5.6 URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

5.6.1 Introduction

This Section evaluates the effects of construction and operation of the water main connections on nearby urban design and visual resources. This includes consideration of changes to the streetscape along the route of the water mains, possible effects to the visual quality of the surrounding area, and impacts to views of significant visual resources. The Study Area for the analysis of the water main connections on urban design and visual resources is the area extending 400 feet from the potential water main connection routes, including the First Avenue route (reasonable worst-case route), the Sutton Place route (additional representative route), and the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street route (additional representative route) (Figure 5.6-1). The methodology used to prepare this Section is described in Section 3.6, "Urban Design and Visual Resources" in Chapter 3, "Impact Methodologies."

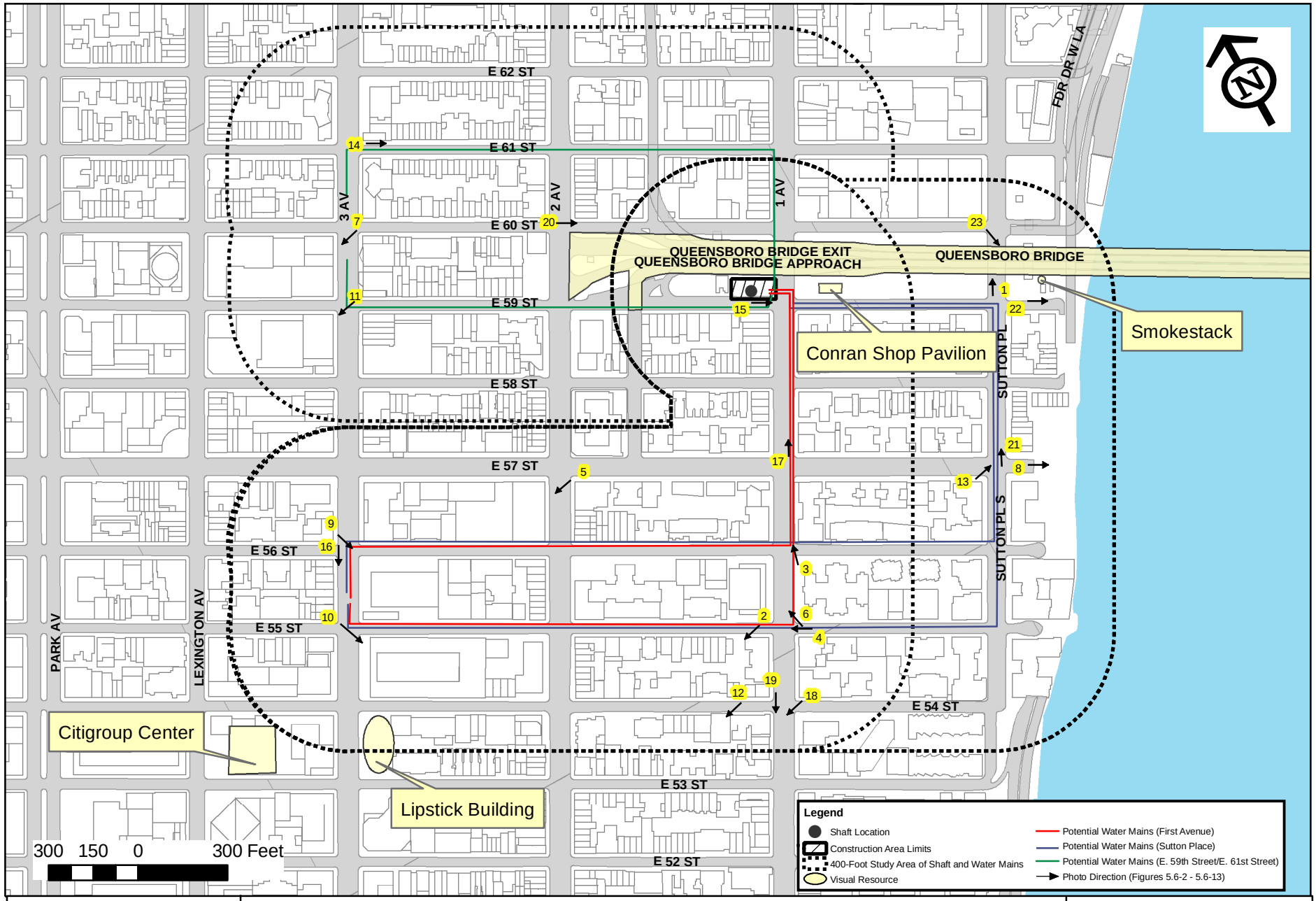
5.6.2 Existing Conditions

Urban Design

The street pattern of the area surrounding the First Avenue, Sutton Place, and E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street water main connection routes is the typical rectangular street grid of Manhattan, interrupted between E. 57th and 61st Streets and First and Second Avenues by the approaches and exits from the Queensboro Bridge. At the east end of the Study Area, the street grid ends at the East River. First, Second, and Third Avenues and E. 57th Street are major thoroughfares that carry the majority of vehicular traffic through the Study Area, with Sutton Place carrying less traffic. Traffic entering and exiting the Queensboro Bridge also flows through the area. There is pedestrian activity throughout the area, heavier along Third and Second Avenues and less so along First Avenue, Sutton Place, and the side streets.

The topography of the Study Area slopes gradually upward from Lexington Avenue to Second Avenue and gradually downward south of E. 59th Street and from Second Avenue to Sutton Place/York Avenue. Sutton Place/York Avenue slopes sharply downward underneath the Queensboro Bridge, from E. 59th Street to E. 61st Streets (Figure 5.6-2; Photograph 1). There are street trees along sidewalks throughout the Study Area, and there are also a number of landscaped public plazas that include trees, shrubs, and flowers surrounding residential and commercial tower buildings. Brevard Park, one such plaza on E. 55th Street west of Second Avenue, is set back into the midblock and includes a waterfall wall and seating on several levels (Figure 5.6-2; Photograph 2). Cobrahead lampposts are generally used in the Study Area; however, the "long-arm" style lamppost (similar to the bishop's crook) is found on First Avenue between E. 57th and 54th Streets, the bishop's crook style lamppost is found on E. 61st and 62nd Streets between Second and Third Avenues, and several public plazas surrounding residential and commercial towers have individually styled lampposts (Figure 5.6-3; Photograph 3). The streetscape of the Study Area includes typical street furniture, such as public telephones, trash

Source:-
Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT). NYC Landbase, 2000.



Map Document: (S:\Projects\2175158\GIS_Figures\Shaft_33B\EIS_Field_Work\WM_york_VisualResources.mxd
10/07/2005 -- 10:55:56 AM

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2- MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS
VISUAL RESOURCES

FIGURE 5.6-1

View north on Sutton Place / York Avenue from E. 59th Street **1**

Brevard Park, view south from E. 55th Street **2**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-2

"Long-arm" style lampposts on First Avenue, view north **3**

Looking west from First Avenue along E. 55th Street **4**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-3

bins, newspaper dispensers, and bus shelters. There also is a large amount of transportation-related signage near the Bridge. The wires and support towers for the Roosevelt Island tram run above E. 60th Street. Large portions of the north side of E. 59th Street and the south side of E. 60th Street between First and Second Avenues do not have sidewalks; however, there is a sidewalk leading through the midblocks of these avenues between E. 60th and 62nd Streets. There is a pedestrian and bicycle entrance to the Bridge at E. 60th Street and First Avenue, identifiable by its surrounding tubular steel railing.

The Study Area consists of a mix of low- to high-rise buildings. Within the Study Area are 3- and 4-story rowhouses; 4-, 5-, and 6-story tenements; medium-scale (10- to 20-story) apartment buildings; and large-scale (20+-story) apartment and office towers (Figure 5.6-3; Photograph 4). While most buildings are built to the streetline and the Study Area has, in general, very strong streetwalls, there are also a number of large-scale buildings set back behind public plazas. The buildings are generally residential east of Second Avenue and commercial west of Second Avenue, interspersed with institutional buildings such as the High School for Art and Design on E. 57th Street and Second Avenue; several churches on the side streets between Second and Third Avenues, including the part Gothic, part Romanesque style All Saints Episcopal Church on E. 60th Street west of Second Avenue; the 20-story New York Catholic Center on First Avenue and E. 56th Street; and the adjacent Cathedral High School on E. 56th Street west of First Avenue (Figures 5.6-4; Photographs 5 and 6). The well-known Bloomingdale's department store occupies a 12-story, full-block, nondescript building between Third and Lexington Avenues and E. 59th and 60th Streets (Figure 5.6-5; Photograph 7). The avenues include many ground-floor retail uses, which are marked by awnings above store entrances and windows; the side streets, which are more residential, include a number of canopies leading from the street to building entrances. The buildings are clad in a variety of materials, mostly brick, glass and metal, and stone. There are park areas below the Queensboro Bridge on each side of York Avenue north of E. 59th Street, and at the far east of Sutton Place, near the East River (Figure 5.6-5; Photograph 8).

Other notable buildings in the area include the 47-story, modern glass and steel 919 Third Avenue, set back behind a wide, paved plaza with raised planters and modern, dark steel lampposts (Figure 5.6-6; Photograph 9). At the northwest corner of the development are three flag posts and a sign announcing the building's address. Just south of the 919 Third Avenue building is 909 Third Avenue, a concrete-clad, modern commercial tower set back above a 5-story, windowless base. The recessed plaza at the ground level of the building includes an abstract sculpture and is lined with planters (Figure 5.6-6; Photograph 10). One Beacon Court, a new mixed-use, glass-clad 55-story tower, was recently constructed on the full block between E. 58th and 59th Streets and Lexington and Third Avenues (Figure 5.6-7; Photograph 11). The 54th Street Recreation Center of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, located on E. 54th Street between First and Second Avenues, is a Neoclassical red brick and stone building originally built as a bathhouse (Figure 5.6-7; Photograph 12). The attractive, well-maintained townhouses and apartment buildings in the Sutton Place enclave are designed in a variety of styles, including Neo-Georgian (Figure 5.6-8; Photograph 13). The 3- and 4-story rowhouses within the midblocks of E. 61st and 62nd Streets between Second and Third Avenues are within

West side of Second Avenue, view south from E. 57th Street **5**

West side of First Avenue, view north from E. 55th Street **6**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-4

Bloomingdales, view south from Third Avenue and E. 60th Street **7**

Sutton Place Park, view east to the East River and Roosevelt Island **8**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-5

Southeast corner of Third Avenue and E. 56th Street **9**

East side of Third Avenue, view south from E. 55th Street **10**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-6

Beacon Court, view west from E. 59th Street and Third Avenue **11**

South side of E. 54th Street, view west from First Avenue **12**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-7

East side of Sutton Place, view north from E. 57th Street **13**

View of south side of E. 61st Street between Second and Third Avenues **14**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-8

the Treadwell Farm Historic District, a New York City Historic District that is also listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (Figure 5.6-8, Photograph 14).

Visual Resources

There are no visual resources located along the First Avenue water main connection route, except those surrounding the preferred Shaft Site at First Avenue and E. 59th Street. These include the various components of the Queensboro Bridge, the modern glass Conran Shop pavilion, and a tall brick smokestack located adjacent to the Bridge near the East River (Figure 5.6-9; Photograph 15). For more information on those visual resources, see Section 4.6, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," in Chapter 4, "Preferred Shaft Site." In general, the heights of the buildings within the study area and their strong streetwalls create narrow view corridors without any distinguishing features. However, a small number of visual resources can be seen from within the Study Area west of Sutton Place, and views within the Sutton Place area east of Sutton Place/York Avenue include a number of resources. Views within the portion of the Study Area west of Sutton Place include views south on Third Avenue and west on E. 54th Street to the Citigroup Center and the Lipstick Building (855 Third Avenue), which stands out because of its circular form, and views north along First Avenue of the First Avenue arch, which carries above it the approach ramp to the Queensboro Bridge (Figures 5.6-9 and 5.6-10; Photographs 16 and 17). Views south on First Avenue from south of E. 54th Street include the dark-glass Trump World Tower at First Avenue and E. 47th Street and the smokestacks of Con Edison's Waterside Generating Station at E. 40th Street and First Avenue (Figures 5.6-10 and 5.6-11; Photographs 18 and 19). The East River cannot easily be seen from the First Avenue water main connection route.

From the Sutton Place water main connection route and Study Area, views north on Sutton Place include the steel latticework of the Queensboro Bridge above E. 59th Street (Figure 5.6-12, Photograph 21). Wide views of the East River, Roosevelt Island, and the Queensboro Bridge are available from the Sutton Place parks at the east end of the east-west streets in the Study Area (Figure 5.6-5, Photograph 8, above). In views from E. 59th Street and Sutton Place/York Avenue, the Silvercup Studios sign in Long Island City can be seen, as well as the granite Manhattan anchorage of the Bridge and the full span of the Bridge across the East River (Figure 5.6-12 and 5.6-13, Photographs 22 and 23).

Although there are a number of buildings within the Study Area that are designated or potential historic resources, particularly along Sutton Place, these buildings are not considered to be visual resources for the purposes of this analysis, as they are not prominent in surrounding view corridors.

Within the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street water main connection route and Study Area, the visual resources surrounding the preferred Shaft Site at First Avenue and E. 59th Street can be seen. These include the various components of the Queensboro Bridge, the modern glass Conran Shop pavilion, and a tall brick smokestack located adjacent to the Bridge near the East River (Figure 5.6-9, Photograph 15, above). The Queensboro Bridge and the steel towers of the Roosevelt Island tram structure can be viewed along E. 60th Street (Figure 5.6-11, Photograph 20). The

View of Queensboro Bridge, Conran Shop pavilion, and smokestack from E. 59th Street and First Avenue **15**

View south on Third Avenue to Lipstick Building **16**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-9

View of First Avenue arch from E. 57th Street and First Avenue **17**

View south on First Avenue to Trump World Tower **18**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-10

View south on First Avenue to Waterside Generating Station smokestacks **19**

View east on E. 60th Street from Second Avenue **20**

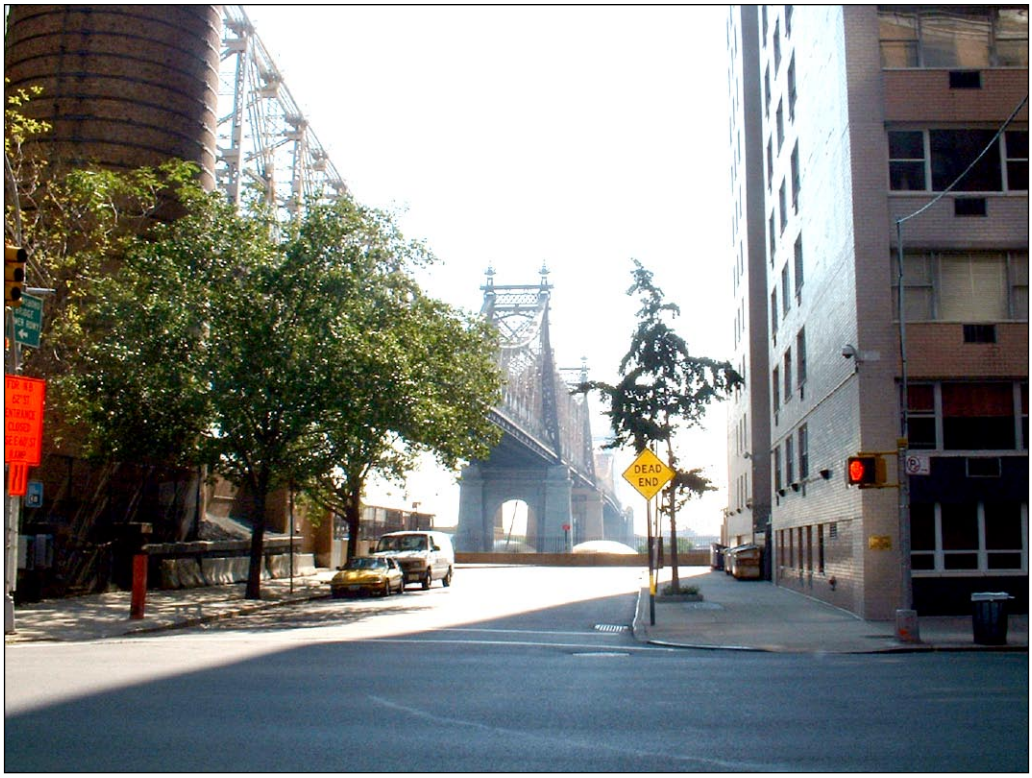
Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-11

View north on Sutton Place from E. 57th Street **21**



View east on E. 59th Street from Sutton Place/ York Avenue **22**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-12

Manhattan anchorage of Queensboro Bridge **23**

Source: Field surveys, spring and summer 2005

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDY AREA

FIGURE 5.6-13

focus of views south along the view corridor of First Avenue is the First Avenue arch, which carries above it the approach ramp to the Queensboro Bridge; views north do not have any distinguishing features. Other views along side streets and Second and Third Avenues do not have any distinguishing features. The rowhouses within the Treadwell Farm Historic District are not considered to be visual resources for the purposes of this analysis as they are not prominent in surrounding view corridors. In addition, the rowhouses along E. 62nd Street within the historic district cannot be seen in views to or from the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street route.

5.6.3 Future Conditions Without the Project

Urban Design

The new residential developments along E. 57th Street between Sutton and Third Avenues are expected to be built in a manner that is consistent with the urban design of this major thoroughfare, which already includes high-rise apartment and office towers. The conversion of the Sutton Hotel on E. 56th Street from hotel to residential use would not be expected to result in any changes to urban design. The other development plans described above in Section 5.2 could result in new buildings in the area that are expected to be similar in style, massing, and height to those that already exist, and are expected to result in minor changes to the streetscape in the Study Area, such as the addition of street furniture, lampposts, awnings, or signboards. Ongoing rehabilitation of the Queensboro Bridge also could result in minor changes to the streetscape of the study area. Upgrades to the Sutton Place parks to be made as part of the FDR Drive Reconstruction Project would further improve these already attractive, well-maintained open spaces. Overall, in the Future Without the Project, the urban design of the Study Area would remain similar to existing conditions.

Visual Resources

In the Future Without the Project, it is anticipated that views of surrounding visual resources would not change from existing conditions. The proposed developments described above are not expected to significantly alter views to visual resources within the Study Area.

5.6.4 Future Conditions With the Project

Construction

Depending on the water main route and final placement of the mains within the City right-of-way, construction of the water main connections would disturb several lanes of the affected streets and, for some portions of the route, a narrow portion of the sidewalks. The area of disturbance and all construction equipment would be confined to a narrow corridor along the street segment being constructed. It is anticipated that the cut-and-cover method of construction would be used; thus, the length of the construction corridor would be segmented and the period of disturbance at any one location would be reduced. The entire street corridor would not be

affected simultaneously. Each street segment would be affected by construction for approximately 10 to 12 weeks.

Urban Design

Construction of the water main connections would not involve any changes to block form; street pattern or hierarchy; topography; natural features; or building arrangement, bulk, use, or type within the Study Area. During construction, the sidewalk area would be reduced, street pavement would be cut up, and construction equipment would be located in the street. These changes are typical of construction projects in Manhattan.

Every effort would be made to protect and maintain street trees before and during construction. However, it is possible that several street trees along the water main route would be removed. As noted in Section 4.6, three street trees would also be removed from the multi-use area at the preferred Shaft Site. For street segments that would involve use of a 2-foot-wide strip of sidewalk, all street trees and street furniture located within the affected sidewalk areas may be removed during construction. Based on the conceptual plans developed for the three potential water main routes, the number of affected trees and other major street furniture that could be affected are listed in Table 5.6-1. More detailed information is provided in Appendix 6 to this EIS. In addition, it is also possible that some additional street trees would be lost in locations where no sidewalk work is proposed, because of the excavation activities close to those trees.

Table 5.6-1
Trees and Street Furniture Potentially Affected by Water Main Construction
Preferred Shaft Site

Water Main Route	Trees	Traffic/Walk Signals	Street Lights	Fire Hydrants
First Avenue Reasonable Worst-Case Route				
Base Scenario	56	7	11	10
Scenario A	77	14	13	11
Sutton Place Route	94	12	17	18
E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street Route	29	3	5	0

Notes: Based on field surveys conducted in August and October 2005. More detailed information is provided in Appendix 6 to this EIS.
In addition to the trees listed in this table, three honey locust trees would be removed at the preferred Shaft Site (see Section 4.6).

It is currently anticipated that in the First Avenue route, Base Scenario, street furniture and street trees along the north side of E. 55th and 56th Streets may have to be removed during construction. A total of 56 street trees and numerous traffic or walk signals, street lights, and signs and 10 fire hydrants could potentially be affected. The First Avenue route, Scenario A, may require the removal of street trees and street furniture along the east side of First Avenue from the Queensboro Bridge to E. 55th Street, as well as on the north sides of E. 55th and E. 56th Streets.

This would affect 21 additional street trees (for a total of 77 trees), numerous traffic or walk signals, street lights, and signs, and one additional fire hydrant as well as one bus shelter on the east side of First Avenue, in addition to the street trees and street furniture affected on E. 55th and E. 56th Streets.

For the Sutton Place route, 2 feet of the sidewalk on the north side of E. 59th Street could be temporarily removed and used for vehicle traffic as part of the roadway, although this would require removal of street furniture (walk signs, signs, and fire hydrants) and 15 street trees. The addition of the blocks of E. 55th and E. 56th Streets between First Avenue and Sutton Place would increase the number of street trees (23 additional trees) and street furniture potentially affected. A total of 94 trees may be affected.

For the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street route, street trees and street furniture may be affected along the south side of E. 59th Street between First and Second Avenues. In addition, to allow eastbound traffic on E. 59th Street to detour around the water main construction zone on the south side of the street while maneuvering under the Queensboro Bridge ramp that crosses E. 59th Street, eastbound cars would have to be diverted beneath the northern arch of the Bridge ramp. This could require removal of the three honey locust trees growing in a traffic island immediately west of the Bridge ramp. A total of 29 trees could be affected along E. 59th Street in using this potential water main route from the preferred Shaft Site.

It is also possible that some additional street trees would be lost in locations where no sidewalk work is proposed, because of the excavation activities close to those trees. The loss of street trees along entire blocks to facilitate water main construction would change the appearance of those blocks. Where possible along the water main routes, the New York City Department of Design and Construction (NYCDDC) would replace any removed street trees in accordance with the requirements of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR), which administers the street tree program in New York City. The replacement trees would in most cases be smaller than the trees that were lost. NYCDPR street tree replacement policy typically requires that areas affected by such construction be re-vegetated with additional street greenery to compensate for the loss of established plantings in the neighborhood. Where opportunities exist, NYCDPR policy most often results in the provision of street tree plantings several times more numerous than those removed to facilitate construction. Depending on the placement of the mains within the streetbed, however, NYCDDC may not be able to replace all street trees in the areas where the water main would be located very close to the sidewalk because sufficient clearance between the tree roots and the water mains must be maintained. In this case replacement trees would have to be provided in the neighborhood area, rather than in existing tree locations. In any event, NYCDDC, working with NYCDPR, would endeavor to provide more trees than the ones that were removed. The provision of additional trees would maintain the greenery of the Study Area, although the visual character of certain block segments would be altered.

The potential elimination of mature street trees, in the numbers described, would have a temporary adverse impact on urban design that would be offset by additional tree planting in the community. The elimination of these trees is not considered to be a significant impact because

the urban design and visual resources characteristic of this area is not defined by this element. However, NYCDEP recognizes that street trees to be an important part of a community and will work with NYCDPR in the greening of this community.

As described in Chapter 2, "Purpose and Need and Project Overview," some limited construction work could occur on the water main connections during the evening shift. If this occurs, lighting would be installed around the street segment under construction. This lighting would be noticeable from the surrounding area, but would not be substantially different from the lighting that already illuminates the Study Area at night.

Overall, due to the limited nature of the potential changes, no potential significant adverse impacts to the urban design of the Study Area are anticipated as a result of construction activities required for the water main connections.

Visual Resources

During construction, the disturbance to the streetbed and sidewalk and construction equipment would be visible from elsewhere in the Study Area, but would not eliminate views from the Study Area to surrounding visual resources; nor would they become a dominant element of such views. The appearance of the construction would be consistent with other water main projects that occur throughout the City. While the construction equipment and related activity would temporarily become part of surrounding views, they would not adversely affect the views. The period of diminished visual quality would be short-term along each street segment. Therefore, no potential significant adverse visual impact would be anticipated to occur during construction of the water main connections.

Conclusions

Overall, the construction work associated with the new water mains would be typical of construction projects in Manhattan and no potential significant adverse impacts to visual resources or urban design would result. Although every effort would be made to maintain and protect street trees before and during construction, some of the work along the water main routes could result in loss of street trees. This would be expected for any water main alignment that uses part of the sidewalk on either an avenue or a side street. In addition, the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street route could require the removal of three honey locust trees in a small traffic island immediately east of the Queensboro Bridge overpass on E. 59th Street between First and Second Avenues. These potential tree losses would be in addition to the three honey locust trees that would be removed from the preferred Shaft Site to facilitate construction. The potential elimination of mature street trees, in the numbers described, would have a temporary adverse impact on urban design that would be offset by additional tree planting in the community. The combination of construction for the water main connections and construction for Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site would be similar in nature to infrastructure construction projects in New York City and overall would not result in potential significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources.

Operation

The new water main connections would be located beneath the street surface, like other water mains in New York City. Once the new water main connections are operational, there would be no visible evidence of the mains (except for some additional manholes and fire hydrants) and no changes would occur to urban design or visual resources of the Study Area. Therefore, no significant adverse impact to urban design or visual resources would occur from operation of the new water mains, regardless of the route selected.

◆