

Retarded-criminal unit proposed

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ADVANCE ALBANY BUREAU

ALBANY — Retarded people ordered into the custody of the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) after committing crimes would stay in a guarded Staten Island residence under a new proposal.

"This is obviously a very different type of facility than ... community residence beds" which the state has been phasing in all over the state, noted Henrik Dullea, Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's director of operations.

The crucial difference is that clients in the new facility would be kept under a tight watch, state officials say.

"There would be a great deal

more restriction" than, for example, in a developmental center, said Lou Ganim of OMRDD.

OMRDD reportedly has made inquiries about a specific site in the borough, but Ganim yesterday would only say "I can't tell you a site at this point."

So far, property adjacent to existing institutions has not been publicly ruled out.

Residents of the facility "could be in there for a number of different things, but they do need a secure unit," Ganim said.

Those ordered to stay in the secure facility will have gone through hearings to determine competency to stand trial and whether they can be held legally responsible for their actions.

The so-called secure unit, for 24

people, would supplement two such places already in existence, slated to be continued under Cuomo's proposed 1986-87 budget.

One is the 24-person Monroe Secure Unit, on the grounds of the Monroe Developmental Center in Rochester.

Also mentioned in the budget are the Westchester and Brooklyn Regional Behavior Treatment

Units, which also have 24 bed spaces each.

According to the budget language, the facilities "serve clients involved with the criminal justice system or those with assaultive or aggressive tendencies."

"Certainly, whatever we do, we'll do with the community agencies and the community boards," Ganim said.