

Beach Area to Get Big Mental Hospital

**State
To Act
Within
Month**

Advance, July 14, 1956

A 3,000-bed mental hospital will be built in the South Beach-Ocean Breeze area by the State Department of Mental Hygiene, according to a statement today by state officials at the second in a series of meetings with city and borough officials in Manhattan, who made it clear that only approval by the governor is needed to make the project official. Governor Harriman is expected to announce his decision to point to this effect within a month.

According to Borough President Mansueto, the state officials have tentatively selected a 200-acre site for the hospital, which would be made up of marshy wastes which would be reclaimed by hydraulic fill—sand pumped from the Lower Bay.

While the exact boundaries of the site have not yet been determined, the eastern boundary would front on the new Seaside boulevard, extending from ten to 15 blocks along that roadway, between Seaview avenue, Ocean Breeze, and Xenia street, South Beach. * * *

BOTH OF THESE streets would be opened to their adopted width and improved at the expense of the state administration to serve as principal approaches to the hospital from Hyman boulevard. There would be no local streets on the site, but the widening, grading and paving of any of the peripheral streets of the site, all of which would be undertaken by the state.

The site would extend from Seaside boulevard to the intersection of Hyman boulevard on the west. The

State Ready To Build in Beach Area

(From page 1)

southerly boundary would be within a block or two of an improved Seaview avenue and the northerly boundary would be within a block or two of Xenia street or Quintard street—its westerly extension.

When the State Department of Mental Hygiene first made it known to the borough president that it was seriously considering building a mental hospital on the Island, the borough president laid down a set of conditions which he said he would insist upon before he would even consider bowing to the project.

THE DEPARTMENT promised to study the feasibility of the borough president's requests

even though it made it clear that the state, under its powers of eminent domain, could acquire the site by condemnation and establish the hospital without the city's consent.

At yesterday's conference at City Hall the state officials agreed to meet all these demands and even grant further concessions.

While no architectural plans have been prepared, it has been agreed, Maniscalco said, that buildings in the perimeter of the site will be limited to one and two stories in height and will be occupied as living quarters by doctors, nurses and administrative personnel, and as administrative offices. Two or

three hospital buildings ranging in height from five to seven stories, will be erected in the center of the site.

THE ENTIRE 200-acre tract will be enclosed by an ornamental iron fence and hedges, trees and shrubbery will be planted along the inside of the fence to provide a screen of foliage for the grounds. Adequate parking facilities for all visitors will be provided inside the grounds, and the site will be landscaped with lawns, trees and drives to give the effect of a private estate, the borough president said.

To clear the site for reclamation, the state will have to acquire several score bungalows in the beach area west of Seaside boulevard between Ocean Breeze and Xenia street. A survey has indicated that most of these structures are very old and some have actually been abandoned. Nearly all of those in use are occupied only during the summer, it was said.

Maniscalco said that state officials have pointed out that the marshlands selected for the site cannot serve any useful purpose in their present condition, that the land is so low that it traps drainage water and is a breeding place for mosquitoes and other insect pests. They said that the land would probably never be made useful if this opportunity had not presented itself.

MANISCALCO said the officials indicated that the land would be acquired and reclamation started within a year. Sand fill pumped from the bay off the beachfront, will be used to raise the grade of the tract several feet.

It was indicated that once the project gets the green light from the governor, efforts will be made to acquire privately-owned land in the site by private sale, that condemnation proceedings will only be initiated as a last resort. By far the greater portion of the land is city-owned, acquired by foreclosure for tax arrears, and title can easily be transferred to the state.

The borough president said the state authorities also said that the hospital will be designed and planned to include outpatient treatment for Islanders who may need such service. They have also indicated that some 200 Islanders now in mental hospitals throughout the state, would be transferred to the new hospital so they could be near their families.

The Manhattan meeting was attended by the borough president, top-officials of his Engineering Bureau, City Construction Coordinator Robert Moses and his chief aides, and representatives of the City Planning Commission, the State Department of Public Works, the state budget director's office, and the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Advance, July 14, 1956