

A. Explain any special circumstances affecting the land or structure (related to soil conditions, shape or topography) that are unusual and do not affect other properties AND any hardship that results from these special circumstances.

The land is unique such that approximately 76% of the lot is located in the city on Medford leaving just 723 square feet in the city of Somerville with the existing fire damaged one story building located entirely in Medford. The land in Somerville is located in a MR4 zone which requires the first story of any building in that zone to be 14' in height. The petitioner seeks to expand the structure into Somerville to make use of the open land available however the existing structure has a first floor height 9'-10". The lot is located in a residential neighborhood with two story houses therefore the proposed two story addition with a height of 19'-10" that has been approved by the zoning board of appeals in Medford is more in keeping with the neighborhood. Requiring the first floor in the Somerville portion of the lot to increase to 14' would create a financial hardship resulting in an unusable second floor space in the Somerville portion of the building. Increasing the overall height of the building would also result in a hardship causing the increased demolition of the existing structure and creating a building that is not in keeping with the neighborhood causing the petitioner to return to the city of Medford and re-apply for a finding from the zoning board of appeals.

B. Explain if and how the variance is the minimum approval necessary to grant reasonable relief to the owner AND results in a reasonable use of the land or structure.

The proposed addition to the building meets all other zoning requirements for MR4 lots aside from the three story minimum requirement. Currently the land in Somerville is unused and in disrepair and therefore not beneficial as is to the owner. It also lacks the dimensions required to use the current open area for parking. By granting this variance it will allow the owner to expand the existing structure in a way that is more cost effective and beneficial to the neighboring properties.

C. Explain if and how the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance AND will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

The unique location and configuration of this lot and building make it such that granting this variance will not be detrimental to the neighborhood. The granting of this variance is also in line with the intent of the MR4 zoning in that it will create and enhance the area for the smaller scale of this location and to provide a quality commercial space. The new building facade will also be in keeping with the requirements of the Somerville zoning ordinance for an MR4 zone and therefore will be an improvement to the neighborhood.