

DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals

Department of Planning & Sustainability 178 Sams Street, Suite A-3600 Decatur, GA 30030

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 1:00 PM

Planning

Andrew Baker, AICP

Director

Michael L. Thurmond Chief Executive Officer

Planning Department Staff Analysis

N6. Case No: A-22- 1246134 Parcel ID(s): 15-201-11-010

Commission District 03 Super District 07

Applicant: Jay Scott /Greenrock Partners

581 Angier Avenue, NE Atlanta, GA 30308

Owner(s): Rico Parks / A&R Construction Co. Inc.

> 300 Peachtree Street, NE Atlanta, GA 30038

Project Name: 3357 Memorial Drive -Live-Work Unit

Location: The property is are located at the intersection of Memorial Drive, Rupert Road and Belvedere Lane, in Decatur,

Georgia.

Variance from Chapter 27-2.24.1 to decrease the maximum front building setback along Memorial Drive from 60 Request:

feet to 20 feet in the C-1(Local Commercial) zoning district; and

2) Variance from Chapter 27-2.24.1 to decrease the maximum front building setback along Rupert Road from 50 feet to 30-feet in the C-1 (Local Commercial) zoning district; and

3) Variance from Chapter 27-2.24.1 to decrease the maximum front building setback along Belvedere Lane from 50

feet to 30-feet in the C-1 (Local Commercial) zoning district; and

4) Variance from Chapter 21-2.24.1 to decrease the maximum side building setback from 30 feet to 10 feet in the

C-1 (Local Commercial) zoning district.

Staff Recommendation: Denial.

STAFF FINDINGS:

Setback Variance Analysis:

The applicant proposes to construct a new 6-unit, live-work building on the subject property. The proposed design will require variances.

1. By reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific lot, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions, which were not created by the owner or applicant, the strict application of the requirements of this chapter would deprive the property owner of rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district:

The property is triangular shaped, and three sides of the property abut roads, including a portion along a Major Arterial (Memorial Drive). There is a required 60-foot minimum setback along Memorial Drive and 50-foot minimum front setbacks along Belvedere Lane for development at this location. The required setbacks leave a relatively small, triangular shaped area for development.

The shape and location of this parcel may present exceptional lot specific conditions that may result in the strict application of the requirements of these chapters depriving the property owner of the rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the C-1 zoning districts.

2. The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief, and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the zoning district in which the subject property is located:

The requested decrease in the setback may go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief. The maximum setback in the C-1 zoning district from a Memorial Drive, a major arterial road is 60-feet and the requested variance to 20-feet is more than a 30% decrease of that minimum setback. The minimum setback in the C-1 zoning district from Rupert Road and Belvedere Lan, a local road is 50-feet and the requested variance to 30 feet is more than a 60% decrease of that minimum setback. There may be other potential designs that would require a more minimal decrease to the zoning setbacks.

3. The grant of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district in which the subject property is located:

The granting of the setback variance may be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the C-1 zoning district as it would arbitrarily increase the maximum building setback, with which other property owners are required to conform. The proposed site layout does not appear to maximize the opportunities available under the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor (CRC) character area. The CRC character area goals are to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors.

4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would cause undue and unnecessary hardship:

The strict application of the setback requirements may cause unnecessary hardships based on the required setbacks, but there may be reasonable site layout that does not require the building to be situated 130' from the front property line. Consideration of alternative layouts is recommended.

5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this Chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Text:

The future land use designation for these properties is CRC. The *DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan* describes the intent of the of Commercial Revitalization Corridor (CRC) character area to promote the redevelopment of declining commercial corridors and to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors. These areas mostly consist of strip -style shopping centers that are in need of aesthetic or functional improvements, are in economic decline or are vacant. They are often characterized by a high degree of vehicular traffic, onsite parking, moderate floor to area ratio and large tracts of land. The proposed density for areas of this type is up 18 dwelling units per acre, with a maximum height of 3 stories.

While this proposed live-work development will be an improvement to the corridor, it may not be completely consistent with the spirit and purpose of this chapter. A site re-design should be considered to achieve a higher number and density of live-work units. Also, a site re-design would provide better building placement on the site while reducing the percentage of parking visible in front of the buildings. Adding garages to the rear of the units will reduce the amount of parking needed in the front of the buildings, thereby increasing the overall aesthetic appeal of the development which gives focus on the building and not the parking lot.

Therefore, the proposed development is only partially consistent with the sprit and intent of the purpose of the CRC character area of the Land Use Plan of the DeKalb Comprehensive Plan.

FINAL STAFF ANALYSIS:

The strict application of the setback requirements may cause unnecessary hardships based on the required setbacks, but there may be reasonable site layout that does not require the building to be situated 130' from the front property line. Consideration of alternative layouts is recommended.

Therefore, Planning and Sustainability staff recommends denial of all of the variances.



DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability

Hon. Michael Thurmond Chief Executive Officer Andrew Baker, AICP, Director

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING (VARIANCES, SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS, APPEALS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS)

BOA No				
Applicant and/or Authorized Representative SCOTT				
Mailing Address: 581 ANOIER ANE, N.E.				
City/State/Zip Code: ATLANTA (CA 30308)				
Email: JAy @ GREENROCK-PARTNERS. COM				
Telephone Home: Business: 404-909-7290				
OWNER OF RECORD OF SUBJECT PROPERTY				
Owner: RICO PARKS A ANDR CONSTRUCTION CO HC Address (Mailing): 300 PENCHTMEE ST, NE, ATL, 6A 30308				
Address (Mailing): 300 PEACHTREE ST, NE, ATL, 6A 30308				
Email: PICOPARKS @ YMAIL. COM				
Telephone Home 404-791-5786 Business: 678-851-9487				
ADDRESS/LOCATION OF SUBJECT PROPERTY				
Address: 3357 MEMORIAL DR City: DECOTUR State: 6A Zip: 30032				
District(s): 15 Land Lot(s): 201 Block: 11 Parcel: 010				
Zoning Classification: Commission District & Super District: 3 \$ 7				
CIRCLE TYPE OF HEARING REQUESTED:				
VARIANCE (From Development Standards causing undue hardship upon owners of property.)				
• SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS (To reduce or waive off-street parking or loading space requirements.)				
OFFICIAL APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS.				
* PLEASE REVIEW THE FILING GUIDELINES ON PAGE 4. FAILURE TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN SCHEDULING DELAYS. *				
TO BE COMPLETED BY PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT:				
Date Received: Fee Paid:				





ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals

To inspect the premises of the Subject Property

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property subject to the application.

DATE: 9 4 22	Applicant: Signature
DATE:	Applicant:Signature



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

AUTHORIZATION TO REPRESENT THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to inspect the premises of the Subject Property

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property and that I authorize the applicant/agent to apply for a hearing to the ZoningBoard of Appeals for the requests as shown in this application.

DATE: 10-05-2022	Applicant/Agent: Signature	Jasoc	J.
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: (I)/ (WE) (Name of Owners)	la	Rico	Parks
Notary Public	NOTA A	hereby delegate auth	cority to:
Notary Public		Owner	
Notary Public		Owner	



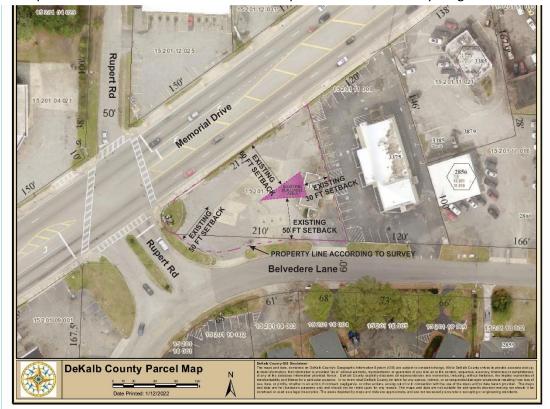
October 6, 2022

DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals 330 W. Ponce de Leon Ave Decatur, GA 30030

RE: Letter of Intent - 3357 Memorial Drive Zoning Variance Application

This application is being made because the existing zoning setback regulations place an exceptional and undue hardship on the property making it virtually impossible to build anything that would be of value to the community.

The property, as shown below, is a triangular corner at the intersection of Memorial Drive and Rupert Road. There is frontage on Memorial Drive, Rupert Road and Belvedere Lane. Memorial requires a minimum setback of 60 feet, while Rupert and Belvedere require 50 feet. The side yard is adjacent to 3375 Memorial Drive, a commercial property with a parking lot adjacent to the property line. There is a 30 foot setback required here. With these existing setbacks, there is only a triangle of 782 sq. ft.- far too small and too restrictive a shape to accommodate anything feasible or desirable.



These are views of existing conditions:



A Bird's Eye View looking northeast up Memorial Drive



Street View of the Property from the Memorial/Rupert intersection



Street View looking northeast up Memorial Drive



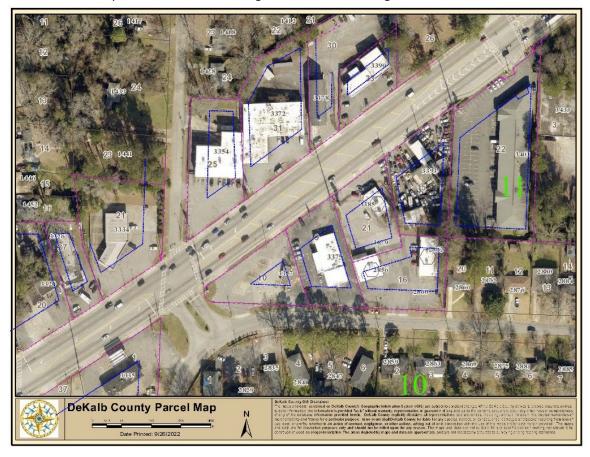
Street View looking southwest along Memorial Drive



Street View looking directly across Memorial Drive

These variances are necessary for development to occur. In its current state, the property is not beneficial to either the property owner or the community. We believe these variances are fully appropriate for the following reasons:

- 1. There are extraordinary and exceptional physical conditions pertaining to this particular piece of property which were not created by the current owner, previous owner or applicant; The strict application of this chapter would deprive the property owner of rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district and is neither a special privilege nor a simple convenience.
 - a. Many decades ago the property operated as a Hess gas station. It has been closed for at least two decades and vacant ever since, but even the old station would not meet the current regulations. As shown on the aerial photos, the building encroaches into two of the current setbacks. Also, the buried fuel tanks (which need to be removed) and pumps (which today would have canopies) are within the current setbacks.
 - b. As shown on the aerial photo below (taken from the DeKalb GIS) many of the neighboring properties do not meet the current setbacks and could not be built without variances. The magenta lines indicate property lines. The blue lines are the required setbacks according to current C-1 zoning



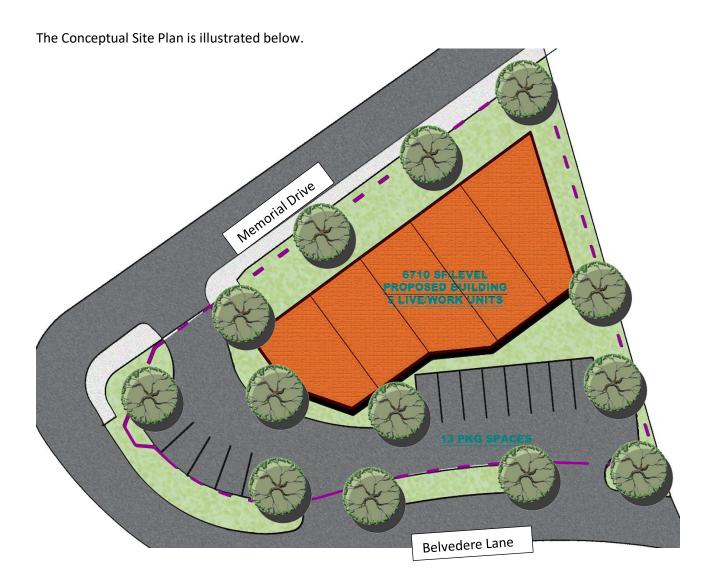
- 2. The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief, and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the zoning district.
 - a. The requested variance for the side setback to 10 ft leaves a greater setback than other properties in the area. Even the adjacent property does not have any setback for improvements with the parking lot extending right up to the subject property
 - Properties in this district use the front yard along Memorial Drive and Belvedere
 Lane for parking and storage, which is discouraged under the long range plan. This
 property has essentially three fronts Memorial Dr, Rupert Rd and Belvedere Lane.
 By having three front yards like this, it does not leave any room for building.
- 3. The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district.
 - a. It will not be detrimental to other neighboring properties. On the contrary, the new construction this variance will allow will enhance the neighborhood and increase the process of revitalization that is sorely needed.
 - b. In the long range plan, Belvedere Plaza (less than 1000 ft to the northeast along Memorial Dr) is identified as a Town Center district which encourages buildings to be near the street to increase pedestrian environment. This property is in C-1 in CRC (Commercial Redevelopment Corridor) and transitional to the Town Center. The stated goal is to move parking to the rear wherever possible. The only way to accomplish this is to move the buildings close to the road. Our proposed plan has a majority of the parking shielded from view from Memorial Drive.
- 4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would cause undue and unnecessary hardship.
 - a. It is not possible to redevelop this site under the current requirements.
 - b. As a property that is almost 100% impervious with no storm detention; with underground fuel storage tanks; and with a building that does not meet the current regulations, it would not be possible to improve this property without the variances
 - c. Not only is this a hardship on the property owner, but it is also a hardship on the neighborhood. This property is an eyesore that will limit values and redevelopment of surrounding property. Building a new, quality project here will instead be a driver of redevelopment for the area with higher and better uses.
- 5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan text.
 - a. The purpose of property setbacks in zoning is to protect neighboring properties. As described above, these variances will not cause harm to neighboring properties but instead will increase values and potential.
 - b. These variances are completely in line with the goals and the text of the comprehensive plan which has identified this area as a Commercial Revitalization

Corridor. On page 39 of the plan, it states: "This Character Area is intended to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of commercial corridors in the County and promote the redevelopment of commercial corridors in decline." As a highly visible corner that has been abandoned for decades and represents the auto-centric, non-environmental trends that formed the corridor, this is an ideal site for redevelopment as live/work and encourage less automobile use. Such a development will not occur without the requested variances.

- c. The plan also states that the CRC should have a "maximum density of 30 dwelling units per acre..." The proposal for this property is to have a total of five live/work units, which a density of just over 10 units per acre.
- d. CRC recommends Townhomes, Condominiums, Retail & Commercial & Office Mixed Use. Live/Work is a combination of these uses in a lower density setting.
- e. The Plan states "..new development should be built closer to the street, on underutilized parking lots... Create compact, walkable, mixed-use districts to reduce automobile dependency..." This is a small site, so the impact on goals of the plan will be limited, but this project is fully in line with the goals. And this is a first step that will set a new standard for the area, encouraging other properties to to the same. The Primary goal of a Live/Work environment is to eliminate daily automobile trips. By combining living and working spaces, it allows more flexibility for the families, keeps people at home more and also contributes to a stronger family unit as both parents are home more.
- f. The Plan states, "Improve the pedestrian environment and community character with consistent sidewalks, signage, lighting, landscaping..." By moving the buildings closer to the street we will be able to create a more sheltered walking environment with all these elements.
- g. The Plan states: ""Encourage shared parking, and locate parking to the rear or side of the buildings...". The only way to accomplish this is to reduce the setback requirements. By granting these variances, there are opportunities for creative site planning and design that reduces the visual impact of parking, allows for more landscaped areas and creates a signature development in an area in need of an impetus to improve.

In summary, our goal is to create a new standard for this section of Memorial Drive. Often, adversity will create opportunities for greater success, and such is the case with this property. Because of the current restrictions and existing conditions, the design team was forced to look hard for ways to create quality development that exceeds the standards of what has been done previously while seeking minimal and appropriate variances. By looking at the area – including the goals for the Town Center District at Belvedere Plaza – They have created a vision that, although small, will be a great

entryway to the Town Center and transition point. This location is highly visible, and this project as proposed will be worthy of the location. We believe strongly that it will inspire change in this area.



On the following page are photos of a building in Seattle which is similar in character to what is planned for this property.



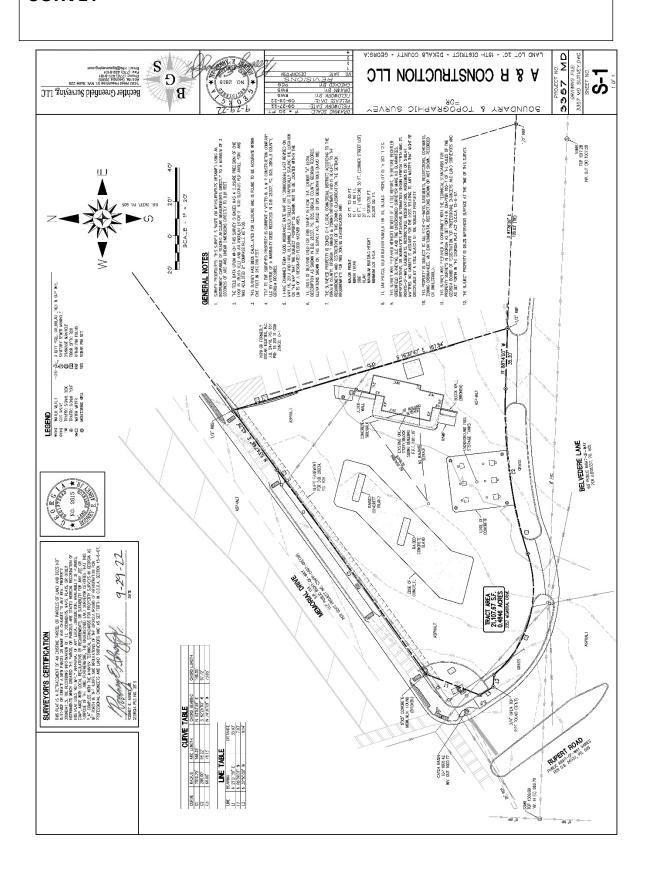
Front and side views of the proposed building style. (This building is in Seattle, Washington, so we will need to make some modifications.)



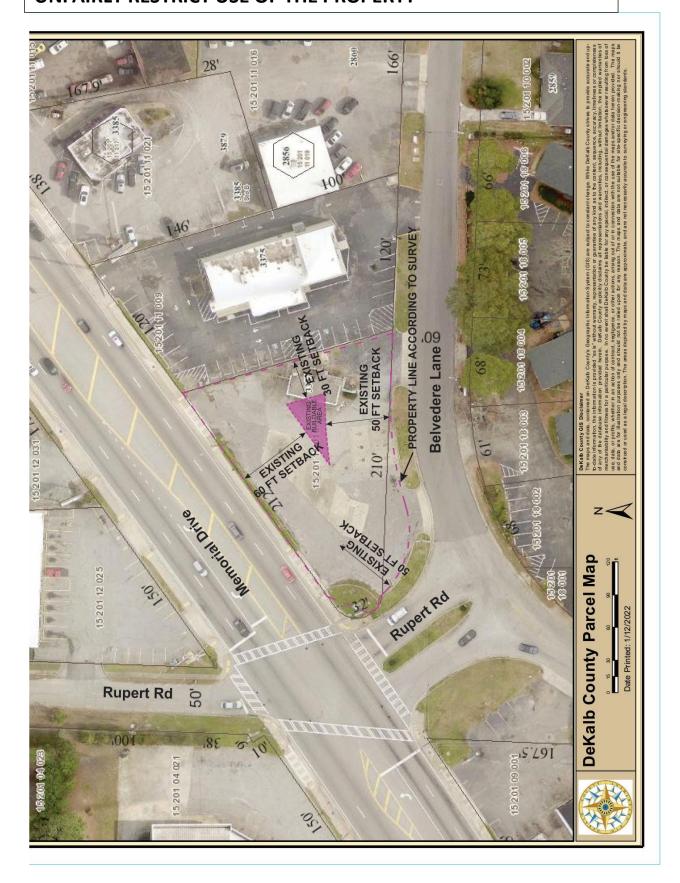
Some views inside the building in Seattle with the work space at upper left, and the others show the living spaces.

On the following pages are enlarged views of the plans for the project.

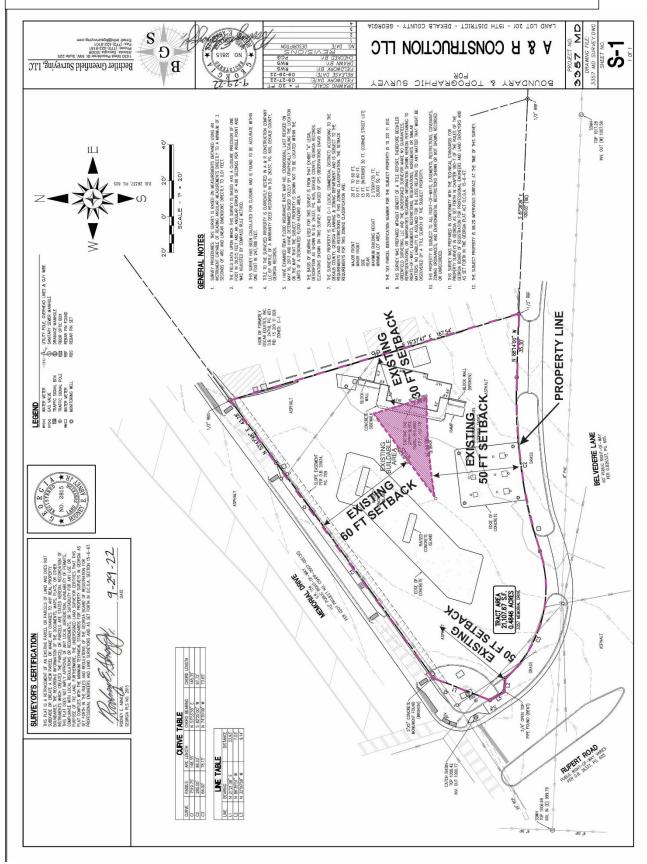
SURVEY



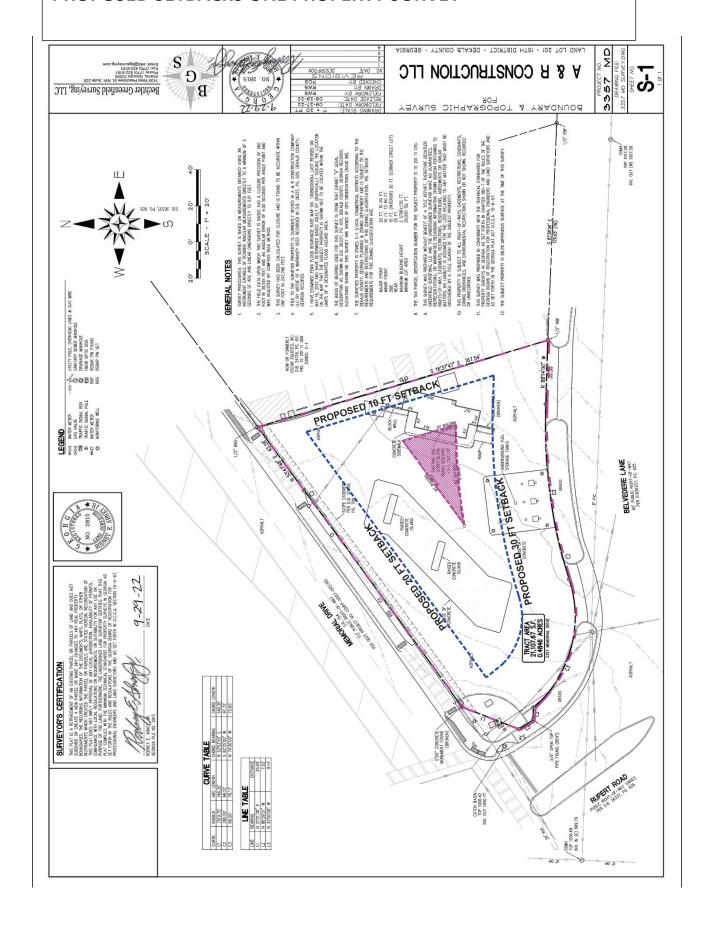
EXISTING SITE AERIAL ILLUSTRATING HOW EXISTING SETBACKS UNFAIRLY RESTRICT USE OF THE PROPERTY



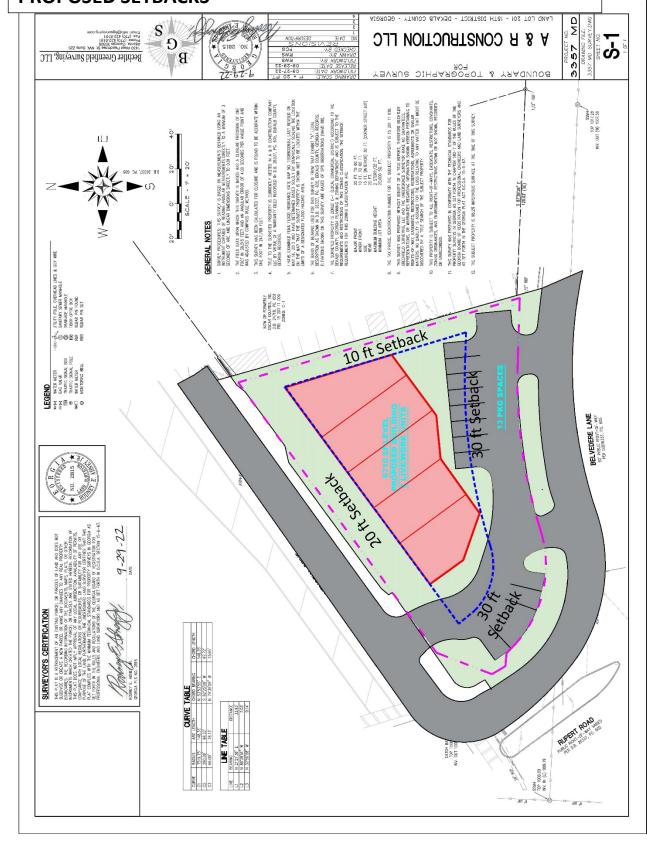
PROPERTY LINE AND BUILDABLE AREA HIGHLIGHTED ON SURVEY OF EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



PROPOSED SETBACKS ONE PROPERTY SURVEY



PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN ON SURVEY BASE WITH PROPOSED SETBACKS



PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

