

Stevenson Commons EIS

Chapter 7: Historic and Cultural Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

Historic and cultural resources include both architectural and archaeological resources. The 2020 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* identifies historic and cultural resources as districts, buildings, structures, sites, and objects of historical, aesthetic, cultural, and archaeological importance. This includes designated New York City Landmarks (NYCL); properties calendared for consideration as landmarks by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC); properties listed in the State/National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) or contained within a district listed in or formally determined eligible for S/NR listing; properties recommended by the New York State Board for listing on the S/NR; National Historic Landmarks (NHL); and properties not identified by one of the programs listed above, but that meet their eligibility requirements. An assessment of historic/archaeological resources is usually needed for projects that are located adjacent to historic or landmark structures or within historic districts, or projects that require in-ground disturbance, unless such disturbance occurs in an area that has already been excavated.

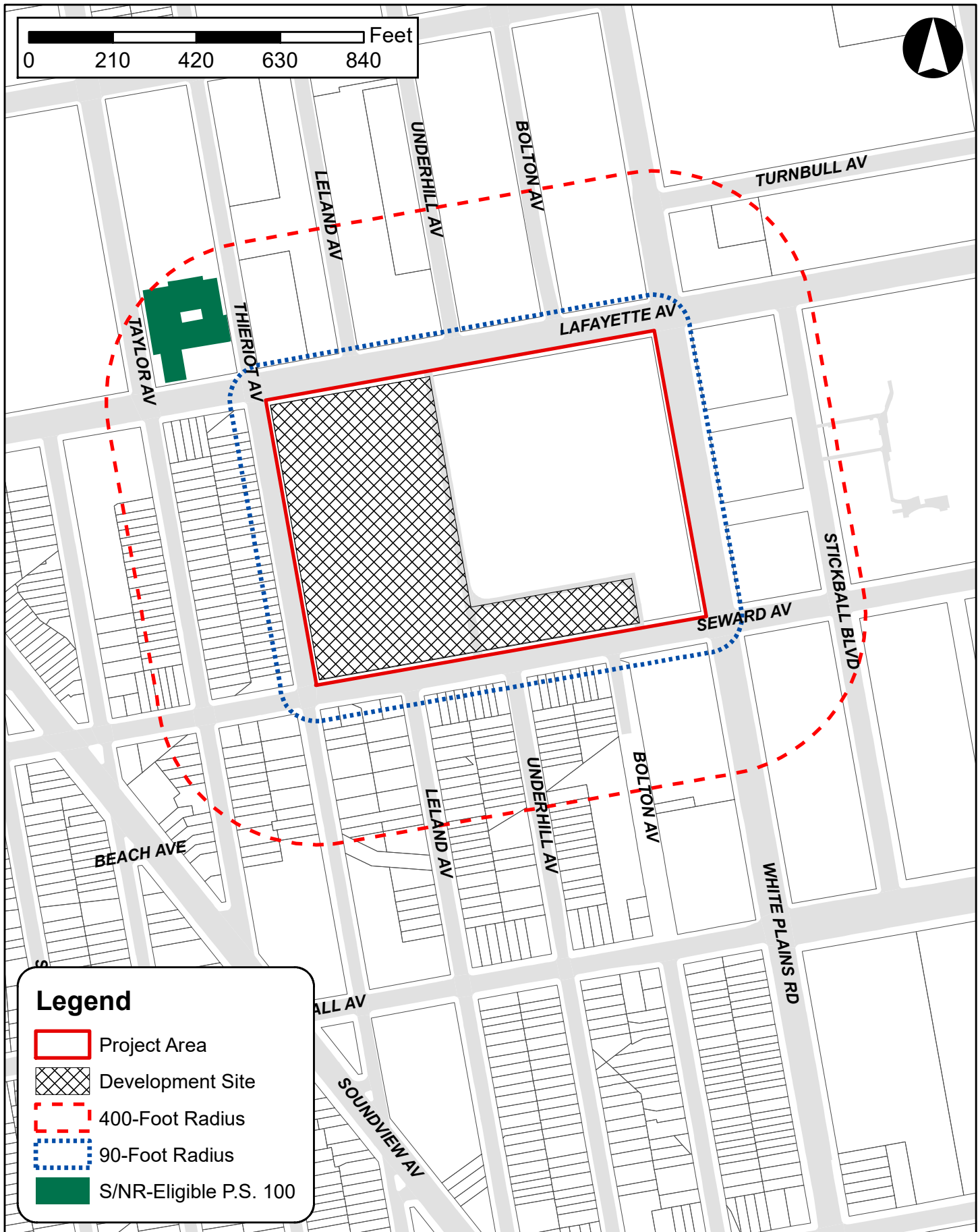
As the Project Area is located in close proximity to ~~P.S.~~PS 100, a S/NR-eligible historic resource, it is necessary to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Actions on historic architectural resources. According to *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance, impacts on historic architectural resources are considered on those sites affected by a proposed action and in the area surrounding the project area. The historic resources study area is therefore defined as the Project Area (Bronx Block 3600, Lots 4, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, and 50) plus an approximate 400-foot radius (refer to Figure 7-1), which is typically adequate for the assessment of historic architectural resources, in terms of physical, visual, and historical relationships.

Archaeological resources are considered only in those areas where new excavation or ground disturbance is likely and would result in new in-ground disturbance compared to No-Action conditions (i.e., the Project Area). As determined by the LPC in a letter dated November 15, 2019 and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in a letter dated December 23, 2019 (provided in Appendix B), the Project Area does not have archaeological significance. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse archaeological impacts and an archaeological analysis is not warranted. As such, this chapter focuses exclusively on historic architectural resources.

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

Direct (Physical) Impacts

The Proposed Actions are site-specific, and the Project Area does not contain any designated or eligible historic resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any direct impacts to historic architectural resources.



Indirect (Contextual) Impacts

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse indirect impacts on historic architectural resources. The Proposed Actions would not adversely alter the context or setting of the nearby S/NR-eligible P-S-PS 100 so as to affect those characteristics that make the building eligible for listing on the S/NR. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of six buildings in the Project Area, ranging in height from four to 14 stories. The Proposed Project would be visible when looking west at P-S-PS 100 from Taylor Avenue; however, this change in setting would not be adverse. The study area is a dense urban environment with multiple existing mid-rise and high-rise buildings that currently form the backdrop for P-S-PS 100. As detailed below, the school was built to accommodate the rapidly growing population of Soundview as a result of the newly constructed urban renewal housing of the mid-20th century, including the eight- to 15-story Monroe Houses immediately west of the S/NR-eligible historic resource and the 16-story Carol Gardens Apartments immediately east (as shown in Figure 7-2). As such, the mid- and high-rise buildings that would be constructed in the Project Area as a result of the Proposed Actions would not be out of context in the backdrop of P-S-PS 100, and would not adversely alter the visual setting of the school.

Additionally, in the future with the Proposed Actions, no incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements would be introduced to any historic resource's setting. The Proposed Project would not alter the relationship of P-S-PS 100 to the streetscape, as all streets in the study area would remain open and the S/NR-eligible historic resource's relationships to adjacent streets would remain unchanged in the future with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Project would not eliminate or screen public views of P-S-PS 100, which would remain visible in view corridors on adjacent public streets and sidewalks. No primary facades, significant architectural ornamentation, or notable features of the S/NR-eligible school would be obstructed by the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Actions would not result in development that would diminish the qualities that make the S/NR-eligible P-S-PS 100 historically and architecturally significant. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse indirect or contextual impacts on historic architectural resources.

Construction-Related Impacts

As there are no historic architectural resources located within 90 feet of the Project Area, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse construction-related impacts to historic resources.

Shadows Impacts

As detailed in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would not generate incremental shadows on sunlight-sensitive features of surrounding historic resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse shadows impacts on historic resources.



1. Southern facade of the S/NR-eligible P.S. 100 from Lafayette Avenue, with the Monroe Houses in the background.

2. Eastern facade of the S/NR-eligible P.S. 100 along Thieriot Avenue.



3. Western and northern facades of the S/NR-eligible P.S. 100 from Taylor Avenue, with the Carol Gardens Apartments in the background.

C. DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND¹

Prior to the arrival of the European colonists in the 17th century, the Bronx was inhabited by Siwanoy Native Americans, a subgroup of the Leni Lenape tribe. From European settlement of the borough until the early 20th century, Soundview was predominately undeveloped farmland. In 1920, the Lexington Avenue subway was completed along Westchester Avenue (north of the Project Area), connecting the area to Manhattan and spurring the development of one- and two-family homes.

After World War II, high-rise multi-family buildings for low- and middle-income households were constructed in Soundview, including the 13 buildings of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Soundview Houses, which were completed in 1954 to the southwest of the Project Area, and the 12-building Monroe Houses, completed in 1961 to the northwest of the Project Area. Commercial and institutional buildings were subsequently constructed to accommodate the rapidly growing population of the area, including P.S. PS 100 at 880 Lafayette Avenue (built 1960), L.S. IS 31 at 880 Story Avenue (built 1965), and the Shops at Bruckner at 1906 Story Avenue (built 1966), all immediately north and northeast of the Project Area.

In the 1960s, the Bruckner Expressway was constructed over the roadway of the Bruckner Boulevard (north of the Project Area), spurring further development in the neighborhood. The Carol Gardens Apartments at 820 and 880 Thieriot Avenue were built in 1968, and the nine buildings of Stevenson Commons in the Project Area were completed in the mid-1970s; both developments were constructed under the Mitchell-Lama housing program. Immediately east and southeast of the Project Area, P.S. PS 182 was constructed at 601 Stickball Boulevard in 1974 and a U.S. Post Office was completed at 1950 Lafayette Avenue in 1976.

The neighborhood surrounding the Project Area has undergone little new development since the mid-20th century, and remains much as it did in the late-1970s.

D. ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

Criteria and Regulations

Once the study area was determined, an inventory of officially recognized architectural resources was compiled. Criteria for listing on the National Register are in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 63. As recommended in the 2020 *CEQR Technical Manual*, Chapter 9, Section 160, NYCLPC has adopted these criteria for use in identifying National Register listed and eligible architectural resources for CEQR review. Following these criteria, districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects are eligible for the National Register if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and: (1) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history (Criterion A); (2) are associated with significant people (Criterion B); (3) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components

¹ Based on Jackson, Kenneth T. (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (2010); Sanborn Maps, Sheets 49-52 (1898 Volume B; 1908 Volume A; 1928 Volume 17); NYS OPRHP's *Resource Evaluation – P.S. 100* (May 2018); MyNYCHA Developments, <https://my.nycha.info/DevPortal/> (accessed April 2020); and OASIS NYC Map, <http://www.oasisnyc.net/map.aspx> (accessed April 2020).

may lack individual distinction (Criterion C); or (4) may yield [archaeological] information important in prehistory or history. Properties younger than 50 years of age are ordinarily not eligible, unless they have achieved exceptional significance. Official determinations of eligibility are made by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

In addition, LPC designates historically significant properties in the City as NYCLs and/or Historic Districts, following the criteria provided in the Local Laws of the City of New York, NYC Charter, Administrative Code, Title 25, Chapter 3. Buildings, properties, or objects are eligible for landmark status when a part is at least 30 years old. Landmarks have a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation. There are four types of landmarks: individual landmark, interior landmark, scenic landmark, and historic district.

Existing Conditions

PROJECT AREA

In a letter dated November 15, 2019 (provided in Appendix B), LPC determined that there are no designated or eligible historic architectural resources in the Project Area. SHPO concurred with these findings in a letter dated December 23, 2019 (also provided in Appendix B).

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

As shown in Figure 7-1, there is one historic architectural resource located within the 400-foot study area surrounding the Project Area: ~~P-S-PS~~ 100, which is eligible for listing on the S/NR. A brief description of this resource is presented below, photos of which are provided in Figure 7-2.

Public School (~~P-S-PS~~) 100 Isaac Clason School (S/NR-Eligible): 800 Taylor Avenue (Block 3641, Lot 1)

Constructed in 1958-60, ~~P-S-PS~~ 100 Isaac Clason School is an intact example of a Modern-style school built to accommodate the new populations of New York City's mid-20th century urban renewal housing developments. The school was designed by Michael L. Radoslovich, the City's Superintendent of School Buildings from 1952-69 and architect of the East River Drive. Radoslovich sought to reinvent the public school building by using Modernist design principles, with open and flexible classroom spaces filled with natural lighting. ~~P-S-PS~~ 100 consists of three sections: a four-story center with single-story wings to the north and south. As shown in Figure 7-2, ~~P-S-PS~~ 100 is clad in brick, and the northern and southern frontages of the center section have large window openings separated by glazed terra cotta tiles and brick spandrel panels that create a strong grid appearance. The eastern and western facades are simple and largely unadorned, with small window slits at the stairwells in the center section. The northern wing has large window openings separated by glazed terra cotta tiles along Thieriot Avenue, and the northern and southern wings contain single window openings with glazed terra cotta tiles along Taylor Avenue.

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

Under No-Action conditions, the status of historic resources could change. S/NR-eligible architectural resources could be listed in the Registers, and properties found eligible for consideration for designation as NYCLs could be calendared and/or designated. Changes to the historic resources identified above or to their settings could also occur irrespective of the Proposed Actions. Future projects could affect the settings of architectural resources. It is possible that some architectural resources in the area surrounding

the Project Area could deteriorate, while others could be restored. In addition, future projects could accidentally damage architectural resources through adjacent construction.

Properties that are designated NYCLs are protected under the New York City Landmarks Law, which requires LPC review and approval before any alteration or demolition of those resources can occur. All properties within LPC-designated historic districts also require LPC permit and approval prior to new construction, addition, enlargement, or demolition. The owners of a property may work with LPC to modify their plans to make them appropriate. Properties that have been calendared for consideration for designation as NYCLs are also afforded a measure of protection insofar as, due to their calendared status, permits may not be issued by DOB for any structural alteration to the buildings for any work requiring a building permit, without at least 40 days prior notice being given to LPC. During the 40-day period, LPC has the opportunity to consider the case and, if it so chooses, schedule a hearing and move forward with designation.

The New York City Building Code provides some measures of protection for all properties against accidental damage from adjacent construction by requiring that all buildings, lots, and service facilities adjacent to foundation and earthwork areas be protected and supported. Additional protective measures apply to designated NYCLs and S/NR-listed historic buildings located within 90 linear feet of a proposed construction site. For these structures, the DOB's TPPN #10/88 applies. TPPN #10/88 supplements the standard building protections afforded by the Building Code by requiring, among other things, a monitoring program to reduce the likelihood of construction damage to adjacent NYCL-designated or S/NR-listed historic resources (within 90 feet) and to detect at an early stage the beginnings of damage so that construction procedures can be changed.

Additionally, historic resources that are listed on the S/NR or that have been found eligible for listing are given a measure of protection from the effects of federally-sponsored, or federally-assisted projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and are similarly protected against impacts resulting from state-sponsored or state-assisted projects under the New York State Historic Preservation Act. Although preservation is not mandated, federal agencies must attempt to avoid adverse impacts on such resources through a notice, review, and consultation process. Private property owners using private funds can, however, alter or demolish their S/NR-listed or S/NR-eligible properties without such a review process.

Anticipated Developments in the No-Action Condition

PROJECT AREA

In the 2028 future without the Proposed Actions, it is expected that no new development would occur within the Project Area. As such, the Project Area would continue to be occupied by 948 dwelling units (DUs), 10,648 gross square feet (gsf) of local retail uses, and 36,214 gsf of community facility uses, as under existing conditions.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

As noted in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, & Public Policy," there are two developments in the 400-foot study area that are expected to be built in the 2028 future without the Proposed Actions. A 14-story building is planned for 1965 Lafayette Avenue and a one-story building is planned at 1806 Seward Avenue (refer to Figure 2-4 in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). These projects would result in minimal changes to the backdrop of the S/NR-eligible ~~P-S~~PS 100 in the future without the Proposed Actions.

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

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, generally, if a project would affect those characteristics that make a resource eligible for NYCL designation or S/NR listing, this could be a significant adverse impact. As described above, the S/NR-eligible ~~P-S-PS~~ 100 in the 400-foot study area is significant both for its architectural quality, as well as for its historical value as part of the City's development. This section assesses the Proposed Actions' potential to result in significant adverse impacts on identified architectural resources in the study area, including impacts resulting from construction, project-generated shadows, or other indirect effects on existing historic resources in the study area.

The Proposed Actions were assessed in accordance with guidance established in the *CEQR Technical Manual* (Chapter 9, Part 420), to determine (a) whether there would be a physical change to any designated or listed property as a result of the Proposed Actions; (b) whether there would be a physical change to the setting of any designated or listed resource, such as context or visual prominence, as a result of the Proposed Actions; and (c) if so, whether the change is likely to diminish the qualities of the resource that make it important. Whereas this chapter focuses specifically on the Proposed Actions' effects on the visual context of historic resources, an assessment of the Proposed Actions' effect on the visual character of the study area in general is provided separately in Chapter 8, "Urban Design ~~&~~ and Visual Resources."

As detailed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions would facilitate the construction of a new approximately 826,209 gsf mixed-use development that would result in an incremental 735 DUs, approximately 33,995 gsf of community facility uses, approximately ~~two~~ 1.94 acres of publicly accessible open space, and a net decrease of ~~149~~ 104 accessory parking spaces in the Project Area. As shown in Figure 1-5 in Chapter 1, the Proposed Project would be spread across six buildings in the Project Area, ranging in height from four to 14 stories (approximately 45 42 feet to 138 feet tall, with maximum building height envelopes of 50 to 150 feet). Construction of the Proposed Project is expected to begin in 2021, with all components complete and operational by 2028.

Direct (Physical) Impacts

Historic resources can be directly affected by physical destruction, demolition, damage, alteration, or neglect of all or part of a historic resource. For example, alterations, such as the addition of a new wing to a historic building or replacement of the resource's entrance could result in significant adverse impacts, depending on the design. Direct effects also include changes to an architectural resource that cause it to become a different visual entity, such as a new location, design, materials, or architectural features.

The Proposed Actions are site-specific, and, as discussed above, the Project Area does not contain any designated or eligible historic resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any direct impacts to historic architectural resources.

Indirect (Contextual) Impacts

Contextual impacts may occur to architectural resources under certain conditions. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, possible impacts to architectural resources may include isolation of the property from, or alteration of, its setting or visual relationships with the streetscape. This includes changes to the resource's visual prominence so that it no longer conforms to the streetscape in terms of height, footprint, or setback; is no longer part of an open setting; or can no longer be seen as part of a significant view corridor. Significant indirect impacts can occur if the Proposed Action would cause a change in the quality of a property that qualifies it for listing on the S/NR or for designation as a NYCL.

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse indirect impacts on historic architectural resources. The Proposed Actions would not adversely alter the context or setting of the nearby S/NR-eligible P-S-PS 100 so as to affect those characteristics that make the building eligible for listing on the S/NR. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of six buildings in the Project Area, ranging in height from four to 14 stories. The Proposed Project would be visible when looking west at P-S-PS 100 from Taylor Avenue; however, this change in setting would not be adverse. The study area is a dense urban environment with multiple existing mid-rise and high-rise buildings that currently form the backdrop for P-S-PS 100. As detailed above, the school was built to accommodate the rapidly growing population of Soundview as a result of the newly constructed urban renewal housing of the mid-20th century, including the eight- to 15-story Monroe Houses immediately west of the S/NR-eligible historic resource and the 16-story Carol Gardens Apartments immediately east (as shown in Figure 7-2). As such, the mid- and high-rise buildings that would be constructed in the Project Area as a result of the Proposed Actions would not be out of context in the backdrop of P-S-PS 100, and would not adversely alter the visual setting of the school.

Additionally, in the future with the Proposed Actions, no incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements would be introduced to any historic resource's setting. The Proposed Project would not alter the relationship of P-S-PS 100 to the streetscape, as all streets in the study area would remain open and the S/NR-eligible historic resource's relationships to adjacent streets would remain unchanged in the future with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Project would not eliminate or screen public views of P-S-PS 100, which would remain visible in view corridors on adjacent public streets and sidewalks. No primary facades, significant architectural ornamentation, or notable features of the S/NR-eligible school would be obstructed by the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Actions would not result in development that would diminish the qualities that make the S/NR-eligible P-S-PS 100 historically and architecturally significant. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse indirect or contextual impacts on historic architectural resources.

Construction-Related Impacts

Any new construction taking place within historic districts or adjacent to individual landmarks has the potential to cause damage to contributing buildings to those historic resources from ground-borne construction vibrations. As noted above, the New York City Building Code provides some measure of protection for all properties against accidental damage from adjacent construction by requiring that all buildings, lots, and service facilities adjacent to foundation and earthwork areas be protected and supported. Additional protective measures apply to LPC-designated and S/NR-listed historic resources located within 90 linear feet of a proposed construction site. For these structures, DOB's TPPN #10/88 applies. TPPN #10/88 supplements the standard building protections afforded by the Building Code by requiring, among other things, a monitoring program to reduce the likelihood of construction damage to adjacent LPC-designated or S/NR-listed resources (within 90 feet) and to detect at an early stage the beginnings of damage so that construction procedures can be changed. As there are no historic architectural resources located within 90 feet of the Project Area, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse construction-related impacts to historic resources.

Shadows Impacts

As detailed in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would not generate incremental shadows on sunlight-sensitive features of surrounding historic resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse shadows impacts on historic resources.