



6

Urban Design and Visual Resources

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' potential effects on urban design and visual resources. Per the *2020 City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, the urban design and visual resources assessment is undertaken to determine whether and how a project or action may change the visual experience of a pedestrian, focusing on the components of the project or action that may have the potential to affect the arrangement, appearance, and functionality of the built and natural environment.

Introduction

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, urban design is defined as the totality of components—including streets, buildings, open spaces, wind, natural resources, and visual resources—that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. A visual resource is defined as the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, and natural resources.

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Proposed Actions would facilitate a mixed-use development containing approximately 2,992,161 gross square feet (gsf) (2,246,515 zsf) of mixed-use development space, including a hotel, office, and public space

(the Proposed Project). The Development Site would contain approximately 2,108,820 gsf¹ of office space; an approximately 452,950-gsf, 500-room hotel; public space; and retail space on the cellar, ground, and second floors of the proposed building. The Proposed Project would also include significant public realm improvements, as well as subway and mass transit improvements to enhance circulation and reduce congestion at Grand Central Terminal (GCT, or the Terminal) and the Grand Central – 42nd Street subway station.

Principal Conclusions

Urban Design

The Proposed Project would not have significant adverse impacts to the urban design of the study area. The Proposed Project has been designed to reflect its location among a group of iconic and historically significant buildings within the study area and larger East Midtown central business district. The proposed building would have a massing with multiple setbacks, honoring the style of the classic Manhattan skyscraper. The elevations of the proposed building setbacks were designed to align with important visual horizontal features of both ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT and the Chrysler Building across from the Development Site on Lexington Avenue.

The ground floor of the Proposed Project would provide a streetfront appropriate for a highly trafficked location within East Midtown, providing access to ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT and open space. These improvements include a new transit hall, larger 42nd Street passageway entrance, new 42nd Street subway entrance and a new highly visible entrance to Lexington Passageway. These improvements would contribute to better functioning of the Development Site and ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT as a central transportation hub. The Proposed Actions would also facilitate significant improvements in the pedestrian experience within and around the Development Site in the form of new publicly accessible open space and transit circulation improvements. The new open space would be located on the second floor of the Proposed Project and would include three terraces that run the length of the Development Site from north to south and east to west.

While the Proposed Actions would facilitate an increase in density on the Development Site compared to the No-Action condition, under both the No-Action and With-Action conditions, the Development Site would be redeveloped as a high-rise mixed-use building typical of East Midtown and consistent with the zoning framework set by the recent Greater East Midtown Rezoning, which put in place various zoning mechanisms to increase density and encourage large scale commercial developments, similar to the Proposed Project.. The Proposed Project would be taller than the No-Action development and would facilitate many on-site benefits and improvements to the building design, particularly at the base level, that would improve visual conditions on the Development Site. Overall, the building's design would be well-integrated within its context, and would not adversely affect the built environment's arrangement, appearance, or functionality.

¹ Development may also occur under an All Office Scenario. Under this scenario, the overall building square footage and building massing would be the same as under the Proposed Project but would be comprised of approximately 2,561,770 gsf of office space, retail, and no hotel.

The project is also subject to New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) review for a harmonious relationship determination; an advisory report concerning interior alterations to the 42nd Street Passageway within GCT to facilitate transit improvements, and a Certificate of Appropriateness for sidewalk improvements adjacent to the elevated vehicular roadway on the GCT property (none of which is subject to CEQR analysis). At the Public Hearing and Public Meeting of February 23, 2021, the LPC ~~Commissioners~~ determined that the proposed design of the Proposed Project had a harmonious relationship with ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT and voted to issue a positive advisory report regarding the interior alterations to the 42nd Street Passageway. At the Public Meeting on September 28, 2021, the LPC voted to approve a resolution authorizing the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed sidewalk improvements. Additionally, in a letter dated October 29, 2020, the New York State Division for Historic Preservation of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) stated that they had reviewed submitted materials in accordance with the New York State Historic Preservation Action of 1980 (section 14.09 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law) and had issued a finding of No Adverse Impact.

Visual Resources

The Proposed Actions are not anticipated to have significant adverse impacts to visual resources within the study area. The design of the Proposed Project honors its location, surrounded by visual resources, by increasing visibility to those visual resources and improving pedestrian experiences.

The proposed building form would taper inward along the western, southern and eastern facades, in order to provide increased visibility to surrounding landmarks, and to create new public and green spaces. This proposed building form would provide new sightlines to ~~Grand Central Terminal's~~ GCT's eastern façade, which is largely hidden from public view by the existing Grand Hyatt Hotel, as the existing building rises directly from the property line with no setback. The existing Grand Hyatt Hotel is cantilevered over the 42nd street sidewalk, further obscuring views of Grand Central. The Proposed Project would also create new sightlines to other surrounding visual resources, including improving visibility of the Graybar Building's distinctive Art deco/Neo-byzantine façade from the south as well as the intricate detailing of the Chanin Building's façade from the north, and the visibility of the corner of the Chrysler building from the west. By tapering the massing of the Proposed Project inwards before meeting the ground, three new second-floor terraces are created, flanking the Development Site on the east, west, and north. They would provide a safe, protected, and publicly accessible elevated space from which to view and enjoy these and other resources, including ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT to the west, the Chrysler Building to the east, and Graybar to the north.

Though taller than buildings in its immediate surrounding context, the Proposed Project would sit within the context of other tall towers within the Manhattan skyline, including One Vanderbilt and the MetLife Building. Terminal City, as the area around ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT was called, was a catalyst of urban density; the Proposed Project extends a tradition of towers that defined the district, including many of the surrounding visual resources. Moreover, the goal of the Greater East Midtown Rezoning is to continue this tradition and facilitate new, high-quality commercial towers. As a result, the Proposed

Project would be constructed as part of a newly revitalized East Midtown skyline, including towers such as One Vanderbilt and 270 Park Avenue. Therefore, urban design effects of the Proposed Project are anticipated to be similar to those of other newly constructed tall towers in the context of the densely developed and continuously evolving skyline.

Methodology

Per the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the urban design and visual resources assessment is conducted in three steps. First, a proposed action is reviewed to determine whether such an assessment is warranted, based on whether it would be expected to result in changes to elements particular to urban design—such as streets, buildings, visual resources, open space, natural features, and/or potential wind effects. When such changes, or “effects,” could be expected with a proposed action, then a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is conducted to determine which particular effects expected with the proposed action may warrant further investigation in the detailed analyses. It is within the detailed analysis that the effects are characterized in greater detail and a determination is made as to whether any changes to the urban design and visual resources of an area would alter the pedestrian’s experience of public space in a significant way.

As described later in this chapter, a detailed analysis of the potential impacts of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources has been conducted per the *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines. This analysis describes existing conditions and compares conditions in the future without and with the Proposed Actions to determine potential urban design and visual resource impacts.

Information pertinent to the assessment of the urban design and visual resources analysis includes data collected and analytical information prepared as part of other analyses included in this ~~DEIS~~Final EIS, specifically: **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**; **Chapter 3, Open Space**; and **Chapter 5, Historic and Cultural Resources**. In addition, the study of existing urban design and visual resources conditions has been informed by field visits and photography, and future conditions without and with the Proposed Actions also rely on computer imaging and graphic renderings.

As discussed in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, for conservative analysis purposes the EIS considers the two building program options to determine the With-Action reasonable worst case development scenario (RWCDs) for each density-based technical area: the Proposed Project with a mix of hotel, commercial office, local retail, and publicly accessible space; and the All Office Scenario, based on the same overall building square footage and building massing as the Proposed Project but comprised of approximately 2,561,770 gsf of office space, retail, and no hotel. In each chapter, where applicable, the EIS analyzes the scenario with the greater potential for impacts. ~~Since the overall building massing and design would be the same in both program options, this~~This chapter evaluates the With-Action condition including the hotel space, as described above, because it represents the Proposed Project, and for the purposes of this analysis is not any less conservative than the All Office Scenario.

Assessment Criteria

In general, an assessment of urban design is needed when a project may have effects on one or more of the elements that contribute to a pedestrian’s experience of public space. The

elements comprising urban design are described in the *CEQR Technical Manual* as follows:

- › **Streets:** For many neighborhoods, streets are the primary component of public space. The arrangement and orientation of streets define the location and flow of activity in an area, set street views, and create the blocks on which buildings and open spaces are organized. The apportionment of street space between cars, bicycles, transit, and sidewalk is critical to making a successful streetscape, as is the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, streetlights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands.
- › **Buildings:** Buildings support streets. A building's streetwalls form the most common backdrop in the City for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, placement on the zoning lot and block, orientation of active uses, and pedestrian and vehicular entrances all play major roles in the vitality of the streetscape. The public realm also extends to building façades and rooftops, offering more opportunity to enrich the visual character of an area.
- › **Open Space:** For the purpose of urban design, open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots and privately-owned public spaces.
- › **Natural Features:** Natural features include vegetation and geologic, topographic, and aquatic features. Rock outcroppings, steep slopes or varied ground elevation, beaches, or wetlands may help define the overall visual character of an area.
- › **Visual Resources:** A visual resource is the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources.
- › **Wind:** Channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and downwashed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety.

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Proposed Actions would permit additional floor area on the Development Site and would modify certain publicly accessible space requirements and height, setback, and street wall regulations. Therefore, an urban design and visual resources analysis is warranted. The size and orientation of the Proposed Project fits within the high-rise context and street grid of the East Midtown central business district and the Development Site is not located on the waterfront; therefore, the Proposed Project would not alter existing wind conditions within the study area. As such, an analysis of pedestrian wind conditions is not warranted.

Study Area

Consistent with **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**, the area within 400 feet of the Project Area is defined as the study area for this analysis; this is typically considered an appropriate radius for a site-specific development. As shown in **Figure 6-1**, the study area for this analysis is generally bounded by East 45th Street to the north, the midblock between Lexington Avenue and Third Avenue to the east, East 41st Street to the south, and Madison Avenue to the west.

Preliminary Assessment

Per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning, including the following:

1. projects or actions that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements; and,
2. projects or actions that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed “as-of-right” or in the future without a proposed project or action.

Beyond a preliminary assessment, a detailed analysis may be needed for projects or actions that potentially obstruct view corridors, compete with icons in the skyline, or make substantial alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings. The Proposed Project is located adjacent to historic and visual resources, and given its proposed height, would be visible among existing iconic buildings in the skyline. Therefore, a detailed analysis is warranted and is provided below.

Detailed Analysis

Existing Conditions

Figure 6-1 provides an aerial image of the Development Site, Project Area, and study area, and provides a photo key for area photographs. **Photo 6-1** through **Photo 6-20** show the existing conditions of the Development Site, Project Area, and study area.

Figure 6-1 Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area and Photograph Locations

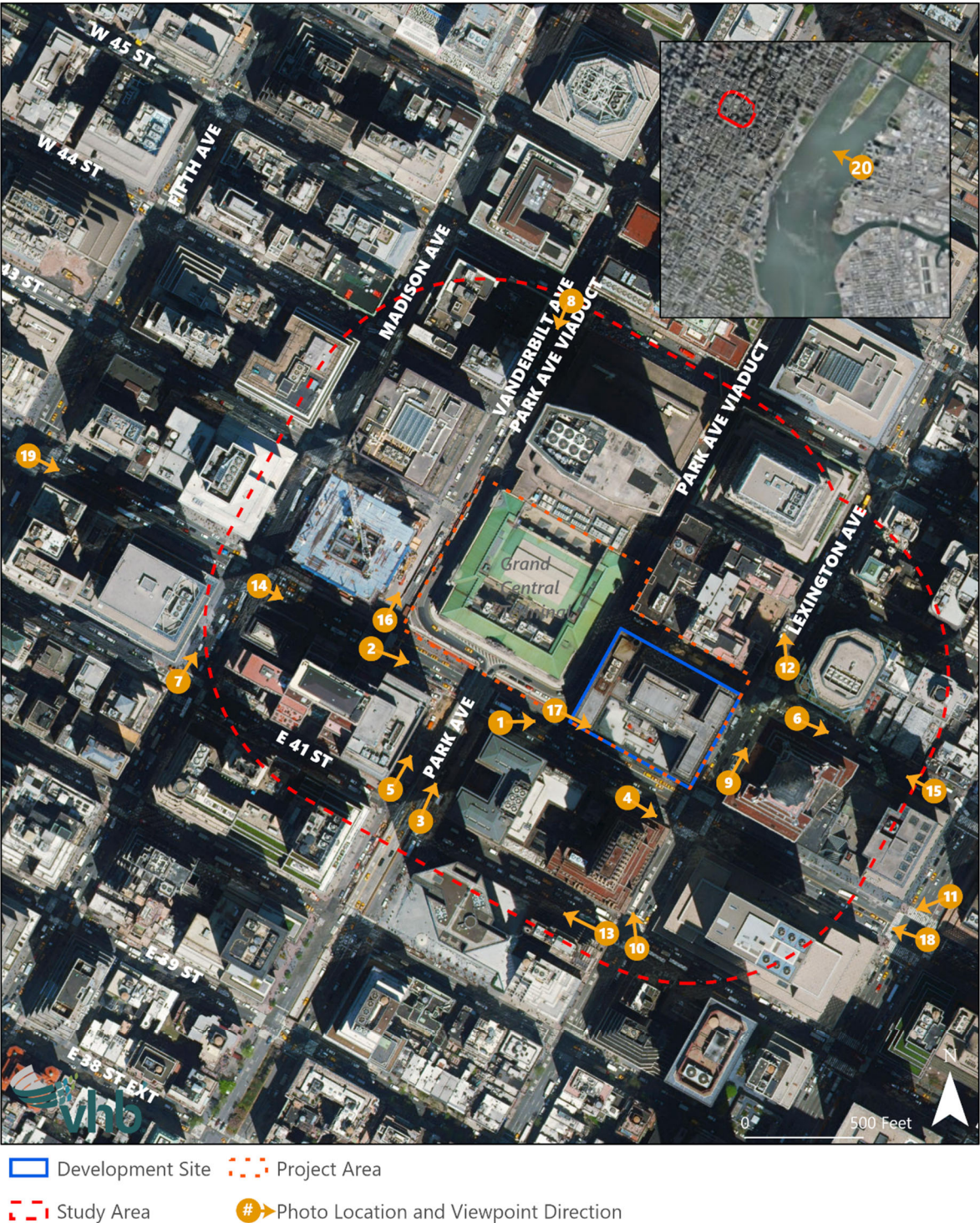


Photo 6-1 View east along East 42nd Street of Development Site



Photo 6-2 View of Grand Central Terminal facing northeast from the intersection of Vanderbilt Avenue and East 42nd Street



Photo 6-3 View north along Park Avenue toward Grand Central Terminal



Photo 6-4 Well-maintained sidewalks and crosswalks along East 42nd Street



Photo 6-5 View north of the Pershing Square pedestrian plaza



Photo 6-6 View east along East 43rd Street



Photo 6-7 View north along Madison Avenue from East 41st Street



Photo 6-8 View south along Vanderbilt Avenue from 45th Street



Photo 6-9 View north along Lexington Avenue from East 42nd Street



Photo 6-10 View northwest of the Chanin Building from East 41st Street



Photo 6-11 View southwest of Sacony-Mobil Building from Third Avenue



Photo 6-12 View facing northwest of the Graybar Building along Lexington Avenue



Photo 6-13 View facing west along East 41st Street from Lexington Avenue



Photo 6-14 View facing east along East 42nd Street from Madison Avenue



Photo 6-15 View of Saint Agnus Church and rectory on East 43rd Street facing west



Photo 6-16 Pedestrian plaza adjacent to One Vanderbilt currently under construction



Photo 6-17 View east along East 42nd Street



Photo 6-18 View west along East 42nd Street from Third Avenue



Photo 6-19 View east along East 42nd Street from Fifth Avenue



Photo 6-20 View west across the East River from Gantry Plaza State Park



Urban Design: Streets, Buildings, Open Space, and Natural Features

Development Site and Project Area

The Development Site is located on Block 1280, Lot 30, a 57,292-sf lot that currently contains the Grand Hyatt Hotel (the "Hyatt Hotel"), a 26-story, approximately 1,028,120-sf, 295-foot-tall steel and glass building. The Development Site, located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street, fronts on Lexington Avenue to the east, East 42nd Street to the south, ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT to the west and the Grand Central Market to the north. Above the third floor, the Hyatt Hotel building is entirely reflective, offering mirrored views of the buildings across its street frontages. The street level facades of the building have steel rounded columns flanking the retail storefronts. A small glass portion of the building along the 42nd Street frontage cantilevers over the sidewalk (see **Photo 6-1**).

The building is notable for its integration with one of the City's primary transportation hubs. The building sits directly above the Grand Central – 42nd Street subway station and Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Metro-North railroad tracks below grade and is located immediately to the east of the Beaux Arts-style ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT on Block 1280, Lot 1. The building provides direct access to ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT via the Lexington Passage, which is lined with retail uses.

The building is located immediately to the south of the Grand Central Market on Block 1280, Lots 54 and 154, a single-story building that was a later addition to ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT. GCT, though relatively short compared with the mid- and high-rise buildings that surround it, is a central focal point in East Midtown, both architecturally and as a central transportation hub (see **Photo 6-2**).

The Project Area, located in the East Midtown central business district in Community District 5 of Manhattan, comprises the existing hotel, ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, and Grand Central Market, with approximately 340 feet of frontage on Vanderbilt Avenue; 669 feet of frontage on East 42nd Street; and 253 feet of frontage on Lexington Avenue.

Paved sidewalks are provided along both 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue adjacent to the Development Site with some pedestrian obstructions including phone booths and utility poles. The sidewalks along Lexington Avenue adjacent to the Development Site are relatively narrow. The portions of the sidewalk along Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street within the Project Area fronting ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT are lined with security bollards. There are no existing publicly accessible open spaces or natural features on the Development Site or within the Project Area. See **Chapter 1, Project Description**, for additional photos of the Development Site.

Study Area

Many aspects of urban design are directly related to land use and zoning, particularly as types of buildings relate to land use. Urban design typically reflects the types of uses that are present in an area, which in the case of the study area, is predominantly commercial, though there is also a mix of institutional and transportation uses. Zoning controls the types of land uses that may be located in an area, and it also controls the forms the development may take. For example, commercial office towers on small lots and constructed with high lot

coverage may be characteristic of a dense urban area like East Midtown, rather than sprawling warehouse buildings.

The urban design character of the study area is largely shaped by the context of its location within the Greater East Midtown Rezoning area. As discussed in detail in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**, the Greater East Midtown Rezoning established the East Midtown Subdistrict and various subareas within it, including the Grand Central Transit Improvement Zone Subarea, which permits development of up to 27 FAR as-of-right and up to 30 FAR by special permit. Within the Grand Central Transit Improvement Zone Subarea, developments can achieve as-of-right maximum FARs through three mechanisms: the transfer of unused landmark development rights from landmark buildings located within the Subdistrict, a payment to a public realm improvement fund to reconstruct overbuilt floor area, and the construction of pre-identified transit infrastructure projects. Two special permits—the Public Concourse Special Permit and the Transit Improvement Special Permit—provide FAR bonuses of up to 3.0 FAR for the provision of a public concourse or additional subway improvements. These bonuses are in addition to as-of-right maximum FAR. With the approval of this new zoning framework, the study area is developing, and is expected to continue to develop, with greater density than was previously permitted.

Streets

The study area roadway network generally consists of a grid of wide north-south avenues and narrower east-west streets. The one notable exception is Park Avenue, which consists of a two-way viaduct running between East 40th and East 46th Streets (see **Photo 6-3**). This allows passenger vehicle through traffic to bypass intersections in the Grand Central area. The northbound Park Avenue Viaduct also provides vehicular access to the Hyatt Hotel on the second-floor level. The viaduct elevates above 42nd Street, supported by a broad archway composed of steel girders cantilevered from granite piers; ornate iron railings run along the roadway above the arches.

Madison Avenue and Lexington Avenue, as well as East 42nd Street, are important pedestrian corridors within the study area. Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street provide access to the subway and commuter rail station entrances from the Development Site and ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ **GCT**. Madison Avenue and Lexington Avenue carry two-way traffic. Most of the east-west streets carry local one-way traffic, with the exception of 42nd Street, which is two-way.

East Midtown pedestrian amenities include well-maintained sidewalks, walking signals, and crosswalks, which together facilitate the movement of a large volume of pedestrians (see **Photo 6-4**). In addition to these amenities, the study area also contains pedestrian plazas and curb bump outs/sidewalk extensions. Two pedestrian plazas are located between East 41st Street and East 42nd Street on either side of the Park Avenue Viaduct and do not permit vehicular traffic. The new Pershing Square Plaza on the west side of the viaduct provides some seating and vegetated planters (see **Photo 6-5**). The plaza on the east side does not provide public seating. As part of the Vanderbilt Corridor and One Vanderbilt project (detailed in the **Future Without the Proposed Actions** section below), Vanderbilt Avenue between East 42nd Street and East 43rd Street is currently under construction and will be a pedestrian plaza once completed. Several curb bump outs/sidewalk extensions have been installed along the East 43rd Shared Street, east of Lexington Avenue (see **Photo 6-6**),

providing a wider pedestrian right-of-way where pedestrian volumes are typically high and sidewalk widths are insufficient to accommodate the pedestrian demand.

Many of the avenues and cross streets within the study area are lined with restaurants and other retail uses, which add to the activity and vitality of the East Midtown central business district. Pershing Square, located directly south of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, includes a restaurant below the Park Avenue viaduct.

Examples of street furniture in the study area include decorative and standard street lighting, parking regulation signs, bus stop signs and shelters, fire hydrants, garbage cans, concrete and steel protective bollards, concrete planters, mailboxes, and newspaper boxes. Food carts are numerous along East 42nd Street and Madison Avenue. Greenery is extremely limited in the study area, with most blocks having no greenery apart from a few small street trees on certain sidewalks and street-light-affixed planters at certain locations. Most streets in the study area have parallel parked vehicles, including cars and trucks.

Buildings

Buildings in the study area are primarily commercial office towers, with ground floor retail uses along the avenues and many of the side streets, and some institutional and residential buildings as well. Commensurate with their location in the East Midtown central business district, buildings in the study area generally have large FARs, ranging from 10 to 29 FAR in the immediate vicinity of the Development Site, and many exceed 40 stories in height. The study area buildings are centered around the historic ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT building. The building was designed on an axis with Park Avenue; the clock and statue at the apex of the building terminate the avenue's northward vista, as viewed from points south of East 42nd Street. From these vantage points south of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, the 59-story concrete, steel, and glass MetLife Building directly north of the street-level ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT building rises above the historic train station (see **Photo 6-3**).

On the west side of the study area, Madison Avenue and Vanderbilt Avenue are lined primarily with a mix of mid- and high-rise office buildings, with ground floor retail primarily included along Madison Avenue. Building heights along these avenues within the study area range from 20 to 40 stories, and are generally built to the lot line, creating a uniform streetwall; several buildings provide multiple setbacks above the base height while others have a consistent massing with no setbacks (see **Photo 6-7** and **Photo 6-8**). One Vanderbilt, a 68-story glass building currently under construction between Vanderbilt and Madison Avenues along 42nd Street, is already a defining building within East Midtown. The building, which occupies the entire block, rises to 1,414 feet (1,514 feet to the top of the spire), with a tapered form almost from top to bottom and a glass facade.

On the east side of the study area, Lexington Avenue comprises a mix of mid- and high-rise commercial buildings, mostly with ground-floor retail and upper-level offices. The buildings along Lexington Avenue within the study area range in height from 18 to 68 stories and are built to the lot lines to create a continuous streetwall; many buildings in this area have setbacks above the building base (see **Photo 6-9**).

There are several prominent and iconic buildings along Lexington Avenue within the study area. The 56-story Chanin Building (374 Lexington Avenue) is a prominent and early example of a skyscraper with a solid base, setback massing, and a buttressed crown (see **Photo 6-10**).

The 77-story brick and Nirosta steel Chrysler Building (405 Lexington Avenue), whose iconic spire is a focal point of East Midtown, is located across Lexington Avenue from the Development Site (see **Photo 6-14**). South of the Chrysler Building stands the 42-story, stainless steel Socony-Mobil Building (150 East 42nd Street), which is flanked by 13-story wings (see **Photo 6-11**). Just north of the Development Site is the 30-story, art-deco, tan brick and limestone Graybar Building (420 Lexington Avenue) (see **Photo 6-12**).

Given the configuration of the blocks within the study area, with smaller blocks created from the interruption in the street grid by ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, many of the buildings within the study area are full-block buildings.

The cross streets within the study area have a similar character to that of the avenues, with generally uniform street walls and mid- to high-rise buildings framing views along the roadways (see **Photo 6-13**). The character of the most heavily trafficked cross street, East 42nd Street, is unique within the context of the study area as ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT and the Park Avenue viaduct archways contrast with the taller commercial buildings that surround them (see **Photo 6-14**).

There are two buildings within the study area that have a lower profile and fewer stories compared with the surrounding office towers, and serve institutional uses. Saint Agnes Catholic Church on East 43rd Street is a four-story baroque-revival building (see **Photo 6-15**), and the Yale Club of New York City is a 22-story Renaissance Revival building located at the northwest corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and East 44th Street.

No material or pattern of material is dominant in the study area (although several buildings, like the Art Deco Chrysler Building and Modernist Socony-Mobil Building, use stainless steel materials), and there is also wide variation in architectural styles. Throughout the study area, there is a mix of pre- and post-war buildings, as well as a wide variety of building materials, with many brick and stone exteriors intermixed with glass façades on neighboring buildings. A number of buildings have varied exteriors, with remnants of original classical ornaments contrasting with rooftop additions and modern storefronts. In addition, a number of buildings surrounding the Development Site, including the Chrysler Building, the Chanin Building, and the Socony-Mobil Building, have single-story articulations in the building design that orient buildings toward a pedestrian perspective.

Open Space and Natural Features

Open spaces within the study area are limited to Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and pedestrian plazas. See **Chapter 3, Open Space**, for a list of all open space amenities in the study area. Most notably, there is a POPS located on the north side of East 43rd Street associated with 425 Lexington Avenue that provides table seating and a seating ledge around vegetated planters. The three plazas listed above, on either side of the Park Avenue viaduct between East 41st and 42nd Street and adjacent to One Vanderbilt (currently under construction) also provide seating, planted areas, and protected walking areas for pedestrians in the study area (see **Photo 6-16**).

As mentioned above, greenery is extremely limited in the study area, with most blocks having no greenery apart from a few small street trees on certain sidewalks and street-light-affixed planters at certain locations.

Visual Resources

This section presents the visual resources assessment, which focuses on views of landmark structures and other distinct buildings within or viewable from the study area. Visual resources within the study area consist of older, historic buildings that are visually prominent. These resources are identified in **Table 6-1** and **Figure 6-2**. The list of visual resources is based on those identified as part of the 2017 Greater East Midtown Rezoning (see **Chapter 1, Project Description** for details on the context of the study area within the Greater East Midtown rezoning area). As shown, the location of the Development Site is unique in that it is located near nine visual resources.

Table 6-1 Study Area Visual Resources

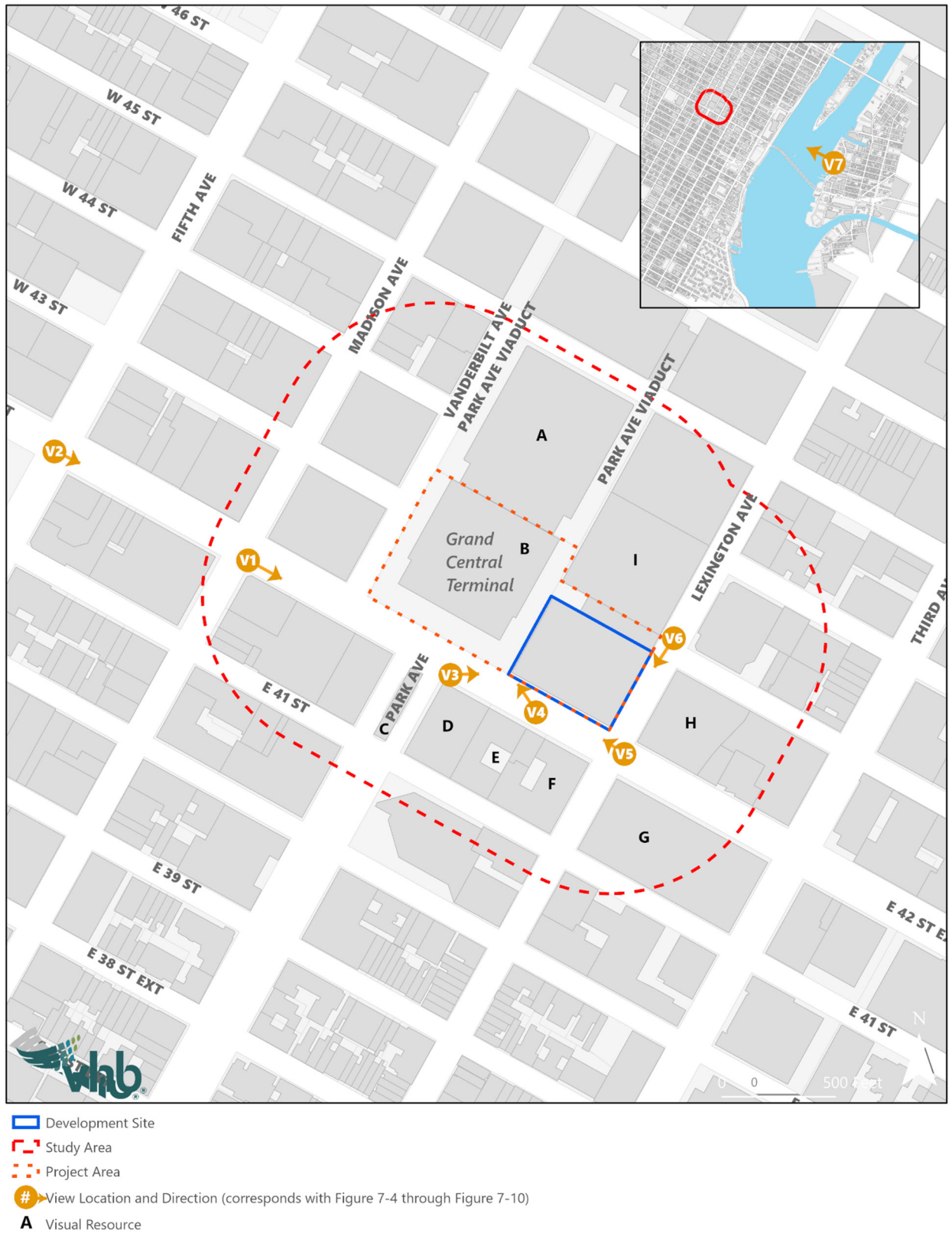
Figure 6-2 Reference	Visual Resource	Address
A	Pan/Am MetLife Building	200 Park Avenue
B	Grand Central Terminal	77 East 42nd Street
C	Park Avenue Viaduct	Park Avenue from East 40th Street to Grand Central Terminal
D	Pershing Square Building	125 Park Avenue
E	Bowery Savings Bank Building	120 East 42nd Street
F	Chanin Building	374 Lexington Avenue
G	Socony-Mobil Building	150 East 42nd Street
H	Chrysler Building	395 Lexington Avenue
I	Graybar Building	420 Lexington Avenue

Source: Greater East Midtown Rezoning Environmental Impact Statement, 2017

The East Midtown central business district is fully developed and characterized by buildings that, all together, represent greater height and bulk than is present in neighborhoods surrounding it. Given the critical mass of buildings that are constructed with such height and bulk, view corridors and existing views of the visual resources located within the study area are provided primarily along major avenues and streets. For many of the visual resources identified, the most representative views are typically limited to a distance of a few blocks and from sides of the street opposite the resource.

There are four visual resources identified within the study area located on the south side of 42nd Street near the Development Site that have limited visibility. The 25-story Pershing Square Building and the 18-story Bowery Savings Bank Building are located across East 42nd Street from Project Area. Views of these buildings are generally limited to vantage points along the adjacent roadways: Park Avenue, East 41st Street, and East 42nd Street (see **Photo 6-17**). The Chanin Building, located at the southwest corner of Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street, and the Socony-Mobil Building at the southeast corner, are visible from vantage points along these roadways. However, given these buildings' locations within the typical street grid, direct views become partially obstructed as a pedestrian moves further from the building (see **Photo 6-18**). The Graybar Building is primarily visible from Lexington Avenue and East 43rd Street (see **Photo 6-12**).

Figure 6-2 Study Area Visual Resources and Comparative Viewpoints Photo Key



Notable exceptions to the patterns described above within the study area are the Chrysler Building, the MetLife Building, ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, and the Park Avenue Viaduct. The Chrysler Building's iconic spire is visible and recognizable from further distances, given its respective height compared to the surrounding buildings. The addition of One Vanderbilt to the skyline has also changed some views of the Chrysler Building from points directly to the east. As shown in **Photo 6-19**, the Chrysler Building is visible from longer views along 42nd Street, though some of the building is obstructed by the One Vanderbilt building under construction and the existing Hyatt Hotel. Similar views from further east along East 42nd Street provide more direct views to this visual resource (see **Photo 6-14**). The MetLife Building is located immediately north of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT and is visible from vantage points along 42nd Street and from the south along Park Avenue (see **Photo 6-3**).

~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, though not as tall as surrounding buildings, is a recognizable element of key view corridors given its placement on a block that interrupts the street grid. Given the building's location at the southwest corner of this superblock, the southern and western facades of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT are generally visible from within the study area (see **Photo 6-2**). However, views of the eastern façade are obstructed from nearby vantage points by the existing Hyatt Hotel building. Views of the Park Avenue Viaduct are generally limited to vantage points within a few blocks of the structure because of its height compared with the tall buildings that surround it. However, the structure extends over 42nd Street, a major east-west corridor, and wraps around ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, and therefore is a visually prominent feature of the area. These visual resources contribute to the character and setting of the study area.

As detailed above, East Midtown and the study area contain buildings that generally have a greater height and bulk compared with the neighborhood buildings that surround it. As a result, the tallest buildings within East Midtown are visible from further distances beyond the study area. To demonstrate, **Photo 6-20** provides the existing viewpoint from Gantry Plaza State Park in Long Island City, Queens. As shown, prominent buildings within the study area from this vantage point include the Chrysler Building, the MetLife Building, and One Vanderbilt.

The Future Without the Proposed Actions (No-Action Condition)

Urban Design

Development Site and Project Area

Absent the Proposed Project, the existing Hyatt Hotel would be demolished and the Development Site would be developed with a 27-FAR as-of-right development of approximately 1,883,743 gsf (1,546,884 zsf), comprising approximately 1,682,336 gsf of commercial office space, approximately 18,300 gsf of local retail, an approximately 5,896-sf enclosed publicly accessible space on the ground floor, and 166,991 gsf of mechanical space. In addition, approximately 10,220 gsf of MTA circulation space would be provided on the ground floor. A ground floor plan and views of the illustrative massing of the No-Action condition are provided in **Chapter 1, Project Description**. The proposed publicly accessible open space would include landscaping and passive open space amenities.

The No-Action development would be 69 stories and approximately 1,118 feet tall. The building would be constructed to the lot line, with a base height up to five stories (150 feet) along East 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue. Above the base height, the building would provide a series of consistent setbacks to form a tiered structure. However, similar to existing conditions, the No-Action development would continue to obstruct views of ~~Grand Central Terminal's~~ GCT's east façade (see **Figure 6-7**). **Figure 6-3** provides a comparative section diagram of the illustrative No-Action and With-Action conditions. As shown, the No-Action development would be taller than the neighboring Chrysler Building and would be shorter than One Vanderbilt.

Retail would be provided on the ground floor of the No-Action development, along both East 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue, as well as along the interior 42nd Street passageway and Lexington passageways. The office lobby space would be accessed from two building entrances proposed at the corner of 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue. The enclosed open space would be accessed from 42nd Street.

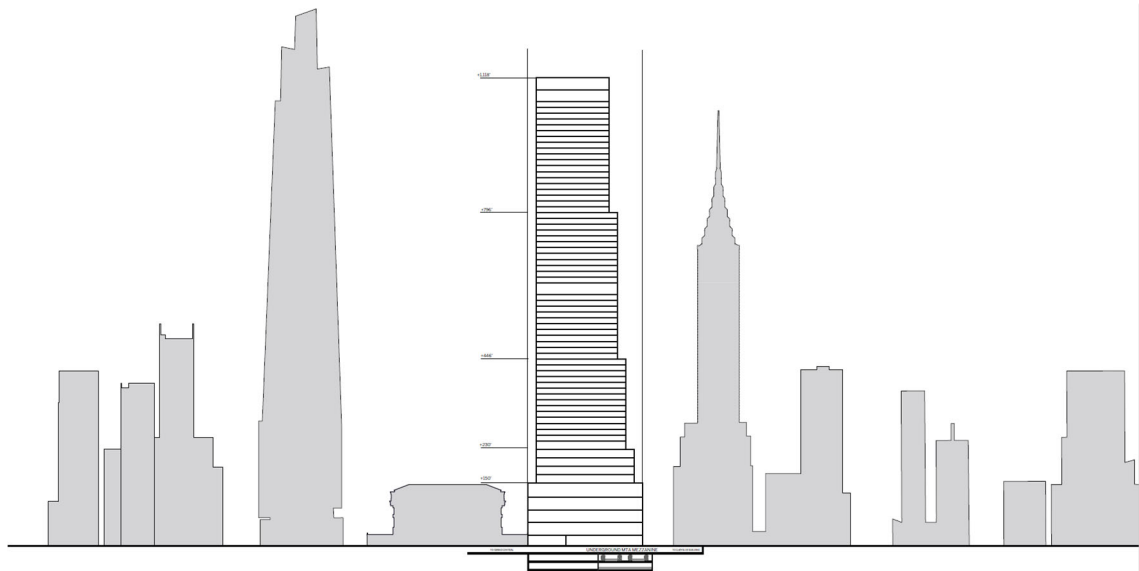
In the No-Action condition, the Applicant would provide transit improvements from the Priority Improvement List set forth in ZR Section 81-682 to improve circulation and reduce congestion. Specifically, at the 42nd Street - Bryant Park/Fifth Avenue station, the Applicant would provide the following improvements, which each generate 40,000 square feet of floor area for the Development Site (a combined total of 160,000 sf of floor area):

- › ADA elevator between the Flushing platform and mezzanine level;
- › A new street entrance from the north side of West 42nd Street;
- › ADA elevator between Sixth Avenue northbound platform and mezzanine level;
- › ADA elevator between Sixth Avenue southbound platform and mezzanine level.

Transit improvements on the Development Site would be limited to redevelopment of the subway access points from East 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue. The existing sidewalk widths along East 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue adjacent to the Development Site would be maintained.

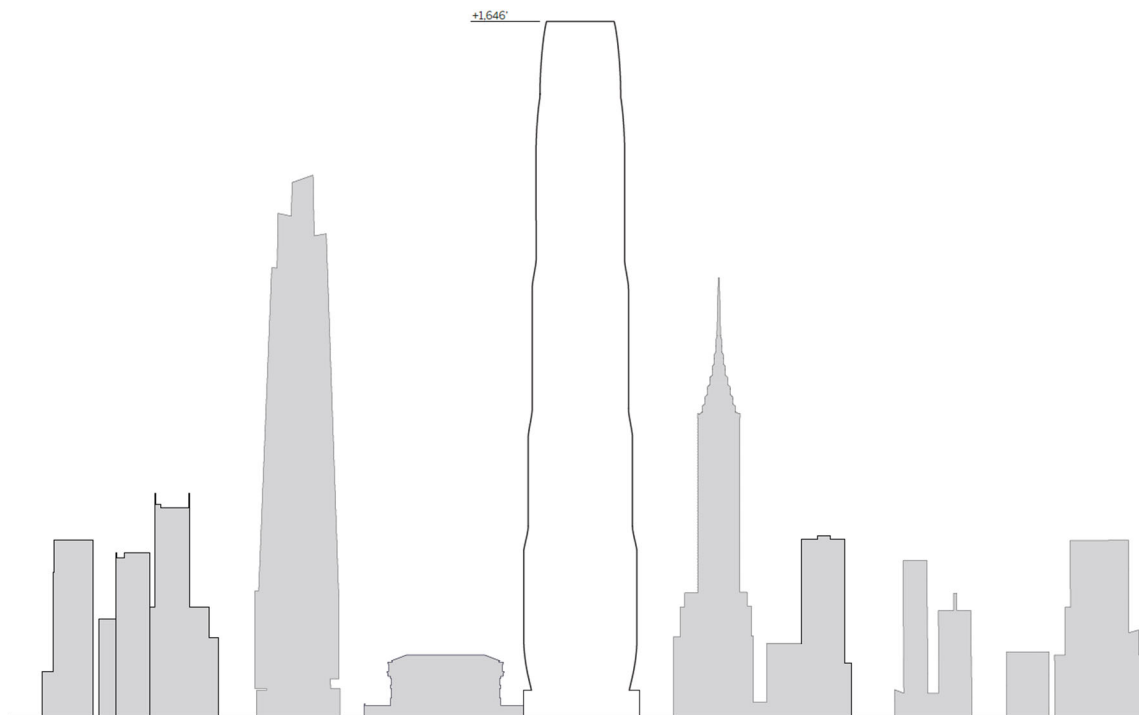
Figure 6-3 Comparative Section Diagrams

No-Action Section



For illustrative purposes only

With-Action Section



For illustrative purposes only; line shows maximum building envelope

Study Area

As detailed in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy** and shown in **Table 6-2** below, there are three development projects within the 400-foot study area that are anticipated to be completed by the analysis year. These development projects include One Vanderbilt, currently under construction; 343 Madison, also located within the Vanderbilt corridor; and, 363 Lexington Avenue, located at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and East 41st Street. These developments are all high-rise commercial buildings that would reinforce the prevailing building form characteristic of the East Midtown central business district. Each of these buildings would be set within the existing street grid, and therefore would preserve the existing street patterns in the study area. One exception is the construction of the Vanderbilt Avenue pedestrian plaza, which would be completed in the No-Action condition, and would close Vanderbilt Avenue between East 42nd Street and East 43rd Street to vehicular traffic, providing a new pedestrian amenity to the study area.

Enabled by the Vanderbilt Corridor rezoning in 2015 (N 150127 ZRM), under the future No-Action condition, One Vanderbilt would be the tallest building and one of the higher-density developments within the study area, at 1,414 feet tall and approximately 1.8 million gsf. One Vanderbilt and the other No-Action development projects are indicative of a larger development trend within the study area, and larger East Midtown neighborhood, toward greater height and density, facilitated by both the Vanderbilt Corridor and the Greater East Midtown Rezoning. Just beyond the study area to the north on Block 1283, Lot 21, stretching between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue from 47th Street to 48th Street, is the redevelopment of 270 Park Avenue. Anticipated to be built in 2024, the new building would contain approximately 2.4 million gsf of commercial office space (an addition of over one million gsf as compared to the previous office building on the site) for the world headquarters for JPMorgan Chase Bank. The planned building would rise to 1,425 feet.

As detailed in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**, the stated goals from the 2017 Greater East Midtown Rezoning were to enable the development of new, modern office buildings, to preserve and maintain landmarked buildings, to facilitate public realm improvements, and to maintain key physical characteristics of the area, including active retail corridors and the street wall character of the area around ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT. One Vanderbilt and the other No-Action projects continue this trend toward higher density in East Midtown and help to promote these goals.

Table 6-2 No-Action Projects Within 400-Foot Study Area

Site	Location	Description	Proposed Height	Building GSF
1	One Vanderbilt	Tall full-block commercial tower with a tapered form and ground floor retail	1,414 feet	1,800,000
2	343 Madison	Mixed-use building with commercial office and retail space	814 feet	939,412
3	363 Lexington Avenue	Mixed-use office and retail building	720 feet	607,661

Source: Greater East Midtown FEIS, One Vanderbilt FEIS

Visual Resources

Figure 6-4 through **Figure 6-10** show comparative illustrative views of the Development Site under the No-Action and With-Action conditions.² As detailed above, the No-Action development will be constructed to the lot line, within the context of the existing street grid.

Figure 6-4 Comparative View 1: Facing East along East 42nd Street from Madison Avenue

No-Action



For illustrative purposes only

With-Action



For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

² Note that this Urban Design and Visual Resources assessment considers the maximum building envelope in the comparative illustrative views and massing diagrams for conservative analysis purposes. The Proposed Project would be constructed within this maximum envelope, and therefore the figures presented represent the worst-case development scenario.

Figure 6-5 Comparative View 2: Facing East along East 42nd Street from Fifth Avenue

No-Action



For illustrative purposes only

With-Action



For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

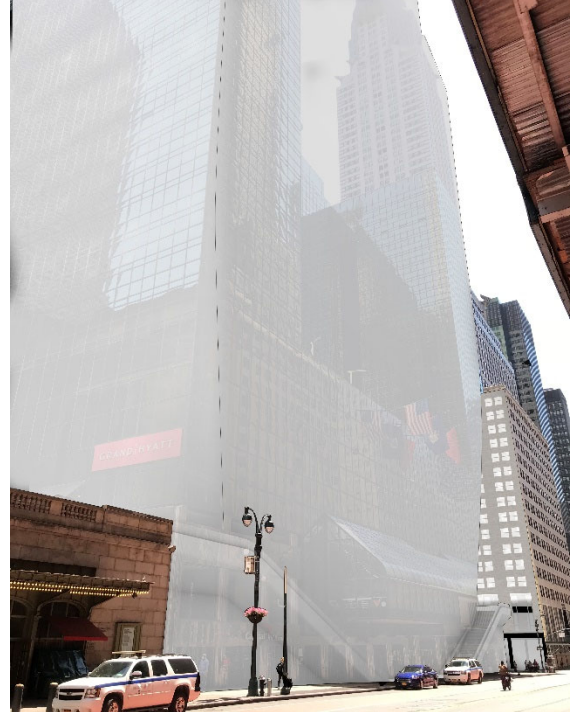
Figure 6-6 Comparative View 3: Facing East along East 42nd Street from south of Grand Central Terminal

No-Action



For illustrative purposes only

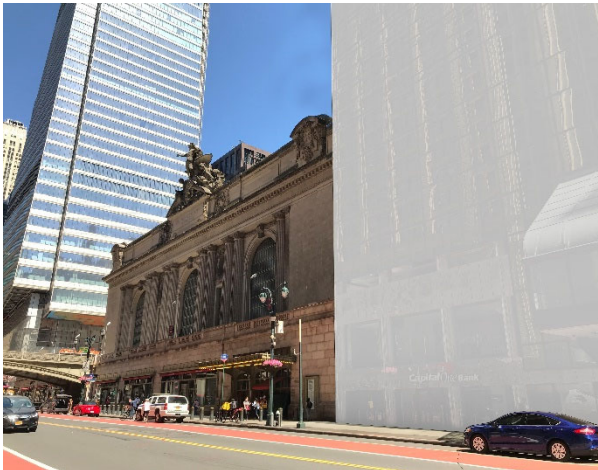
With-Action



For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

Figure 6-7 Comparative View 4: Facing Northwest along East 42nd Street from south of the Development Site

No-Action



For illustrative purposes only

With-Action



For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

Figure 6-8 Comparative View 5: Facing West along East 42nd Street from Lexington Avenue

No-Action



For illustrative purposes only

With-Action



For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

Figure 6-9 Comparative View 6: Facing South along Lexington Avenue from East 43rd Street Intersection

No-Action



For illustrative purposes only

With-Action



For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

Figure 6-10 Comparative View 7: Facing West from Gantry Plaza State Park, Long Island City**No-Action**

For illustrative purposes only

With-Action

For illustrative purposes only; view shows maximum building envelope

This would provide a consistent continuation of the existing street wall that characterizes the study area. As a result, views along the roadways within the study area would not be interrupted by the No-Action development.

Figure 6-4 and **Figure 6-5** provide illustrative views east along 42nd Street. As described above, under the “Existing Conditions” section, certain vantage points along this corridor provide views of the Chrysler building, an important visual resource in the study area. As shown in **Figure 6-4** and **Figure 6-5**, the No-Action development would partially obstruct these existing views. This change from existing conditions would be most pronounced from a pedestrian’s perspective in the area immediately west of the Development Site. As shown

in **Figure 6-5**, from vantage points further west of Madison Avenue, the One Vanderbilt building already partially obstructs this view. As a pedestrian walks east along 42nd Street from Madison Avenue toward the Development Site, views of the Chrysler Building would be more limited as a result of the No-Action development.

As shown in **Figure 6-6** and **Figure 6-7**, the No-Action development would be constructed to the lot line and would thus stand further south than the southern façade of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, aligned with the Terminal's one-story podium on East 42nd Street. Views facing east from East 42nd Street adjacent to ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT indicate how the No-Action development would present a continuation of the consistent street wall (with the exception of the disruption of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT), with a setback above the base of the building, similar to the building form of the Chrysler Building. Views of the eastern façade of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT would remain blocked from view from the perspective of a pedestrian facing west along East 42nd Street (see **Figure 6-7**).

Along Lexington Avenue, the No-Action development would also provide a continuation of the consistent streetwall pattern described under the "Existing Conditions" section above. As shown in **Figure 6-9**, the No-Action development would reinforce that development pattern, mirroring the streetwall of the Chrysler Building across the street, and preserving existing views down the avenue. Typical of this mid- to high-rise central business district, the No-Action development would partially obstruct views of the visual resources to the south of it from further north, including the Chanin Building, as the existing Hyatt Hotel does currently.

Views from further distances show how the No-Action development would be set within the existing skyline of East Midtown and the study area. **Figure 6-10** shows a representative view from Gantry Plaza State Park. As shown in this figure, from viewpoints facing west, the No-Action development would be located behind the Chrysler Building and would be taller than the Chrysler Building spire. The No-Action development would be shorter than the tallest building within the study area, One Vanderbilt, but would still be amongst the tallest of the buildings within the study area from this vantage point.

The Future With the Proposed Actions (With-Action Condition)

In the With-Action condition, the Applicant proposes to redevelop the Development Site with approximately 2,992,161 gsf of mixed-use development, including a hotel, commercial office, and public space. The Development Site would contain approximately 2,108,820 gsf of office space³; an approximately 452,950-gsf, 500-room hotel; approximately 25,421 sf of open-air publicly accessible space; and approximately 43,370 gsf of retail on the cellar, ground, and second floors (see **Figure 1-3** in **Chapter 1, Project Description** for the illustrative ground floor and second floor plans). It would also contain approximately 16,245 gsf of space for improved transit circulation.

Figure 6-11 provides an elevation of the Proposed Project along 42nd Street in the context of its surrounding buildings, and **Figure 6-12** provides illustrative renderings of the proposed publicly accessible open spaces. **Figure 6-3** through **Figure 6-10** and **Figure 6-13**

³ Development may also occur under an All Office Scenario. Under this scenario, the overall building square footage and building massing would be the same as under the Proposed Project but would be comprised of approximately 2,561,770 gsf of office space, retail, and no hotel.

show comparative sections, elevations, and perspective views of the Development Site in the No-Action and With-Action conditions.

Urban Design: Streets, Buildings, Open Space, and Natural Features

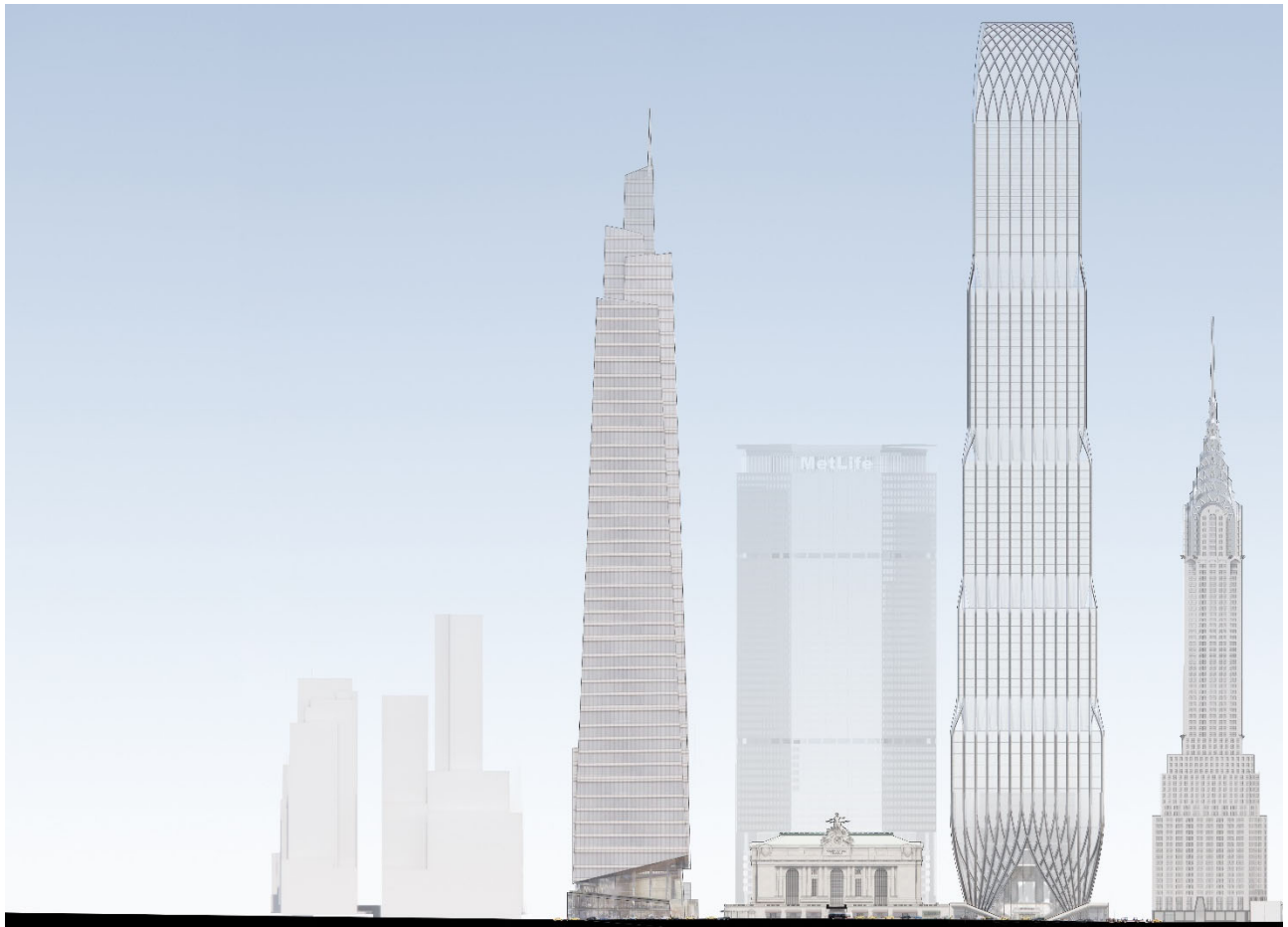
Development Site and Project Area

The Proposed Project would be a high-rise tower, consistent with the typical built form in the study area. The building would be approximately 1,646 feet tall and would be set back slightly from both the Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street lot line to allow for improved pedestrian circulation and visibility to surrounding visual resources. Although the building design has not yet been finalized, it is anticipated that the building would feature expressed structural columns on the outside of the balcony that form a sculptural "lattice," instead of an all-glass tower. Along 42nd street, that lattice would gather in at the two corners of the building and meet the ground in large stone piers, allowing the structure to avoid subway and train tunnels below. The structural lattice would be clad in metal to honor the façade of the Socony-Mobil Building and the Chrysler Building's steel accents. Two grand staircases would extend from the center of the building along East 42nd Street, with a third staircase along Lexington Avenue, drawing pedestrians up to three second-floor terraces flanking the building's eastern, northern, and western sides (described below).

The design of the proposed building would require relief from zoning regulations regarding streetwall location and would require waivers for encroachments beyond the setback lines. As detailed in the analysis below, these requested actions would help to facilitate the design of a building that is appropriate for its context and would enhance the visual conditions on the Development Site, permitting views of adjacent visual resources and improving the public realm pedestrian experience.

The Proposed Project building has been designed with urban design elements that reflect its location amidst a group of iconic buildings in the study area and larger East Midtown skyline. The intricate crown of the building appropriately addresses the Proposed Project's prominence within the skyline and complements the crown on the neighboring Chanin Building across the street to the south. The massing of the building would step back in a tiered fashion to honor the historic building form of the Manhattan skyscraper. As shown in **Figure 6-11**, the height of the proposed building setbacks were designed to align with important visual features of the Chrysler Building. The façade would feature expressed structural members that create strong vertical and diagonal patterns as they rise and gather, making the design of the building reminiscent of the Chrysler Building's strong vertical and diagonal patterning.

Figure 6-11 East 42nd Street Elevation of the Proposed Project



For illustrative purposes only

In addition, the design of the Proposed Project integrates visually with ~~Grand Central Terminal GCT~~. The proposed building incorporates a one-story base that aligns with the Terminal's base. This platform would visually extend the level of the Park Avenue Viaduct onto the Development Site, extending its datum to the corner of 42nd street and Lexington Avenue. At the center of the Development, two grand staircases would rise along 42nd street towards the east and west, meeting the level of the viaduct.

The ground floor of the Proposed Project would provide a streetfront appropriate for a highly trafficked location within East Midtown. Specifically, the ground floor would include the hotel and office lobbies, a reconstructed Lexington Passage with upgraded retail along the passage, access to the elevated publicly accessible open spaces (detailed below), a new subway entrance, as well as access to an approximately 5,300-sf transit hall that would contain retail, information screens and booths, and connections to ~~Grand Central Terminal GCT~~.

LPC reviewed the design of the Proposed Project and in an advisory letter issued on March 19, 2021 (LPC-21-05602), confirmed that the proposed design would have a "harmonious relationship" with ~~Grand Central Terminal GCT~~ and would enhance public views of and access to the terminal from the east. Concurrently, LPC issued an Advisory Report dated March 19, 2021 stating that the proposed exterior and interior alterations to ~~Grand Central Terminal GCT~~ incorporated into the Proposed Actions will not eliminate, damage, or detract from any significant historic, architectural, or design features of the building. Based on these findings, the Advisory Report confirmed the proposed work to be appropriate. See additional details in **Chapter 5, Historic and Cultural Resources**.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate significant improvements in the pedestrian experience within and around the Development Site, in the form of improved publicly accessible open spaces as well as transit circulation improvements, as outlined below and discussed in detail in **Chapter 9, Transportation**. The new open space would be located on the second floor of the Proposed Project and would include an open air space that wraps around the eastern, northern, and western facades with three terraces that run the length of the Development Site from north to south and east to west. The open space would be elevated at a height of approximately 30 to 45 feet above street level. Illustrative renderings of the terraces are provided in **Figure 6-12**.

As shown, the "Chrysler Terrace" would provide an overlook onto Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street, and a unique vantage point for viewing the Chrysler Building and other surrounding visual resources. It would be reachable by the two proposed staircases along East 42nd Street, by a staircase along Lexington Avenue, and by elevator. The Chrysler Terrace would feature trees, plantings, and multiple seating options.

The "Grand Central Terrace" on the west side of the Proposed Project would provide new visibility for the currently obstructed eastern façade of ~~Grand Central Terminal GCT~~. It would be accessed by the proposed staircases along East 42nd Street, as well as by elevator. As shown in **Figure 6-12**, the terrace would be improved with trees, planting, seating, and skylights that would bring light to the transit hall to be situated below. In addition, there would be a sidewalk expansion along the Grand Central Terrace adjacent to the Park Avenue Viaduct measuring 142 feet long by 8.5 feet wide. Together, the Grand Central Terrace and

the staircases along East 42nd Street would also provide views to other historic buildings to the south including the Bowery Savings Bank Building and Pershing Square Building.

The "Graybar Terrace" on the north side of the Proposed Project would provide a critical connection between the Grand Central Terrace and Chrysler Terrace. This terrace would feature retail use, fixed and movable seating, and flexible use space, and would be accessed by stairs and the ADA elevators along each of the Grand Central and Chrysler Terraces.

Together, these three terraces would provide approximately 19,525 sf of additional open space amenity on the Development Site compared with the No-Action development.

In addition to the open spaces and the transit hall described above, the Proposed Project would provide the following transit and transit-related and public realm improvements to improve the pedestrian experience and reduce congestion at ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT and the Grand Central 42nd Street subway station:

- › The subway entrance at East 42nd Street would be redesigned and expanded. A new designated subway entrance would be constructed to help ease crowding and backups at the entrances.
- › Improvements to the subway entrance on Lexington Avenue and below-grade mezzanine would be constructed to bring light and air into the subway mezzanine and provide a larger, covered at-grade subway entrance.
- › The proposed building would be set back from Lexington Avenue to allow for increased sidewalk widths of five feet and enhanced views to adjacent landmarks.
- › The Lexington Passage entrance would be redesigned to make it legible and inviting to pedestrians; the Passage would be refinished, and its ceiling height would be increased to improve the pedestrian experience.
- › Girders would be removed from the subway mezzanine level to improve circulation and enhance sightlines.
- › A "Short Loop Connection" would be constructed to provide direct access through Grand Central from the lower-level Metro North trains and East Side Access to the Subway mezzanine level.

Under both the No-Action and With-Action conditions, the Development Site would be redeveloped as a high-rise mixed-use building typical of East Midtown and facilitated by the recent Greater East Midtown Rezoning. As detailed above, to achieve its stated goals, the Greater East Midtown Rezoning set in place various zoning mechanisms to permit greater density. The Proposed Project would utilize a modified version of this zoning framework appropriate to its unique location in order to facilitate the type of building that was envisioned as part of the rezoning effort. The With-Action development would increase height on the Development Site relative to the No-Action condition by an increment of up to 528 feet. The Proposed Actions would also facilitate many on-site benefits and improvements to the building design particularly at the base level that would improve visual conditions on the Development Site. Furthermore, the five-foot sidewalk widening along Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street, along with the other transportation upgrades detailed above, would improve pedestrian circulation at the Development Site and within the Project Area as compared to the No-Action condition. Similar to the existing conditions and under the No-Action condition, security bollards would be placed along the outer edge of the

sidewalk surrounding the Development Site, for the No-Action condition. Although the bollard design has not yet been developed, they are typically approximately one foot in diameter and would be placed approximately five or six feet apart, avoiding any material impediment to pedestrian circulation.

As detailed above, the Proposed Project is anticipated to have beneficial effects on the streetscape and pedestrian circulation within the study area. Compared with the No-Action condition, the proposed building setbacks from the lot line under the With-Action condition would widen the sidewalks and help to alleviate pedestrian congestion. The additional gross square footage of retail uses would support and enliven the improved circulation corridor through the Development Site and on the street.

Buildings

Views representative of the Proposed Project from the surrounding streets within the study area are provided in **Figure 6-4** to **Figure 6-10**. These representative views demonstrate that from mid-range views within a few blocks, the Proposed Building would fit within the context of the densely developed street grid of East Midtown Manhattan. Though the design of the Proposed Building would gently taper in at the base, from these mid-range views, the building maintains the consistency of the strong and consistent streetwall characteristic of the area.

As shown in **Figure 6-6** through **Figure 6-9**, when viewed from close range, the features of the proposed building designed to fit in with the surrounding building context are more visible. These features include the East 42nd Street grand staircases that rise to meet the height of the Grand Central Station podium, as well as the gentle tapering of the building's base that is set back to reveal sightlines of the adjacent buildings as pedestrians move around the Development Site.

Figure 6-11 provides an illustrative view of the Proposed Project elevations along East 42nd Street. The Proposed Project would be the tallest building within the study area; it would be up to 232 feet taller than One Vanderbilt. However, the elements of the Proposed Project described above are designed to ensure the building acknowledges the context of surrounding buildings in various ways, and thus would not adversely affect the built environment's arrangement, appearance, or functionality.

The Proposed Project building form tapers inward along the western, southern and eastern facades to allow pedestrian views to adjacent visual resources. In addition, as detailed above, building materials would replicate those of iconic buildings around the Development Site, including the steel used in the facades of the Chrysler Building and Socony-Mobil Building.

The massing and form of the building would further integrate the building with its surroundings. The Proposed Project's setbacks match key horizontal features of the Chrysler Building and ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT, and the structural columns of the proposed façade mimic the verticality of the southern façade of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~GCT and of the façade of the Chrysler Building. Overall, though taller, the building would be one of many tall office buildings in a densely developed commercial district that contains skyscrapers and other historic buildings, and within this context, the proposed building features would ensure that the building is cohesive with rather than adversely affects those surrounding buildings.

Figure 6-12 Illustrative Renderings of the Development Site Open Spaces

The “Grand Central Terrace”



Illustrative view facing north from the proposed Grand Central Terrace

The “Chrysler Terrace”



Illustrative view facing south along Lexington Avenue from the proposed Chrysler Terrace

Figure 6-12 Illustrative Renderings of the Development Site Open Spaces
The “Graybar Terrace”

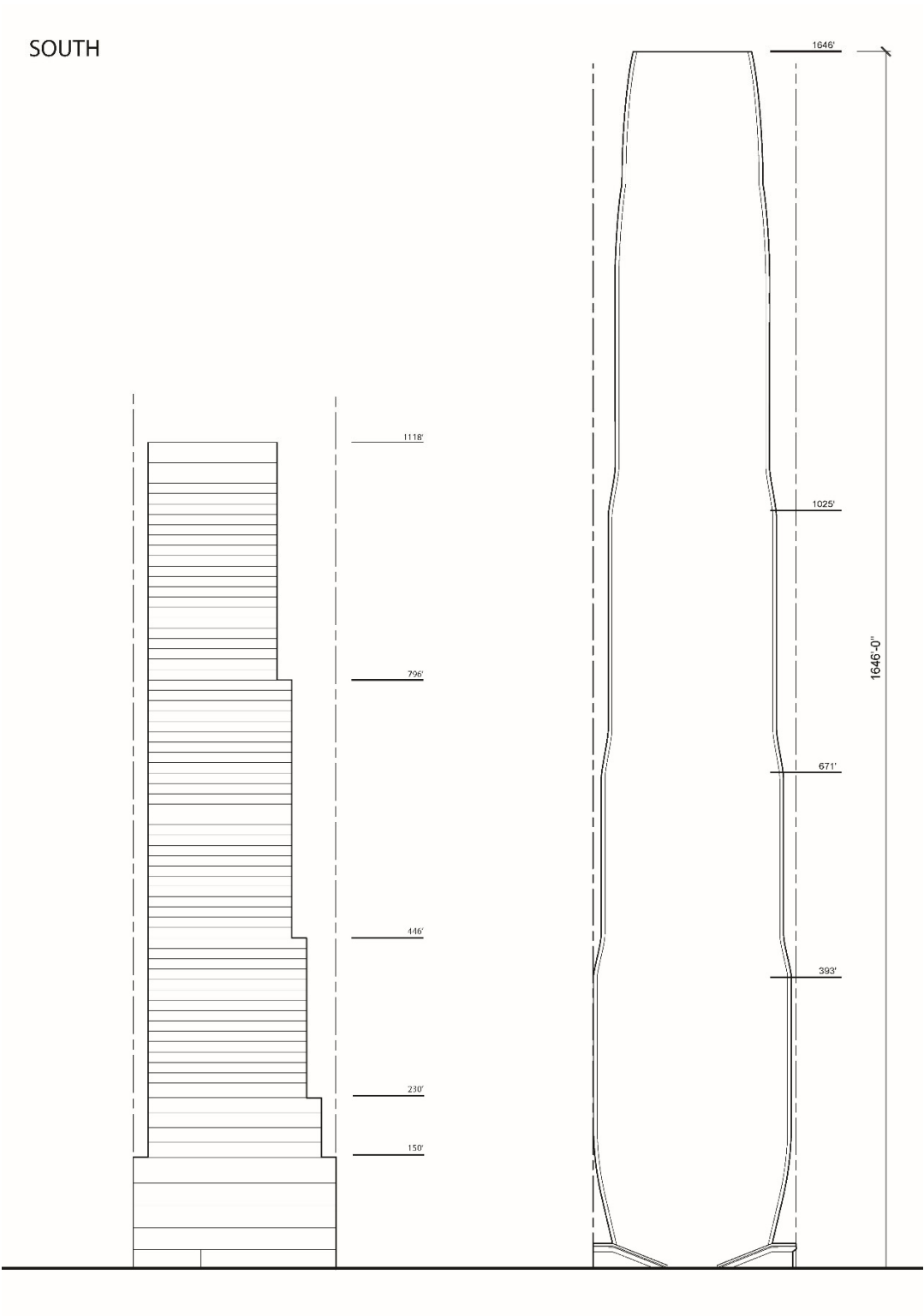


Illustrative view facing west along the proposed Graybar Terrace

Figure 6-13 Comparative Building Elevations – South Facade

Illustrative No-Action Elevation

Illustrative With-Action Elevation



Study Area

Streets

Open Space and Natural Features

As detailed above, the Proposed Project would provide approximately 25,421 sf of new open space amenities within the study area, tying into a network of pedestrian plazas and open spaces that has been expanding with the opening of the Pershing Square pedestrian plaza and the One Vanderbilt pedestrian plaza currently under construction. These pedestrian terraces would be elevated from the sidewalks of East Midtown, and would be landscaped with trees and other vegetation, offering a separate and safe passive open space away from the busy surroundings. Further, the western terrace would offer a new vantage point for viewing Grand Central, bringing visitors close to the eastern façade of the Terminal, an area that has been largely obstructed from view by the existing Hyatt Hotel. In addition, the Proposed Project provides a significant new viewpoint from which to enjoy the Chrysler Building and the Graybar Building on the second-floor outdoor terraces proposed along Lexington Avenue and the north side of the Proposed Project.

Visual Resources

As indicated above, the design of the Proposed Project respects its location amidst a group of historically and visually significant buildings that surround it by increasing visibility, improving the pedestrian experience, and promoting sightlines to these resources.

The Proposed Project building form tapers inward along the western, southern and eastern facades, in order to provide increased visibility to surrounding landmarks, and to create improved public and green spaces at the base. As shown in **Figure 6-10**, the tapered shape of the base, which is set back from the lot lines, would allow a new sightline to the eastern façade of ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT. As detailed previously, this façade is currently obstructed from view by the existing Hyatt Hotel building, as the existing building rises directly from the property line with no setback. The existing Hyatt Hotel is cantilevered over the 42nd street sidewalk, further obscuring views of Grand Central This represents a significant improvement over the No-Action development, which would maintain the obstruction from that viewpoint. This proposed building form would benefit not only ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT, but other surrounding visual resources as well, including improving visibility of the Graybar Building's distinctive Art deco/Neo-byzantine façade from the south as well as the intricate detailing of the Chanin Building's façade from the north (see **Figure 6-9**).

In addition, the proposed design of the building's base would allow for the creation of the three second-floor terraces detailed above. As detailed, many of the important visual resources surrounding the Development Site are only visible to pedestrians from the immediate adjacent roadways. The proposed terraces create a protected space away from the busy East Midtown sidewalks from which pedestrians can view and appreciate surrounding visual resources, including ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT, the Graybar Building, and the Chrysler Building, as well as the midblock Bowery Savings Bank Building and Pershing Square Building.

As shown in **Figure 6-7** and **Figure 6-8**, existing views of the top portion of the Chrysler Building along 42nd Street from east of Madison Avenue would be obstructed by the Proposed Project. However, as shown and described above, these views would be partially obstructed in the No-Action condition, and therefore the view that remains in the No-Action condition would not be a significant view of the Chrysler Building. Consequently, the view corridor would not be significantly altered by the Proposed Actions, but rather would incorporate a tall building along a corridor that includes several other high-rise buildings. The Chrysler Building would still be visible from vantage points closer to Lexington Avenue, as well as from other vantage points within the study area along Lexington Avenue and further east along East 42nd Street as well as East 43rd Street. These views are direct and high quality by comparison, as they would not be partially obstructed in the No-Action condition. In addition, as described above, the Proposed Project provides a significant new viewpoint from which to enjoy the Chrysler Building in the form of second floor outdoor terraces. This represents an improvement over the No-Action condition.

Figure 6-10 presents a viewpoint from Gantry Plaza State Park, as a representative of other long-range views of the East Midtown skyline. As shown from this perspective, the Proposed Project would be highly visible, including as compared to the No-Action development. The Proposed Project would sit directly behind the Chrysler Building from this vantage point, and therefore would not block direct views to that building, nor would it block views to the other visual resources within the study area, including the MetLife Building.

Overall, though taller than buildings in its immediate surrounding context, the Proposed Project would sit within the context of other tall towers of the Manhattan Skyline, including One Vanderbilt and the MetLife Building. Terminal City, as the area around ~~Grand Central Terminal~~ GCT has been called, was historically a catalyst of urban density and the Proposed Project extends a tradition of towers that defined the district, including many of the surrounding visual resources. Moreover, the goal of the Greater East Midtown Rezoning is to continue this tradition and facilitate new, high-quality commercial towers. As a result, the Proposed Project will be constructed alongside a newly revitalized East Midtown skyline, including towers such as One Vanderbilt. Therefore, effects of the Proposed Project are anticipated to be similar to those of other newly constructed tall towers in the context of a densely development and continuously evolving skyline.

Based on the analysis provided above, the Proposed Actions are not anticipated to have significant adverse impacts to visual resources within the study area.