

LIVING IN

Bronxville, N.Y.: An Affluent Village 15 Miles From Manhattan

With good schools, an easy commute and a lively downtown, this walkable community in Westchester County is wealthy without being “flashy or fancy.”

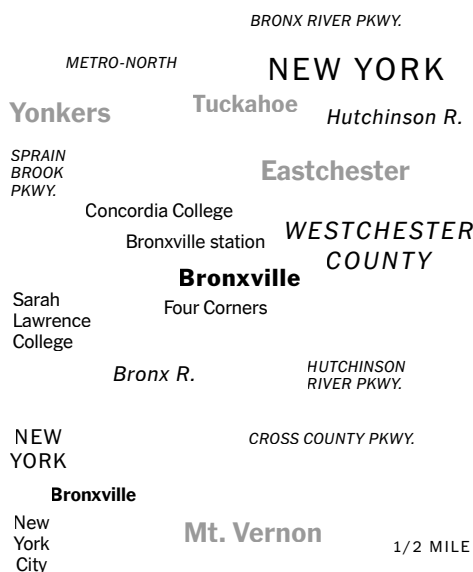
By Susan Hodara

July 31, 2019

Strong schools, an easy commute, a vibrant downtown — those are the qualities that brought Charlotte and Ryan Sullivan to Bronxville, N.Y., a pretty, one-square-mile village in the Westchester County town of Eastchester, only 15 miles northeast of Midtown Manhattan.

The Sullivans and their daughters, who are 7 and 5, moved from the Scottsdale, Ariz., area after Mr. Sullivan, 43, accepted a position as general counsel for a biotech company in Manhattan. He and Ms. Sullivan, 41, started house-hunting

within a wide radius — New Jersey, Connecticut, Westchester — but quickly zeroed in on Bronxville. There, in July 2018, they paid \$2.4 million for a 3,306-square-foot, four-bedroom Tudor, built in 1923 on 0.26 acres.



By The New York Times

Young families like the Sullivans make up one segment of Bronxville’s population of roughly 6,400. Guy A. Longobardo represents another: longtime residents who move within the village as their lives unfold.

Mr. Longobardo, 58, is a lawyer and a partner at Bettergy, a clean-energy company in Peekskill, N.Y. He arrived in Bronxville as a fourth-grader and — apart from college, law

school and a few years working in Atlanta — has never left. (Nor did his parents, who still live in the house they built in 1969.)

Mr. Longobardo's residential history reflects the village's array of housing alternatives. In 1985, newly married, he bought a one-bedroom co-op. Three years later, he and his wife moved into a three-bedroom townhome. In 1996, with two toddlers, they bought a four-bedroom, 2,750-square-foot colonial, where Mr. Longobardo raised his daughters, now 29 and 27 years old, after he and his wife divorced. In April 2018, he sold the house, designed by Penrose Stout in 1928, for \$1.938 million, and paid \$1.199 million for a two-bedroom, 1,747-square-foot condominium in VillaBXV, a 53-unit complex that opened in 2017.

“I have lived in every type of housing in the village,” he said.



The Bronx River Pathway is a cycling and walking trail that runs along Bronx River, at the village's western border. Brad Dickson for The New York Times

Wherever one chooses to live in Bronxville, the village exudes a well-manicured charm coupled with a lively ambience. Both Mr. Longobardo, a former village trustee, and Ms. Sullivan, a stay-at-home mother, praised the sense of community, citing shared school spirit, lots of volunteer opportunities and overall friendliness.

“It’s truly a walkable town,” Ms. Sullivan said, “so people interact more. And because it’s so small, you really do get to know one another.”

As Mr. Longobardo put it, “It’s a welcoming place.”

That wasn't always so. Mary C. Marvin, the mayor of Bronxville for the last 14 years, acknowledged its onetime reputation as restricted, unofficially discouraging Jewish home buyers, but said that changed decades ago. One indicator: Along with seven churches, there is now a synagogue, Chabad of Bronxville, which opened in 2011. Last year, the village displayed a menorah for the first time.

Today, Ms. Marvin said, "People embrace you — they couldn't give a darn about your church, your color, your income."



6 NORTHERN AVENUE | A six-bedroom house with four full and two half-baths, built in 1907 on 0.36 acres, listed for \$4.65 million. 914-310-6220 Brad Dickson for The New York Times

What You'll Find

Bronxville's busy downtown covers several blocks around the Metro-North Railroad station. Steps southeast is an intersection called Four Corners, where the Village Hall, Bronxville Public Library, Reformed Church of Bronxville and Bronxville school have each occupied a corner since the first half of the 20th century.

“Village planners believed a community needed a seat of government, a library, a church and a school,” Ms. Marvin said.

The rest of Bronxville is residential: a mix of apartments, attached townhomes and houses, many of them Tudors and colonials built in the 1920s and 1930s on small lots lining leafy streets. Gerry Iagallo, the village's assessor, said there are 1,149 single-family homes and 25 multifamily homes, as well as approximately 800 cooperative apartments in 26 complexes and 216 condominiums in five complexes. There are also 12 rental complexes with roughly 271 apartments. Ms. Marvin noted that 40 percent of residents live in co-ops, condos or apartments.



16 COURSEVIEW ROAD | A four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath house, built in 1925 on 0.41 acres, listed for \$2.495 million. 914-715-6052 Brad Dickson for The New York Times

What You'll Pay

Sheila Morrissey Stoltz, an associate broker at Houlihan Lawrence, said that while options extend from co-ops in the \$100,000s to houses close to \$10 million, half of the inventory trades between \$2 million and \$3 million; “that’s the sweet spot.”

Although market activity has improved since last year, selling price points are lower, said Kathleen Collins, an associate broker with Julia B. Fee Sotheby’s International Realty: “So far this year, unit sales are up about 40 percent, but the cost per square foot is down 10 percent.”

Because of a village-wide no-signs-on-personal-property agreement, visitors won't see any for-sale notices in front of Bronxville homes. Nevertheless, data from the Hudson Gateway Multiple Listing Service indicated that as of July 18, there were 41 single-family houses on the market. They ranged from a three-bedroom, 1,500-square-foot attached townhouse, built in 1956 on 0.07 acres and listed at \$969,999, to a seven-bedroom, 10,000-square-foot estate, built in 1927 on 1.01 acres, for \$8.8 million.

There were 18 co-ops on the market, from a 450-square-foot studio for \$215,000 to a 2,684-square-foot four-bedroom for \$1.8 million. There were also four condos for sale, from a 1,000-square-foot two-bedroom for \$695,000 to a 2,030-square-foot two-bedroom penthouse for \$3.495 million.

As for rentals, there were 22 apartments and homes available. The least expensive was a 700-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment for \$1,850 a month; the most expensive was a 4,347-square-foot, six-bedroom house for \$17,000.

During the 12-month period ending July 18, the median sale price for a single-family home was \$1.82 million, down from \$2.2 million the previous 12 months. The median sale price for a co-op was \$600,000, compared to \$598,750 the previous 12

months; the median sale price for a condo was \$695,000, compared to \$1.4 million. The median monthly rental was \$3,613, down from \$4,200 the previous year.



Parkway Road has a range of dining and shopping options. Brad Dickson for The New York Times

The Vibe

Bronxville is an affluent community. In a 2018 Bloomberg analysis, it was rated eighth on a list of “America’s 100 Richest Places.”

Even so, “it is not flashy or fancy,” said Ms. Stoltz, an 18-year resident. “It’s bustling all day.”

There are commuters walking to and from the train station and students walking to and from school. Downtown, shoppers and diners patronize more than 150 stores, restaurants and businesses, including clothing boutiques, an artisanal cheese shop, the 81-year-old Womrath Bookshop and a triplex cinema. Nearby, a seasonal farmers' market is held on Saturdays.

The culturally inclined can attend lectures, concerts and exhibitions at Concordia College, in the village, and Sarah Lawrence College, minutes across the western border, in Yonkers. Or they can explore the public library's impressive collection of paintings and prints, many by artists who lived in Bronxville.

In addition to two private clubs, residents can join the Eastchester-owned Lake Isle Country Club for golfing, indoor and outdoor tennis and swimming in five pools. They can play on the village's tennis and paddle-tennis courts or stroll along the Bronx River in the Bronx River Parkway Reservation, a county-owned linear park that runs through Bronxville.

“We're a throwback community, in the best sense of the word,” Ms. Marvin said. “Everybody walks, even children, yet we are half an hour from Grand Central.”



Families enjoy the lawn at the Georgian-style Bronxville Public Library, which offers programs for all ages. Brad Dickson for The New York Times

The Schools

Bronxville is served by the Bronxville Union Free School District. All students share a building that houses Bronxville Elementary School for kindergarten through fifth grade; Bronxville Middle School for grades six through eight; and Bronxville High School. During the 2018-2019 school year, total enrollment was 1,679.

On the 2017-2018 state assessments, 88 percent of the district's fourth-graders tested as proficient in math and 91 percent as proficient in English language arts; statewide equivalents were

48 percent and 47 percent. Mean SAT scores for the 2018 graduating class were 654 in evidence-based reading and writing and 655 in math; statewide means were 534 and 534.

In U.S. News and World Report's 2019 high school rankings, Bronxville was 99th nationally, 11th in New York and No. 1 in Westchester.

The Commute

Commuters to Manhattan can catch the Metro-North Harlem Line at the Bronxville station. Peak trains to and from Grand Central Terminal take 28 to 40 minutes; round-trip fares are \$17.50 off-peak, \$23 peak and \$248 monthly. Driving takes about half an hour, depending on traffic.



Lawrence Park, a hilltop neighborhood with winding roads, was developed by William Van Duzer Lawrence as an artists' colony in the late 19th century. Brad Dickson for The New York Times

The History

William Van Duzer Lawrence had a vision: a residential artists' colony near New York City. And he had the means to realize that vision. In the late 19th century, Mr. Lawrence, a pharmaceutical mogul in Manhattan, bought an 86-acre farm in what would soon become the incorporated village of Bronxville and began building houses.

But not just any houses. Working with architects like William A. Bates, Mr. Lawrence developed an enticing blend of Tudors, Victorians and colonial and Romanesque revival homes along narrow streets that meandered through wooded hills and rocky ledges. "He laid out the roads quixotically, so they follow the landscape," said Raymond Geselbracht, Bronxville's historian.

The enclave, called Lawrence Park (and also the Hilltop), drew numerous artists and writers. Encompassing approximately 90 homes, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. "The care Lawrence took building these houses set the architectural tone for village's future," Mr. Geselbracht said.

Mr. Lawrence's legacy includes Bronxville's New York-Presbyterian Lawrence Hospital; Sarah Lawrence College; the Lawrence Park West neighborhood, in Yonkers; and the real estate agency Houlihan Lawrence.

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