



May 15, 2026

Town of Bristol Historic District Commission

10 Court Street

Bristol, Rhode Island

Re: 125 Hope Street

Pending Demolition Request and Submission of Proposed Replacement Design

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

We respectfully submit for your review the proposed architectural design for a historically informed reconstruction at 125 Hope Street, together with the accompanying plans, elevations, streetscape views, and material information. This submission is advanced in coordination with the pending demolition request and responds directly to the Commission's prior comments, guidance, and workshop discussion.

This filing follows the Commission's March 5, 2026 workshop, at which time it was agreed that a more fully developed replacement design would be prepared and presented prior to further consideration of the demolition application.

Project Background and Feasibility Review

The property at 125 Hope Street has been under review for an extended period, during which the feasibility of retaining the existing structure has been carefully and thoroughly evaluated. Structural inspections identified significant deficiencies, and it was further determined that a substantial portion of the existing living space is currently located below required flood elevation levels. Bringing the structure into compliance would require extensive elevation, reconstruction, and code-related interventions.

At the Commission's request, the project team investigated FEMA and State Building Code constraints, lifting feasibility, floodplain conditions, construction costs, and alternative flood mitigation strategies. These efforts included coordination with Town staff, CRMC, and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), as well as site walks and formal reviews.

Based on this comprehensive evaluation, RIHPHC issued a written opinion dated September 25, 2025 concluding that there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to demolition of the existing structure.

Transition to Replacement Design Review

At the September 29, 2025 and January 6, 2026 HDC hearings, the Commission indicated that demolition could not be considered without a proposed replacement design and requested that any reconstruction reference the existing structure in terms of character, massing, and architectural expression. The Commission further requested refinements related to scale, streetscape presence, and overall hierarchy.

Based on these directives, the project has progressed beyond feasibility analysis and is now focused on the appropriateness of the proposed replacement design.

Design Intent and Architectural Features

The proposed design is a historically informed reconstruction intended to carry forward the character of the existing 1930s International Style residence while providing a fully code-compliant and flood-resilient structure. The design does not seek to replicate the existing house, but rather to reinterpret its defining characteristics in a manner appropriate to current codes and site constraints.

Key architectural features of the proposed house include:

- Overall massing and proportions that reinforce the horizontal emphasis of the original structure
- Simple geometric forms organized in a clear hierarchy
- Asymmetry and articulated volumes that reduce perceived scale
- Ribbon windows and horizontal fenestration patterns consistent with the original architectural language
- Expression of the foundation and base acknowledging required flood elevation while maintaining visual grounding
- Restrained detailing and a material palette compatible with the historic district context

All living space is located above required flood elevation levels, and the structure is designed to meet current building, zoning, and floodplain regulations.

Consistency with Historic District Standards

The proposed reconstruction has been developed to be consistent with the Historic District Commission's standards and review criteria, particularly with respect to compatibility of scale, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials. While the design is clearly contemporary and fully code-compliant, it is intentionally grounded in the character-defining elements of the existing structure and its surrounding context. The building's articulated massing, horizontal emphasis, restrained detailing, and relationship to the streetscape are intended to ensure that the proposed house is compatible with the historic district without creating a false sense of history.

Response to Commission Comments

In direct response to Commission guidance, the current proposal incorporates conversion to a single-family residence from the previous design of a two family home, reduction in apparent width along Hope Street, refinement of façade proportions and roof forms, introduction of stepped volumes to break down scale, and preparation of existing and proposed streetscape views illustrating the project's appearance from both directions of travel.

Site Placement and Streetscape Considerations

The reconstructed building maintains a similar orientation and relationship to Hope Street and the shoreline. Required elevation increases have been addressed through a combination of massing refinement and shifting the structure farther back on the site, reducing its apparent height and visual impact from the public way.

Demolition and Replacement Coordination

The demolition request and replacement design are advanced together to allow the Commission to evaluate the proposal comprehensively, with a clear understanding of the structure proposed to replace the existing building.

Request

We respectfully request approval of the proposed reconstruction design and approval of the pending demolition request.

Sincerely,



Dennis DiPrete