

ACTION DENYING VARIANCE REQUEST

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY: Pittman & Greer Engineering

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: September 5, 2025

RE: Request for a Variance on a ±15.3122-acre tract of land located 1060 Cemetery Rd in the Town of Bishop, Georgia, (A-07-034), to remove the 10' no access easement and required planting screen.

After consideration and a motion and second, the Bishop Mayor and City Council does hereby deny the above-referenced request for a Variance.

This 14th day of October, 2025.

BISHOP MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

BY: _____

Drew Kurtz, Mayor

Chuck Hadden, Member

Deborah Lucas, Member

Hudson Holder, Member

Mindy Porterfield, Member

ATTEST: _____

Lacy Armstrong
Clerk, Town of ~~Begart~~ Bishop





**Planning Department
Oconee County, Georgia
STAFF REPORT**

VARIANCE (BISHOP) CASE #: P25-0195

DATE: October 7, 2025

STAFF REPORT BY: David Webb, AICP (Planning Manager)

APPLICANT NAMES: Justin Greer, Pittman and Greer,
Engineering, P.C.

PROPERTY OWNER(S): Saint Aelred Catholic Church

LOCATION: 1060 Cemetery Road
Parcel: A 07 034

PARCEL SIZE(s): ±15.31 acres

EXISTING ZONING: A-1 Agricultural District

EXISTING LAND USES: Vacant- wooded

TYPE OF VARIANCE REQUESTED: Variance from the Bishop Subdivision Ordinance

REQUEST SUMMARY: A variance from Bishop Subdivision Ordinance Section 502.3.6, to remove the 10' no access easement and required planting screen.

DATE OF SCHEDULED HEARINGS

TOWN OF BISHOP, MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEEETING: October 14, 2025

ATTACHMENTS:

- Application
- Warranty Deed
- Plat of Survey
- Concept Plan
- Narrative
- Legal Description
- Architectural Elevations



CONCURRENT APPLICATION: The applicant is requesting Conditional Use Approval for a Community-Scale Church. The total Square Feet (SF) proposed for all buildings is 26,300 SF to include a Church, assembly hall, academy, office, catechesis classroom building, rectory (residence for clergy), and a maintenance building.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION & FINDINGS OF FACT

HISTORY

- The subject property became a part of the Town of Bishop through an annexation by the Mayor and Council on April 12, 2021.
- The property was zoned A-1(Agricultural) upon the approval of the annexation.
- The property was previously zoned Oconee County AG (Agricultural).
- An adjacent property was zoned B-1 as part of the annexation for the purpose of building a Dollar General.
- A plat was filed October 10/6/2023 by Seeundberry, LLC (Daniela Wieczorek) and recorded in Plat book 2023, Page 144 that was not approved by the Town of Bishop and was not reviewed by Planning and Code Enforcement. Planning staff determined that the plat was an illegal subdivision.
- Saint Aelred Catholic Church acquired the 15.312 acres as recorded in Deed Book 1752, Page 216-220 based on the illegal plat.
- Daniela Wieczorek, Saint Aelred Catholic Church and Donald and Shirley Smith submitted an Administrative Plat to correct the illegal subdivision in February 2025. The plat was approved and recorded in Plat Book 2025, Page 35, with a non-access easement to Cemetery Road.

VARIANCE DESCRIPTION

- A variance from Bishop Subdivision Ordinance Section 502.3.6, to remove the 10' no access easement and required planting screen.
- This type of variance would normally be considered as part of a Preliminary Plat public hearing, but this plat was approved with an administrative review process.
- Section 502.3.6 states:
Double frontage lots, unless approved by the Bishop Mayor and Council, shall be prohibited except where essential to provide separation of residential development from traffic arteries or to overcome specific disadvantage associated with topography, orientation, and property size. A planting screen reservation of at least ten (10) feet in width, or equivalent natural buffer, may be required along the property line of lots abutting such a traffic artery or other incompatible use. The planted buffer shall form and constitute a No Access Easement, unless otherwise approved by the Mayor and Council.

TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS

- There is an estimated 832 Average Daily Trips for the whole church campus (Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition) based on a church with 299 seats, a private school with 191 students and an office building with 10 employees.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Water:

- The project is proposing to connect to the Oconee County water system.

Sewer:

- The project is proposing to use on-site septic systems.

Roads:

- The site is proposed to access High Shoals Road, GA state route 186, and Cemetery Road, a local street. Staff notes that Cemetery Road does not meet the Town of Bishop standards as the paved width is between 10 and 12 feet within the Town limits. A pavement width of 20 feet is required by the Bishop Subdivision Ordinance section 503.9.

Environmental:

- The concept plan indicates there are no State Waters, Wetlands or Flood Hazard Areas on the site.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION IS MADE BASED UPON THE “VARIANCE” STANDARDS AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 106.4 OF THE TOWN OF BISHOP SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

Section 106.04 states:

The Mayor and Council is authorized to grant variance from the literal requirements of these Regulations in cases where the size, shape, or topography of a parcel prevents it from being designed to conform to these Regulations. Variance may be granted with conditions. However, in no case shall a Variance reduce the lot size, side yard setback or road widths.

- Granting this variance would be allowing a non-residential use to access a road that does not meet the road width standards and thus would violate section 106.04.
- Cemetery Road is a one lane road with approximately 12 feet of pavement at the point where the applicant is requesting access.
- This road does not meet the Town of Bishop Road standards for road pavement width, which is 20 feet for a local road.
- There is an estimated 832 Average Daily Trips for the whole church campus at full build-out that would access this one-lane road.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the standards and a review of the plans and current conditions of Cemetery Road, staff recommends **DENIAL** of this variance request.

If the Mayor and Council choose to approve the variance, staff recommends the following **conditions** be adopted:

1. Development design and structures shall meet or exceed the standards indicated on the concept plan, narrative, representative architectural sketches, and other documents submitted with the conditional use application and attached hereto. This condition shall not construe approval of any standard that is not in conformity with the Bishop Zoning Regulations or Subdivision Ordinance.
2. A traffic impact study shall be completed and submitted to the Oconee County Planning & Code Enforcement Department and Oconee County Public Works Department for review prior to application for a Site Development Plan. The scope of the traffic impact study shall be approved by the Oconee County Planning & Code Enforcement Director and the Oconee County Public Works Director. The study shall show conclusively that the impacted intersections will maintain, at a minimum, a level of service C. At the owner's expense, road and intersection improvements as identified in the approved Traffic Impact Study shall be made.
3. At its expense, the Owner shall make all right of way improvements to Cemetery Road and Payne Road to bring the roads up to current Town of Bishop and Oconee County roadway standards.
4. A separate Site Development Plan shall be submitted for any required road improvements and shall be completed and accepted by the Town of Bishop/ Oconee County prior to a Certificate of Occupancy being issued for any building on the site.
5. The owner shall file a revised administrative plat for review and approval, to remove the non-access easement. The plat shall be recorded prior to submission of a Site Development Plan for the site

Variance # P25-0194 - Saint Aelred Catholic Church

Parcel #
A-07-034

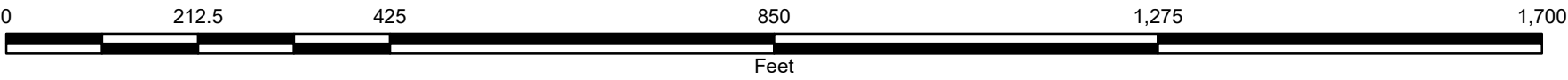
High Shoals Rd

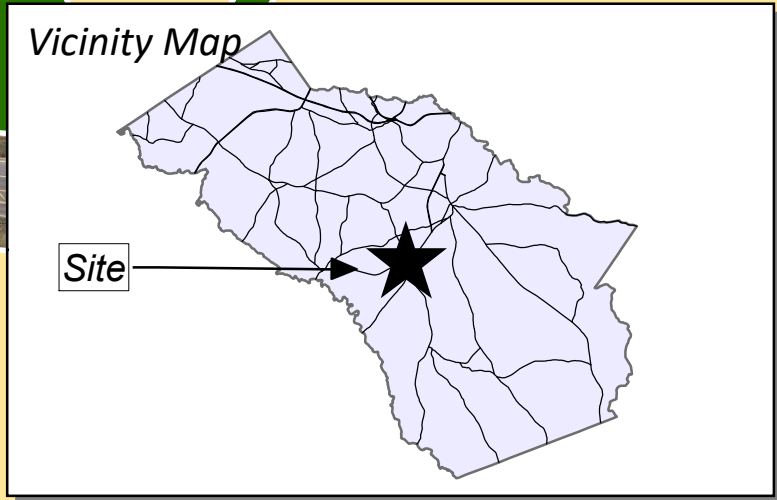
Macon

A-07-034

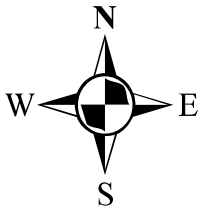
Cemetery Rd

1:2,266





**Oconee County
Planning Department**



This map is a representation of the future development map
and should be used for planning purposes only

0 80 160 320 480 640 Feet

A horizontal scale bar with markings at 0, 80, 160, 320, 480, and 640 feet.

Country Estates

***Neighborhood
Village***

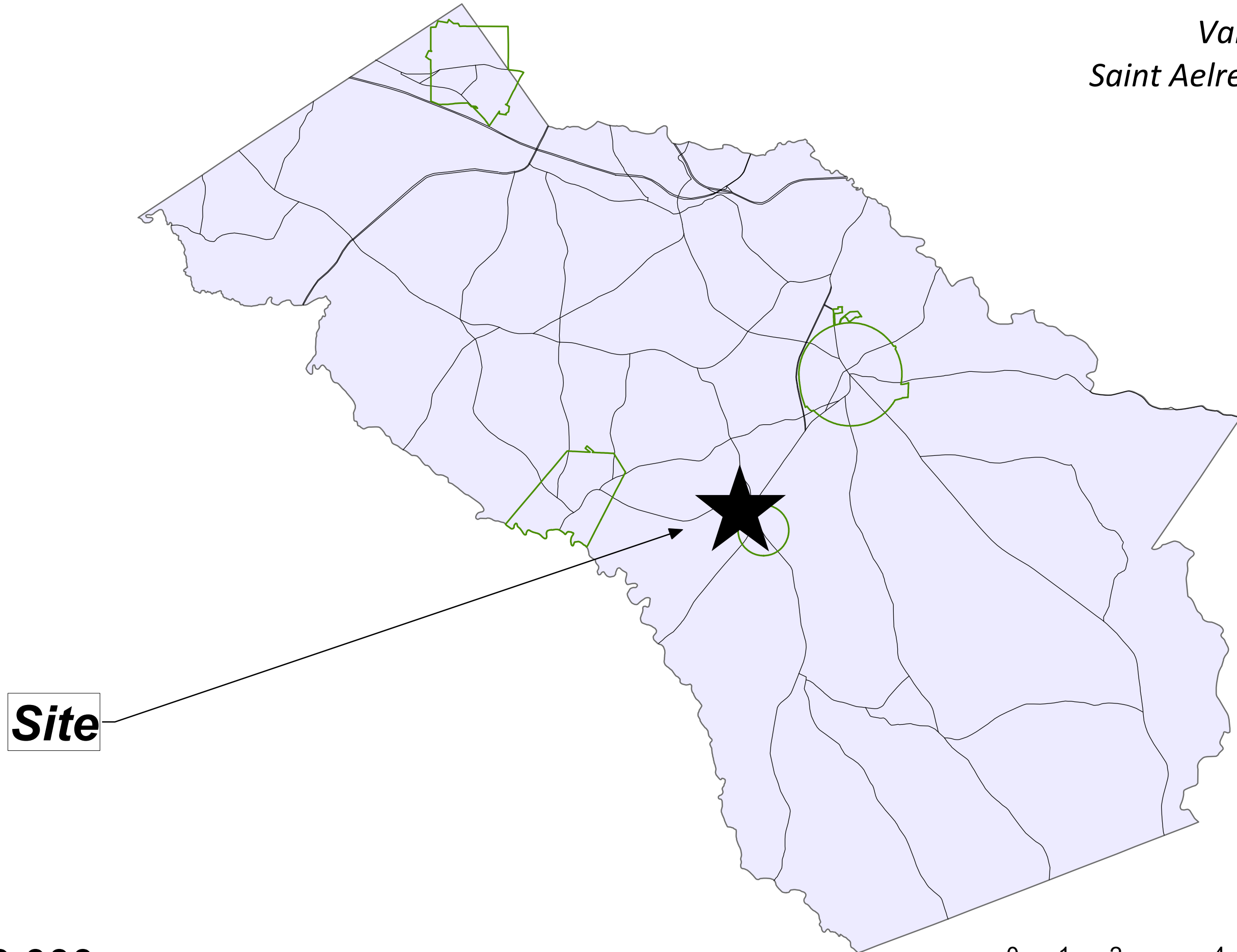
***Country
Estates***

***Rural
Places***

***Neighborhood
Village***

Suburban Neighborhood

*Location Map -
Variance # P25-0194
Saint Aelred Catholic Church*



Site

1:120,000

