Chapter 5: Historic and Cultural Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential of the Proposed Project to affect historic and cultural resources, including architectural historic resources ("architectural resources") and buried archaeological resources. Construction of the Proposed Project would require a number of actions including adoption and authorization of a General Project Plan (GPP) in accordance with the New York State Urban Development Corporation Act by Empire State Development (ESD) and conveyance of the Project Sites to ESD from the Franchise Oversight Board (FOB). As such, the Proposed Project is subject to review pursuant to Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 (SHPA).

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

In a letter dated August 10, 2018, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) determined that the Proposed Project would not result in any adverse impacts to historic and archaeological resources (see **Appendix B**). There are no known or potential archaeological or architectural resources on the Project Sites or within the other directly affected areas, and thus the Proposed Project would not have any direct or indirect impacts to on-site archaeological or architectural resources. There is one known architectural resource in the study area—the Floral Park-Bellerose School—that is located approximately 400 feet from the North Lot, separated by a playing field, and thus has visibility to that portion of the directly affected area. No new structures would be constructed on the North Lot, with the exception of lighting poles and potential low scale ticket booths; however, the North Lot would be used more frequently for active parking during arena events as compared to its current use for the storage of vehicles and overflow parking for the annual Belmont Stakes. The Proposed Project would include a new replacement fence with privacy screening and a hedgerow with dense evergreen vegetation along the northeastern boundary of the North Lot to separate and screen the North Lot and the playing field in the rear of Floral Park-Bellerose School, and to reduce visibility. In addition, although Belmont Park is visible in the distance from the Floral Park-Bellerose School, the Proposed Project would be located far enough away from the school that visibility of its built structures would be insignificant (see photo-simulation provided in Chapter 6, "Visual Resources"). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have any direct (physical) or indirect (visual/contextual) impacts to architectural resources within the study area.

B. METHODOLOGY

Cultural resources can include archaeological remains from Native American people who may have used or occupied a site, including tools, refuse from tool-making activities, habitation sites, etc. These resources are also referred to as "precontact" since they were deposited before Native Americans' contact with European settlers. Archaeological resources also can include remains from activities that occurred during the historic period (beginning with European settlement of the area) that include European contact with Native Americans, as well as battle sites and foundations.

Cultural resources also include significant built resources, such as structures, buildings, and objects ("architectural resources").

In general, cultural resources consist of properties determined to be eligible for listing on, or have been listed on the State/National Register of Historic Places (S/NR). Criteria for inclusion on the NR are listed in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 63. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects are eligible for the NR if they have integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history;
B. Are associated with significant people;
C. Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic value; or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D. May yield [archaeological] information important in prehistory or history.

Properties less than 50 years old are ordinarily not eligible, unless they have achieved exceptional significance. Determinations of eligibility are made by OPRHP.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT—SECTION 14.09

The SHPA declares historic preservation to be the public policy and in the public interest of New York State. The act created the New York State Register of Historic Places, which is the official list of sites, buildings, structures, areas or objects significant in the history, architecture, archeology or culture of the state, its communities, or the nation. SHPA requires that state agencies consider the effect of their actions on properties listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places (SR). This includes consulting with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the OPRHP for actions that may cause any change—beneficial or adverse—in the character of a property that is listed on or determined eligible for listing on the SR. It also requires state agencies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such properties to the fullest extent practicable, and to fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives that would avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such properties.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROJECT IMPACT AREA

A required step in the Section 14.09 process is determining the Project Impact Area (the "Study Area")—the geographic area(s) within which potential project impacts may occur. In general, adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources can occur if a project may cause the destruction or alteration of all or part of the historic property; isolation or alteration of the historic property's environment; introduction of visual, audible or atmospheric elements which are out of character with the property or alter its setting; or neglect of the historic property resulting in its deterioration or destruction.

The study area for archaeological resources is defined as those areas that would be directly impacted by full development of the Proposed Project on the Project Sites or other directly affected areas. These other directly affected areas include: the North Lot, South and East Lots, which would be improved for additional parking as needed; the location of an electrical substation proposed immediately west of the North Lot; and the routes proposed for associated underground electricity distribution feeders and underground transmission lines.

For architectural resources, the study area was developed based on the Proposed Project limits and the potential of the Proposed Project components, including their anticipated visibility, to have direct or indirect impacts on architectural resources. For the purpose of this FEIS, the study area extends approximately ¼ mile from the project components (see **Figure 5-1**), which includes areas that would have the most proximate views to the Proposed Project. Beyond this ¼-mile study area the Proposed Project would be minimally visible from public vantage points, and as such would not have the potential to adversely impact the historic characteristics or setting of any architectural resources.

IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Information regarding the locations of proposed disturbance, including the Project Sites and other directly affected areas, was submitted to OPRHP on January 31, July 20, 2018, and October 8, 2018. In a letter dated August 10, 2018 and subsequent comments dated October 15, 2018, OPRHP indicated that they have no archaeological concerns for the Project. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have no adverse impacts on such resources and this analysis focuses on standing historic structures ("architectural resources").

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

A list was compiled identifying architectural resources officially recognized as S/NR-listed and S/NR-eligible in the study area through a review of OPRHP's Cultural Resource Inventory System (CRIS). In addition, National Historic Landmarks, New York City Landmarks as designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, and local landmarks designated by the Town of Hempstead Landmarks Preservation Commission also were considered.

In addition to identifying architectural resources officially recognized in the study area ("Known Architectural Resources"), an assessment was performed to determine if there were other properties that could warrant recognition as architectural resources (i.e., properties that could be eligible for S/NR listing) ("potential architectural resources"). Potential architectural resources are properties that appear to meet one or more of the NR criteria described above. Field surveys of the study area by an architectural historian, historical research, and review of lists of locally protected landmarks were undertaken March to July 2018 to determine if there were any potential architectural resources in the study area.[1]

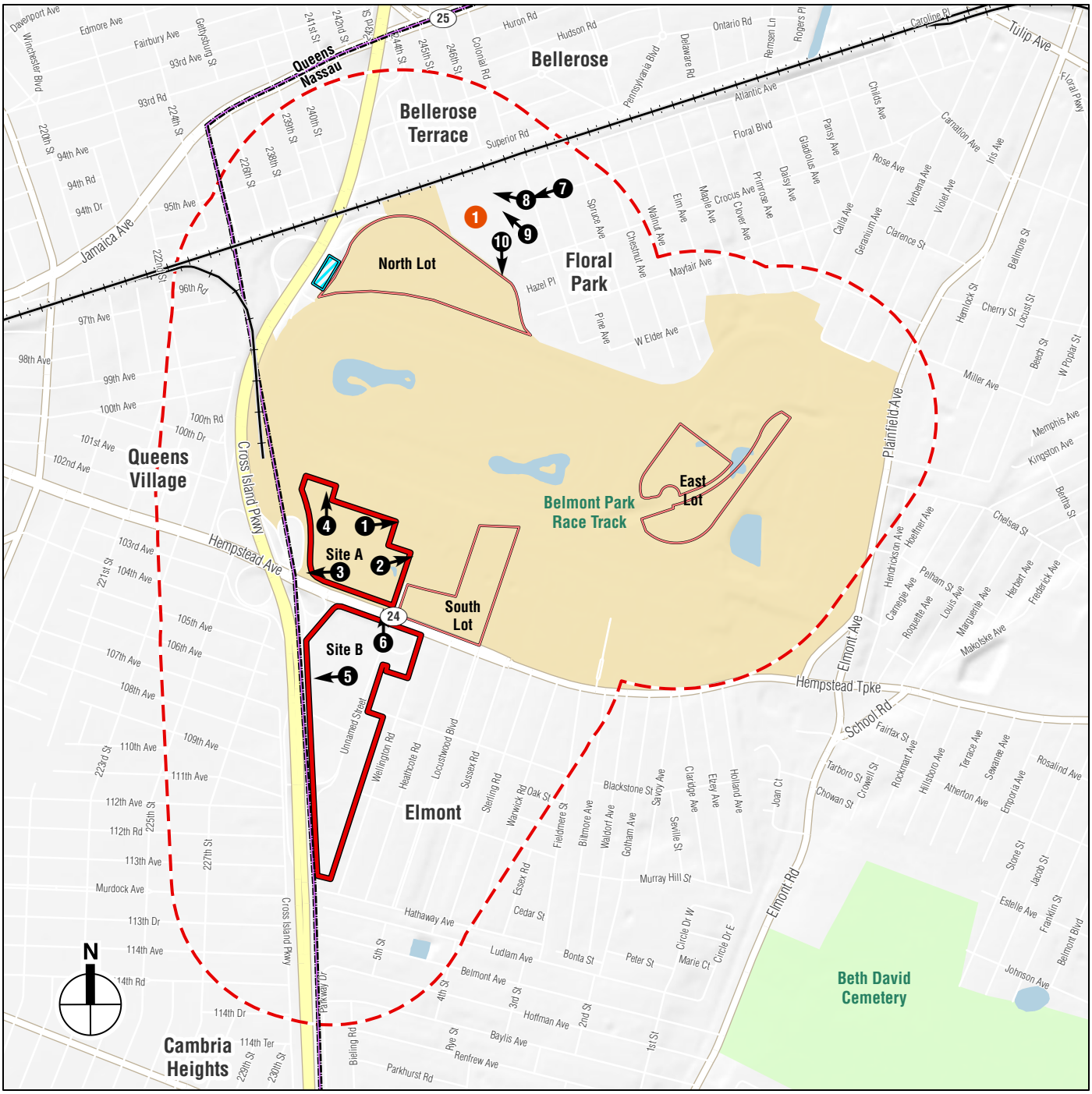
C. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The area that Belmont Park occupies was settled in the mid-1600s by farmers and originally called "Foster's Meadow." In the 1880s, Foster's Meadow became the hamlet of Elmont, and by the turn of the 20th century, Elmont fell within the boundaries of newly created Nassau County. Elmont remained rural through the end of the 19th century until plans were made by the Westchester Racing Association (WRA) to move its races from Morris Park in what is now the Bronx and open Belmont Park as a horse-racing track in Elmont. The opening of Belmont Park provided an impetus for eastward metropolitan New York City suburban expansion, with many new jobs located at the Racetrack.

Belmont Park currently comprises approximately 430 acres in the hamlet of Elmont in the Town of Hempstead, Nassau County. Belmont Park opened on May 4, 1905. The complex was named

[1] Survey and report by Historical Perspectives, Inc. July 3, 2018.

6.5.19



Project Sites

North, South, and East Parking Lots

Proposed Belmont Electrical Substation

Study Area (1/4-mile radius)

Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)

1 Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

Known Architectural Resource

1 Floral Park Bellerose School (S/NR-eligible)

0 2,000 FEET

Architectural Resources

BELMONT PARK REDEVELOPMENT CIVIC AND LAND USE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Figure 5-1

for August Belmont I, who helped establish a horse racetrack at Jerome Park in the Bronx, where the Belmont Stakes—the oldest of the Triple Crown races—was originally run in 1867. Morris Park was the site of the Belmont Stakes from 1890 to 1904, before the race relocated to Belmont Park.

In 1917, the original grandstand caught fire as a result of arson. It was repaired and completely renovated in 1920. These 1920 renovations included increasing the length of the grandstand to 950 feet in order to provide seating for 17,500 spectators. A Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) spur and station south of Hempstead Turnpike provided service to Belmont Park from 1920. Additional stables, barns, a public kitchen, a washhouse, and cottages and other dwellings were erected in the stables area by 1939.

In the mid-20th century, The New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA) formed and consolidated three existing racetracks—Aqueduct, Belmont Park, and Saratoga—into single ownership. Plans were made to renovate each track, beginning with Aqueduct, which reopened in 1959. Redevelopment at Belmont Park began in 1962 based on the designs of architect Arthur Froehlich, and the entire grounds reopened to the public in 1968. The 1960s redevelopment included a new building to replace the former grandstand (the former grandstand was demolished for structural issues), a new entrance at Plainfield Avenue, reconstruction of a stable barn, a new saddling paddock, new concession stands, the addition of bleachers in the Backyard, new parking lots, and the creation of two new concrete tunnels to provide access under the Racetrack to the parking lots. The LIRR Belmont Park station also relocated to an area directly west of the Grandstand.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

PROJECT SITES

As detailed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the two Project Sites are located within the boundaries of Belmont Park. Both Project Sites are located south of the existing Grandstand, and include approximately 15 acres on "Site A" north of Hempstead Turnpike, and approximately 28 acres on "Site B" south of Hempstead Turnpike (see **Figure 5-1**). Site A comprises the western portion of the "Backyard" area south of the Grandstand, and an adjacent surface parking lot. Immediately west of Site A is the LIRR Belmont Park Station, located on a spur of the Main Line (see **Figures 5-2 and 5-3**). Currently, the western portion of the Backyard contains several concession stands (two built between 1966 and 1980, one built between 1980 and 2000), a pari-mutuel booth (built between 1966 and 1980), paved walkways, metal benches with concrete footings, landscaping, and fences.

Site B is currently used for vehicle storage, and as surface parking for Belmont Park visitors on large-volume event days (e.g., the Belmont Stakes). There are no structures on Site B (see **Figure 5-4**).

As required by the State Historic Preservation Act, ESD submitted information regarding Belmont Park and its structures to OPRHP and its SHPO for their review. In a letter dated May 25, 2018, OPRHP determined that Belmont Park does not meet the criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (see **Appendix B**). Therefore, the Project Sites do not include any architectural resources.

View northeast in Site A **1**

View east in Site A **2**

Project Site A

View west in Site A **3**

View north in Site A **4**

Project Site A

BELMONT PARK REDEVELOPMENT CIVIC AND LAND USE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Figure 5-3

View west in Site B **5**

View north in Site B **6**

Project Site B

OTHER DIRECTLY AFFECTED AREAS

In addition to the two Project Sites, with the Proposed Project NYAP would utilize Belmont Park's North, South, and East Lots for parking (in addition to parking proposed on Sites A and B). The North Lot is an approximately 39-acre unpaved parcel, bounded by the Cross Island Parkway to the west, a service road to the north and east, and the Racetrack to the south. The North Lot is currently used as a vehicle storage lot for car dealerships and for the storage of NYRA equipment and vehicles. It is also used for overflow parking once a year for the Belmont Stakes. The South Lot is an approximately 17-acre paved parcel used for surface parking; it is located east of Site A and the Backyard, south of the Grandstand and Racetrack, west of the Paddocks and north of Hempstead Turnpike. The East Lot is located east of the Racetrack within the interior oval of the Belmont Park Training Track. The East lot is currently used for vehicle storage, Belmont Park employee parking and large-volume event parking. There are no structures on the North Lot, South Lot, or the portion of the interior of the Training Track that would function as the East Lot; therefore, these lots do not include any architectural resources.

Immediately west of the North Lot is the location of a proposed electrical substation. This substation would be required to service the Proposed Project because Belmont Park currently does not have the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the Proposed Project's energy demand. The location of the electrical substation would be in the vicinity of the Cross Island Parkway ramps, just north of the Racetrack, on a parcel that does not contain any structures.

In addition to the electrical substation, the Proposed Project would include the construction of associated underground distribution feeders and underground transmission lines. The underground distribution feeder cables would extend south, around the Belmont Park Racetrack, and to the proposed uses on Site A. Underground transmission lines would extend east approximately 1.5 miles from the proposed substation, along Belmont Park Road at the boundary of the Belmont Park site, and tie into existing overhead power lines on Plainfield Avenue. A transmission overpass would be installed to connect to the existing overhead circuit on Plainfield Avenue. As described above, OPRHP has determined that Belmont Park does not meet the criteria for inclusion on the Registers. Therefore, the location of the underground distribution feeder/transmission lines and transmission overpass does not include any known or potential architectural resources.

STUDY AREA

Known Architectural Resources

There is one known architectural resource located in the ¼-mile study area. This resource is described below and mapped on **Figure 5-1**.

Floral Park-Bellerose School (S/NR-eligible) is a Colonial Revival-style brick school building. Constructed in 1929, the building is located on the west side of Larch Avenue within the Floral Park neighborhood of the Town of Hempstead. The property is located approximately a ¼ mile from Site A, approximately 1,000 feet from the proposed electrical substation, and approximately 400 feet from the northern boundary of the North Lot. The two-story building features a long façade on Larch Avenue with a central portico built in stone and projecting end bays (see **Figures 5-5 and 5-6**). A clocktower is located over the portico. The building's fenestration consists of six-over-six sash windows in clusters of three. The end bays have stone quoins, and round-headed windows.

No locally designated landmarks in the City of New York or Town of Hempstead are located in the study area.

View west on Floral Boulevard, showing Floral Park Bellerose School **7**

View northwest on Larch Avenue, showing Floral Park Bellerose School **8**

Known Architectural Resource in the Study Area
Floral Park Bellerose School

View northwest at Larch Avenue and Poppy Place, showing Floral Park Bellerose School **9**

View south from Floral Park Bellerose School, showing Belmont Park in the distance **10**

Known Architectural Resource in the Study Area
Floral Park Bellerose School

Potential Architectural Resources

The study area encompasses neighborhoods within Queens in the City of New York and the Town of Hempstead in Nassau County. The study area consists of residential neighborhoods bisected by major thoroughfares. The Cross Island Parkway, a six-lane limited access highway, runs north-south to the west of Belmont Park. LIRR tracks pass east-west through the study area to the north of Belmont Park. Hempstead Turnpike is a four- to six-lane road passing east-west to the south of Belmont Park that includes commercial properties. Within the study area in Elmont, the commercial buildings lining Hempstead Turnpike are primarily gas stations and one-story buildings containing fast food restaurants and retail (see Chapter 6, "Visual Resources"). Within the study area, these transportation corridors do not contain historic or architectural resources. Within the study area in Queens, Hempstead Avenue does contain mid-twentieth century commercial buildings, though the properties have undergone significant alterations such as window replacements and modernized storefronts on the ground floor. To the west and south of Belmont Park, the residential neighborhoods within the study area are dominated by mid- to late-twentieth century detached single-family houses. To the north of Belmont Park, the Floral Park and Bellerose neighborhoods were developed in the early 20th century. These neighborhoods contain single-family houses that do not exhibit distinctive designs for the region, and/or have been altered over time such that original design features and materials have been removed, resulting in a loss of architectural integrity. Therefore, no potential architectural resources were identified in the study area.

E. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

PROJECT SITES

No changes in use are anticipated for the Project Sites in the future without the Proposed Actions. Sites A and B will continue to be used for occasional parking related to Belmont Park and its associated activities and events. NYRA's future renovations at Belmont Park fall outside of the Project Sites, are separate from the Proposed Actions and will occur in the future with or without the Proposed Project. As described above, there are no architectural resources on the Project Sites.

OTHER DIRECTLY AFFECTED AREAS

In the future without the Proposed Actions, the North, South, and East Lots and the area of the proposed electrical substation will continue in their current use. As described above, these areas do not include architectural resources.

STUDY AREA

As described in detail in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Community Character," there are no developments within the study area that are anticipated to be completed by the 2021 analysis year.

In the future without the Proposed Actions, the condition of architectural resources within the study area could change. Architectural resources that are listed on the S/NR or that have been found eligible for listing are given a measure of protection under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act from the effects of projects sponsored, assisted, or approved by federal agencies. Although preservation is not mandated, federal agencies must attempt to avoid adverse effects on such resources through a notice, review, and consultation process. Properties listed on the S/NR are similarly protected against effects resulting from projects sponsored, assisted, or approved by state agencies under the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980. However,

private owners of properties eligible for, or even listed on, the Registers using private funds can alter or demolish their properties without such a review process.

F. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

PROJECT SITES

The Proposed Project would redevelop Site A with: an approximately 125-foot-tall, 745,000-gross-square-foot (gsf) arena; an up to 150-foot-tall, 210,000-gsf hotel with structured parking within and below the podium level; up to approximately 35,000 gsf of dining and entertainment-oriented retail; 30,000 gsf of office space; 10,000 gsf of community space; hard- and soft-scape open spaces; and approximately 440 parking spaces. The Proposed Project on Site B would include up to 315,000 gsf of commercial retail space in one- and two- story buildings, landscaped open spaces, and approximately 1,500 parking spaces, most of which would be located below grade. One or more pedestrian connections would provide access between Sites A and B.

As there are no architectural resources on the Project Sites, the Proposed Project would not have any impacts on such resources.

OTHER DIRECTLY AFFECTED AREAS

In the future with the Proposed Actions, the North Lot, currently consisting of mostly gravel parking areas, would be resurfaced and restriped. The South Lot and East Lots would remain in their existing paved condition. New lighting would be provided in all three lots. The lots would be used more frequently for active parking during arena events as compared with their current use. Small-scale ticketing booths may be built at the entrances to the North and South Lots, and the East Lot would contain a bus parking area. A buffer composed of a hedgerow with dense evergreen vegetation along a new replacement fence with privacy screening would be provided along the northeastern boundary of the North Lot. Additional fencing with privacy screening would be provided along Belmont Park Road from approximately Crocus Avenue to Mayfair Avenue to shield the adjacent Floral Park neighborhood from parking activities in the North Lot.

The Proposed Project would include the construction of an electrical substation adjacent to the North Lot to the west, and associated underground distribution feeders and underground transmission lines to serve the Proposed Project. The new electrical substation would include a 20- to 24-foot-tall bus and converter tank, and four approximately 50-foot-tall lightning rods. The perimeter of the substation would be planted with evergreen trees. The distribution feeders and transmission lines would be underground and would not be visible upon completion of the Proposed Project.

As there are no architectural resources within the other directly affected areas, the Proposed Project would not have any impacts on such resources.

STUDY AREA

With the Proposed Actions, no architectural resources in the study area would be demolished, damaged, altered, or neglected, as part of the Proposed Project. The known architectural resource in the study area, the Floral Park-Bellerose School, is located approximately a ¼ mile from Site A, and approximately 400 feet from the northern boundary of the North Lot. As such it is located far enough away from the Project Sites and other directly affected areas such that it would not be

adversely affected through project construction activities, including falling debris and ground-borne construction vibration.

Given the presence of residential and commercial buildings within the area surrounding the Project Sites, raised highway infrastructure adjacent to the Project Sites, the generally flat topography, and the presence of mature trees lining many residential streets and within private property lot lines, views of the Project Sites and the other directly affected areas are generally limited to locations within or immediately adjacent to Belmont Park.

Floral Park-Bellerose School is located immediately north of Belmont Park. The school has a southern view of Site A from the rear playground and playing field on the west side of the building. As illustrated in Figure 6-69 of Chapter 6, "Visual Resources," views of the Proposed Project on Site A would be largely obscured by the Grandstand/Clubhouse; only the top of the proposed hotel would rise slightly above the roof of the Grandstand/Clubhouse. Located approximately ¼ mile from Site A, the visibility of the Proposed Project on Site A would be insignificant.

Increased activity at the North Lot would not have the potential to alter the historic setting of the Floral Park-Bellerose School. As described above, the school is separated from the North Lot by a playing field and is approximately 400 feet away. In addition, no new structures, with the exception of potential low scale ticket booths, would be constructed on the North Lot. The Proposed Project would include a buffer composed of a hedgerow with dense evergreen vegetation along a new replacement fence with privacy screening along the northeastern boundary of the North Lot to separate and screen the North Lot and the playing field in the rear of Floral Park-Bellerose School and to reduce visibility. The Proposed Project would also include evergreen tree plantings around the substation, which would shield views of the structure from the Floral Park-Bellerose School. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have any direct (physical) or indirect (visual/contextual) impacts to architectural resources within the study area. In a letter dated August 10, 2018, OPRHP determined that the Proposed Project would not result in any adverse impacts to architectural resources. ✷