

A. INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the visual character of the existing Project Site within the context of the Study Area and assesses whether the Proposed Project would have any significant adverse visual impacts on the existing characteristics.

The Proposed Project includes the potential introduction of new structural and landscape features to the Project Site, as well as the modification and/or removal of some existing features. As described in Chapter 1, the Project Site for the Proposed Project has been delineated to include the entirety of the Saratoga Race Course property in Saratoga Springs, New York. The Project Site encompasses all areas in which proposed improvements are located and also includes NYRA-owned parcels for which no changes are being proposed as part of the Proposed Project.

A visual resources analysis was undertaken to determine the potential for the Proposed Project to impact visual character and aesthetic conditions of the Project Site and its immediate vicinity. The assessment was conducted in accordance with the NYSDEC Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts,” (DEP-00-2) (July 2000) and assesses whether the Proposed Project would affect the 15 categories of state aesthetic and visual resources as well as the historically significant resources that were evaluated in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources.”

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS*VISUAL RESOURCES*

Overall, the Proposed Project is expected to have a beneficial impact on the visual character of the Race Course. As part of the planned elements and conceptual improvements, direct impacts to specific buildings in the Backstretch were identified in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources.” However, these impacts would not be adverse. Further, because the project involves ongoing design and refinement of selected improvements, a Draft LOR between NYRA, FOB, OGS, and OPRHP has been prepared (**Appendix F-1**), which sets forth a process for avoiding potential adverse visual impacts to contributing resources. The categories of potential visual impacts to historic resources identified as part of this analysis which would require ongoing consultation with OPRHP to implement the provisions of the LOR include: 1) Proposed Project elements that would result in the construction of new buildings in close proximity to contributing resources on the Project Site and 2) potential impacts to landscape features that help define the overall character of the historic Race Course landscape (which is itself considered a contributing feature to the Historic District). These impacts would not be adverse, provided that the final design and construction are carried out in conformance with the LOR. The LOR includes a procedure for identifying measures to avoid potential adverse impacts. It also establishes guidelines for sensitive design and a procedure for consultation with OPRHP to obtain design approval of the design.

B. METHODOLOGY

NYSDEC GUIDANCE

NYSDEC has developed a methodology for assessing and mitigating visual impacts (DEP-00-2). While this policy was developed for NYSDEC review of actions, the methodology and impact assessment criteria established by the policy are comprehensive and can be used by other State and local agencies to assess potential visual and aesthetic impacts.

According to DEP-00-2, a “visual impact” occurs when “the mitigating¹ effects of perspective do not reduce the visibility of an object to insignificant levels. Beauty plays no role in this concept” (DEP-00-2, p. 10). DEP-00-2 also defines an “aesthetic impact:”

Aesthetic impact occurs when there is a detrimental effect on the perceived beauty of a place or structure. Mere visibility, even startling visibility of a project proposal, should not be a threshold for decision making. Instead a project, by virtue of its visibility, must clearly interfere with or reduce the public’s enjoyment and/or appreciation of the appearance of an inventoried resource. (DEP-00-2, p. 9)

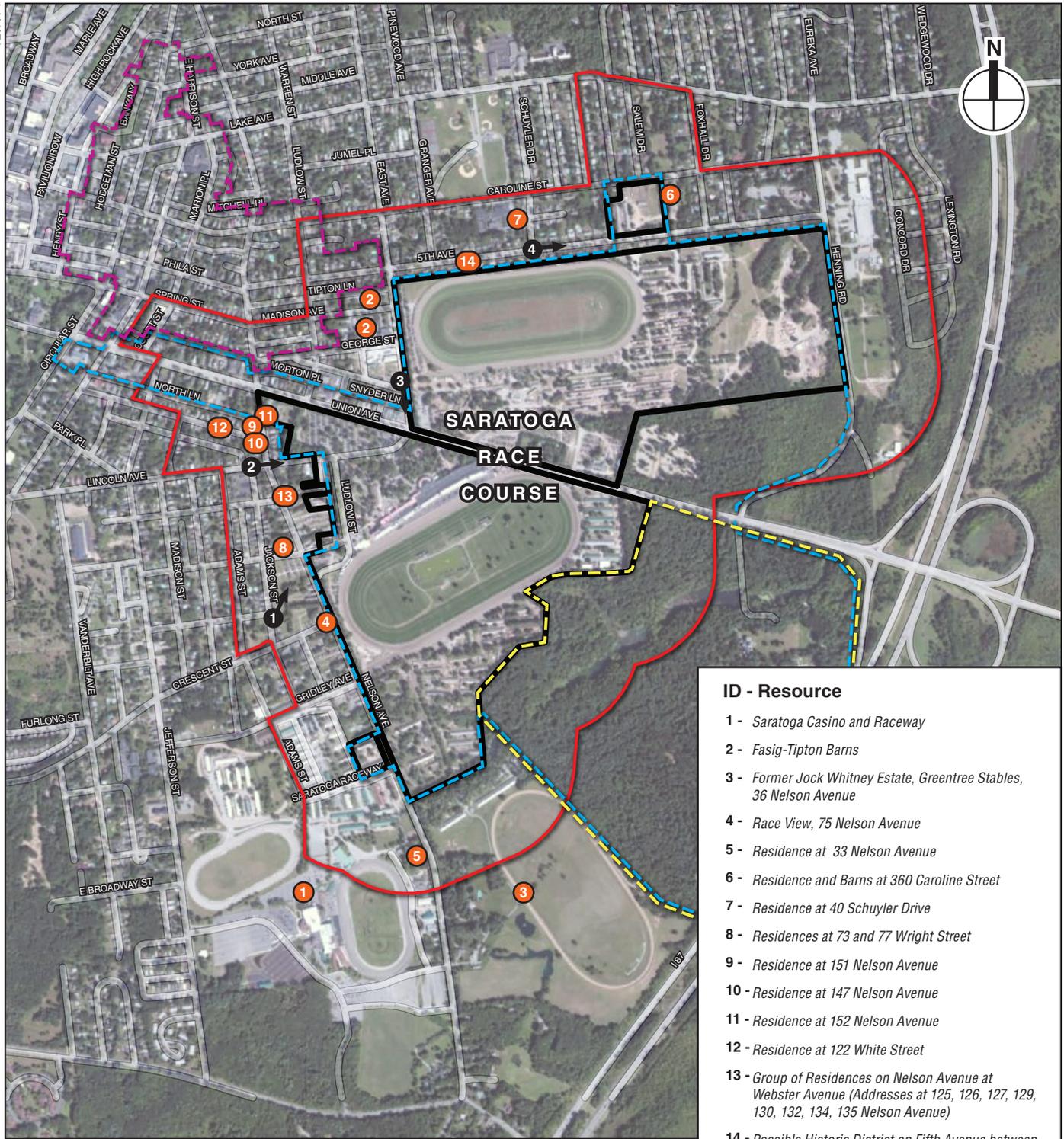
Thus, while a project or structure may be visible from a certain location, mere visibility is not a threshold of significance. The significance of the visibility is dependent on several factors: presence of any designated historic or scenic resources within the viewshed of the project, distance, general characteristics of the surrounding landscape, and the extent to which the visibility of the project interferes with the public’s enjoyment or appreciation of the resource. A significant adverse visual impact would only occur when the effects of design, distance, and intervening topography and vegetation do not minimize the visibility of an object and the visibility significantly detracts from the public’s enjoyment of a designated historic or scenic resource. DEP-00-2 identifies specific types of historic and scenic resources that should be considered as part of a visual impact assessment.

STUDY AREA

The Visual Resources Study Area for the Proposed Project (see **Figure 16-1**) is based on the Cultural Resources Project Impact Area defined in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources.” In general, the Study Area extends between 800 to 1,000 feet from the Project Site depending on views towards the Project Site. The Study Area takes into consideration topography and the surrounding built environment and is more expansive in areas where views towards the Project Site are longer due to an open landscape or a lack of existing, intervening, view obstructing structures or landscape features.

The Study Area extends 1,000 feet from the Project Site to the east and the south, roughly from the intersection of Caroline Street and Henning Road to Nelson Avenue 1,000 feet south of the Project Site. This area is characterized by large properties rather than residential blocks; therefore, a consistent buffer has been delineated for the Study Area to the east and south. This area includes portions of Yaddo, an artists’ community and public garden that is a National Historic Landmark and a contributing element within the S/NR-listed Union Avenue Historic

¹ DEP-00-2 uses the term “mitigating” or “mitigation” to refer to design parameters that avoid or reduce potential visibility of a project. This should not be confused with the use of the term “mitigation” with respect to mitigation of significant adverse environmental impacts as required by SEQRA.



- Project Site Boundary
- Visual Resources Study Area Boundary
- Potential Historic Resource
- Yaddo National Historic Landmark
- Union Avenue S/NR Historic District
- East Side S/NR Historic District

- Vantage Point
- 1 - Nelson Avenue
- 2 - View of Proposed Lincoln Avenue Gate from Lincoln Avenue
- 3 - View down East Avenue Looking at East Avenue Entrance
- 4 - View of Oklahoma Annex from Caroline Street looking east into the site

- ID - Resource**
- 1 - Saratoga Casino and Raceway
 - 2 - Fasig-Tipton Barns
 - 3 - Former Jock Whitney Estate, Greentree Stables, 36 Nelson Avenue
 - 4 - Race View, 75 Nelson Avenue
 - 5 - Residence at 33 Nelson Avenue
 - 6 - Residence and Barns at 360 Caroline Street
 - 7 - Residence at 40 Schuyler Drive
 - 8 - Residences at 73 and 77 Wright Street
 - 9 - Residence at 151 Nelson Avenue
 - 10 - Residence at 147 Nelson Avenue
 - 11 - Residence at 152 Nelson Avenue
 - 12 - Residence at 122 White Street
 - 13 - Group of Residences on Nelson Avenue at Webster Avenue (Addresses at 125, 126, 127, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135 Nelson Avenue)
 - 14 - Possible Historic District on Fifth Avenue between East Avenue and Schuyler Drive



Visual Resources Study Area
Figure 16-1

District. It also includes a portion of the Saratoga Gaming and Raceway property. On the west, the proposed Study Area runs along Jackson Street between Gridley Street and Crescent Street. It extends along Adams Street from Crescent Street to Lincoln Avenue to account for the slightly longer views towards the Project Site created by a relatively open landscape. At Lincoln Avenue the Study Area extends westward to Stratton Street and to Clark Street. Between Union Avenue and Spring Street, it extends to Court Street and then runs eastward along Spring Street/Madison Avenue to Ludlow Street. The northern boundary of the Study Area is defined as Caroline Street except where it extends north to Lake Avenue between Benton Drive and Foxhall Drive to account for the expansion of the Project Site north to Caroline Street. As shown on **Figure 16-1**, three known and fourteen potential architectural resources have been identified outside of the Project Site within the Visual Resources Study Area. These resources are listed in **Table 16-1** and described below in Section C.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

The existing character of the Project Site is typical of a race course with a race track, grandstand, club house, and numerous accessory structures including a saddling shed, jockey house, barns and dormitories. The entire Saratoga Race Course is listed as a S/NR-listed historic property. There are 176 contributing buildings on the Project Site. The landscape of the Race Course is also considered a contributing resource, and a number of character-defining landscape features have been identified. Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources,” provides a detailed description of these resources and Table 16-1 provides a summary of the contributing buildings and character-defining landscape features on the Project Site by Race Course area.

The Project Site is largely characterized as lawn with numerous landscape features. Many fences are located throughout the site and typically delineate the public areas from the areas used by the horses to travel to and from the track, paddock, saddling shed and the barns. Stands of mature trees are interspersed throughout the site particularly in the Backyard. Hedges, shrubs, and grasses are located throughout the Project Site, screening views and directing circulation within the public areas of the Race Course. As described in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources,” many of the trees and hedges found throughout the site date to the period of significance and help define the character of the overall historic landscape of the Race Course. Elements of the Race Course (e.g., fences, structures, grandstand, and pedestrian paths) are visible from most, if not all, of the rights-of-way immediately adjacent to the Project Site. There is one pond on the Project Site located in the middle of the Main Race Course. The pond is not visible from locations beyond the Race Course boundaries. A portion of the eastern edge of the Project Site is covered with woodland-type vegetation.

The Project Site is located in the southeast portion of the City of Saratoga Springs approximately midway between downtown Saratoga and I-87. All of the properties adjacent to or near the Project Site have been previously developed. Some large tracts of land are currently used by institutional and private land uses. Yaddo, the artists’ community, is located immediately south of the Race Course property.

The roadways located adjacent to the Project Site range in character and scale. Union Avenue bisects the Project Site and is a two-way roadway that provides a striped median west of Nelson Avenue and a grass median east of Nelson Avenue. In the immediate vicinity of the Saratoga Race Course, there are closely spaced (approximately 150 to 350 feet) breaks in the grass median that provide turning movement paths along Union Avenue. Fifth Avenue, located to the

Saratoga Race Course Redevelopment Plan DGEIS

north, is a local street. Nelson Avenue is a two-way roadway that travels in a north-south direction in the Study Area. Nelson Avenue generally provides one moving lane in each direction and is classified as a Minor Arterial between Crescent Avenue and Lake Avenue and as a Local Roadway between of Lake Avenue and High Rock Avenue. On the west, the Project Site is bordered by Nelson Avenue, described above, and East Avenue, a collector roadway. To the east is Henning Road, which is also classified as a Collector roadway. All other vehicular rights-of-way that form the boundaries of the Project Site are local streets typical of a suburban neighborhood. There are some roadways, or sections of roadways, within the Study Area that are unique in character due to their narrow width and/or planted median (i.e. Union Avenue).

STUDY AREA

An inventory of sensitive aesthetic and visual resources was prepared following the guidance in NYSDEC Program Policy “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts” (DEP-00-2, July 31, 2000). In addition to the Project Site, a total of seventeen (17) aesthetic and visual resources, limited to locally significant historic resources, State/National Register (S/NR) of Historic Places-listed or eligible resources, or potential historic resources, are located within the Study Area. The location of each of the identified resources in the Study Area is shown in Figure 16-1.

STATE/NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

As described above, the entire Saratoga Race Course is listed on the S/NR as part of the Union Avenue Historic District. In addition, there are three known and fourteen potential S/NR-listed architectural resources that have been identified outside of the Project Site boundaries but within the Study Area (see **Table 16-1**). None of these resources are subject to potential adverse visual impacts as a result of the Proposed Project.

**Table 16-1
Aesthetic/Visual Resources in the Study Area**

Resource	NHL	S/NR-listed	S/NR-eligible*
Saratoga Race Course		X	
Union Avenue Historic District		X	
East Side Historic District		X	
Yaddo	X		
Potential Architectural Resources			
Saratoga Casino and Raceway			X
Fasig-Tipton Barns			X
Former Jock Whitney Estate, Greentree Stables,			X
36 Nelson Avenue			X
Race View, 75 Nelson Avenue			X
Residence at 33 Nelson Avenue			X
Residence and Barns at 360 Caroline Street			X
Residence at 40 Schuyler Drive			X
Residences at 73 and 77 Wright Street			X
Residence at 151 Nelson Avenue			X
Residence at 147 Nelson Avenue			X
Residence at 152 Nelson Avenue			X
Residence at 122 White Street			X
Group of Residences on Nelson Avenue at Webster Avenue (Addresses at 125, 126, 127, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135 Nelson Avenue)			X
Notes:	NHL = National Historic Landmark S/NR-listed = listed on the State/National Register of Historic Places S/NR-eligible = potentially eligible for listing on the State/National Register of Historic Places		

NEW YORK STATE PARKS

No State Parks as defined by Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law Section 3.09 were identified within the Study Area.¹ The Saratoga Spa State Park is located approximately 2.5 miles from the Project Site. The Proposed Project would not be visible from Saratoga Spa State Park.

HERITAGE AREAS

Saratoga Springs, New York is a Heritage Area as defined by Article 35, Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law.² Heritage Areas include cultural parks and heritage corridors that reflect the cultural themes of New York State's development and provide educational, inspirational, economic, and recreational benefits. The Heritage Area System was formerly known as the Urban Cultural Park System. The Saratoga Springs Heritage Area incorporated those land uses and these areas which have historically developed or caused the development of the City of Saratoga Springs, which include the Project Site as well as several other areas within the Study Area including Union Avenue, Yaddo Gardens, the East Side Historic District and the Saratoga Casino and Raceway. As part of the planned elements and conceptual improvements, some direct impacts to specific buildings in the Backstretch was identified in Chapter 15, "Cultural Resources," however, these impacts would not be adverse. Further, because the project involves ongoing design and refinement of selected improvements, a LOR between NYRA, FOB, OGS, and OPRHP has been prepared, which sets forth a process for avoiding potential adverse visual impacts to contributing resources. The Proposed Project is expected to have a beneficial impact overall because it will preserve and promote the visual and historic character of the Race Course. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to the Saratoga Springs Heritage Area would result from the Proposed Project.

NEW YORK STATE FOREST PRESERVE

All lands within the State Forest Preserve (New York State Constitution Article XIV) are located within the boundaries of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Thus, there are no State Forest Preserve lands within the Study Area.³

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

There are no National Wildlife Refuges within the Study Area.⁴

STATE GAME REFUGES AND STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

There are no Wildlife Management Areas in the Study Area.⁵

¹ Source: <http://nysparks.com/regions/taconic/default.aspx>; accessed 2/23/2012.

² Source: <http://nysparks.com/historic-preservation/heritage-areas.aspx>; accessed 2/23/2012.

³ Source: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4960.html>; accessed 2/23/2012.

⁴ Source: <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/>; accessed 2/23/2012.

⁵ Source: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8297.html>; accessed 2/23/2012.

Saratoga Race Course Redevelopment Plan DGEIS

NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARKS

No National Natural Landmarks (defined by 36 CFR Part 62) are located within the Study Area.¹ The Petrified Gardens, a National Natural Landmark, is located at 42 Petrified Sea Gardens Road, in Saratoga Springs, New York approximately 4.5 miles from the Project Site. The Proposed Project would not be visible from this location.

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM RECREATION AREAS, SEASHORES, FORESTS

No National Parks (as defined by 16 USC 1c) are located within the Study Area.² Saratoga National Historic Park is located approximately 9 miles from the Project Site. The Proposed Project would not be visible from this location.

RIVERS DESIGNATED AS NATIONAL OR STATE WILD, SCENIC, OR RECREATIONAL

There are no National Wild, Scenic, or Recreational (16 USC Chapter 28) rivers within the Primary Impact Area.³ Rivers designated by New York State as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational are listed in Sections 16-2713 through 16-2715 of New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL). There are no State-designated Wild, Scenic, or Recreational rivers within the Primary Impact Area.⁴

SITES, AREAS, LAKES, RESERVOIRS, OR HIGHWAYS DESIGNATED OR ELIGIBLE FOR DESIGNATION AS SCENIC

Resources identified in Article 49 of the ECL include Scenic Byways (under the purview of New York State Department of Transportation [NYSDOT]), parkways (designated by OPRHP), and other areas designated by NYSDEC. There are no Scenic Byways or parkways located within the Study Area.⁵

SCENIC AREAS OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE (SASS)

There are no Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance located in the Study Area.⁶

STATE OR FEDERALLY DESIGNATED TRAILS

There are no federally designated trails (as defined by 16 USC Chapter 27) located within the Study Area.⁷

STATE NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION AREAS

There are no State Nature or Historic Preservation Areas located within the Study Area.⁸

¹ Source: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/docs/NNLRegistry.pdf>; accessed 2/23/2012.

² Source: <http://www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm?program=parks>; accessed 2/23/2012.

³ Source: <http://www.rivers.gov/wildriverslist.html>; accessed 3/14/2014.

⁴ Source: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/32739.html>; accessed 3/14/2014.

⁵ Source: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/programs/scenic-byways/lists>; accessed 3/14/2014.

⁶ Source: http://nyswaterfronts.com/waterfront_developed_SASS.asp; accessed 3/14/2014.

⁷ Source: <http://www.nps.gov/nts/maps/National%20Trails%20map>; accessed 3/14/2014.

⁸ Source: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/34531.html>; accessed 3/14/2014.

PALISADES PARK

Palisades Park is not located within the Study Area.

BOND ACT PROPERTIES PURCHASED UNDER EXCEPTIONAL SCENIC BEAUTY OR OPEN SPACE CATEGORY

No properties purchased with Bond Act funds under the scenic beauty or open space categories are located in the Study Area.

LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES

The Project Site is identified by the City of Saratoga as locally significant. In addition, there are seventeen properties identified in the Study Area (see **Table 16-1**) as potential architectural resources. These resources are described in detail in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources.” The potential for visual impacts to these resources is described in Section E., “Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project.”

D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In the Future without the Proposed Project (also referred to as the “No Build” condition) the Project Site would retain its character as a historic race course set amidst suburban single-family residential properties and larger institutional properties. It is expected that the Background Projects identified in “Chapter 1, Project Description”, such as routine repairs and maintenance, the refurbishment of non-contributing buildings, alteration of landscape features identified as non-character-defining features would be implemented as needed. As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description”, these projects are identified as Background Projects because they are considered Type II Actions under SEQRA. Type II Actions are those actions, or classes of actions, which have been found categorically to not have significant adverse impacts on the environment, or actions that have been statutorily exempted from SEQRA review. Therefore, as renovations to existing structures or other maintenance and improvements as delineated in the Draft LOR, the proposed Background Projects would not be expected to adversely affect visual resources on the Project Site or in the Study Area in the Future Without the Proposed Project.

In addition, a comprehensive review of other public and private development projects anticipated by No Build analysis year of 2024 was compiled and presented in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy.” Based on the review, only the proposed Saratoga Casino and Raceway is currently identified for completion by 2024 within the ¼-mile land use study area.

E. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

As described in **Chapter 1**, “Project Description,” the Proposed Project would include renovation of existing structures and construction of new buildings and landscape features to serve the needs of NYRA’s racing mission. The Project Site would be improved with walking paths and sitting areas and designated areas would be established and maintained as gathering spaces and cultivated gardens. The Proposed Project would retain the overall visual quality of the Project Site by preserving its use as a race course and designing new elements in a manner sensitive to the existing historic and aesthetic character of the property. The renovations to existing buildings and the addition of new structures and landscape features as well as outdoor meeting spaces would change views of the property from certain locations in the Study Area, but

the changes are expected to have a beneficial visual effect on the Property and would not be expected to adversely affect the overall visual and historic character of the Race Course.

VISIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Many of the proposed visual changes to the Project Site would not be visible from public rights-of-way or private residences adjacent to the Project Site due to intervening buildings and vegetation. However, a small number of the proposed project elements on the Frontside and Backstretch are expected to be at least partially visible from public rights-of-way adjacent to the Project Site. NYRA has designed the proposed buildings and site improvements to be as sensitive to the existing landscape and community character as possible. The materials used for the buildings would be sensitive to the historic character of the site and would include stone, brick, and clapboard siding. The heights and massing of the proposed buildings were designed to be compatible with the size and heights of the existing structures and site lighting has been designed to be consistent with the character of the existing Race Course as well as to avoid potential impacts to neighboring properties and visual resources.

A Tree Management and Planting Plan (see **Figures 16-2a and 16-2b**) was developed by the LA Group Landscape Architecture & Engineering P.C., for the Saratoga Race Course. Shade and evergreen trees have always contributed to the character of the Saratoga Race Course landscape distinguishing it from other courses both nationally and internationally. Therefore, a strategy of tree planting was developed to:

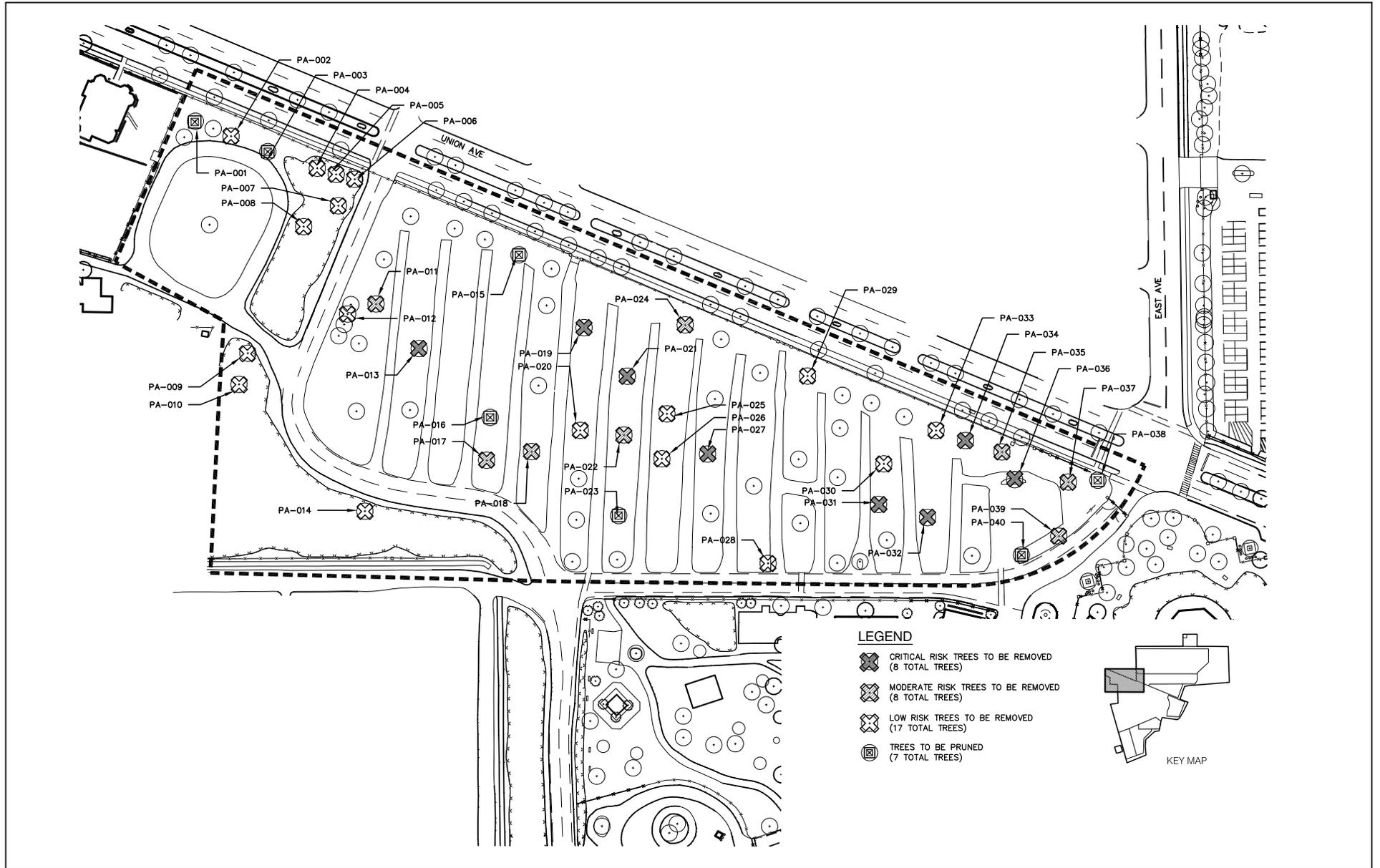
- 1) Complement the beauty of the overall historic and visual character of the Race Course;
- 2) Perform practical functions such as shading to cool the horses and workers;
- 3) Provide visual interest in an otherwise flat landscape.

The Vantage Point Analysis below describes the proposed project elements that would be visible from public right-of-ways. Potential visual impacts to the seventeen (17) aesthetic or visual resources identified within the study and listed in **Table 16-1** are also described below following the Vantage Point Analysis.

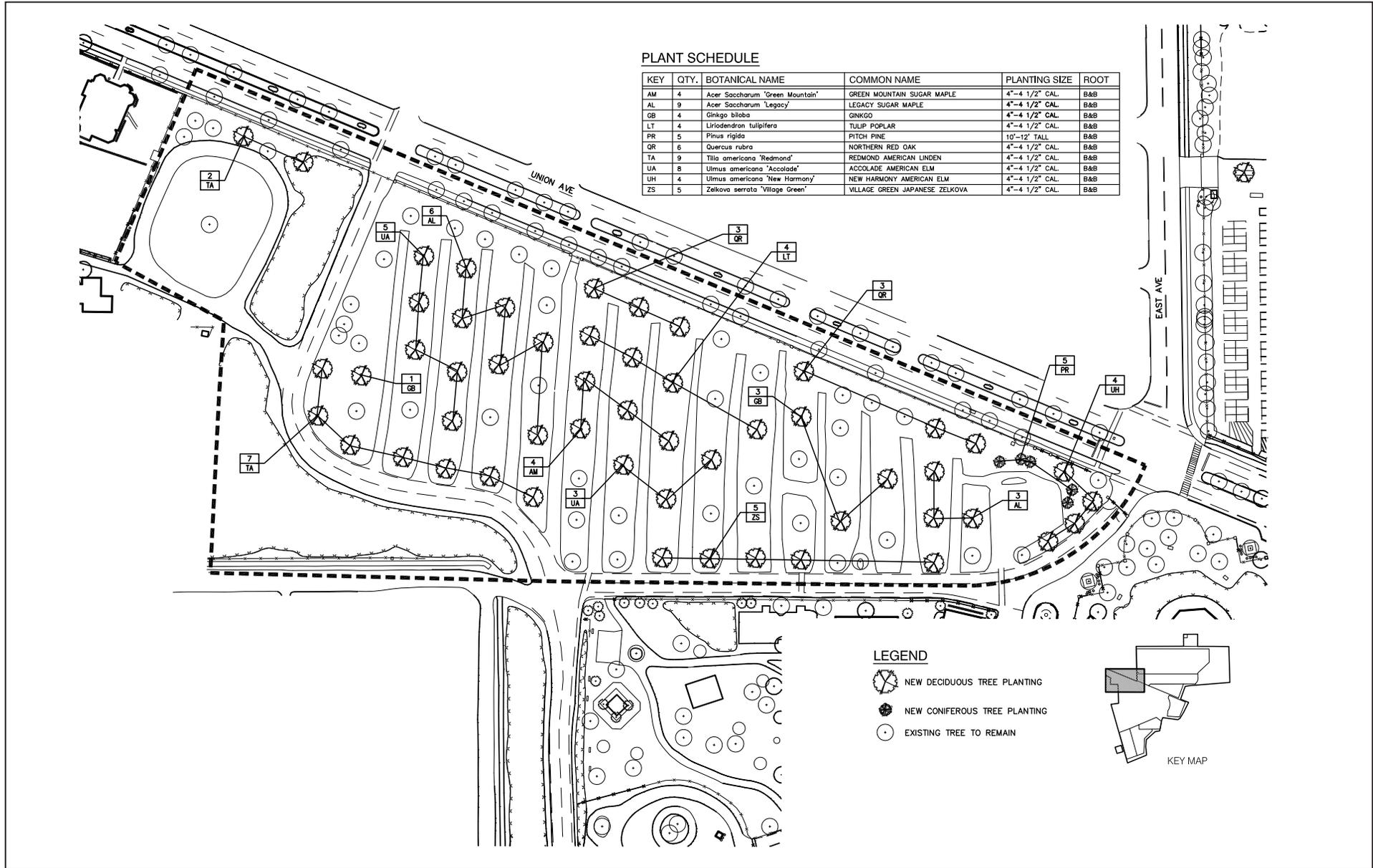
VANTAGE POINT ANALYSIS

The relationship between a Vantage Point and an object, both in terms of distance and contextual landscape character, is critical in assessing potential visual impacts. The relative distance and the width of the vista affect the ability to discern detail of a specific element. The perceived size of an object decreases as distance increases. Similarly, the size an object appears smaller in a wider vista. In addition, due to atmospheric perspective over large distances, the colors of an object are reduced in intensity and contrast between lights and darks decreases. This causes an object to appear “washed out” and less intrusive, or noticeable, within a vista. Typically, an increased distance between an object and Vantage Point and a wider vista will decrease the visual impact of the object.

Four Vantage Points were identified surrounding the Project Site from which an assessment of potential impact was performed (see Figure 16-1). Renderings of the potential visibility of the Proposed Project elements from the following Vantage Points were prepared and are described below.



For Illustrative Purposes Only



For Illustrative Purposes Only

Vantage Point 1: Nelson Avenue

Multiple Project elements would potentially be visible from Vantage Point 1 along Nelson Avenue including the Nelson Avenue Service Building; the Wright Street Gatehouse Modifications); and At the Rail Building.

Nelson Avenue Service Building

The proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building would introduce a large new structure into an area of the Race Course where no existing Race Course structures are located. This area is currently undeveloped and no contributing historic features exist in this location. **Figure 16-3** shows the existing and proposed conditions of the Project Site from Vantage Point 1. Existing views from Nelson Avenue in the vicinity of Nelson Avenue and Crescent Street are of a grassed parking area with some areas of impervious surfaces visible. Beyond the parking areas portions of the Clubhouse and Main Race Course are visible. With the Proposed Project, the existing grass parking lots would be replaced with the Nelson Avenue Service Building. The new building would be sited in the existing parking area located at the corner of Nelson Avenue and Wright Street. would provide a new central loading dock area, a new covered connection to the proposed new At the Rail Building, a new parking area for broadcast trucks, a new screen wall with plantings along Nelson Avenue, and a new utility courtyard and enclosure with a planting area to screen the utility courtyard. The utility courtyard and its enclosure and landscaping would be located in an area between the proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building and the proposed At the Rail Building so it would not be readily visible from public streets surrounding the facility. Its landscaping would be integrated into the overall plan for this area and would not be visually intrusive. The proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building would be two stories and a total of 32,655 sf. Turning lanes into the main driveway would be constructed on Nelson Avenue. Proposed landscaping on the Project Site would serve to soften views of the building and buffer visibility of the building's parking lot and solid waste collection and loading areas. As illustrated in the rendering (**Figure 16-3**), a large portion of the Nelson Avenue Service Building would be visible from Vantage Point 1 as well as the proposed parking areas.

The design of the proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building would be compatible with the character of existing historic architecture within the Race Course and along Nelson Avenue and would be in keeping with the LOR to avoid adverse impacts to visual resources. Proposed building materials such as slate roofing and board-and-batten siding would also be compatible with the majority of contributing Race Course buildings on both the Frontside and Backstretch. The scale of the proposed building would be consistent with other buildings on the Frontside and it would not alter significant historic view corridors.

While visibility of this element of the Proposed Project would result in a visual change within the immediate vicinity of this vantage point, the proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building would be designed to fit in with the overall visual character of the site. Additionally, it would occupy a space that is currently underutilized and does not contribute to the historic character of the Race Course. Therefore, it is not expected to have an adverse visual effect on the Race Course or its contributing components.

Wright Street Gatehouse

The proposed Wright Street Gatehouse Modifications would revitalize the existing Wright Street Gate Entrance by creating a new pedestrian drop-off loop near the intersection of Wright Street and Frank Sullivan Place and would add more space between the gate and the horse path to improve the safety of the horses and pedestrians. In addition, the horse path leading from the Paddock area towards the Clubhouse would be slightly reshaped. The minor modifications



For Illustrative Purposes Only

Rendering of Nelson Avenue Service Building
from Nelson Avenue

Figure 16-3

proposed and the slight shift in the location of the gate would not significantly alter the visual character of the entrance and would be in keeping with the LOR to avoid adverse impacts to landscape features. Therefore, the Wright Street Gatehouse modifications would have no adverse visual impacts and would not change the overall visual character of the Project Site or Nelson Avenue in a manner that would visually detract from the historic setting.

At the Rail Building

The At the Rail Building is a proposed new building which would be located immediately south of the Wright Street Entrance Gate between the proposed new Nelson Avenue Service building (connected via a covered walkway) and the west side of the historic Clubhouse (see Figure 1-9). The proposed three-story building has been designed to be in keeping with the LOR to avoid adverse impacts to historic and visual resources. The new permanent building would replace the existing non-contributing temporary At-the-Rail Building and would introduce a larger new building into the Wright Street Entrance Area. Unlike the existing At the Rail Building, the proposed building would be within the Nelson Avenue viewshed year round. However, due to its location between the proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building and the Grandstand/Clubhouse Complex, the visibility of the proposed building from Nelson Avenue would be limited. Further, the proposed At-the-Rail Building has been designed to be visually consistent with existing contributing buildings in the immediate vicinity, particularly the adjoining Grandstand/Clubhouse Complex and would not directly affect any contributing buildings or historic landscape features in on the Project Site and no adverse visual impacts would result from the construction of this building.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse effects to the visual character of Vantage Point 1.

Vantage Point 2: View of the proposed Lincoln Avenue Gate from Lincoln Avenue

Figure 16-4 shows a rendering of the Project Site from Vantage Point 2. Existing views looking east from Lincoln Avenue toward the Proposed Lincoln Avenue Gate at Lincoln Avenue are of a gated chain-link fence with the lawn areas of the backyard and Autopark visible beyond the fence.

The proposed new Lincoln Avenue Entrance would create a major access point along Lincoln Avenue and its central location would make the entry an easy access point from all areas of the Frontside alleviating pedestrian and vehicular traffic coming from Union Avenue and creating a safer and more accessible entrance to the Race Course. The Lincoln Avenue Entrance design incorporates a new paved space or pedestrian plaza in front of the proposed new gatehouse building to allow guests to gather while waiting in line to buy tickets. A roundabout is proposed to slow traffic down and function as a guest drop-off area. The design of the proposed entrance and building would be sensitive to the historic setting of the Race Course and would be visually consistent with the other entrance gates.

The center of the proposed median would be landscaped creating an additional gateway for the Race Course. The proposed landscaping and streetscape improvements would enhance the overall appearance of the Backyard Area, which is currently visible beyond the chain link fence from Lincoln Avenue. The Lincoln Avenue Entrance would replace the existing Union Avenue Entrance, which would be converted to the Grandstand Garden. The proposed new entrance would change the visual character of Lincoln Avenue in the proximity of Vantage Point 2, by increasing the visibility of the Project Site from this location. Further, an increase in vehicular and pedestrian activity would also be visible and would also be expected to affect the overall



For Illustrative Purposes Only

Rendering of Lincoln Avenue Gate from
Lincoln Avenue
Figure 16-4

visual character of this Vantage Point. These modifications would physically alter the appearance of the Project Site in this location as well as introduce a change to the Project Site's pedestrian circulation. Although these changes would alter the appearance of the Project Site and increase activity levels in this area, these changes would be in keeping with the Draft LOR to avoid adverse impacts to visual resources and would not result in significant adverse impacts to the overall visual character of Vantage Point 2. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse effects to the visual character of Vantage Point 2.

Vantage Point 3: View down East Ave looking at the East Avenue entrance

Figure 16-5 shows the Proposed East Avenue Entrance from Vantage Point 3. Views into the Project Site from East Avenue at the intersection of East Avenue and Union Avenue (looking northeast) are of an existing Race Course entrance gate, the Autopark and portions of the Backyard including grass picnic areas, landscaping, and pedestrian pathways.

The Proposed Project would provide new landscaping, pedestrian pathways and a new semi-circular drive with brick pavers in front of the gate to create an easier and safer guest drop-off and pick-up area by providing a buffer between the existing gatehouse and Union Avenue (see Figure 1-38). New landscaped paths from the central location of the entrance along Union Avenue would create connections to other locations within the backyard and the Grandstand and Clubhouse. Modifications to the existing non-contributing gatehouse would be made to incorporate changes in technology and ticketing (see Figure 1-39). Since there are no contributing buildings in this area of the Race Course, the proposed changes from this Proposed Project element would not result in any impacts to visually sensitive resources. Overall, the proposed changes to the landscape design and the related East Avenue improvements including brick pavers are expected to support the historic character of the entry area by decreasing the amount of visible asphalt and creating a landscaped, treed setting more reminiscent of a park.

Under the Proposed Project, the existing East Entry Gate would be renovated to include a kitchen, concessions, mutuels, a bar. A seating area that would seat about 300 people would also be created (see Figures 1-40 to 1-41). While the function of the existing non-contributing Entry Gate would be changed, the location of the entry gate (which is considered a character-defining landscape feature) would not change. Although a new element would be introduced into the landscape it would be in keeping with the LOR to avoid adverse impacts to visual resources and would not affect contributing buildings or historic landscape features. Further, the proposed changes would result in the removal of non-contributing features (such as simulcast umbrellas and canopied walkways) that are visible within the landscape and would replace existing asphalt and parking areas with landscaped areas. This would result in a landscaped and more visually cohesive area consistent with the historic character of the Backyard. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse effects to the visual character of Vantage Point 3.

Vantage Point 4: View of Oklahoma Annex from Caroline Street looking east into the site

Figure 16-6 shows a rendering of the Oklahoma Annex from Vantage Point 4. The Oklahoma Annex is located across Fifth Avenue from the main Race Course area and occupies a parcel of land between Caroline and Fifth Avenues. A wire mesh fence and deciduous trees line portions of Caroline Street partially obscuring views of the Oklahoma Annex during leaf-on conditions. Existing views from this Vantage Point are of the Oklahoma Annex's barns and bunkhouses and portions of a paddock and dirt exercise ring surrounded by mature deciduous and evergreen trees.



Rendering of East Avenue looking
toward East Avenue Entrance

Figure 16-5



For Illustrative Purposes Only

As discussed in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources” there are seven existing buildings in the Oklahoma Annex, three of which are contributing. The buildings in the Oklahoma Annex include two barns (contributing), two bunkhouses (one contributing), and three other buildings (a pony barn, a restroom, and an office), all non-contributing. In addition, Oklahoma Annex contains character-defining landscape features including the two square paddocks along the northern edge of the area and the two dirt and turf exercise rings in the eastern portion of the area. The surviving early shade trees located along the east and west sides of the barns and the row between also help define the area’s historic character.

The Proposed Project would result in the demolition of a non-contributing bunkhouse and restroom building, and Pony Barn/walking shed to make room for the construction of three new barns and two new dormitories. Figures 1-47 and 1-48 provide renderings of what the 3 new barns and 2 new dormitories proposed on the Oklahoma Annex might look like. The construction of the three new barns and two new dormitories would fill in a large portion of the remaining two square paddocks along the northern edge of the area and the two exercise rings south of the paddocks. Both the paddocks and the exercise rings are character-defining landscape features and would be visually modified by the construction of the new barns and dormitories. The new dormitory would be two stories and would be closest to Caroline Street. The building would be parallel to the street, which, while larger in overall size, is in keeping with the orientation of houses along the street. The building would be set back about 30 feet from Caroline Street (beyond the existing fencing and tree line) and would limit views from the street into the interior of the Annex. The proposed new buildings would be similar in design and use to the buildings that currently occupy the site and the introduction of new horse and Race Course related features into a landscape already characterized by such structures, would not adversely affect the setting of the potential historic resource.

As described in Chapter 15, “Cultural Resources”, in keeping with the LOR, NYRA, OGS, and FOB would identify and implement measures to avoid potential adverse impacts to these landscape features. Therefore, although visual changes to the Oklahoma Annex would result from the Proposed Project, measures to avoid adverse impacts would be incorporated into the design of the Proposed Project such as the building materials as well as the height, massing, and architectural features of the buildings. As a result, any changes in the future to the proposed position, size, height, and location (i.e., moved closer to the street or adjacent properties) of the new buildings analyzed within the GEIS, could require an additional visual impact assessment.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACTS TO AESTHETIC OR VISUAL RESOURCES

There are seventeen (17) aesthetic or visual resources within the Study Area. The aesthetic or visual resources are the three (3) known and fourteen (14) potential S/NR eligible architectural resources that have been identified outside of the Project Site within the Study Area (see **Table 16-1**). This section assesses the potential visual impact of the Proposed Project on these resources and presents the Applicant’s evaluation of the character and significance of any visual impact.

STUDY AREA

Union Avenue Historic District (S/NR-listed)

Because the Race Course (Project Site) is located within the S/NR-listed Union Avenue Historic District, the Proposed Project would directly affect the visual character of the Historic District as a whole. However, these impacts would not be adverse because the larger new buildings that would be constructed at the Race Course, such as the Nelson Avenue Service Building, At-the-

Rail Building and New Jockey House, would be relatively far removed from contributing elements within the Union Avenue Historic District other than the Project Site itself. Landscape treatments that would be visible from other contributing resources along Union Avenue, such as the improvements to the Union Avenue entrances and the Backyard Expansion, would not substantially alter these adjacent resources. Yaddo, a contributing property within the Union Avenue Historic District, would experience no visual impacts as a result of the Proposed Project. Therefore, no adverse visual impacts to the Union Avenue Historic District would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

East Side Historic District (S/NR-listed)

No potential for adverse visual impacts on the East Side Historic District has been identified. The Historic District is relatively far removed from proposed project improvements and no substantial changes in the visual character or setting of contributing resources in the East Side Historic District are anticipated to result from the Proposed Project. Therefore, no adverse visual impacts to the East Side Historic District would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

Yaddo (NHL)

Yaddo is immediately adjacent to the Project Site to the east; however, it is relatively far removed from the majority of the proposed improvements at the Race Course. The Proposed Project new barns and bunkhouses at the eastern edges of the Dupont area and Madden Court near the Yaddo property. However, wooded buffers between the proposed new buildings and Yaddo would visually screen the proposed buildings from the view from actively used portions of the Yaddo property. Therefore, no adverse visual impacts to the Yaddo property would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

The majority of the potential architectural resources identified in the Study Area are far removed from proposed improvements in the Project Site and do not have the potential to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed improvements. The Saratoga Casino and Raceway and the Residence at 33 Nelson Avenue are located to the southeast of the Race Course and are not expected to experience views to or substantial changes in context or setting as a result of the proposed changes on the Project Site. Similarly, the Fasig-Tipton Barns, the Residence at 40 Schuyler Drive, and the Potential Historic District along Fifth Avenue, are located near the Race Course, but are far removed from portions of the site in which improvements are proposed.

The Residence at 122 White Street is also relatively far removed (approximately 1/3 mile) from proposed improvements on the Race Course and is expected to experience no substantial change in setting or other visual impacts as a result of the proposed project. Nearby, but further east, the Residences at 151 and 147 Nelson Avenue are located approximately 250 feet west of the Autopark Area, where the Backyard Expansion would occur and approximately 400 feet west of the proposed Lincoln Avenue Entrance. However, because a substantial buffer intervenes between these residences and proposed elements, no adverse visual impacts to these resources would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

Across Nelson Avenue to the east from the residences described above, the Residence at 152 Nelson Avenue is immediately adjacent to the Project Site, its rear yard abutting the Reading Room and Autopark areas. Although the Backyard Expansion would result in substantial changes to the visual character of the Autopark through the introduction of new landscaping and

other features, a buffer of trees would be left at the western end of the Autopark Area in which no improvements are proposed. Therefore, the residence at 152 Nelson Avenue would not be visually affected by the proposed Backyard improvements. The residence is also within 250 feet of the proposed Lincoln Avenue Entrance. However, the residence is oriented away from the proposed entrance and is not expected to experience views or substantial changes in context as a result of the proposed project element.

The former Jock Whitney Estate at 36 Nelson Avenue is immediately adjacent to the southern edge of the Project Site, but is far removed from portions of the site in which improvements are proposed. Therefore, no adverse visual impacts to the Former Jock Whitney Estate would occur.

The residence and horse barns at 360 Caroline Street are immediately adjacent to the Oklahoma Annex, where five new buildings are proposed. The proposed new buildings would be visible from the property but are similar in design and use to the buildings that currently occupy the site. Therefore, the introduction of new horse and Race Course related features into a landscape already characterized by such structures, would not adversely affect the setting or context of the potential historic resource and no adverse visual impacts to the Residence and Horse Barns at 360 Caroline would result from the Proposed Project.

The residences at 73 and 77 Wright Street are located approximately 200 feet west of the proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building. If constructed, the Service Building would introduce a prominent new feature into the potential resources' setting, but the residences on Wright Street are removed from Nelson Avenue and face southward, away from the proposed building. The Service Building would therefore not be visible from the residences. Further, the proposed building would be in keeping with the design and uses already characterizing the Race Course site and thus would not substantially change or adversely affect the setting or context of the residences. Similarly, the group of residences on Nelson Avenue at Webster Avenue are located in relatively close proximity to the proposed Nelson Avenue Service Building and to the Backyard Expansion improvements in the Autopark Area, but, due to the configuration of the streets in the immediate vicinity, these residences are not expected to have direct views of the proposed improvements. The changes that would result from the proposed project would be consistent and compatible with the visual character of the existing setting and context as well as the architectural characteristics, or uses that currently characterize the Race Course site. Therefore, no adverse visual impacts to the Yaddo property would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

Race View, at 75 Nelson Avenue, is a historic hotel and/or boarding house is located across Nelson Avenue from the Main Race Course. As this property's name implies, views from the boarding house to the Race Course are likely an important aspect of the 19th Century building's character. No views from Race View to the Race Course would be blocked or obscured by the Proposed Project. Both the Nelson Avenue Service Building and the proposed At-the-Rail Complex would be visible from Race View. However, because these buildings would be designed in a manner sensitive to their historic context, the overall character of the Race View's setting and relationship to the historic Race Course would not be adversely affected.

F. MITIGATION

The Proposed Project is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts to visual resources or visual character on the Project Site or within the Study Area. Measures to avoid adverse impacts to contributing architectural resources have been described in Chapter 15, Cultural Resources, and the associated Draft LOR. These avoidance measures would also ensure adverse impacts to visual resources are avoided. Thus, no additional mitigation is required. *