

A. INTRODUCTION

This analysis considers the potential of the proposed project to affect historic and cultural resources on the project site and in the surrounding area. The project site consists of 4.7 miles of Rockaway Beach Boardwalk between Beach 20th and Beach 126th Streets, the section of beach between Beach 126th Street and Beach 149th Streets, and the section of beach between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets. Cultural resources include archaeological and architectural resources. This cultural resources assessment was conducted pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 since funding is being sought from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to undertake the proposed project. The New York City Office of Management & Budget (OMB) is acting as the Responsible Entity (RE) for the environmental review of the proposed project.

In accordance with Section 106 regulations, Areas of Potential Effect (APEs) for archaeological and architectural resource were defined. The archaeological APE for the project site is the area of planned construction and disturbance—the project site itself. Since the proposed project would require excavation, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) was contacted on September 13, 2013 (regarding the section of the project site between Beach 20th and Beach 126th Streets), on October 1, 2013 (regarding the section of the project site between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets), and on October 17, 2013 (regarding the section of the project site between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets) for a preliminary evaluation of the project site’s archaeological sensitivity. In an environmental review letter dated September 16, 2013, LPC requested that the Commission be notified in “the event that in-ground construction in any previously undisturbed areas of the project site will occur on any portion of this site” so that “further review may be conducted.” Following further consultation, LPC determined that the project site has no architectural or archaeological significance, as written in an environmental review letter dated December 19, 2013. (See Appendix C for Agency Correspondence.). Therefore, no further consideration of archaeological resources is warranted.

In general, potential effects to architectural resources can include both direct, physical effects and indirect, contextual effects. Direct effects include demolition of a resource and alterations to a resource that cause it to become a different visual entity. A resource can also be damaged from vibration (i.e., from construction blasting or pile driving) and additional damage from adjacent construction that could occur from falling objects, subsidence, collapse, or damage from construction machinery. Adjacent construction is defined as any construction activity that would occur within 90 feet of an architectural resource, as defined in the New York City Department of

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Buildings (DOB) *Technical Policy and Procedure Notice (TPPN) #10/88*.¹ Contextual effects can include the isolation of a property from its surrounding environment, or the introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that are out of character with a property or that alter its setting.

Therefore, to assess the potential for physical and contextual effects due to on-site construction activities, and also to account for the project's potential visual and/or contextual effects, the architectural resources APE is defined as the area within 90 feet of the project site which generally encompasses the blockfronts facing the project site. Within the architectural resources APE, the architectural resources considered include individual properties and historic districts designated as National Historic Landmarks (NHL), listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) or determined eligible for or pending such listing, and New York City Landmarks (NYCLs) and New York City Historic Districts (NYCHDs) or properties determined eligible for landmark status ("known architectural resources"). A survey of the APE was also undertaken to identify if there were any properties that appeared to meet S/NR and/or NYCL eligibility.

In May 2013, a Programmatic Agreement was executed among the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the New York State Office of Emergency Management, the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, the Shinnecock Nation, the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans, LPC, and the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation (ACHP) as a result of Hurricane Sandy. (See Appendix A for the Programmatic Agreement.) This Programmatic Agreement ensures that Federal disaster assistance programs in the State of New York are administered in accordance with certain stipulations to satisfy FEMA's Section 106 responsibilities. Other Federal agencies providing financial assistance for the type of disaster assistance programs covered by the Agreement may, with the concurrence of ACHP, FEMA, and SHPO, satisfy their Section 106 responsibilities by accepting and complying with the terms of the Agreement. As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," HUD is disbursing Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Funds for the reconstruction of the Rockaway Beach boardwalk, with the City of New York as the grantee. OMB has assumed HUD's environmental responsibilities as the Responsible Entity for New York City and has agreed to accept the terms and conditions of the Programmatic Agreement via Appendix D to the Programmatic Agreement and to take into account the effects of its undertakings and satisfy its Section 106 responsibilities for the CDBG-DR program for activities in New York City. (See Appendix A for the Programmatic Agreement.)

As the proposed project conforms to one or more of the allowances in Appendix B of the Programmatic Agreement, OMB may complete the Section 106 review process by documenting the determination of No Adverse Effect in the project file without SHPO and Tribal review or notification. However, as this EA has also been prepared to allow the City to make City Environmental Quality Review findings, as appropriate, OMB, DPR, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation have consulted with LPC regarding the proposed project.

¹ *TPPN #10/88* was issued by DOB on June 6, 1988, to supplement Building Code regulations with regard to historic structures. *TPPN #10/88* outlines procedures for the avoidance of damage to historic structures resulting from adjacent construction, defined as construction within a lateral distance of 90 feet from the historic resource.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

The project site consists of the Rockaway Beach Boardwalk between Beach 20th and Beach 126th Streets, a portion of the beach between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets, and a portion of the beach between Beach 20th and Beach 9th Streets. Although it was originally constructed in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the boardwalk itself is not a historic resource due to a loss of integrity from a major renovation in the 1990s and severe damage caused by Superstorm Sandy in October 2012. Some sections of the boardwalk were rebuilt in early 2013 with new surfaces, access points, and comfort and lifeguard stations. As described above, in an environmental review letter dated December 19, 2013, LPC has determined that the project site has no architectural or archaeological significance.

AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

KNOWN ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

There are two known architectural resources located within the APE for the proposed project. These resources are shown on **Figure 3B-1** and are described below.

Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District

Approximately 100 summer bungalows and a contributing open space compose the Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District (S/NR), an irregularly bounded district along Beach 24th, Beach 25th, and Beach 26th Streets between Seagirt Avenue and the boardwalk (see **Figure 3B-2**). Only the grassy open space between Beach 24th and Beach 25th Streets is located within 90 feet of the boardwalk. The small bungalows were constructed in 1921 as affordable vacation housing, and they were placed on small lots either facing the street or interior, common alleyways. The historic district is eligible under National Register “Criterion C in the area of architecture as a rare and intact enclave of small, seasonal beach bungalows that once dominated the oceanfront of Far Rockaway, Queens” and under National Register “Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development, and social history.” From within the historic district, the existing elevated boardwalk—which was relatively undamaged by Hurricane Sandy—and its access ramps at the street ends blocks views to the beach and ocean (see **Figure 3B-3**).

Jacob Riis Park Historic District





The 220-acre, mile-long Jacob Riis Park Historic District (S/NR) is located just west of the project site and APE. The district is bounded on the west by Beach 169th Street and on the east by a point west of Beach 149th Street, with a northeast section along Jamaica Bay that extends to Beach 146th Street. Jacob Riis Park is a unit within the Gateway National Recreation Area, and the historic district comprises three recreational buildings, none of which are located within the APE for the proposed project. These buildings are the Bathing Pavilion and the Central Mall Buildings. Constructed under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, Jacob Riis Park opened in 1937. The historic district is eligible under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture as “a representative example of 1930’s structures built for large scale recreational purposes” and under Criterion A in the areas of social history and recreational planning.

1.22.14



0 1 2 MILES

SCALE

-  Proposed Reconstructed Boardwalk
-  Existing Dunes
-  Proposed Crossing Structures
-  Proposed (No-Action) Sand Fencing

Approximate Project Site Location:
73° 48' 4" W 40° 35' 11" N



USGS Topographic Map – Far Rockaway Quadrangle
Architectural Resources



Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District Figure 3B-2



View south on Beach 24th Street 1



View south on Beach 25th Street 2

Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District -
Existing Views to Boardwalk and Beach
Figure 3B-3

Rockaway Boardwalk Reconstruction

POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

Between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets, the northern edge of the project site is bordered by modern high-rise apartment buildings, recreational fields, and paved parking areas. There do not appear to be any potential architectural resources in this portion of the APE that may meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the Registers or for NYCL designation.

Between Beach 20th and Beach 109th Streets, the northern edge of the boardwalk is bordered by modern recreational facilities and undeveloped land, and there do not appear to be any potential architectural resources in this portion of the APE that may meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the Registers or for NYCL designation.

The section of the boardwalk between Beach 109th and Beach 126th Streets runs along the southern edge of blocks that are mostly developed with modern buildings. However, at Beach 125th Street, there is an early 20th-century, brick and wood house notable for its bay windows and hipped roof. Occupied by the Chai House Group Home, the building was heavily damaged by Hurricane Sandy. In addition, the ground-floor had previously been altered, and it appears that an original wrap-around porch was filled in and new façade treatments added. Therefore, due to a loss of integrity this building does not appear to meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the Registers or for NYCL designation.

The western section of the project site between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets is located in an area densely developed with detached houses of varying sizes, materials, and architectural styles. These houses are all set back from the beach and mostly behind low walls. Although many of these houses appear to be relatively modern, there are three early 20th-century houses located in this 23-block portion of the APE that could meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the Registers or for NYCL designation. These three potential resources are an Arts and Crafts-style house from circa 1925 at 1-30 Beach 137th Street, an Arts and Crafts-style house from circa 1930 at 140 Beach 141st Street, and a Dutch Colonial-style from circa 1910 at 140 Beach 145th Street. All three houses suffered some damage from Hurricane Sandy.

C. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In the future without the proposed project, the City is proposing to construct an interim boardwalk connection between Beach 35th Street and Beach 39th Street, where—as described above—the boardwalk suffered significant damage. The boardwalk surface in this area, which was constructed of wood, is currently completely absent, thus interrupting public use of the boardwalk. The proposed temporary structure will use salvaged *ipe* stringers that were recovered from the damaged boardwalk. These stringers will be placed on and anchored to the existing concrete piles, with timber decking placed on the stringers. The width of the deck will be approximately 12 feet and will be connected to the existing boardwalk at Beach 35th Street and Beach 39th Street. Upon completion of this interim connection, the entire stretch of boardwalk between Beach 9th and Beach 60th Streets would be usable, thus improving pedestrian access and enjoyment of this portion of the project site. The boardwalk section between Beach 35th and Beach 20th Streets and the boardwalk section between Beach 39th and Beach 126th Streets will not be reconstructed and will remain in their current conditions. There are no known or potential architectural resources located in the vicinity of the interim boardwalk connection. In addition, LPC determined that the project site has no archaeological significance.

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently undertaking a project to renourish Rockaway Beach between Beach 19th

and Beach 149th Streets. The USACE project includes the creation of beachfill and new dunes between the shore and the boardwalk. Dunes were completed in the first phase of the project in September 2013. The second phase, which will start in early 2014, will extend the width of the beach. It is expected that the current renourishment program will be amended by a “betterment” of the USACE contract that would utilize the project’s volume of sand in a manner to raise the level of the USACE dune from 14 to 16 feet in height. DPR, in the future with or without the proposed project, would plant cape beach grass on the top of the USACE dune from Beach 20th Street to approximately Beach 73rd Street and on the top and seaward side of the dune from Beach 73rd Street to approximately Beach 149th Street. Planted areas would be protected by sand fencing until the vegetation becomes established. The USACE project on the waterside of the boardwalk and DPR’s planting of the dune will not affect the Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District. Nor will these projects have any effects on the Jacob Riis Park Historic District, which is located west of the project APE, nor on the potential architectural resources located in the APE between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets, as they are set slightly back from the beach within enclosed parcels.

In the future with or without the proposed project, the City intends to install sand fencing that would aid in the gradual formation of a sand dune beyond the eastern end of the USACE dune in order to provide flood protection to communities between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets. The sand fencing would be placed in two parallel rows approximately 20 feet apart, adjacent to and in approximate alignment with the eastern terminus of the USACE dune and landward of the existing natural dunes that occur in this area. Pedestrian access would be through up to five at-grade openings in the sand fencing, where pedestrian access is now in the vicinity of Beach 19th, Beach 16th and Beach 9th Streets. There are no known or potential architectural resources located in the vicinity of the proposed sand fencing. In addition, LPC determined that the project site has no archaeological significance.

On the currently vacant blocks between Beach 32nd and Beach 59th Streets, it is expected that approximately 1,300 residential units and retail uses will be developed pursuant to the Arverne East redevelopment plan. No other major land use changes are currently anticipated in the study area. Homes and businesses affected by Hurricane Sandy, which could include bungalows within the Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District, are expected to be gradually repaired or redeveloped depending on the extent of damage, and small new developments such as single family houses and small businesses can be expected to be built in the coming years.

D. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

The proposed project would complete the reconstruction of the boardwalk from Beach 20th Street to Beach 126th Street, and the rebuilt boardwalk and associated access points would be constructed to be compatible with the USACE beach renourishment project. Between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets, the proposed project includes providing new access to the beach with stairs and ramps across the new dunes currently being constructed as part of the USACE beach renourishment project. It is expected that the new structures would be located at each street end and that up to four locations would also have access ramps that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Between Beach 20th and Beach 9th Streets, the proposed project includes maintaining existing access to the beach with at-grade crossings of the existing dunes. An overall goal of the project is to raise the new boardwalk to an elevation above the

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100-year FEMA storm surge levels, which would result in raising the new boardwalk sections from approximately 1.4 feet at the eastern portion of the site to approximately 8.0 feet to the west. As the project site has no architectural or archaeological significance, the proposed project would not have any adverse effects on cultural or historic resources located on the project site.

AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

The proposed project would not have any adverse effects on the Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District, the Jacob Riis Park Historic District, or on the three potential architectural resources located in the portion of the APE between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets.

Although the Far Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District extends down Beach 25th and Beach 26th Streets to the boardwalk, there are no bungalows located within the project APE and the boardwalk is not located within the boundaries of the historic district. Therefore, reconstruction of the boardwalk would not have potential adverse construction-related effects on any of the bungalows. The contributing open space within the historic district is adjacent to the boardwalk, and to ensure that the proposed project would not have construction effects on this contributing feature of the historic district, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation would prepare and implement a construction protection plan in consultation with LPC. It is expected that this construction protection plan would include implementing construction fencing around the portion of the historic district located adjacent to the boardwalk and would preclude construction activities from taking place within the open space located between Beach 24th and Beach 25th Streets. The proposed project, which would reconstruct an existing boardwalk, would not have adverse visual or contextual effects on the historic district. In this location, the proposed project would only raise the boardwalk approximately 1.4 feet. Since the existing elevated boardwalk already blocks views to the water from within the historic district, the minor change in the boardwalk's height would not obstruct any significant views from within the historic district to the beach and ocean (see Figure 3C-7 in Chapter 3, Section C, "Urban Design and Visual Resources").

Constructing stairs and ramps over the USACE dune between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets would not have any adverse direct, visual, or contextual effects on the Jacob Riis Park Historic District. Only the easternmost edge of the mile-long historic district is located within the vicinity of the project site, and none of the contributing historic districts structures are located within the project APE. In addition, this portion of the project would not have any adverse direct, visual, or contextual effects on the three potential architectural resources located between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets. The construction of stairs and ramps over a dune that is being constructed in the future without the proposed project would not have any adverse visual or contextual effects on the three potential architectural resources. Further, it is not expected that the minor construction activities related to this portion of the project would result in any adverse direct impacts on the potential architectural resources, as the dune would not abut any of the buildings in this portion of the APE.

Overall, the proposed project would not have any adverse effects on historic or cultural resources. *