

CSI unveils its plan for Willowbrook site

By JULIE MACK
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The College of Staten Island yesterday unveiled its master plan for its new campus in Willowbrook, and the biggest surprise was that the college is proposing to use 220 acres of the soon-to-be-vacated Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC).

The college had originally wanted 187 acres of the 300 acres that SIDC is vacating. As recently as March, officials at the state Office of General Services, which handles disposition of state-owned property, said the college would probably receive less rather than more acreage than requested.

Whether the Office of General Services will grant the college's latest request is still uncertain — CSI President Edmond L. Volpe admits that negotiations for the property are incomplete and it is possible the college's acquisition will be smaller than 220 acres. But most of the master plan has been approved by the state, he said; only the southeast and eastern boundaries are still being negotiated.

The extra acreage is mainly woodlands bordering the main campus, according to Peter Capone, president of Edward Durell Stone Associates, which drafted the master plan for the Willowbrook campus. Capone

termed the extra land as "buffer and transition" areas. He said the woodlands would remain as natural areas, adding that an estimated 25 percent of the 220 acres would not be developed.

The master plan calls for retaining 15 of the two dozen brick buildings now standing on the site. The buildings would be "completely gutted," Capone said during a press conference to unveil the plan at the school's St. George campus. "We would use only the foundation, the outer wall, the floor and the roof.

"We are not talking about renovated buildings," Capone

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added. "We're talking about all new (interior) space using the empty shells." That means all new walls, plumbing, wiring and partitions.

Capone said reusing the buildings would save about 25 percent compared to the cost of building completely new structures. The cost of the new campus is estimated at \$200 million.

The buildings to be preserved would include the current administration building, which would become the college information and reception center. The two buildings which were once used as dining halls and kitchens for the institution would be reconstructed into the college's student center and library.

The college's administration and student service buildings would be housed in two existing four-story structures flanking the present administration building.

Ten other existing buildings in the center of the property — which form two U-shaped formations — would become classroom and faculty office space. The five buildings in each formation would be linked to each other by new construction, which would also house classrooms and offices.

New structures for the campus would also include a gymnasium seating 3,000, and a

performing arts building containing three theaters with seating capacities of 1,000, 500 and 250.

Also proposed are a running track, a soccer field and a baseball field.

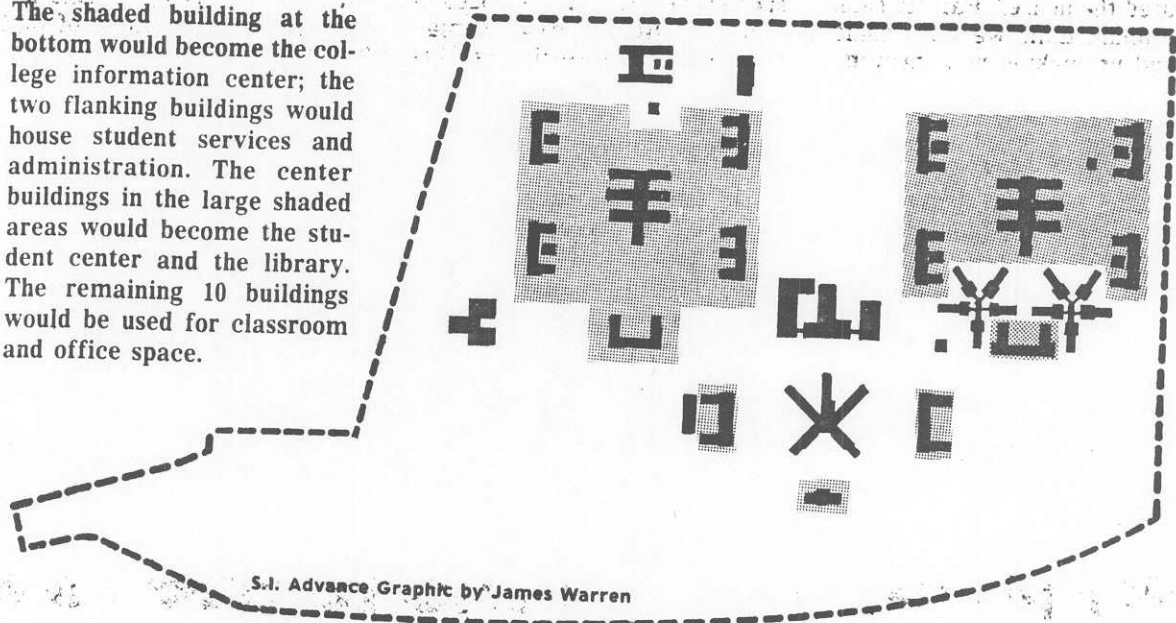
The master plan calls for the new campus to be pedestrian-oriented. Parking space for 2,000 cars would be placed around the perimeter of the buildings, and there would be no public roads cutting through the inner campus. Capone said students and faculty should be able to park within a two-minute walk of the classroom buildings. Even for someone who must walk the entire length of the campus, the walk would take under 10 minutes, he said.

Capone said adoption of the master plan would mean that the college campus would contain fewer concrete surfaces and more natural space than exist now. He noted that buildings not used by the college would be demolished, and that many of the present roads and parking lots would be eliminated and landscaped.

The next stage for the college is to translate the master plan into architectural drawings for the individual buildings. That work will be financed by a \$7 million bond sale approved by the state Legislature in March.

In addition, the college must

The shaded building at the bottom would become the college information center; the two flanking buildings would house student services and administration. The center buildings in the large shaded areas would become the student center and the library. The remaining 10 buildings would be used for classroom and office space.



This map shows the existing buildings at Staten Island Developmental Center on the site requested by College of Staten Island. Buildings in the shaded area would be reused by the college, according to its master plan. The other buildings would be demolished.

work on getting title to the property. The land is currently under the control of the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, which operates SIDC. The institution, which once housed 6,000 mentally retarded clients, is scheduled to close in 1987. However, the acreage requested by the college should be vacated within a year.

Once the Office of Mental Retardation formally gives up its rights to the property, the Office of General Services can transfer the title to the State Dormitory Association, which owns the

property of the state's public colleges.

Capone and Volpe said they do not expect problems in transferring the title. "We have the commitment for the property, although we haven't got a commitment on the actual boundaries yet," Volpe said, adding that the state agencies involved have been "most cooperative" with the college officials.

"If all things move correctly, construction could begin in the fall of 1986 and the first buildings would be ready for occupancy in 1989," Capone said. "The entire campus would be

ready in 1990 to '91 — that's our target."

A new campus would allow the college to consolidate its operations, which are currently divided between campuses in St. George and Sunnyside. CSI officials have been lobbying for a consolidation for almost 20 years.

While expressing confidence that the new campus will finally become reality, Volpe noted that the plans are still subject to change. "This is an ideal," he said about the master plan. "Whether it works out this way is a question of money and all those things."