

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION  
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 160326 ZMX  
Westchester Mews**

**DOCKET DESCRIPTION**

**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by Westchester Mews LLC pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 4b:

1. Changing from an R5 District to an R6 District property bounded by Westchester Avenue, Olmstead Avenue, new bold Avenue, Pugsley Avenue, a line midway between Westchester Avenue and Newbold Avenue, a line perpendicular to the southerly street line of Westchester Avenue originating at a point 450 feet easterly of Pugsley Avenue; and
2. Changing from an C2-2 District within an R5 District to a C2-4 District within an R6 District on property bounded by Westchester Avenue, Olmstead Avenue, a line midway between Westchester Avenue and Newbold Avenue and a line perpendicular to the southerly street line of Westchester Avenue originating at a point 450 feet easterly of Pugsley Avenue.

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated December 12, 2016.

**BACKGROUND**

**The Project Area**

Approval of this application will amend the Zoning Map by changing an existing R5 District located on Block 3805, to R6. Also proposed is to change an existing R5/C2-2 to R6/C2-4. The specific Block and Lots known as the Proposed Project Area include:

Block 3805, Lots: 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, and 76, from R5 to R6

Block 3805, Lots: 30, 34, and 41, from R5/C2-2, to R6/C2-4

Block 3805, Lots: 11, 43, 55, 56, 78, 123, and 124, portions of these lots would be rezoned from R5/C2-2 to R6/C2-4.

This project is subject to Mandatory Inclusionary Housing mandates (MIH).

## The Development Site

Adoption of the proposed zoning changes will facilitate construction of two residential buildings, Building A and Building B. Together, this development will be known as Westchester Mews. These proposed buildings will be constructed on Block 3805, Lot 123 and Lot 124, “the development site.” It consists of 47,060 square feet, approximately 1.08 acres. The site is currently vacant. The two proposed buildings will be constructed under the Quality Housing Program. This project will meet Enterprise Green requirements.

### Building A:

2044 Westchester Avenue (Block 3805, Lot 124)

This site is located on the east side of Westchester Avenue, midblock, between Pugsley Avenue on the south and Olmstead Avenue on the north. The site is composed of 17,158 square feet, offering 134.08 feet of frontage on Westchester Avenue. The proposed mixed residential/commercial building will rise 11-stories and offer 82 residential units. Specific measurements and unit counts include:

- 87,000 gross square feet-residential floor area
  - 8,000 gross square feet-commercial floor area
- 95,000 gross square feet-TOTAL

Residential units include:

Studios:	13	Measuring approximately 350 square feet
1 Bedroom:	32	Measuring approximately 500 square feet
2 Bedrooms:	22	Measuring approximately 650 square feet
<u>3 Bedrooms:</u>	<u>15</u>	Measuring approximately 850 square feet
Total:	82	

No on-site vehicular parking will be provided. Interior parking for 51 bicycles will be provided.

Given Building A’s proximity to the elevated subway that is in place on Westchester Avenue, the required sound mitigation measures to reduce the noise associated with passing trains are being installed.

**Building B**

2044 Newbold Avenue (Block 3805, Lot 123)

This site is located on the west side of Newbold Avenue, midblock between Pugsley Avenue on the south and Olmstead Avenue on the north. The site is composed of 29,911 square feet, with 200 feet of frontage on Newbold Avenue. The proposed building will rise 10-stories and will include 124 residential units. Specific measurements include:

- 114,132 gross square feet of residential floor area
  - 1,319 gross square feet of community use facility floor area
- 115,451 gross square feet-TOTAL

Residential units include:

Studios:	35	Measuring approximately 350 square feet
1 Bedroom:	33	Measuring approximately 500 square feet
2 Bedrooms:	36	Measuring approximately 650 square feet
<u>3 Bedrooms:</u>	<u>20</u>	Measuring approximately 850 square feet
Total:	124	

No on site vehicular parking will be provided. Interior parking for approximately 63 bicycles will be provided.

The total number of residential units making up the Westchester Mews development is 206 units. A percentage breakdown of this total include:

- 23.41% studio units
- 31.71% 1-bedroom units
- 27.80 % 2-bedroom units
- 17.07 % 3-bedroom units

Unit affordability (Area Median Income-AMI) for Westchester Mews includes

- 16% Our Space
- 35% at 60% of AMI
- 49% at 80% of AMI

The two residential buildings will share a common exterior courtyard designed for passive recreation. This space will be composed of 1,500 square feet. A community room in each building will also be provided.

Development of the surrounding community includes low rise commercial buildings on Westchester Avenue. Residential development includes two-family homes and mid-rise residential buildings. Retail activity, access to the #6-Train and various bus routes are in place on Westchester Avenue. Vehicular access to the Cross Bronx Expressway is also available within a one mile radius of the Westchester Mews site.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION**

This application has been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration, meaning the proposed development will have no impact on the surrounding environment. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on December 12, 2016.

## **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD HEARING**

A meeting was called by Bronx Community District #9 on January 19, 2017. A vote recommending approval of this application was 19 in favor, five opposed, and three abstaining.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING**

A public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on February 1, 2017. Speakers representing the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. A representative of Local 32BJ was also present and submitted written testimony, which is attached to this recommendation.

## **BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

The approval of this application will achieve two very important objectives:

- 1) Development of a vacant lot which will yield over 200 affordable residential units
- 2) The rezoning of property that will facilitate higher density residential development in an area well served by mass transit.

I acknowledge that building affordable housing as represented here by the Westchester Mews proposal is critical for our city. As I have also noted, making certain that what is constructed will be able to accommodate growing families; this too must never be compromised. As such, I must vigorously object to the very modest size of what will be provided to such families at Westchester Mews. Indeed, a three-bedroom unit measuring approximately 850 square feet is simply too small. I would recommend that the Department of Housing Preservation and

Development (HPD) revise its standards and by so doing, establish increased minimum unit measurements that will prevent overcrowding and thereby allow for what must be the inclusion of a person's "private space" within a multi-bedroom unit. To ignore the essentiality of such space is to create housing which, over time will be considered sub-standard. I will continue to speak out about this matter, as for the sake of economics and demand we are now, in my judgement, compromising on the living standards of what is being built.

I recommend approval of this application, noting that for this project, my observations cannot be imposed upon the applicant.



**Testimony of Bryant Brown, SEIU 32BJ  
Testifying in Opposition Westchester Mews,  
Borough President Hearing  
February 1, 2017**

Good morning, my name is Bryant Brown, and I am here today testifying on behalf of my union. 32BJ is the largest property service workers union in the country. 32BJ represents 70,000 building service workers in New York City. Over 4,000 of us live in Community District 9 and over 33,000 of us work in residential buildings like the one Procida is proposing to develop. I am here to tell you just how important it is that Procida commit to creating high quality jobs at Westchester Mews.

Westchester Mews is going to create badly needed affordable housing in the Bronx. My union and I understand how important this is. Many of us have struggled to stay in New York City as rents have risen. But we also know we need good jobs just as much as we need housing. We cannot build our way out of the affordable housing crisis. As long as there are working people earning too little to afford the rising housing costs, families are going to continue to get priced out of their homes.

Building service jobs can be jobs that pay \$10 an hour with no benefits, or they can be good quality jobs that pay wages that allow people to afford to put a roof over their head, save for retirement and access health benefits. My union brothers and sisters and I have been able to stay in the city and support our families because we are lucky to have these kinds of jobs. We need to make sure that Westchester Mews is creating good jobs, not poverty jobs, for Bronx residents.

This is why I am calling on the borough president and councilmember Anabelle Palma to ensure that Procida commits to creating high quality, family sustaining jobs at Westchester Mews and in all of its upcoming developments across the City.

Thank you.