

A. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter assesses the visible changes that would result from the East Side Access Project and considers the effect those changes would have on the areas nearby. Study areas for the assessment of visual considerations have been defined for the visible project elements of the Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative in Queens and for each of the major Preferred Alternative project components: the Manhattan alignment, the Queens alignment, the four possible replacement railroad yards—Blissville Yard, Maspeth Yard, and Fresh Pond Yard in Queens, and Highbridge Yard in the Bronx (study area maps are provided in each section of “Existing Conditions,” below). The study areas correspond with project elements that are expected to be visible to the public from surrounding areas. As described below, the majority of the proposed work for the Manhattan alignment would be underground, though visible elements would include work within Grand Central Terminal (GCT), proposed off-street pedestrian entrances, and an above-ground ventilation facility.

For the Queens alignment, proposed work would predominantly involve tunnel and track construction within existing active rail yards. However, proposed project elements, such as a new passenger station at Sunnyside, ventilation facilities, and Harold Interlocking work outside the Sunnyside yard area, would be visible to surrounding areas. The TSM Alternative would also result in visible changes in Queens. Due to the nature of the work planned within the replacement rail yards—Blissville or Maspeth, Fresh Pond, and Highbridge Yards—and the locations of the yards themselves, project elements are not expected to be visually prominent to the surrounding areas.

No study area was defined for Roosevelt Island for visual and aesthetic considerations because no visual change is anticipated. Proposed construction of the substation on Roosevelt Island would require subsurface work that, when completed, would not be significantly visible above ground.

In addition, the seven sites being assessed in this FEIS to illustrate the effects of new night-time storage yards are also considered in this chapter (for more information on the assessment of these sites, please see Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives”). The study areas for these sites correspond with the areas around the sites from which potential yard elements could be visible.

The study areas are large enough to characterize the visual context of whatever element would be changing, but exclude areas where project components would not be visible. The existing visual conditions and resources within each of the study areas are analyzed below, followed by a discussion of the impact of the project alternatives. The focus of the analysis is on those areas that are accessible to the public that could be affected visually by any of the alternatives, notably proposed work in GCT and project elements that would be visible to the surrounding area. Information for this analysis was collected through field visits to the TSM and Preferred Alternative

study areas, which are the areas within visual range of project components. Viewer groups in each area are identified and duration of views assessed to determine any potential impacts.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

MANHATTAN

STUDY AREA

The locations where project elements would be visible for the Preferred Alternative include:

- GCT, Main Concourse level: Biltmore Room (Preferred Alternative Options 1 and 2); either the existing unused ticket windows in the Main Concourse (Options 1 and 2) or the area of existing stores along the east side of the Shuttle Passageway (Option 1).
- GCT, Dining Concourse level: along the north wall in the areas of the entrances, tracks, and platforms at tracks 114 through 117, and in new public areas to be developed in Metro-North's Madison Yard, which is not currently visible to the public (Options 1 and 2).
- 47 East 44th Street (Options 1 and 2).
- The sites of the possible new pedestrian entrances (Options 1 and 2). As described in Chapter 2 ("Project Alternatives"), possible locations for these new entrances have been identified. As designs progress, these locations may shift to areas in close proximity to the identified sites, but the overall visual context of the entrance sites would remain the same.

These areas and their visual context are described below (see Figure 6-1). There would be no visible elements of the TSM Alternative in Manhattan.

GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL

Affected Areas

The Biltmore Room is located in the northwest quadrant of the terminal and connected to the Main Concourse by a marble passageway, the Biltmore Concourse. It is a large, square space with glossy marble walls and a high ceiling with classical moldings. The center of the room is currently occupied by a large, modern newsstand, utilitarian in appearance. In the Main Concourse, the mostly unused ticketing windows in the east half of the south wall are similar in appearance to the ticketing windows in the west half, which are used by Metro-North Railroad (MNR). Both the east and west windows are a series of rectangular openings filled with decorative, scrolled brass grilles set in long marble booths.

The existing stores adjacent to the Shuttle Passageway are recently installed, glass-fronted retail spaces, including a bookstore.

On the Dining Concourse level, the entrances to tracks 114 through 117 extend along the Dining Concourse's north wall. Decorative arched stone plaques are located above each entrance, which are also framed by smaller, rectangular train information displays. There are also decorative brass grilles set high in the wall. The area of tracks 114 through 117 consists of parallel sets of depressed railroad tracks separated by plain concrete platforms. This area is at a lower grade than the public spaces of the Dining Concourse level and is accessed by steel and concrete staircases at each entrance.

Visual Context

GCT is a landmark of extraordinary grandeur. Its public interior spaces, the Main and Dining Concourses, are grand, marble-clad rooms with connecting vaulted passageways. These interior spaces, equaling the terminal's monumental limestone facade in terms of elegant design and beauty, are also inspiring visual resources. The Main Concourse's barrel-vaulted veiling, rising 120 feet, is decorated with illuminated constellations, which have recently been cleaned and restored as part of a major renovation and restoration of the terminal's interior. Also as part of this renovation, a planned, though previously unbuilt, grand marble staircase has been erected on the east side of the Main Concourse to match the one on the west side. The north wall of the Main Concourse is lined with the arched open entrances to MNR tracks and platforms. The southern wall is occupied by a series of marble ticket booths with long, modern train display destination boards above them. The ticket booths are divided by the wide passage extending to Vanderbilt Hall and 42nd Street.

New retail spaces designed with glass and metal grille storefronts have been constructed on the Main Concourse level. These are located along the passages extending from the Main Concourse, including the Lexington Passage that extends east from the Main Concourse and near the Shuttle Passageway, to the west of the Main Concourse.

The Biltmore Room is visible only from the immediate areas surrounding it, such as the Biltmore Concourse and the 45th Street Roosevelt Passage, as it is located at the edge of the terminal. The east ticketing windows are visible from within the Main Concourse and for a short distance on the Lexington Passage.

The new stores are visible from the Shuttle Passageway, which extends to the north and south, just west of the Main Concourse. The Shuttle Passageway has marble walls with high ceilings and splits into two parallel passageways as it extends south. The east passage is at the same level as the rest of the Main Concourse and leads to the subway. The passage to the west is a ramp that gradually ascends to the wood and glass-fronted entrance doors leading out to East 42nd Street.

The large, central Dining Concourse area is a large marble room with passageways that extend east and west from it. This concourse has also been modernized with new restaurant spaces and seating areas throughout. In the immediate vicinity of the entrances to tracks 114 and 117, modern new restaurant spaces are cut into the west walls of the concourse. Two escalators are also located along this wall between the restaurant areas. This area is located to the far west of the Dining Concourse level behind the grand marble stairs that extend from the Main Concourse, isolating this area from views from the majority of the Dining Concourse. The tracks and platforms are only visible from the entrances to the tracks and the immediate vicinity around the entrances.

OTHER AREAS IN MANHATTAN

Affected Areas

47 East 44th Street. This 5-story, buff-colored brick building occupies a small lot on the north side of the street between Vanderbilt and Madison Avenues (see view 1 of Figure 6-2). This simply designed structure, dating from the late 19th century, consists of a plainly articulated facade with ornament limited to simple geometric brick detailing. Large unadorned window openings are set shallowly into the facade above a modern glazed coffee shop at street level.

New Entrance Sites. Current designs for the project envision a total of five new entrances for each project option, at the following possible locations:

- 200 Park Avenue, the Metropolitan Life Building, is a tall, 58-story glass and concrete tower that straddles Park Avenue. It is oriented east-west, set on a wide 10-story base, and contiguous with GCT to the south. A triple-story arcade surrounds the building's lower glass-fronted 3 stories (see view 2 of Figure 6-2). A restaurant with a modern glazed store-front surmounted by a red canopy, surrounded by an outdoor sidewalk cafe with tables and chairs, is at the northwest corner of the building.
- 270 Park Avenue, the Chase Building, is a prominent glass curtain-wall building with a 52-story tower on Park Avenue and a 12-story annex along Madison Avenue that occupies the entire block bounded by Park and Madison Avenues, between East 47th and 48th Streets. The Park Avenue tower is set in a wide open plaza (see view 3 of Figure 6-3). An arcade of square columns encircles the base of the tower, supporting its cantilever above street level. A newly constructed, small glass and metal shelter housing the MNR entrance to GCT is located adjacent to the building on the north side of East 47th Street. On East 48th Street, a low, narrow stone planter containing small trees and shrubs divides the plaza from the sidewalk.
- 280 Park Avenue is located on the north side of East 48th Street across from 270 Park Avenue. This 28-story glass-and-metal sheathed modern structure fronts onto Park Avenue, with an adjoining 42-story tower behind it (see view 4 of Figure 6-3). On both 48th and 49th Streets and on Park Avenue, there is a shallow paved plaza in front of the building. On the side streets, the plaza has several square and rectangular stone planters containing small shrubs and trees.
- 245 Park Avenue occupies the entire block between Park and Lexington Avenues between East 46th and 47th Streets (see view 5 of Figure 6-4). It is a 45-story, modern, glass and metal framed structure with a square-columned arcade that surrounds the structure at street level, set on a shallow paved plaza.
- 347 Madison Avenue is a stone and brick clad building that occupies the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 45th Street (see view 6 of Figure 6-4). This building has a predominantly unornamented 4-story limestone base topped by 16 stories clad in buff-colored brick with limestone and terra cotta trim. There are ground-floor retail spaces located along East 45th Street. The retail space occupied by Grand Central Optical is at the corner with Madison Avenue and is a simple glazed storefront of a plain design.
- 335 Madison Avenue occupies the entire block between Madison and Vanderbilt Avenues between East 43rd and 44th Streets. The Bank of America building is a 26-story glass, metal and stone clad structure with stores located at street level (see view 7 of Figure 6-5). The northwest corner of the building at Madison Avenue and East 44th Street is occupied by a retail space with large plate glass and metal display windows set between stone sheathed piers.

Visual Context

The area within visual range of the Manhattan project sites is roughly bounded by Lexington Avenue to the east, Madison Avenue to the west, East 48th Street to the north, and East 42nd Street to the south. This is an extremely dense urban center characterized by tall buildings from all periods beginning in the early 20th century and by substantial traffic and pedestrian activity.

Between these two avenues, GCT, the Metropolitan Life Building, and the Helmsley Building together form a massive island, interrupting the north-south and east-west flow of traffic and people on Park Avenue and on East 43rd and 44th Streets. Park Avenue traffic uses a viaduct, built at the time of GCT, which winds its way through and around the three large structures and crosses East 42nd Street. Alongside and partially beneath the viaduct is Vanderbilt Avenue, a relatively narrow road that runs from East 42nd Street to East 47th Street. From East 47th Street to East 49th Street, a pedestrian walkway through two buildings—270 and 280 Park Avenue—continues the route of Vanderbilt Avenue for two additional blocks.

In most locations, the area's streetscape is dominated by the masonry or steel and glass streetwalls of Manhattan's buildings and skyscrapers, which generally limit visibility of any individual feature beyond the blocks on which it is located. The exception is Park Avenue, which offers a north-south vista that includes all its sidewalks, roadways and median, building plazas, and a variety of office buildings, all focusing at its southern end on the Helmsley Building, with its grand pyramidal roof capped by an ornate cupola silhouetted against the 58-story, concrete, steel, and glass 1960's Metropolitan Life Building. In the area, there are also two small, newly constructed steel and glass shelters that house the Metro-North entrances to GCT. One is located at the corner of Madison Avenue and East 47th Street and the other at the corner of Park Avenue and East 48th Street.

QUEENS

STUDY AREA

The locations where project elements for the TSM Alternative would be visible include:

- Hunters Point Avenue bridge in Hunters Point.
- Proposed route of the pedestrian walkway along Borden Avenue between the Long Island City LIRR station and East River ferry terminal in Long Island City.
- East River ferry terminal in Long Island City.
- Long Island Expressway (LIE).

The locations where project elements for the Preferred Alternative would be visible include:

- The yards: the complex of railroad activities at Yard A, Sunnyside Yard, the LIRR right-of-way, and Harold Interlocking.
- The buildings at 2950-2970 Northern Boulevard near 41st Avenue.
- Queens Boulevard bridge, near Skillman Avenue.
- Intersection of 43rd Street and the LIRR bridges (northwest corner).
- Area between 43rd Street to 48th Streets, bounded by 37th and Barnett Avenues.

All of these areas and their visual context are described below (see Figures 2-1 and 2-2 of Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives" for locations of the TSM elements and Figure 6-6 in this chapter for locations of the Preferred Alternative Queens alignment elements).

AREAS AFFECTED BY THE TSM ALTERNATIVE

Affected Areas

Hunters Point Avenue Bridge. The Hunters Point Avenue bridge is the narrowest of the viaduct bridges that cross the yards and is located at the western end of the rail yard complex. It carries two-way traffic and is four lanes wide. It is bordered by concrete sidewalks with chain-link fencing along the west side of the bridge and combined fencing of approximately 4 foot high concrete walls topped by chain-link fencing along the east side. Access to the Hunters Point LIRR station is located from the bridge via covered stairs that descend from either side of the bridge to the train platform below.

Proposed Route of the Pedestrian Walkway. This encompasses the sidewalk on the south side of Borden Avenue (which is an east-west street) east of the present Long Island City LIRR station to 2nd Street, and the parking lot of the East River ferry terminal. The sidewalk is approximately 15 feet wide, and is divided from the LIRR's property by a metal chain-link fence. There are standard metal street lamps, parking meters, and short, round, concrete bollards placed at even intervals along the edge of the sidewalk with the street. The parking lot of the ferry terminal is a flat, unlandscaped, at-grade paved surface with street lamps around its perimeter.

East River Ferry Terminal Slip. The New York Waterway slip extends for a short distance into the water and is constructed of wooden piles with a concrete walkway. A rubber bumper is attached to the edge of the slip where the boats dock.

Long Island Expressway. The Long Island Expressway (LIE) is a prominently visible, major transportation spine that extends through Queens. The proposed location of the flyover ramp near the 74th Street underpass is on the expressway's elevated roadbed that crosses a deep ravine containing the New York Connecting Railroad freight line tracks on a concrete bridge. The expressway gradually becomes elevated east of 74th Street, supported by concrete retaining walls, with the bridge supported on piers on either side of the trackbed. The one-lane-wide north collector/distributor roadway runs parallel to the highway at the same elevation and on the same bridge, and is separated from the highway by a standard concrete Jersey barrier. Tall pole-mounted lights line the road at even intervals.

The area of the proposed new eastbound entrance ramp, east of Queens Boulevard, encompasses the LIE service road, the eastbound portion of the LIE, and the embankment between the two roads. The three-lane-wide service road, which runs alongside the LIE, carries one-way traffic and is at a lower elevation than the LIE. The eastbound portion of the LIE is three lanes wide and separated from the westbound portion by low metal guard rails or concrete Jersey barriers. There are tall pole mounted lights along the highway, and large signs on metal grid structures are mounted above. A low concrete retaining wall runs between the expressway and the embankment, which is approximately 20 feet wide and planted with small shrubs and trees.

Visual Context

Hunters Point Avenue Bridge. The area east and west of the bridge consists of the depressed railroad tracks of the rail yard complex, covered concrete platform of the Hunterspoint Avenue LIRR station that extends east and west of bridge at track level, and the No. 7 subway tracks. At the north end of the bridge, stairs lead down into the below-grade subway station from the east side of the bridge. The bridge is visible from the north on Hunters Point Avenue and the immediately surrounding commercial and light industrial buildings that line the avenue. The bridge

can also be seen at the dead end of Skillman Avenue at Hunters Point Avenue, where a paved parking lot and plain brick commercial buildings are located.

Proposed Route of the Pedestrian Walkway and Ferry Slip. The area within visual range of the proposed walkway and ferry slip consists of a commercial/light manufacturing district and the LIRR station and surrounding rail yard. Borden Avenue is a two-way street that runs east-west between the LIE and 2nd Street. Views down Borden Avenue are blocked by a large, modern, approximately 6-story brick ventilation structure located in the middle of the avenue just east of 5th Street. East of this structure, the north side of Borden Avenue is lined with plain, 2-story brick commercial structures, including a restaurant. The south side of Borden Avenue is occupied by the railroad's property, including the at-grade LIRR tracks and the LIRR's supply and service depot at the southeast corner with 2nd Street, where small metal and brick structures and construction materials are located. The westernmost street in the area, closest to the river, is 2nd Street. This north-south street is a two-way street lined with a variety of disparate structures, including a large brick power plant with tall smokestacks dating from the early 20th century, and a small stone building with a peaked roof dating from the late 19th century. On the west side of 2nd Street near Borden Avenue is a parking lot for ferry passengers. Several structures are located in and around the ferry parking lot, including modern metal shed-like structures, a Con Edison substation and massive eight-silo concrete storage terminal, and older early 20th century brick structures. The shoreline at and around the ferry slip consists of a dirt and rubble embankment, with what appears to be the remnants of an old pier nearby.

Long Island Expressway. The LIE runs generally east-west and is elevated in the vicinity of the proposed LIE flyover ramp. In this area, the expressway passes a warehouse district to the north and a residential district to the south. On either side of the highway are collector/distributor roads. These roads drop below the level of the highway to meet 74th Street, which passes beneath the expressway. Also in this area, LIRR tracks run north-south in a deep cut beneath the LIRR east of 75th Street. Two service roads parallel the expressway, at grade with the rest of the surrounding area.

North of the raised LIE and its at-grade service road, a small block of short, detached and attached brick houses is located between 74th and 73rd Streets, and several plain, 1- and 2-story warehouses are east of 74th Street. From these areas, views of the LIE are of the tall retaining wall; the roadbed is not visible. On the south side of the LIE, several 3- and 4-story attached homes and apartment houses line the at-grade service road. Again, views of the LIE from this neighborhood are of the approximately 20- to 25-foot concrete retaining wall rather than of the roadbed. However, between 74th and 75th Streets, as the service road rises to meet the highway grade, the expressway is partially visible through chain-link fencing.

The area surrounding the location of the TSM Alternative's new LIE entrance ramp is primarily residential to the north, with tall brick apartment complexes, and a large paved parking area to the south. The LIE is elevated as it passes through this area; views of the expressway from the residential neighborhood on the north side are blocked by the expressway's concrete retaining walls and solid fencing extending along the north side of the LIE. From the parking area on the south, the service road and LIE are clearly visible, as only a grassy strip with a sidewalk divides this area from the service road.

AREAS AFFECTED BY THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, THE YARDS: YARD A/ARCH STREET YARD, SUNNYSIDE YARD, AND THE AMTRAK/LIRR TRACKS

Affected Areas

Yard A/Arch Street Yard, Sunnyside Yard, and the Amtrak and LIRR Main Line and Port Washington Branch tracks (“the yards”) appear as one vast area of railroad tracks interspersed with electrical facilities, poles, and wires; and 1- to 3-story early 20th century masonry buildings and modern metal structures and trailers, utilitarian in appearance (see Figure 6-7). This whole area is depressed below the surrounding land. Vegetation is sparse, mostly consisting of short trees and lightly overgrown grassy areas in isolated locations, with the exception of the southern edge, which is bordered by taller and much denser vegetation. Rail cars are stored on the tracks, particularly in the center of Sunnyside Yard, where Amtrak trainsets and catenary wires dominate views. At the northern portion of the yards, Yard A and Arch Street Yard are less used. This area appears partially vacant, with some freight cars on the tracks but little other visible activity. This portion of the yards does not have overhead electrical wires.

Along the southern boundary of the yards complex, Amtrak and LIRR trains move through along an embankment (see Figures 6-8 and 6-9). The railroad tracks taper to a narrow point at the yards’ western end; beneath the Hunters Point Avenue bridge, the concrete platforms of the LIRR’s Hunterspoint Avenue station are alongside the tracks. The station is accessed from covered stairs at the bridge.

Visual Context

The visual character of the area surrounding the yards is that of an industrial district consisting of a variety of early and mid-20th century manufacturing and warehouse buildings. The location of the yards below the surrounding land, as well as the densely built-up character of the surrounding area, almost completely isolate the yards from view from the surrounding neighborhoods. On the north side of the yards, views of the yards are largely blocked by a barrier of 2- to 8-story brick warehouse buildings that line the south side of Northern Boulevard and abut the yards (see view 3 of Figure 6-8). The yards are visible at the ends of streets that extend south from Northern Boulevard to dead-end at the yards. To the east, shorter buildings along 43rd Street and 42nd Place also create a similar streetwall that obstructs views. These structures are typically 2-story, plain commercial buildings dating from the 1960's and 1980's with loading docks at street level. Those who work in the buildings and within the yard itself do have views of the yard. At the west end of the complex, limited views into Arch Street Yard are available from 21st Street.

On the south side of the yards, Skillman Avenue runs along the southern border of the yards (see view 6 of Figure 6-10). There are no buildings between Skillman Avenue and the yards, but fencing along the yards’ edge obscures views down into them, except in some locations where fencing is broken or missing (see view 7 of Figure 6-10). East of the Queens Boulevard bridge, the approximately 8-foot-high fencing consists of densely woven metal that effectively blocks views. West of the bridge, the edge of the yards is less well maintained with older metal pole and chain-link fencing. In this area, heavy vegetation also blocks views in places where the fence is dilapidated. In areas where there are opportunities to see into the yards, pedestrians and workers in the commercial and industrial buildings across the street have limited, sporadic views in the immediate areas of the openings.

At the western point of the yards, the steel and concrete LIE bridge spans the tracks and blocks views of the yards from the west. Five other bridges span the yards at relatively even intervals. These bridges typically carry two-way traffic and have narrow concrete sidewalks with a variety of impermeable metal or concrete walls that obstruct views. In the few locations where there is chain-link fencing, the yards can be partially seen through the fencing, providing, at most, short, passing views into the yards. The yards are not visible to the general public on the Honeywell Street bridge, as it is currently closed and in a poor state of repair (see view 8 of Figure 6-11). (As described later in this chapter, rehabilitation is planned for this bridge so that it can be reopened in the future.) The yards are also visible from the Queens Boulevard bridge above the middle of the yards—both from subway trains traveling on the tracks above the roadway, and from a few locations on the roadway, described below (see view 9 of Figure 6-11). In addition, the yards can be seen in passing by passengers traveling on the Amtrak and LIRR trains that run adjacent to the yards.

OTHER AREAS AFFECTED BY THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IN QUEENS

Affected Areas

2950-2970 Northern Boulevard. These three 1- and 3-story manufacturing and warehouse buildings, dating from the 1920's (and now owned by MTA), have an abandoned appearance, with peeling paint as well as graffiti on the facades of the buildings at street level (see view 10 of Figure 6-12). These structures are separated by narrow parking lots that are fenced off from Northern Boulevard.

Queens Boulevard Bridge. The bridge spans the yards (Yard A, Sunnyside Yard, and the LIRR Main Line and Port Washington Branch tracks) at midpoint and is a prominent, heavily traveled thoroughfare (see view 9 of Figure 6-11). This metal bridge consists of a lower vehicular deck, four lanes wide, with narrow sidewalks on either side, and an upper deck on which subway trains run, blocking light to the vehicular deck. The yards are visible from a few locations on the vehicular deck to passing pedestrians, through small sections of chain-link fencing interspersed between larger sections of tall metal panels, and from a staircase on the east side of the bridge leading down to the yard, for use by authorized personnel.

Intersection of 43rd Street and LIRR Bridges. At the northwest corner of this intersection there is a long, 2-story commercial structure (see view 11 of Figure 6-12). Erected during the 1980's, it has a flat roof and no ornament, with loading docks located at street level.

Area between 43rd and 48th Streets. The two parallel group of tracks that compose the Amtrak and LIRR Main Line and Port Washington tracks cross 43rd and 48th Streets on two separate steel and concrete bridges. Between these streets, and bounded by 37th Avenue to the north and Barnett Avenue to the south, the tracks run on a narrow, raised embankment that is at the same elevation as the bridges (see view 12 of Figure 6-13). Tall metal poles and high-tension towers support electric wires that extend along the length of the tracks. The slopes of the embankment are covered in light vegetation and small trees.

Visual Context

2950-2970 Northern Boulevard. In visual range of this site, Northern Boulevard is a wide thoroughfare that carries two-way traffic. Above Northern Boulevard is a steel truss viaduct carrying elevated subway tracks. This supports for this structure divide Northern Boulevard into sections, and the structure blocks light to the street and severely restricts views of the site to

only the immediately surrounding area (see view 10 of Figure 6-12). Along the south side of the street, contiguous with the project site, there are other brick commercial and parking structures, utilitarian in appearance. Most of these, like the structure at 2950-2970 Northern Boulevard, are built to the property line, forming a solid streetwall. Directly across Northern Boulevard is the large staging site of MTA New York City Transit's (NYCT) 63rd Street Connector construction project. This site, blocked off from the street by tall wooden construction barriers, occupies almost the entire block between 41st Avenue and 40th Road. At the entrance to the construction site, views are available of a large dirt area, an enormous hole in the ground, and mounds of dirt surrounding it. Views to the project site are blocked from Queens Plaza by the heavy framework of the elevated train structure.

Queens Boulevard Bridge. The area surrounding the Queens Boulevard bridge consists primarily of the large expanse of the railroad yards it crosses, which extend east and west from the bridge and are described above. The bridge is also visible in the immediate vicinity of its northern terminus at Northern Boulevard, which is lined by brick commercial and warehouse buildings, and from the congested, heavily traveled Queens Plaza approach to the bridge across Northern Boulevard. On Skillman Avenue, the bridge is visible for longer distances east and west on Skillman Avenue, as there are no buildings between the north side of this street and the railroad yards that block views of the bridge (see view 6 of Figure 6-10).

Intersection of 43rd Street and the LIRR Bridges. The area surrounding the project site at the corner of 43rd Street and the LIRR bridge is defined by plain brick commercial buildings, parking lots, and small vacant areas (see view 14 of Figure 6-14). A winding road that carries two-way traffic with cars parked along its paved and unpaved shoulders, 43rd Street turns into 42nd Place at Northern Boulevard. Due to the sharp curves in the road, the site is only visible to the immediately surrounding areas.

Area between 43rd and 48th Streets. The areas within visual range of the LIRR bridges and embankment differ significantly to the north and south. On the north side of the railroad tracks, 37th Avenue is predominantly industrial two-way street with little pedestrian traffic (see view 12 of Figure 6-13). The south side of this street, contiguous with the railroad embankment, consists primarily of a vacant, cracked, paved area overgrown with small weeds. There are also several plain 1-story brick and concrete commercial buildings near 48th Street. On the north side of the street, there are a few plain, 1- and 2-story structures as well as fenced, vacant lots. One of these buildings has been converted for use as a church. Also on the north side of 37th Avenue, there is a large and striking, newly constructed concrete and metal building with large Korean symbols and lettering reading "New York Presbyterian Church" on its west facade. Because there are no buildings along the south side of 37th Avenue, the railroad embankment is clearly visible along that street—including from the two church buildings on the north side of the street. The railroad embankment is also visible from 43rd Street, described above.

On the south side of the railroad embankment, a group of attached 1-story private residential garages and several 1-story, brick, boxy, commercial buildings are located on the north side of Barnett Avenue between the street and the railroad (see view 13 of Figure 6-13). The 20 small garages, which are located on a slight incline commencing at the corner with 43rd Street, are plainly designed short structures with flat roofs. Along the Barnett Avenue side, they consist simply of wooden garage doors set in plain brick framing. Eastward, the remaining portion of this street to 48th Street is occupied by a variety of flat-roofed brick and concrete structures interspersed with small, chain-link, fenced-off parking areas. These structures appear to have

been built during the 1960's, some with small windows and with roll-down corrugated metal gates.

The area south of Barnett Avenue is composed of a leafy, tree-lined neighborhood that has a suburban character and is a visual resource (and historic district). Lining the south side of Barnett Avenue and the streets south of it are 2- and 3-story brick houses and taller brick apartment buildings that date from the 1920's and 1930's (see view 15 of Figure 6-14). Views of the railroad embankment from the south side of Barnett Avenue and the streets that dead-end onto it are mostly obstructed by the 1-story garages and commercial buildings on the north side of the street. However, where there are gaps between the buildings in the area of the small parking lots, described above, the train embankment and passing trains are visible.

REPLACEMENT YARDS

BLISSVILLE YARD, QUEENS

Affected Area

Blissville Yard is a swath of predominantly unused railroad property located near Newtown Creek (see Figure 6-15 and view 1 of Figure 6-16). The tracks are in poor condition and some are missing their wooden ties. They are overgrown with and surrounded by unkempt vegetation, small trees, and refuse. Along the northern edge of the yard, there are two sets of railroad tracks following different routes: the railroad tracks of the LIRR Montauk Branch run on an embankment supported by a concrete retaining wall, while an additional Montauk Branch track, which appears to be the only at-grade track in use in the yard, runs beside the embankment.

Visual Context

The area within visual range of the yard is industrial and commercial in character. To the south, a narrow, winding, paved service road extends along the edge of the yard at the same grade, leading to industrial buildings (see view 2 of Figure 6-16). This street is traveled by heavy trucks going to and from the industrial properties. There are utilitarian warehouse-type buildings, large cylindrical gas tanks and associated above-ground gas pipes, and lumber and gravel piles. Since there is no fencing between the road and the yard, the yard is clearly visible along this street and from the industrial properties opposite the yard. From the street, portions of the opposite industrial shoreline of Newtown Creek are also visible.

The north side of the yard is bordered by a variety of 1- and 3-story brick and concrete nondescript commercial buildings on the north and south sides of Review Avenue, a busy, heavily traveled commercial street (see view 1 of Figure 6-16 and view 3 of Figure 6-17). The structures along the south side of the street abut the yard and form a wall that completely obstructs views into the yard, except where there are breaks between the buildings, such as a vacant lot, driveway, or parking lot. However, the blocks between Review Avenue and the yard are deep, and, therefore, the yard is only visible from a distance, typically behind chain-link gates or vegetation (see view 4 of Figure 6-17).

To the west of Blissville Yard, the at-grade tracks of the LIRR Montauk Branch continue across a metal truss bridge that spans Dutch Kills. The tracks on the embankment drop down to grade and veer to the north across another railroad bridge spanning Dutch Kills. The yard is not visible from the Borden Avenue bridge, which crosses Dutch Kills northwest of the yard, or to areas farther west across Dutch Kills.

East of the yard, one set of LIRR tracks continues at-grade across a narrow service road that is an extension of Van Dam Street, south of Review Avenue. The service road descends from Review Avenue, which in this location is at a higher elevation than the yard. It terminates at a paved parking lot that is located under the metal and concrete J.J. Byrne Memorial Bridge (Greenpoint Avenue), which spans the yard, industrial properties, and Newtown Creek. The four-lane bridge, bordered on either side by narrow sidewalks and chain-link fencing, offers viewers on the bridge—vehicular traffic and pedestrians—views, through the fencing, of the yard and industrial shorelines of Newtown Creek to the west (see view 5 of Figure 6-18).

MASPETH YARD, QUEENS

Affected Area

Maspeth Yard consists of a long, flat, relatively narrow strip of land containing at-grade railroad tracks (see Figure 6-19 and view 1 of Figure 6-20). The active rail lines of the LIRR Montauk Branch run along the eastern edge of the yard paralleling the curve of Rust Street. Additional railroad tracks are located to the west of the LIRR tracks in unpaved areas surrounded by grass and light vegetation. There are also piles of construction materials, construction debris, such as broken-up rocks and concrete, and railroad cars stored in the yard. Tall wooden utility poles with wires extend along the length of the yard down its center.

Visual Context

Maspeth Yard is surrounded by a commercial and industrial area with the exception of a small residential district to the east. From the west, the yard is not visible, since structures along its border block any views. The western edge of the yard is lined with 1- to 4-story concrete and brick nondescript factory and warehouse-type buildings, some of which appear to be vacant (see view 1 of Figure 6-20). These structures, interspersed with parking lots and grassy unbuilt land parcels, effectively block views to the yard from areas to the west.

The east side of the yard is bordered by Rust Street, a wide, four-lane road that is heavily trafficked. From Rust Street and properties across the road, the yard is clearly visible. The east side of the street, opposite the yard, is lined predominantly with 1- and 2-story brick and concrete warehouse buildings (see view 2 of Figure 6-20). South of Maspeth Avenue, however, a small residential area abuts Rust Street. Properties on the east side of the street include a 3-story house at Maspeth Avenue and a church and parish house on a sloping wooded block between 57th Road and 57th Drive (see view 3 of Figure 6-21). Along most of Rust Street, the yard is bordered by a chain-link fence that is periodically obscured by weed trees and bushes. Where there is no fencing, including gaps and the at-grade railroad crossings at Maspeth Avenue and 49th Street, the yard is clearly visible to passing vehicular and pedestrian traffic (see view 4 of Figure 6-21). The yard can be seen from the residential structure on Rust Street between Maspeth Avenue and 57th Place, described above. It can also be seen for a short distance (within a block of the yard) in the residential area on the north side of 57th Road, where 10 small houses are located, and on the south side of 57th Drive, where 13 small, 2-story rowhouses are located. The yard is also fully visible to passersby who cross it using Maspeth Avenue, a heavily trafficked road that crosses the yard and Montauk Branch tracks at grade, and at the 49th Street railroad crossing. Railroad crossing barriers and bells warn vehicles of oncoming trains.

FRESH POND YARD, QUEENS

Affected Area

Fresh Pond Yard consists of a depressed triangular area formed by three sets of railroad tracks, as well as an additional length of tracks to the west (see Figure 6-22). Where the yard can be seen, it consists of at-grade railroad tracks, separated by paved sections (see view 1 of Figure 6-23). Tall wooden utility poles with associated utility wires extend along the paved portions. Freight rail cars are also stored along the tracks. A steel truss railroad bridge is also visible in the triangular portion of the yard near Mafera Park.

Visual Context

Fresh Pond Yard is visible from very few locations in the surrounding area. Much of the yard is bordered by industrial and commercial buildings. The yard is also bordered by a large cemetery, a park, and residential neighborhoods. Lutheran Cemetery, a large fenced, landscaped area on a hill, completely blocks views from the northeast. A modern retail shopping mall is located west and adjacent to the cemetery, and fronts onto Metropolitan Avenue, blocking views from the avenue. Along Admiral Avenue, approximately 45 attached 2-story frame rowhouses create a streetwall along the street's southern side. At the dead-end of the street, however, the tops of railroad cars in the yard are partially visible above dense fencing that runs along the northern edge of the yard (see view 2 of Figure 6-23). South and parallel to Admiral Avenue, a narrow rutted road slopes downward from the street, extending between the rear of the houses and the yard. The yard is visible only to the residents of the houses who use this small lane to access their garages, which front onto it (see view 3 of Figure 6-24).

On the south and southwest, the yard is bordered by Traffic Avenue, which runs parallel to the yard, and Mafera Park, which is adjacent. Traffic Avenue is a narrow commercial street that is lined with 1-story brick warehouse buildings of utilitarian appearance (see view 4 of Figure 6-24). These buildings form a wall along the north side of the street, blocking all views to the yard. There is also a paved parking lot on Traffic Avenue, providing partial views of the yard, above fencing. This view is available for a short distance on tree-lined, residential Gates Avenue. From Mafera Park, a predominantly open, grassy area surrounded by a chain-link fence, - only the top of the railroad bridge, described above, is visible above a tall, densely woven metal fence that borders the yard, since this portion of the yard is at a lower grade than the park (see view 5 of Figure 6-25).

To the southeast, Otto Road borders the yard. Like Traffic Avenue, this is a narrow street and its north side is similarly lined with 1-story nondescript brick warehouses and commercial buildings, as well as areas hidden by tall opaque fencing. The yard is only visible from the area immediately surrounding Otto Road's intersection with 68th Street, a residential street, as there is no fencing and an open paved area connects the street to the yard (see view 6 of Figure 6-25). The railroad tracks and stored freight cars are visible, as is the railroad bridge in the distance to the southwest (see view 1 of Figure 6-23).

HIGHBRIDGE YARD, THE BRONX

Affected Area

Highbridge Yard is an isolated parcel of land bordered by the Harlem River on the west, MTA Metro-North Railroad's (MNR) Hudson Line tracks and the elevated roadbed of the Major Deegan Expressway (I-87) on the east, the elevated Depot Place (Highbridge Ramp) access road

on the north, and the Major Deegan Expressway elevated ramp on the south (see Figure 6-26 and view 1 of Figure 6-27). The yard is at the same grade as the Harlem River shoreline and has an irregular shape corresponding to the shoreline's curving configuration. The yard has a vacant unused look. It consists of a primarily paved area bordered by unmaintained lightly vegetated areas with several trailers and modern, 1-story, architecturally nondescript structures located throughout the area. The yard also includes railroad tracks, frequently used to store railroad cars.

Visual Context

Due to the yard's isolated location, described above, it is visible only from limited locations. Across the Harlem River from the site, the Manhattan shoreline consists of the at-grade and elevated portions of Harlem River Drive, the surrounding densely wooded steep slope of Highbridge Park, and two complexes of tall apartment buildings. However, since the heavily vegetated slopes of Highbridge Park are not open to the public, the yard is only visible from the park from a paved public observation walkway farther west in the park at West 172nd Street. This walkway terminates to the north at High Bridge Water Tower, a tall, 200-foot-high octagonal stone tower that is both a historic and visual resource (see view 2 of Figure 6-27). The yard is also visible from the tall residential buildings across the river. From the Manhattan side of the river, Highbridge Yard appears as a low industrial area in front of tall residential buildings (see view 3 of Figure 6-28).

Along the eastern edge of the yard, active MNR tracks run north-south between the yard and a strip of overgrown land with scattered refuse that separates the tracks from the multilane Major Deegan Expressway. Passengers on MNR have quick, passing views of the yard as the trains pass by the area. The Major Deegan, which runs alongside the MNR tracks at a higher elevation, acts both as a visual corridor through the area and as a visual barrier to views of the yard from the east (see view 1 of Figure 6-27). East of the Major Deegan, Sedgwick Avenue parallels the highway and runs at the same grade. Views of the yard from the east are blocked for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic by tall stone walls that divide opposing traffic on the Major Deegan Expressway and by the concrete retaining walls that border portions of the highway. To the east, the land rises sharply upward from the river and highway, and the yard is only visible from a few scattered locations. Limited views are available from the stairs that connect University and Sedgwick Avenues at West 165th Street and from behind a barbed wire fence surrounding a residential parking lot on University Avenue between West 165th and 166th Streets (see view 4 Figure 6-29). The yard is also partially visible in the winter, through dense trees, from the western edge of the Highbridge Gardens apartment complex property between University and Sedgwick Avenues (see view 5 of Figure 6-29).

To the north, the yard is fully visible from High Bridge, a visual resource that is a striking former aqueduct that spans the Harlem River and Major Deegan Expressway (the bridge is shown in view 3 of Figure 6-28). The bridge has in the past served as a pedestrian walkway, but it is currently closed to the public, except for a few days a year for special events. When publicly accessible, this bridge provides clear views of the yard and across to the Manhattan shoreline (see view 1 of Figure 6-27).

South of the yard, the elevated concrete and metal Major Deegan access ramp crosses the MNR tracks and obstructs views from the south.

LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

CERRO WIRE SITE

Affected Area

The Cerro Wire and adjacent former landfill are now-unused industrial property adjacent to the LIRR right-of-way. The Cerro Wire property contains open expanses of flat pavement along the railroad right-of-way and along Robbins Lane. In the center of the site are large derelict industrial structures. The southern end of the site is characterized by several large sandy depressions. To the east of the Cerro Wire property, the former Syosset Landfill is a wide paved expanse. The Town of Syosset uses some portions of the landfill area for parking Department of Public Works vehicles, but the landfill is largely unused and inactive.

Visual Context

The area within visual range of the proposed yard is composed of industrial and commercial districts. Overall, views into the site are limited by vegetation along Robbins Lane, by the raised Long Island Expressway (LIE) structure to the south, and by neighboring properties to the north and east. On the north, commercial and industrial properties along the railroad right-of-way block views from public thoroughfares of the yard site. From the east, the former Syosset Landfill prevents access to the eastern edge of the site. Views of the site are available at some distance, across the landfill property. In addition, while the site is completely blocked from public view by trees and houses along Colony Lane, it is possible that some private houses on the south and west side of Colony Lane may have a view of the site, especially from upper floors.

BABYLON SITE

Affected Area

The Babylon site occupies the north side of Union Boulevard from near Higbie Lane on the east to Route 231 on the west. The site is occupied by a disparate mix of low-rise buildings of different sizes, shaped, and uses. Some of the buildings are industrial in appearance and close to the street, while others have parking areas in front or beside them. School buses are parked behind many of the structures on the site. Three properties near the east end of the site are residential, and have small yards and driveways. The western portion of the Babylon site is particularly industrial in appearance, with several large fuel storage tanks painted light blue. Behind those tanks, tall cellular communication towers are visible. Behind the variety of buildings and fencing on the site, glimpses of the LIRR tracks and existing Babylon Yard are visible.

Visual Context

In this area, Union Boulevard is a curving street that ranges in width from two to three lanes. Telephone and electric wires line both sides of Union Boulevard, supported on telephone poles. The south side of the street is more residential in appearance than the north, although it too includes commercial buildings as well. Most of the nearby residential buildings south of the site are 2-story structures oriented to the south, away from Union Boulevard and toward a larger residential neighborhood to the south. The intersection of Union Boulevard and Higbie Lane is low-rise and commercial in appearance, with two gasoline stations, a convenience retail store, and a neighborhood business.

YAPHANK EAST SITE

Affected Area

The Yaphank East site includes a combination of undeveloped wooded land, property occupied by several of the varied low-rise structures of the Suffolk County Department of Public Works, and some of the land currently occupied by a tree farm.

Visual Context

Because it is located in the interior portion of the Department of Public Works facility, the Yaphank East site has little visibility to the surrounding area. It is visible from the Department of Public Works property itself, but that property is not open to the public. It is also visible from private property to the east and south, and from the westernmost edge of Southaven County Park. This portion of the park is not widely used, however, and does not include any public facilities. The yard site is not visible from the nearest public thoroughfares—Yaphank Avenue and Park Street—nor from the LIE to the north.

YAPHANK WEST SITE

Affected Area

The Yaphank West site is currently a flat farmed field, with a wooded area at its western end. It lies adjacent to and at the same grade as the LIRR Ronkonkoma Branch.

Visual Context

The site is widely visible from the surrounding area, including from the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center to the north and the police facilities to the east and south. It is also visible from Yaphank Avenue, to the east. From all these vantages, the site appears to be part of the larger agricultural area that continues to the north, west, and south of the site.

The area surrounding the Yaphank West site is largely flat and open. To the south and west are several police facilities and the raised bridge of Yaphank Avenue as it crosses the LIRR right-of-way. To the north, the low-rise complex of structures at the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center are clustered close to Yaphank Avenue, and agricultural fields stretch to the west.

RONKONKOMA SITE

Affected Area

The Ronkonkoma site is located adjacent to the existing Ronkonkoma Yard, on property currently partially occupied by a LIRR yard facility and partially wooded and vacant.

Visual Context

The proposed yard site is not visible from public thoroughfares, except via the dirt access driveways that lead from Railroad Avenue into the Ronkonkoma Yard. The site is surrounded by wooded land on the south, east, and west sides and by the Ronkonkoma Yard on the north side. Residences on the north side of the existing yard are buffered from the yard by a high noise wall, and do not have views of the expansion property to the south.

PILGRIM HOSPITAL SITE

Affected Area

The Pilgrim Hospital site is varied in appearance, because of the wide range of uses on the site today. It includes several underutilized former utility buildings that together block views of the southern portion of the yard site from Campus Road. Although they are in disrepair, those utility buildings are monumental in appearance and somewhat forbidding. Behind and beside these buildings, the yard site is predominantly vacant and vegetated, although it also includes several sewage ponds.

Visual Context

From Campus Road, the existing utility structures on the proposed yard site are clearly visible and connected in context with the rest of the extensive Pilgrim Hospital complex to the north. Most of the rest of the yard site is not currently visible from Campus Road, as it is blocked from view by those buildings. The site is not visible from the Sagtikos Parkway, because of the dense vegetation along the parkway.

RIVERHEAD SITE

Affected Area

The proposed yard site is currently an undeveloped property, half an open field and the other half wooded (see Figure 6-30). The single set of train tracks along the northern border of the site runs slightly above grade at the western end of the site, but is at grade for most of the length of the site. The open portion of the yard site is separated from the tracks to its north by trees and shrubbery along most of the border.

Visual Context

The area within visual range of the proposed yard is residential to the north and vacant, undeveloped land to the south (see Figure 6-30). A number of small streets and private dirt roads extend toward the site from Hubbard Avenue, some of which terminate within visual range of the existing tracks. The site is visible from the ends of some of these roads and from nearby houses, but it is otherwise not easily seen. Much of the land on the north side of the railroad is lined with wooden or chain link fences, trees, shrubs, and bushes, although at several locations, there are no barriers between the tracks and abutting properties.

Specifically, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets in the Riverhaven mobile home community all end at the tracks. Much of the community therefore has a view toward the yard down these streets. Since the right-of-way is slightly above grade in this area, this view is currently of the tracks, but not of the yard site beyond. To the east, Jackson Road also dead-ends at the tracks, but views of the land to the south of the tracks are predominantly obscured by vegetation. Two private roads originating at Hubbard Avenue lead to and cross the tracks. From these roads, the land south of the tracks is visible upon approaching the right-of-way from the north. Another private road at the eastern end of the study area dead-ends at an opening in the fencing, providing a view of the site to the south that is partially obscured by trees. In addition to these public views of the *site*, many houses adjacent to the north side of the tracks have views of the site. To the surrounding community, the yard site appears as an open area. Even when the *site* itself is blocked from view, the open sky above the yard is widely visible from the surrounding area.

C. FUTURE CONDITIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

In the future, it is anticipated that the visual character of the study areas will remain unaltered or change minimally, based on the normal development patterns and pressures specific to each area. Projects projected for completion by 2010 or 2020 and general trends within each of the study areas are described below.

MANHATTAN

Within GCT, it is anticipated that repairs and projects designed to improve the appearance and circulation within the terminal will continue. However, since GCT is a protected historic structure, it is anticipated that any changes will be in keeping with the visual character of the existing building. Around GCT, in the area of the proposed ventilation facility and off-street pedestrian entrances, it is unlikely that there will be many significant visual changes as this area is densely built up with predominantly large, fully occupied office buildings. Within this immediate vicinity of the terminal, there are no vacant lots open for development. Buildings could, of course, be demolished and larger, new structures erected in their place, as is the case with the Bear Stearns World Headquarters building—currently being erected at 383 Madison Avenue, on the full block bounded by Madison and Vanderbilt Avenues between East 46th and 47th Streets—and the planned development of a new building at 310 Madison Avenue, between 41st and 42nd Streets.

QUEENS

In the area of the Queens alignment, several future projects will change the visual character of the yards and the immediate area. The proposed renovation and reconstruction of the currently closed and dilapidated Honeywell Street bridge that spans the yards will improve the visual character of the immediately surrounding area and generate greater vehicular and pedestrian activity at the bridge. The planned widening of the Queens Boulevard bridge will also change the appearance of that cramped, dark bridge, by creating wider, more spacious sidewalks. New cyclone fencing will be installed along the sidewalks' edges, and a concrete Jersey barrier will be placed between the new sidewalk and vehicle lanes for pedestrian safety.

North of Sunnyside Yard, new development of large office buildings is anticipated close to Northern Boulevard south of Queens Plaza by 2010 (for more discussion, see Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). These new offices will change the appearance of the area north of the yards complex, particularly on the south side of Queens Plaza. In that area, several large-scale new office buildings may be constructed along the edge of the yards complex. These new buildings will bring new pedestrian activity to the area. In addition, north of Queens Plaza, NYCT will be completing its 63rd Street Connector Project by 2001, ending the use of the large parcel at 41st Avenue as a construction staging area.

REPLACEMENT YARDS: BLISSVILLE, MASPETH, FRESH POND, AND HIGHBRIDGE

No significant visual changes are anticipated within or surrounding Blissville, Maspeth, or Fresh Pond Yards, as these areas are not subject to intense development pressures. At Highbridge Yard, it is possible that a new residential development, proposed on a platform over Highbridge Yard, may significantly alter the visual appearance of the area by erecting new residential and community-related buildings (see Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). In

addition, the possible construction of an easement in the area of the vacant land parcel separating Highbridge Yard and the Major Deegan Expressway, to connect to a proposed Bronx waterfront esplanade north and south of Highbridge Yard, will also change the visual character of the Bronx shoreline in this area. However, none of these plans have progressed since the Department of City Planning's 1993 *Plan for the Bronx Waterfront* was published (see Chapter 3). Therefore, they may not be pursued prior to construction of the proposed project.

LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

As discussed in Chapter 3, several of the yard sites *assessed in this FEIS* are being considered for other development in the future. At two of the sites (Cerro Wire and Riverhead), that development would *be in direct conflict with* development of the sites as rail yards. At Pilgrim Hospital, future development may or may not allow development of a rail yard. At each of these sites, those future developments would significantly change the appearance of the sites and the visual context of the immediate area. Other than those potential developments, no specific changes are expected that would alter the visual character of any of the Long Island storage yard sites in the future.

D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The following discussion considers the potential impacts on visual and aesthetic considerations that may result from the operation of the project alternatives. Impacts during construction are documented separately in Chapter 17, "Construction and Construction Impacts."

The analysis considers the visual impacts of the project alternatives on the study areas. The visual and aesthetic conditions are described for those areas seen at street level and do not consider the effects the alternatives have below the surface (tunnels, tracks and platforms, substations, and underground ventilation facilities), since these areas are not visible to the public.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative is the benchmark against which other project alternatives are compared. In this alternative, existing visual conditions would not alter dramatically at any of the New York City sites described above. Conditions would be the same as discussed above under "Future Conditions Common to All Alternatives."

As described in Chapter 2 ("Project Alternatives"), the No Action Alternative would require development of a new railroad yard on the Port Jefferson Branch for nighttime storage of LIRR rail cars. If the Cerro Wire site is selected for construction of a rail storage yard under the No Action Alternative, the new yard would change the appearance of the site itself, but would otherwise not affect visual character. The site is not readily visible from most public places, and the yard would be similar in visual character to the industrial structures currently on the property. The No Action Alternative would not require changes to the other potential yard sites analyzed in this FEIS.*

* See page S-6 of the Executive Summary or pages 2-1 through 2-5 of Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives," for a discussion of the No Action Alternative.

TSM ALTERNATIVE

As described above, the Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative would require construction of project elements separate from the Preferred Alternative. *Like the No Action Alternative, the TSM Alternative would require a new rail storage yard on the Port Jefferson Branch.* Other visible project elements—including a new pedestrian bridge connecting the LIRR and subway stations at the Hunters Point Avenue bridge, construction of a new covered pedestrian walkway between the Long Island City LIRR station and the East River ferry terminal at Long Island City, possible construction of a new ferry slip at the ferry terminal, and construction of new flyover and entrance ramps within the LIE right-of-way—are anticipated to make visual changes, but not significantly alter the visual character of any of the surrounding areas.

The proposed new pedestrian bridge to connect the LIRR and subway stations at Hunters Point Avenue would be constructed contiguous with the east side of the Hunters Point Avenue bridge and at the same height. It is anticipated that the new walkway would be bordered by some form of protective barriers, such as concrete or chain-link fencing. It would require the widening of the bridge to accommodate the new walkway for the approximately 200-foot length between the LIRR and subway stations, and would also require the installation of new piers to support the bridge. A new, widened stairwell and new elevator from the bridge to the LIRR platform and a new subway entrance from the walkway would also be constructed. The new pedestrian bridge, which would constitute a visual continuation of the existing Hunters Point Avenue bridge, would not significantly alter the visual character of the existing bridge nor substantially change any views to the bridge. It is also not anticipated that the construction of new access stairs and an elevator to and from the new pedestrian bridge and the LIRR and subway stations, where such forms of access currently exist, would constitute a significant visual change.

The proposed 500-foot-long pedestrian walkway in Long Island City would extend west from the Long Island City LIRR station along the existing sidewalk on Borden Avenue, continue west through the existing East River ferry terminal paved parking lot, to the New York Waterway ferry slip. Though not fully designed, it is anticipated that the walkway would be unenclosed but covered by a roof, which would be supported by columns at even intervals along the walkway. The walkway would not obstruct any views to the water from the public right-of-way, as views are currently only permitted from within the ferry terminal parking lot due to the presence of large and multiple structures in and around the parking lot that block views from the west. The walkway itself would not negatively alter the visual context of the immediately surrounding area, which is defined by a mixture of commercial, railroad, and ferry terminal uses. It is also possible that the existing ferry slip would be enlarged to handle a greater number of boats or larger ferries. However, since this change would only be visible from within the ferry parking lot in close proximity to the shore, no significant visual changes are anticipated. Therefore, neither the proposed walkway or enlargement of the ferry slip would have a significant adverse impact on, nor negatively alter the visual context of, the immediately surrounding areas.

The TSM Alternative's new flyover ramp on the LIE would connect the LIE's north (west-bound) connector/distributor road to a new westbound lane in the center of the expressway via a new elevated ramp that would pass above the existing westbound expressway lanes, essentially providing another tier of highway structure above the existing expressway. The ramp would be at its highest point on the bridge that crosses the railroad tracks, gradually declining to meet the expressway at 74th Street. Although it would likely be visible to some of the

surrounding area, the new flyover ramp would be similar in materials and appearance to the existing LIE structure, and would not be expected to change the visual character of the LIE, already an obtrusive transportation artery in the area.

The TSM Alternative's new eastbound entrance ramp to the LIE east of Queens Boulevard would create a new connection from the south LIE service road to the LIE on a ramp that would rise and cross the existing embankment. The construction of a ramp within the LIE right-of-way—between its service road and the expressway itself—would not be a significant visual change nor would it alter the existing visual character of the prominent expressway structure. In addition, the new ramp would be visible only from the south, near the large parking lot there, because walls and fencing along the north side of the expressway effectively block views of the LIE roadbed from the north.

Since none of the TSM Alternative's components would significantly alter the visual character of the project sites or the areas within visual proximity, this alternative would not result in any significant adverse impacts.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

MANHATTAN

Grand Central Terminal

As described in Chapter 2 ("Project Alternatives"), Option 2 has been selected as the preferred engineering option for the East Side Access Project. The effects of both project options are assessed in this chapter. The Preferred Alternative under either option would involve changes to GCT. Under either project option being considered, those changes would include changes to both the Main Concourse level and the Dining Concourse level. As described in detail in Chapter 2 ("Project Alternatives"), on the Main Concourse level, the Biltmore Room could be altered under either project option. In addition, both options could also create new ticket windows in the existing terminal structure on the Main Concourse level. On the Dining Concourse level, both options would create a new public area in MNR's Madison Yard area, and both would create a new connection between that area and the existing public areas of the Dining Concourse. The visual effects of the changes common to both options are discussed below. Following that discussion, project components of Option 1 and Option 2 that differ are described separately for each option.

Under both project options, the Preferred Alternative's elements within GCT would change the appearance of the areas of the terminal described above. However, none of the changes proposed would constitute significant visual impacts that would adversely affect the existing visual character of the terminal. Both options *could* install new *escalators* in a portion of the Biltmore Room on the Main Concourse level, permanently changing the room's appearance by altering its symmetrical classical proportions. *(As described in Chapter 7, "Historic Resources," changes to the Biltmore Room are subject to review and approval by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation [OPRHP], and the State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO].)* At the same time, however, removal of the large newsstand currently in the center of that room, which is a separate modern amenity, would likely open up the room and would have a positive visual effect. Since the Biltmore Room is at the edge of the terminal and only visible from the immediate vicinity of the Biltmore Concourse and the 45th Street Passage, the proposed work would not adversely affect the terminal's overall visual

character. The proposed new circulation elements would bring increased pedestrian activity to this part of the terminal, drawing people into an aesthetically pleasing space that currently receives little use.

As described in Chapter 2, either option could create new ticketing windows in the existing ticket windows in the Main Concourse. If the east ticketing windows in the Main Concourse are used for LIRR ticket operations, no changes are anticipated to the appearance of that ticketing area, except for the addition of signage, which would not alter the visual character of the area or of the Main Concourse. Use of these windows would return them to their original function.

On the Dining Concourse level, either option would create new public space in the Madison Yard area, which is currently not accessible to the public. This space would be visible only to the immediately surrounding area at the western edge of the existing terminal. The creation of this space would essentially enlarge and expand the existing publicly accessible area of this level. As this area would be built outside the existing public space and at the edge of the terminal, it is not expected to have a significant adverse visual effect on the overall visual character of the terminal. However, to have a positive visual effect, it is recommended that the new space be designed in keeping with the visual character of the surrounding Dining Concourse area.

Elements Proposed only under Option 1. Under Option 1, the new passenger area on the Dining Concourse level would consist predominantly of tracks and platforms, similar to the rest of the lower level of GCT. This new platform area, as well as the adjacent public space, would not significantly change the visual character of existing public areas on the Dining Concourse level, as explained above.

As described in Chapter 2, Option 1 might create new ticketing windows in an area now used for retail space along the Shuttle Passageway. The changed appearance of this area would not result in any negative visual effects on the bustling, heavily trafficked terminal. The replacement of modern stores with a new ticketing area in an area only minimally visible—e.g., from the Shuttle Passageway—would not constitute a significant adverse visual effect.

In addition to the escalators to the Biltmore Room proposed under either Option 1 or Option 2 (discussed above), Option 1 would also create new elevators from the track and platform area to the Biltmore Room. Like the escalators, the new elevators would be in the northernmost portion of the room, thereby limiting the disturbance they would cause to the classical proportions of the room, which is one of the historic features of the terminal.

Elements Proposed only under Option 2. For Option 2, the new passenger concourse area would consist of waiting areas and retail stores that would be in keeping with other uses within the terminal. Although this newly created area would extend the non-track-related public spaces much deeper (farther north) into the terminal, it would not be more visually prominent than the tracks and platforms in that space that are proposed for Option 1, and similarly would not be expected to have a significant adverse effect on the existing visual character of the terminal.

Other Areas in Manhattan

The Preferred Alternative under either option would create a new ventilation facility at 47 East 44th Street, between Vanderbilt and Madison Avenues. It is anticipated that this facility would occupy the same width and depth as the 5-story commercial building that is currently on the site, but would be of a greater (though at this time undetermined) height than the structure it would be replacing. The design for this structure is still under way, and would be completed in consultation with interested parties. Although MTA and its subsidiaries are not subject to New York

City zoning requirements, the design of the building would be coordinated with appropriate city agencies. The owners of adjacent buildings, including the Yale Club, would be provided with preliminary engineering design and artist renderings of the building, as they become available. The ventilation facility would be clearly visible to viewers in the buildings fronting north and south on East 44th Street on the block; to office workers, shoppers, and pedestrians on this portion of the street; and at the intersections with Madison and Vanderbilt Avenues. However, due to the height of the buildings surrounding the site, which range from 12 to 26 stories, unless the structure exceeds those heights, it would not be visible from other locations in the study area—including at other locations on Madison and Vanderbilt Avenues.

As noted in Chapter 2, the locations of the proposed passenger entrances under either project option have not yet been finalized. However, the new entrances would be located within the general area roughly bounded by Lexington and Madison Avenues between East 42nd and 48th Streets—and would be of similar design. The design of the off-street pedestrian entrances would also be developed in coordination with property owners, and concerns of interested parties incorporated into the design, wherever possible. Although the off-street pedestrian entrances have not yet been fully designed, it is expected that the entrances proposed adjacent to existing structures would be covered by a shelter. They would be somewhat similar in visual character to the new entrances constructed for Metro-North's Grand Central North project. The design of the entrances would make them conspicuous to viewers in the immediately surrounding areas, but visibility would typically be limited to the immediate street, because of the dense development of the surrounding areas. In addition, new signage would be added to the existing Grand Central North entrances, though it would only be visible within the visual range of the entrances. Due to the dense, dynamic, urban nature of the surrounding environment, characterized by older brick and newer glass and metal clad structures, the new entrance structures would not have a significant effect on the visual character of the surrounding area. For the entrances to be located within existing storefronts, the storefronts would be replaced by new entrances with marquees or canopies. Similar to the pedestrian entrances described above, the new marquees would be expected to be visually prominent, since they would extend out from the building line. Replacing storefronts of contemporary design with modern entrances that would include strongly articulated architectural features would not constitute a significant adverse visual effect.

Option 2 would also require various additional ventilation features at street level in the area north of the GCT structure—roughly between Park and Madison Avenues from 43rd to 49th Street. As described in Chapter 2, these features would most likely consist of a combination of gratings in the street or sidewalk, vents on the roofs of existing buildings above the trainshed, grills or louvers on the facades of existing buildings at least 6 feet above the sidewalk, or kiosk-type pylons installed in plazas or sidewalks. The structures would be sited so as not to have adverse visual effects on any of the historic structures in the vicinity (see Chapter 7, "Historic Resources"). In the context of the densely developed urban area north of GCT, these new structures would not result in an adverse visual impact.

QUEENS

The Yards: Yard A/Arch Street Yard, Sunnyside Yard, and the Amtrak/LIRR Tracks

Within the yards, the possible demolition of several brick structures at the northern edge of Sunnyside Yard would change the appearance of this portion of the yards. However, this change would not alter the visual character of the yards as a complex network of railroad tracks and old and new buildings. In addition, since this portion of the yards is visible only from dead-end

streets south of Northern Boulevard, to authorized traffic en route to the yards from the Honeywell Street bridge, and from limited locations on the Queens Boulevard bridge, this proposed change would not be visually prominent and would not constitute a significant adverse visual effect on the surrounding area.

Other proposed changes within the yards are also not anticipated to alter the visual character of the yards. These include the construction within the Harold Interlocking, which would add new tracks, but would not change the general appearance of the Amtrak/LIRR tracks or surrounding Sunnyside Yard areas. Proposed rearrangement and installation of new tracks within Yard A and Arch Street Yard would similarly not be expected to alter the visual character of the yard as a wide network of railroad tracks. Construction of new facilities within Yard A and Arch Street Yard, such as a train washer and service and inspection shop, would only add to the existing mixture of old and new structures located within the yards, therefore not altering their visual character. Overall, Yard A/Arch Street Yard would appear to be more actively used with the project. The new, more active Yard A/Arch Street Yard would be visible to pedestrians in the area north of the yard, where new offices uses are expected to be developed in the future (see the discussion above under “Future Conditions Common to All Alternatives”).

Sunnyside Station

The new Sunnyside station is anticipated to be more visually prominent. The station would be constructed adjacent to and on the west side of the Queens Boulevard bridge, approximately 400 feet north of Skillman Avenue (see figures in Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives”). Although not yet fully designed, it would consist of a central headhouse and three separate parallel train platforms. The headhouse would be located at street level with the Queens Boulevard bridge and would open onto the west sidewalk of the bridge, housing the LIRR ticket office, waiting room, and other LIRR uses. The structure would have a strong, dynamic design to orient and attract passengers. The current design favors a primarily transparent building, built of stainless steel and glass. The headhouse would be located above the center island platform with glass-enclosed pedestrian walkways connecting down to cylindrical vertical circulation towers on the platforms north and south of it, and canopied escalators extending down to the central platform. A walkway would extend southward from the headhouse and through the vertical circulation tower on the south platform to a bus/van/auto drop-off/pick-up area to be created on the north side of Skillman Avenue. On the bridge, a pedestrian barrier would be installed between the sidewalk and vehicle lanes to prevent drop-offs or pick-ups of passengers at the station headhouse instead of at the designated area on Skillman Avenue. This could be a new barrier or an improvement to the Jersey barrier present without the project. On the west side of the bridge, canopied stairs would provide access down to the central platform.

The bridge-level headhouse and stairways to the platforms would be visible west of Queens Boulevard along Skillman Avenue, as is the Queens Boulevard bridge today. The station, if designed in a striking, modern, primarily transparent aesthetic described above, would constitute a bright, positive visual effect on the surrounding area, currently defined by nondescript commercial buildings and the dark, cramped, congested visual character of the Queens Boulevard bridge.

Other Areas in Queens

It is anticipated that replacement of the warehouse buildings at 2950-2970 Northern Boulevard with a new LIRR structure would change the appearance of that site on the south side of Northern Boulevard. However, since the site is located in an area dominated by manufacturing

and commercial buildings that are predominantly blocked from view along Northern Boulevard by the elevated train superstructure, it is not anticipated that these changes would negatively affect the surrounding area within visual proximity nor constitute a significant adverse visual effect. The new structure would most likely be built to the property line, similar to the existing building on the site and to neighboring structures. It would therefore not interrupt the streetwall formed by those buildings.

On the north side of Northern Boulevard at 41st Avenue, the Preferred Alternative would create a new substation on the property now being used for construction of NYCT's 63rd Street Connector Project. The substation would be underground and not visible to the public. (For information on construction techniques, see Chapter 17). Once construction of the East Side Access Project is complete, that property would no longer be fenced off, as it has been for several years.

East of the yards, the proposed demolition of a commercial building at the northwest corner of 43rd Street and the LIRR bridges, and construction of new bridges across 43rd and 48th Streets to carry the new Harold Interlocking tracks, would not significantly alter the appearance of the immediately neighboring areas. The removal of one utilitarian brick structure—or a portion of that structure—out of several of similar appearance, and the construction of bridges, expected to be similar to the existing ones, would not noticeably change the visual character of the area in the vicinity of 43rd Street, 42nd Place, 37th Avenue, and 48th Street.

Work along the LIRR train embankment, including embankment modifications and viaducts, is not expected to negatively affect the properties to the north or south. The properties to the north, which are located on the north side of 37th Avenue, already have clear views of the embankment. The properties to the south, which are located on the north side of Barnett Avenue, form a buffer between the railroad embankment and the nearby Sunnyside Gardens residential neighborhood south of Barnett Avenue. The 1-story garages and commercial buildings, except where there are small paved parking lots with no structures, form an effective visual barrier from the embankment and passing trains. The new, wider track area would not be any more visible to the surrounding neighborhood than the existing tracks today. Consequently, the proposed work would not alter the historic character of the Sunnyside Gardens neighborhood (see Chapter 7, "Historic Resources," for further details).

REPLACEMENT YARDS

Blissville Yard, Queens

Rehabilitation of the abandoned rail yard, including grading and replacement of railroad tracks for freight car storage, would change the visual appearance of the yard by improving its current derelict condition. It is not anticipated that new elements and the resulting greater activity in the yard would have a significant adverse visual effect on the surrounding area, as there are no sensitive viewer groups or significant visual resources in the view shed. As described above, the closest viewers are the industrial and commercial properties located north and south of the yard, which are unlikely to be affected by any greater activity in the yard.

Maspeth Yard, Queens

As described in Chapter 2, NYAR is no longer considering development of replacement yard space at Maspeth, but the analysis of such a yard is retained for comparison purposes. The proposed work within Maspeth Yard would not significantly alter the visual character of the yard and therefore would not have an adverse effect on the surrounding area. Proposed

grading, installation of switches and signals, and construction of new storage tracks within an existing active rail yard and subsequent storage of more railroad cars would not greatly alter the visual quality or urban design of the yard. In addition, as described above, the yard is not visible from many locations. Where it may be seen, viewer groups typically consist of passing traffic on commercial streets and workers in the commercial/manufacturing buildings. Where the yard is visible from residential properties east of Rust Street, the proposed work would not be conspicuous enough to have a negative visual impact on the viewers. Possible new security fencing around the yard would likely be more visually prominent, but would give the perimeter of the yard a more maintained and less dilapidated appearance. It would also more effectively screen views into Maspeth Yard.

Fresh Pond Yard, Queens

The proposed construction of a new maintenance facility in the triangular portion of the Fresh Pond Yard would have no adverse visual impacts on the surrounding area, because it would hardly be visible. As described above, this part of the yard can be seen from only one location, at Otto Road and 68th Street. Since it is likely that the structure would be built at the widest portion of the yard, this would place it farther away from Otto Road and deeper into the yard, where it would be most difficult to see from outside the yard. Possible new security fencing may be more visually prominent in locations where heavy fencing does not exist around the perimeter of the yard, but would not be expected to cause any significant adverse impacts, since the yard can only be seen in very few locations. Other work proposed in the yard to relocate existing utilities to allow construction and servicing of the new shop would have no visual impact, since the completed work would be underground.

Highbridge Yard, The Bronx

Proposed work within Highbridge Yard—including construction of new tracks, platforms, structures, an enclosed employee overpass over the Hudson Line tracks, and new security fencing—would change the visual character of the yard by adding to and improving an infrequently used facility. In addition, the proposed project would introduce a greater amount of activity and personnel. Since the yard is immediately bordered by such physical barriers as the Harlem River and elevated roadways—the Major Deegan Expressway, its access ramps, and Depot Place—the proposed changes within the yard and anticipated increase in activity would not have an adverse effect on any sensitive residential uses, which are located farther away. Where the yard is visible, such as from Highbridge Park or residential complexes in Manhattan or from areas on University Avenue, these locations are at a sufficient distance—and across from a river or major highway—to render the change in visual appearance of the yard, and any new activities that may occur there, negligible. If the High Bridge pedestrian walkway should be opened to the public, it is not anticipated that any visual changes created in the yard by the addition of new tracks, platforms, or structures, or heightened activity within an already existing rail yard, would have a significant effect on viewers on the bridge. New construction would not obstruct any views from the bridge nor interfere with the primary views on the bridge looking north and south along the Harlem River.

New security lighting at the yard would consist of low-level standard pole-mounted lights designed with shielding as required to shield sensitive viewers in the viewshed from glare. Therefore, the increased lighting at the yard would not adversely affect residential uses across the Major Deegan Expressway or the Harlem River from the site. Further, the proposed new lighting

is not anticipated to have any significant adverse effects on the closest visual resource—High Bridge—which is itself illuminated at night.

LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

Cerro Wire Site

While a new train storage yard on the Cerro Wire site would change the appearance of that site, that change would not affect the overall industrial character and context of the property. The Preferred Alternative would double the size of the required yard over that of the No Action Alternative, but the yard would still remain similar to the existing visual context of the site.

Babylon Site

A new yard at Babylon under the Preferred Alternative would completely transform the appearance of that site. The current mix of buildings of different uses, forms, layouts, and heights would be removed and replaced by one unified rail yard. This change would alter the appearance of Union Boulevard and views toward the site from properties to the south. To mitigate any adverse visual effects on the adjacent residential neighborhood on the south side of Union Boulevard, a barrier wall would be built around the edge of the yard. With this wall in place, the industrial context of the north side of Union Boulevard would remain, and the visual changes brought by the yard would not constitute a significant adverse impact.

Yaphank East Site

A new yard at Yaphank East would be of limited visibility, because of that site's location largely within the Department of Public Works facility. Consequently, overall the new yard would not result in significant adverse visual effects. The yard could be visible from the adjacent Southaven County Park, however. To avoid visual impacts to the nearby park, a buffer of vegetation would be retained on the east side of the new yard at Yaphank East.

Yaphank West Site

In contrast, a new yard at Yaphank West would be highly visible from the surrounding area, including Yaphank Avenue, the police facilities to the south, and the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center to the north. It would replace an agricultural area and wooded area with an active industrial use. This transformation would be visually compatible with the nearby municipal facilities, however, and therefore would not result in significant adverse effects on visual character.

Ronkonkoma Site

As described under "Existing Conditions," the Ronkonkoma Yard site is not currently visible from public places, since it is surrounded on three sides by wooded vacant land and its nearest neighbors are the existing Ronkonkoma Yard, the Ronkonkoma station parking area, and the MacArthur Airport. No adverse visual effects would therefore occur from development of a new nighttime storage yard at this site.

Pilgrim Hospital Site

The construction of a rail yard and associated structures would completely change the appearance of the Pilgrim Hospital site. It would replace the field areas south of Campus Road with train tracks and related facilities. The site, however, is not easily seen from beyond its

boundaries, except along Campus Road, and the visual changes resulting from the new yard would not constitute a significant adverse visual impact.

Riverhead Site

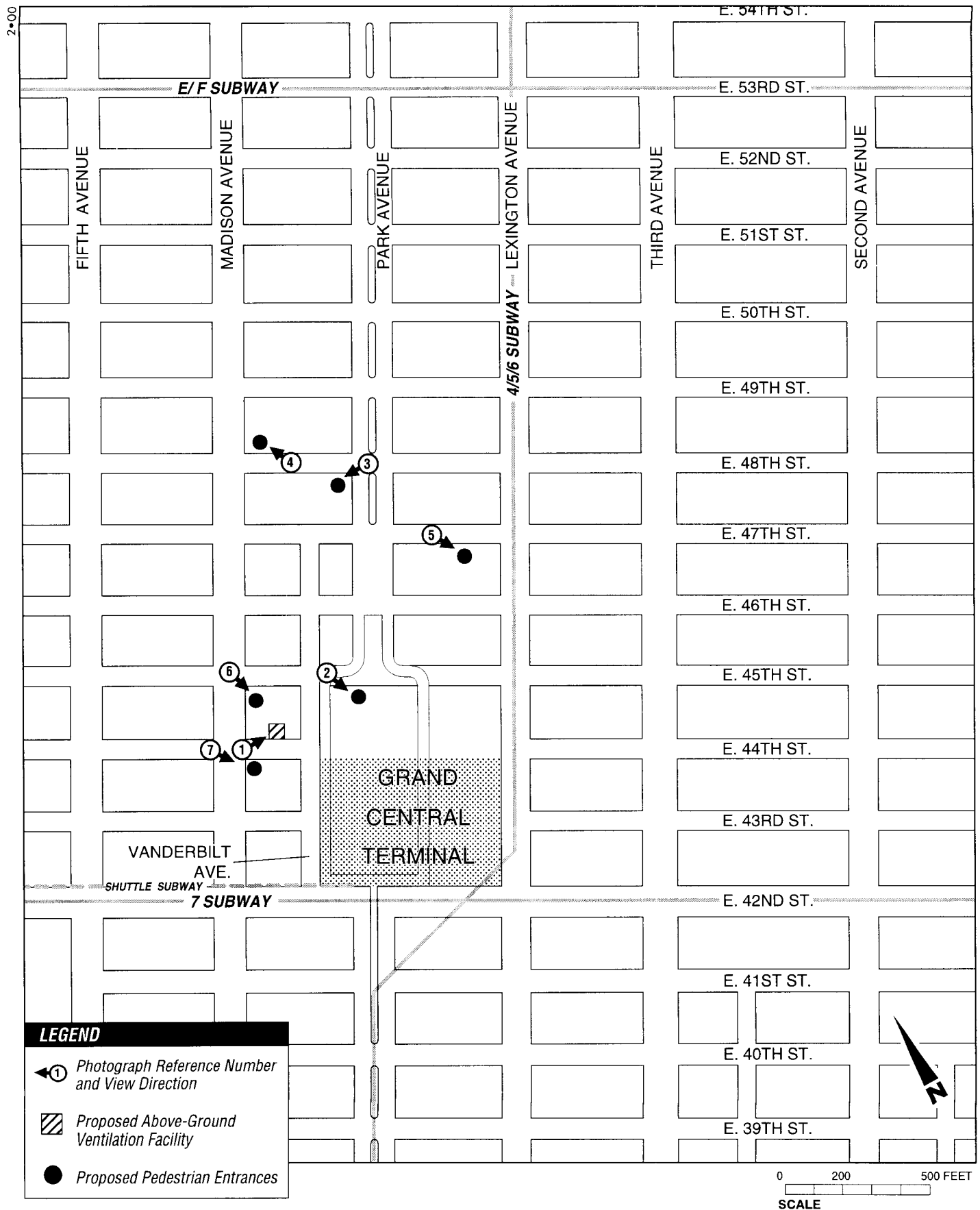
The construction of a new rail yard and associated structures at Riverhead would transform an open area that serves as a neighborhood visual resource into an active industrial use. A new yard at Riverhead would significantly change the visual context of the surrounding low-rise residential neighborhood. The yard would also bring new nighttime lighting to an area that is currently relatively dark. Overall, these effects on visual resources would constitute a significant adverse impact.

As described below under “Mitigation Measures,” to mitigate adverse visual impacts at Riverhead, a barrier wall and possibly vegetation would be constructed around the new yard. With this wall in place, however, the new yard would still significantly change the visual context of the existing residential neighborhood. The wall would also block views across the currently open site.

E. MITIGATION MEASURES

To mitigate the significant impacts *on visual character of new storage yards* at several of the *sites assessed in this FEIS*, barrier walls would be constructed around *new yards*, should those sites be selected. Specifically, the walls would be created at the following yards:

- Babylon. A new wall would line the southern side of the yard, to buffer the site from neighboring uses on the south side of Union Boulevard. With this wall in place, the site would appear more unified than it does today, but it would still retain its industrial character. With the buffering wall, the new yard would not result in a significant adverse impact on visual character.
- Yaphank East. A vegetated area along the eastern and southern portion of this yard would be retained to buffer the rail uses from the nearby Southaven County Park and from residential uses. With this buffer, no significant adverse impact on visual character would occur.
- Riverhead. New buffer walls would surround the yard and the north side of the adjacent LIRR right-of-way. However, while they would separate the yard from the nearby residential neighborhood, the new walls would also block views across the currently open site. Overall, the new walls would only partially mitigate the new yard’s significant adverse impact on visual character. ❖





1

*View of 47 East 44th Street,
site of the proposed
ventilation facility*

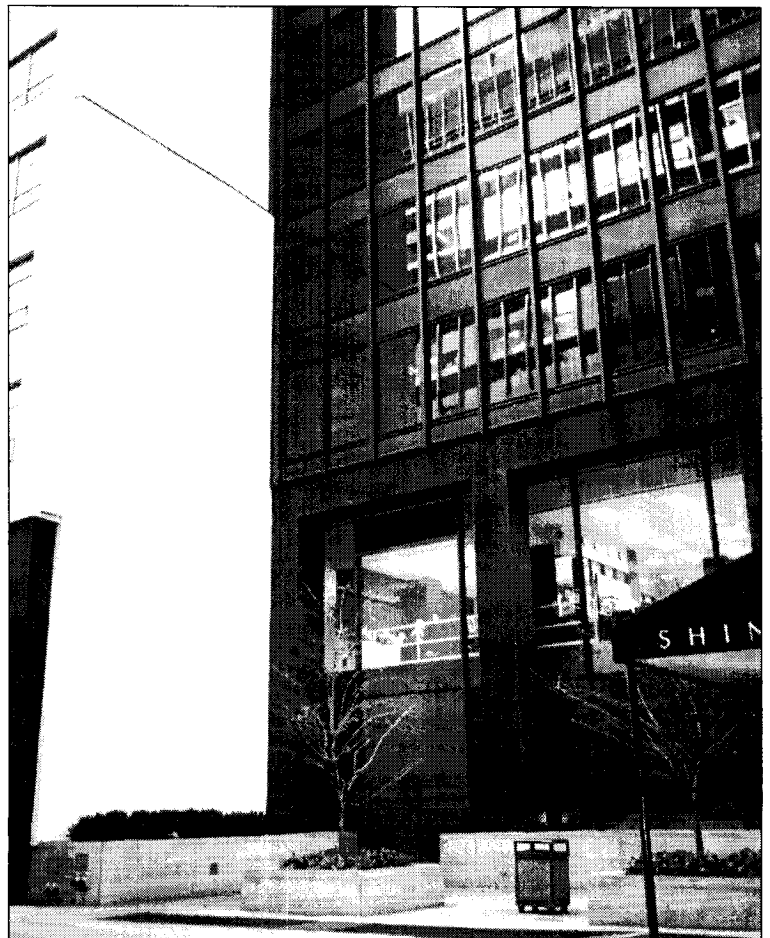


2

View of the southeast corner of 200 Park Avenue from East 45th Street



View west of 270 Park Avenue and the south side of East 48th Street **3**



4
View of 280 Park Avenue and
the north side of East 48th Street



View east of 245 Park Avenue from about midblock **5**



View east of 347 Madison Avenue and south side of East 45th Street **6**



View southeast of the corner of 335 Madison Avenue at East 44th Street **7**

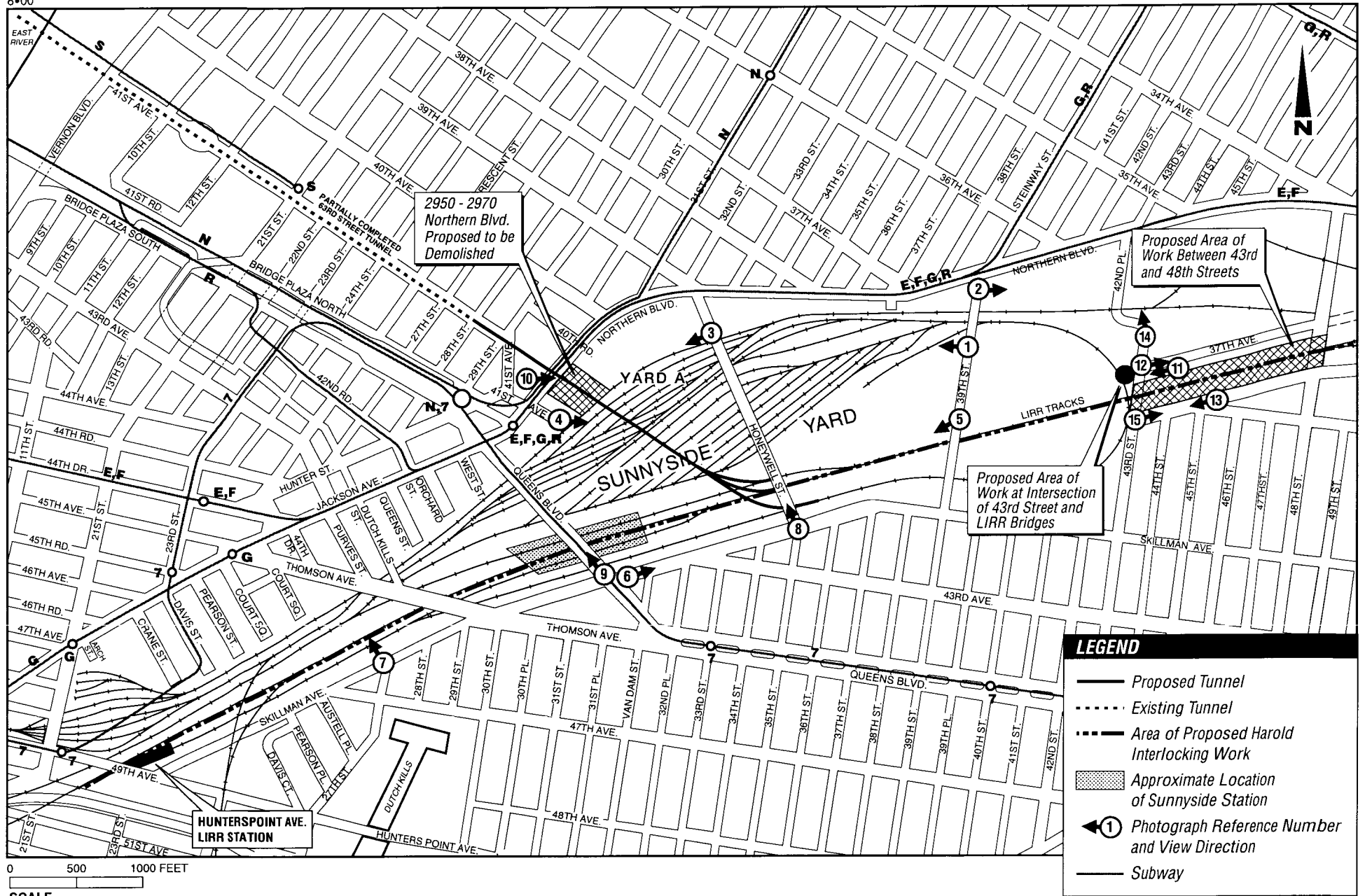
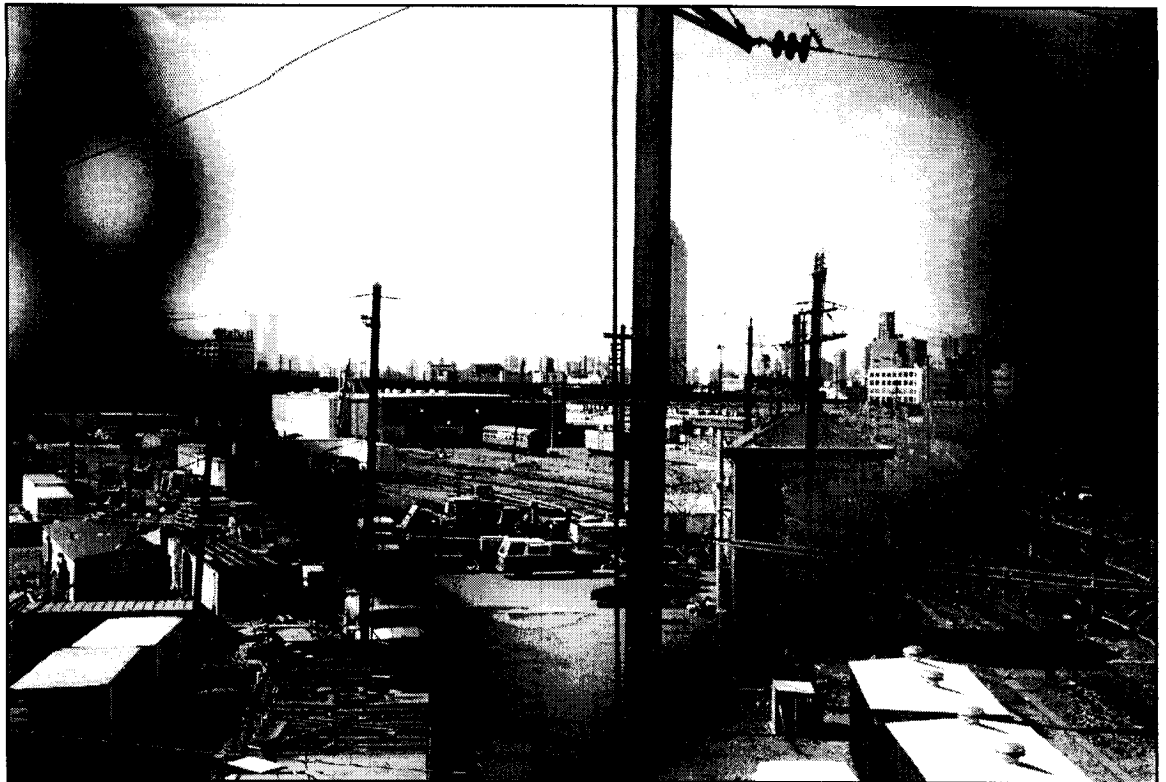


Figure 6-6

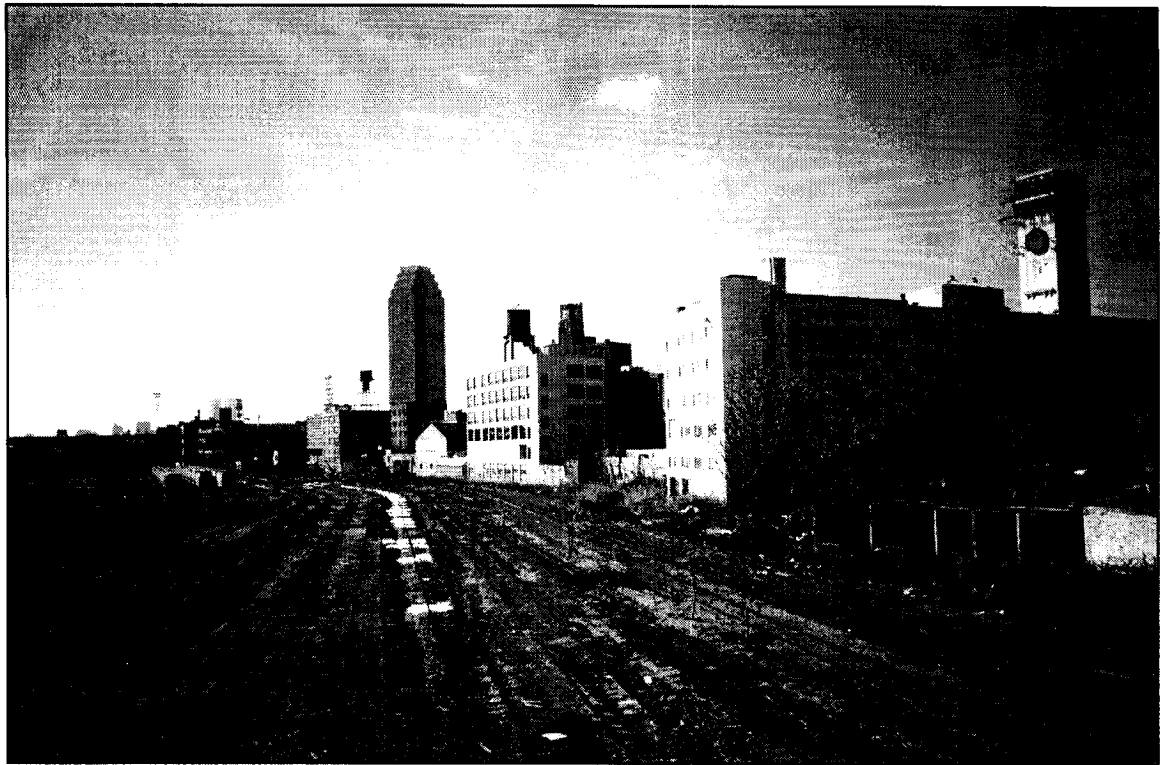
Queens Alignment – Key to Photographs



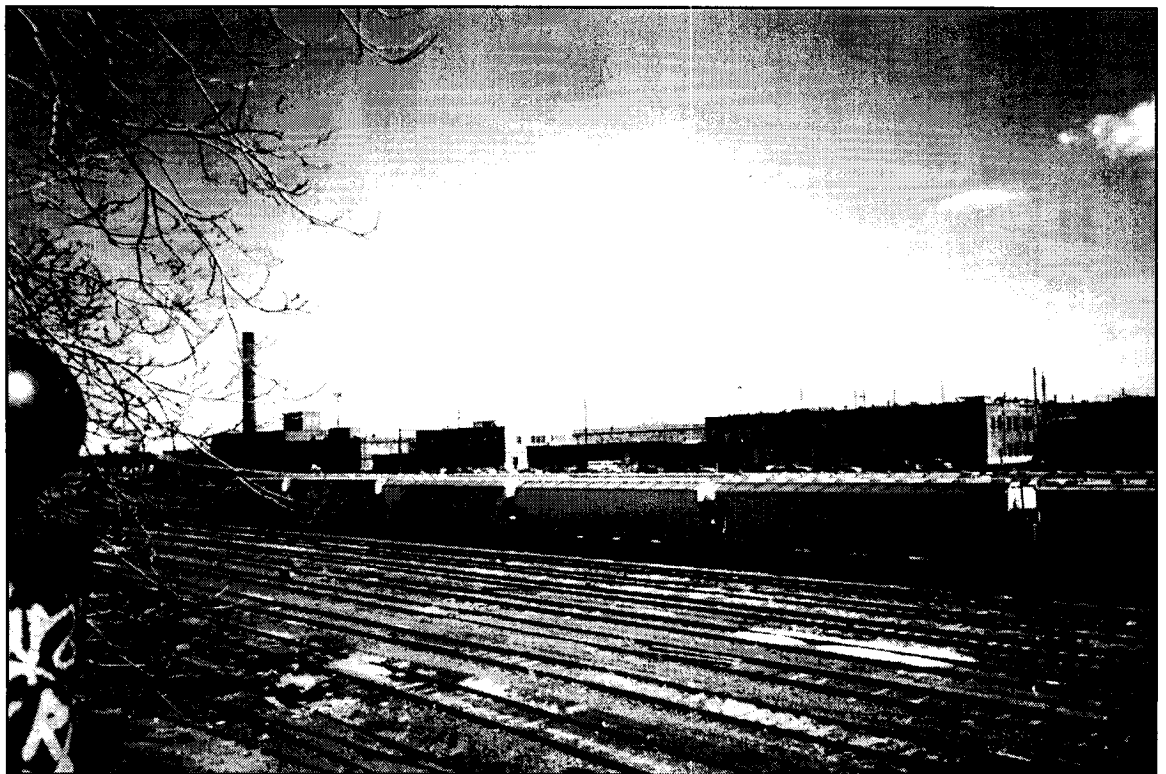
View west through chain-link fencing on the 39th Street Bridge 1



View east from the 39th Street Bridge 2



View west of Yard A from the Honeywell Street Bridge **3**



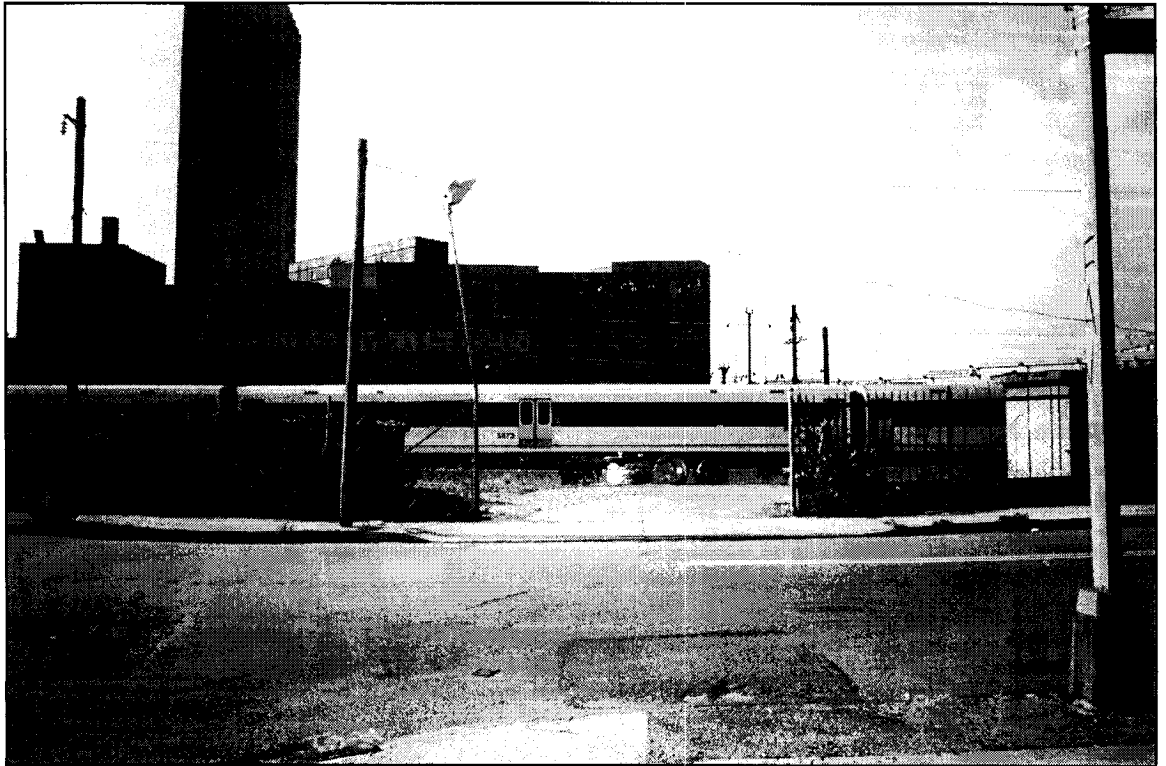
View southeast from foot of 41st Avenue **4**



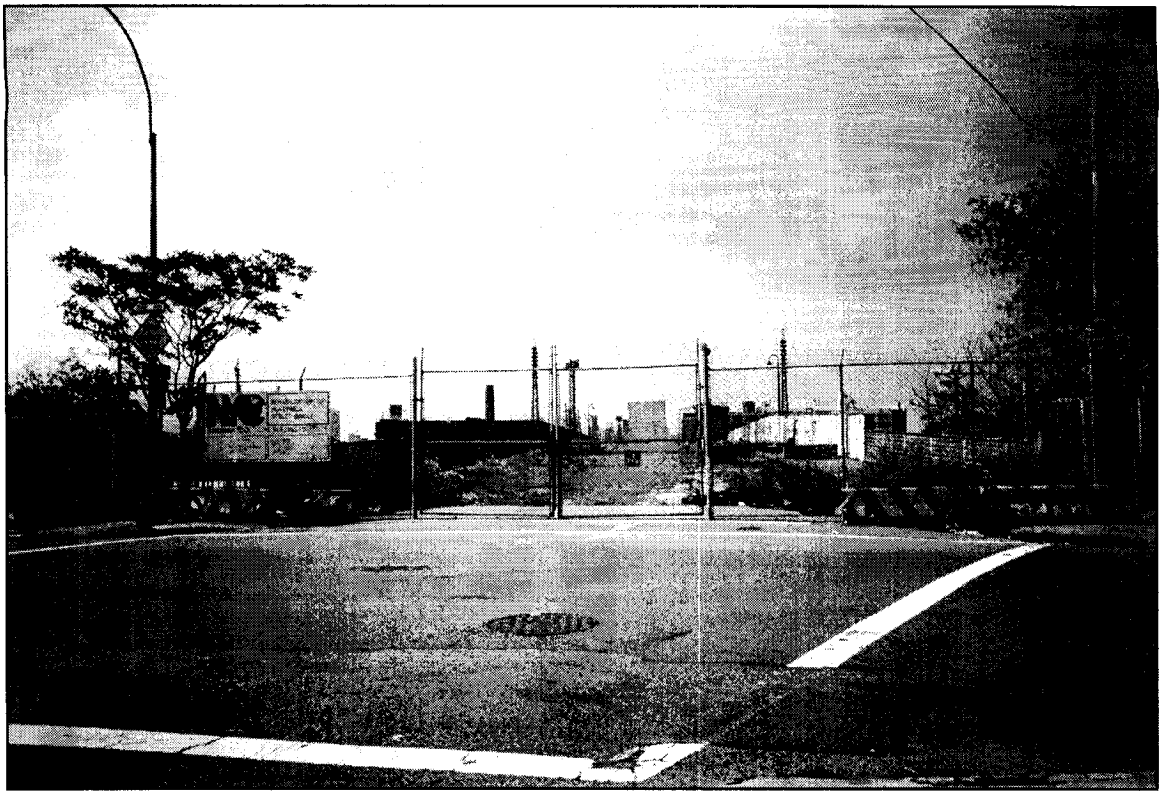
View west of the LIRR tracks through chain-link fencing from the 39th Street Bridge **5**



View east on Skillman Avenue at Queens Boulevard **6**



View north from Skillman Avenue at 27th Street **7**



View north of the Honeywell Street Bridge from Skillman Avenue 8



View north of the Queens Boulevard Bridge from Skillman Avenue 9



View south of two of the manufacturing structures at 2950-2970 Northern Boulevard **10**



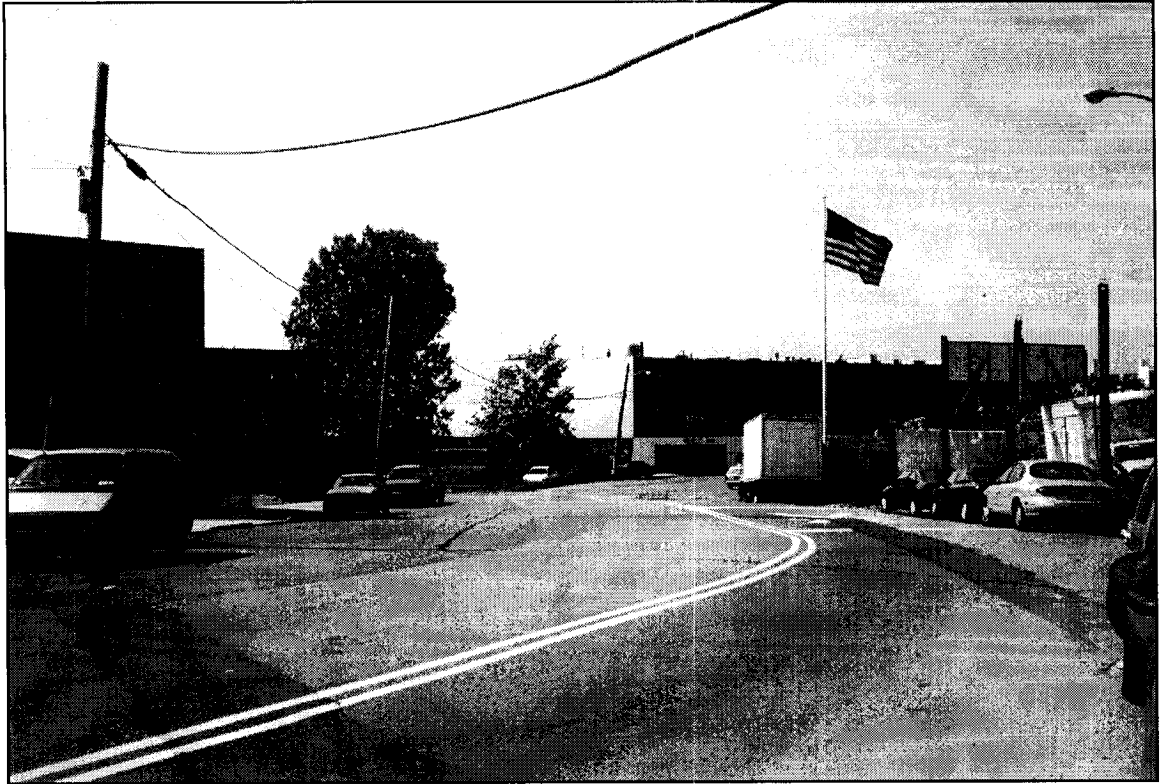
View west of the commercial building at the intersection of 43rd Street and the LIRR bridges **11**



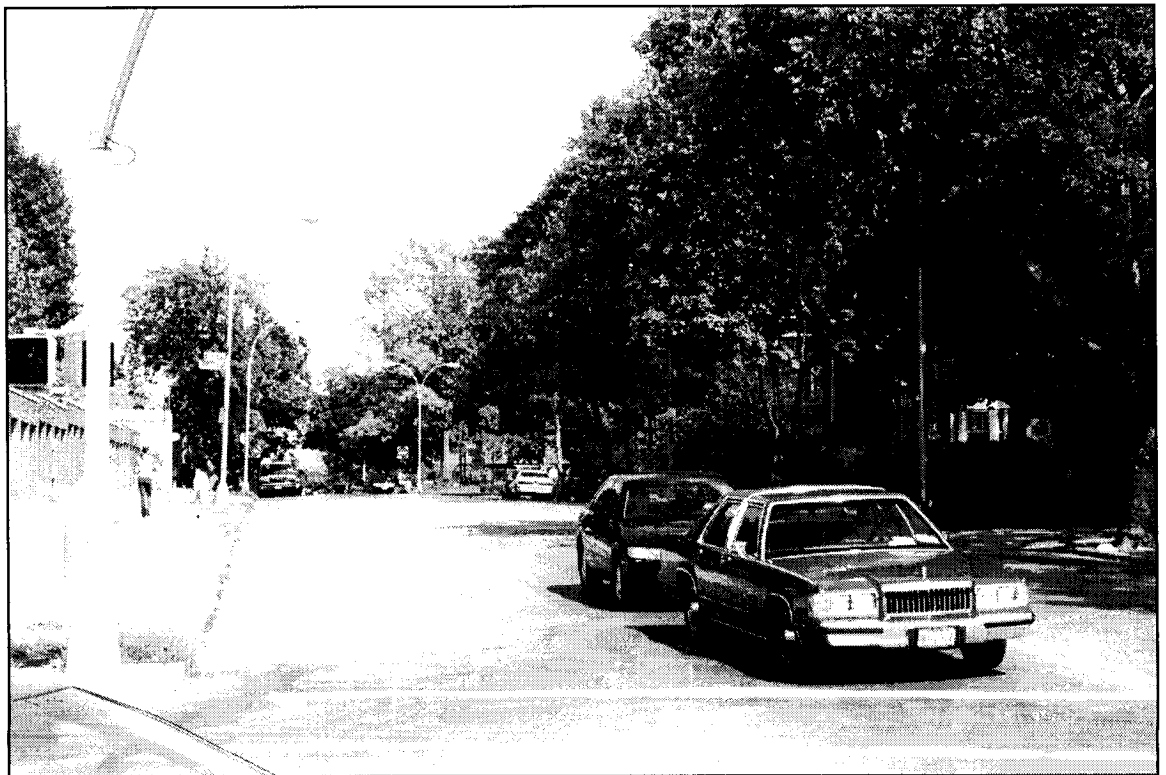
View east on 37th Avenue from 43rd Street. The project site is on the right **12**



View west of the north side of Barnett Avenue from 45th Street. The project site is on the right. **13**



View north on 43rd Street from 37th Avenue **14**



View east on Barnett Avenue from 43rd Street. The project site is on the left **15**

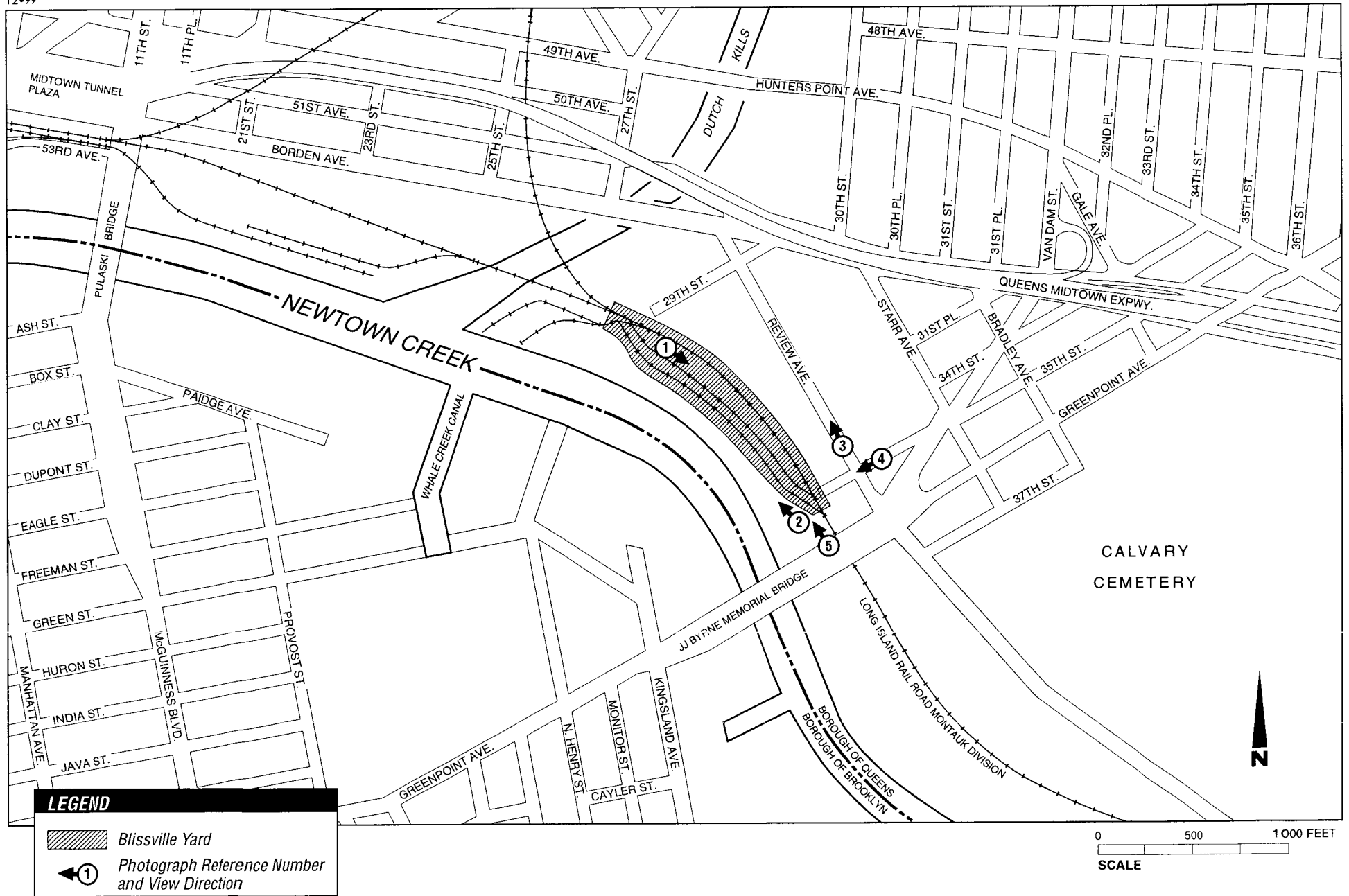


Figure 6-15

Blissville Yard – Key to Photographs



View southeast of Blissville Yard **1**



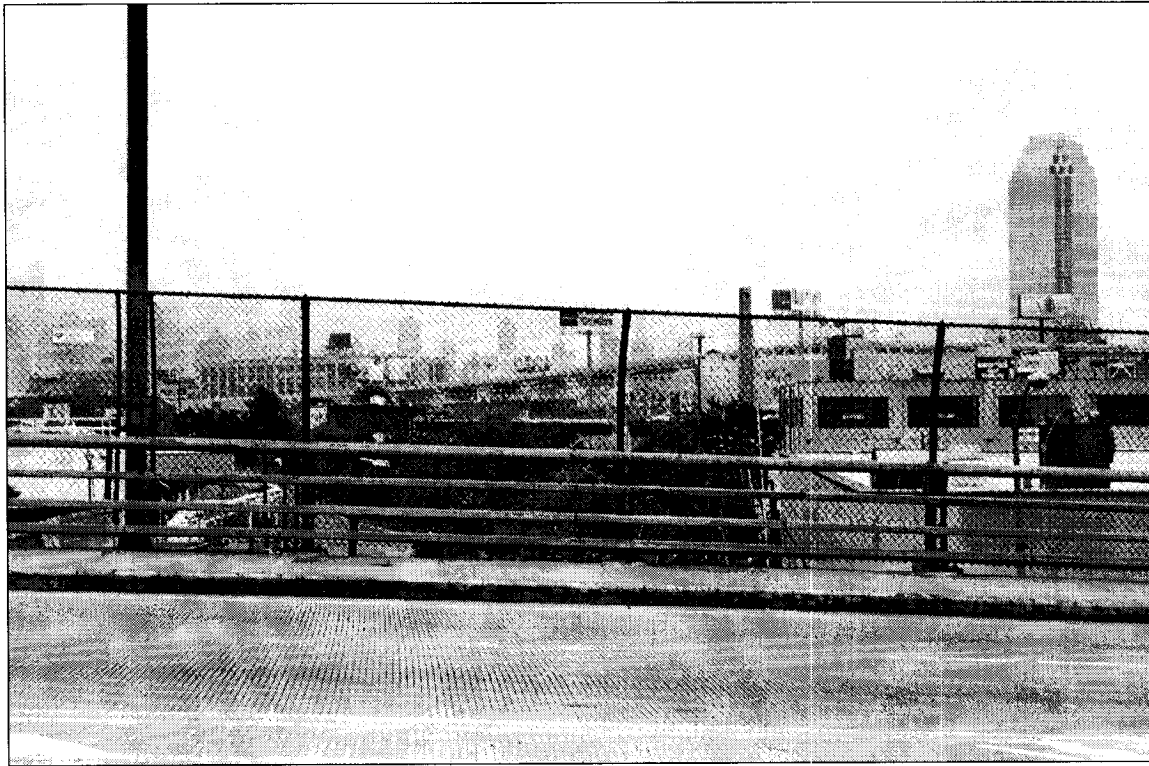
View northwest on service road south of Blissville Yard **2**



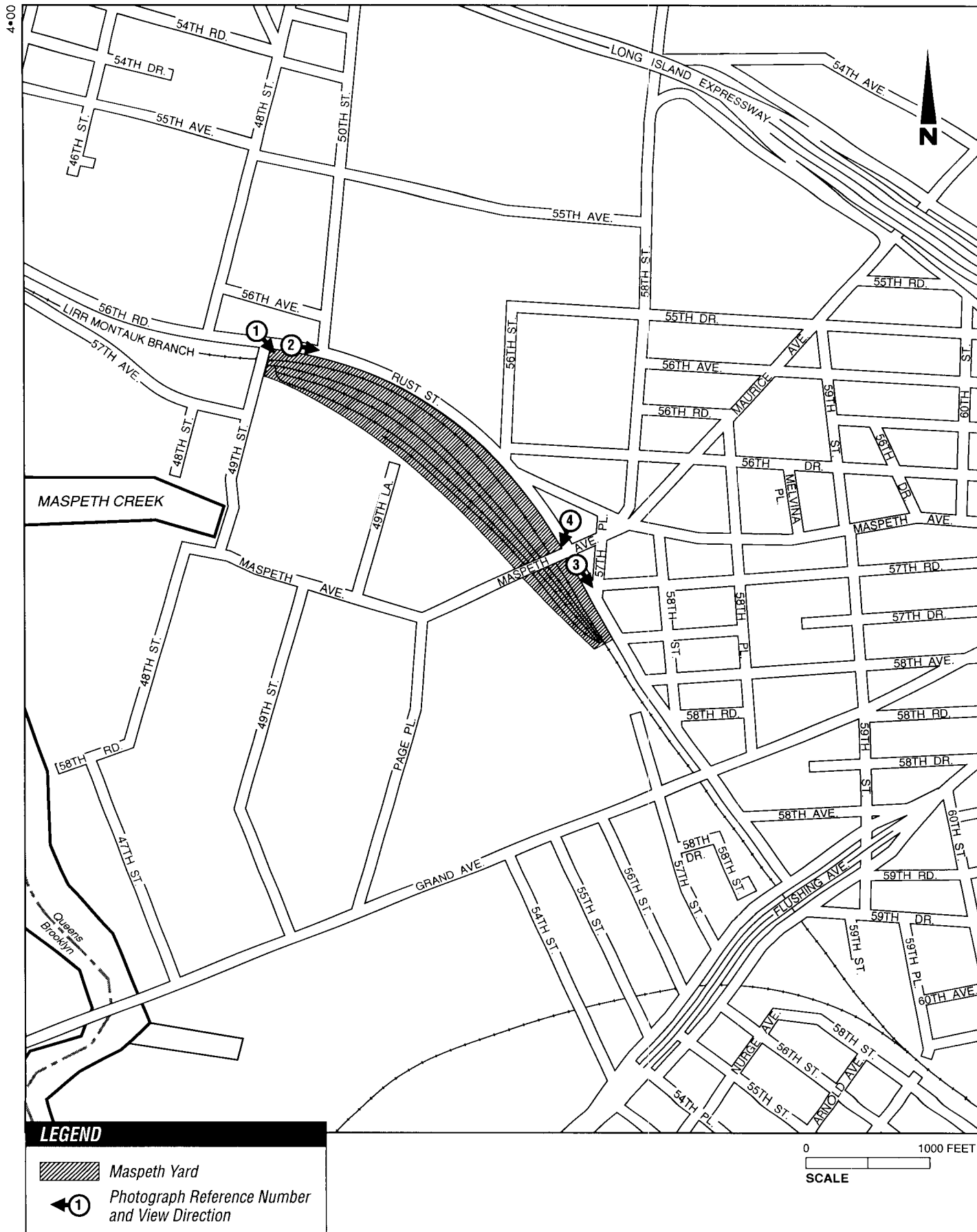
View northwest on Review Avenue from 35th Street **3**



View southwest from 35th Street and Review Avenue **4**



View west from the JJ Byrne Memorial Bridge **5**





View southeast of Maspeth Yard from 49th Street **1**



View southeast along Rust Street from 49th Street **2**



View southeast on Rust Street from Maspeth Avenue 3



View west on Maspeth Avenue from Rust Street 4



View west of Fresh Pond Yard from 68th Street and Otto Road **1**



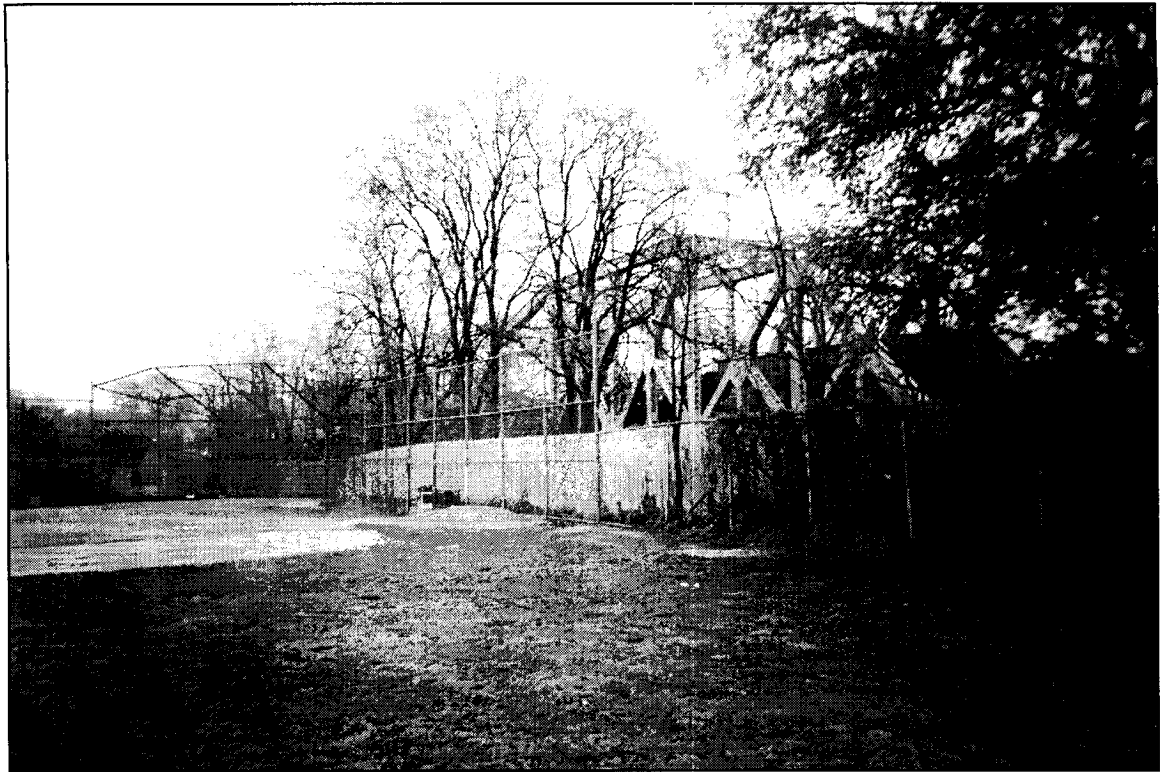
View southeast of Fresh Pond Yard from Admiral Avenue **2**



View west along private road south of Admiral Avenue **3**



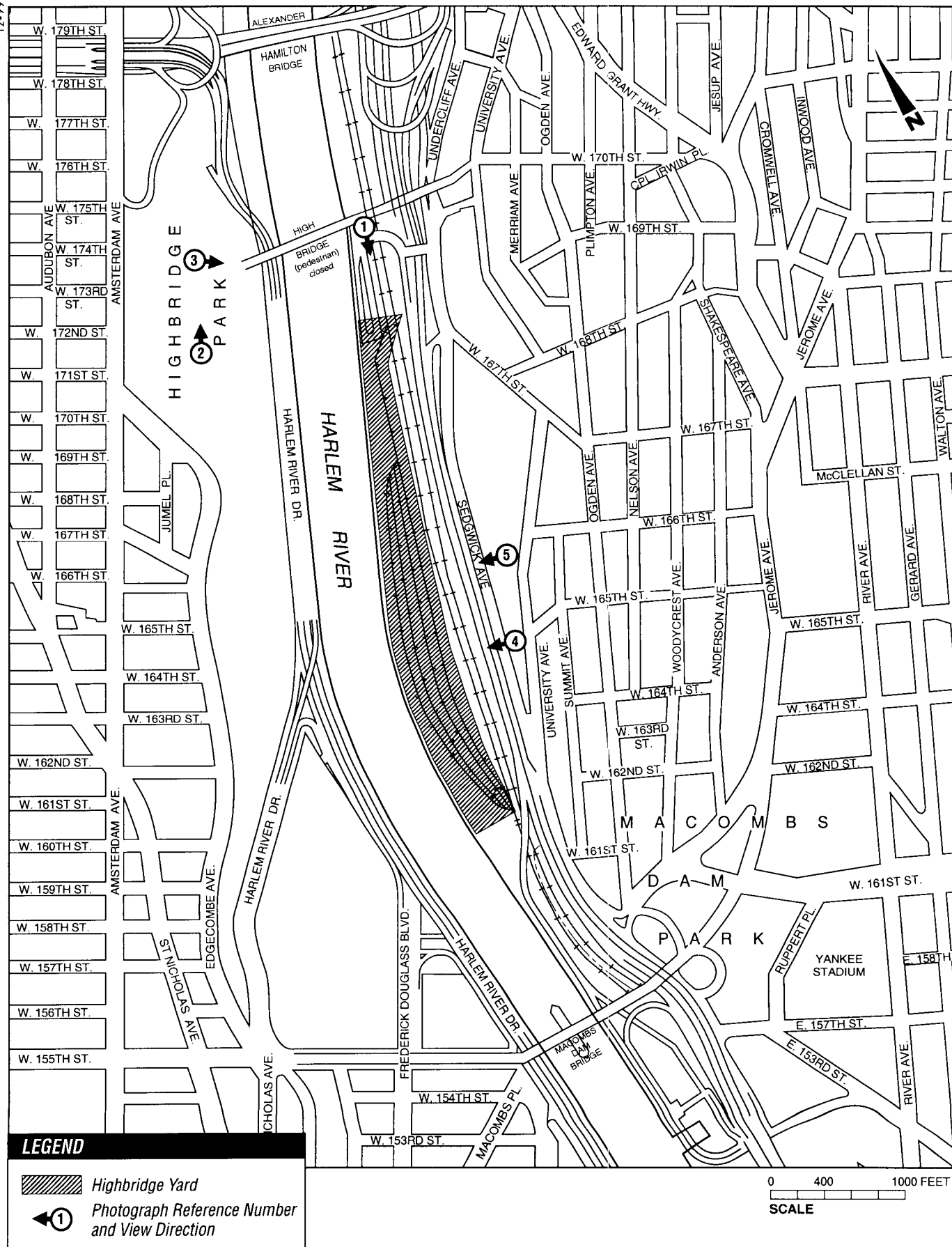
View east on Traffic Avenue from Menahan Street **4**

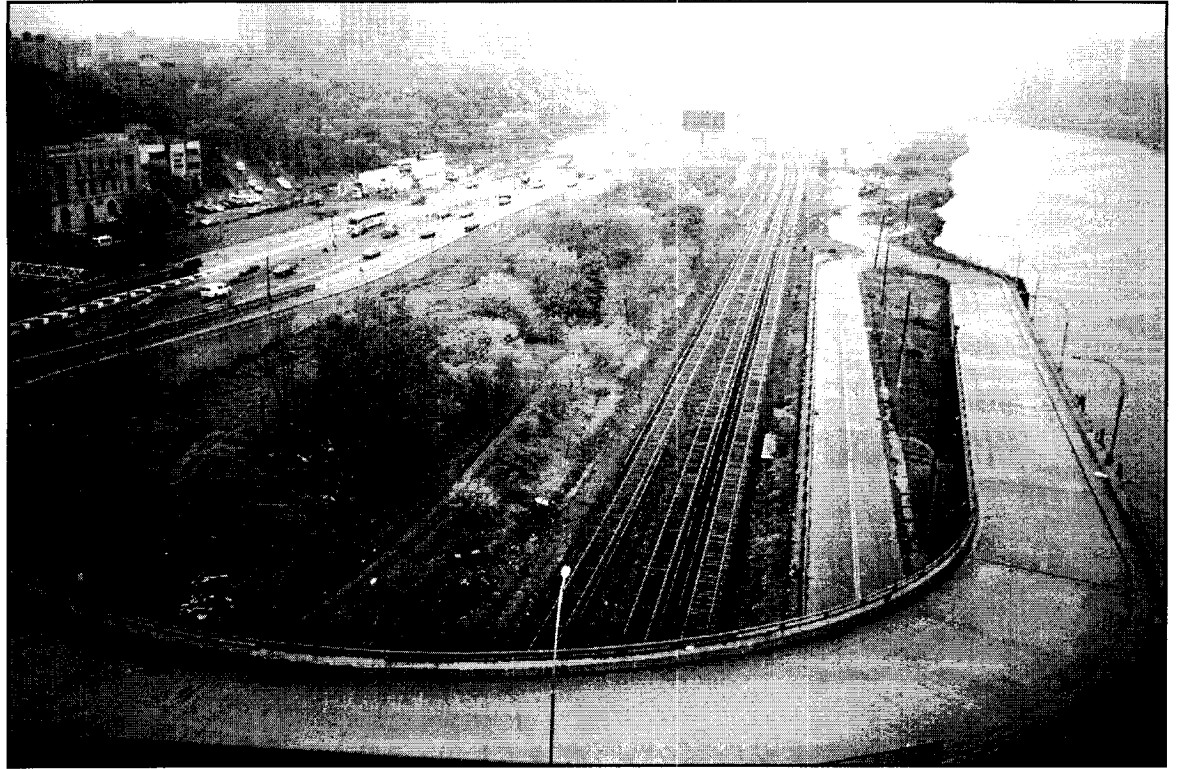


View east from Mafera Park **5**



View south on 68th Street from Otto Road **6**





View south of Highbridge Yard from High Bridge 1



View north on observation walkway in Highbridge Park 2

NOTE: ON THE DAY OF THE SITE VISIT, HIGH BRIDGE WAS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Figure 6-27



View east from Highbridge Park across the Harlem River **3**



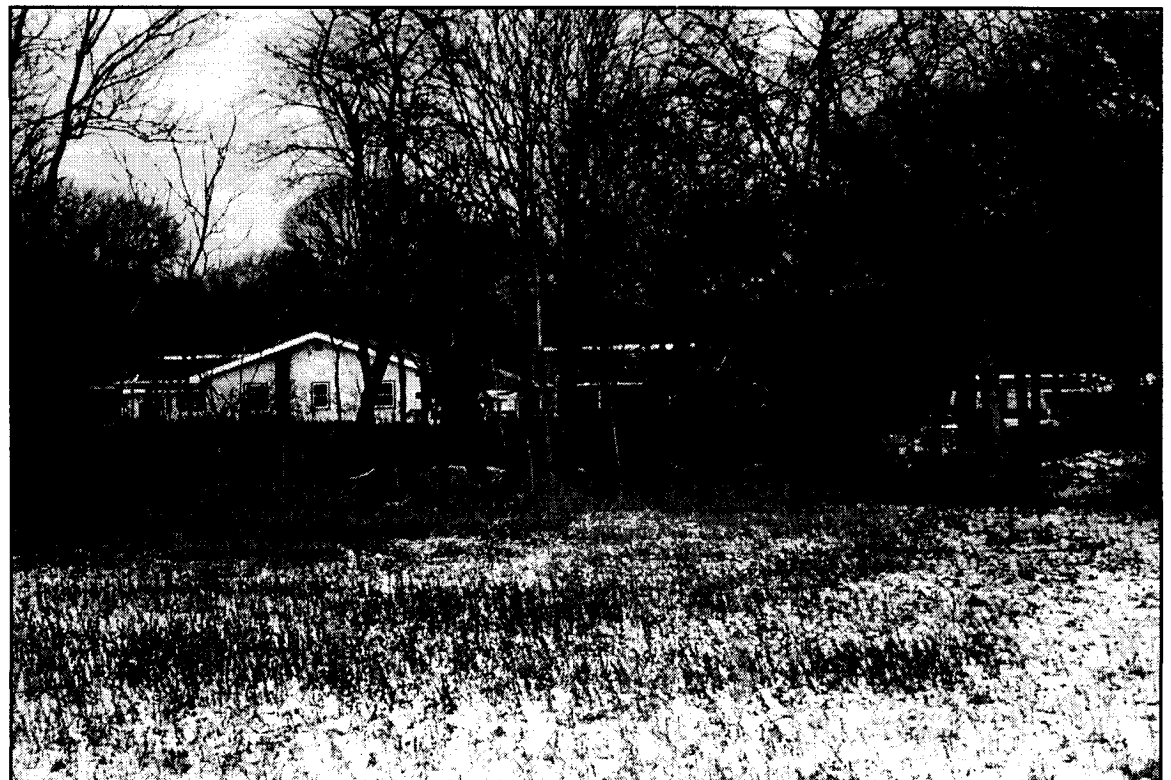
View west from stairs at W. 165th Street. A portion of the yard is visible past the Major Degan Expressway **4**



View west from western edge of the Highbridge Gardens apartment complex **5**



View southwest across Riverhead Yard site from the LIRR tracks



View north from Riverhead Yard site toward the LIRR tracks