

CSI study finds SIDC site better in every respect

By JULIE MACK
Advance Staff Writer

Staten Island Developmental Center is superior in every area of consideration for consolidating the College of Staten Island, according to a study officially released yesterday by CSI President Edmond Volpe. The Advance reported Dec. 29 that the study would recommend the SIDC site.

The report, which evaluated four sites for the consolidation, concluded that SIDC in Willowbrook was the superior choice in terms of budget, physical factors, construction time and quality of the finished campus.

The Manhattan firm of Edward Durrell Stone Associates, which the college commissioned to make the study, ranked a 110-acre site in Ocean Breeze as a second choice for a consolidated campus. The study rejected consolidation at either of CSI's present campuses in Sunnyside and St. George.

The study's recommendation for the Willowbrook site was endorsed Monday by the CSI's facilities and finance committee, and the college board of trustees will vote on the issue at its next meeting, on Jan. 28.

Volpe said the board's approval of the Willowbrook site is "fairly certain."

He is submitting the report to a state task force studying disposition of the 390-acre SIDC, which has housed an institution for the mentally retarded for the past 30 years. The state plans to close the institution by the end of 1987 and adapt the land for other uses.

Since CSI's proposal already has the approval of state budget officials, the state Office of General Services — which controls disposition of the land — will probably support transferring part of the property to the college, CSI spokesman Brian Morris said.

The study suggests that CSI could use 187 acres of the Willowbrook campus and renovate between eight and 12 existing buildings. The renovation would give the college between 342,000 and 534,000 square feet in space — between a third and a half of the space the consolidated college would need.

"One thing I think we were really amazed about was the condition of the buildings; they are really in very good shape," said Kenneth Klindtworth, CSI's resident architect. The college can save \$36 a square foot by utilizing existing buildings, according to the study.

The other dozen or so buildings not used would be razed and CSI would build new facilities for a total of 1.1 million square feet of building space, the requirement set by college officials.

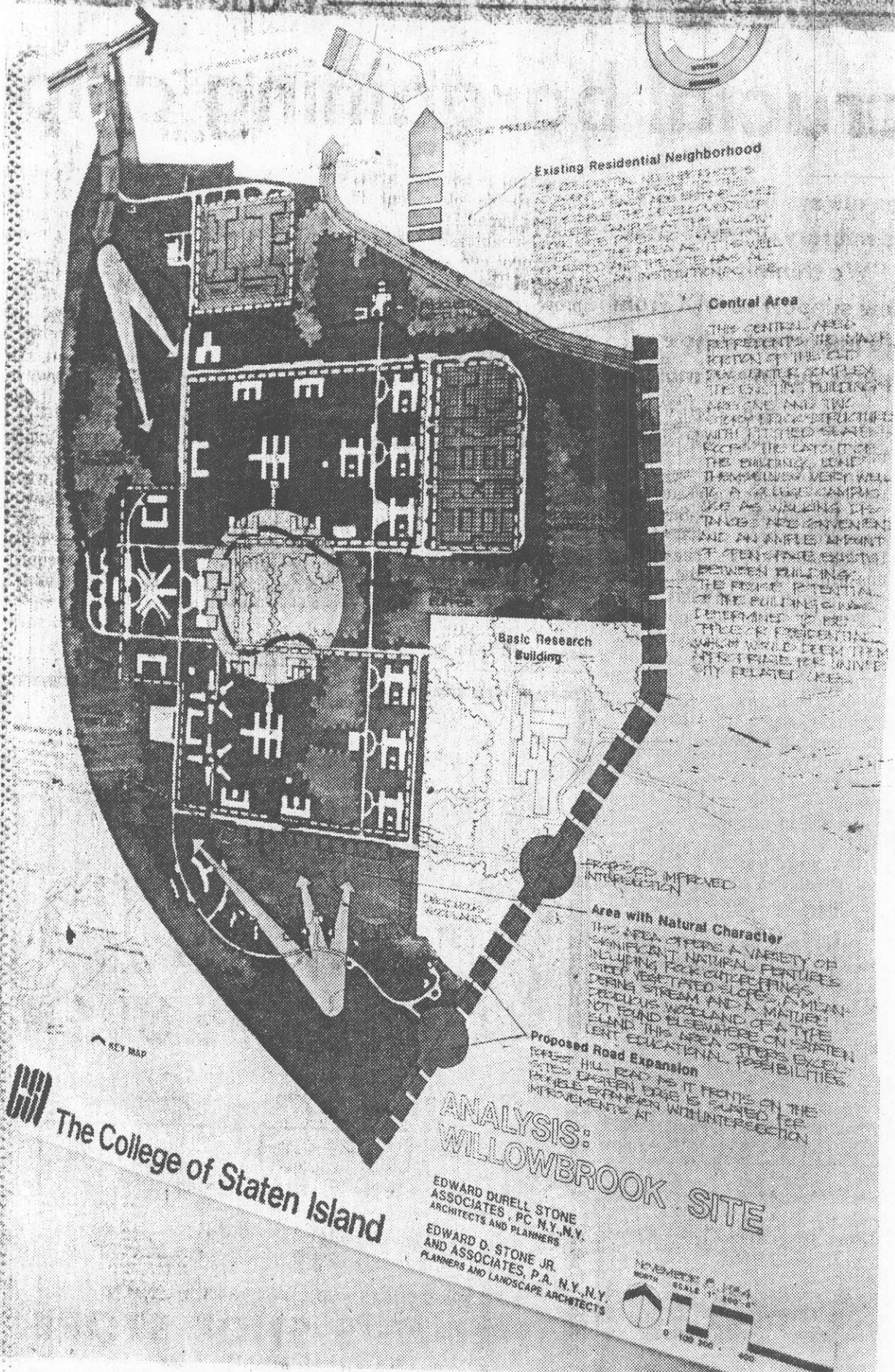
The potential offered by the acreage and existing buildings scored high points in the evaluation process used in the study. "The significant advantage of this site is the possibility of re-use of many suitable existing buildings," the study said. "The existence of service tunnels is another significant advantage."

There is also the appearance of the grounds, with its wide grassy spaces and low brick buildings. "It looks like the classic college campus," Volpe said. "It's perfect."

By comparison, the study said, the Ocean Breeze site has no buildings to use, while the Sunnyside and St. George sites have no room for adequate expansion.

The consolidated campus requires at least 60 acres of land. The Sunnyside campus has only 330,000 square feet in building space on 42 acres and the St. George campus has less than 300,000 square feet in three buildings with virtually no surrounding property.

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Central Area
 THIS CENTRAL AREA REPRESENTS THE MAIN RETAIL OF THE COLLEGE CENTER COMPLEX. THE EXISTING BUILDINGS ARE ONE AND TWO STORY STRUCTURES WITH LIMITED SCALE SCOPE. THE LAYOUT OF THE BUILDINGS LEAD THROUGHOUT VERY WELL TO A WALKING CAMPUS AND AS WALKING DISTANCES AND CONVENIENCE AND AN AMPLE AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE EXISTS BETWEEN BUILDINGS. THE GREAT POTENTIAL OF THE BUILDINGS AND DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WOULD BEEN THEM TO BE USED FOR UNIVERSITY RELATED USES.

Area with Natural Character
 THIS AREA OFFERS A VARIETY OF SIGNIFICANT NATURAL FEATURES INCLUDING ROCK OVERHANGS, STEEP VEGETATED SLOPES, A MEAN DECIDUOUS STREAM AND A MAJORITY NOT FOUND ELSEWHERE ON STATEN ISLAND. THIS AREA OFFERS EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES.

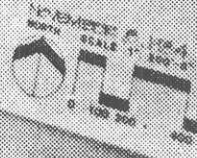
Proposed Road Expansion
 TRAFFIC WILL LEAD TO IT FRONTS ON THE SITES. GREEN DRIVE IS CURVED FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT INTERSECTION.

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 The College of Staten Island

**ANALYSIS:
WILLOWBROOK SITE**

EDWARD DURELL STONE ASSOCIATES, P.C. N.Y., N.Y. ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS
 EDWARD D. STONE JR. AND ASSOCIATES, P.A. N.Y., N.Y. PLANNERS AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



An architect's drawing outlines the planned alterations at the site of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, if CSI's two campuses are moved there from St. George and Sunnyside.

S.I. Advance Photo by Frank J. Johns

The study estimated that the college would have to spend \$97 million for new construction and \$48 million for rehabilitation of existing buildings in Willowbrook. Other costs — including external roadwork, creation of more parking, upgrading utilities, site development, demolition — plus inflation, would total \$196 million at midpoint of construction.

By contrast, using the St. George site would cost an estimated \$224 million at the midpoint of construction, assuming more property was obtained; the Sunnyside site would cost \$198 million; and the Ocean Breeze site would cost \$249 million.

Time was another factor for the development of an entirely new campus," the study said. Moreover, it said, the site's 110 acres would allow for future growth, the location provides ample access to transportation, and the community is supportive of plans to build a college there.

However, the site is only 8 feet above sea level, which means the entire campus would have to be constructed on raised platforms to protect the buildings from flooding. The platforms would boost construction costs by \$20 million.

Volpe, who for years has advocated building a new campus in Ocean Breeze, said he is now enthusiastic about the Willowbrook site. "I always thought Willowbrook would be a magnificent site, but I was hesitant about adapting hospital-type buildings for use as a college," he said.

But when he finally walked through the campus and the buildings last fall, he said, "I became excited.

"I think Willowbrook will provide the kind of campus for this college that its educational mission deserves. I see this becoming one of the major campuses within CUNY (City University of New York) and one of the most beautiful campuses."

amined in the study. Volpe said Peter Capone, president of firm which conducted the study, predicted that "if all goes well," the college could be relocated to Willowbrook within four years.

"I think that's a bit optimistic, but even if we had some of the buildings in use by then" he would be satisfied, Volpe said.

It could take longer to consolidate at the other sites, the study said: Builders have to start from scratch at the Ocean Breeze site; community opposition would slow expansion at the Sunnyside campus, and it would take years to acquire enough property for expansion in St. George.

The study concluded that the only hindrance at the Willowbrook site is demolition of buildings that would not be renovated, but "that is not seen as significant."

"No unusual site conditions are present which should prove burdensome in costs," authors of the study wrote. "Construction may be easily staged and completed to allow controlled transfer of existing facilities to the new campus. The campus and proximity to major thoroughfares will prove to be a catalyst in the development of the Willowbrook area."

Of the other sites, the study noted that land is scarce in St. George, and that in Sunnyside, land adjacent to the site is expensive, hilly and unsuitable for college facilities.

Consolidating CSI at Sunnyside could only occur with the construction of high-rise structures packed closely together, which would ruin the look of the campus and meet with strong community resistance, the authors of the report said.

"In the final analysis, the disadvantages of a limited site, unfavorable community response, potential delays and a compromised land-use plan overcame the advantage of building around the existing nucleus of the college," the study said about the Sunnyside site.

The Ocean Breeze site "presents a unique opportunity