

# Staten Island

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Daily News, Sunday, July 22, 1984

## Willowbrook site: A complex choice

By MARY ENGELS

**B**Y EARLY SEPTEMBER, a plan proposed by members of the Staten Island Developmental Center Advisory Council dealing with the future of the center—the site of the former Willowbrook State Hospital—must be on Gov. Cuomo's desk so he can evaluate it and make a decision on the future of the complex.

Joseph Stellato, a member of the New York State Office of General Services, stressed the urgency of the situation—"which the governor has imposed on my commission"—to the council this past week at a meeting in the center's board room.

But, he said, "six weeks is tough" to evaluate some 21 proposals for reuse of the almost 300 acres at Willowbrook, which will be up "for grabs" once the 1987 deadline is reached to phase out the old center.

Nevertheless, Stellato said, "a good working document must be finished in time for the September deadline."

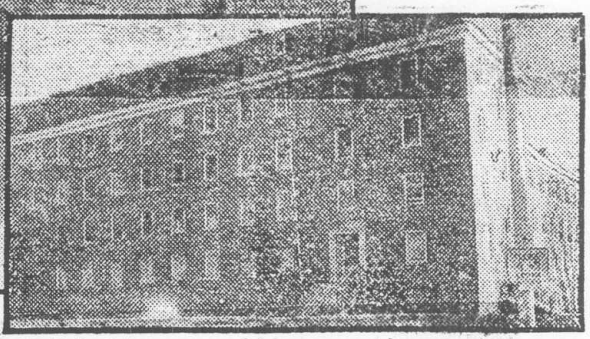
For the past few months, the advisory council—consisting of local legislators, city planners, community board people, John Egan, commissioner of General Services, and Arthur Webb, commissioner of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental—has been meeting to discuss the best possible use of the property.

They have also been seeking community input for uses of the site when the state phases out the center.

Suggestions have run the gamut from senior citizen housing to recreational facilities for the handicapped, from a permanent facility for local theater groups to a maintenance center for state vehicles.



Staten Island Developmental Center director James Walsh (l.). Below, typical living quarters at center.



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