



# **Executive Summary**

125 Hope Street      Demolition and Replacement Design Submission

## **Project Overview**

The application for 125 Hope Street involves a coordinated request for approval of demolition of the existing structure and approval of a proposed historically informed replacement design. The project has been under review for an extended period and has progressed beyond questions of feasibility to consideration of the appropriateness of the proposed reconstruction.

## **Background and Feasibility Review**

The existing structure has been evaluated extensively by structural engineers, architects, floodplain professionals, and regulatory agencies. Early structural investigations identified significant deficiencies, prompting a comprehensive review of potential alternatives, including renovation, elevation in place, and new construction.

A substantial portion of the existing living space is currently located below required flood elevation levels. Bringing the structure into compliance would require significant elevation and reconstruction measures, further compounding the structural and code-related challenges already identified.

At the Commission's request, the project team investigated FEMA and State Building Code constraints, lifting feasibility, environmental conditions, construction costs, and flood mitigation options. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) participated in site walks and meetings and reviewed the findings.

On September 25, 2025, RIHPHC issued a formal written opinion concluding that there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to demolition of the existing structure.

## **HDC Review History**

The Historic District Commission has reviewed the project multiple times, including hearings on March 6, 2025; September 29, 2025; January 6, 2026; and a workshop discussion on March 5, 2026. The Commission indicated that demolition could not be considered without a proposed replacement design and requested that any reconstruction reference the existing structure and respond to scale, massing, and streetscape concerns.

## **Design Approach**

The proposed design is a historically informed reconstruction that carries forward the character of the existing 1930s International Style residence without replicating it. The reconstruction is fully code-compliant, including compliance with current flood elevation requirements, with all living space relocated above required flood levels. The applicant has made several major design revisions including combining the originally proposed two single family homes to one duplex building, redesigning the duplex building to be a historically informed version of the existing home, and with this submission further revising the design to be one single family home with other revisions requested by the commission.

## **Request**

The applicant respectfully requests approval of the proposed replacement design and approval of the pending demolition request.

