



February 11, 2026

**Bristol Historic District Commission**

c/o Town of Bristol – Department of Community Development

235 High Street

Bristol, Rhode Island

**Re: 125 Hope Street – Revised Submission (Historically Informed Reconstruction)**

**Dear Members of the Bristol Historic District Commission,**

This letter is submitted as a continuation of the Commission’s review of the property at 125 Hope Street and accompanies the enclosed revised architectural drawings and schematic site plan. The project team appreciates the Commission’s sustained engagement over the past year, including the March 6, 2025 Historic District Commission meeting, the March 26, 2025 site walk with Commission members and staff, the September 29, 2025 HDC meeting, and the January 6, 2026 meeting at which the Commission provided direction on the next phase of the project.

Through this extended review process, the existing house has been carefully evaluated by structural engineers, architects, and floodplain professionals, and the findings have been discussed with the Commission on multiple occasions. As part of that process, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) issued a written opinion dated September 25, 2025 stating that *“Given these factors, it is the RIHPHC’s opinion that there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to the demolition.”* That opinion, together with the Commission’s deliberations and prior findings, has allowed the project team to move forward from questions of feasibility to a focused discussion on architectural design, historic character, and compatibility within the Historic District.

At the January 6, 2026 meeting in particular, the Commission indicated that while the need for demolition was understood by a majority of the Commission, there remained a strong interest in ensuring that any new construction on the site meaningfully reflects the historic character and perceived uniqueness of the existing house. The Commission further expressed a preference for a single primary structure and encouraged the project team to clearly identify which architectural qualities of the existing house contribute to the Historic District and to demonstrate how those qualities could be incorporated into a new design.

The revised submission has been prepared in direct response to that guidance.



## **Terminology and Design Intent**

For clarity, the project team describes the proposed work as a historically informed reconstruction. Due to floodplain and structural constraints, the existing structure cannot be retained or restored. The intent of the historically informed reconstruction is to preserve and carry forward the scale, massing, form, and character-defining architectural features of the existing house, while accommodating current building code, floodplain, and life-safety requirements. The goal is not to create a literal copy, but rather a new, code-compliant structure that is firmly grounded in the historic character and context of the district.

## **Identification of Character-Defining Features**

As part of this effort, the architect prepared a photographic and analytical study of the existing house identifying architectural elements considered noteworthy and contributing to the Historic District. These elements are illustrated and labeled in the attached drawings and include the central brick chimney, hip roof form, recessed entry condition, roof overhangs, simple geometry, cupola, grouped window patterns, and traditional material expression.

## **Revised Design Approach**

The revised proposal consists of a historically informed reconstruction that maintains the historic scale, massing, and architectural language of the existing house while accommodating a duplex program within a single, unified building. While the use differs from the existing single-family configuration, the exterior expression is intentionally designed to read as one structure, consistent with the Commission's stated preference.

## **Design Options**

The architectural drawings include three conceptual options. Options A and B maintain a unified building form and align most closely with the Commission's preference for a single structure. Option C is included for comparison purposes only.

## **Site Plan and Context**

A schematic site plan is included showing the existing house and the proposed historically informed reconstruction, maintaining the historic siting and relationship to Hope Street and the shoreline.

## **Conclusion**

This revised submission represents a good-faith effort to respond directly to the Commission's guidance by proposing a historically informed reconstruction that preserves the historic character of the existing house while providing a safe, code-compliant, and long-term viable structure.



**Enclosures:**

- Architectural Concept Drawings – Historically Informed Reconstruction (Options A, B, and C)
- Character-Defining Features Analysis (Existing House Photograph with Annotated Features)
- Schematic Site Plan – Existing House and Proposed Historically Informed Reconstruction

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis DiPrete

Principal

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