

# Architect assessing damage to Dumont Ave. office

The state will await an architect's report before deciding whether to renovate a Dongan Hills building set afire Sunday night, one month before it was to open as a day center for the retarded.

Elin Howe, director of the Borough Developmental Services Office, which was to run the center at 26 Dumont Ave. and open its office headquarters there, said state architects would inspect the two-story brick building today.

Preliminary state estimates placed

the damage from the Sunday night blaze, the third fire there in the last six months, at \$45,000.

"Before we make any kind of decision, we'll have to first hear from the architects," Ms. Howe said.

Two 17-year-old Dongan Hills youth, who live within two blocks of the center, are accused of setting the fire with a molotov cocktail. Arrested 25 hours after the fire and accused of arson, possession of dangerous weapons, criminal mischief and conspiracy were Michael

O'Hara of 247 Reid Ave. and Joseph Koeller of 1448 Hylan Blvd.

Police said Koeller manufactured the homemade bomb, and O'Hara tossed it through a window of the Dongan Hills building, fueling the blaze.

The two youths are not considered suspects in two previous suspicious fires at 26 Dumont Ave. — the first May 1, the second Sept. 24, fire marshals said.

The state has signed a five-year lease with the owners of the building — the 26

Dumont Ave. Corp. — calling for an annual rental of \$34,800 a year. The state has also agreed to pay \$40,000 in renovations, some of which were necessary as a result of the two previous fires.

Mental Retardation Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin said Monday that the state will probably pay for repairs of the latest fire damage if it decides to move ahead with plans to operate a day center. It is slated to serve 200 retarded persons living in the Community Board 2 area.