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# Brooklyn

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## Mental facility faces test

By RANDY DIAMOND

The modern group of buildings is hidden by the swamps, weeds and dump land that surround it. Even many people who live nearby don't know where to find the Brooklyn Developmental Center.

Construction of the ultra-modern, 33-acre, six-building campus in an isolated section of southeastern Brooklyn was finished in mid-1972. It was a place where the retarded were supposed to get the best and most modern care available.

To Tom Shirtz, the center's executive director, the Brooklyn Developmental Center has more than lived up to its goal.

"It's the best institution in the country for the retarded," the 60-ish director

tor said, bluntly.

But to Chris Hanson, a lawyer with the New York Civil Liberties Union, the Brooklyn Developmental Center is nowhere near the top of the list. In fact, Hanson believes it is near the bottom—a modern-day chamber of horrors akin to the old Willowbrook on Staten Island.

"IT WAS supposed to replace the terrible conditions at Willowbrook, but it has become a striking example of the fact that large institutions for the retarded don't work," Hanson said.

Sixty-five per cent of the 636 residents at the center are from Willowbrook, now re-named the Staten Island Developmental Center, where national attention was focused in the early 1970s when the media brought to light the horrendous conditions in the 6,500-person institution.

Resident of center works assembling ballpoint pens during one of facility's training periods.

