

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the proposed project’s potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the 2014 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is an amalgam of various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct “personality.” These elements may include a neighborhood’s land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, shadows, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, transportation, and/or noise conditions, but not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in every case.

Under CEQR, an analysis of neighborhood character identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether a proposed project has the potential to affect the defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical analysis areas. To determine the effects of a proposed project on neighborhood character, the defining features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that, in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas, a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant adverse impact identified in one of the technical areas that contributes to a neighborhood’s character does not necessarily constitute a significant impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the applicant is seeking zoning map and text amendments and special permits to facilitate construction of five new mixed-use buildings on the existing Lenox Terrace property, a superblock bounded by West 132nd and 135th Streets and Lenox and Fifth Avenues in the Central Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, Community District 10.

By 2026, the proposed project would result in the development of approximately 1,642 residential units on the proposed development site (a portion of which would be permanently affordable) and add an estimated 3,842 new residents.¹ It also would result in approximately 135,500 gross square feet (gsf) of retail space, approximately 15,055 gsf of community facility space, and approximately six acres of new private open space. The 2026 With Action condition also assumes that the projected future development site (Lot 65) could be developed with approximately 69 new DUs and 6,968 gsf of community facility use (a replacement facility for the existing church on that site), adding approximately 162 new residents. The new private open space would surround the existing and new buildings on the Lenox Terrace campus, and would replace much of the area currently occupied by surface parking. It is currently anticipated that features of this open space could include a large central lawn, a winding pedestrian promenade lined with trees and garden areas,

¹ Based on the average household size for renter-occupied housing within ½-mile of the rezoning area (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2012–2016 5-Year Estimates).

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and four “pocket parks.” This new open space would be accessible to existing and new residents of Lenox Terrace and their guests. At-grade parking on the proposed development site would be reduced to 34 spaces, and accessory parking garages below the new buildings would be created to serve existing Lenox Terrace residents as well as those in the proposed residential development.

The applicant is expected to enter into a Restrictive Declaration, which would run with the land and would require that the proposed project is developed in substantial conformance with the approved large-scale special permit, which would restrict the uses within buildings on the proposed development site to what is shown on the site plan associated with the special permit; establish the envelope within which the buildings must be constructed, including limitations on height, bulk, and floor area; establish the required setbacks and distance between buildings; and establish open areas on the site where buildings are not permitted. The Restrictive Declaration also would establish any environmental mitigation conditions identified through the project’s environmental review. The Restrictive Declaration would limit the project’s FAR to 5.61.² The Restrictive Declaration would not extend to the lots on the project block not controlled by the applicant, specifically the lot owned by NYC Parks (Lot 55), the lots owned by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York (Lots 16 and 19), or the lot on the project block that is being analyzed as a projected future development site (Lot 65).

This chapter includes a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character, which was prepared in conformance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*. This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the proposed actions on these defining features. This assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts associated with neighborhood character. The rezoning area is located within the Central Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. As described in the relevant chapters of this EIS, the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; urban design and visual resources; or operational-period noise. Although significant adverse impacts would occur with respect to historic and cultural resources, shadows and open space, traffic and pedestrians, and construction-period noise, these impacts would be at least partially mitigated, and would not result in a significant overall change to the defining elements of the area’s neighborhood character. New development on the proposed development site would allow for the provision of additional housing units, including permanently affordable housing pursuant to MIH; facilitate the development of new community facility and retail uses that would create more active ground-floor street-front retail spaces and create a more defined streetwall along Lenox Avenue; improve site circulation and access; and create more than six acres of outdoor recreation space for residents. The proposed reduction in parking regulations and the conversion of interior areas of the site from predominantly parking to open space are intended to enhance the urban design conditions of the proposed development site and surrounding area, thereby contributing to the neighborhood character. In addition, mitigation measures could minimize or

² Development pursuant to the underlying zoning at greater than the proposed maximum FAR and building heights approved as part of the large-scale special permit would be restricted by the Restrictive Declaration and would require New York City Planning Commission (CPC) approval.

eliminate anticipated shadow-related project impacts to the Howard Bennett Playground, impacts to open space and historic resources, and to traffic intersections in the surrounding area.

B. METHODOLOGY

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when a proposed action has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts in any of the following technical areas: land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, shadows, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, transportation, or noise. The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that even if a proposed action does not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts in any specific technical area(s), an assessment of neighborhood character may be required if the project would result in a combination of moderate effects to several elements that may cumulatively affect neighborhood character. A “moderate” effect is generally defined as an effect considered reasonably close to the significant adverse impact threshold for a particular technical analysis area. The study area for the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is defined as the area within a quarter-mile of the rezoning area, consistent with the study areas for land use, zoning and public policy and urban design and visual resources (see Figure 2-1 of Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy”).

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in certain technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed project or action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, form the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing neighborhood context, the more sensitive it is to change. A neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically able to absorb greater change without experiencing significant impacts.

If there is no potential for the proposed project or action to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted.

C. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

DEFINING FEATURES

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

The proposed development site is located on the superblock bounded by West 132nd and 135th Streets and Lenox and Fifth Avenues in the Central Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, Community District 10. The proposed development site has frontages on West 132nd and 135th Streets and Lenox and Fifth Avenues. It contains the Lenox Terrace complex, a development comprising six 16-story towers with 1,716 residential units, five one-story buildings with local retail use, and approximately 457 at-grade accessory parking spaces. Each of the existing Lenox Terrace residential buildings has a vehicular drop-off surrounded by landscaping at the main entrance. One of the retail buildings, at the southeast corner of the block, housed retail uses until 2009 but has been vacant since. Two parcels of land at the northwest and southwest corners of the block are currently vacant and surrounded with chain-link fencing. Along with existing buildings, the interior of the

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proposed development site is occupied by surface parking for use by Lenox Terrace residents. There are landscaped areas and trees around the surface parking.

PROJECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITE

The projected future development site (Lot 65) is occupied by a 2-story building with a scalloped concrete facade, in use by the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church since the 1960s.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE

The Joseph P. Kennedy Memorial Community Center, a community facility use, is located on Lots 16 and 19 under ownership by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. This site includes a 3-story brick building facing Lenox Terrace Place, and two narrow 3-story buildings at the rear of the lot. The remainder of the site—approximately half—contains a paved surface parking lot.

CITY-OWNED SITE

The Hansborough Recreation Center, a New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) facility, is located on Lot 55. The recreation center includes a 3-story building with a copper cornice, and a 1-level structure housing a natatorium (indoor swimming pool). The two buildings fully occupy their lot and are built to the lot lines on Lenox Terrace Place. Portions of the west façade of the natatorium building are covered with murals.

STUDY AREA

The study area for the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character extends north to 139th Street, south to 127th Street, west beyond Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, and east to Park Avenue and the Harlem River (see Figure 2-1 of Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy”). The study area has a typical urban grid pattern but also includes superblock such as the project block; in addition, there are irregularly shaped blocks along the Harlem River waterfront, which curves inland near the rezoning area. The study area is served by the No. 2 and 3 trains, with a stop directly adjacent to the proposed development site at Lenox Avenue and 135th Street, as well as the M1, M2, M7, M98, M102, and Bx33 buses, which provide north-south service along the avenues and east-west service along 135th Street. Defining features of the study area include the Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Drive, the Harlem River and Harlem River Park Greenway, the Park Avenue viaduct carrying the Metro-North rail line, and the presence of multi-building complexes of mixed-income and public housing.

The predominant land use in the study area is residential and includes large multi-building apartment developments, row houses, and tenement buildings interspersed with community facilities such as houses of worship, social service providers, and community centers, as well as open spaces and some commercial uses. Large community facilities in close proximity to the rezoning area include the Harlem Hospital Center, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the P.S. 197 John B. Russwurm School; open spaces in close proximity to the rezoning area include the Howard Bennett Playground on the block immediately to the north, and the Abraham Lincoln Playground on the block immediately to the east. Large residential developments in the study area include the fourteen-building New York City Housing Authority’s (NYCHA) Lincoln Houses complex directly east of the rezoning area, the seven-building NYCHA Saint Nicholas complex at the southwest corner of the study area, the seven-building Riverton Square development, and the seven-building Savoy Park Apartments complex. These

developments consist of multiple freestanding apartment buildings set in grassy areas with trees enclosed by fences, parking lots and small playgrounds. Pedestrian walkways extend through the complexes, and typically there are sidewalk seating areas. Additional residential towers are located to the north along the Harlem River. Retail development, located primarily along Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, is on the ground floor of residential buildings or in single-story, freestanding buildings. In the southeastern portion of the study area there are several commercial, transportation, and utility uses located along Park Avenue; the southern portion of the study area also contains small parking facilities, vacant parcels, buildings under construction, community facility and institutional uses, and open spaces.

The Harlem River, a prominent natural resource that borders the eastern part of the study area, is a defining feature of the neighborhood. Adjacent to the Harlem River is the Harlem River Park, a public open space with access to the waterfront. However, the elevated Harlem River Drive, which runs parallel to the river, obstructs views of the river from the neighborhood and limits access to the river and to the park. Within the study area, Harlem River Park can be accessed from 135th Street and Madison Avenue and 139th Street and Fifth Avenue. The expansive views from Harlem River Park within the study area include the river; nearby bridges, including the Madison Avenue Bridge, the Harlem River Lift Bridge, and the Third Avenue Bridge; and the Bronx waterfront.

ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE DEFINING FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the proposed actions in the following technical areas that are considered in the neighborhood character assessment pursuant to the *CEQR Technical Manual*: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the proposed actions would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character. As described below, defining features of the study area's neighborhood character would not be affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or in combination with other moderate effects in the relevant technical areas.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed actions on land use, zoning, and public policy, either individually, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," no significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, or public policy would occur in the future with the proposed project.

The proposed actions would facilitate the construction of five new residential with commercial/community facility buildings within the Lenox Terrace complex. The proposed buildings would be taller than most of the existing buildings in the surrounding area but would be consistent with the height of the mechanical bulkhead of the Harlem Hospital Center, directly north of the proposed development site. The proposed project would include residential, retail, community facility, and new private open space uses, and would not add uses not already present within the rezoning area and surrounding study area. The proposed actions would result in up to approximately 1,711 new dwelling units within the rezoning area, of which up to 514 units would be designated as affordable, pursuant to the MIH program. This permanently affordable housing

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would support the Mayor's affordable housing programs. The proposed actions also would result in 22,023 gsf of new community facility space and 135,500 gsf of commercial space (an increase of approximately 39,845 gsf over the No Action scenario). Additionally, much of the surface parking on the proposed development site would be relocated to below-grade parking, and these areas would be converted to new open space, pathways, and landscaped areas for existing and new residents of Lenox Terrace and their guests.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed actions on socioeconomic conditions, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts related to direct residential displacement, direct business displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business displacement, or effects on specific industries in the ½-mile study area.

The proposed actions would not directly displace any residents from the existing Lenox Terrace buildings within the rezoning area, or from any other locations within the rezoning area. Development generated by the proposed actions would directly displace 19 businesses employing an estimated 234 workers. The businesses that would be directly displaced are located on Lenox Avenue between West 132nd Street and West 135th Street, and at the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 135th Street. They include 12 retail businesses, 4 food service businesses, a bank, a dry cleaners, and an optometrist's office. These businesses do not represent a majority of study area employment for any given industry sector. While all businesses contribute to neighborhood character and provide value to the City's economy, because there are alternative, comparable sources of goods and services within reasonable walking distance, the potentially displaced businesses are not critical to the socioeconomic conditions of the area as defined by CEQR. Two potentially-displaced businesses—an Associated Food and Fine Fare—are medium-format local grocery stores; however there are several additional sources of healthy fresh produce and food products located within close proximity of the proposed rezoning area. Additionally, with the proposed actions, it is expected that a net increase in retail space (and associated employment opportunities) would be available for rent by potential new businesses as well as those businesses directly displaced. With respect to grocery stores, it is the applicant's intention to include one or more food stores in the proposed project's retail mix as warranted based on consumer demand and market conditions.

Under the proposed actions' Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario (RWCDS), it is conservatively assumed that the property owner of the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church would redevelop that projected future development site, and the current use would be temporarily displaced until new space becomes available. The temporary displacement of this community facility use is not considered a significant adverse impact because there are alternative sources of comparable services available within close proximity to the rezoning area, and because there are no regulations or publicly-adopted plans to preserve, enhance, or otherwise protect it.

The concern under CEQR in regards to indirect residential displacement is whether a project would result in substantial new development that is markedly different from existing uses, development, and activities within the neighborhood that may lead to indirect residential displacement. While the proposed actions could add new population with a higher average household income as compared with existing study area households, the proposed project would

not directly displace existing tenants, and the proposed actions would not result in socioeconomic changes that would alter the residential market in a manner that would lead to significant project-generated rent pressures. There is already a readily observable trend toward higher incomes and new residential development in the study area. In addition, the proposed actions would result in the development of up to 514 units of affordable housing.

The rezoning area and broader socioeconomic study area have well-established residential and retail markets such that the proposed actions would not be introducing substantial new economic activities to the rezoning area, nor would it add to the concentration of a particular sector of the local economy enough to alter or accelerate an ongoing trend or to alter existing patterns. Based on the *CEQR Technical Manual*, projects resulting in less than 200,000 gsf of commercial development would typically not result in significant socioeconomic impacts. The proposed actions would not directly displace uses that provide substantial direct support for businesses in the area, or uses that bring people into the area who form a substantial portion of the customer base for local businesses. It is also possible that some directly displaced businesses could tenant the new retail space resulting from the proposed actions, which is greater than the amount currently in the rezoning area. Overall, the proposed actions may generate new employment opportunities, and create new retail opportunities to meet the needs of local workers, residents, and visitors, while the new residential population may increase consumer demand for goods and services at existing and new retail businesses.

The proposed actions would not significantly affect the business conditions in any industry or any category of business within or outside the study area. The proposed actions would not result in significant indirect business displacement, and therefore would not indirectly substantially reduce employment or have an impact on the economic viability in any specific industry or category of business.

OPEN SPACE

The defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed actions on publicly accessible open space, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this chapter.

No publicly accessible open space resources would be physically displaced as a result of the proposed project. As described in Chapter 5, “Open Space,” because the reduction in the active open space ratio in the 2026 With Action condition is close to 5 percent and the open space ratios in the study area would continue to be quantitatively low in the No Action and With Action conditions, the reduction in the open space ratio would be considered a significant adverse indirect impact in the 2026 analysis year. The following summarizes the findings of the proposed actions’ direct and indirect effects on area open space resources.

As detailed in Chapter 6, “Shadows,” project-generated shadows on open spaces would be limited in extent and duration with the exception of Howard Bennett Playground, where a significant adverse shadow impact would occur on the December 21 analysis day (representing the winter months). While the shadows would contribute to a decrease in the open space’s utility on the December 21 analysis day, the greatest shadowing effects on this open space would occur during the winter, when utilization of the playground is relatively low, and outside of the growing season as well as the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) tennis season.³

³ <https://www.nycgovparks.org/things-to-do/tennis>, accessed April 22, 2019.

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In addition, the study area includes multiple open spaces with passive and active recreation space within a 10-minute walk of Howard Bennett Playground. Additionally, as described in Chapter 21, “Mitigation,” ~~potential~~ mitigation measures for the impact from project shadows would include facility enhancements at the playground as well as at the Hansborough Recreation Center. Thus, the shadows impact to open space would not create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

Construction-period effects on open space are described in Chapter 19, “Construction.” As detailed in that chapter, during construction of the proposed project access to the Howard Bennett Playground and Abraham Lincoln Playground would be maintained; however, during construction of the proposed Building N, a pedestrian gate to the east of the construction site may need to be temporarily closed, limiting access to the Hansborough Recreation Center from that location. Access to the main entrance to the recreation center, from the west via Lenox Terrace Place, would be maintained throughout construction. During certain periods, construction noise levels anticipated to be experienced at the Howard Bennett Playground would be “noticeable” (in the low to mid 70s) and would be in the “marginally unacceptable” range according to the *CEQR Technical Manual* noise exposure criteria. Construction noise levels anticipated to be experienced at the Hansborough Recreation Center would be “noticeable and potentially intrusive” during the most noise-intensive stages of construction, which would have a duration of approximately three months, with maximum noise levels in the “marginally unacceptable” range (60s to high 70s dBA) according to *CEQR Technical Manual* noise exposure criteria for a period of 18 to 24 months. However, based on the limited duration and magnitude of predicted construction noise levels, construction-related noise would not rise to the level of a significant adverse open space impact at the Howard Bennett Playground or the Hansborough Recreation Center.

As discussed in Chapter 5, “Open Space,” and Chapter 21, “Mitigation,” because the reduction in the active open space ratio in the 2026 With Action condition is close to 5 percent and the open space ratios in the study area would continue to be quantitatively low in the No Action and With Action conditions, the reduction in the open space ratio would be considered a significant adverse indirect impact in the 2026 analysis year. ~~Potential~~ Mitigation measures for the open space ratio impact and the shadows impact are being explored by the applicant in have been developed consultation with DCP and NYC Parks, and will consist of facility enhancements, at the Howard Bennett Playground and the Hansborough Recreation Center be refined between the DEIS and FEIS. However, from a qualitative perspective, the proposed project would introduce a substantial amount of new private open space on the proposed development site that would be available to both existing and new Lenox Terrace residents and their guests. This new private open space would limit the incremental demand on study area public open space resources generated by the proposed actions. In addition, the study area has a large number of community gardens, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)-owned open spaces and other quasi-public open spaces that are not accounted for in the quantified analysis but which serve to offset the demand for publicly accessible open space resources. Therefore, the proposed actions would not create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character related to open space.

SHADOWS

Although the analysis presented in Chapter 6, “Shadows,” showed that incremental shadows cast by the proposed projects would reach 10 sunlight-sensitive resources, the majority of these new shadows would be limited in extent and duration and would typically only occur during some seasons. The short duration of new shadow that would fall on most affected resources would not substantially reduce the quantity of direct sunlight and would not significantly alter the utilization

of the resources or the variety of vegetation supported within. Only one sunlight-sensitive resource would experience significant adverse impacts—the Howard Bennett Playground on the December 21 analysis day. The long duration and extent of new shadow on the playground could significantly affect the usability of the resource on this winter analysis day. Since the project-generated shadows would result in significant adverse impacts on only one sunlight-sensitive resource for one season, these shadows would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

Further, as described in Chapter 21, “Mitigation,” ~~potential~~ mitigation measures for the shadows impacts would include facility enhancements at the playground as well as at the Hansborough Recreation Center. Thus, the shadow impact would not create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 7, “Historic and Cultural Resources,” the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has determined that the Lenox Terrace complex on the proposed development site appears eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, for its cultural associations with prominent African Americans in the Harlem community. The proposed actions would result in a significant adverse impact associated with the demolition of the five one-story retail buildings on the proposed development site. The structures that would be demolished on the proposed development site are not known to have had any tenants that contribute to the Lenox Terrace complex’s cultural associations with prominent African Americans in the Harlem community, do not physically connect to any of the residential buildings that housed prominent community members, and are in all cases separate and distinct structures. However, the buildings were constructed as part of the overall development of the Lenox Terrace complex and are part of the S/NR eligibility determination by LPC. Therefore, the demolition of the one-story structures on the proposed development site would result in a significant adverse impact to historic resources.

Should standard DOB controls governing the protection of adjacent properties during construction activities not provide sufficient protection, it is possible that development of the projected future development site and the potential development site could have a direct significant adverse impact on the S/NR-eligible Lenox Terrace historic resource during construction. The proposed actions would not be anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to other historic and cultural resources in the study area, with the preparation and implementation of a Construction Protection Plan to avoid inadvertent demolition and/or construction-related damage to resources within 90 feet of the proposed development site.

Overall, the defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed actions on historic and cultural resources, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts.

Further, as described in Chapter 21, “Mitigation,” ~~m~~Mitigation measures to address this impact have been developed in consultation with LPC. LPC recommends that partial mitigation consist of both HABS Level II recordation of the complex and an interpretive program. The HABS recordation and interpretive program shall be prepared in consultation with a qualified consultant that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards, and the interpretive program will be installed at publicly-accessible locations within the site. ~~potential~~ mitigation measures for historic and cultural resources at the project site that are being considered include educational material and displays focused on prominent Lenox Terrace residents who have contributed to the history of the Harlem community, to be installed on the property. The applicant

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~~will continue exploring possible mitigation options with LPC and DCP between the DEIS and FEIS.~~ Thus, the historic and cultural resources impact would not create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed actions on urban design and visual resources, either singularly or in combination with other potential impacts related to neighborhood character.

The proposed actions would not be anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual resources. At 28 stories (approximately 284 feet) tall, the new buildings on the proposed development site would be much taller than the existing 1-story retail structures they would replace, and approximately 140 feet taller than the existing Lenox Terrace residential buildings. The majority of existing buildings in the study area are generally under 8 stories; however, the larger residential complexes in the area (both NYCHA and privately-owned) are generally 13- to 16-stories tall, like the existing Lenox Terrace development. In addition, the height of the proposed buildings was designed to be similar to the height of the mechanical bulkhead of the Harlem Hospital Center, directly north of the proposed development site. The proposed buildings also would create a taller, ~~6-story~~ streetwall compared to the existing 1-story retail structures; however, the buildings on the west side of Lenox Avenue across from the rezoning area are generally 5 stories tall, and the lower portion of Harlem Hospital (before setback) along Lenox Avenue is 6 stories tall. Therefore, this taller streetwall would not be inconsistent with streetwall heights in the surrounding neighborhood.

Like the existing Lenox Terrace residential buildings, the massing of the proposed buildings would be generally oriented north-south, and would be generally similar in location and size to the footprints of the existing retail buildings; however, the proposed buildings also would extend east-west at the corners of the site, creating a frame around the overall site. The new buildings are anticipated to be clad in a mix of masonry and glass. The residential and retail uses of the proposed buildings would be consistent with the uses of the existing buildings on the Lenox Terrace complex as well as the predominant land uses in the study area, and the proposed community facility use would be compatible with similar uses in the surrounding area. The majority of new construction would take the place of existing one-story commercial buildings, allowing for the conversion of surface parking areas to open space; the new private open space would enhance the visual character of the proposed development site as compared to existing/No Action conditions, and thus would enhance the pedestrian experience of the surrounding area. ~~The proposed existing driveway off Lenox Avenue—which would extend from 133th Street around the proposed midrise central podium to 134th Street, to provide~~ access to the existing residential building at 470 Lenox Avenue—would be maintained—visually extend the street grid of the study area eastward onto the site.

The assumed uses of a new building on the projected future development site would be consistent with the existing uses on the site as well as within the surrounding area. The height and massing of any new building on the potential development site also is assumed to be consistent with the proposed zoning. The proposed project would alter the visual character of the surrounding area through the development of new, taller buildings, but this character is already evolving through other buildings currently under construction in the study area. The new buildings on the proposed development site and the buildings assumed for the projected future development site and the potential development site would maintain existing street frontages and create stronger streetwalls

along these corridors. These streetwalls would be expected to enhance the pedestrian experience along adjacent sidewalks. As described above, the proposed buildings would create a taller, ~~6-story~~ streetwall compared to the existing 1-story retail structures; however, the buildings on the west side of Lenox Avenue across from the rezoning area are generally 5 stories tall, and the lower portion of Harlem Hospital (before setback) along Lenox Avenue is 6 stories tall. Therefore, this taller streetwall would not be inconsistent with streetwall heights in the surrounding neighborhood, and would not be expected to adversely affect the pedestrian experience in this area.

The new buildings on the proposed development site would be prominent in views along surrounding streets, particularly along the avenues; however, in these views, the new buildings would be consistent with the height of the adjacent Harlem Hospital Center. The proposed buildings would not obstruct or eliminate views to visual landmarks in the surrounding area (including the Harlem River Lift Bridge, the Harlem YMCA tower, the Third Avenue Bridge, and the Madison Avenue Bridge). The expansive views from the Harlem River Park within the study area would continue to include the river, the nearby bridges, and the Bronx waterfront; views west also would include, from some perspectives, the new buildings on the proposed development site. Therefore, the proposed project would not be expected to significantly adversely affect the context of natural or built visual resources, or any view corridors.

Overall, the changes in urban design characteristics, view corridors and visual resources due to the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character.

TRANSPORTATION

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed actions on transportation, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

Traffic

As detailed in Chapter 13, “Transportation,” traffic conditions were evaluated at 11 intersections for the weekday AM, midday, PM, and Saturday midday peak hours. In the 2023 With Action (Phase 1 Completion) condition there would be the potential for significant adverse traffic impacts at four intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, one intersection during the weekday midday peak hour, two intersections during the weekday PM peak hour, and two intersections during the Saturday peak hour. In the 2026 With Action (Full Build) condition there would be the potential for significant adverse traffic impacts at five intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, three intersections during the weekday midday peak hour, three intersections during the weekday PM peak hour, and four intersections during the Saturday peak hour. Overall, the change in traffic conditions caused by the proposed actions in the 2023 and 2026 With Action conditions would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character. Furthermore, the locations where significant adverse traffic impacts are predicted to occur could be fully mitigated with the implementation of standard traffic mitigation measures (e.g., signal timing changes and lane restriping), as described in Chapter 21, “Mitigation.”

Transit

A detailed analysis of station circulation elements and control areas was conducted for the 135th Street Station (No. 2 and 3 trains) during the weekday AM and PM peak hours. Additionally,

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subway line-haul (No. 2 and 3 trains) analyses were conducted for the weekday AM and PM peak hours.

Based on the subway station analysis results, the proposed project would not yield potential significant adverse impacts at the 135th Street Station in the 2023 With Action (Phase 1 Completion) or the 2026 With Action (Full Build) condition. The line-haul analyses showed that the proposed project would not yield significant adverse subway line-haul impacts.

Pedestrians

Weekday and Saturday peak period pedestrian conditions were evaluated at key area sidewalk, corner reservoir, and crosswalk locations. As discussed in Chapter 21, “Mitigation,” the project would result in a significant unmitigated impact to the south crosswalk at the intersection of West 135th Street and Lenox Avenue. However, the single impacted pedestrian location would not affect overall neighborhood character.

Parking

Under the 2023 With Action condition, there would be approximately 792 to 817 accessory parking spaces provided on the proposed development site. For a conservative parking analysis, the lower total of 792 accessory parking spaces was assumed. Accounting for the incremental parking demand generated by Phase 1 of the proposed project, the 2023 With Action public parking utilization in the off-street parking study area is expected to increase to a maximum of 85 percent during the weekday midday peak period.

Under the 2026 With Action condition, there would be a total of approximately 544 to 679 accessory parking spaces provided in the rezoning area (approximately 525 to 660 spaces from the proposed development site and 19 spaces from the projected future development site). For a conservative parking analysis, the lower total of 544 accessory parking spaces was assumed. Accounting for the incremental parking demand generated by the 2026 Full Build of the rezoning area, the 2026 With Action public parking utilization in the off-street parking study area is expected to increase to a maximum of 98 percent during the weekday overnight peak period. Since the parking utilization level is within the area’s off-street public parking capacity in both the 2023 and 2026 With Action condition, the project is not expected to result in significant adverse parking impacts, and would therefore not result in an overall impact to neighborhood character.

NOISE

The defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the proposed actions, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas. The analysis presented in Chapter 16, “Noise,” finds that the proposed actions would not result in any significant adverse operational-period noise impacts at nearby noise receptors. The proposed project would not generate sufficient traffic to have the potential to cause a significant noise impact (mobile source). It is assumed that the proposed buildings’ mechanical systems (i.e., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] systems) would be designed to meet all applicable noise regulations and to avoid producing levels that would result in any significant increase in ambient noise levels. The proposed buildings, when completed and occupied, would not have the potential to significantly affect noise levels within the nearby residences. Therefore, the proposed projects would not result in any significant adverse noise impacts related to building mechanical equipment (stationary sources). As a result, there would be no noise-related impacts on neighborhood character.

CONCLUSIONS

The assessments above demonstrate that the proposed project would not have potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood, either individually through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical areas. Therefore, the proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. *