

Proposed group home toured by officials

State and Community Board 3 officials yesterday were generally impressed with a Tottenville duplex proposed as a state-run group home for the mentally retarded.

An official with the state retardation agency declared the site "one of the best I've ever seen" for a group home. Community board leaders also said it was a nearly ideal candidate.

The remarks came yesterday as six community board members and a state official toured the house and surrounding grounds at 2768-2770 Amboy Rd., a duplex home at the foot of the street, a few hundred yards from the shore.

The house, which is now privately owned, is scheduled to be sold to the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and run as a 10-person group home. The home will house adolescents and young adults ranging in retardation from moderate to severe.

The house is surrounded on three sides by woods, with a small path leading to the water. New houses are being built behind the site, and relatively new duplex homes, less than 10 years old, line the street on the other side.

"This is excellent," remarked Carol Rothfeld, coordinator of site development for the state agency. "The rooms are appropriate; the site is appropriate; there are no sewer or septic problems. I'm very pleased."

Board chairman Jack Potenza also seemed optimistic about the site.

"We wanted isolation and that's good. There's a remoteness," Potenza said. "The structure itself is very sound. It's very hard to say there's a physical problem in that sense."

Potenza, however, saw a possible problem with the home's proximity to the water. "I begin to worry about that," he said.

The board will hold a public hearing on the proposed site Wednesday night at 8 p.m. at the Factory Center, Princes Bay. Many Tottenville residents have already promised to oppose its selection.

"Knowing the city and the way they operate, I don't trust them," said neighbor Horst Hasselbach, who lives three houses away.

Community board approval of the site is not required by law.

— MARC DAVIS