

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential of the proposed actions to affect architectural and archaeological resources on Site A and Site B, as well as in the surrounding area. As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the project sites together occupy 37.5 acres on the Hunter’s Point waterfront bounded by 50th Avenue and 54th Avenue to the north, 2nd Street and the prolongation of 5th Street to the east, Newtown Creek to the south, and the East River to the west.

Historic resources include both archaeological and architectural resources. The *CEQR Technical Manual* recommends that an analysis of archaeological resources be undertaken for actions that would result in any in-ground disturbance. It also recommends that an architectural resources assessment be performed if a proposed action would result in any of the following (even if no known architectural resources are located nearby): new construction; physical alteration of any building; change in scale, visual context, or visual setting of any building, structure, object, or landscape feature; or screening or elimination of publicly accessible views.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archaeological resources are physical remains, usually buried, of past activities on a site. They can include remains from Native American people who used or occupied a site, including tools, refuse from tool-making activities, habitation sites, etc. These resources are also referred to as “precontact,” since they were deposited before Native American contact with European settlers. Archaeological resources can also include remains from activities that occurred during the historic period (beginning with European colonization of the New York area in the 17th century) and that include European contact with Native Americans, as well as battle sites, foundations, wells, and privies. Cemeteries are also considered archaeological resources.

On sites where later development occurred, archaeological resources may have been disturbed or destroyed by grading, excavation, and infrastructure installation and improvements. However, some resources do survive in an urban environment. Deposits may have been protected either by being paved over or by having a building with a shallow foundation constructed above them. In both scenarios, archaeological deposits may have been sealed beneath the surface, protected from further disturbance.

The study area for archaeological resources is the site itself where disturbance from excavation and construction can be anticipated. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYCLPC) was contacted for its preliminary determination of the sites’ archaeological sensitivity (i.e., the sites’ likelihood to contain significant archaeological resources). In comments dated September 24, 2007, NYCLPC determined that the project sites are not sensitive for archaeological resources (see **Appendix 7**). Therefore, this chapter focuses on architectural resources.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

Architectural resources are defined as properties or districts listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) or determined eligible for such listing; National Historic Landmarks (NHLs); New York City Landmarks (NYCLs) and Historic Districts; and properties that have been found by NYCLPC to appear eligible for designation, considered for designation (“heard”) by NYCLPC at a public hearing, or calendared for consideration at such a hearing (these are “pending” NYCLs).

Study areas for architectural resources are determined based on the area of potential effect (APE) for construction-period impacts, such as ground-borne vibrations, and on the APE for visual or contextual effects, which is usually a larger area. In accordance with both CEQR and SEQRA guidelines, the architectural resources analysis identifies all architectural resources that have been designated or determined to meet the eligibility requirements for local, state, or national designation. This analysis assesses potential project impacts on architectural resources.

In general, potential impacts on architectural resources can include both direct physical impacts and indirect impacts. Direct impacts include demolition of a resource and alterations to a resource that cause it to become a different visual entity. A resource could also be damaged from vibration (i.e., from construction blasting or pile driving) and additional damage from adjacent construction that could occur from falling objects, subsidence, collapse, or damage from construction machinery. Adjacent construction is defined as any construction activity that would occur within 90 feet of an architectural resource, as defined in the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) *Technical Policy and Procedure Notice* (TPPN) #10/88.¹

Indirect impacts are contextual or visual impacts that could result from project construction or operation. As described in the *New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, indirect impacts could result from blocking significant public views of a resource; isolating a resource from its setting or relationship to the streetscape; altering the setting of a resource; introducing incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a resource’s setting; or introducing shadows over a historic landscape or an architectural resource with sun-sensitive features that contribute to that resource’s significance (e.g., a church with stained-glass windows).

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The proposed actions are not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts on archaeological or architectural resources in the study area. As discussed above, the project sites are not sensitive for archaeological resources. The architectural resources are located more than 90 feet from the project sites and, therefore, outside the area of potential physical impacts. As discussed in greater detail below, the proposed actions would not result in adverse contextual impacts nor would any significant views of any architectural resource be blocked. In addition, the proposed actions would not significantly alter the visual setting of any architectural resource, nor would they introduce incompatible elements to any architectural resource’s setting in the study area.

¹ TPPN #10/88 was issued by DOB on June 6, 1988, to supplement Building Code regulations with regard to historic structures. TPPN #10/88 outlines procedures for the avoidance of damage to historic structures resulting from adjacent construction, defined as construction within a lateral distance of 90 feet from the historic resource.

B. METHODOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

NYCLPC's *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City* outline specific steps to determine whether the proposed actions could affect areas of archaeological sensitivity. The first step in this process is an initial review conducted by NYCLPC of the City tax lots that would be excavated as a result of the proposed actions. If NYCLPC has archaeological concerns, a Stage 1A documentary study is typically prepared to assess the archaeological sensitivity of the affected areas and to determine whether further archaeological evaluation is required. NYCLPC conducted an initial review of the project sites and in comments dated October 1, 2007, determined that the project sites are not sensitive for archaeological resources. Therefore, no analysis of archaeological resources is required.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

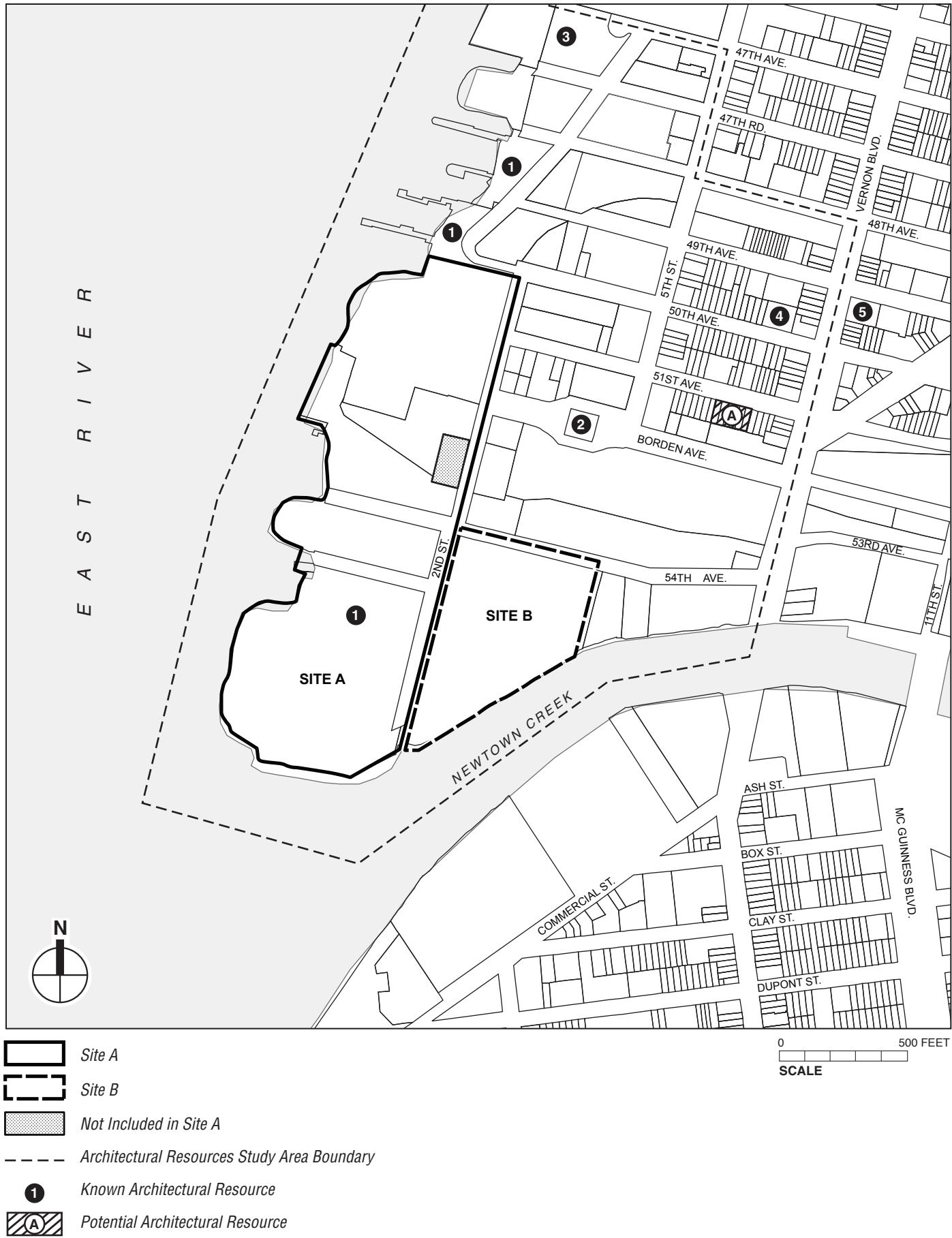
Study areas for architectural resources are determined based on the area of potential effect for construction period impacts, as well as the larger area in which there may be visual or contextual impacts. Based on the anticipated visibility of the proposed project, the study area has been defined as the area bounded by 47th Avenue and 48th Avenue to the north, Vernon Boulevard to the east, Newtown Creek to the south, and the East River to the west (see **Figure 7-1**). In addition, views of the site from the Manhattan waterfront were also considered.

To assess the potential impacts of the proposed actions, an inventory of historic architectural resources in areas that could be affected was compiled based on the methodology described below. The existing setting of each historic resource, including its visual prominence and significance in publicly accessible views, whether it has sun-sensitive features, and its visual and architectural relationship to other historic resources, was taken into consideration for this analysis.

Within the study area for the assessment of architectural resources, the architectural resources comprise properties listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) or determined eligible for such listing, National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), and New York City Landmarks (NYCL) and Historic Districts or properties determined eligible for landmark status.

In addition to identifying architectural resources officially recognized in the study area, an inventory was compiled of other buildings that could warrant recognition as architectural resources (i.e., properties that could be eligible for S/NR listing or NYCL designation) in compliance with CEQR and SEQRA guidelines. These are considered "potential architectural resources." These were identified based on site visits by an architectural historian and the review of prior studies of the study area, including the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) completed in 1990 for the Hunters Point Waterfront Development and the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) prepared in 2004 for the Hunters Point Subdistrict Rezoning.

Once the historic resources in the study area were identified, the proposed actions were assessed for both direct physical impacts and indirect contextual impacts (as described above) on architectural resources.



Historic Resources Study Area **Figure 7-1**

C. BACKGROUND HISTORY

MID-17TH CENTURY TO MID-19TH CENTURY

The first archival record pertaining to the area now known as Hunter's Point is a land grant from the Dutch government of New Amsterdam of 130 acres to Everard Bogardus, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. The area, mostly low-lying meadows, streams, and marshes, contained an elevated area next to Newtown Creek, located approximately where today's Vernon Boulevard runs for a few blocks north from Borden Avenue. In 1647, Bogardus perished in a shipwreck, and the estate changed hands several times over the next 150 years, until it came to be owned by the wife of Captain George Hunter, and the land then began to be called Hunter's Point.

Until the 1850s, both Site A and Site B were mostly underwater as shoreline was only slightly west of 5th Street. Prior to that time, no structures were known to exist in the area except for a single house owned by Bogardus, which was located in the Hunter's Point neighborhood, but was not located on the project sites. The first road was built in the area in approximately 1840. It was called the Ravenswood, Hallett's Cove, and Williamsburgh Turnpike, and very nearly followed the path of today's Vernon Boulevard, east of the project sites.

MID-19TH CENTURY TO 20TH CENTURY

In 1852, President Nott of Union College, then the owner of Hunter's Point, went into business with Jonathan Crane and Charles Ely to develop the Hunter's Point area as a real estate venture. Within the same year, the partners began to grade and level out the area and began to stake out the first streets. The area was surveyed and mapped, and lots began to be sold. The map, dated May 16, 1854, was the foundation map for the new village of Hunter's Point. It shows 16 blocks of the former Hunter farm laid out in 25-by-100-foot lots, and the new streets, 1st through 10th Streets, corresponding to the present streets of 54th Avenue to 46th Avenue. The shoreline was just west of the current 5th Street at that time.

Between 1853 and 1861, substantial progress was made in creating the town of Hunter's Point. Streets were laid out, buildings were erected, and a ferry service to Manhattan was begun. With ample available land, few existing residences, and excellent barge access via the East River and Newtown Creek, industries, eventually including railroad yards, oil and kerosene producers, and paint and varnish manufacturers, began to move to the Hunter's Point area.

New rail service on the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) in 1861 and the outbreak of the Civil War brought many changes to the area. The rail company filled in 10 acres (the first known landfill out to what is now 2nd Street) and built car houses, engine houses, machine shops, and a depot. The Civil War created a huge demand for lumber, oil, and iron wares, and heavy industry began to dominate the waterfront.

In 1870, Long Island City was incorporated as the county seat of Queens, consolidating the villages of Hunter's Point, Ravenswood, Astoria, and Bowery Bay. At this time, railroads continued to be crucial to Hunter's Point's development. At the foot of Borden Avenue, on Site A, the LIRR had its chief passenger terminal, one of the most heavily used in the United States at the time. At the station, passengers also transferred to ferries for Manhattan. To the north of the terminal was the LIRR transfer bridge facility, where freight cars were transferred to and from carfloats—barges with rails on them that could hold between 8 and 21 freight cars. These were unloaded via specially designed transfer bridges and prepared for delivery to the industries

of Long Island. The transfer bridges remain in place in Gantry Plaza State Park, just north of 50th Avenue on the waterfront. From the 1870s through the end of World War I, almost all freight cars to and from Long Island passed through this yard.

The importance of the railroad and the high volume of passenger traffic in the area created a vibrant commercial district near the ferry terminal on Borden Avenue. Reflecting the commercial importance of the area, the Queens County Bank erected a small Romanesque Revival-inspired bank building next to the ferry terminal in 1890, which is still extant on Site A. In 1897, a large site on the southern peninsula of Hunter's Point, now part of Site A, was purchased by a sugar refinery, and large brick buildings were built along the waterfront.

20TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

In 1903, the LIRR expanded farther south, rebuilding former lumber facilities. By this time, the passenger ferry operation had become obsolete, and the freight facilities were becoming more important than the passenger facilities.

Also during the first decade of the 20th century, the Pennsylvania Railroad bought the Long Island Rail Road and constructed its “New York Improvement,” tunneling from New Jersey, through Manhattan to Long Island City. This work was probably the largest construction project ever accomplished by private industry up to that time. Train service was extended to Manhattan at this time, and both the line to Manhattan and several lines of the LIRR were electrified. Local freight yards were also modernized and grade crossings eliminated. This project had a major impact on Hunter's Point: not only did it result in changes in the landscape, such as the building of a large powerhouse on 2nd Street between 50th and 51st Avenues, and changes in the freight yards, but it also eventually led to the discontinuance of the ferry to Manhattan. The Long Island City Powerhouse of the Pennsylvania Railroad, built between 1903 and 1906 to power the Pennsylvania Railroad's New York Extension (to Pennsylvania Station in New York), also provided power for the Long Island Rail Road.¹ Also at this time, the Sunnyside Rail complex was built to the east of Hunter's Point, which involved massive changes to Long Island City as local streets were removed and a large, below-grade rail storage facility was built. With the discontinuation of passenger ferry service in the area, the nearby commercial district began to decline.

The character of Hunter's Point continued to change in the later half of the 20th century. The sugar refinery on Site A was demolished in the 1950s. Freight traffic through the Hunter's Point rail yards remained heavy up to the mid-1960s, when the Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroads merged. Even after the merger and subsequent reroutings in 1968-1969, freight cars from non-Penn Central lines, such as Erie-Lackawanna and the B&O Railroad, continued to be delivered via the transfer bridges on the waterfront. The Daily News purchased the former sugar refinery site on Site A and constructed a printing plant there in 1972 (now demolished). During the 1980s, all rails were removed west of 5th Street and most of the associated structures were removed.

As discussed in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” a development plan was approved by the City and State in 1990 for a 74-acre area (the Queens West site), located between Anable Basin on the north

¹ All references give Westinghouse, Church and Kerr Company credit for the design and engineering; however, it is possible that McKim, Mead & White, which was designing Pennsylvania Station at the time, had some influence on its design and architecture.

Hunter's Point South Rezoning and Related Actions FEIS

and Newtown Creek on the south, extending generally as far east as 5th Street north of 49th Avenue, and 2nd Street south of 49th Avenue. This development plan, which was the result of planning efforts initiated by the City beginning in 1982 and was set forth in a General Project Plan (GPP) approved for the site, called for the redevelopment of the 74-acre area with high-rise mixed-use development on 20 parcels. Stages I and II, in the northern part of the site, are currently developed or under development (see Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). Stages III and IV (Site A in this EIS) were to be developed with residential and commercial uses.

Ferry service has been restored to Manhattan from Hunter's Point by the New York Water Taxi, and today carries commuters to Midtown and Lower Manhattan during the spring and summer months.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITES

SITE A

The northern third of Site A is developed with two low-rise, corrugated metal buildings for a tennis club; tennis courts; and an indoor tennis "bubble." None of these undistinguished buildings would meet eligibility for S/NR listing or NYCL designation in terms of age or architectural and historical significance (see **View 1, Figure 7-2**). Also on the tennis club site, on 2nd Street near Borden Avenue is a one-story brick and stone building that once housed the former Queens County Savings Bank (see **View 2, Figure 7-2**). During the review conducted in 1989 in connection with the 1990 FEIS and in a letter dated October 11, 2007, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) determined that this building is not eligible for S/NR listing (see **Appendix 7**).¹

SITE B

Site B is currently developed with a three-story modern, brown brick structure and a two-story low-rise industrial structure (see **View 3, Figure 7-3**). Neither of the structures on this site meet S/NR or NYCL eligibility criteria in terms of age or architectural or historical significance. Therefore, there are no architectural resources on Site B.

¹ The former Queens County Savings Bank is a Romanesque-revival style building constructed of red brick and stone with a hipped roof, which was constructed in 1890 by local builders Carpenter and Woodruff. The original dormer windows have been removed and the roof replaced. The remaining windows have been bricked over and a one-story addition was made to the building. Though NYCLPC has indicated that the building appears to meet S/NR eligibility criteria, OPRHP's determination of the building's lack of S/NR eligibility serves as the basis for determining that this building does not constitute a historic resources under CEQR and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (see **Appendix 7**).

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Site A, Tennis Facility 1



Site A, Former Queens County Savings Bank 2

Views of Site A
Figure 7-2

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Site B 3



Long Island Rail Road Car Float Gantry 4

Views of Site B
and Study Area

Figure 7-3

STUDY AREA

KNOWN RESOURCES

There are five known architectural resources in the study area. These are listed in **Table 7-1** and their locations are shown on **Figure 7-1**.

Table 7-1
Known Architectural Resources in the Study Area

No.*	Name	Address	Block/ Lot	S/NR Eligible	NYCL Eligible
1	LIRR Car Float Gantry	4-00 and 4-40 48th Avenue	17/21, 18/5	X	X
2	Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent	230 Borden Avenue	13/25	X	
3	Pepsi-Cola Sign	49th Avenue and East River	19/19		Pending
4	108th Police Precinct Building	5-37/5-47 50th Avenue	32/6	X	X
5	St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church	49-07 Vernon Boulevard	42/6	X	X

Notes:

- * Corresponds to Figure 7-1
- S/NR Eligible: Determined eligible for listing on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places by OPRHP or NYCLPC. The Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent has been determined eligible by OPRHP; the other resources listed have been identified as eligible by NYCLPC during review conducted for the 2004 EAS for the Hunters Point Subdistrict Rezoning.
- NYCL: New York City Landmark.
- NYCL Eligible: NYCLPC has determined that the site appears eligible for NYCL designation.
- Pending NYCL: Site has been calendared for a public hearing or heard for designation by NYCLPC.

The **LIRR Car Float Gantry (S/NR eligible, NYCL eligible)** are located almost 300 feet north of the Site A at the edge of 49th Avenue and the East River within Gantry Plaza State Park (see **View 4, Figure 7-4**). These structures were previously used to transfer box cars from barges to trains headed east to Long Island and are strong reminders of the area's industrial past. They were last rebuilt for the Long Island Rail Road in 1925, and remained in use for freight rail operations as late as the 1970s. They are among a handful of remaining bridges of this type in the New York City area. These gantries were restored and preserved as the centerpiece of Gantry Plaza State Park as a part of the Queens West development in 1998. During the review for Hunter's Point Waterfront Project as part of the development of the plan approved in 1990, OPRHP determined in 1989 that the gantries were not eligible for listing on the S/NR. NYCLPC determined that the gantries are eligible for NYCL designation and S/NR listing in 2003, during review as part of the EAS for the Hunters Point Subdistrict Rezoning.

The **Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent Building (S/NR eligible)** was built circa 1939 in the center of Borden Avenue between 2nd and 5th Streets to provide ventilation for the Queens-Midtown Tunnel, which was one of the largest public works projects of the New Deal era. It is located 390 feet east of Site A and north of Site B and is constructed of yellow brick with Art Deco elements (see **View 5, Figure 7-4**). This structure has been determined eligible for the S/NR by OPRHP.

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Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent

5



Pepsi-Cola Sign

6

Views of Study Area

Figure 7-4

The **Pepsi-Cola Sign (pending NYCL)** is located approximately 600 feet from the north end of Site A, at the end of 47th Avenue on the Hunter's Point waterfront (see **View 6, Figure 7-4**). Built circa 1936, the sign is 60 feet tall and was constructed by Artkraft Signs (now the Artkraft-Strauss Sign Company) and dates from the heyday of neon signage. Originally located on the roof of the Pepsi-Cola bottling plant that was located to the north of the project sites, the sign was preserved and will be incorporated into the Queens West public park. The current location is temporary until the construction of Queens West is complete. The sign was considered for designation as a New York City Landmark at a hearing held by NYCLPC in 1988.

The 108th Police Precinct Building (S/NR eligible, NYCL eligible) is located at 5-37 50th Avenue between Vernon Boulevard and 5th Street, approximately 1,000 feet east of Site A and several blocks north of Site B. The building was constructed in 1903, and designed by the architect R. Thomas Short. It is designed in the Renaissance Revival Style, with arched windows and ornate torchieres on the ground floor, and decorative neo-baroque elements around the windows on the upper floors (see **View 7, Figure 7-5**). NYCLPC determined that this building appears eligible for S/NR listing and NYCL designation in 2003 during review as part of the EAS for the Hunters Point Subdistrict Rezoning.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (S/NR eligible, NYCL eligible), is located at 49-01 Vernon Boulevard (at the intersection with 49th Avenue), approximately 1,300 feet east of Site A and several blocks north of Site B, just outside the study area. Although it is located outside the defined study area, it is included in this analysis as its steeple is a prominent feature on the Hunter's Point skyline, visible from the project sites and the Manhattan waterfront. It was built in 1887 and designed by Patrick Charles Keely. The church is built from brick and brownstone in a simple Gothic design, featuring multiple pointed arches across the façade on Vernon Boulevard, and a tall steeple that rises several stories. Clad in gray slate, the steeple houses clocks on each side, and marks the skyline as it rises over Vernon Boulevard (see **View 8, Figure 7-5**). NYCLPC determined that this building appears eligible for S/NR listing and NYCL designation in 2003, during review as part of the EAS for the Hunters Point Subdistrict Rezoning.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

One potential architectural resource has been identified in the study area, a group of rowhouses on 51st Avenue between 5th Street and Vernon Boulevard. The **51st Avenue rowhouses** are a series of predominantly three-story rowhouses, built circa 1870 that are located at 5-30 to 5-40 51st Avenue on the south side of the street. As mentioned above, development in this area of Hunter's Point did not begin until the 1850s, making this row of houses part of the earliest development in Hunter's Point. Constructed mainly of brick, this series of Greek Revival rowhouses is mostly intact. They feature tripartite windows with lintels above, bracketed cornices and large front stoops that meet the sidewalk, and some have bay windows facing the street (see **View 9, Figure 7-6**).

The Pennsylvania Railroad Power House and neighboring Schwartz Chemical Building, located 65 feet from Site A, were determined eligible for listing on the S/NR in 1989 during review of the Hunters Point Waterfront Development project. The buildings were also found to be both NYCL and S/NR eligible again in 2003 when reviewed for the Hunters Point Subdistrict Rezoning EAS. Although the structures had been both architecturally and historically significant, the Schwartz Chemical Building has been demolished and the Power House is currently undergoing a conversion to residential condominiums. Substantial alterations have

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108th Precinct

7

St. Mary's Church

8



Views of Study Area

Figure 7-5

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51st Avenue Rowhouses

9



Former Pennsylvania Railroad Power House

10

Views of Study Area

Figure 7-6

occurred that have impacted the integrity of the Power House building. These include the removal of a section of the building and construction of a new steel frame, the addition of a steel skeleton above the building to house additional stories, the removal of its iconic smokestacks, the gutting of the building, and the removal of all its windows (see **View 10, Figure 7-6**). As such, these buildings no longer meet S/NR eligibility criteria. In comments dated October 17, 2007, NYCLPC determined that the Power House no longer meets S/NR or NYCL eligibility criteria (see **Appendix 7**). Therefore, it is not considered an architectural resource for the purpose of this analysis.

VIEWS OF ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES FROM MANHATTAN

From the Manhattan waterfront, the East River Esplanade provides sweeping views of the Queens waterfront at Queens West and Hunter's Point South (see **View 11, Figure 7-7**). At Queens West (north of 50th Avenue), the gantries and the Pepsi-Cola sign are clearly visible in front of the high-rise buildings of the Queens West development. The Pepsi-Cola sign is oriented to face the Manhattan waterfront. In addition, two of the study area's other architectural resources are visible from Manhattan from vantage points south of approximately East 35th Street. The steeple of St. Mary's Church is visible above a landscape of low-rise buildings. The Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent Building is also clearly visible as a bulky structure similar in height to the steeple.

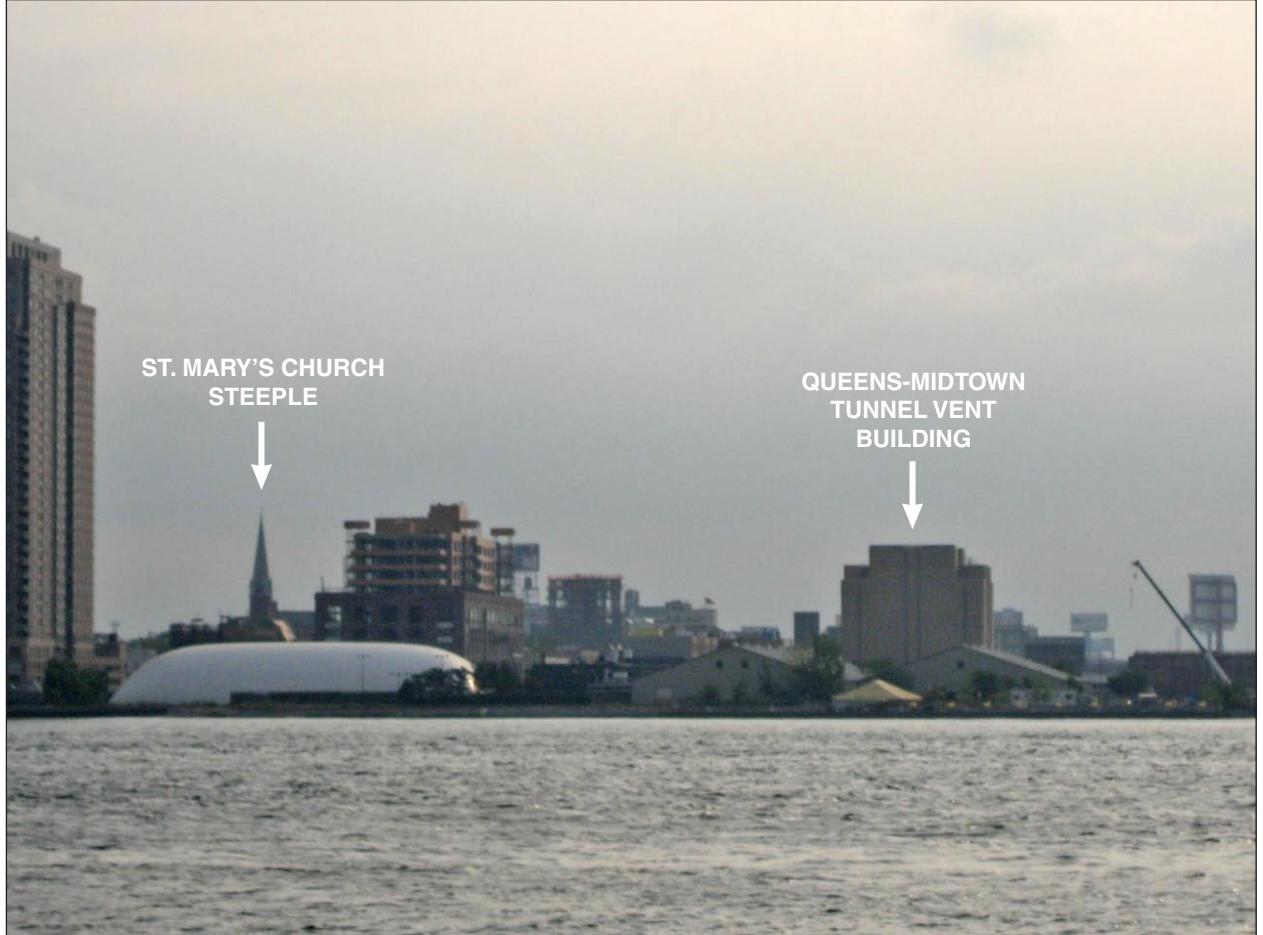
E. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

Architectural resources that are listed on the National Register or that have been found eligible for listing are given a measure of protection from the effects of federally sponsored or assisted projects under Section 106 of the National 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. Properties listed on the State Register are similarly protected against impacts resulting from state-sponsored or state-assisted projects under the State Historic Preservation Act. Private property owners using private funds can, however, alter or demolish their properties without such a review process. Privately owned sites that are New York City Landmarks, within New York City Historic Districts, or pending designation, are protected under the New York City Landmarks Law, which requires NYCLPC review and approval before any alteration or demolition can occur whether or not public funds are used.

In the future, it is possible that the architectural resources identified by NYCLPC as eligible for listing on the S/NR or for designation as NYCLs may be so designated, and therefore may receive these protections. In addition, the 51st Avenue rowhouses may be found eligible for listing on the Registers or designation as a New York City Landmark and may be listed or designated in the future.

PROJECT SITES

In the future without the proposed actions, it is expected that the uses on Sites A and B will continue in their current condition, and no new construction will occur. The distribution business currently operating on Site B is slated to relocate to the Hunts Point area of the Bronx in late 2008; however, it is expected that the site will continue to be used as a distribution facility absent the proposed actions.



View of Hunter's Point South from Manhattan's East River Esplanade **11**

View of Queens Waterfront
from Manhattan

STUDY AREA

As described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” three projects are planned for completion within the historic resources study area by 2017. These projects could potentially affect known and potential architectural resources in the study area.

A proposed five-story residential building is under construction at the corner of Borden Avenue and 5th Street, which is within 90 feet of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent building, and therefore has the ability to create incidental construction-related impacts. Another residential development, the 12-story One Hunters Point, under construction at 5-35 Borden Avenue, is located behind the 51st Avenue rowhouses, a potential architectural resource, and therefore also has the potential to result in accidental construction-related impacts.

In addition, as described above, the conversion of the old Pennsylvania Railroad Power House to residential use has resulted in significant changes that have affected the historic character of this building.

VIEWS OF ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES FROM MANHATTAN

In the future without the proposed actions, views of architectural resources in the study area from the Manhattan side of the East River will change, as development is completed at Queens West. The gantries and Pepsi-Cola sign are already visible in the forefront of a number of high-rise buildings, and this context will become more pronounced as Queens West is completed. The Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent Building and the steeple of St. Mary’s Church on Vernon Boulevard will remain visible from some locations on the East River Esplanade south of approximately East 35th Street. However, the addition of the upper floors of the PowerHouse residential building and the 12-story building at One Hunters Point will create a new backdrop for the vent building that lessens its prominence when viewed from distant points. These buildings and a nearby four-story building under construction will block some views of the steeple of St. Mary’s Church when viewed from distant points, including from Brooklyn and from some locations on the Manhattan waterfront.

F. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

PROJECT SITES

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the proposed actions, if approved, would transform Site A and Site B from their current condition to a new high-rise development of residential buildings with retail and community facility uses. On Site A, a network of new streets, sidewalks, and bikeways would be developed, creating seven new city blocks from the single superblock on the site today. In addition, a new waterfront park would continue along the west side of Center Boulevard along the site’s East River and Newtown Creek frontage. On Site B, it is anticipated that the single parcel would be divided into two new blocks, with a new east-west street between them. This site would also be developed with new high-rise residential buildings.

STUDY AREA

It is not expected that the proposed actions would have a significant adverse impact on known or potential architectural resources in the study area. As there are no architectural resources within 90 feet of the project sites, no construction-related impacts on architectural resources are expected to occur.

Two of the resources closest to the site, the LIRR gantries and the Pepsi-Cola sign, have been subject to dramatic change over the last few years. The gantries were incorporated into the design of Gantry Plaza State Park, along the waterfront, as part of the Queens West development. The Pepsi-Cola sign was moved from its original location atop the now-demolished Pepsi bottling plant to a new location in the park, and will have a permanent location within the Queens West development, when it is completed. As such, these resources exist in an altered context that includes new high-rise buildings and a park. Therefore, the proposed Hunter's Point South project and development on Site B would not adversely affect the historic context of these resources. Further, views to these resources would not be blocked by the new buildings at Hunter's Point South, which would be located south of Gantry Plaza State Park.

It is also not expected that the proposed actions would have an adverse impact on the context of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent Building. The vent building is surrounded by new construction to the north and the LIRR yards to the south. As described in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the visual corridor along Borden Avenue would be opened to the waterfront, making the structure more visible and prominent than it is under the existing conditions.

Sites A and B, which are located on the far western waterfront of the Hunter's Point neighborhood, are separated from the remaining known and potential architectural resources in the study area (the 108th Police Precinct, St. Mary's Church, and the 51st Avenue rowhouses) by approximately two developed blocks and the LIRR tracks and yard. As such, there is no meaningful or prominent relationship with the inland historic resources. All existing and potential resources would remain visible after the project is completed. It is not expected that the streetscape improvements proposed for 50th and 51st Avenues would adversely affect the 108th Police Precinct on 50th Avenue or the 51st Avenue rowhouses.

Overall, the proposed actions would not adversely affect the setting or visual prominence of any of the architectural resources in the study area.

VIEWS OF ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES FROM MANHATTAN

The new development at Hunter's Point South and Site B would create prominent, new high-rise buildings on the Queens waterfront, reinforcing the existing high-rise setting of the Pepsi-Cola sign and the gantries when viewed from Manhattan. Views of the steeple of St. Mary's Church and the Queens-Midtown Tunnel Vent Building would be largely blocked, although some limited views might remain above low-rise portions of the new buildings and down east-west streets. Both these architectural resources are already set in a diverse landscape of tall and lower-rise buildings along the Queens waterfront and the loss of views toward them from Manhattan would not represent a significant adverse impact.

CONCLUSION

The proposed actions are not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts on archaeological or architectural resources. The project sites are not sensitive for archaeological resources. The architectural resources are located more than 90 feet from the project sites and, therefore, outside the area of potential physical impacts. The proposed actions would not result in adverse contextual impacts nor would any significant views of any architectural resource be blocked. In addition, the proposed actions would not significantly alter the visual setting of any architectural resource, nor would they introduce incompatible elements to any architectural resource's setting in the study area.

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