

# Tottenville home chosen for retarded

By DOUGLAS PATRICK

A two-story, wood-frame house in Tottenville has been selected as the first group home for the retarded on the South Shore, a state official said yesterday.

Elin M. Howe, director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, said the building at 750 Page Ave. should be ready for occupancy in about six months, after the state has arranged to lease or purchase the facility.

The group home will house six center residents and be staffed by "at least two people," Miss Howe said.

Of 13 possible group home sites approved by Community Board 3 for consideration by the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, two are existing structures — 6 Ainsworth Ave., Great Kills, and 750 Page Ave. The others are vacant lots, which would require additional time for construction of houses.

State officials considered both existing structures until Great Kills residents vigorously objected to the Ainsworth Ave. site.

Last month Community Board 3, reversing its earlier approval, voted to oppose Ainsworth Ave. as a group home location.

"There was obviously a great deal of community opposition to the Ainsworth Ave. site and that only left Page Ave.," Miss Howe explained yesterday.

As part of an effort to return all but 250 profoundly handicapped residents of the institution to their hometowns by 1981, eight locations housing 80 persons will be chosen by the state as South Shore community facilities.

Miss Howe declined to say whether the seven remaining group homes will have to be built, or if existing structures can be found.

"Obviously it takes a long time to construct a group home, and we are trying

to get them set up as soon as we can," she said.

At least two of the South Shore homes will be constructed, she said, adding, "We will gather our experience from this construction and adjust our plans accordingly."

"A number of group homes," according to Miss Howe, should begin operations on Staten Island this year.

Miss Howe said she expects to set up meetings soon with Community Board 2 representatives to identify potential group home sites to serve such communities as New Dorp, Dongan Hills and New Springville.

Community Board 1, which covers the North Shore, will not receive group homes for the retarded because the state maintains the area already is "saturated" with social service agencies.