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## St. Joe's may stay a church

### Another religious group sought to buy building

By Christopher Moore  
DAILY NEWS STAFF

WALTHAM — Though the former St. Joseph Church is no longer in the hands of the Boston archdiocese its days as a place of worship might not be over just yet.

Waltham-based Eastport Real Estate Services entered into an agreement with the archdiocese last week to purchase the parcel as part of the archdiocese's re-configuration plan. The sale is expected to become final in late June.

The parcel contains four

buildings and a parking area. Eastport President Michael Price said yesterday that he hopes to leave the church and the rectory, the two buildings that face Main Street, relatively unchanged.

Price said Eastport is entertaining offers from an unspecified number of churches in the area that hope to acquire the former St. Joseph Church. As for the 6,000-square-foot rectory beside it, he said Eastport intends to sell it as a single-family home.

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE

## St. Joe's may serve another religious organization

ST. JOE'S, From A1

"What we're really trying to do here is maintain the streetscape," said Price. "We think that's what the community wants as well."

Price was reluctant to discuss Eastport's plans for the rear portion of the property, which contains a small house, the child care center and a parking area. If St. Joseph remains a church, Price said some portion of the parking area will likely be set aside to accommodate.

Eastport is conducting engineering surveys on the site and formulating plans for its reuse. Though he would not say what those plans were, Price stressed that Eastport does have the community in mind.

"If our primary choice happens, I think the neighborhood will be very pleased with the outcome," he said.

Eastport, now in its 10th year of business, owns five properties in Waltham, including the Bear Hill Road offices that contain the WJMN-FM radio station and a building on Turner Street leased by Brandeis University. Two members of Eastport's senior management team, Vice President Mark Connaughton and Treasurer Richard Connaughton, grew up in Waltham.

"We've got roots in the community," said Price. City Councilor Kenneth Doucette of Ward 6, in which St. Joseph sits, said he conducted some brief research on East-

port after hearing the company had purchased the property.

"They are a responsible company," Doucette said. "They're probably going to reach out to the neighbors and also city officials and work with them."

Doucette said The Nelson Companies and the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing had both submitted bids to the archdiocese and informed Doucette of their proposals. The Nelson Companies had hoped to put in an arts center and an affordable housing development, and WATCH was seeking a combination of market rate and affordable housing units.

Doucette hoped that Eastport would consider such uses if their primary plans fall through.

He also said several neighbors and former parishioners have come to him with concerns over the future of the site.

"They're looking for something that's going to fit the personality of the property," he said. "Something that fits in with the neighborhood."

Christopher Moore is a staff writer for the Daily News Tribune. He can be reached at cmoore@cnc.com or 781-398-8009.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO BY ED HOPPMANN

St. Joseph's Church on Main Street in Waltham, right, has been sold to developers by the Archdiocese of Boston. The new owners are looking to sell it to another religious group.

