

WILLOWBROOK DRUG PROBER: 'WILD PARTYING'

By MARALYN MATLICK
THE narcotics detective who headed the investigation that led to the arrest of nine Willowbrook workers told of lax security and wild parties at the controversial facility.

The sprawling complex, renamed the Staten Island Developmental Center, was the scene of late-night drug and alcohol parties, according to Detective Dennis Gill.

"On the night shift there's a lot of partying," he said. "A lot of drugs and alcohol."

Gill said that once staff

members signed in, no one checked to make sure that they were in their assigned areas.

"The only thing they care about is that you're there on time," said Gill. Gill also said he drove in and out of Willowbrook "25 to 30 times" to make drug buys without being stopped by security.

"The first time I went, I was prepared to have an excuse for what I was doing there," he said.

"Then I drove through in my car and no one asked me who I was or what I was doing there."

The detective said that once inside, drug buyers simply drove to whichever building was known to have the drug he or she wanted.

The director of the controversial mental health center, Dr. Ella Curry, said security at the 734-patient facility was

beefed up three months ago.

But she added, "This is not a prison, it is an open facility."

The drug dealers grossed at least \$250,000 a year by selling drugs throughout the 60-building institution, detectives said.

Those being charged with felonious sale of narcotics were mental health supervisor Gordon James, 28, of 51 Ar-

nold St.; mental health aide Peter Etheridge, 40, of 178 Loughlin Av.; and therapists Aida Rodriguez, 25, of 187 Gordon St.; Herman Mickens, 40, of 1030 Post Av.; Jacob Gibens, 35, of 50 North Burger Av., — all of Staten Island; James Ward, 38, of Newark, N.J., and Laverne Leverage, 35, of Bayonne, N.J.

The two being charged with both felonious sale and possession of drugs were therapists Helen Chavis, 25, of 178 Loughlin Av. and Theodore Handy, 40, of 175 Trantor Pl., both of Staten Island.