



City of Somerville

# ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**TO:** Zoning Board of Appeals  
**FROM:** OSPCD Staff  
**SUBJECT:** 8-8a Melvin Street, ZP25-000047, ZP25-000048, ZP25-000049  
**POSTED:** September 11, 2025

**RECOMMENDATION:** No change

This memo is supplemental to the PPZ Staff Memo dated July 10, 2025, found [here](#), and the first Supplemental Staff Memo dated August 6, 2025, found [here](#). Since the August 20, 2025, hearing date three new narratives (one per original item of relief), all dated September 9, 2025, were submitted.

## BACKGROUND

The hearing for the case was opened and heard at the July 16, 2025, ZBA meeting, but was continued by the Board to give the applicant an opportunity to present an alternative plan that required less relief. The Board heard the case again at the August 20, 2025, ZBA meeting, but it was continued again to give the applicant the opportunity to either present an alternative plan that required less relief or craft an argument for how the requested relief meets the first Hardship Variance criterion.

## ANALYSIS

The September 9, 2025, revised proposal presents an alternative proposal for the dormer dimensions. Under this latest proposal:

- Relief from SZO Section 3.1.13.I.ii.c. regarding maximum total dormer width **is no longer required**. The newly proposed total dormer width is compliant and measures 16'11".
- Relief from SZO 3.1.13.I.i.a. regarding maximum dormer face width is still required. The dormer face width was reduced to 11'7". The maximum allowed dormer face width with the newly revised dimensions would be 8'4". A **Hardship Variance** is required.
- Relief from SZO 3.1.13.I.i.c. regarding minimum dormer separation is **no longer required**. The dormer separation was increased from 6'4". The allowed minimum allowed dormer separation with the revised dimensions would be 5'-9 1/2".

However, the applicant still asks that the ZBA approve the proposed dormer dimensions proposed in the August 6, 2025 narrative and presented at the August 20, 2025 ZBA hearing.

At the August 20, 2025 ZBA hearing, the Board asked the applicant to provide an additional argument for relief regarding the first Hardship Variance criterion. The applicant presents no additional arguments that the proposal fits the first Hardship Variance criteria.

At the time of posting on September 11, 2025, ISD has not had adequate time to review the updated proposal for compliance, as it was only received September 10, 2025.

A comparison between the as-built, August 6, 2025, and September 9, 2025 required and proposed dimensions is presented in the tables below.

**SZO 3.1.13.I.ii.c (Maximum Total Dormer Width) – ZP25-000047**

- The cumulative width of a single, multiple, or attached combinations of dormers may equal up to fifty percent (50%) of the eave/ridge length of the roof.
- The eave/ridge length of the roof is 43'9".
- Below is a table comparing the requirements and proposed dimensions of all three proposed submissions:

As Built Requirement (based on dimensions in original staff memo)	As-Built Dimensions	August 6, 2025 Requirement	August 6, 2025 Revised Proposed Dimensions	September 9, 2025 Requirement	September 9, 2025 Narrative Revised Dimensions
21'10 ½"	22'4"	21'10 ½"	19'5"	21'10 ½"	16'11"
(43'9" / 2)	( <b>HV required</b> )	(43'9" / 2)	(no relief needed)	(43'9" / 2)	(no relief required)

- **No relief** is required for both the August 6, 2025 and September 9, 2025 submissions

**3.1.13.I.i.a (Maximum Dormer Face Width) – ZP25-000048**

- The maximum permitted dormer face width is the window(s) width + 36"
- Below is a table comparing the requirements and proposed dimensions of all three proposed submissions:

As Built Requirement (based on dimensions in original staff memo)	As-Built Dimensions	August 6, 2025 Requirement	August 6, 2025 Revised Proposed Dimensions	September 9, 2025 Requirement	September 9, 2025 Narrative Revised Dimensions
12'  (Window(s) width +36 in)  (9' of window width is proposed as built)	16'  (9' of window width and 7' of wall width)  <b>(HV required)</b>	11'  (8' of window width is now proposed)	13'1"  (8' of window width and 5'1" wall width)  <b>(HV required)</b>	8'4"  (5'4" of window width is now proposed)	11'7"  (5'4" of window width and 6'3" of wall width)  <b>(HV required)</b>

- A **Hardship Variance** is required for all three proposals.

### **3.1.13.I.i.c (Minimum Dormer Separation) – ZP25-000049**

- The minimum dormer separation is 50% of the dormer width

As Built Requirement (based on dimensions in original staff memo)	As-Built Dimensions	August 6, 2025 Requirement	August 6, 2025 Revised Proposed Dimensions	September 9, 2025 Requirement	September 9, 2025 Narrative Revised Dimensions
8'0"  (50% of new 16' shed dormer)	1'11"  <b>(HV required)</b>	6'6½"  (50% of 13'1' shed dormer)	4'10"  <b>(HV required)</b>	5'-9 ½"  (50% of 11'7" shed dormer)	6'4"  <b>(no relief required)</b>

- The proposal submitted on August 6, 2025 required a **Hardship Variance**, the proposal submitted September 9, 2025 requires **no relief**

## **CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS**

Considerations and findings for permit ZP25-000048 (dormer face width) remain [the same](#). Permits ZP25-000047 (total dormer width) and ZP25-000049 (dormer separation) no longer require relief and, therefore, no longer require any considerations and findings.

## **PERMIT CONDITIONS (ZP25-000048, Dormer Face Width)**

Should the Board approve the required Hardship Variance regarding dormer face width, PPZ Staff recommends the following conditions:

Validity

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
2. The relief granted in this decision is valid only for the currently proposed 5'4" of window width and 6'3" of wall width, resulting in 11'7" of dormer face width. Any increase in the non-conforming dormer face width will require additional relief.

Public Record

3. A digital copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division for the public record.