

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* states that urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, and their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and the noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. Since the proposed development on the project site would be notably different in bulk and type from existing development, and would result in changes to block forms and street patterns, a detailed urban design and visual resources analysis was conducted to determine whether this development would result in significant adverse impacts to these resources. This chapter analyzes existing conditions, the future without the proposed project, and probable impacts of the proposed project.

As part of the urban design and visual resources analysis, this chapter also considers the lighting and signage that are part of the proposed project. While the lighting for the residential buildings would be similar to lighting used by most modern residential buildings that are being constructed in New York City, lighting surrounding the proposed project’s arena would include signage along Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues.

As discussed in Chapter 2, “Procedural and Analytical Framework,” two variations of the project program are under consideration: (1) a residential mixed-use variation and (2) a commercial mixed-use variation. Under the commercial mixed-use variation, Buildings 1 and 2 and the building on Site 5 would contain slightly larger floorplates, typical of office development. However, this difference would be minimal and would not result in different conclusions regarding the urban design and visual resource assessment. The proposed building heights are the same for both the residential and commercial mixed-use variations, and both variations would have generally the same effects on urban design and visual resources.

## **PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS**

### *URBAN DESIGN*

The proposed project would transform an underutilized 22-acre site and establish physical and visual connections between several vibrant neighborhoods in the heart of Brooklyn. It would add to the site a major mixed-use development close to Downtown Brooklyn. Development of the project site’s western end would be of a scale similar to the buildings in Downtown Brooklyn, and would serve to extend that area along the existing transit hub. Development at the eastern end of the project site would serve as a transition and connection to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Dramatically designed modern buildings would attract people to live, work, and enjoy sports and entertainment events in an area that is situated at a major transportation crossroad and that is currently, for the most part, in a deteriorated and underdeveloped condition.

In general, the proposed project is expected to alter the built form of the project site and study area through the addition of an arena and 16 additional buildings (referred to as Site 5 and Buildings 1 through 15), ranging in height at their highest roofs from approximately 184 feet to approximately 620 feet. Most of these buildings would be considerably taller and of a larger scale than the buildings in the surrounding area. Streets would be closed and blocks would be joined to create the arena block (the three blocks bounded by Dean Street and Flatbush, Atlantic, 5th, and 6th Avenues) and the large residential block (the two blocks bounded by Dean Street and Atlantic, Carlton, and Vanderbilt Avenues). The arena block would provide a sufficient footprint for a functioning arena. The creation of the arena block would facilitate pedestrian access to the arena from the subway, and the four buildings surrounding the arena would incorporate a variety of uses that would promote street activity.

The creation of the large residential block between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues would allow the development of at least seven acres of new publicly accessible open spaces that would enliven the project site and the surrounding study area. This block would also accommodate water features that serve as stormwater detention basins, a major sustainable design element, as well as a new visual resource for the area. Wide openings into the open space and the provision of a pedestrian path along the right-of-way of Pacific Street would enhance pedestrian activity and create visual links to the residential neighborhoods to the north, south, east, and west.

The larger buildings and the most active uses would surround the transit hub at the crossroads of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues. Further, the proposed project would greatly alter the Brooklyn skyline with the addition of 17 uniquely shaped buildings that would be markedly different in height, form, and massing from most buildings in the study area. The proposed project would be dramatically different than anything in the neighborhood today and would enhance the vitality of the area and foster connections between neighborhoods surrounding the site.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

The proposed project would redevelop a largely abandoned-looking area of Brooklyn—three blocks occupied by the underdeveloped below-grade rail yard, and five additional blocks occupied by a miscellaneous collection of warehouses, and residential and commercial structures, some of which are vacant and/or in a dilapidated state. The proposed project is designed as a comprehensive plan with buildings of varying heights, unique shapes, and a style of architecture that would differ substantially from the buildings in the surrounding neighborhoods.

With the proposed project, views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, a visual resource in the Brooklyn skyline, would be unobstructed from the areas to the north, east, west, and from the south along the 4th Avenue corridor. Views of the Bank Building from some elevated transportation corridors would remain from some vantage points but would be obstructed from other points. Views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor from south of the project site would be obstructed except from vantage points on Flatbush Avenue immediately adjacent to the project site. It should be noted, however, that a building could be constructed as-of-right and independent of the proposed project on Block 1118 that would also obstruct views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building along the Flatbush Avenue corridor south of the project site. Other views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building that would be obstructed by the proposed project are those along Pacific Street between 4th and Flatbush Avenues and points along 5th Avenue, and those from Bergen Street between

6th and Carlton Avenues, the Dean Playground, and Vanderbilt Avenue east of the project site. The loss of these views would constitute a significant adverse impact.

With the proposed project, most changes to visual resources and view corridors in the study area would not be considered adverse. The Atlantic Avenue Control House would remain visible from the east and west along Atlantic Avenue and from the south along 4th and Flatbush Avenues. Similarly, visual resources north of the project site—the bell towers of the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew and the Verizon building—would remain visible from areas within the northern and eastern sections of the study area. Views of the bell tower of St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church at 856 Pacific Street would remain visible from the study area east and south of the project site. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be no adverse impacts to these visual resources.

Completion of the proposed project would create new visual resources. Views east and west along the Atlantic Avenue corridor would be transformed by the arena and nine tall buildings fronting on this portion of the Atlantic Avenue view corridor between 4th and Vanderbilt Avenues. This significant change would not be considered adverse, however, in light of the absence of significant visual resources at the project site or in this view corridor. Views southeast along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor, from northwest of the project site would include views of Building 1, the arena, and Site 5. These changes would be significant but not adverse. Views northwest along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor would include views of Site 5 and Buildings 1 and 2. From some vantage points along the west side of Flatbush Avenue south of the project site, other buildings on the project site would be visible along this view corridor. The proposed buildings would serve as new wayfinders in the skyline, becoming new visual resources.

Views along the tree-lined residential streets described in existing conditions, “Study Area, Visual Resources, and View Corridors,” would not be affected by the proposed project as views along these corridors would not include views of the project site.

#### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

Signage on the project site would be typical for local retail and commercial areas throughout New York City with the exception of portions of the Atlantic and Flatbush Avenue frontages. Signage controls for the retail establishments occupying street-level space in the Phase II developments, the Pacific Street frontage of Site 5, and portions of the arena block would be consistent with the strictest signage controls used in New York City for local retail. Signage controls along the Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenue frontages of the Site 5 building allow for signage similar to that found on commercial establishments in the area. Special signage controls would apply to the Urban Room, Building 1, and the arena façades along Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. With the exception of limited signage for ground-floor uses, illuminated and non-illuminated opaque signs would be limited to the westernmost 75 feet of the proposed project and to the Building 1 façades along the two streets and would be limited in terms of overall surface area and height. Additional signage and lighting would also be allowed on the Urban Room (to its full height), on Building 1 (to a height of 60 feet), and on the Arena façade (to a height of 40 feet); however, this additional permitted signage would have to be sufficiently transparent to make activity within the building and the interior architecture visible to passerby, and to allow people within the building to view the exterior. This signage scheme concentrates lighting and signage at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues and away from residential neighborhoods to the south.

Since most of the project lighting would be in keeping with lighting in recently developed areas of Brooklyn, the project lighting would not represent a significant departure or impact. Signage on the arena and Building 1 would be consistent with the active uses and sports events that would take place in the arena. While it would be brighter on event nights, on non-event nights the lighting levels would be reduced. Signage would be visible to the east and west on Atlantic Avenue, to the north and south on Flatbush Avenue, and on a small portion of Pacific and Dean Streets south of Flatbush Avenue. Other residential areas would not have direct views of the signage. Since the signage would be visible principally along the commercial corridors of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, it would not have a significant adverse impact. The effect of the signage on the relatively small residential area on Pacific and Dean Streets south of Flatbush Avenue, from which it would be visible, would also not be considered significant.

## B. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers the effects of the proposed project on the following elements, which collectively form an area's urban design:

- *Block Form and Street Pattern.* This urban design feature refers to the shape and arrangement of blocks and surrounding streets, such as a grid pattern with regularly sized, rectangular blocks. These features set street views, define the flow of activity through an area, and create the basic format on which building arrangements can be organized.
- *Building Arrangement.* This term refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. The buildings can have small or large footprints, be attached or detached and separated by open space uses, and be varied in their site plans. This urban design feature helps to convey a sense of the overall form and design of a block or a larger area.
- *Building Bulk, Use, and Type.* Buildings are usually described by these characteristics. A building's bulk is created from an amalgam of characteristics that include its height, length, and width; lot coverage and density; and shape and use of setbacks and other massing elements. The general use of a building (e.g., residential, manufacturing, commercial office) gives an impression of its appearance and helps to convey visual and urban design character. Building type refers to a distinctive class of buildings and suggests distinguishing features of a particular building. Examples of building type include: industrial loft, church, gas station, and walk-up tenement.
- *Streetscape Elements.* Streetscape elements are the distinctive physical features that make up a streetscape, such as street walls, building entrances, parking lots, fences, street trees, street furniture, curb cuts, and parking ribbons. These features help define the immediate visual experience of pedestrians.
- *Street Hierarchy.* Streets may be classified as expressways, arterials, boulevards, collector/distributor streets, or local streets, and they may be defined by their width, type of access, and the presence or absence of at-grade pedestrian crossings. Street hierarchy helps convey a sense of the overall form and activity level of a neighborhood.
- *Topography and Natural Features.* Topographic and natural features help define the overall visual character of an area and may include varied ground elevations, rock outcroppings and steep slopes, vegetation, and aquatic features.

This analysis also considers the effects of the proposed project on the area's visual resources, which the *CEQR Technical Manual* defines as unique or important public view corridors, vistas,

or natural or built features. Visual resources can include waterfront views, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural features, such as rivers or geologic formations.

As recommended by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this technical analysis evaluates the potential for impacts in two areas—the project site and a surrounding study area (see Figures 8-1 and 8-17). In consideration of both the scale of the proposed project and the surrounding urban fabric, this chapter analyzes an 800-foot study area roughly bordered by Washington and Underhill Avenues to the east, 3rd Avenue to the west, Hanson Place and Fulton Street to the north, and Prospect and St. Marks Places to the south (see Figure 8-17). This analysis also considers the view from Grand Army Plaza along Flatbush Avenue, a major view corridor that extends beyond the 800-foot study area. Views from elevated transportation corridors located beyond the 800-foot study area, including the Gowanus Expressway, the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE), and the F train subway viaduct, were also considered in this analysis. However, these views are from a moving vehicle for a limited amount of time. Other views that were considered are views from low-rise development areas, such as the Gowanus Canal area.

## **C. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **PROJECT SITE**

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

The proposed project site lies within the Atlantic Terminal area of Brooklyn, where several distinct residential neighborhoods converge with the commercial Downtown Brooklyn District. The area is served by numerous transportation routes, including several roadways, subway lines, and a commuter rail line. The project site comprises all of six blocks, and parts of two more, as well as some intervening streets. A mix of one- to eight-story industrial, commercial, and residential buildings, paved parking lots, gas stations, and vacant lots currently exist on the site. Three former industrial buildings within the project site along Pacific Street have been converted into residential buildings. Numerous others are abandoned and/or dilapidated. Three of the northern blocks of the project site contain the below-grade, open-air Vanderbilt Yard (rail yard) on the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Atlantic Branch. The project site, long an industrial/transportation service area, has limited natural features and few street trees or other landscaping. West of 6th Avenue, the grid-like street pattern is interrupted by Flatbush Avenue cutting diagonally from the southeast to the northwest through the project site, creating irregularly shaped blocks along Flatbush Avenue. The portion of the project site southwest of Flatbush Avenue—Block 927—follows a grid-like pattern that is skewed and follows the angle of Atlantic Avenue. East of 6th Avenue the streets in the project site follow a different grid-like pattern with long, rectilinear blocks. Generally, the warehouse, commercial, and larger residential buildings on the project site are built to the sidewalk line, whereas the smaller residential buildings are set back slightly allowing for small front gardens and/or stoops.

The discussion below focuses first on the project site's urban design—its basic layout and structures—and then describes its visual resources. For this discussion, the project site has been divided into three distinct areas based on visual characteristics: Commercial Sites, the Vanderbilt Yard, and Industrial and Residential Sites.

### *Commercial Sites*

The westernmost portion of the project site includes most of Block 927 and all of Block 1118. These blocks lie on either side of Flatbush Avenue south of Atlantic Avenue, and contain commercial uses and surface parking lots. The blocks' irregular shapes are defined by the angle of Flatbush Avenue that cuts diagonally through the grid-like streets. Block 927 is irregularly shaped and is occupied by two detached double-height, buff-colored brick commercial buildings (see View 1 of Figure 8-2). Modell's Sporting Goods is located along the block's irregularly shaped eastern side, just west of the Brooklyn Bear's Pacific Street Community Garden (which is not part of the project site), with façades along Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street. The building's shape reflects the shape of the lot. P.C. Richard & Son occupies a rectangular building that covers the entire blockfront along 4th Avenue and also has façades along Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street. Between these two buildings is a paved surface parking lot that opens onto Pacific Street. The only windows in the P.C. Richard & Son building are associated with the entrance that opens onto the paved parking lot. The Modell's Sporting Goods building has one band of windows along Flatbush Avenue and windows associated with the building entrance at the parking lot.

The Flatbush Avenue side of Block 1118 is occupied by a single-story, red-painted, cinder block structure, a two-story bar and restaurant with residential space above, and a single-story shed-like building. The single-story cinder block building and the single-story shed-like structure both extend through-block with façades on Flatbush and 5th Avenues. The majority of the Atlantic Avenue blockfront was occupied until recently by a four-story, green-painted warehouse structure with sealed windows, banner advertisements, and graffiti (see View 2 of Figure 8-3). The corner of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues is a surface parking area strewn with garbage and other miscellaneous debris. The southeastern end of the block is occupied by outdoor seating for the adjacent bar and restaurant that opens onto Flatbush Avenue (see View 3 of Figure 8-3).

### *Vanderbilt Yard*

The northernmost portion of the project site between 5th and Vanderbilt Avenues—Blocks 1119, 1120, and 1121—is currently occupied by the rail yard on LIRR's Atlantic Branch. The below-grade open rail yard, constituting much of the project site, spans most of the length of these three blocks to create a nearly ½-mile physical break in the urban fabric of the area. (The rail yard does not extend to 5th Avenue on the west, and does not extend to Vanderbilt Avenue on the east). The Vanderbilt Yard dates from 1892, when LIRR built its Flatbush Terminal (also called Atlantic Terminal) at the northeast corner of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. The Vanderbilt Yard, originally the Carlton Freight Yard, was developed on the south side of Atlantic Avenue between Carlton and 6th Avenues and served Brooklyn until 1904-1906. It was then extended east almost to Vanderbilt Avenue and west almost to 5th Avenue and became known as the Vanderbilt Yard. The rail yard replaced a number of industrial, commercial, and residential uses on the project site. Soon after, a new and larger LIRR Atlantic Terminal for commuters opened in 1907.

All three blocks of the rail yard are enclosed by an approximately 10-foot-high chain link fence. 6th and Carlton Avenues bridge the rail yard and enable it to be crossed from the north and south. Because the majority of the rail yard is below grade, and because it also includes a New York City Transit (NYCT) storage yard for retired buses, it has an isolated, bleak appearance and the surrounding streets and sidewalks are uninviting and rarely used by pedestrians.

The western portion of Block 1119 is occupied by a fenced in U-Haul truck rental business and a paved surface parking area on the west end of the rail yard (see View 4 of Figure 8-4 and Views 5 and 6 of Figure 8-5). The remainder of this block is below street level and occupied by railroad tracks, small shed-like service structures, and train cars, all surrounded by a chain link fence. Because the majority of the block is below grade, from street level it appears to be a large empty area.

Like Block 1119, the majority of Block 1120 is also below street level and has railroad tracks spanning the length of the block (see View 7 of Figure 8-6). This block is also occupied by two large three- and six-story masonry warehouse structures at street level along Atlantic Avenue. A three-story red brick structure has eight bays with a loading dock and entrance on the Atlantic Avenue façade. The ground-floor windows on this façade are covered with bricks and wood panels. The upper floor windows have many broken elements. The western and southern façades are visible and also have bricked-up windows. The other building (east of the red brick building) is a six-story, painted brick building with three exposed façades and bricked-up windows. The building is a storage facility and has entrances and a loading dock opening onto Atlantic Avenue (see View 8 of Figure 8-6). Like Block 1119, Block 1120 generally has an empty, abandoned appearance from the street level (see View 9 of Figure 8-7).

The easternmost block occupied by the rail yard is Block 1121. The majority of this block is below grade and contains railroad tracks and an NYCT storage yard for retired buses (see View 10 of Figure 8-7). The street-level, eastern end of the block is occupied by a gas station and an auto repair shop, both opening onto Vanderbilt Avenue. The gas station occupies the corner just south of Atlantic Avenue and has a flat canopy structure, filling station islands, a small shop, and curb cuts along both Atlantic and Vanderbilt Avenues. The auto repair shop is a one-story structure with paved surface parking along Vanderbilt Avenue and Pacific Street that is occupied by cars and trucks in various states of disrepair (see View 11 of Figure 8-8). From street level this block also appears largely undeveloped. The buildings on the eastern end of the block further contribute to the block's forlorn appearance.

There are overgrown weeds, garbage, and graffiti along the fence that encloses the rail yard along Pacific Street and Atlantic, Carlton, and 6th Avenues, giving these surrounding streets an unkempt appearance. An automobile entrance/exit point on Carlton Avenue, just north of Pacific Street, provides ramp access to the car and bus parking area below. The traffic along Pacific Street changes direction from one-way traveling east between 5th and 6th Avenues to two-way traffic between 6th and Vanderbilt Avenues. These sections of Pacific Street are not highly trafficked and are lined with parked cars, delivery vans, and small trucks (see View 12 of Figure 8-8).

#### *Industrial and Residential Sites*

South of the rail yard are three blocks that are entirely or partially within the project site—Block 1127, the westernmost 100 feet of Block 1128, and all of Block 1129. The northern portions of these blocks are occupied primarily by industrial buildings and warehouses, vacant lots, and buildings that have been converted from industrial and warehouse uses to residential use. The buildings on the south sides of these blocks are generally a combination of two- to four-story industrial buildings, residential rowhouses, and small apartment buildings. There are also several empty lots and surface parking lots interspersed along these blocks.

The western block—Block 1127—contains a variety of building types, styles, and sizes. The buildings on 6th and Flatbush Avenues are two- and three-story brick buildings with ground-

floor retail, including a restaurant on Flatbush Avenue and a bar on 6th Avenue. The buildings on the Pacific Street side of the block include single-story, brick garage buildings and small warehouses;<sup>1</sup> two- to four-story residential rowhouses; a four-story, red brick warehouse and an eight-story, yellow brick warehouse that have been converted to residential uses; and a two-story, red brick “Special Operations Command” facility that provides wash-down services for the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). The tallest building on this block, at 636 Pacific Street, is an approximately 83-foot-tall, eight-story former warehouse building that has been converted to residential use. The building has been significantly altered with enlarged window openings to accommodate replacement windows, cuts below the windows for air conditioning units, and the removal of the cornice (see View 13 of Figure 8-9). Another visually prominent building is 650-660 Pacific Street, a four-story, approximately 64-foot-tall, red brick warehouse at the corner of Pacific Street and 6th Avenue which has been converted to residential use and is in good condition (see View 14 of Figure 8-9). Dean Street has a more residential character than the other streetfronts on this block with several three- and four-story brick residential buildings, many with front stoops and others with significant non-contextual alterations,<sup>2</sup> and one- and two-story community facilities, including a roofers union hall (see View 15 of Figure 8-10). A gas station occupies the corner of Dean Street and Flatbush Avenue and has a flat canopy structure, a small shop, filling station islands, and curb cuts along both Dean Street and Flatbush Avenue (see View 16 of Figure 8-10).

The westernmost 100 feet of Block 1128 lie within the project site and are occupied by six buildings and an empty lot. At the corner of Pacific Street and 6th Avenue is a three-story, gray stuccoed warehouse building with wire mesh security screens covering the Pacific Street windows, and rolling metal security screens covering the building’s loading docks and entrances, many of which have graffiti (see View 17 of Figure 8-11). A mid-block lot along 6th Avenue is overgrown with weeds, enclosed by a chain link fence, and occupied by several parked cars. The Dean Street elevation is more residential in character and is occupied by five two- and three-story residential buildings on the western portion of Block 1128 that is within the project site (see View 18 of Figure 8-11). The three-story, red brick building at the corner of Dean Street and 6th Avenue has a rolling metal security screen along its ground floor, and an awning. The two buildings to the east have raised first floors and high front stoops with cast iron railings. The next two buildings to the east have street-level ground floors and are set back from the sidewalk line. All of these buildings have replacement windows and are faced in a variety of siding materials, including vinyl and brick.

The eastern block of the project site, Block 1129, is occupied by large warehouse buildings, numerous one- and two-story smaller warehouses, rowhouses, and empty lots. The most prominent features of the block are on Pacific Street, including the tallest building on the block—a six-story, stucco-faced warehouse building with red-framed windows at 752 Pacific Street (see View 19 of Figure 8-12). East of this building is a smaller, five-story, brick warehouse building at 768-772 Pacific Street that has been converted to residential use. East of these buildings is a long, three- and five-story, white, terra cotta-faced warehouse that extends through the block between Pacific and Dean Streets. This warehouse building—the former Ward

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<sup>1</sup> The buildings at 620 and 622 Pacific Street (Block 1127, Lots 19 and 20) were demolished in the summer of 2006 due to deteriorated and unsafe conditions. These lots are now vacant.

<sup>2</sup> The buildings at 461 and 463 Dean Street (Block 1127, Lots 56 and 55) were demolished in the summer of 2006 due to deteriorated and unsafe conditions. These lots are now vacant.



Bread Bakery complex at 790-808 Pacific Street—occupies a large portion of the block and has wide, arched windows on the top floor. All of the windows on this building have been sealed with cinder block or glass block, contributing to the abandoned appearance of the unused building. Scaffolding covers the majority of the building's ground-floor Pacific Street façade (see View 20 of Figure 8-12). Adjacent to this warehouse are two four-story, attached red brick apartment houses with intact cornices, stone lintels, low stoops, and central entrances (see View 21 of Figure 8-13).

The Dean Street elevation of Block 1129 includes several two- and three-story brick warehouses that have loading docks and entrances (see View 22 of Figure 8-14). The westernmost warehouse at 585-601 Dean Street (Lot 81) was demolished in the spring of 2006 due to its deteriorated and unsafe state. This lot is now vacant. The remaining warehouses on this portion of Dean Street are empty or lightly used. Also along this portion of Dean Street is a two-story, stucco-faced warehouse at 603-613 Dean Street that has been converted to residential use (see View 23 of Figure 8-14). The white, terra cotta warehouse building identified above—the Ward Bread Bakery complex—is a through-block building that also occupies a significant portion of the Dean Street elevation. The façade of the building complex at 615-631 Dean Street is faced in yellow brick with modest terra cotta detailing. As with the Pacific Street façade, the Dean Street façade's windows are also filled in with cinder block or glass block. The building has several loading docks and entrances and is not in use (see View 22 of Figure 8-14). A five-story, brick-faced warehouse building near the eastern end of the block has sealed windows (see View 24 of Figure 8-15).

The lots along Carlton Avenue are all surface parking lots, enclosed by a tall metal fence along Pacific Street and portions of Carlton Avenue, and by a painted brick, eight-foot-high wall along Dean Street and the rest of Carlton Avenue (see View 25 of Figure 8-16). The portion of Block 1129 along Vanderbilt Avenue, at the corners of both Dean and Pacific Streets, is occupied by two underutilized lots. The lot at Dean Street is overgrown with weeds and a few small trees, and is enclosed by a rusty chain link fence. The lot at the corner of Pacific Street is occupied by parked cars. Until recently, this portion of Vanderbilt Avenue contained a single-story auto services building and two brick residential buildings that had been significantly altered (see View 26 of Figure 8-16). These buildings will be demolished in the summer of 2006.

## ***VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS***

### ***Visual Resources on the Project Site***

This analysis also considers the effects of the proposed project on the area's visual resources, which the *CEQR Technical Manual* defines as unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. Visual resources can include waterfront views, public parks, landmark structures, or districts; or natural features, such as rivers or geologic formations.

None of the elements on the project site—the rail yard, industrial warehouses, residential buildings, and commercial lots and structures—is considered a visual resource. The majority of the warehouses on the project site are in various stages of disrepair. The warehouses that have been renovated and converted for residential uses are not visual resources. The majority of the smaller residential buildings on the project site along Dean and Pacific Streets have been significantly altered and are not visual resources. Overall, the structures and features on the project site do not constitute visual resources.

### *Views from the Project Site*

In general, the views north from the project site are much different from the views to the east, south, and west because views north include tall buildings. The following analysis discusses views to the north of the project site and then follows with analyses of views to the east, south, and west.

Northwest of the project site are the small, one-story Atlantic Avenue Control House and plaza, located at the center of the intersection of Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenues, and visible from the project site (see View 27 of Figure 8-18). Also visible to the north—and east of the Atlantic Avenue Control House—are the Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower and Atlantic Center shopping centers, located immediately north of Atlantic Avenue between Flatbush and South Portland Avenues (see View 28 of Figure 8-18). These bulky, three-story buildings are highly visible from the project site and provide a distinctive retail presence in the area. Both buildings are faced in red- and buff-colored masonry with large windows and entrances along Atlantic Avenue. The westernmost of the two shopping centers, Atlantic Terminal, occupies the entire block bounded by Atlantic Avenue, Flatbush Avenue, Hanson Place, and Fort Greene Place. It has a curved façade facing Atlantic Avenue and an angular façade along the remaining streetfronts. The building has uniform green awnings along the ground-floor businesses that give the shopping center a unified appearance. Also associated with the Atlantic Terminal shopping center—and clearly visible from the project site—is the Bank of New York Tower, a 10-story, glass and red brick-faced office building located above the north side of the Atlantic Terminal shopping center. Atlantic Center lies east of the Atlantic Terminal shopping center and occupies the entire block front facing the project site between Fort Greene Place and South Portland Avenue.

The most prominent visual resource in the study area—the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building—is located northwest of the project site, beyond the shopping centers described above. It is the tallest building in Brooklyn and visible from nearly every area of the project site because of its proximity to the project site and because it is considerably taller than the residential, commercial, and warehouse buildings in the study area (see View 3 of Figure 8-3, Views 11 and 12 of Figure 8-8, and View 16 of Figure 8-10). Although there are several tall buildings in Downtown Brooklyn on or near Flatbush Avenue that are visible to the northwest of the project site—such as the red brick J.P. Morgan Chase building and three buildings west of Flatbush Avenue that are part of the MetroTech Complex—none are as tall as the tower of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building. The distance of these buildings from the project site further reduces their visual prominence.

North of the project site are six taller residential buildings along South Elliott and Hanson Places, Cumberland and Carlton Avenues, and Fulton Street, including the Atlantic Terminal Houses (a New York City Housing Authority development); a large, boxy seven- and 10-story former manufacturing building now partially occupied by office uses; and a two- and three-story high school building. All of these buildings are visible from most areas of the project site's northern blocks—Blocks 1119, 1120, and 1121—and the northern sections of Blocks 1127, 1128, and 1129 (see Views 29 and 30 of Figure 8-19). The six residential buildings are red and tan brick, range in height from seven to 31 stories and are flat slabs without setbacks and with few decorative architectural elements. The upper floors of these buildings are also visible from Pacific Street within the project site. Other views to the north of the project site include the visually consistent, three-story rowhouses that have recently been completed along South Portland Avenue, South Oxford Street, Cumberland Street, and Carlton Avenue.

Northeast of the project site, the bell tower of the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew on Clinton Avenue is visible from the project site along Pacific Street, and is in distinct contrast to the residential buildings to its west (see View 31 of Figure 8-20).

Views from the project site to the east, south, and west are generally limited to the buildings immediately facing the project site. Visible to the east are a McDonald's restaurant with surface parking and two- and three-story commercial buildings along the east side of Vanderbilt Avenue. Also visible to the east of the project site are the low-pitched roof and the two bell towers with pediments and Corinthian columns of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church at 856 Pacific Street (see View 32 of Figure 8-20). Views to the south of the project site include the warehouses and residential buildings along Pacific and Dean Streets, the northern portion of the Prospect Heights Historic District along Carlton Avenue, and the two- to four-story residential buildings with ground-floor retail uses lining Flatbush Avenue. Apart from the buildings in the historic district, many of the residential and warehouse buildings facing the project site to the south have had their cornices removed, windows replaced or sealed, or other alterations.

Also visible to the south of the project site are several taller apartment buildings outside of the study area in Prospect Heights and Park Slope that are visible because of their heights and higher ground elevations. To the west there are views of rowhouses along Pacific Street west of Flatbush Avenue (see View 33 of Figure 8-21), the Pacific Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) at the southeast corner of Pacific Street and 4th Avenue, and the Church of the Redeemer at the northwest corner of Pacific Street and 4th Avenue. Other views from the project site are along the wider avenues, including views east and west along Atlantic Avenue and views south along Vanderbilt, Carlton, 4th, 5th, and 6th Avenues.

#### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

Nighttime lighting around the project site is low and non-existent in places for a number of reasons. Much of the project site is vacant. Not only are there few uses to give off light, there are few surfaces, such as building façades, that could reflect light. Large areas of the project site that are part of the below-grade rail yard have minimal lighting in their central areas and seem to make the location even darker. There is varying storefront lighting along Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues. There are store signs, there is lighting reflected on some building façades, there is lighting that spills out of retail windows, and there are lighted billboards. In particular, the very bright lighting of the gasoline station at the intersection of Flatbush Avenue and Dean Street strongly contrasts with its generally darker surroundings.

Street and sidewalk lighting in the area is provided by standard New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) high pressure sodium "cobra head" fixtures and the more decorative lighting fixtures sanctioned by DOT for use on Flatbush Avenue. Some fixtures seem to be missing, particularly on 6th Avenue.

#### **STUDY AREA**

The study area lies at the convergence of several distinct neighborhoods. The urban design of the study area is defined by a mixture of rowhouses, warehouses, some apartment buildings, small and large commercial buildings, highly trafficked thoroughfares, and side streets. The area north of the project site has a variety of building sizes, types, and uses, including large commercial buildings closest to Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, and attached and detached small, residential buildings. These buildings include ground-floor retail shops, several residential buildings, office buildings, a school, and churches. The areas to the east, south, and west of the project site

include primarily low-rise warehouses, residential buildings, and residential buildings with ground-floor retail, schools, churches, open spaces, and community centers. Many of the buildings throughout the study area—including industrial and residential buildings—are one to six stories tall and faced in brick or brownstone. Larger buildings include warehouses to the south and northeast of the project site; taller residential buildings are located north of the project site and range in height from a seven-story building and four 15-story structures to a 31-story tan brick building that is part of the Atlantic Terminal Houses. Taller commercial buildings are located in Downtown Brooklyn, outside the study area but visible from locations within the study area, particularly along Flatbush Avenue.

The discussion below is organized by block, beginning with a discussion of the urban design—its basic layout and structures—and visual resources of the block fronts immediately facing the project site, and then expanding outward to the remaining study area.

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

The topography of the study area appears generally flat, although there is a gradual downward slope from the north and south toward the project site, most notably along Vanderbilt, Carlton, and Flatbush Avenues. The only other natural features in the study area are trees that line the streets. The wider, primary thoroughfares and the portions of Pacific Street and 5th Avenue in the study area have fewer trees than the narrower residential streets. Several residential streets—particularly along Carlton and St. Marks Avenues, Prospect Place within the Prospect Heights neighborhood south of the project site, and along St. Marks Avenue and Prospect Place in the Park Slope neighborhood southwest of the project site—have a very dense tree cover so that views down the streets are limited to the most immediate areas in the spring, summer, and early fall.

#### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy, and Block Shapes*

Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues establish three related grid patterns in the study area (see Figures 8-1 and 8-17). The area north of Atlantic Avenue and east of Flatbush Avenue is laid out in a skewed grid pattern that reflects the angles of both Flatbush Avenue to the west and Fulton Street to the north. The blocks in this part of the study area are long and narrow with irregularly shaped ends, with the narrow ends of the blocks abutting Atlantic Avenue. South of Atlantic Avenue and east of Flatbush Avenue the study area is laid out in a north-south grid pattern. The blocks in this area are typical, rectangular blocks. This north-south grid pattern is interrupted by Flatbush Avenue, which cuts through the study area diagonally from the southeast to the northwest, and through the western portion of the project site, creating triangular and other irregularly shaped blocks. Southwest of Flatbush Avenue, the streets are laid out in long, narrow rectilinear blocks with a slightly skewed horizontal orientation, reflecting Atlantic Avenue, which shifts slightly at its intersection with Flatbush Avenue. Generally, the blocks are rectilinear except where they are interrupted by diagonally oriented Flatbush Avenue and Fulton Street, which create irregular angles along block ends.

The primary roadways in the study area are Atlantic Avenue running generally east-west, Flatbush Avenue cutting diagonally across the study area, and 4th Avenue running north-south on the western side of the study area. These three roadways form a major intersection north of the westernmost portion of the project site. Vanderbilt Avenue, a significant thoroughfare in the

eastern portion of the study area, is a wide, north-south avenue. The remaining streets in the study area include one-way, local traffic corridors and narrow, primarily residential streets.

Each of these primary avenues marks a division between neighborhoods—Atlantic Avenue separates Prospect Heights from Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, and separates Boerum Hill from Downtown Brooklyn to the west of the project site. Similarly, 4th Avenue divides Park Slope and Boerum Hill. To the south of the project site, Flatbush Avenue separates Park Slope from Prospect Heights.

Atlantic Avenue is a primary east-west, multi-lane thoroughfare with paved traffic islands dividing the two-way traffic. Flatbush Avenue is also a primary thoroughfare that carries vehicular traffic to and through Downtown Brooklyn. There is also a high volume of pedestrian traffic along Flatbush Avenue, particularly near entrances to the LIRR Atlantic Terminal and the NYCT Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street subway stations at Hanson Place. Flatbush Avenue also has four entrances to the Bergen Street subway station at the corners of Bergen Street. 4th Avenue is a divided, multi-lane roadway that dead-ends at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. It is characterized by high volumes of traffic traveling in both directions. There are two subway entrances and an elevator bank at the northwest and northeast corners of 4th Avenue and Pacific Street for the Pacific Street subway station. As Vanderbilt Avenue travels south, it forms the eastern boundary of the project site and slopes down gradually toward the project site. It carries multi-lane, two-way traffic; the curbside lanes are generally occupied by parked cars. The remaining streets in the study area are generally one-way residential streets and avenues, many of which are lined with parked cars and street trees.

### *Streetscape*

The streetscape in the study area is urban in character with wide, concrete sidewalks along the primary avenues, including Flatbush and 4th Avenues. All of the streets in the study area are paved in asphalt. Atlantic and 4th Avenues have concrete barriers and/or planters dividing the multi-lane, two-way traffic. These primary thoroughfares are busy with vehicular traffic throughout the day and night. By contrast, the residential side streets have less vehicular traffic overall, particularly at night. The side streets are mainly smaller, one-way streets that tend to have narrower sidewalks, many of which have bluestone pavers. In general, the smaller streets are lined with trees and two- to four-story residential rowhouses, small apartment buildings, and two- to four-story buildings with ground-floor retail.

Street furniture in the study area includes traffic lights and stop signs, fire hydrants, trash receptacles, subway entrances, newspaper boxes, a free-standing clock, a gas lamp on Flatbush Avenue, and lampposts in a variety of styles that are reproductions of historic lamppost designs. There are several street vendor carts along the sidewalks on Flatbush Avenue and Hanson Place. Along Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues there are large building-mounted and free-standing billboards and advertising signage.

There are also a few covered bus stops, bus stop signs along bus routes, banners hanging from lampposts, and painted advertisements on sides of buildings. Several streets have bike lanes along one side of the street, including Dean, Bergen, and Pacific Streets. All of the streets in the study area have on-street parking on one or both sides along the curbline. There is an enclosed pedestrian bridge over Fort Greene Place connecting the Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower and the Atlantic Center shopping centers. There are also loading docks at street level along Fort Greene Place. There are ground-floor entrances to these shopping centers along Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues.

Most streets are lined with street trees; however, the density of the trees depends on the street. In general, the wider, more trafficked streets have fewer street trees than the narrower, residential streets. The streets closest to the project site have very few trees, which contributes to the visually open and barren character of the project site. Other streetscape elements include the landscaped traffic island at the intersection of Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenues. At the center of this traffic island is the 1908 Atlantic Avenue Control House, a small, one-story structure faced in buff-colored brick with limestone and terra cotta trim (see View 27 of Figure 8-18). To the east of Flatbush Avenue and north of Atlantic Avenue is a plaza associated with the Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower shopping center. It provides seating areas, signage, and open space (see View 34 of Figure 8-22).

Although all of the subway lines that run through this area of Brooklyn are below ground, there are subway entrances that are visible from the street with red or green globes, green cast iron stairs, advertisement panels, and LCD screens. There is also an elevator bank at the Pacific Street subway entrance at the northeast corner of Pacific Street and 4th Avenue. Another transportation element is the awning above the entrance to the LIRR Atlantic Terminal adjacent to the streetwall of the Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower shopping center. The LIRR entrance is also the street entrance to the Atlantic Avenue subway station at the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Hanson Place. There are also subway entrances at 4th Avenue and Pacific Street for the Pacific Street station's subway lines at Hanson Place and South Oxford Street, for the Lafayette Street subway stop on the C line at Fulton Street and Clinton Avenue, for the Clinton-Washington Avenues subway stop, and on Bergen Street and Flatbush Avenue for the Nos. 2 and 3 lines at the Bergen Street station.

Streetwalls in the study area vary depending on their location. In areas closest to the project site streetwalls vary the most. North of the project site are two three-story commercial structures that are built to the sidewalk (see View 28 of Figure 8-18) and occupy the entirety of the two blocks between Flatbush Avenue and South Elliott Place. The large, full-block structure at the north corner of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, the Atlantic Terminal shopping center, has large glass windows on all three floors and entrances at street level. It also has a 10-story, approximately 130-foot-tall building—the Bank of New York Tower—along its Fort Greene Place elevation. East of Fort Greene Place is a large, three-story L-shaped commercial structure, the Atlantic Center shopping center, which opens onto Atlantic Avenue immediately across from the project site. Also set back from the streetwall are the larger building structures in the northern portion of the study area. These buildings are surrounded by grassy and paved open spaces. Streetwalls are nonexistent on the vacant lots with overgrown weeds, garbage, and surface parking. With some exceptions where surface parking or vacant lots exist, there are generally strong streetwalls throughout the commercial and warehouse areas of the study area, and equally uniform streetwalls in the residential sections of the study area.

Pedestrian flow is heaviest along the major thoroughfares closest to the commercial businesses and mass transportation hub at the intersections of Flatbush, Atlantic, and 4th Avenues. There is also a greater presence of pedestrians in the study area along Flatbush Avenue immediately north and south of Atlantic Avenue where the avenue is lined with small businesses, shops, and restaurants that serve the local residents and workers. The intersections around the Atlantic Avenue Control House are particularly busy because of the convergence of 10 subway lines at the Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street subway stations and the LIRR Atlantic Terminal. The pedestrian traffic is heaviest during the morning and evening rush hours and is compounded by vehicular traffic along these same streets. Because the study area is also a largely residential area, there is generally a steady flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic along the more

residential streets. However, the flow of pedestrian traffic drops off significantly along the sidewalks closest to the project site.

Other streetscape elements include open spaces. North of Fulton Street at the intersection of Gates and Vanderbilt Avenues is the Gateway Triangle, a small, triangular park. The park contains several mature dogwood and cedar trees and shrubbery and is surrounded by a black, cast iron fence with a gate opening onto Vanderbilt Avenue. On Pacific Street between Vanderbilt and Underhill Avenues is an enclosed garden that is part of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, and is not open to the public.

One further streetscape element in the study area is a triangular paved island at the corner of Flatbush, St. Marks, and 6th Avenues known as Colonel J. Gardiner Conroy Square. It has a few trees, is paved with Belgian block, and has a concrete paved sidewalk along the Flatbush Avenue side of the island. The triangular space features a cast iron, free-standing clock, and a streetlamp.

Sharing Block 927 with the project site, but excluded from the project site, is the Brooklyn Bear's Pacific Street Community Garden, a triangular public garden enclosed by a chain link fence. Immediately facing the project site, along the southern streetwall of the Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower shopping center, is a public plaza that features decorative brickwork, plantings, and seating areas. At the northwest corner of Atlantic Avenue and South Oxford Street is an empty lot overgrown with grass and weeds; this is slated to be redeveloped for residential uses. Another streetscape element is a fenced-in, outdoor running track, field, and bleachers that occupy the northeastern portion of the block along Clermont Avenue and Fulton Street. Other open spaces in the northern area of the study area are associated with the residential buildings and include playgrounds, grassy areas, paved areas, and seating. Two additional open spaces to the south are playgrounds. Dean Playground—located mid-block between 6th Avenue and Carlton Avenue, with entrances on Dean and Bergen Streets—includes a separate children's play area with swings, benches, and a fountain. The remainder of the playground has basketball courts and an asphalt ballfield. The entire playground is paved in asphalt and is surrounded by a high fence (see View 35 of Figure 8-22). The second playground in the study area opens onto St. Marks Avenue and is part of Public School 9—Teunis G. Bergen School. The playground has basketball and handball courts and play equipment, and is enclosed by a tall, chain link fence.

#### *Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements*

As discussed in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the study area contains a variety of building uses, including one- to six-story residential rowhouses and smaller and larger apartment buildings and loft conversions; two- to 10-story office buildings, one- to four-story commercial and warehouse buildings; several churches, schools, community centers, and open spaces; and a few larger-scale commercial and residential buildings in the northern section. The shapes and forms of the area's buildings result from the underlying street pattern of mostly long, narrow rectilinear block configurations, and blocks set at skewed angles with triangular ends. Most of the buildings in the study area are attached structures. There are a few empty lots interspersed among the rows of attached structures. The few free-standing structures include a McDonald's restaurant, residential buildings, a church and its related outbuildings, and two school buildings.

The discussion below focuses first on the portions of Blocks 927 and 1128 that are outside the project site, and then on the buildings on blocks in the study area immediately facing the project site, and finally on the surrounding sections of the study area moving outward radially from the project site (see Figures 8-1 and 8-17).

***Blocks 927 and 1128.*** The portion of Block 927 bordered by Flatbush Avenue and Pacific Street and within the study area does not contain any buildings. It is the Brooklyn Bear's Pacific Street Community Garden, a small triangular area enclosed by a chain link fence and occupied by a community garden with dense vegetation.

On Block 1128, east of the project site on Pacific Street, is Newswalk, the former Daily News Building at 700 Pacific Street that has been converted to residential use. The building has two- and three-story wings that flank its 10-story approximately 130-foot-tall central section. The two remaining buildings along this portion of Pacific Street are two-story, former warehouse buildings near the western end of the block, and a rowhouse facing Carlton Avenue along the block's eastern end. The eastern end of Block 1128, along Carlton Avenue, is lined with three-story brownstone and brick residential rowhouses with flat roofs, front stoops, intact cornices, stone lintels, and other decorative architectural elements (see View 36 of Figure 8-23). The portion of Block 1128 along Dean Street is characterized by a variety of residential buildings ranging from three- and four-story residential rowhouses to four-story small apartment buildings to a portion of the rear yard of Newswalk. The portion of Newswalk that opens onto Dean Street is set back from the sidewalk with surface parking and small gardens closest to the sidewalk that are enclosed by a fence. At 515 Dean Street is the Temple of Restoration, a small, red-brick church with a steeply pitched roof, decorative brick work, and arched stained glass windows. The building is set back from the sidewalk and is enclosed by a wrought iron fence (see View 37 of Figure 8-23).

***Blocks Immediately Facing the Project Site.*** In general, the portions of the neighborhoods in the study area closest to the project site, particularly the areas facing the project site, are largely dissimilar to the remaining portions of the study area neighborhoods to which they belong. Their dissimilarities, which are particularly apparent north and south of the project site, form a visual buffer along the blocks closest to the project site. The portion of the study area facing the project site to the north (across Atlantic Avenue) is characterized by a mix of larger-scale commercial buildings and taller residential and commercial buildings, including the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, and recently constructed three-story row houses. These buildings contrast with most of the buildings within the larger study area north of the project site, as those areas farther from the project site are generally characterized by two-, three- and four-story 19th and 20th century residential buildings and institutional buildings such as BAM and the Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church. The part of the study area facing the project site to the south is likewise dissimilar to the remainder of the study area south of the project site. Buildings facing the project site to the south consist of a mix of rowhouses along Dean Street, a large residential warehouse building at 700 Pacific Street, a few small industrial buildings along Dean Street, and a public playground, also along Dean Street. Farther from the project site, the section of the study area south of the project site is more residential in character with rows of two-, three-, and four-story townhouses. Facing the project site along many of the avenues, including Flatbush and Vanderbilt Avenues, and a portion of 5th Avenue, are three- and four-story residential buildings with ground-floor storefronts. Moving away from the project site and into the study area neighborhoods near these avenues, the neighborhoods have a more consistent residential character. The discussion below is organized geographically by neighborhood. The neighborhoods are described in more detail in "Study Area Neighborhoods."

***West of Flatbush and 4th Avenues, and South of Pacific Street between 4th and 5th Avenues—Boerum Hill.*** The triangle at the intersection of Dean Street, 5th Avenue, and Flatbush Avenue is occupied by a three-story triangular building faced in light brick with plate glass windows along



its Dean Street and Flatbush Avenue façades, and a prominent green cornice. This building, occupied by a sporting goods store, is of a small scale (see View 38 of Figure 8-24).

The section of Pacific Street between Flatbush and 4th Avenues is occupied by a three-story warehouse, several three- and four-story brick- and brownstone-faced rowhouses, and the Pacific Branch of the BPL. Described in greater detail in Chapter 7, “Cultural Resources,” the library building is faced in red brick with limestone architectural elements. The building is visible from Pacific Street and 4th Avenue, is enclosed with a wrought iron fence, and has its primary entrance on 4th Avenue.

The blockfront facing Site 5 of the project site on 4th Avenue is characterized by small residential structures with ground-floor shop fronts. The Church of the Redeemer is an ashlar-stone-faced church that occupies the southern half of this block front between Pacific Street and Atlantic Avenue. The remaining buildings along 4th Avenue facing the project site are three- and four-story residential structures with ground-floor retail. Also facing the western side of the project site is an entrance stairway to the Pacific Street subway station at the corner of Pacific Street and 4th Avenue.

*North of the Project Site—Downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene, and Clinton Hill.* A variety of building types, sizes, and open spaces are located north of Atlantic Avenue. Facing the westernmost portion of the project site between 4th and Flatbush Avenues is a row of four-story, attached brownstone-faced buildings, with ground-floor storefronts with awnings and advertising and residential spaces above. The one-story Atlantic Avenue Control House is a small, free-standing structure faced in buff-colored brick with limestone and terra cotta trim that is sited in a plaza at the center of the intersection (see View 27 of Figure 8-18).

Facing the project site between Flatbush and South Portland Avenues are Atlantic Terminal and Atlantic Center Shopping Centers, two large, three-story shopping centers. Both buildings occupy their entire blocks and are configured to fill the shape of the irregularly shaped blocks on which they are located. Both buildings are faced in buff and red brick with large windows along their southern and western façades (see View 28 of Figure 8-18). The westernmost of the two buildings has a curved primary entrance façade that opens onto both Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. The westernmost building has a 10-story tower on its north end. These two buildings are connected via a second-floor glass-enclosed walkway that spans Fort Greene Place.

Between South Portland Avenue and Carlton Avenue, the blockfronts facing the project site are occupied by recently constructed, attached three-story rowhouses with parking in the rear. These modest residential buildings have a uniform design and establish an orderly presence along this portion of Atlantic Avenue. Their primary façades are faced in red brick and their rear façades are faced in a gray siding material.

At the northeast corner of Atlantic Avenue and Cumberland Street is a seven-story, red brick residential building with its primary entrance along Cumberland Street. The building is a rectangular monolithic slab without any setbacks.

Facing Atlantic Avenue, between Carlton and Clermont Avenues, are a 31-story L-shaped residential building and a three-story school building. The residential building, part of the Atlantic Terminal Houses, is set amidst a small landscaped area and playground and is faced in yellow brick with brown brick horizontal bands breaking up the mass of the structure (see View 29 of Figure 8-19). It is one of the taller buildings in the study area. On the adjacent lot to the east is the two- and three-story L-shaped school building, the Sterling High School (see View 30

of Figure 8-19). This yellow brick-faced building's primary façade is oriented along Clermont Avenue.

Between Clermont and Vanderbilt Avenues is a seven- and 10-story slab-like former warehouse building with tall floor-to-floor dimensions (see View 30 of Figure 8-19). This flat-roofed, gray brick building at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue occupies three-quarters of the block, including the entire block front facing Atlantic Avenue.

*East of the Project Site (South of Atlantic Avenue and east of Vanderbilt Avenue—Clinton Hill).* Immediately facing the project site between Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street is a free-standing, one-story McDonald's restaurant at the southeast corner of Vanderbilt and Atlantic Avenues. The structure is surrounded by an approximately 175-by-100-foot surface parking lot with a drive-through lane. The block facing the project site between Pacific and Dean Streets is occupied by a row of small two- and three-story brick- and brownstone-faced residential buildings, many with ground-floor shops, a funeral home, and offices. All of the buildings in this row have intact cornices, and two buildings have fire escapes on their primary façades (see View 39 of Figure 8-25).

*South of the Project Site (South of Pacific and Dean Streets, between Vanderbilt and Flatbush Avenues—Prospect Heights).* The project site is bounded to the south by Pacific and Dean Streets. The portion of Pacific Street facing the project site between 6th and Carlton Avenues is primarily characterized by Newswalk, a through-block residential building at 700 Pacific Street; two former warehouse buildings; and a row house facing Carlton Avenue, described above.

The blockfront facing the project site on Dean Street, between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues, includes a mix of one- and two-story masonry-faced warehouse buildings and three- to four-story rowhouses and small apartment buildings (see View 40 of Figure 8-26). Many of the three- and four-story buildings have either high front stoops or modest stoops. These residential buildings are faced in brick and brownstone. Several buildings have missing cornices. The westernmost building on this block—faced in brownstone and with an intact cornice and original windows—faces Carlton Avenue and is part of the Prospect Heights Historic District.

The western section of Dean Street between 6th and Carlton Avenues is occupied by a four-story, free-standing gray brick residential building with decorative architectural elements, a turret-like rounded corner, bay windows on its upper floors, and ground-floor commercial uses; a two-story, red brick-faced fire station; and a row of small four-story apartment buildings. A large portion of the block is occupied by the through-block Dean Playground, discussed in "Streetscape." The northwest corner of this playground faces the project site along this section of Dean Street. Facing the project site along Dean Street between Flatbush and 6th Avenues, are a one-story undistinguished warehouse building with a delivery garage opening onto Dean Street, a two-story residential building with a pitched roof, two four-story residential tenements with modest front stoops, and a residential rowhouse with its primary façade facing 6th Avenue (see View 41 of Figure 8-26).

### Study Area Neighborhoods

The study area comprises portions of several distinct neighborhoods—including Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, and Park Slope—the majority of which consist of low-rise residential buildings along narrow, tree-lined streets, and many on wider streets with ground-floor commercial uses. These neighborhoods also include industrial buildings and warehouses, many of which have been converted to residential use. Other features

that define the study area are churches and schools. The following discussion is organized geographically by neighborhood.

*West of the Project Site, South of Atlantic Avenue—Boerum Hill.* The portion of the Boerum Hill neighborhood in the study area lies south of Atlantic Avenue and southwest of Flatbush Avenue. As with the majority of the other neighborhoods in the study area, Boerum Hill is characterized by brownstone- or brick-faced rowhouses; however, the rowhouses in this section of Boerum Hill tend to be more modest than those of the other nearby neighborhoods and have less ornamentation. Most rowhouses in this neighborhood have cast iron stoops and railings, and original wood double doors (see View 42 of Figure 8-27). The commercial corridor in this section of the Boerum Hill neighborhood lies along Atlantic Avenue and is defined by two- to four-story residential buildings with ground-floor shops, a mosque, and the Times Plaza Branch of the United States Post Office. Other buildings in this section of the study area include several small, two- and three-story rowhouses faced in wood clapboarding; a three-story high school building housed in a classically designed stone-faced building; several small, brick-faced warehouse buildings; the BPL's Pacific Branch; and the Church of the Redeemer.

*North of the Project Site—Downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene, and Clinton Hill.* The portion of the study area north of the project site is characterized by large numbers of late 19th and early 20th century, three- and four-story rowhouses along the residential side streets—many with high front stoops and decorative architectural elements, and faced in red brick and brownstone—and three- and four-story rowhouses with ground-floor commercial uses, several churches, and taller residential and commercial buildings.

The northwestern section of the study area along Flatbush Avenue, south of Fulton Street, includes a small portion of Downtown Brooklyn. Downtown Brooklyn comprises a variety of commercial office buildings, courthouses and government buildings, educational facilities/major academic and cultural institutions, residential buildings, and retail stores. Buildings in Downtown Brooklyn range from larger, recently constructed buildings, to smaller-scale civic and commercial structures that date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The area of Downtown Brooklyn within the study area contains smaller-scale structures with ground-floor shopfronts, and larger buildings, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and Brooklyn's tallest building, the 512-foot-tall Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building.

The neighborhood of Fort Greene is roughly bordered by Fort Greene Park and Willoughby Avenue to the north, Vanderbilt Avenue to the east, Atlantic Avenue to the south, and Fort Greene Place, Fulton Street, and Ashland Place to the west. Except for the Atlantic Avenue corridor, described above, the portion of the Fort Greene neighborhood in the study area is composed almost entirely of residential buildings, including three- to five-story rowhouses faced in brownstone and brick and designed with high stoops, arched doorways, floor-length second floor windows, and curved brackets supporting windows and cornices (see View 43 of Figure 8-28). The western portion of Fort Greene includes BAM and related buildings. The primary building occupies the entire streetfront along Lafayette Avenue between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street and is a tan brick and terra cotta-faced building with decorative architectural elements (see View 44 of Figure 8-28). The buildings in the area of BAM include three- and four-story brick- or brownstone-faced rowhouses with high stoops dating from the mid-1800s. Also in this area are several commercial and institutional buildings, including the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building and the Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church. The Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building lies at the corner of Hanson Place and Ashland Place. It is a tower structure with multiple, stepped-back bays along Ashland Place that lead to the central

four-sided clock tower (see Views 11 and 12 of Figure 8-8, View 16 of Figure 8-10, View 35 of Figure 8-22, Views 49 and 50 of Figure 8-31, and View 51 of Figure 8-32). The Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church is on Hanson Place, immediately east of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building. It has a central entrance on Hanson Place, is faced in dark red brick and terra cotta decorative elements, and has a low-pitched roof. There are also new housing developments north of Atlantic Avenue along sections of South Portland Avenue, South Oxford Street, Cumberland Street, Carlton Avenue, and Fulton Street. These modest, three-story, brick-faced rowhouses form uniform rows along each of these streets, set back behind shallow, private front gardens enclosed with black cast iron fences. Several surface parking lots are also located in this part of the study area.

The northeastern section of the study area includes a portion of the Clinton Hill neighborhood north of Atlantic Avenue, east of Clermont Avenue, and west of Classon Avenue, and includes a small section of the Clinton Hill South Historic District, characterized by a mix of 19th century free-standing residential mansions and brick-, brownstone-, and limestone-fronted rowhouses designed in the Italianate, Neo-Grec, Queen Anne, and Beaux Arts styles. This section of the study area is described below. The six-story Beaux Arts-style Royal Castle Apartments are located at 20-30 Gates Avenue (see View 45 of Figure 8-29). South of Fulton Street, Clinton Avenue has a variety of residential buildings, including a five-story apartment building and two wood-frame houses with front porches. There is also a two-story, brown-brick funeral home with architectural elements and a low-pitched, copper roof at 519 Clinton Avenue. The Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew, a large, stone-faced structure with pitched roofs, copper-roofed turrets, a bell tower, and a large rose window, is a through-block building with its primary façade along Clinton Avenue (see View 31 of Figure 8-20). At 549 Clinton Avenue, there is a six-story, red brick building with a limestone base, a cornice, and decorative architectural elements that is currently used by Verizon (see View 31 of Figure 8-20 and View 46 of Figure 8-29). Other buildings within the Clinton Hill section of the study area include two- to four-story residential brick- and brownstone-faced buildings, churches, residential brick-faced buildings ranging from seven to 31 stories, and brick-faced warehouses. The seven- and 10-story through-block, gray brick building at 470 Vanderbilt Avenue faces the project site and is also located within the Clinton Hill neighborhood. It is one of the larger buildings in this section of the study area. A gas station at the corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and Fulton Street has a primary awning structure, filling station islands, a small shop set back from the streets, and a paved surface along both streets. In general, the buildings in this area of Clinton Hill occupy their entire lots, are built to the sidewalk, and reflect a variety of building types, sizes, and periods.

*South of the Project Site, South of Dean Street between Flatbush and Vanderbilt Avenues—Prospect Heights.* The portion of the Prospect Heights neighborhood in the study area lies immediately south of the proposed project site. A large section of the Prospect Heights neighborhood that lies within the study area is part of the Prospect Heights Historic District (see Chapter 7, “Cultural Resources”). This portion of the neighborhood is characterized by uninterrupted rows of attached two- to four-story residential rowhouses faced in brick and brownstone, which are typically set back from the street allowing for front stoops and small front gardens (see View 47 of Figure 8-30). The areas of Prospect Heights outside of the boundaries of the historic district have a more varied character. Underhill and Vanderbilt Avenues are wider streets lined with two- to four-story residential buildings with ground-floor shopfronts. The smaller, more residential streets have a variety of buildings, including low-rise warehouses closest to the project site along Dean and Bergen Streets, and rows of brick- and brownstone-faced residential buildings farther from the project site.

*South of the Project Site, South of Flatbush Avenue—Park Slope.* Park Slope is a residential neighborhood that lies south of Flatbush Avenue. The portion of the Park Slope neighborhood that lies within the study area is defined by rows of three- and four-story residential buildings faced in brick and brownstone with a variety of decorative features. Also interspersed among the smaller residential buildings are a few residential buildings with ground-floor shop fronts along Flatbush and 5th Avenues, and larger residential buildings along Flatbush Avenue (see View 48 of Figure 8-30).

#### ***VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS***

Structures of aesthetic and historic value make up the visual resources in the study area.<sup>1</sup> These include such historic structures as the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building and its four-sided clock tower, which at 512 feet is a prominent architectural feature in the Brooklyn skyline, and is located at the northwest corner of Hanson and Ashland Places (see Views 11 and 12 of Figure 8-8, View 16 of Figure 8-10, Views 49 and 50 of Figure 8-31, and View 51 of Figure 8-32). As the tallest building in Brooklyn, this visual resource is visible from many locations throughout the surrounding neighborhoods of Brooklyn, as well as from areas within the project site and areas south of the project site that are at a higher elevation than the Bank Building. Within the study area, views from most residential streets do not include the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, as intervening buildings limit views. However, within the study area this visual resource is visible from many of the wider, major transportation routes, particularly along Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenues. Portions of the building are also visible from areas along 3rd Avenue, Pacific and Dean Streets, Vanderbilt Avenue, Hanson Place, Fort Greene Place, and State Street.

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building is also visible from some elevated transportation corridors, including the Gowanus Expressway, the BQE, and the F train subway viaduct. However, these views are from a moving vehicle for a limited amount of time. The Bank Building can also be seen from some low-rise development areas, such as the Gowanus Canal area, beyond the 800-foot study area. It is also visible from some unobstructed public views, such as views from the Dean Playground. Views of the building are generally limited to views of the building's clock tower, although views of the entire building are possible from more immediate surrounding areas within the study area, particularly along Flatbush and 4th Avenues.

Other prominent visual resources in the study area include the Atlantic Avenue Control House at the intersection of Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenues; the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew at 520 Clinton Avenue; the six-story Verizon building at 549 Clinton Avenue; and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church at 856 Pacific Street. The Atlantic Avenue Control House, a small, single-story structure at the center of a major intersection, serves as a focal point along Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenues (see View 27 of Figure 8-18). Views to this small building, in contrast to views to the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, are generally limited to the immediately surrounding areas and views along these avenues. The Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew is a large through-block church building with its primary entrance along Clinton Avenue. The church's red, tile-roofed bell tower and two turrets rise above the small two- to four-story residential buildings that make up this portion of the study area, making these features of the church visible from the eastern section of the project site and from unobstructed vantage points within the nearby study area (see View 31 of Figure 8-20). The six-story Verizon building

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<sup>1</sup> See Visual Resources and View Corridors Table (Table 8-4) at the end of this chapter.

at 549 Clinton Avenue is one of the taller buildings in this section of the study area (see View 46 of Figure 8-29). Its intact cornice and prominent location, at the intersection of Clinton and Atlantic Avenues, make it a visual resource in the study area. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church at 856 Pacific Street lies east of the project site. The church's two bell towers and its higher elevation create visually prominent resources within this section of the study area that are visible from the project site (see View 32 of Figure 8-20). The remainder of the church building and its related outbuildings are visible only from the immediate vicinity of Pacific and Dean Streets.

Other visual resources in the study area include views along many of the narrower, tree-lined streets lined with 19th century residential and institutional buildings and continuous rows of two- to four-story brownstone-faced rowhouses. Many of these streets lie within the study area's numerous primarily residential historic districts. As described above, much of the southern portion of the study area lies within Prospect Heights. This neighborhood offers uninterrupted views of historic brownstone- and brick-faced residential rowhouses along Prospect Place, St. Marks Avenue, and Bergen Street (see View 47 of Figure 8-30). The section of the study area southwest of Flatbush Avenue and south of Atlantic Avenue also offers fairly uninterrupted views of the historic residential neighborhoods of Park Slope and Boerum Hill. Views along Prospect Place and St. Marks Avenue, between 5th and 6th Avenues, include residential brownstones and brick-faced rowhouses with high stoops and small front gardens, many of which are paved (see View 48 of Figure 8-30). The residential views in Boerum Hill along Bergen and Dean Streets, between 4th and 5th Avenues, and along Dean and Pacific Streets, between 3rd and 4th Avenues, include solid rows of more modest residential 19th century rowhouses (see View 42 of Figure 8-27). Most views along residential streets are limited to the buildings lining the streets and the tree canopy.

Flatbush Avenue is a significant view corridor in the study area, spanning north and south through the project site, and connecting the residences and small businesses along Flatbush Avenue south of the project site to the skyscrapers of Downtown Brooklyn. Views southeast along Flatbush Avenue toward the project site include small, three-story shops in 19th century buildings with a variety of brightly colored signage; the Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower shopping center, with entrances along Flatbush Avenue; the Atlantic Avenue Control House plaza; and an empty lot. Views to the northwest along Flatbush Avenue from south of the project site include rows of three- to five-story residential buildings—many with commercial space below—faced in brownstone, brick, and metal with a variety of signage advertising the businesses. This portion of Flatbush Avenue slopes down toward the project site and provides unobstructed views to skyscrapers within Downtown Brooklyn's skyline and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building (see Views 49 and 50 of Figure 8-31). Another prominent view corridor in the study area is 4th Avenue. It is a north-south corridor that terminates at the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, providing views to this visual resource from the south within the study area, as well as from points further south (see View 51 of Figure 8-32).

The visibility of the project site differs based on location, topography, and urban fabric but is generally limited to the immediate surrounding areas since intervening buildings obstruct many views. Views of the project site from the south include those from 4th, 5th, Flatbush and Vanderbilt Avenues (see Views 15 and 16 of Figure 8-10). In views from the north, the project site is most prominent from Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues and also from the southern ends of South Portland, South Oxford, Cumberland, Carlton, Clermont, and Vanderbilt Avenues (see View 1 of Figure 8-2, View 2 of Figure 8-3, and View 10 of Figure 8-7). Although the topography is slightly elevated south of the project site with a gradual downward slope toward

the project site, views of the project site from the south are limited to the areas closest to the project site that are unobstructed by buildings. Views are also possible from portions of Vanderbilt Avenue nearest to the project site (see View 11 of Figure 8-8). However, the site, in its deteriorated and underutilized state, is not a visual resource for the study area.

#### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

Existing nighttime lighting and signage in the study area near the project site varies depending on location in the study area. In general, in the areas where there are retail buildings and residential buildings with ground-floor retail, there are more store signs, more storefront lighting, lighting reflected on some building façades, lighting that spills out of retail windows, and some lighted billboards. Like the project site, the areas of the study area that have more residential buildings generally have street and sidewalk lighting provided by standard DOT high pressure sodium “cobra head” fixtures and the more decorative lighting fixtures sanctioned by DOT for use on Flatbush Avenue.

### **D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT—2010**

#### **PROJECT SITE**

In the future without the proposed project, it is assumed that the project site would remain unchanged and would continue to be inconsistent with the visual character of the surrounding area. While some warehouse and industrial buildings may be converted to residential use, underlying zoning and the presence of the LIRR rail yard and NYCT storage yard for retired buses would continue to limit development, and the project site would remain a negative visual resource.

#### **STUDY AREA**

#### *URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES*

As described in Chapter 2, “Procedural and Analytical Framework,” there are three projects planned for development in the study area by 2010. These projects represent a continuation of recent development trends and patterns in the area. The most notable project is the residential conversion of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building that is currently underway. This 34-story building, famous for its four-faced clock, will be converted from office use to 189 condominiums with ground-floor retail and a small dental office component. None of these projects will significantly affect urban design and visual resources in the study area.

#### **NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE**

In the future without the proposed project, lighting and signage conditions on the project site, and in the surrounding area, are not expected to change substantially from existing conditions. The project site would continue to be underlit at night, contributing to the break in the urban fabric of the study area.

### **E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT—2010**

The proposed project is designed as a comprehensive plan with buildings of varying heights, unique shapes, and a style of architecture that would differ substantially from the buildings in the

surrounding neighborhoods. As discussed in Chapter 2, “Procedural and Analytical Framework,” development of the proposed project would occur in phases over a period of time. Project components expected to be complete and operational in 2010 include the newly reconfigured and upgraded below-grade rail yard, and the development on the arena block (consisting of Buildings 1 through 4 in addition to the arena) and Site 5 (see Figures 8-33a through 8-33d). See Chapter 1, “Project Description,” for further detail.

### PROJECT SITE

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

All the structures on the project site would be demolished in Phase I. The portion of 5th Avenue between Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, and the portion of Pacific Street between Flatbush and 6th Avenues would be removed to create the arena block bounded by Atlantic Avenue to the north, 6th Avenue to the east, Dean Street to the south, and Flatbush Avenue to the west (see Figures 8-33a and 8-33b). A portion of the arena block would replace the existing below-grade rail yard of Block 1119, thereby eliminating the visibility of this portion of the rail yard in the surrounding area. The closure of these streets and the joining of these blocks would provide a sufficient footprint for a functioning arena.

The proposed arena would occupy the central portion of the arena block and would be set behind Building 1 at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, and behind the Urban Room (described in more detail below), a publicly accessible covered pedestrian space providing a place to congregate and access to the arena and subway, and access to lobby areas in Building 1. The proposed arena would have an oval shape with its longer edges along Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues. Its western edge would merge with Building 1 that would open onto Flatbush Avenue. The arena bowl would be surrounded by commercial and residential buildings at each corner of the arena block. The arena would have glass-enclosed walkways along the building’s perimeter creating a transparent and open quality along the Flatbush and Atlantic Avenue streetwalls. The arena’s primary entrance would be located at the Flatbush Avenue and Atlantic Avenue intersections; secondary entrances would be located on Atlantic Avenue and Dean Street. The ground floor of the arena block, particularly along Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, would contain a variety of uses and design features providing visual interest to passersby, including one or more of retail, café, graphic displays, street furniture, and visual cues to the arena bowl (see Figures 8-37 and 8-38).

The Urban Room, a noteworthy project element, would be built at the triangular western end of the arena block at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues (see Figures 8-36, 8-37, and 8-43). At approximately 620 feet tall, Building 1 would be highly visible, would have a distinctive architectural design, and would be prominent in the Brooklyn skyline as the borough’s tallest building. Building 1 would be set back from the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues behind the Urban Room, a large, at least 10,000-square-foot, publicly accessible atrium that would provide a place for people to congregate and access the arena and other buildings on the arena block. This large, publicly accessible amenity would be a pedestrian gathering place, as well as a new access point to the underground transit connection. It would provide transit passengers, commuters, arena patrons, local residents, and visitors with an ample interior space in which to move from the below-grade connection between the transit hub, the project site, and the surrounding neighborhood. It would also have a sitting area with café kiosks, and would include arena ticket booths. The upper floors of this building would be undulating curved forms faced in glass, metal panels, and masonry. Building 1 would contain a



mix of uses, possibly including commercial office, hotel, retail, and residential, anchoring the proposed project and this prominent corner to one of the major transportation intersections in this area of Brooklyn. Building 1's exterior would be clad in a series of sculptural panels with wave-like, rippled qualities that would step down gradually, moving eastward away from the triangular block end and the glass-enclosed Urban Room. Building 1 and the Urban Room would have a significant presence along Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues.

While shorter than Building 1, and with narrower floor plates, the other three buildings on the arena block would also be very tall, with heights of approximately 428 feet (Building 3 at Dean Street and 6th Avenue), approximately 322 feet (Building 2 at Flatbush Avenue and Dean Street), and approximately 511 feet (Building 4 at Atlantic and 6th Avenues). These three buildings on the arena block would have residential and ground-floor retail uses, with the possibility of commercial office space in lieu of all or part of the hotel and residential space in Building 2. Although these buildings would range in height from approximately 322 feet to 511 feet, they would have setbacks and articulations at lower levels. The bases of these buildings would be of a similar height to the proposed arena. These buildings would rise in fluid sculptural shapes, and would be faced with glass and articulated metal panel or masonry, and would have deeply recessed windows (see Figures 8-34 and 8-36).

The building on Site 5, facing both Building 1 and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from across Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, would be approximately 350 feet tall and would be developed with ground-floor retail, and either a combination of residential and office use or just office use. The base of the building would create a solid streetwall along Pacific Street, Flatbush, Atlantic, and 4th Avenues. Above that, the structure would rise as a series of setbacks and angular forms (see Figures 8-36 and 8-43). If developed with office use, the commercial mixed-use variation would include slightly bulkier buildings on the arena block (Buildings 1 and 2) and Site 5. It is not anticipated that these differences in bulk would significantly alter the proposed project's effects on urban design.

The streetscape of the arena block would include decorative paving, landscaping, and other public amenities at ground level. The Urban Room and proposed streetscape elements of the arena block would contribute to the urban design of the project site, as no such publicly accessible amenities exist on this portion of the project site.

The proposed development on the westernmost portion of the rail yard site during Phase I would transform this portion of the project site from an unattractive, isolated block into part of a vibrant commercial, entertainment, and residential center, bringing new activity to the area.

There is one combined block in the study area north of the project site—north of Atlantic Avenue between Carlton and Clermont Avenues, although the building heights and density of that block are less than those of the proposed arena block. The proposed buildings on the arena block would be larger than the surrounding buildings and would have a strong presence. However, because the project site is currently an underdeveloped and unattractive area occupied by empty lots, surface parking, a portion of the rail yard site, and warehouses, the development of a block with a sports arena, residential, and commercial uses would be an improvement to the urban design fabric of this area. Further, the creation of the arena block would facilitate pedestrian access to the arena from the subway. The four buildings surrounding the arena would incorporate a variety of uses that would promote street activity (rather than the opaque, windowless wall characteristic of many arenas, which is undesirable for pedestrians).

The proposed project also includes changes along several roadways adjacent to the project blocks. The proposed project would be set back approximately 10 feet from Flatbush Avenue on the east side to provide a drop-off lane adjacent to the site. Development along Atlantic Avenue between Flatbush and 6th Avenues would likewise be set back from the southern street line to provide a drop-off lane adjacent to the project site. Widened pedestrian sidewalks (to 20 feet) along Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues would improve pedestrian access to the arena and other buildings on the arena block. The portion of 5th Avenue between Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues and the portion of Pacific Street between Flatbush and 6th Avenues would be closed to traffic to allow for the large arena block to be developed with the arena and Buildings 1 through 4. Similarly, the portion of Pacific Street between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues would be closed to traffic and would be developed as part of the open space during Phase II. The streetbeds of 6th Avenue between Atlantic Avenue and Dean Street, and Pacific Street between 6th and Carlton Avenues, would be widened to accommodate new traffic patterns, and a new 6th Avenue bridge would be built to connect Atlantic Avenue to Pacific Street. The widened sidewalks would be lined by buildings with ground-floor windows, lobbies, or storefronts. A well-marked, highly visible new subway entrance would be created at the corner of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues to provide direct pedestrian access between the proposed arena and the LIRR Atlantic Terminal transit hub.

The project site east of 6th Avenue would remain largely undeveloped during Phase I apart from work associated with the renovation and enhancements to the below-grade rail yard on Blocks 1120 and 1121. However, as further described in Chapter 17, "Construction Impacts," construction activities for some Phase II buildings would be taking place during Phase I of the proposed project. During Phase I, all of the buildings and structures on Blocks 1128 and 1129 would be demolished and replaced by construction staging areas and temporary parking with stackers.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

As there are no visual resources on Blocks 927, 1118, 1119, 1127 of the project site, demolition of existing structures would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources. Streets closed as part of the arena block are not significant view corridors, and their closures would not result in significant adverse impacts.

Currently, the project site does not include any visual resources and has a blighted character. During Phase I it is anticipated that the proposed development on the arena block and Site 5 would significantly and positively alter the visual character of the project site by enlivening it with an arena and five tall, dramatically designed, modern buildings. Also during Phase I, construction-related activities pertaining to the proposed project would be taking place on the project site east of 6th Avenue. The change in urban design and visual resources would not have a significant adverse impact on the project site.

### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

Signage on the project site would be typical for local retail and commercial areas throughout New York City with the exception of portions of the Atlantic and Flatbush Avenue frontages of the arena block. Except on certain portions of the arena block and Site 5 detailed below, signage would be limited to a height of 25 feet, to an overall surface area of 150 square feet per ground-floor retail establishment, and to fixed illumination. These controls are consistent with the strictest signage controls used in New York City for local retail. Given Site 5's location in the

midst of three principal corridors, signage would be allowed to a height of 40 feet and to an aggregate surface area equal to five times the linear frontage of an establishment or 500 square feet along the Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenue Corridors; these controls are typical in New York City for most commercial districts other than local retail, and would allow for signage similar to that found on commercial establishments in the area.

Special signage controls would apply to the Urban Room, Building 1 and the arena façades along Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. With the exception of limited signage for ground-floor uses, illuminated and non-illuminated opaque signs would be limited to the western most 75 feet of the project and to the Building 1 façades along the two streets. The opaque signage at the Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush Avenue intersection could rise to the height of the Urban Room (approximately 100 feet) and could occupy not more than 50 percent of these 75-foot-wide areas, while the opaque signage on Building 1 would be limited to an overall height of 40 feet and to not more than 50 percent of the signage zone. Additional signage and lighting would also be allowed on the Urban Room, on Building 1 (to a height of 60 feet), and on the arena volume façade (to a height of 40 feet); however, this additional permitted signage would have to be sufficiently transparent to make activity within the building and the interior architecture visible to passersby and to allow people within the building to view the exterior. This signage scheme creates a hierarchy of signs, lighting, and graphics that concentrates lighting and signage at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues and away from residential neighborhoods to the south. The provision for “transparent signage” would allow for larger, and potentially changeable, graphic images to be located on these two frontages in a way that does not interfere with the architecture of the building or views into or out of the arena or Urban Room. Because of the required transparency, the larger graphics would not be particularly visible to pedestrians on the adjoining streets, but would have a presence from a farther distance along the Atlantic and Flatbush Avenue corridors.

Signage on the arena and on Building 1 and the Urban Room would be consistent with the active uses and sports events that would take place in the arena. While it would be brighter on event nights, on non-event nights the lighting levels would be reduced. Signage would be visible to the east and west on Atlantic Avenue, to the north and south on Flatbush Avenue (see Figures 8-37 and 8-38), and on a small portion of Pacific and Dean Streets south of Flatbush Avenue. Other residential areas would not have direct views of the signage. Since the signage would be visible principally along the commercial corridors of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, it is not a significant adverse impact. The effect of the signage on the relatively small residential area on Pacific Street, west of Flatbush Avenue, from which it would be visible would not be considered significant.

Most of the lighting for the arena block and Site 5 would be in keeping with lighting in recently developed areas of Brooklyn. Lighting and signage along the arena block’s 6th Avenue and Dean Street elevations and along Site 5’s Pacific Street and 4th Avenue elevations would be more subtle and would primarily emanate from the ground-floor retail spaces and street lighting sources on the project site. The lighting along these portions of the project site would meet DOT lighting standards. Lighting for these areas of the project site would add ambient lighting to the study area where existing street lighting does not meet the minimum street and sidewalk lighting required by DOT. By providing adequate lighting, the proposed changes would be a marked improvement over current conditions.

## **STUDY AREA**

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

The proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts on topography or natural features in the study area. The Phase I components of the proposed project—the arena and residential, commercial, and office buildings—would be built on sites that do not contain natural or important topographic features. The limited street trees in this area of the project site are small and young, and their removal would not constitute a significant adverse impact. Further, they would be replaced as part of the landscape plan for the overall site.

#### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy, and Block Shapes*

The proposed project would not adversely affect street patterns, street hierarchy, and block shapes or urban design in the study area.

The closing of 5th Avenue and Pacific Street would eliminate the portions of these streets between Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues and between Flatbush and 6th Avenues, respectively, as they would become part of the footprint of the proposed arena block. The closure of these formerly through streets would eliminate views from the study area across these streets. However, these views do not contain any important features. Closure of portions of Pacific Street and 5th Avenue on the project site would not have a significant adverse impact on the study area. The direction of traffic changes from block to block along these sections of Pacific Street. Pacific Street is not a connective street between neighborhoods on the east and west side of Flatbush Avenue. 5th Avenue is a relatively short segment of roadway and results in an awkward shape for Block 1118; it does not carry large volumes of traffic.

#### *Streetscape*

Streetscape elements are distinctive physical features, including street trees, street walls, street furniture, building entrances, fences, steps, and parked cars along a street. The proposed project would introduce streetscape elements that would positively affect the urban design of the study area. The proposed project would introduce a variety of attractive buildings, private open space on the roof of the arena, and publicly accessible areas to the project site that would replace empty lots and a disparate variety of buildings many of which are in disrepair. The proposed development of the arena block and Site 5 would alter the streetscape along two principal corridors in Brooklyn in the study area. The introduction of several tall, modern, and visually striking buildings would modify an area that is currently defined primarily by lower-rise residential, commercial, and warehouse buildings, vacant lots, and a below-grade rail yard with larger buildings to the north of the project site. The addition of an arena, widening of the sidewalks along Atlantic Avenue, and development of ground-floor retail space on the arena block and Site 5 would encourage pedestrian activity and would activate the streetscape in this area.

The proposed project would alter the streetwall in the study area by removing structures, erecting new buildings and a sports arena, and creating publicly accessible open spaces in new locations. The existing streetwall of the project site has several gaps where empty lots, a gas station, and surface parking lots exist. The proposed arena and other buildings on the arena block and Site 5 would create strong, varied streetwalls, in place of existing, nondescript structures, rejuvenating the streetscape and character of the immediate area.

Due to their height and scale, the proposed buildings would be highly visible along most of the main transportation corridors throughout the study area. In particular, Building 1, the mixed-use building on the northwest corner of the arena block, would change the streetscape on both Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues by introducing a new visual element and wayfinder into the streetscape. The streetscape along Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues would also be altered by the proposed 350-foot-tall, mixed-use building at Site 5.

The closure of Pacific Street between Flatbush and 6th Avenue would alter the streetscape along the Pacific Street corridor and remove what is theoretically a connector street between Prospect Heights and Park Slope/Boerum Hill, although it currently runs in opposite directions on either side of Flatbush Avenue. However, these neighborhoods do not currently have a strong connection because they are physically and visually divided by Flatbush Avenue, and, therefore, this would not result in a significant adverse impact. Likewise, the closure of 5th Avenue between Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues would not result in a significant impact. This avenue is not an important connector between neighborhoods, does not transport large volumes of traffic, and does not have an interesting streetscape; its closure would improve the circulation of traffic along Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues by eliminating intersections that are near on another.

#### *Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements*

The proposed project would alter urban design by introducing five tall, large-scale and uniquely formed buildings, and a sports arena to an area characterized by primarily low-rise rectangular, masonry warehouses, and small-scale residential buildings with their primary façades built to the streetwall and perpendicular to the sidewalk. Many of these existing buildings have ground-floor retail; there are some taller, larger-scale buildings to the north. The proposed residential and commercial buildings would be considerably taller than most of the existing buildings in the immediate surrounding area and would introduce a different bulk and scale to the project site and study area. The only buildings of comparable height in the study area are the 31-story Atlantic Terminal Houses at Carlton and Atlantic Avenues and the iconic, 512-foot Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building. These larger buildings and most active uses would be located closest to the intersection of two major thoroughfares—Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. The arena and five buildings that would be built during Phase I of the proposed project would alter the Brooklyn skyline. These buildings on the project site would stand out in the area because they would be dramatically different from anything in the neighborhood today. These changes, though significant, would not be considered adverse to urban design. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to the study area.

#### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

It is expected that the proposed project would make positive contributions to visual resources in the study area and that the proposed arena and Buildings 1 through 5 would become prominent visual features in the area, changing the Brooklyn skyline and serving as new wayfinders. As part of the proposed project, a platform above the western portion of the below-grade rail yard would be developed, thereby removing this section of the rail yard from sight.

However, the height, form, and locations of the proposed buildings would obstruct views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from many public vantage points south of the project site—primarily along the Flatbush Avenue corridor, but also from areas of Pacific Street between 4th and Flatbush Avenues, points along 5th Avenue near Flatbush Avenue, from Bergen Street between 6th and Carlton Avenues, the Dean Playground, and some points along Vanderbilt Avenue east of the project site (see Figures 8-45 and 8-46). The loss of these views

would constitute a significant adverse impact on this resource from these public vantage points because it is one of the most prominent and recognizable features of the Brooklyn skyline, and has been since it was constructed in 1927–1929. However, it should be noted that a building could be constructed as-of-right and independent of the proposed project on Block 1118 that could also obstruct views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building along the Flatbush Avenue corridor south of the project site and from other vantage points. Views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building would be maintained in areas north of the project site from along the Flatbush Avenue corridor and other areas outside the study area to the north, east, and west, and from the south along the 4th Avenue corridor. The transient views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from some elevated transportation corridors would remain from some areas but may be obstructed from other vantage points. Views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from low-rise development areas, such as areas adjacent to the Gowanus Canal, would also remain visible from some vantage points but may be obstructed from others. Overall, the proposed project would alter the context of this visual resource that serves as a wayfinder for this area of Brooklyn. The proposed project would create new wayfinders for this area and frame the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building on the skyline.

With completion of Phase I, the Atlantic Avenue Control House would remain visible from the east and west along Atlantic Avenue and from the south along 4th and Flatbush Avenues. Similarly, visual resources north of the project site—the bell towers of the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew and the Verizon building—would remain visible from areas within the northern and eastern sections of the study area. Views of the bell tower of St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church at 856 Pacific Street would remain visible from the study area north, east, and south of the project site. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be no adverse impacts to these visual resources.

Views along the tree-lined residential streets described in Existing Conditions, “Study Area, Visual Resources and View Corridors,” would not be affected by the proposed project as views along these corridors would not include views of the project site. Views east and west along the Atlantic Avenue corridor north of the arena block and Site 5 would be changed significantly by the arena and Buildings 1 and 4 fronting on this portion of the Atlantic Avenue view corridor between 4th and 6th Avenues. This change would be significant but not an adverse impact to these visual resources and view corridor (see Figure 8-43). Views southeast along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor, from northwest of the project site would include views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, Building 1, the arena, and Site 5. These changes would also be significant but not adverse (see Figure 8-44). Views northwest along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor would include views of Site 5 and Buildings 1 and 2 (see Figures 8-45 and 8-46). From some vantage points along the west side of Flatbush Avenue south of the project site, other buildings on the project site would be visible along this view corridor. While the Phase I project buildings would have a significant adverse impact by obstructing views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from the Flatbush Avenue view corridor south of the project site (except immediately adjacent to the project site), the proposed buildings would serve as new wayfinders on the skyline, becoming new visual resources.

### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

The urban design of the study area facing the project site would be enhanced by the proposed project’s lighting and signage. The proposed buildings and the lighting and signage described in “Project Site,” would drastically change the streetscape of the study area by replacing a portion

of the dark, below-grade rail yard and the underlit sidewalks with active buildings on the arena block and Site 5 that would emanate ambient lighting onto the sidewalks and streets.

It is anticipated that the proposed lighting and signage for the arena and Building 1 would be visible from some sections of the study area closest to this part of the project site, with views concentrated on Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. Most residential areas would not have direct views of the lighting and signage. It is not anticipated that the proposed lighting and signage would result in significant adverse impacts on the study area.

The lighting for the remainder of the arena block buildings and Site 5 would be more subtle and would primarily emanate from the ground-floor retail spaces and street lighting sources on the project site, adding ambient lighting to the study area where existing street lighting does not meet the minimum street and sidewalk lighting required by DOT.

## **F. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT—2016**

### **PROJECT SITE**

In the future without the proposed project, it is assumed that the current conditions on the project site would remain unchanged and would continue to be inconsistent with the character of the surrounding area. While some warehouse and industrial buildings may be converted to residential use, underlying zoning and the presence of the LIRR rail yard and NYCT storage yard for retired buses would continue to limit development, and the project site would remain a blighted area.

### **STUDY AREA**

In the future without the proposed project, the Atlantic Center on Atlantic Avenue—immediately north of the project site—may be redeveloped with additional residential and commercial office space; the existing retail space is expected to remain. It is anticipated that this project would be completed by 2013. Northwest of the project site, anticipated future projects include new theater, office, and commercial space for BAM and the BPL’s 10-story Visual and Performing Arts Library. These projects are expected to be complete by 2013 and would add additional taller and larger scale buildings to the study area (see Chapter 2, “Procedural and Analytical Framework”).

### **NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE**

In the future without the proposed project, lighting and signage conditions on the project site and surrounding area are not expected to change substantially from those in the existing condition. The project site would continue to be underlit at night, contributing to the break in the urban fabric of the study area.

## **G. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT—2016**

As discussed in “Probable Impacts of the Proposed Project—2010,” above, Phase I of the proposed project would include the newly renovated, below-grade rail yard and the development planned for the blocks containing the arena (consisting of Buildings 1 through 4 in addition to the arena) and Site 5. Phase II would include development over the rail yard and east of 6th Avenue. This development would include constructing a deck over the rail yard and 11 residential buildings (Buildings 5 through 15) ranging in height from approximately 184 feet to 460 feet at their roofs, with setbacks and building articulations. Lower building elements would

be situated along Dean Street from Carlton to Vanderbilt Avenues, with community facilities and local retail use on the street level and, at a minimum, seven acres of publicly accessible active and passive open space (see Figures 8-33a through 8-33d, 8-34 through 8-36, and 8-39 through 8-41).

Three residential buildings would be built along Atlantic Avenue between 6th and Carlton Avenues, and one would be built along 6th Avenue, between Pacific and Dean Street. The closing of Pacific Street between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues would combine Blocks 1121 and 1129, and the new large residential block would allow the creation of at least seven acres of publicly accessible open space (see Figures 8-40, 8-41, and 8-48) as well as seven apartment buildings. The block would also accommodate water features that would serve as stormwater detention basins, a major sustainable design element.

### PROJECT SITE

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

Of the three residential buildings along Atlantic Avenue between 6th and Carlton Avenues, the tallest (Building 7) would rise approximately 460 feet and would be located at the corner of Carlton Avenue. As the third tallest building on the project site, it would be one of the more prominent buildings of the proposed project. It is anticipated that this building would be faced in sculptural metal or glass panels (see Figures 8-49 and 8-50). Due to its height and its sculptural form, this building would be visible and easily identifiable along the Atlantic Avenue corridor and in the surrounding area (see “Visual Resources,” below). The other two buildings to be developed on this block would be shorter, rising approximately 334 feet to 397 feet at their roofs, with setbacks and articulation at the lower levels establishing the streetwall. These buildings are anticipated to have a more uniform rectilinear treatment than the Phase I building forms and would be faced in a variety of materials. These buildings would be larger than most of the existing buildings in the immediate area (other than the Phase I buildings), though comparable in scale to the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, the 31-story Atlantic Terminal Houses, and the Atlantic Center Development. A landscaped publicly accessible open space would be created along Pacific Street. Wide openings and a pedestrian path along the former right-of-way would enhance pedestrian activity and create visual links to the residential neighborhoods to the north, south, east, and west. A fourth residential building (Building 15), with a height of approximately 272 feet, would be oriented toward 6th Avenue with lower elements along Pacific and Dean Streets. This building would be irregularly shaped and faced in masonry materials.

The two easternmost blocks of the project site would be combined to form one large residential block between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues as a result of the closure of Pacific Street. This larger block allows for greater flexibility in the placement of buildings on the project site and a greater amount of usable open space than would otherwise be possible. It would also accommodate water features that serve as detention and retention basins, which are part of the project’s comprehensive stormwater management system. This block would be developed with seven residential buildings along its perimeter, with openings into the publicly accessible open space aligned with the streets to the north of Atlantic Avenue. These buildings would range in height from approximately 184 feet to 418 feet at their highest roofs, with alternating taller and shorter buildings along the Atlantic Avenue frontage, and would be faced in masonry and/or metal panels, and have a variety of window styles.



The Phase II buildings, in addition to the Phase I buildings, would significantly change the Atlantic Avenue corridor with a series of buildings with undulating façades, ranging in height from the approximately 312 feet of Building 10 at Vanderbilt Avenue to the approximately 460-foot height of Building 7 at the intersection of Carlton and Atlantic Avenues (see Figures 8-35, 8-43, 8-48, and 8-53). While the heights would vary from building to building, with lower buildings interspersed between higher ones, there would be a general trend of higher and larger scale buildings to the west and lower buildings to the east. The average height of buildings would decline by approximately 45 feet to 150 feet per block eastward along Atlantic Avenue, providing for a general reduction in scale as the project site moves farther away from the taller buildings associated with Downtown Brooklyn, and in relation to the lower-scale buildings to the east and south of the project site.

The building envelopes would step down in height from the Atlantic Avenue frontage and change character considerably along the southern edge of the project site between 6th Avenue and Dean Street to approach the scale of the neighborhoods to the south (see Figures 8-34 through 8-36). Although the buildings would still be larger and taller than most existing buildings to the south (see Figures 8-39 and 8-40), the Dean Street frontages of the four buildings on Block 1129 would be no taller than the existing Newswalk building on the adjacent Block 1128. The four residential buildings fronting on Dean Street between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues would be designed to introduce a lower scale into the proposed project (see Figures 8-51 and 8-52). Building heights along Dean Street would range from 30 to 105 feet before setting back. The design of the lower levels of these buildings is intended to be compatible with the existing rowhouses along Dean Street with the taller portions of the buildings set back a minimum of 55 feet from the southern boundary of the project site. Dean Street would be lined with trees in this location, and the placement of buildings along this street would have a lower density character. These buildings would, similar to the Atlantic Avenue buildings, have a variety of heights, ranging in height from approximately 184 feet (Building 14) to approximately 287 feet (Building 12) at their highest roof, but would all be of a lower scale than the buildings along Atlantic Avenue (see Figure 8-36).

These Phase II buildings would significantly alter the urban design of the project site by transforming three blocks and a portion of a fourth block into a high-density, enlivened residential area with ground-floor retail, community facilities, and publicly accessible open space, in an area where public open space is lacking (see Figures 8-39 through 8-41). On Block 1120, the area between Pacific Street and the proposed Phase II buildings would be landscaped, creating a green corridor along the Pacific Street block with the residential buildings serving as a backdrop to the landscaped edge. The open space has been designed, and the buildings around the open space have been arranged, to promote public access to, and use of, the space by creating access points along the streets. Additionally, the open space would continue the Pacific Street corridor eastward on Blocks 1121 and 1129 through the introduction of a winding walking path, preserving this corridor as a pedestrian thoroughfare east of the arena block. A dedicated north-south bicycle path would be incorporated into the open space and would connect with the larger city bicycle network. The proposed project would reconnect the neighborhoods to the north and south of the project site that have been divided—physically and visually—by the below-grade rail yard, by creating at-grade development and introducing numerous paths and connections through the project site via the proposed project’s publicly accessible open space component, discussed above and in Chapter 6, “Open Space,” and Chapter 1, “Project Description.”

### *Summary*

Overall, the proposed project would create a strong street presence along the principal vehicular routes, and among surrounding structures and neighborhoods. While the proposed project would significantly alter the area's urban design context and features, it would bring new life and new vitality to this underutilized site in the center of Brooklyn by significantly increasing the density above what exists today (see Figures 8-34 through 8-36 and 8-43 through 8-45).

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

As there are no visual resources on the project site, there would be no significant adverse impacts on visual resources on the project site as a whole. Further, the proposed project would introduce new visual resources to the project site. The potential impacts to visual resources in the surrounding area are discussed below under "Study Area."

Phase II would involve closing Pacific Street between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues, constructing a platform above the rail yard, and developing 11 residential buildings and over seven acres of publicly accessible open space above the below-grade rail yard. In addition, the block would accommodate water features. They would not only serve as stormwater detention basins but would also be new visual resources. Further, the proposed project would visually and physically reconnect the neighborhoods to the north and south of the project site. However, these changes would not be adverse in light of the absence of significant visual resources on the project site or on the Atlantic Avenue Corridor. These changes would replace the project site's blighted condition with a vibrant new visual resource.

### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

The Phase II buildings would have lighting and signage that would be similar to most modern residential buildings that are currently being constructed in New York City. There would be no special roof or façade lighting and signage would be limited to signage typical for local retail and apartment building entrances. Signage on the residential blocks would be limited to a height of 25 feet, to an overall surface area of 150 square feet per ground-floor retail establishment, and limited to fixed illumination. These controls are consistent with the strictest signage controls used in New York City for local retail. Street-level lighting of the Phase II buildings would emanate from the ground-floor retail uses in these buildings. Although this lighting would be subtle, it would add new lighting to the project site where very limited lighting currently exists.

## **STUDY AREA**

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

The proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to topography or natural features in the study area. The project components would be built on sites that do not contain important or natural topographic elements. The street trees on the project site are small and young, and their removal would not constitute a significant adverse impact. Further, these trees would be more than replaced by the open space and landscaping planned with Phase II development.

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

Phase II of the proposed project would also affect street patterns, street hierarchy, and block shapes in the study area. However, it is not expected that any of the proposed changes would result in significant adverse impacts on the urban design of the area.

As described above, the closed portion of Pacific Street would become part of the open space that would be accessible from 7:00 AM to 10:30 PM from May through September, and from 7:00 AM to the later of 8:00 PM and sunset in other months, seven days a week. Although larger than adjacent blocks, this combined residential block would retain the rectangular form common to the existing blocks that line Atlantic Avenue within the study area. The closure of this portion of Pacific Street would not result in significant adverse impacts to accessibility within the study area as Pacific Street does not have a uniform travel direction, does not allow traffic to cross Flatbush Avenue, and does not have heavy traffic volumes. Further, the view along Pacific Street would remain open through the open space and would be improved by new visual resources. Development of publicly accessible, attractive, and well-oriented open space, in an area where such amenities are greatly lacking, would be a major benefit. Pedestrian access would be provided in both north-south and east-west directions through the introduction of more than seven acres of open space with connections to the remaining street grid. Although the proposed project would alter the street pattern in the study area, the changes to the block shapes and the provision of open space would enhance, rather than detract from, the study area. It is therefore expected that the project features would not result in significant adverse impacts on the urban design of the study area's street pattern, block shapes, or natural features.

### *Streetscape*

The streetscape in the study area closest to the project site would undergo further changes with the addition of 11 residential buildings, in addition to the Phase I development on the project site. The Phase II development would have street-level local retail, landscaped street frontages, and entries into publicly accessible open space. The changes to the streetscape would be most dramatic in the areas immediately facing the project site, where the below-grade rail yard and low-rise warehouse and residential buildings are currently located and present an uninviting barrier and bleak street presence. The proposed residential buildings east of 6th Avenue would be built to the streetwall, but would also have openings between the buildings to the landscaped publicly accessible open space. These changes to the streetscape would enliven the study area, and the wide openings between the residential buildings would provide pedestrian and visual links to the residential neighborhoods to the north, south, east, and west.

### *Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements*

Although the proposed buildings of Phase II would be residential with ground-floor retail and community facilities, they would have different bulk and arrangement than many of the existing buildings in the study area (see Figures 8-33a-d and 8-34 through 8-36). The project site would be altered significantly by the size and bulk of the proposed buildings because, although they would have a variety of setbacks and scales, they are larger in scale from the study area's existing buildings, defined primarily by two- to eight-story residential and warehouse structures to the east, south, and west of the project site, and by some larger commercial and residential buildings to the north of the project site. Apart from the five buildings and arena to be built in Phase I of the proposed project, the only existing tower-like buildings in the study area are to the north, including the 512-foot Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, residential buildings ranging in height from seven to 31 stories, and two eight- and 10-story office buildings. These

existing buildings, themselves taller than the mostly low-rise buildings in the study area, would reduce the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building's prominence in the Brooklyn skyline, but this would not constitute a significant adverse impact because the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building would remain visible from many vantage points and would not be rendered less attractive as a result of the Phase I or II project buildings.

Like the buildings proposed for Phase I, the buildings proposed for Phase II would have irregular massing and setbacks, and would be faced in masonry, metal, and glass curtain walls. As currently contemplated, the metal and glass curtain walls would be sculptural in form and would appear as screens affixed to the buildings' façades.

### *Summary*

Overall, the effect of the proposed buildings of Phase II would be beneficial to urban design elements. The proposed modern Phase II buildings and the proposed project—which would replace a blighted area with a modern new development—would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design elements.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

The context of visual resources in the study area would be further altered by the proposed Phase II buildings. As described below, most changes to visual resources and view corridors would not be considered adverse. However, views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, an iconic visual resource in the Brooklyn skyline, would primarily be limited to the areas north of the project site along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor, and other areas outside the study area to the north, east, and west, and from the south along the 4th Avenue corridor. The transient views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from some elevated transportation corridors would remain from some vantage points but may be obstructed from other areas. View of the Bank Building from low-rise development areas would also remain visible from some areas but may be obstructed from other vantage points. The proposed project would change views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from the various vantage points from that of one tall building against the sky to one of a group of tall buildings in the skyline.

There are three principal view corridors from which pedestrians can presently view the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building: views southeast along Flatbush Avenue, views northwest along Flatbush Avenue, and views north along 4th Avenue. The proposed project would block views from one of these three view corridors—the view northwest along Flatbush Avenue. Views of the Bank Building along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor from south of the project site would be completely obstructed except from vantage points on Flatbush Avenue immediately adjacent to the project site (see Figures 8-45 and 8-46). Other views of the Bank Building that would be obstructed by the proposed project are areas of Pacific Street between 4th and Flatbush Avenues and points along 5th Avenue, and views from Bergen Street between 6th and Carlton Avenues, the Dean Playground, and Vanderbilt Avenue east of the project site. The loss of these views would constitute a significant adverse impact on the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building.

The Atlantic Avenue Control House would remain visible from the east and west along Atlantic Avenue and from the south along 4th and Flatbush Avenues. Similarly, visual resources north of the project site—the bell towers of the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew and the Verizon building—would remain visible from areas within the northern and eastern sections of the study area. Views of the bell tower of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church at 856 Pacific Street would

remain visible from the study area east and south of the project site. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be no adverse impacts to these visual resources.

Views along the tree-lined residential streets described in Existing Conditions, “Study Area, Visual Resources and View Corridors,” would not be affected by the proposed project as views along these corridors would not include views of the project site. Views east and west along the Atlantic Avenue corridor north of the project site would be transformed by the arena and nine tall buildings fronting on this portion of the Atlantic Avenue view corridor between 4th and Vanderbilt Avenues. It is anticipated that there would be no adverse impacts to these visual resources and view corridor. Views southeast along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor, from northwest of the project site would include views of Building 1, the arena, and Site 5. These changes would be significant but not adverse. Views northwest along the Flatbush Avenue view corridor would include views of Site 5 and Buildings 1 and 2. From some vantage points along the west side of Flatbush Avenue south of the project site, other buildings on the project site would be visible along this view corridor. As described earlier, the project buildings would obstruct views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building from the Flatbush Avenue view corridor south of the project site, constituting a significant adverse impact. However, the changes to the views along Flatbush Avenue would also be beneficial as the proposed buildings would themselves become new visual resources. Overall, the proposed project would result in both adverse and beneficial changes to these view corridors.

#### *NIGHTTIME LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE*

In 2016, most of the proposed project would have lighting and signage that would be similar to the lighting and signage on residential buildings with ground-floor retail throughout New York City. There would be no special roof or façade lighting. Lighting and signage for the arena and Building 1 would continue to be as described above for 2010.

Lighting for the Phase II buildings would be in keeping with lighting in recently developed areas of Brooklyn and would not represent a significant departure or impact. Lighting and signage for the Phase II buildings would be more subtle and would primarily emanate from the ground-floor retail spaces and street lighting sources on the project site. Signage on the Phase II buildings would be limited to a height of 25 feet with an overall surface area of 150 square feet per ground-floor retail establishment and limited to fixed illumination. These controls would be consistent with the strictest signage controls used in New York City for local retail and would meet DOT lighting standards. Lighting for these areas of the project site would add ambient lighting to the study area where existing street lighting does not meet the minimum street and sidewalk lighting required by DOT. By providing adequate lighting, the proposed changes would be a marked improvement over current conditions.

#### **SUMMARY**

Overall, the proposed project would introduce an arena, 16 new mixed-use buildings, and at least seven acres of landscaped, publicly accessible open space to a currently blighted area. The proposed project would greatly alter the Brooklyn skyline. The proposed buildings would be uniquely shaped and would be markedly different in height, form, and massing from most buildings in the study area, with the most dramatically shaped buildings at the crossroads of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues. The loss of some views of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building would constitute a significant adverse impact to this visual resource. Overall, the new taller buildings of the proposed project would have a positive effect by serving as new

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wayfinders in the Brooklyn skyline. At the same time, the project would contribute to the vitality of the area's urban design and foster connections among the neighborhoods surrounding the project site.

**Table 8-1**  
**Photo Locator for Figures 8-2 through 8-16—Project Site**

Figure No.	Photo No.	Location
8-2	1	Block 927 (beyond Atlantic Avenue Control House)—View southwest across Flatbush Avenue
8-3	2	Block 1118—View southeast across Flatbush Avenue
8-3	3	Block 1118—View northwest from 5th Avenue and Pacific Street
8-4	4	Block 1119—View northeast from Flatbush and 5th Avenues
8-5	5	Block 1119—View southeast across Atlantic Avenue from Fort Greene Place
8-5	6	Block 1119—View southeast from Atlantic Avenue and Fort Greene Place
8-6	7	Block 1120—View northeast from Pacific Street across rail yard and Carlton Avenue
8-6	8	Block 1120—View southeast across Atlantic Avenue from South Oxford Street
8-7	9	Block 1120—View west along rail yard from Carlton Avenue
8-7	10	Blocks 1120 and 1121—View southeast across Atlantic Avenue from Cumberland Street
8-8	11	Block 1121—View west across Vanderbilt Avenue to project site
8-8	12	Block 1121—View northwest across project site from Pacific Street between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues
8-9	13	Block 1127—View west on Pacific Street between 5th and 6th Avenues
8-9	14	Blocks 1127 and 1128—View south on 6th Avenue from Pacific Street
8-10	15	Block 1229—View northwest on Dean Street from 6th Avenue
8-10	16	Block 1127—View northeast from Flatbush Avenue and Dean Street
8-11	17	Block 1128—View southeast at Pacific Street and 6th Avenue
8-11	18	Block 1128—487-495 Dean Street
8-12	19	Block 1129—Pacific Street elevation, including 752 and 768-772 Pacific Street
8-12	20	Block 1129—Pacific Street elevation, including the former Ward Bread Bakery complex, 790-808 Pacific Street
8-13	21	Block 1129—810-812 Pacific Street
8-14	22	Block 1129—View northwest along Dean Street
8-14	23	Block 1129—603-613 Dean Street
8-15	24	Block 1129—647-669 Dean Street
8-16	25	Block 1129—Surface parking lots along Carlton Avenue between Dean and Pacific Streets
8-16	26	Block 1129—Corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and Pacific Street

**Table 8-2**  
**Photo Locator for Figures 8-18 through 8-32—Study Area**

Figure No.	Photo No.	Location
8-18	27	Atlantic Avenue Control House
8-18	28	Atlantic Terminal/Bank of New York Tower and Atlantic Center shopping centers
8-19	29	View northeast across Atlantic Avenue, east of Cumberland Street
8-19	30	View northeast across Atlantic Avenue, east of Carlton Avenue
8-20	31	View of Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew from Pacific Street looking northeast across project site
8-20	32	View of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church from Carlton Avenue looking southeast across project site
8-21	33	View southeast on Pacific Street between 4th and Flatbush Avenues
8-22	34	View of plaza at Atlantic Terminal looking east along Atlantic Avenue
8-22	35	Dean Playground—View northwest from Bergen Street
8-23	36	Block 1128—West side of Carlton Avenue, across from the project site
8-23	37	Block 1128—North side of Dean Street, between 6th and Carlton Avenues
8-24	38	West side of Flatbush Avenue from Dean Street, opposite the project site
8-25	39	East side of Vanderbilt Avenue opposite the project site
8-26	40	Dean Street opposite the project site, between Carlton and Vanderbilt Avenues
8-26	41	Dean Street opposite the project site, between Flatbush and 6th Avenues
8-27	42	Boerum Hill—St. Marks Place between 4th and 5th Avenues
8-28	43	Fort Greene—East side of St. Felix Street
8-28	44	Fort Greene—Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lafayette Avenue and Ashland Place
8-29	45	Clinton Hill—Royal Castle Apartments, 20-30 Gates Avenue
8-29	46	Clinton Hill—Verizon Building, 549 Clinton Avenue
8-30	47	Prospect Heights—Bergen Street between Vanderbilt and Carlton Avenues
8-30	48	Park Slope—St. Marks Avenue between 5th and 6th Avenues
8-31	49	View northwest on Flatbush Avenue from Grand Army Plaza
8-31	50	View northwest on Flatbush Avenue from Prospect Place
8-32	51	View north on 4th Avenue to Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building

**Table 8-3**  
**Photo Locator for Figures 8-33a through 8-53**

Figure No.	Photo No.	Location
8-33a	—	Residential Mixed-Use Variation Site Plan
8-33b	—	Commercial Mixed-Use Variation Site Plan
8-33c	—	Residential Mixed-Use Variation
8-33d	—	Commercial Mixed-Use Variation Sectional Elevation
8-34	—	View from the South of the Project Site
8-35	—	View West of Project Site along Atlantic Avenue
8-36	—	View from the Southwest of the Project Site
8-37	—	Proposed Urban Room
8-38	—	View of the Arena Lighting and Signage from the Southeast along Flatbush Avenue
8-39	—	View North on 6th Avenue from Dean Street
8-40	—	View East on Dean Street from Carlton Avenue
8-41	—	View West from Vanderbilt Avenue toward the Pedestrian Pathway
8-42	—	Key to Photomontages
8-43	—	Existing and Proposed Views: East on Atlantic Avenue from 4th Avenue
8-44	—	Existing and Proposed Views: Southeast on Flatbush Avenue from Northwest Toward Project Site
8-45	—	Existing and Proposed Views: Northwest on Flatbush Avenue from Prospect Place
8-46	—	Existing and Proposed Views: Northwest on Flatbush Avenue from Grand Army Plaza
8-47	—	Existing and Proposed Views: Northwest on Vanderbilt Avenue from Bergen Street
8-48	—	Existing and Proposed Views: West on Atlantic Avenue near Washington Avenue
8-49	—	Existing and Proposed Views: South on Carlton Avenue toward Project Site
8-50	—	Existing and Proposed Views: North on Carlton Avenue toward Project Site
8-51	—	Existing and Proposed Views: East on Dean Street from Carlton Avenue
8-52	—	Existing and Proposed Views: West on Dean Street from Underhill Avenue
8-53	—	Existing and Proposed Views: East on Atlantic Avenue from 3rd Avenue

**Table 8-4**  
**Visual Resources and View Corridors**

Figure No.	Photo No.	Location
8-3	3	Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building—Corner of Hanson and Ashland Places
8-8	11 & 12	
8-10	16	
8-22	35	
8-31	49 & 50	
8-32	51	
8-44	—	
8-45	—	
8-46	—	
8-51	—	
8-2	1	Atlantic Avenue Control House—Intersection of Atlantic, Flatbush, and 4th Avenues
8-18	27	
8-20	31	Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew—520 Clinton Avenue
8-20	31	Verizon Building—549 Clinton Avenue
8-29	46	
8-20	32	St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church—856 Pacific Street
8-30	47	Views in Prospect Heights along Prospect Place, St. Marks Avenue, and Bergen Street between Vanderbilt and Carlton Avenues
8-30	48	Views along Prospect Place and St. Marks Avenue between 5th and 6th Avenues
8-27	42	Views in Boerum Hill along Bergen and Dean Streets between 4th and 5th Avenues and along Dean and Pacific Streets between 3rd and 4th Avenues
8-31	49 & 50	Flatbush Avenue view corridor
8-32	51	4th Avenue view corridor

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