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## St. Joe's to be sold to another church

### Former parishioners approve of plan

By Galen Moore  
DAILY NEWS STAFF

WALTHAM — It may not be called St. Joseph's any more, but the marble-fronted church on Main Street will remain a house of worship, real estate developers said yesterday.

After announcing earlier in the week that it plans to leave the structure standing, Eastport Real Estate Services yesterday disclosed it has signed a purchase agreement with a new religious denomination.

"We are going to be selling it to another church," said Michael Price, president of Eastport, which bought the church property from the Boston Roman Catholic Archdiocese this April.

Out of four church properties put on the block simultaneously in 2004, St. Joseph's will be the only one to remain a house of worship. The other three churches — in Medford, Rockport and Salem — are being converted to another denomination. ST. JOSEPH'S, Page A12

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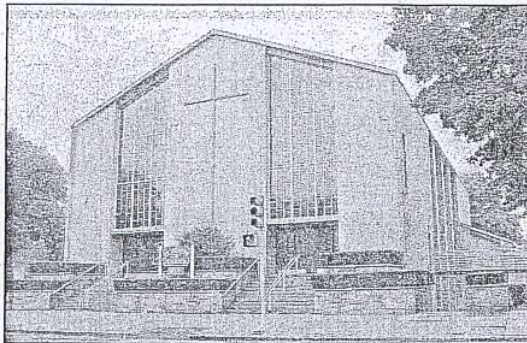
ST. JOSEPH'S, From A1  
verted into multi-family housing.

Price said he would not disclose the name of the buyer until the deal is finalized.

Catholics in this former parish, who chose not to fight the archdiocese when it announced plans to close it in 2004, said they are still grieving the loss of their church, but putting in a new church is better than the alternatives.

"The people that were in that parish, most of them are never going to feel better," said lifetime St. Joseph's parishioner Irene Belcher. The new church will not be a Catholic church, she said. "But it's better than being torn down or made into condos."

The rest of the church property will be subdivided for sale. Real estate agent Sam Webb said the adjacent rectory, a three-story stucco on wood-frame structure built in 1850, is likely to become a single-family or two-family home. Two other buildings, including a sexton's house built in 1890, will be demolished to make room for six two-family townhouses, to be constructed by local developer



DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

St. Joseph's Church on Main Street in Waltham is set to be sold to another church.

Sachem Realty Co. One of the buildings to be demolished currently houses the Little Souls daycare center which reportedly has until Oct. 31 to find a new location.

Webb said the rectory, listed at \$850,000, is eyed by four potential buyers, if a neighboring four-bay garage can be included in the sale.

"I've got tons of interest in the property," said Webb, an agent with Re/Max Realty on Main Street in Waltham. "Some are condo conversion candidates;

some are extended families. One potential investor wants to buy it to house his grown children and his mother."

The church property is zoned "Residence B," meaning single- or two-family houses are currently the only allowed use, other than religious or educational institutions, which may locate anywhere. Any commercial use for the property would require a zoning change.

Price said his company explored other options, such as renovating the church for resi-

dential or commercial use. Some of those might have been more lucrative, but keeping the building's religious use proved best, he said.

"When you feel the pulse of a property, you figure out what use for it makes the most sense," Price said. "It's a combination of profit motive, path of least resistance and doing what's best for the community."

When Eastport bought the church, local officials and neighbors had hoped the company would keep the property as close to its original character as possible.

Price said Eastport obtained the church to maintain a strong presence in Waltham. Of the 38 properties listed on the company's Web site, six are in Waltham, he said. Company Vice President Mark Connaughton, and Treasurer Richard Connaughton are both Waltham natives.

"You're working with people you know in the community and it's a nice way to do business," Price said.

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