

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential of the proposed project to affect historic and cultural resources, which include both archaeological and architectural resources. The project site is located near the intersection of Forest Avenue and South Avenue in Staten Island. The development site is located at 534 South Avenue (Block 1707, Lots 1 and 5) in the Mariners Harbor neighborhood of Staten Island. As described in detail in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the proposed project involves the construction of a retail center. This analysis has been prepared in accordance with the 2014 *New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*. In addition to the proposed actions by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC), the proposed project would require permits from the New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC). Therefore, this analysis has been prepared in accordance with CEQR, the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (NYSHPA). As described below, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources.

B. METHODOLOGY**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

The study area for archeological resources is the project site itself, where disturbance from excavation and construction can be anticipated. The archaeological sensitivity of the project site was previously assessed in a Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study (“Phase 1A Study”) that was prepared by Greenhouse Consultants, Inc. (GCI) in 1996 as part of an unrelated project that was not constructed (see **Appendix B**).¹ The area evaluated in the 1996 Phase 1A included the current project site in its entirety as well as additional land to the west of the project site in the area bounded by Forest Avenue, Elizabeth Grove Road, and Morrow Street.

As described in detail below, the study identified areas of archaeological sensitivity and recommended additional archaeological analysis. The report was recently submitted to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for review. In a comment letter dated March 24, 2016, LPC recommended that a supplemental Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study be prepared to reevaluate the site’s archaeological sensitivity and any potential changes that may have occurred to the site over the last 20 years as well as to incorporate information that has been collected from nearby archaeological sites in recent years (see **Appendix B**).

¹ GCI. (1996): “Stage 1A Archaeological Sensitivity Evaluation of the Forest and South Avenues Project, Borough of Richmond, New York.” Prepared for: Land Planning and Engineering Consultants, PC, Staten Island, New York, and The Berkowitz Development Group, Coconut Grove, Florida.

South Avenue Retail Development

In response to this comment, a supplemental Phase 1A Study of the project site was prepared by AKRF in December 2016 (see **Appendix B**). The supplemental study was designed to confirm and/or refine the site's potential to contain archaeological resources dating to both the precontact and historic periods as stipulated in the 1996 Phase 1A Study. The supplemental study also took advantage of technological advancements that have improved archaeological analyses over the last 20 years, including the involvement of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, the use of digitized historic maps to analyze changes in topography, and the wider availability of digitized historic documentary records. The locations where archaeological testing was recommended in the 1996 Phase 1A Study were therefore refined by the Supplemental Phase 1A Study. The Supplemental Phase 1A Study was prepared in accordance with LPC's "Guidelines for Archaeology work in New York City," issued in 2002,² and with the standards for Historic and Cultural Resources analyses as specified in the *CEQR Technical Manual* as amended in 2014.³ In addition, the Supplemental Phase 1A was prepared to comply with the "Phase 1 Archaeological Report Format Requirements" as issued by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) in 2005⁴ and the "Standards for Cultural Resources Investigations and the Curation of Archaeological Collections in New York State" as issued by the New York Archaeological Council in 1994 and adopted by OPRHP in 1995.⁵

The conclusions of this study are summarized below. In a comment letter dated January 17, 2017, LPC concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the Phase 1A Study. In a comment letter dated January 30, 2017, OPRHP also concurred with the Phase 1A Study (see **Appendix B**).

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

Study areas for architectural resources are determined based on the area of potential effect for construction period impacts, as well as the larger area in which there may be visual or contextual impacts. The *CEQR Technical Manual* sets the guidelines for the study area as being typically within an approximately 400-foot radius of the project site (see **Figure 3-1**). Within the study area, architectural resources analyzed include designated New York City Landmarks (NYCLs) and Historic Districts; properties calendared for consideration as NYCLs by LPC or determined eligible for NYCL designation (NYCL-eligible); properties listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) or formally determined eligible for S/NR listing (S/NR-eligible), or properties contained within a S/NR listed or eligible district; properties recommended by the New York State Board for listing on the S/NR; National Historic Landmarks (NHLs); and potential historic resources (i.e., properties not identified by one of the programs listed above, but that appear to meet their eligibility requirements). No architectural resources have been identified within a 400-foot radius of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts on architectural resources; this chapter will provide an assessment of archaeological resources.

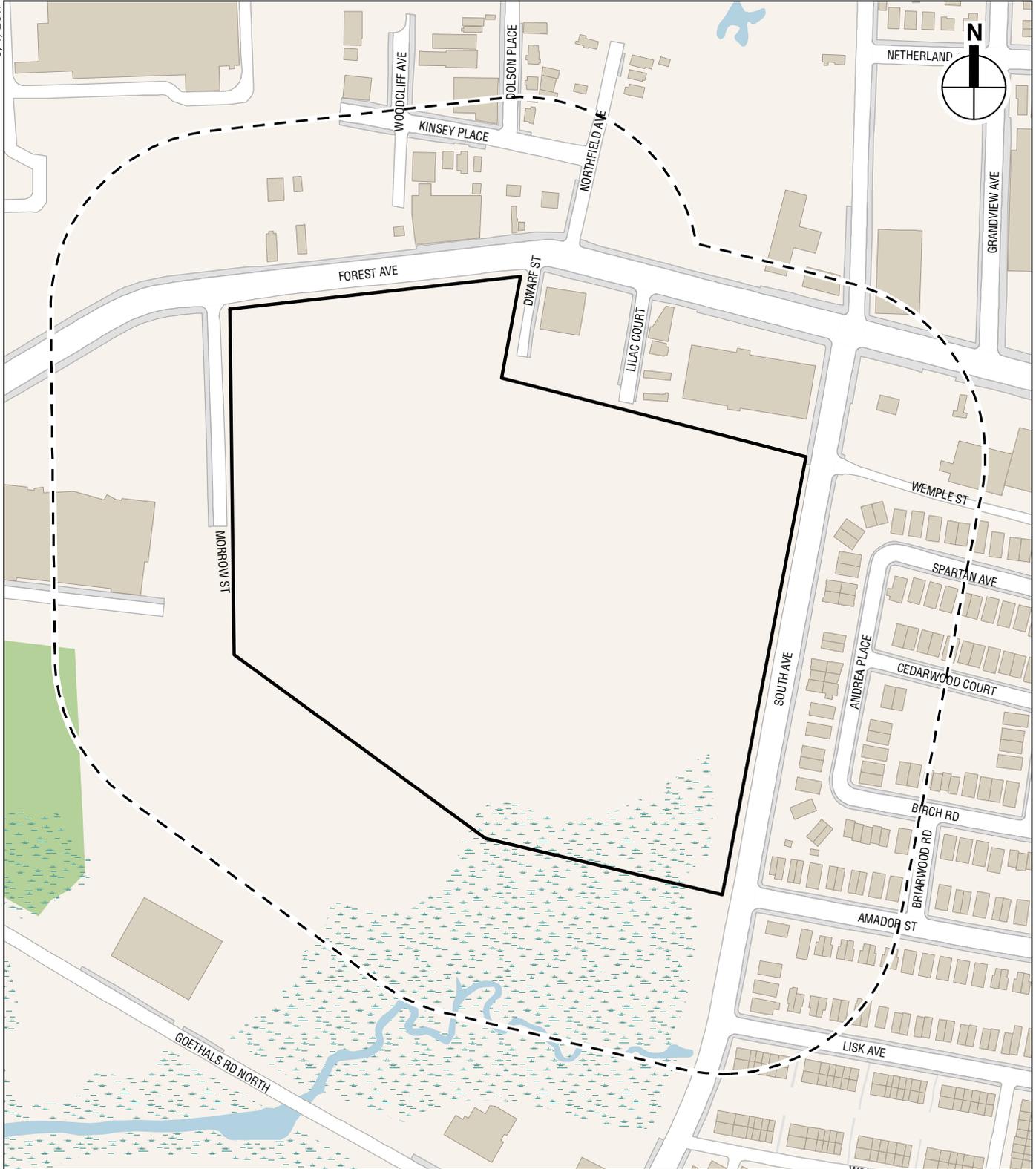
² <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/downloads/pdf/pubs/ayguide.pdf>

³ http://www.nyc.gov/html/oec/downloads/pdf/2014_ceqr_tm/09_Historic_Resources_2014.pdf

⁴ <http://parks.ny.gov/shpo/environmental-review/documents/PhaseIReportStandards.pdf>

⁵ <http://nyarchaeology.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/NYACStandards.pdf>

6/1/2017



-  Project Site
-  Study Area (400-foot boundary)
-  Buildings
-  Open Space and Outdoor Recreation
-  Wetland

0 500 FEET

South Avenue Retail Development

Historic and Cultural Resources
Project Location
Figure 3-1

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

As described above, a Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study (“Phase 1A Study”) of the project site was completed by GCI in 1996 and a supplemental Phase 1A was prepared by AKRF in December 2016. These studies incorporated documentary research designed to determine the occupation and development histories of the project site and to determine the site’s sensitivity for archaeological resources dating to both the precontact and historic periods. The conclusions of both studies are summarized below.

PRECONTACT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

The precontact period refers to the time when Staten Island was occupied by Native Americans before the settlement of the area by European colonists. The precontact sensitivity of sites in New York City is generally evaluated by the site’s proximity to level slopes, water courses, well-drained soils, and previously identified precontact archaeological sites. Precontact archaeological sites are generally found at shallow depths, usually within 5 feet of the original ground surface. The 1996 Phase 1A Study documented at least 12 previously identified archaeological sites within a 2-mile radius of the project site and identified a former freshwater stream within the project site. GCI determined that the site was likely to have been the site of precontact hunting camps and determined that it possesses precontact archaeological sensitivity.

The supplemental Phase 1A Study summarized recent archaeological excavations that have occurred in the immediate vicinity of the project site. These recent investigations included extensive documentation of the Old Place archaeological site to the northwest of the project site, where excavations in the last five years have revealed deeply stratified Native American deposits potentially associated with the earliest phases of Staten Island’s human occupation. The supplemental report also included a comparison of current and historic topography, which suggests that the landscape of the southern portion of the project site has not been significantly modified since the early 20th century. As such, the supplemental Phase 1A determined that portions of the project site have moderate sensitivity for precontact archaeological resources. These locations are depicted on **Figure 3-2**.

HISTORIC PERIOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

The 1996 Phase 1A included a thorough review of historic maps. The study concluded that portions of the project site were used for agricultural purposes between the 17th and late-19th centuries. Three 19th century map-documented structures were identified within the project site. The first was the Haughwout House along the southern side of Forest Avenue (ca. 1830s through 1935) in the center of the project site, which by 1996 had been redeveloped with a go-kart track. The second structure was a school house (ca. 1830s through 1887) along Morrow Street on the western side of the project site. A third house dating to the late-19th century, identified as the home of “Mrs. Z” on historic maps, was also located within the project site in an area that was determined to have been situated beneath 12 feet of fill material, however, this structure is west of the current project site. These areas were identified as archaeologically sensitive. The supplemental Phase 1A provided additional information about the homes that were present on the project site during the 19th century, which included the Haughwout House and properties to the east that were owned by the Decker and Zuleff families and that were only partially situated within the project site. Limited portions of the project site were determined to have moderate sensitivity for archaeological resources associated with the historic period occupation of the project site (see **Figure 3-2**).

12/22/2016



-  Project Site
-  Approximate Locations of Historic Sensitivity
-  Approximate Locations of Precontact Sensitivity

0 500 FEET

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” absent the proposed actions, the development site is assumed to be developed with six new buildings that will not require any discretionary approvals. If additional archaeological investigations of the project site are not completed prior to the start of ground-disturbing construction activities, then the No Action scenario has the potential to impact archaeological resources if such resources are present.

E. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Phase 1A and Supplemental Phase 1A studies identified areas of precontact and historic period archaeological sensitivity within the project site and recommended Phase 1B archaeological testing in those locations. In comment letters dated January 17, 2017 and January 30, 2017, LPC and OPRHP, respectively, concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the Phase 1A Study (see **Appendix B**). As recommended by the supplemental Phase 1A Study, prior to the start of field testing, a Phase 1B Archaeological Testing Protocol was prepared and submitted to LPC and OPRHP for review. In comment letters dated February 15, 2017 and February 28, 2017, LPC and OPRHP, respectively concurred with the testing protocol. A Phase 1B archaeological investigation will be conducted to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological resources on the project site. With the completion of the Phase 1B investigation and any subsequent archaeological investigations as necessary (e.g., a Phase 2 Archaeological Survey or a Phase 3 Data Recovery) that would be undertaken in consultation with LPC and OPRHP, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts on archaeological resources. The applicant will enter into a Restrictive Declaration requiring that these archaeological investigations will be undertaken. A draft of the Restrictive Declaration is included in **Appendix B**. *