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# Newfoundland court approves sale of 42 Catholic Church properties to help compensate victims of sexual abuse

Archbishop acknowledges ‘feelings of anger, loss and sadness’ by the people who attended, maintain

**Glen Whiffen** | Posted: a day ago | Updated: a day ago | 6 Min Read

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The Roman Catholic Basilica of St. John the Baptist on Military Road in St. John's. — Joe Gibbons/SaltWire Network

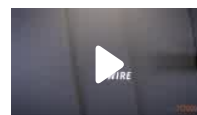
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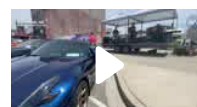
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ST. JOHN'S, N.L. — The Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador approved the sale of 42 Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. of St. John's properties on Monday to a value of more than \$20.6 million — a key step forward to finally being able to settle compensation claims with victims of sexual abuse dating back to the 1940s, '50s and '60s.

Twelve of the properties approved for sale are churches.

Nineteen properties did not receive acceptable bids during the tender process and will be offered up for sale again, along with 70 other church properties situated in the Burin and Avalon regions including churches, halls and rectories.

Lawyers for Episcopal Corp. also asked the court for another extension to continue with the work, which was unopposed by lawyers representing the victims or the monitor Ernst & Young.

Justice Garrett Handrigan granted the request shifting the end date to Dec. 9 of this year.



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**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's ("RCECSJ")****Summary of Accepted Tenders**

Tender Parcel	Property Description	Successful Bidder Recommendation
1A	Basilica Cathedral and Pastoral Centre	Basilica Heritage Foundation, Inc.
1B	St. Bonaventure's College	Basilica Heritage Foundation, Inc.
1C	St. Bon's Forum	Basilica Heritage Foundation, Inc.
2A	St. Patrick's Church	Howard Real Estate Holdings
2C	Vacant Land (located at 18 Deanery Ave, St. John's)	84392 Newfoundland and Labrador Inc.
2D	Vacant Land (located on Patrick Street, St. John's)	St. John's Independent School Inc.
3A	St. Teresa's Church and other adjoining structures	St. Teresa's Mundy Pond Corporation
4A	Corpus Christi Church, Parish Office and Community Centre	Stewart McKelvey, as Agent
4B	Vacant Land (231 Waterford Bridge Road, St. John's)	Stewart McKelvey, as Agent
5A	St. Pius X Church and St. Pius X Junior High School	Association For New Canadians
6A	Mary Queen of Peace Church and Rectory	54105 Newfoundland and Labrador Ltd.
6B	Mary Queen of Peace Hall	10981 Newfoundland Ltd.
8B	Vacant Land (Topsail Road, Mount Pearl)	P.M.C. Holdings Ltd.
8C	Vacant Land (Topsail Road, Mount Pearl)	City of Mount Pearl
8D	Vacant Land (Pinebud Crescent, Mount Pearl)	City of Mount Pearl
9B	St. Peter's Rectory	84392 Newfoundland and Labrador Inc.
11A	St. Thomas of Villanova Church and Vacant Land (Ball Field)	Archdiocesan Renewal Corp.
12B	St. Edward's Rectory	Pine Bud Investments Inc.
12C	Vacant Land (St. Edwards Road, Conception Bay South)	Pine Bud Investments Inc.
13A	Holy Rosary Church, Rectory and Hall	Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's Chamber of Commerce Inc. / Holy Rosary on behalf of Newco
14A	St. Joseph's Church	89149 Newfoundland and Labrador Corp.
14B	Vacant Land (Cribbies Road, Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove)	89149 Newfoundland and Labrador Corp.
15A	St. Francis of Assisi Church	Rocky Hill Holdings Inc.
15B	Archbishop's Residence	Rocky Hill Holdings Inc.
15C	St. Francis of Assisi Rectory	Rocky Hill Holdings Inc.
15D	Vacant Land (51 Outer Cove Road, Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove)	Rocky Hill Holdings Inc.
15E	Vacant Land (23 - 25 Outer Cove Rd, Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove)	Pine Bud Investments Inc.
16B	Holy Trinity Parish Hall	YBC Development Ltd.
17A	St. Michael's Church	Town of Flatrock
17B	Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto	Town of Flatrock
18A	St. Agnes Church and Rectory	G.J. Shortall Ltd.
19A	O'Dwyer Apartments	Ashley and Wajdi Bensaid
19B	Vacant Land (51 Hazelwood Crescent, St. John's)	P.M.C. Holdings Ltd.
20A	Ecole Rocher du Nord	Emerald Atlantic Group Inc
20B	Vacant Land (Ricketts Road, St. John's)	Emerald Atlantic Group Inc
20C	Vacant Land (Ricketts Road, St. John's)	Emerald Atlantic Group Inc
23C	Vacant Land (370-410 Beachy Cove Road)	Emerald Atlantic Group Inc
25A	<i>Intentionally Deleted</i>	N/A
25B	Vacant Land (Octagon Pond, Paradise)	Emerald Atlantic Group Inc
25D	Vacant Land (456-466 Bauline Line, Torbay)	640 Torbay Road Inc.
25E	Vacant Land (27A Piperstock Place, Torbay)	Blair White
25F	Vacant Land (Bullock Town Road, Torbay)	YBC Development Ltd.
25G	Vacant Land (Route 90, Salmonier Arm)	Nature Conservancy of Canada

Newfoundland and Labrador Supreme Court approved the sale of 42 properties Monday owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's. Taken from documents posted to Ernst & Young (court-appointed monitor) website. - SaltWire Network File Photo

"I am quite pleased with the process as it's unfolding, and quite encouraged actually," Handrigan said. "And given the amount that's been achieved over the last couple of months that by Dec. 9 we should be very well advanced in these



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Monday) are to buyers intending to have the buildings continue to be used as Catholic churches.

“I am quite pleased with the process as it’s unfolding, and quite encouraged actually. And given the amount that’s been achieved over the last couple of months that by Dec. 9 we should be very well advanced in these proceedings.”

— *Justice Garrett Handrigan*

“This sale of churches and the corresponding amalgamation of parishes is a distressing and emotional process for all the people and clergy of the archdiocese,” Hundt said. “It brings with it feelings of anger, loss, sadness, and for some, even at times a sense of hopelessness.

“During this difficult and challenging times, I am extremely grateful to all the clergy and parishioners who are working hard to move forward this process by which we are seeking to meet our legal obligations to the victims of abuse and restructure our diocese in a positive and sustainable manner.”



Geoff Budden - SaltWire Network File Photo



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abuse of boys by certain members of the Irish Christian Brothers, the lay order that ran the Mount Cashel orphanage.

The ruling by the country's top court not to hear the appeal brought to an end to that stage of a 20-year legal battle.

Since the Supreme Court of Canada's decision more than 100 men have come forward intending to file claims against the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. of St. John's, and the claims are expected to exceed \$50 million.

A claims process is also underway before the courts.

The court process to approve the property sales on Monday was not without some drama.

Lawyers for the provincial government and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District attended the hearing raising issues regarding the rights of government and the district to the Ecole Rocher-Du-Nord school property that is part of the properties approved for sale.



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Issues surrounding other school properties that could be put up for sale are expected to be heard in November.

In March 2021, SaltWire Network was told by the school board that 34 public schools are still technically owned by the archdiocese of St. John's, but they are protected from being sold because they are still in use.

After the end of the denominational education system, Sect. 84 of the Schools Act, 1997 mandated agreements be reached with denominational authorities where the title to property used for educational purposes is held by government, the board said at that time.

Trustee documents indicated that "legal and factual uncertainty" will have to be sorted out before it is determined whether schools will be included in the tender sales package.

Lawyers for the victims, Ernst & Young, and the episcopal corporation agreed on Monday, however, that it was too late for government and the school district to make an objection to the Ecole Rocher-Du-Nord property sale at this stage. That objection should have been launched during the winter when the property was first listed as part of the tender package sale proposals.

Representative counsel Geoff Budden called the move "disrespectful."

"It's most disrespectful to the claimants to come forward at this late hour," Budden said. "Essentially, (try to) torpedo a process which enormous work has gone into."

"I realize government has duties to protect the public purse but surely that's not at the expense of treating survivors in this fashion."

Handrigan said he would grant the order approving the sale of the 42 properties "which will include Ecole Rocher-Du-Nord" but left it open for government and the school district to be able to make argument about the distribution of the proceeds from that particular sale at a later time.

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