

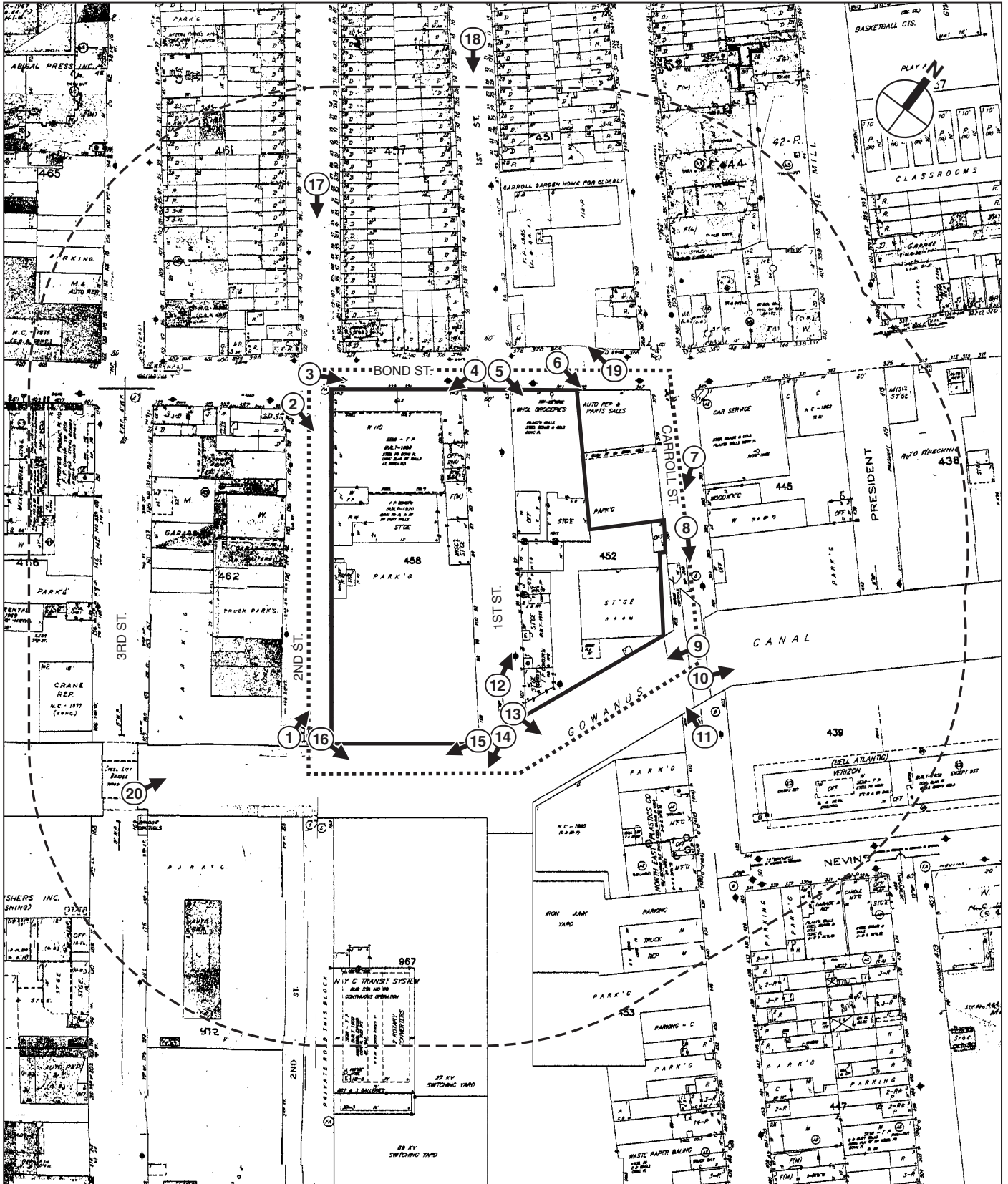
**A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter considers the impacts of the proposed project with respect to the urban design and visual resources of the study area. The project site is bounded roughly by Bond Street, the Gowanus Canal, Carroll Street, and 2nd Street, and occupies an area totaling approximately 146,300 square feet, or one and a half blocks. The primary study area for this analysis has been defined as extending 400 feet from the project site (see Figure 8-1). The analysis also considers a secondary study area, which includes most of the area that is visible from the project site; or from which the proposed project would be visible (see Figure 8-2). This area extends to roughly ¼ mile to the west and east (to Smith Street on the west and 4th Avenue on the east), where the topography and the development limits views; and approximately ½ mile to the north and south of the project site, where views stretch farther, because of the open space associated with the Gowanus Canal.

As defined by the 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—i.e., physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis examines each of these characteristics in determining the impacts of the proposed project.

**PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS**

This analysis concludes that the proposed project would not have a significant adverse impact on urban design and visual resources. Although changes would occur, the proposed project would substantially improve the condition of the project site and create new waterfront access for the neighborhood. The proposed residential buildings would be taller and have a greater footprint than the existing buildings on the site. However, these changes would not have a significant adverse impact on urban design or on the overall visibility of visual resources from public spaces within the study areas. The proposed project has been designed to maintain as much as possible the low-rise character of the nearby blocks and to blend with the streetscapes of surrounding neighborhood. The proposed project is expected to enhance the overall vitality of the surrounding streets by introducing residential uses and a waterfront esplanade from which the public would be afforded an improved view of many visual resources, including the canal itself. Therefore, the proposed project would reflect a reasonable balance between existing and proposed building heights and bulk and new open space without causing any significant adverse impacts.



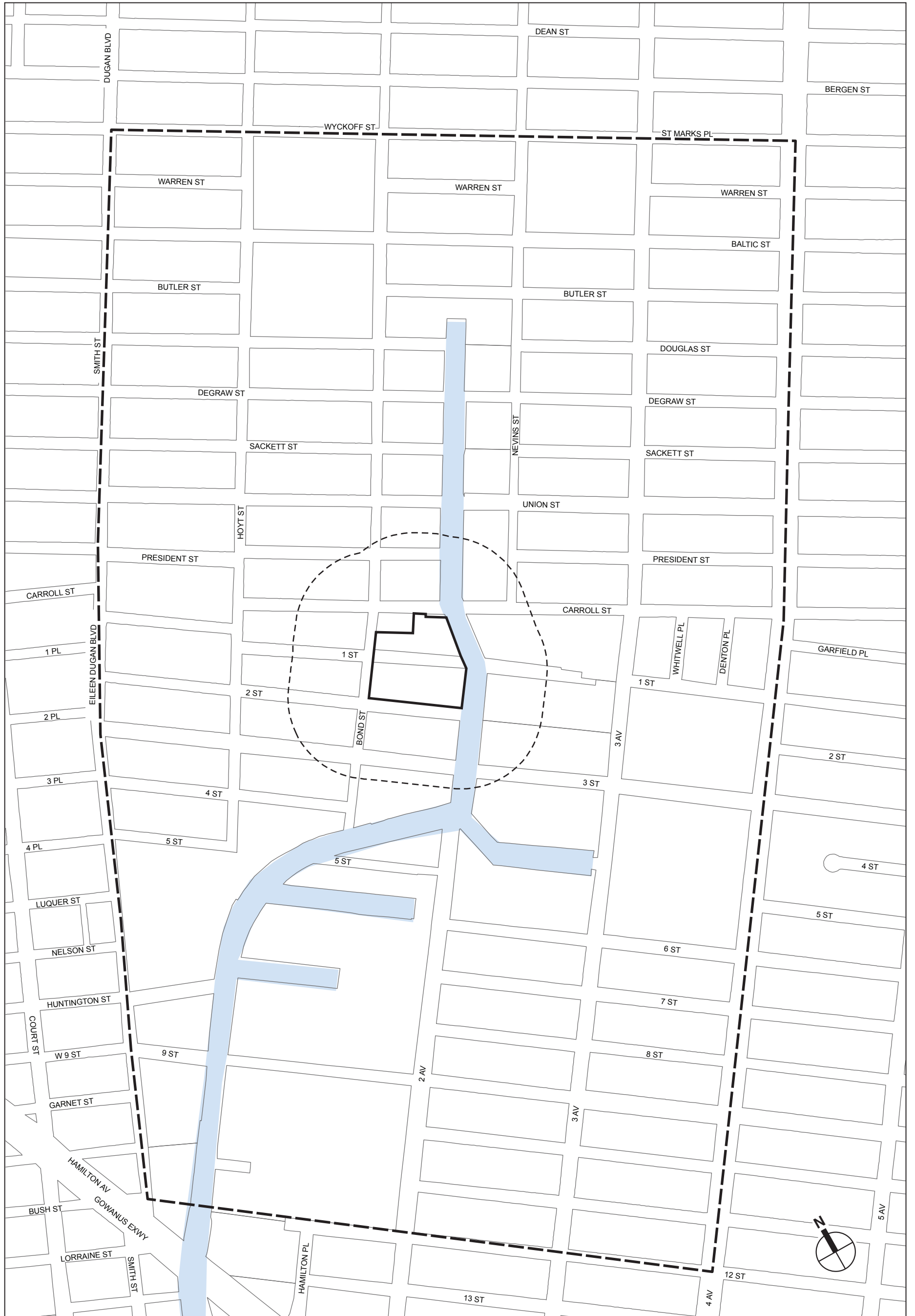
- Project Site Boundary
- Primary Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)
- Rezoning Area Boundary




Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

**363-365 BOND STREET**

0 200 FEET  
SCALE

Key to Photographs  
Figure 8-1



-  Project Site Boundary
-  Urban Design Primary Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)
-  Secondary Study Area Boundary

0 1000 FEET  
SCALE

## B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

### PROJECT SITE

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

The project site is an approximately 146,300-square-foot, or one-and-a-half-block parcel in the Gowanus section of Brooklyn. It primarily consists of one- and two-story industrial or warehouse buildings, as does much of the waterfront area near the Gowanus Canal. The existing buildings on the project site are faced with brick or concrete, and have few or no windows. Many of the original window openings have been filled in with brick or concrete block. Most of the structures were built for industrial or storage use and remain in this use. These large, low buildings tend to create uniform street walls along entire blocks or half blocks. There are also vacant lots, currently used for vehicle and truck parking and enclosed by chain-link fences. There are few street trees within the project site.

365-379 Bond Street (a.k.a. 109-129 Second Street) (Building 1) is a brick and concrete-block warehouse between 1st and 2nd Streets and between Bond Street and the Gowanus Canal, (see Figure 8-3 and 8-4, Views 2 through 4). This one- and two-story complex is located in the southwestern portion of the project site. It was built in multiple stages, principally between 1920 and 1956. Along Bond Street, the building has a two-story continuous façade, creating a completely uniform street wall. Most of the windows have been blocked or filled in on all façades of the building.

The single-story brick building at 363 Bond Street (a.k.a. 63-87 1st Street) between First and Carroll Streets (Building 2) is a ca. 1950 warehouse structure with simple brickwork patterns ornamenting a low parapet (see Figure 8-5, View 5). Although the building appears to have originally had several windows and doors, these have been filled, and there are currently no functioning windows.

The brick and concrete warehouse building at 89-107 1st Street (Building 3) adjoins Building 2. Located on the north side of 1st Street, it was constructed in 1916 (see Figure 8-6, View 12). Faced in concrete, the bays of the windowless two-story building are delineated by slightly projecting pilasters or buttresses. Multiple large garage doors are located along the south façade. The building creates a uniform street wall along the eastern portion of the north side of 1st Street.

The two-story brick structure at 388 Carroll Street (Building 4) is labeled as an 'office' on Sanborn maps and was originally associated with an oil company that was formerly on an adjacent parcel (see Figure 8-7, View 7). It is currently used as an office. On the same parcel, there are two cylindrical reinforced concrete buildings, which formerly served as containment structures. One of these (Building 5), between Carroll and 1st Streets, is currently used for storage (see Figure 8-7, View 7).

Lastly, the Gowanus Canal bulkhead, a portion of which is located within the project site, is considered a contributing element within S/NR-eligible Gowanus Canal Historic District.



View from the west bank of the Gowanus Canal at Second Street, looking northwest towards the project site. This portion of the project site is currently vacant. 1



View looking northeast on Second Street towards the Gowanus Canal, a portion of Building 1 is pictured on the left. 2



View from Bond Street at Second Street, looking northeast towards the Bond Street facade of Building 1.

3



View from Bond Street at First Street looking east towards the Gowanus Canal and the First Street facade of Building 1.

4



View from Bond Street at First Street looking northeast towards Building 2.

5



View from Bond Street between Carroll and First Streets looking northeast towards the project site. The single-story brick building pictured in the center is located immediately adjacent to the project site on the northwest corner of Bond and Carroll streets.

6



View from the east side of the Carroll Street Bridge looking west towards the project site.

7



View from First Street and the west side of the Gowanus Canal, looking northwest towards Building 3 on the project site.

8





View from Carroll Street looking southeast towards the northeast corner of the project site. Note Building 4, the two-story brick office pictured on the left, and Building 5, the cylindrical former containment structure, on the right.

9



View from Carroll Street on the west side of the Gowanus Canal, looking east towards the Carroll Street Bridge and the Carroll Street Bridge Operator's House, on the right. Also note Belgian Block pavement and cast iron street lamp.

10

*VISUAL RESOURCES*

Although the Gowanus Canal bulkhead is considered a contributing element within the S/NR-eligible Gowanus Canal Historic District, (see Chapter 7, “Historic Resources”) this structure is not considered a visual resource.

Multiple visual resources can be seen from the publicly-accessible areas within and immediately adjacent to the project site. These areas include the streets adjacent to the canal, the Carroll Street Bridge, and the proposed publicly-accessible esplanade that would be part of the proposed project development (see Figure 8-7, View 8 and Figure 8-8, View 10). Resources visible from these locations include the Gowanus Canal, Saint Agnes Church (located on Hoyt Street between Sackett and Degraw Streets), and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank (also known as One Hanson Place). The latter is located some distance from the project site and is visible from a limited number of locations, predominantly the Carroll, Union, and 3rd Street bridges.

**PRIMARY STUDY AREA**

*URBAN DESIGN*

*Natural Features, Street Patterns, and Block Shapes*

The Gowanus Canal extends from the Gowanus Bay in Upper New York Harbor on the south to Butler Street on the north. Originally a tidal creek, the canal was channelized in the mid-19th century and became primarily industrial in character. It is approximately 100 feet wide throughout most of its length.

The study area is developed primarily in a typical, rectilinear grid pattern, interrupted by the Gowanus Canal, where streets running perpendicular to the waterway dead-end with the exception of Union, Carroll, and 3rd Streets, which cross the canal on small bridges.

The topography of the study area is characterized by hills sloping upwards both east and west of the Gowanus Canal. The Gowanus Canal itself is at the lowest elevation within the study area and the blocks immediately surrounding the canal to the east and the west are relatively flat. Beyond these blocks, however, the elevation climbs steadily to both the east and west. The topography also slopes very gradually higher from south to north.

Immediately adjacent to the project site, within the rezoning area, the New York City Department of Design and Construction on behalf of the City of New York has recently extensively rehabilitated an existing single-story brick industrial building for use as a station for the Fire Department’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) rapid response network on Lot 5 of Block 452 (the proposed project’s block).

Also immediately adjacent to the project site is the Carroll Street Bridge and associated single-story brick Operator’s House. These structures are designated as a New York City Landmark and have been determined eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

*Streetscape*

The study area is urban in character, with streets flanked by concrete sidewalks. The industrial area along the Gowanus Canal and the project site is somewhat underutilized with relatively little street life. In these locations, the majority of pedestrian activity consists of people crossing the Carroll, Union, and 3rd Street bridges en route between surrounding neighborhoods such as



View from the Carroll Street Bridge looking south; the project site is pictured on the right.

11



View from the Carroll Street Bridge looking north; the Williamsburgh Savings Bank is pictured on the right.

12

Carroll Gardens and Park Slope. Vacant lots or parking areas are also found within the primary study area, particularly at locations closer to the canal. Many of these are surrounded by chain-link fences. Further east and west of the project site, residential uses dominate, and streets are relatively well traveled.

There are few City parks or other public spaces within the primary study area with the exception of the streets and bridges discussed above. Increasingly, the Gowanus Canal itself is used by the public for recreational purposes such as canoeing and kayaking.

There is very little street furniture located in the study area. Standard cobra-head streetlamps are the street light fixtures along the project site and much of the primary study area (see Figure 8-5, View 6). Two older, cast-iron street lamps are located on Carroll Street; one on each side of the Carroll Street Bridge. Small portions of the streetbed of Carroll Street surrounding the Carroll Street Bridge, a portion of the south sidewalk on 1st Street, and a portion of the streetbed and sidewalks of Second Street near its terminus, are paved with Belgian block (see Figure 8-7, View 8; and Figure 8-6, View 11). There are few street trees within the primary study area.

### *Building Uses, Shapes and Forms*

The area surrounding the project site and within a block of the Gowanus Canal on both sides is a low- to mid-scale neighborhood, filled with small industrial and residential buildings interspersed with vacant, fenced lots. The industrial and warehouse buildings that typify the canal waterfront are one- to two-story brick or concrete block buildings with few windows, flat roofs often with low parapets, and minimal decorative features. Some of these buildings are somewhat taller, such as the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Power House on the east side of the canal, a nine-story Romanesque Revival-style brick building constructed in 1902 (see Figure 8-9, View 14). Most of the industrial structures have boxy shapes and occupy most of the lots on which they are located.

The eastern and western portions of the study area are residential in character and primarily consist of two- to three-story brick townhouses constructed during the second half of the nineteenth century. The neighborhood of Carroll Gardens (including the S/NR-Listed and New York City Landmark Carroll Gardens Historic District and S/NR-eligible and NYCL-eligible Carroll Gardens Historic District Boundary Increase) is located just beyond the western edge of the 400-foot primary study area. It is known for mid-rise brick and brownstone rowhouses in the Italianate and neo-Grec styles as well as the unusually large set-backs of the structures from the streets allowing spacious front gardens. The residential blocks closer to the Gowanus Canal and to the project site, such as those between Hoyt and Bond streets, are similar to those in Carroll Gardens, but are somewhat more modest in nature, and lack spacious front yards.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

Visual resources of the primary study area include the Gowanus Canal. Clear views of the canal can only be achieved from the street ends at the canal and from the bridges that traverse the canal, including the Carroll Street Bridge (see Figures 8-7 through 8-10). However, distant views of the canal can be seen along the street corridors from up to three blocks away. This relatively long view corridor is due in part to the sloping topography (see Figure 8-11).

Other visual resources that can be seen from publicly accessible vantage points within the study area include Saint Agnes Church and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank. Saint Agnes Church (S/NR-eligible and NYCL-eligible) can be seen most clearly from streets east of the Gowanus Canal, and from the Carroll Street Bridge (see Figure 8-12, View 20). The Williamsburgh



View from First Street and the west side of the Gowanus Canal, looking northeast towards a large single-story warehouse building on the east side of the canal. **13**



View from First Street and the west side of the Gowanus Canal, looking east towards the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Power House on the east side of the canal. **14**



View from First Street and the west side of the Gowanus Canal, looking southeast towards the east side of the canal; the cylindrical concrete Burns Brothers Coal Pockets can be seen on the horizon. **15**



View from Second Street and the west side of the Gowanus Canal, adjacent to the project site, looking northeast towards the east side of the Gowanus Canal. **16**



View from Second Street between Bond and Hoyt streets, looking east towards the project site and the Gowanus Canal. The project site and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Power House can be seen in the center background.

17



View from First Street between Bond and Hoyt streets, looking east towards the project site and the Gowanus Canal.

18



View from Bond Street near the corner of Carroll, looking southwest towards the Carroll Gardens Home for the Elderly, a six-story senior housing facility across Bond Street from the project site.

19



View from the Third Street Bridge over the Gowanus Canal, a view looking northwest towards the project site. St. Agnes' Church, identified as a visual resource, is visible in the background.

20



Savings Bank can be seen from the streets that run perpendicular to the Gowanus Canal on the west side of the canal within one block of the canal and it can also be seen from the Carroll Street Bridge (see Figure 8-7, View 10). This 512-foot structure is the tallest building in Brooklyn and is a New York City Landmark and National Register-listed historic property.

## SECONDARY STUDY AREA

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Natural Features, Street Patterns, and Block Shapes*

The secondary study area is primarily developed in a typical rectilinear grid pattern. Within the neighborhood of Carroll Gardens, west of the project site, multiple streets are arranged in an off-set such that direct views down street corridors are blocked. This effect was intentionally created by the developers of Carroll Gardens in order to foster a sense of insularity within the neighborhood. Examples of this street pattern include President and Carroll Streets between Hoyt and Smith Streets. The normal intersecting street grid is also interrupted by a small number of super-blocks in the study area. One of these is the site of the Gowanus Houses, a public housing project, which interrupts the street grid between Douglass and Wyckoff Streets between Hoyt and Bond Streets (see Figure 8-2). Other interruptions of the street grid occur where canal basins occur. These one- to two-block long channels run roughly perpendicular to the main canal and are located at 7th, 6th, 5th, and 1st Streets. The basins at 5th and 1st Streets have been partially filled.

There are multiple subway stations located within the secondary study area. These are found along Smith Street at Bergen Street, Carroll Street, and 9th Street; and along 4th Avenue at 9th Street and at Atlantic Avenue.

The topography of the study area is characterized by upward slopes from both the east and west sides of the canal. The Gowanus Canal itself is at the lowest elevation within the study area and each block along the canal on the east and the west remains relatively flat. Beyond this fronting block, however, the elevation climbs steadily to both the east and west, reaching 50 feet above mean low water at Smith Street, two blocks west of the project site. The topography also appears to slope very gradually higher from south to north.

#### *Streetscape*

The study area is urban in character, with streets flanked by concrete sidewalks. Portions of the study area, particularly along the canal, are somewhat underutilized, with relatively little street life. A number of vacant lots and parking areas are found along the canal, some of which are surrounded by chain-link fence. On Carroll, Union, and 3rd Street, however, where bridges cross the canal, there is a fairly steady stream of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, since these streets include bridges affording travel between the neighborhoods of Carroll Gardens and Park Slope. Further east and west of the project site, where residential uses predominate, streets are quiet but are fairly well used by local residents. Portions of multiple streets within the secondary study area, including Carroll, Sackett, and Degraw Streets, are paved with Belgian block (see Figure 8-6, View 8).

Several publicly-accessible open spaces are located in the secondary study area. Described in detail in Chapter 5, "Open Space and Recreational Facilities," these include, among others, Thomas Greene Playground on Degraw Street between Nevins Street and 3rd Avenue; Boerum

Park between Warren, Baltic, Smith, and Hoyt Streets; Carroll Park at Smith and Carroll Streets, and several others. In addition, as stated above, the Gowanus Canal itself is increasingly used for recreational purposes, such as canoeing and kayaking.

### *Building Uses, Shapes and Forms*

The eastern and western portions of the secondary study area are residential in character and primarily consist of two- to four-story brick townhouses constructed during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the western portion of the secondary study area, the Carroll Gardens neighborhood (including the S/NR-Listed and New York City Landmark Carroll Gardens Historic District and S/NR-eligible and NYCL-eligible Carroll Gardens Historic District Boundary Increase) is known for its brick and brownstone rowhouses in the Italianate and Neo-Grec styles. These relatively high-style houses are known for their unusually large set-backs which allow for spacious front gardens. The residential blocks closer to the Gowanus Canal and to the project site, such as those between Hoyt and Bond streets, are similar to those in Carroll Gardens, but are somewhat more modest in nature, and lack spacious front yards. These houses also exhibit elements of the Renaissance Revival and Neo-Grec styles and range from two to four stories. Typically, they include short stoops and small front yards edged with iron railings.

In general, avenues oriented north-south within the secondary study area, such as Smith Street, and 3rd and 4th Avenues, tend to be mixed-use streets with strong ground-floor commercial activity and residential uses occupying upper stories.

In addition to the industrial development along the Gowanus Canal and the commercial and rowhouse residential development that characterizes the majority of the study area, there are several churches (such as Saint Agnes Roman Catholic Church on Degraw Street and Hoyt Street), and schools (including the Sprole School [Public School 32] on Union and Hoyt Street). There are also several large housing developments, including the six-story brick St. Mary's Star of the Sea Home for the Elderly, located across from the project site on Bond Street between Carroll and 1st Streets (see Figure 8-12, View 19), and housing projects such as the 14-story brick Gowanus Houses (located between Douglass and Wyckoff streets and Hoyt and Bond streets) and 21-story Wyckoff Gardens housing (between Baltic and Wyckoff Streets and Nevins Street and 3rd Avenue). These housing developments are taller than the rowhouses that predominate in the area and can be seen from the project site.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

Visual resources of the secondary study area include Saint Agnes Church and the Gowanus Canal. The Williamsburgh Savings Bank, while located outside of the secondary study area approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile north of the project site at One Hanson Place, is visible from the project site and is therefore identified as a visual resource.

Publicly accessible areas from which the Gowanus Canal can be seen include the streets that run perpendicular to the Gowanus Canal for up to three blocks from the project site (approximately the extent of the east-west study area). However, clear views of the canal can only be achieved from the ends of the streets that terminate at the canal and from the bridges that traverse the canal.

Saint Agnes Church can be seen from points along or east of the Gowanus Canal, including the Carroll Street Bridge and the streets that run perpendicular to the canal on the east side of the canal for up to three blocks east of the canal.

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank can be seen from the streets that run perpendicular to the Gowanus Canal on the west side of the canal within one block of the canal. It can also be seen from the bridges that traverse the canal, including the Union, Carroll, and 3rd Street Bridges.

## C. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

### PROJECT SITE

No other projects are planned for construction on the project site by the year 2011. Without the proposed project, the site is expected to remain in its current condition and use, and therefore the urban design of the project site and views to surrounding visual resources would not be altered.

### STUDY AREA

As described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” it is expected that current trends towards development of a wider mix of uses in formerly industrial areas, which have been occurring throughout Brooklyn and New York City as a whole, will affect the area around the northern portion of the Gowanus Canal. These trends are evident in several currently anticipated projects within the secondary study area. At the intersection of 3rd Avenue and President Street, a new hotel is planned. A Whole Foods Market (commercial retail) is planned for a currently vacant parcel on 3rd Street between 3rd Avenue and the canal. Further east, Con Edison is developing a two-story office building on 4th Avenue between 1st and 3rd Streets.

Several residential developments are planned or under construction in the portion of the study area west of Bond Street and north of 3rd Street, which currently contains mostly residential uses. All of these residential developments are situated along the west side of Bond Street, and some will replace formerly industrial or vacant parcels. They include an 11 dwelling-unit building between Sackett and Union Streets, a 24 dwelling-unit building between President and Carroll Streets, a 15 dwelling-unit building at the corner of Bond and Carroll Streets, and a 45 dwelling-unit development at the corner of Bond and 3rd Streets.

In addition to these projects, on May 29th, 2008, DCP presented to the public a draft zoning proposal for the Gowanus Canal Corridor. Under the draft proposal, the proposed rezoning would: allow for a mix of uses, including residential, in certain areas currently zoned for manufacturing; create public access to the waterfront at the Canal’s edge; encourage an active streetscape with ground-floor uses on certain streets; promote affordable housing through the City’s Inclusionary Housing Program; and establish a range of building heights to allow flexibility to achieve the area development goals while addressing unique site conditions and reflecting the area’s existing built character.

As part of the rezoning, two new mixed use waterfront districts would be created along portions of the canal. In these areas, a 40-foot-wide waterfront esplanade along the canal would be required. The MX Waterfront North area—bounded by Douglass Street to the north, the Gowanus Canal and Nevins Street to the east, Carroll Street to the south, and Smith Street to the west—would be a mixed use district with building height limits of 55 to 65 feet, and 85 feet after a setback. A maximum FAR of 2.5 would be allowed, which may be increased to 3.3 with an inclusionary housing bonus.

The proposed MX Waterfront South area would be roughly bounded by Carroll Street to the north, 3rd Avenue to the east, 3rd Street to the south, and Smith Street to the west, and would include the proposed rezoning area and project site analyzed in this EIS. This mixed use district

would allow a maximum building height of 125 feet on limited portions of the site. Buildings over 85 feet high which face the canal would be limited to 110 feet in width facing the canal shoreline. A maximum FAR of 2.7 would be permitted, which may be increased to 3.6 with an inclusionary housing bonus. In this area, certain larger sites may be required to provide waterfront access in addition to the 40-foot esplanade.

The area between Nevins Street and 4th Avenue would be rezoned to allow a mix of residential, commercial and manufacturing uses at varying contextual densities. A medium-density M1-4/R6B district (2.0 maximum FAR for all uses) would be mapped in certain areas, and a higher density M1-4/R7A (2.0 maximum FAR for manufacturing, a residential base FAR of 3.45 with a bonus to 4.6 for sites providing inclusionary housing) district mapped along 3rd Avenue and Union Street. The west side of 4th Avenue would be rezoned R8A/C2-4 to match the east side of 4th Avenue. The proposed R8A/C2-4 zoning district would allow residential uses with ground-floor commercial uses at a maximum FAR of 7.2 with an inclusionary housing bonus, and a maximum FAR of 2.0 for commercial uses.

It is anticipated that the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) for this proposal would begin in mid 2009, with a potential rezoning in place by late 2009. Although the City's rezoning may be in place by 2011, since it is anticipated that the projected and potential development sites under the City's rezoning would have a Build year after 2011, no changes in land use would be expected to occur at the project site or in the larger study area by 2011.

## **D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

Provided below is an assessment of the potential impacts of the project with respect to urban design and visual character.

With the proposed project, all of the buildings on the project site would be demolished and the site would be cleared for new development. As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the proposed project would be comprised of three new buildings on each project block that would have components at various heights (see Figures 8-13 through 8-17). The range of building heights would be from 4 to 12 stories (up to approximately 125 feet) with three principal design elements: (1) low-rise building components of approximately 60 feet (6 stories) fronting on Bond Street; (2) low-rise "townhouse" components of approximately 43 feet (4 stories) along the midblocks of 1st and 2nd Streets; and (3) low-to mid-rise building components of 6 to 12 stories (up to 125 feet maximum) facing the waterfront open space.

### **PROJECT SITE**

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

As described above, the proposed project would replace the existing one- to two-story buildings on the project site with six-story building components along Bond Street and four-story townhouse components in the mid-block sections, while the medium-rise components would be located further east on the project site. By distributing the respective building heights in this manner, Bond Street's low-rise character would be maintained.

The proposed project would be a change in land use and building form on the project site. Industrial uses would be removed to allow for development of residential space. The proposed project, however, is considered beneficial to the project site and surrounding area. Furthermore, the planting of street trees and the creation of an approximately 0.7 acre publicly-accessible



Existing



Proposed

*NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only*



Existing



Proposed

*NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only*

West Bank of Gowanus Canal at 2nd Street,  
Looking North  
**Figure 8-14**



Existing



Proposed

*NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only*

Carroll Street Bridge in Open Position,  
Looking West to Project Site



Existing



Proposed

*NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only*

Looking southeast towards Third Street Bridge from  
First Street at Gowanus Canal





Existing



Proposed

*NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only*

Looking East towards Hoyt Street  
from Carroll Street at Smith Street

**Figure 8-17**

waterfront esplanade along the Gowanus Canal frontage of project site are also considered positive effects to the streetscape. The project would also improve the condition of the shoreline/bulkhead within the project site which, though currently functioning, could not be utilized or repaired for the purposes of meeting the proposed waterfront access goals of both the project and the City. The new sheet pile bulkhead, which would support the proposed waterfront esplanade, would be secured to the existing land with tie rods. While the final design of the proposed bulkhead is subject to change based on review by DEC/ACOE, the bulkhead would be faced in wood to match the appearance of the existing and would be designed in coordination with the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

Views of all identified visual resources would improve from publicly accessible areas on or immediately adjacent to the project site with the construction of the proposed project. No views that exist at present are expected to be adversely impacted or blocked by the proposed project. Rather, new vantage points from which to view visual resources would be created with the proposed construction of a public esplanade and plaza on the project site along the Gowanus Canal.

### **STUDY AREA**

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

##### *Natural Features, Street Patterns, and Block Shapes*

The proposed project would not change the shapes of the project blocks. Within the existing street grid, access to publicly accessible open space will be provided at three public street locations: Carroll, First, and Second Streets. This aspect of the proposed project is positive in that it would improve access to the Gowanus Canal in the study area by providing publicly-accessible areas along the waterfront, including a waterfront esplanade.

##### *Streetscape*

Overall, the proposed project is expected to enhance the vitality of the surrounding streets by introducing residential uses and increasing resident and visitor use of the project site. The proposed project would also contribute to the street aesthetic by improving sidewalks and introducing street trees along the streets that lead to the waterfront. Currently there are very few trees on and immediately adjacent to the project site. The proposed development would introduce street trees along Carroll Street, 1st Street, 2nd Street, and Bond Street, and along the waterfront esplanade. The sections of Belgian block paving on Carroll Street, immediately adjacent to the project site, would not be impacted. The Belgian block pavement on the south sidewalk at the end of 1st Street and on the sidewalks and street at the end of Second Street, would be removed in order to construct cul-de-sacs and continuations to the waterfront esplanades at the ends of these streets. If possible, the proposed project would seek to either reuse the Belgian block (which is owned by the City of New York) on the project site's streetscape or would encourage its salvage and reuse in another location. The two cast-iron street lamps located on Carroll Street, one on each side of the Carroll Street Bridge, would not be affected by the proposed project. The proposed project would not be expected to affect the other streetscape elements noted above. The proposed project would enhance the vitality of these streets by creating new residential uses along the waterfront and increasing pedestrian visitation

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to the water. All parking would be located within the project site and would be wrapped by active ground floor uses: residences and residential lobbies, residential amenity space, and community facility use, and local retail use.

#### *Building Uses, Shapes and Forms*

The footprint of the proposed buildings would be consistent with the footprint other structures in the neighborhood. The height of the proposed development along the waterfront would be taller than what currently exists on the project site and taller than most of the buildings within the study areas. The tallest building complexes in the primary study area are the six-story Carroll Gardens Home for the Elderly and the nine-story Former Brooklyn Rapid Transit Power House. Within the secondary study area, two housing projects, Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens, rise to 14 and 21 stories, respectively.

The height of the various elements of the proposed project has been distributed to maintain the low-rise character of the Bond Street frontage and the mid-block portions of Carroll, First, and Second Streets. By siting the mid-rise elements along the canal frontage of the project site, the proposed project maintains a low-rise character along Bond Street while providing residential density and waterfront open space along the canal. The lower five-story (with penthouse) segments are placed on Bond Street, reflecting the lower-scale context of the residential area to the west, as well as the narrow, mapped width of Bond Street. The proposed project would include limited elements that are comparable or lower in height than buildings that exist in the study areas, including the Former Brooklyn Rapid Transit Power House (9 stories), Gowanus Houses (14 stories) and Wyckoff Gardens (21 stories). The footprint of the proposed building complex would be consistent with many older industrial buildings located along the canal in the study areas.

The portion of the proposed project to be built along Bond Street would be in keeping with the existing built form of that street corridor. This frontage has been designed with a consistent street wall, set back 5 feet from the sidewalk with a small planting area between each building and sidewalk, in keeping with the existing character of the area. The low-rise townhouse elements planned for the mid-block portions of 1st and 2nd Streets have been designed to reference the rowhouses typical of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Each four-story townhouse element would contain an individual stoop-like entrance to the street. The tallest building elements of the proposed project (12 stories maximum) would be located in the eastern portion of the project site and be limited in both size and width facing the canal. These elements would be wrapped by six-story bases which have been further faceted in order to minimize the perceived height of the development as viewed from the eastern portions of Carroll, First, and Second Streets, and from the waterfront esplanade. The buildings would be set back at least 40 feet from the canal. Approximately 30,821 square feet of open space (not including landscaped street ends) would be created visual corridor along the canal, providing extensive public views to the east, north and south.

The expected materials and finish of the proposed development would consist primarily of masonry and glass, including a larger proportion of glass than is typical for buildings in the surrounding area.

Overall, the proposed project is considered to be beneficial to the urban design and visual character of the study areas, as it would create a major residential facility that would increase visits to the project site and the surrounding area and open up the waterfront to public views. The proposed project would provide substantial new public open space and access to the

waterfront, which currently does not exist on the site (with the exceptions of the dead ends of public streets) or at very many locations along the Gowanus Canal. Therefore, the proposed project will reflect a reasonable balance between existing and proposed building heights, and bulk and new open space.

*VISUAL RESOURCES*

The proposed project is not expected to adversely impact views along the Bond Street or Gowanus Canal view corridors with respect to views to nearby visual resources. In fact, it would create and open new views of resources such as the Gowanus Canal and the former Power House on the east side of the canal. While limited portions of the proposed project would be up to 12 stories in height, these elements would be concentrated in the eastern portion of the project site, while the western portion would consist of low-rise elements of between four and six stories. The impact of the proposed project's height is further diminished because the project site is at a substantially lower elevation than much of the surrounding area.

Overall, existing views of the Gowanus Canal from public vantage points would not be compromised, since these views are currently only available from within streets perpendicular to the canal and the proposed project would not block any of these sight lines. Existing views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank would not be compromised by the proposed construction, but would be enhanced with views from the waterfront.

In conclusion, views of identified visual resources would be expected to improve as a result of the proposed project. The proposed construction of a publicly accessible esplanade and plaza on the project site along the canal and adjacent to the proposed housing complex would create new vantage points where public spaces currently do not exist or are in poor condition. New views and improved views, particularly of the Gowanus Canal and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, would be anticipated as a result of the proposed construction. \*