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Local builder chosen to erect new St. Patrick's

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It may not be long now before parishioners of St. Patrick's Catholic Church can celebrate mass via big screen in the great outdoors.

That concept is among additional touches planned when the church is rebuilt, a project one step closer to fruition with this weekend's announced selection of a local contractor for the job.

George Davis, whose construction firm G.W. Davis Inc. opened for business in 1948, was picked by officials of the Diocese of

Monterey from a field of five companies to oversee the \$2.5 project.

Parishioners learned of the selection during weekend masses at the Moreland Notre Dame gymnasium, site of services since the October 1989 earthquake destroyed the 89-year-old Main Street church.

The Rev. Michael Miller, pastor of St. Patrick's, said Davis was picked early on in the process so that he can begin to work with Monterey architect Russ Haisley on implementing designs.

"He's poised (to start)," Miller said, adding that the first order of business for Davis is to supervise the demolition and salvage stage of the project, expected to take 15 months.

Davis is no stranger to church contracts. Past assignments include renovation of Our Lady of Refuge Catholic Church in Castroville and All-Saints' Episcopal Church in Watsonville. He's also built chapels throughout the Central Coast.

To create a facade identical to

that of the Gothic-style building designed by William Weeks, features such as the original stone doorways and ceiling ribs from the interior will be recycled. Even bricks from the old unreinforced building will be used to erect the new one.

A floor plan of the new structure may be ready in a couple of weeks, Miller said.

However, parishioners can expect some additional changes in interior and exterior design. Since lack of funds restricted expansion

of the previous indoor seating capacity of 501 to only 537, Miller said wiring might be installed between the church and the rectory so that a large screen can transmit services taking place indoors to overflow crowds seated outside.

"It's something that we're thinking of," Miller said, although he stressed this innovation may not be considered until the final phases.

Other differences include expansion of the plaza area leading to the front entrance. Also, the sacristy located in the back that was

part of an addition will be modified to be more consistent with the old church's architecture, Miller said.

Tomorrow, retired engineer and rebuilding volunteer Leo Ruth intends to meet with city planning officials and begin the permit process.

"I think now that we have a contractor in ... that will facilitate the time line," Ruth said.

Funds from the church's rebuilding campaign, currently set at nearly \$1.2 million, will finance the project.