



This house at 26 Dumont Ave., Dongan Hills, shows the charred roof and boarded doors and windows that resulted from a suspicious fire May 1.

S.I. Advance Photo by Irving Silverstein

## Arson probe fails to find a suspect

A joint investigation by fire marshals and police has failed to turn up a suspect in the suspicious fire May 1 that damaged a proposed counseling and service office for the retarded in Dongan Hills.

Detective Salvador Davila, who headed the two-month investigation, said that extensive interviews with homeowners living near the proposed center at 26 Dumont Ave. was unproductive and the probe has officially been closed.

"We don't have a crystal ball and weren't able to come up with a suspect," Davila said. "At this point the investigation is closed unless we get new

information."

The fire, reportedly fueled by a flammable liquid discovered by investigators at the foot of the building's stairwell, caused medium damage to the two-story structure. The facility had been approved by Community Board 2 over local opposition for use as a facility to provide counseling, therapy and recreation for the area's retarded.

Shortly after the blaze, Deputy Chief Fire Marshal John Barracato said that investigators had obtained "hearsay" information that the fire may have been started by an area resident or residents opposed to the planned use of the build-

ing. He declined comment yesterday.

District Attorney Thomas R. Sullivan said he also will withhold comment until he receives a final report from the Police and Fire Departments probe.

Elin Howe, director of the Staten Island Developmental Center and the Borough Developmental Services Office, said the state still hopes to open the building for use by the area's 200 retarded residents. Negotiations for the purchase of the structure are continuing with the building's owner, Joseph Perrotta, she said.