



Church sales win no friends at City Hall

By Dave Wedge

Thursday, February 24, 2005

With three closed Hub churches already on the market and 12 more in the pipeline, some city officials are slamming the archdiocese for not having a master plan to redevelop the properties and preserve community services.

"You would just think that after all the pain and anguish that we felt in the Archdiocese of Boston that they would handle the disposition of property in a more humane approach," said City Councilor Jerry McDermott. "The wounds inflicted by the archdiocese are festering. They are not healing. People are fighting mad."

The archdiocese is actively marketing three closed Hub properties - St. Mary Star of the Sea in East Boston, Blessed Sacrament in Jamaica Plain and St. Ann University Parish in the South End.

While many of the church properties house important community services, such as homeless shelters and youth programs, the archdiocese rejected an offer by the Boston Redevelopment Authority to create a master plan that considered the city's needs, BRA spokeswoman Susan Elsbree said.

"We're very concerned," Elsbree said. "The city's best interests aren't really being represented."

Archdiocese spokeswoman Ann Carter said senior officials at the archdiocese had a "series of conversations with the city and the BRA" about the property sales, and "we expect these conversations to continue."

McDermott predicted massive neighborhood opposition to some [proposed projects](#).

But J.P. Plunkett, marketing the 20,000 square foot St. Ann's property - worth some \$3 million - to Northeastern University and residential developers, among others, said "I don't think that the neighbors are going to be upset one bit. Whatever ends up there is going to be a positive use."

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