

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyzes alternatives to the proposed project. Alternatives selected for consideration in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) generally include a No Action Alternative and alternatives that are feasible, considering the objectives and capabilities of the project sponsor, and have the potential to reduce, eliminate, or avoid significant adverse impacts of a proposed action while meeting some or all of the goals and objectives of the action. In addition, when a project would result in significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated, an assessment of an alternative to the project that would result in no unmitigated impacts is often included in an EIS. Such alternatives may not be feasible in relation to the objectives and capabilities of the project sponsor, but can serve as an analytical tool that demonstrates there is no alternative meeting the goals of the proposed project without resulting in unmitigated impacts.

This chapter considers the following alternatives to the proposed project and compares those alternatives to the proposed project itself:

- A No Action Alternative, which assumes none of the proposed discretionary actions would occur, and the project site would continue to remain primarily unoccupied; and
- A No Unmitigated Significant Adverse Impact Alternative, which considers two scenarios that would avoid the proposed project's significant adverse impact on historic resources.

In addition to a comparative impact analysis, the alternatives in this chapter are assessed to determine to what extent they would meet the goals and objectives of the proposed project, which include:

- Creating an economically viable development that will complement the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood, create jobs, contribute to the vitality of the streetscape and retail environment, reinforce 125th Street as a major mixed-use corridor, and enhance tourism;
- Redeveloping an underutilized, vacant, and deteriorated site into a vibrant mixed-use building;
- Creating new residential apartments to address the needs of the community, including affordable and market-rate housing;
- Providing hotel space to serve growing market demand;
- Preserving and/or adaptively reusing, to the extent practicable, important historic elements of the Victoria Theatre in the building's design; and
- Creating a venue for cultural programming, event space, and support space for the project's cultural partners.

The conclusion of the alternatives analysis is that, while either of the alternatives may reduce or eliminate the significant adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources, neither of the alternatives considered could achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

B. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION OF THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative assumes that the project site would not be transferred from New York State to the developer, that there would be no zoning overrides, General Project Plan, or other discretionary actions, and that the proposed project would not be implemented. Under this scenario, the project site would remain largely vacant, and the Victoria Theater would continue to deteriorate.

Under this alternative, none of the project goals and objectives would be realized: no jobs would be created and the project site would not contribute towards economic revitalization; no new housing—either affordable or market-rate—would be created to address the needs of the community; a new venue for cultural programming and support space for the project’s cultural partners would not be built; and the area would continue to be underserved in terms of hotel space. The vacant and deteriorated project site would not be redeveloped into a vibrant mixed-use building, and the historic Victoria Theater would not be restored and adaptively reused. The project site would continue to be an underutilized state-owned asset that contributes little to the vitality of the streetscape and retail environment or to 125th Street’s character as a major mixed-use corridor and tourist destination. The State would continue to expend resources for the upkeep of the property, insurance, and to meet building and fire code requirements.

The No Action Alternative has been used in other chapters of this EIS as the baseline against which impacts of the proposed project are measured. The section below compares the potential effects of the No Action Alternative to those of the proposed project.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE COMPARED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

Under this alternative, the project site would remain largely vacant, with one tenant occupying a small space along West 125th Street. The North and South Buildings on the project site would continue to deteriorate and the site would remain an underutilized state-owned property.

Under the No Action Alternative none of the proposed actions would be implemented, including creation of a GPP, zoning overrides, or funding. However, this alternative would not achieve the beneficial land use changes that would result from the proposed project and it would not fulfill important public policy goals that the proposed project would address, including the creation of affordable and market-rate housing, employment and economic revitalization, and supporting mixed use development along 125th Street and reinforcing its role as a center of commercial activity and the arts.

Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, and public policy, as described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy.”

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Similar to the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in any socioeconomic changes that would result in significant adverse impacts, for the following reasons:

- Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would directly displace a residential population;
- Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would directly displace more than 100 employees;
- Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would directly displace a business that is unusually important because its products or services are uniquely dependent on its location;
- Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would result in substantial new development that is markedly different from existing uses, development, and activities within the neighborhood;
- Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would add to, or create, a retail concentration that would draw a substantial amount of sales from existing businesses within the area; and
- Neither the proposed project nor this alternative is expected to affect conditions within a specific industry such that there would be significant adverse economic impacts.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

As described In Chapter 4, “Community Facilities,” the proposed project would not have a direct effect on any community facility and would not result in significant indirect effects on public schools, libraries, health care facilities, child care centers, or police and fire protection as defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or additional population and as such would have no direct or indirect effects on community facilities. Therefore, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would have a significant adverse impact on community facilities and services.

OPEN SPACE

The total amount of publicly accessible open space acreage in the open space study area is not expected to change under the No Action Alternative, while a modest number of additional residents would be added to the study area from other planned developments. These additional residents would result in a small decrease in the total, active, and passive open space ratios, which would continue to fall short of the City’s recommended open space ratio guidelines.

While the total, active, and passive open space ratios would be slightly higher (less than 1 percent) under the No Action Alternative than under the proposed project, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts related to open space.

SHADOWS

Under this alternative, there would be no new development on the project site and, therefore, no new shadow increments on nearby sun-sensitive resources. Unlike the proposed project this alternative would not cast new shadows on portions of the St. Nicholas Houses or Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Malls at certain times of the year. However, as described in Chapter 6, “Shadows,”

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the brief duration and small extent of the incremental shadows from the proposed project would not cause a significant adverse shadows impact. Therefore, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts related to shadows.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archaeological Resources

There are no known or suspected archaeological resources on the project site that could be disturbed or impacted, and this alternative would not result in any ground disturbance. Therefore, as with the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts on archaeological resources.

Architectural Resources

Unlike the proposed project, this alternative would not have a significant adverse impact to historic resources, as it would not involve demolition of the North Building, and taking no affirmative action to preserve a deteriorating historic resource is not considered to be a significant adverse impact for SEQRA purposes. However, under the No Action Alternative, the North and South Buildings would continue to deteriorate. There would be no funds generated for the restoration of the project site and neither the North nor South Building would be preserved or opened to the public. With the No Action Alternative, the State would continue to expend resources for the upkeep of the property, insurance, and to meet building and fire code requirements.

As discussed in Chapter 7, “Historic Resources,” the impacts of the proposed project would be mitigated, in part, by a number of measures to be set forth in a Letter of Resolution (LOR) to be executed among the project sponsors, HCDC, ESD, and OPRHP, pursuant to Section 14.09 of the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law. These measures are expected to include the retention and restoration of the South Building, with its 125th Street façade and certain first floor spaces restored to their 1917 appearance. Specifically, elements to be restored or replicated include the front entrance doors, vertical blade sign, horizontal marquee, lobby, and foyer and staircase. In addition, the theater’s former ticket booth on West 125th Street will be recreated to serve as a signage element. New lighting will also be designed to be referential to the theater’s original design. Selected historic ornamental features in the North Building would be identified for salvage and potential reuse in the proposed project. Within the proposed project, educational materials would be installed concerning the historic Victoria Theater and in its larger context as part of Harlem’s Opera Row.

None of these measures would be implemented under the No Action Alternative, and the North and South Buildings would continue to deteriorate. Thus, this alternative could ultimately result in additional loss of structural and historic integrity since there would be no preservation or restoration efforts.

Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not have the potential to result in direct, construction-related impacts on the South Building and the Apollo Theater. However, the proposed project would include the preparation and implementation of a Construction Protection Plan (CPP) that would address the potential for construction-related impacts and, therefore, the proposed project would also not have significant adverse construction-related impacts on these historic resources, as discussed in Chapter 7, “Historic and Cultural Resources.”

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

With the No Action Alternative, the project site would remain much as it is today and would continue as an underutilized and deteriorating site along the heart of West 125th Street. The South Building of the Victoria Theater would not be restored, and the project site would not be redeveloped with new residential, hotel, cultural and retail uses.

The actions related to urban design that would facilitate the redevelopment of the project site (described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,”) would not take place under this alternative, including zoning overrides for total floor area, floor-area ratio, maximum building height, maximum base height, permitted number of residential units, and required square footage per parking space. However, as described in Chapter 8, “Urban Design and Visual Resources,,” the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources. As described above, with the proposed project the South Building would be retained and its façade would be restored as an important component of the West 125th Street streetscape; under the No Action Alternative no such restoration would take place, the building would remain in a deteriorating state, and there would be no improvement to the appearance of the area’s streetscape and pedestrian experience.

Under this alternative, the project site would remain largely inaccessible and vacant, unlike the proposed project which would restore the lobby and foyer of the South Building as the public entryway to the building’s cultural events and hotel and would enhance the visual appearance of the building and the pedestrian experience on West 125th Street. In addition, unlike the proposed project—which would activate this portion of West 126th Street by providing a visually transparent, glazed curtain wall with pedestrian entrances and access to the building—under this alternative the West 126th Street side of the project site would remain a stark brick façade with no activity or articulation at the ground floor to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Unlike the proposed project, which would include a tall modern building, this alternative would retain the existing low-rise buildings on the project site. As described in Chapter 8, “Urban Design and Visual Resources,,” the new building would be substantially taller than permitted by zoning, but the overall bulk and height of the proposed building would be in context with other tall buildings in Harlem, including the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building nearby and the Lionel Hampton Houses within the urban design study area’s viewshed.

Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would have a significant adverse impact on urban design and visual resources.

NATURAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 9, “Natural Resources,,” the project site and surrounding area are in a fully developed part of Manhattan and are substantially devoid of natural resources. Therefore, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would have a significant adverse impact on natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Unlike the proposed project, under the No Action Alternative the project site would remain largely vacant and there would be no demolition, excavation or construction activities that could disturb potential hazardous materials. However, as discussed in Chapter 10, “Hazardous Materials,,” the proposed project would implement appropriate health and safety and investigative/remedial measures that would precede or govern demolition, renovation, and soil

disturbance activities. Therefore, neither the No Action Alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Neither the proposed action nor the No Action Alternative would have an exceptionally large demand for water and the project site is not located at the extremities of the water distribution system. Therefore, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would have a significant adverse impact on water supply.

Similarly, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would meet the thresholds requiring an analysis of wastewater and stormwater conditions (see Chapter 11, “Water and Sewer Infrastructure”). Therefore, neither the proposed action nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts on wastewater or stormwater systems.

SOLID WASTE AND SANITATION SERVICES

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, few projects have the potential to generate substantial amounts of solid waste (50 tons per week or more) and, therefore, most projects would not result in significant adverse impacts. As described in Chapter 12, “Solid Waste and Sanitation Services,” the proposed project is estimated to generate approximately 11.57 tons of solid waste per week; the No Action Alternative, under which the project site would continue to have only one small retail tenant, would generate less than 400 pounds per week¹. Therefore, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts on solid waste and sanitation services.

ENERGY

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, all new structures requiring heating and cooling are subject to the New York City Energy Conservation Code. Therefore, the need for a detailed assessment of energy impacts is limited to projects that may significantly affect the transmission or generation of energy. Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would affect the transmission of energy and would not result in a significant energy impact.

As described in Chapter 13, “Energy,” the proposed project’s energy consumption is estimated to be approximately 60,661 million BTUs per year, which would not be considered a significant demand for energy. The energy demand for the No Action Alternative would be considerably less, given that there would be no redevelopment of the project site and the only active use would be the existing nail salon. Overall, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would have a significant adverse impact on energy.

TRANSPORTATION

As the project site would remain largely unoccupied in the No Action Alternative, it would not generate any travel demand beyond the negligible amount of trips generated by the existing nail salon. Compared to the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would result in approximately 436, 1,023, 836, and 766 fewer person trips in the vicinity of the project site during the weekday AM, midday, PM, and Saturday peak hours, respectively. The No Action

¹ Based on an estimated 4 employees and using the *CEQR Technical Manual* rate of 79 pounds per week per employee.

Alternative would also result in approximately 92, 166, 155, and 114 fewer vehicle trips over the same peak hours, respectively, as compared to the proposed project.

In the No Action Alternative, there would be an increase in transportation demands from sites in the study area that will be developed by 2014 and from background growth reflecting general long-term trends and other developments.

Traffic

As discussed in Chapter 14, “Transportation,” under the No Action Alternative, traffic volumes in 2014 are expected to increase compared to existing volumes due to growth unrelated to the project site.

The majority of the study area approaches/lane-groups would operate at the same LOS as in existing conditions with four exceptions: the eastbound approach at the West 125th Street/Eighth Avenue intersection during the AM and PM peak hours; the westbound approach at the West 125th Street/Eighth Avenue intersection during the AM, PM, and Saturday peak hours; the westbound approach at the West 125th Street/Lenox Avenue intersection during the midday and PM peak hours; and the eastbound left-turn/right-turn lane at the West 124th Street/Lenox Avenue intersection during the PM peak hour.

Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse traffic impacts at the six approaches/lane groups identified in Chapter 14, “Transportation.” However, as discussed in Chapter 22, “Mitigation,” those project impacts could be fully mitigated through adjustments in signal timing.

Parking

In the No Action Alternative, parking conditions would remain similar to existing conditions. Unlike the proposed project, there would be no new parking demand from uses on the project site, and no accessory parking would be created on the project site. Like the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in any significant adverse parking impacts, as discussed in Chapter 14, “Transportation.”

Subway

The project site and surrounding area are well served by subway service, including the A, B, C, and D lines at St. Nicholas Avenue and West 125th Street and the No. 2 and 3 trains at Lenox Avenue and West 125th Street. As discussed in Chapter 14, “Transportation,” with the proposed project, subway station elements would not be expected to incur 200 or more peak hour project-generated subway trips during the study peak hours. Consequently, the proposed project would not have the potential to result in any significant adverse subway impacts.

The demand for subway transit within the study area would increase modestly under the No Action Alternative compared to existing conditions, due to background growth and known developments in the area. Compared to the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would result in 184, 236, 268, and 222 fewer subway trips in the weekday AM, weekday midday, weekday PM, and Saturday midday peak hours, respectively.

Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts with the No Action Alternative or the proposed project.

Bus

There are several bus routes serving the project site and surrounding area, including the M2, M3, M7, M10, M60, M100, M101, M102, and BX15. As discussed in Chapter 14, “Transportation,” the peak hour bus trips generated by the proposed project would be distributed among these bus routes, would not result in an increase of 50 or more peak hour bus riders in a single direction, and would therefore not result in significant adverse impacts on bus service.

The demand for bus transit within the study area would increase under the No Action Alternative compared to existing conditions due to both background growth and anticipated development in the area surrounding the project site. Compared to the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would result in 37, 89, 76, and 72 fewer bus trips during the weekday AM, midday, PM, and Saturday peak hours, respectively.

Therefore, as with the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts on bus transit.

Pedestrians

Compared to the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would result in between 349 and 856 fewer pedestrian trips during the analyzed hours. As with the proposed project, under the No Action Alternative all sidewalk, crosswalk, and corner reservoir analysis locations would continue to operate at acceptable levels according to CEQR thresholds.

Like the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in any significant adverse pedestrian impacts, as discussed in Chapter 14, “Transportation.”

AIR QUALITY

Like the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not have a significant adverse impact on air quality, either from mobile or stationary sources. As the project site would remain largely unoccupied under the No Action Alternative, there would be no new vehicle trips and no exhausts from new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. As described in Chapter 15, “Air Quality,” the mobile source analysis indicated that mobile sources with the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact on air quality. Similarly, the stationary source analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that there would be no potential significant adverse stationary source air quality impacts from emissions of nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter from the proposed fossil fuel-fired HVAC systems of the proposed project.

Therefore, like the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in impacts on air quality from mobile sources or stationary emission sources.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

In the No Action Alternative, the use of energy for buildings and vehicle trips associated with the proposed project would not occur. But it should be noted that the greenhouse gas emissions and consistency analysis, according to *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance, does not attempt to identify the net emissions of a proposed action as compared to a No Action Alternative, but rather identifies the total emissions associated with the proposed action and analyzes a proposed project’s consistency with the City’s greenhouse gas reduction goal by analyzing design and efficiency measures. As described in Chapter 16, “Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” the proximity of the project site to public transportation, energy-efficient building design, and adaptive reuse of

an existing building are all factors that contribute to the energy efficiency of the proposed project, which will be designed to meet the standards for the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification. As such, the proposed project is consistent with sustainable land-use planning and smart-growth strategies which aim to reduce the carbon footprint of new development.

NOISE

Noise conditions in and around the project area, which are primarily a result of existing vehicular traffic on adjacent roadways, would be similar with the No Action Alternative to those with the proposed project. However, the No Action Alternative would not introduce new noise-sensitive uses to the project site. Consequently, no noise attenuation would be provided for the buildings on the project site with this alternative. Under the proposed project, as described in chapter 17, "Noise," the proposed building façades would be designed to provide a composite Outdoor-Indoor Transmission Class rating greater than or equal to CEQR attenuation requirements. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the proposed project would have significant adverse noise impacts.

PUBLIC HEALTH

As described in Chapter 18, "Public Health," the proposed project would not result in significant unmitigated adverse impacts in the technical areas related to public health, such as air quality, water quality, hazardous materials, or noise. Similarly, the No Action Alternative would not be expected to result in public health impacts.

However, since the No Action Alternative would not involve any demolition or construction activities, there would be no identification or remediation of potential sources of contamination on the project site, potentially including lead-based paint, asbestos-containing materials (ACM), and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) containing electrical equipment and fluorescent lighting fixtures. There would not be a Phase II Subsurface Investigation to evaluate the potential for subsurface contamination, and there would not be a Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP) establishing procedures to be followed to safely address any identified contamination during construction. As fully described in Chapter 10, "Hazardous Materials," these measures would be implemented as part of the proposed project to avoid the potential for significant adverse impacts from hazardous materials.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

The No Action Alternative, like the proposed project, would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character. Under this alternative, the buildings on the project site would continue to deteriorate and the site would remain largely vacant and inactive.

The proposed project would have significant adverse impacts in two of the technical areas contributing to neighborhood character: historic and cultural resources (which could be partially mitigated), and transportation (which could be fully mitigated through signal timing changes). These impacts would not occur under this alternative. As described in Chapter 19, "Neighborhood Character," through the creation of a new building that complements existing area land uses, and the revitalization and restoration of the South Building on the project site, the proposed project would be consistent with the key components of the area's character and would, in fact, result in beneficial effects on neighborhood character. Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not provide space for cultural organizations, would not

create any affordable or market-rate housing, would not generate new sources of employment and economic activity, and would not create a new hotel for an underserved market. Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would fail to contribute to the ongoing revitalization of 125th Street as a premier art, culture and entertainment district—the project site would remain substantially underutilized, largely vacant and inactive.

Overall, like the proposed project the No Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character, but it would also have none of the beneficial effects cited above that would result from the proposed project.

CONSTRUCTION

There would be no construction associated with the No Action Alternative and, therefore, it would not result in any of the short-term construction disruptions to the surrounding area that would result from the proposed project. Neither this alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant construction-related adverse impacts on land use, community facilities, open space, natural resources, transportation, air quality, or noise. As described above, during construction of the proposed project, health and safety and investigative/remedial measures would be implemented to ensure that there are no hazardous materials impacts, and for historic resources a CPP would be implemented to avoid potential construction impacts on the South Building as well as the Apollo Theater. Therefore, neither the No Action Alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant adverse construction impacts.

C. NO UNMITIGATED SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ALTERNATIVES

As discussed in Chapter 7, “Historic and Cultural Resources,” the proposed project would demolish the North Building on the project site, which would constitute an adverse impact to a State and National Register-eligible property. Although mitigation measures would be undertaken, the demolition of the North Building would be considered an impact that cannot be fully mitigated. Measures to partially mitigate the adverse impact have been proposed and are described in greater detail in Chapter 22, “Mitigation.” The proposed mitigation measures would be set forth in a Letter of Resolution (LOR) to be executed among the project sponsors, HCDC, ESD, and OPRHP, pursuant to Section 14.09 of the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law. The proposed mitigation measures include the following:

- The South Building would be retained with its 125th Street façade and certain first floor spaces restored to their 1917 appearance. Specifically, elements to be restored or replicated include the front entrance doors, vertical blade sign, horizontal marquee, lobby, and foyer and staircase. In addition, the theater’s former ticket booth on West 125th Street would be recreated to serve as a signage element. New lighting would also be designed to be referential to the theater’s original (1917) design.
- The project architect and historic preservation consultants, in consultation with HCDC and ESD, would identify selected historic ornamental features in the North Building that are able to be salvaged and will consult with OPRHP as to how they would be reused in the proposed project. At a minimum, the north canvas mural from the balcony level of the auditorium and the water fountain mosaics located in the stair foyers of the North Building will be considered for salvage and reuse, contingent upon the feasibility of salvage and removal. Other architectural elements in the North Building would be identified that can be salvaged

and reused or that can be referenced and used to inform and influence the design of new spaces in the North Building.

- Within the proposed project, educational materials would be installed concerning the historic Victoria Theater and in its larger context as part of Harlem’s Opera Row. Development of these materials, which may include text, photographs, interactive exhibits and salvaged architectural elements, would be undertaken in consultation with OPRHP.
- A CPP would be developed to address how the South Building and the Apollo Theater would be protected during project demolition and construction. The CPP shall meet the requirements specified in the New York City Department of Buildings (NYCDOB) Technical Policy and Procedure Notice #10/88 and be implemented by a licensed professional engineer. The CPP would be submitted to OPRHP for review and approval prior to implementation.

These measures would partially mitigate the significant adverse impacts occasioned by the loss of the North Building. This section evaluates two scenarios that would allow for the full mitigation or avoidance of these impacts. The two impact avoidance scenarios are taken from the Alternatives Analysis that was prepared and reviewed by OPRHP under Section 14.09 of the New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Law. After evaluating the alternatives contained in the Alternatives Analysis, OPRHP determined in a letter dated April 23, 2012 that “there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to having an adverse impact upon this historic building.”

SCENARIO 1: RETENTION AND REUSE WITHOUT OVERBUILD

The South Building contains three floors with a double height foyer at the rear of the building that provides access to the balcony level of the auditorium in the North Building. The North Building is primarily composed of the auditorium, an approximately three-story space, which was subdivided into five theater spaces in the 1980s.

As the project seeks to provide cultural programming space, the feasibility of reusing the North Building, including the original auditorium, for the proposed cultural programming was studied. However, the size, configuration, and condition of the auditorium precludes its adaptive reuse for this purpose. The existing auditorium was designed with a seating capacity of over 2,000 and with a traditional configuration with raked seating facing the stage. Representatives of Harlem’s cultural community have indicated that they require smaller and flexible spaces that allow for a variety of cultural programming and that are affordable. The proposed Project’s cultural spaces are envisioned to be financially accessible to smaller groups and companies due to lower union wage rates and operating costs than large performance venues; designed with flexible layouts that maximize the potential programming and use of the performance spaces; and to complement, not compete, with the Apollo Theater. As it is, the Apollo Theater, with a seating capacity of 1,700, is only booked 40 percent of the year. Due to its size of over 499 seats, stagehands and other theater personnel command upper union wage rates and render the Apollo unaffordable to smaller cultural groups and companies. The auditorium of the North Building is also in a substantially deteriorated condition, with wall and ceiling surfaces damaged through prior alterations and water damage, and in some locations collapsed entirely.

Sufficient floor area is required to meet the project’s overall goals and objectives with respect to providing affordable housing, a hotel, and employment opportunities. As built, the Victoria Theater buildings do not contain sufficient floor area to accommodate the proposed program. The North Building is primarily occupied by a large auditorium with a raked floor and balcony,

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and as such, does not possess floor plates conducive to adaptive reuse for purposes other than a large entertainment venue. Dividing the auditorium into smaller spaces would require the removal of historic material, compromise the historic intent and integrity of the space, and overall adversely affect the historic character of the space.

Therefore, retention of the Victoria Theater in its entirety is not a feasible alternative.

SCENARIO 2: CONSTRUCT NEW PROGRAM ABOVE THE NORTH BUILDING

To meet the project's community and economic development goals and objectives, additional floor area would need to be constructed on the project site. The North Building has an approximately 15,000-square-foot footprint that allows for the development of appropriately sized floor plates for the proposed uses. In comparison, the South Building has a much smaller footprint of only 5,000 square feet. In addition, the South Building contains the historic ornamented façade and entrance into the Victoria Theater and is both a historic and visual landmark on West 125th Street. Based on considerations of building footprint and the value of retaining the South Building as an important historic streetscape component on West 125th Street, the potential for construction on the site of the North Building was considered as an alternative.

To avoid significant adverse impacts on the historic resource, the entirety of the North Building, in addition to the South Building, would need to be retained. The lack of any viable use for the auditorium poses an insurmountable impediment to the retention and reuse of the North Building. Even if overbuilding the North Building were to be contemplated without a projected plan for reuse of the auditorium, such an overbuild scenario would require demolition of portions of the North Building and would incur substantial costs. With an overbuild scenario, the new building housing the hotel and residential uses would need to bridge over the approximately 15,000-square-foot footprint and 78-foot height of the North Building. This would present exceptional structural and engineering challenges. Structural columns to support a new building would need to pierce through the building and connect to a major transfer truss structure. The trusses would bridge over the existing building and provide support for the new building. Selective demolition of the existing structure of the North Building would be required to insert the columns as well as to create elevator, stair, and mechanical shafts vertically through the full volume of the North Building. The insertion of the structural columns and circulation and mechanical shafts through the North Building would compromise the historic integrity of North Building, potentially resulting in adverse impacts on this historic resource through alteration of the spatial layout of the spaces within the building and the removal of historic fabric.

Construction of the superstructure necessary to retain the existing building and to build above it would come with a significant premium, dramatically increasing the cost of construction. To bridge over the existing theater and span the 100 foot width of the North Building while supporting approximately 23 stories of housing and hotel above, approximately 38 ten-foot-high steel trusses would be required. The trusses would at a minimum increase the cost of construction by 10 percent, and additional costs would be incurred to construct the structural columns to support the trusses. Costs to restore the North Building itself would also be considerable.

Retention of the North Building would also constrain the project's ability to provide basic functions associated with a mixed-use development. Since the auditorium occupies almost all of the available floor area at ground level (as well as the upper portions of the building), its retention, unaltered, would constrain the ability to provide one or more uses required as part of a

mixed-use development, including an entrance to parking, a service entrance, a loading dock, and a separate residential entrance. These uses cannot be accommodated on West 125th Street due to the limited and relatively narrow frontage available on that street. These elements are essential for a mixed-use development that contains hotel and residential uses. Therefore, retaining the North Building in its current configuration would not achieve the goals and objectives of the proposed project.

Overall, the functional inefficiencies resulting from retention of the North Building and constructing above it, and the increased costs in restoring the North Building—for which there is no viable projected use—and building over it, would preclude the realization of the project’s community and economic development goals and objectives and render the project financially and programmatically infeasible. *