

INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

112 UNION STREET

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Y E A R L Y R E P O R T

1 9 5 6

January 25, 1957

The Honorable City Council of the
City of Providence
City Hall
Providence, Rhode Island

Honorable Sirs:

I respectfully submit for your information and consideration,
a report of the work of the Department of Inspector of Buildings
for the year 1956.

Attached hereto are two tables setting forth by wards and
types of occupancies, the number of buildings and miscellaneous
structures, including the estimated costs, for which permits were
issued. The table marked "New Work" contains data pertaining to the
construction of new buildings and miscellaneous structures. The
table marked "Additions and Alterations" contains data pertaining
to building operations on existing buildings in order to provide
additional space or to make interior changes to satisfy current and
anticipated needs.

The estimated costs as set forth herein, taken from the
accompanying tables, do not include the costs of heating, plumbing
and electrical installations.

From the tables, the estimated cost of construction for the
year 1956 is as follows:-

New Buildings-----	351 Permits
Estimated Cost-----	\$7,223,600.00
Additions & Alterations-----	1,068 Permits
Estimated Cost-----	\$8,470,150.00
Total Estimated Cost of Construction----	\$15,693,750.00

Permits (not included in tables) issued during the year 1956,
are as follows:-

*Razing of Dilapidated Buildings-----	184	Permits
Sandblasting of Buildings-----	7	"
Moving of Buildings-----	25	"
Roofs Recovered-----	70	"
Erection of Billboards-----	63	"
Erection of Wall Signs-----	84	"
Erection of Signs over Sidewalks-----	359	"
Erection of Fire Escapes-----	94	"
Construction of Vaults-----	7	"
Use of Streets & Sidewalks-----	154	"
Erection of Fences-----	1	"
Storage of Dangerous Chemicals-----	40	"
Storage of Petroleum Products in Bulk-----	4	"
Total-----	1092	"

Permits Issued During Year 1956-----2511

*Buildings Demolished for Public Improvements -
 not included in the list of Permits above -
 Willard Avenue Project Unit No. 2 ----- 20 Buildings

Note:

The above installations, not included in the tables,
 do not include estimated costs (not required by
 ordinances).

212 Family Units have been added during the year 1956 as a
 result of building activities through private channels as
 follows:-

(a) New Buildings - One Family -----	182	Family Units
" " 4 - Two Families-----	8	" "
(b) Conversions-----	22	" "

Total Inspections for the year 1956 - 15,206

Total Fees collected during the year 1956 - \$21,177.80.

BUILDING ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 1956

Private building operations, during the year 1956, in the City of Providence with a total declared estimated cost of \$15,693,750. is \$7,614,850. greater than the 1955 total estimated cost of construction - a rise of 49%. This rise in estimated costs of construction is due to a steady upward trend of construction for all types of buildings, with residential buildings accounting for approximately 16.6% of the total estimated cost figures. New one-family dwellings, with a total declared estimated cost of \$1,866,200. for 1956, accounts for 12% of the total declared estimated costs of building construction, 74% of the 1956 total estimated cost figures for residential building operations and a loss of 94% over the estimated cost figures of the year 1955.

During the year 1956, 1419 permits were issued for the construction of new buildings, additions and alterations to existing buildings - 36 permits less than the number of permits issued during the previous year 1955 - a decrease of 8%. Other permits separately listed in this report, issued during 1956 total 1092 - a decrease of 51 permits over the 1955 figures - a decrease of 9.5%.

The estimated cost figures for additions and alterations to existing buildings, during the year 1956, show an increase of \$4,423,350. or a 100.09% rise over the 1955 estimated cost figures, while the permits issued during the same period show a decrease of 25 permits or a decrease of 7% from the 1955 figures. A careful study of the tables will provide the answers to the great differences in percentages which arise from the declared estimated cost figures and the number of permits issued during the same periods. A list of buildings, for which permits were issued in 1956 with a declared estimated cost of construction of \$50,000. or more, are set forth herein for purposes of clarification and information pertaining to these differences in percentages.

Buildings For Which Permits Were Issued In 1956 With A
Declared Estimated Cost of \$50,000. Or More:

City of Providence Sewage Plant 2 Ernest Street Alterations to Plant-----	\$3,644,000.
Brown University 15 Benevolent Street New Freshmen's Quadrangle-----	\$2,000,000.
City of Providence 220 Blackstone Street New School-----	\$1,289,000.
City of Providence 101 Joslin Street New Gymnasium-----	\$300,000.
City of Providence 101 Joslin Street New Swimming Pool 50'0" x 165'0"-----	\$135,000.
Willard Realty Co. Prairie Avenue New Shopping Center-----	\$200,000.
Rhode Island Hospital 593 Eddy Street Alterations to Crawford Allen Memorial Unit-----	\$390,000.
Rhode Island Hospital Trust Co. 15 Westminster Street Addition - Dining and Cafeteria on roof and change non-bearing partitions on the 12th floor-----	\$50,000.
Rhode Island Hospital Trust Co. 15 Westminster Street Repair and waterproof basement walls and floor Add non-bearing partitions-----	\$80,000.
St. Paul's School 445 Elmwood Avenue Addition 64'10" x 107'0" Church and school-----	\$75,000.
Curran and Burton 500 Allens Avenue Addition 2-13,600. BBl Tanks with earth levees-----	\$94,000.
John Hope Community Association 376 Knight Street Addition - Gymnasium 82'-8" x 58'-0"-----	\$71,000.
Citizens Savings Bank 865 Westminster Street One story addition to bank 36.72' x 120'-0"-----	\$78,000.
Hospital Service Corporation of Rhode Island 31 Canal Street Flood Control (Waterproof Basement, Flood doors)-----	\$74,000.

Rhode Island Hospital (Jane Brown) Lockwood Street Addition of Elevator Shaft 1st to 5th floor-----	~\$85,000.
Lying-In Hospital 50 Maude Street New addition to hospital-----	\$972,000.
N. E. Meeting of Friends 301 Butler Avenue New School Building-----	\$200,000.
Church of the Assumption 791 Potters Avenue New rectory - 2 stories 55'-3" x 85'-3"-----	\$100,000.
Providence College River Avenue Alterations to dormitory-----	\$120,000.
Providence College Eaton Street Alterations to dormitory-----	\$130,000.
New Post Office Building 820 Elmwood Avenue-----	\$123,000.
Providence Lithograph 353 Prairie Avenue New addition to Present plant-----	\$205,000.
Sun Oil Co. Terminal Road (Fields Point) Alterations to their plant-----	\$50,000.
Dieges & Clust Public Street General Alterations to Factory building-----	\$50,000.
Firements Mutual 544 Elmwood Avenue New building-----	\$50,000.
Terminal Warehouse Co. 329 Harris Avenue New warehouse - Office and Showroom Building-----	\$50,000.
Trustees U/W Old Woolworth Building 185 Westminster Street New store front and Alterations for Old Stone Bank-----	\$50,000.
Windmill Diner and Restaurant, Inc. 241 Reservoir Avenue New diner-----	\$50,000.
Merril L. Hasenfield 4 Woodland Terrace One family dwelling and Two car garage-----	\$69,500.

The declared estimated cost of construction of the 29 buildings and structures listed above is \$11,451,500. or 72% of the total estimated construction cost figures; while the number of permits issued for the construction of these buildings is only 29 or less than 1.1% of the total number of permits issued for the construction of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings during the year 1956.

It is advisable to keep in mind, when using the declared estimated cost of construction figures in this report, that these figures are neither total nor accurate due, to the language of the Fee Schedule as set forth in the Building Ordinance, and in particular to the usual reluctance on the part of some people to declare fair or true estimates, etc. However, the margin of error does not seriously affect the comparisons and the conclusions drawn from these figures, but the amount of money collected through fees based upon the declared estimated costs of construction is considerably less than it should be.

Comments on 1956 Building Activities

The City of Providence moved at a rapid pace with major alterations to the Sewage Disposal Plant; a new School in South Providence; Swimming Pool and a Gymnasium on Joslin Street.

The Willard Avenue Shopping Center also got underway. We **expect** the West River Project to get started very soon.

The Rhode Island College of Education new school plant at the northern boundary of our city west of Smith Street also got underway.

The Rhode Island School of Design is now working on plans for new buildings in order to expand their school facilities.

The Rhode Island Hospital continued to improve and expand its hospital facilities. The old original hospital is now being razed and on its site a new cancer building will soon be erected which

will be connected to the new modern eleven story hospital building and to the other existing buildings surrounding it.

The new modern freshmen's dormitory at Brown University is well underway and will probably be opened by next fall. Other residential buildings have been altered in order to satisfy the needs of an expanding student body. It is worthy to note that in this Quadrangle the lift-slab method of construction is being utilized where construction basically consists of pouring reinforced concrete floors and roofs on the first floor casting surface, or in the field, and lifting them, by mechanical means, to their respective positions.

Before a new method of construction can gain headway in the construction industry, it must have certain advantages. The lift-slab method of construction has the advantage of allowing the majority of material placement and labor to be accomplished at grade level with a minimum of time and equipment. The pouring of concrete floors and roofs on the first floor slab eliminates a large portion of the form work required in normal construction.

The plan checking and inspection procedures are the same as for normal construction except that special consideration is given to the design and control of the lifting operation and to temporary bracing of columns. Maximum and minimum design criteria has been established to minimize erection failures and to assure that the completed structure complies with all construction requirements and recognized standard practices.

Providence College is continuing to move at a rapid pace, expanding its physical plant by providing additional dormitory buildings for their students.

Locally, private building activities will continue to keep its present pace. The proposed ten story Howard Building will give the downtown area a new face lifting, being the first general office building erected downtown since 1927. This hurricane proofed office building will have no basement. It will rest on a thick concrete mat. The structure will be of reinforced concrete,

with a facing of gray brick. It will have a total of 95,000 square feet of floor space and it will be completely air-conditioned. The cost is estimated at \$2,500,000. The driving of piles is expected to start sometime in February.

The Nation's construction volume of all types, now hitting a record-smashing annual rate of \$60 billion, may rise to nearly \$78 billion a year by 1965 under prevailing peacetime conditions. The Associated General Contractor's of America states :-

In a special study of the construction trend for the next 10 years and its probable demands on structural steel and Portland cement supplies, the association estimated that by the end of the decade, increases of nearly one-third over current production of both these materials will be required for construction.

INSPECTIONAL ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO
SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN BUILDINGS

The annual inspections of all licensed occupancies (hotels, assembly halls of all types and sizes, cafes, barrooms, restaurants, etc.) were carried on in the usual manner by checking:

- (a) The general structural conditions of the building;
- (b) The type, construction, protection and accessibility of exits, the swing of exit doors, exit signs and lights;
- (c) The type, condition and location of heating and cooking equipment including their safety devices and controls;
- (d) The type, condition and location of fire protective equipment, such as, automatic sprinkler systems (wet and dry), fire extinguishers, fire hose and standpipe installations, fire alarm systems, etc.

This program of annual inspections, started many years ago and now considered routine, provides that type of inspectional service entirely devoted to the elimination or correction of hazardous conditions that come within the purview of the rules.

Annual inspections of all public and semi-public occupancies are made in order to maintain approved standards of safety. The License Bureau will not issue any license without first obtaining the approval of this office concerning the structural and fire-safety conditions of the premises. This type of inspectional service places an unusual burden on the field inspectors during the months of October and November every year - two months to complete inspections and submit reports for processing before the approvals or denials can be reported to the License Bureau.

The Department annually receives many complaints of unsatisfactory conditions, ranging from trash-littered open lots to reports that the man next door keeps ponies in his garage. Every complaint is investigated.

The processing of complaints is another important function requiring inspectional services. During the past year, more than 4,000 inspections were made, through this medium, checking and investigating complaints of hazardous conditions existing in residential, commercial, industrial, storage, educational, religious, institutional and mixed occupancy buildings. This effort has been bolstered, over the years, by the participation and cooperation of the members of the Fire Prevention Bureau. As a result of this type of service, thousands of buildings of all type of construction and occupancies have been made safer or razed. Structural, fire preventive and fire protective remedies applied as a result of this effort are as follows:

- (a) Repairs to and replacement of structural components of buildings;
- (b) General repairs to existing buildings for proper maintenance;
- (c) Installation of automatic sprinkler systems;
- (d) Erection of fire division walls;
- (e) Erection of fire-resistive partitions;
- (f) Erection of fireproof or fire-resistive enclosures around stairways and vertical shafts of all types;

- (g) Construction of fire resistive ceilings for horizontal protection;
 - (h) Installation of opening protectives on windows where exposure distances to lot lines and other buildings are below minimum requirements;
 - (i) Erection of fire escapes;
 - (j) Installation of fire alarm systems;
 - (k) Installation of fire-hose and standpipe systems;
 - (l) Installation of fire extinguishers;
 - (m) Installation of fire dampers and automatic controls on ventilating and air-conditioning systems, etc.;
 - (n) Construction of fireproof vaults and enclosures for the storage of flammable liquids and volatiles and dangerous chemicals.
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THE NEW BUILDING CODE

One of the significant accomplishments of the year 1956 was the passing of the new Building Code on December 20th.

This code provides for a Building Code Revision Board composed of thirteen (13) members whose powers and duties shall be to approve rules and regulations proposed by the Director for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the code and to secure the intent and beneficial effects thereof. This will provide a means of maintaining a modern, effective, and flexible code which will be responsive to progress in architecture and engineering. It will also keep abreast of improvements in materials and techniques.

The Building Code in as far as possible sets forth the purposes to be accomplished rather than the method to be followed; thus it anticipates the use of many discoveries and advances in technology and science that are developed to make buildings more attractive and safe.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT

The duties and responsibilities assigned to the Inspector of Buildings Department provides that all buildings, structures, and the alteration, repair or demolition thereof shall be performed in accordance with building and zoning ordinances. All plans must be checked for conformity with recognized engineering standards and construction practices to provide the safety and quality of construction established by ordinance.

The field inspectors through means of both periodic and called inspections, assure that field work complies with the approved plans and specifications and the requirements enumerated above.

In the 1956 fiscal year there was tremendous building activity in Providence. The trend points to a still greater volume of construction to come.

It is interesting to note that we haven't had such a volume of business since 1928. Yet with three men less in the Department - since the death of Mr. Addeo, Mr. McQueeney and the retirement of Mr. Hurley - we have been able to cope with this tremendous volume of new construction without losing sight of its many other services.

Steady pressure has been maintained behind the program of dilapidated dwellings and the elimination of fire hazard and unsanitary conditions. Consistent progress has been made in the program of removing buildings in dangerous condition.

The Department's success in accomplishing this work is in a large measure due to the fine spirit and performance of the employees.

We look back with pride on the Department's ability to keep abreast of the ever increasing work load and at the same time increase the many services offered to the public. We anticipate still greater accomplishments in the year to come, for it is only by obtaining and keeping the good will of the Building Public and the Building Industry that the Department can function in a smooth manner and accomplish its purpose.

IN CITY COUNCIL
FEB 7 - 1957

READ:
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

D. Everett Whelan
CLERK

Respectfully submitted,

Vincent Di Mase

Additions & Alterations 1956

WARDS

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	NO.	EST. COST
Dwellings															
1 Family	No. 12	39	14	30	29	18	18	12	24	10	3	5	4	218	200,550
Dwellings	Est. Cost 14,350	71,050	8,300	22,650	22,500	16,850	15,400	4,750	16,950	3,150	850	1,950	1,800		
2 Families	No. 17	10	12	15	16	23	30	22	30	14	19	12	22	242	221,050
Multi Families	Est. Cost 13,650	9,100	6,350	19,900	28,500	30,300	31,400	8,850	20,350	11,200	12,000	10,800	18,650		
	No. 10	5	7	14	19	15	16	12	7	11	13	18	36		
Churches, Homes, Etc	Est. Cost 6,650	4,300	6,250	19,150	17,700	18,250	19,450	10,200	6,600	9,650	9,650	18,150	26,600	183	172,600
	No. 1	-	2	2	2	1	-	2	-	1	2	5	1		
Amusement & Recreation	Est. Cost 500	-	23,000	25,000	100,800	4,000	-	20,200	-	2,500	393,500	36,300	1,200	19	1,514,200
	No. -	1	-	2	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	3		
Office Buildings and Banks	Est. Cost -	1,500	-	1,100	-	-	6,800	4,000	-	-	-	1,000	93,100	11	107,500
	No. 4	3	-	2	-	-	1	1	2	5	1	24	5		
Public & Municipal	Est. Cost 23,100	35,100	-	7,000	-	-	2,500	50,000	32,200	32,800	200	298,250	85,300	48	566,450
	No. 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	12	-		
Schools	Est. Cost 2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20,000	-	-	111,950	-	14	133,950
	No. 4	1	-	1	3	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	1		
Gasoline Stations	Est. Cost 8,200	600	-	8,000	262,000	-	-	75,000	14,000	-	-	800	3,000	14	371,600
	No. 2	-	2	3	1	-	2	1	3	6	2	6	4		
Garages	Est. Cost 4,250	-	2,300	4,700	3,500	-	2,600	12,000	3,900	14,800	12,500	6,500	8,000	32	75,050
	No. 1	4	1	2	5	3	2	5	6	2	2	1	2		
Stores	Est. Cost 150	5,050	200	600	2,450	1,350	1,200	3,100	1,000	1,800	450	100	4,500	36	21,950
	No. 5	2	7	6	8	4	9	2	8	6	10	58	12		
Storehouses	Est. Cost 32,200	900	23,800	20,600	30,350	11,100	14,950	1,250	77,800	2,900	35,200	236,350	41,700	137	529,100
	No. -	-	1	4	-	1	1	2	3	5	1	3	1		
Manufactories and Shops	Est. Cost -	-	5,000	2,300	-	8,000	2,800	15,400	62,100	126,700	850	12,600	300	22	236,050
	No. 4	-	1	2	2	1	3	3	7	9	11	14	13		
Oil Burners	Est. Cost 8,500	-	1,000	2,500	15,900	14,000	5,750	35,350	86,750	3,929,150	49,900	89,500	68,350	70	4,294,050
	No. 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Miscellaneous	Est. Cost 7,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7,000
	No. 1	-	1	5	2	1	-	3	-	1	3	2	2		
Total Number by Wards	Est. Cost 1,400	-	7,000	4,700	1,150	300	-	900	-	300	900	1,800	600	21	19,050
Estimated Cost by Wards	No. 68	65	48	88	87	67	84	68	92	70	67	163	106	1068	
	121,950	127,600	83,200	138,200	1,372,050	91,550	102,850	241,000	341,650	413,495	516,000	826,050	353,100		

Total Permits 1,068
Est. Cost 8,470,150

New Work - 1956

WARDS

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	No.	EST. COST
Dwellings	No.	14	4	31	79	22	24	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 Family	Est. Cost	15,000	326,500	45,000	729,800	197,200	196,500	17,500	31,500	-	-	7,000	-	182	1,866,200
Dwellings	No.	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 Families	Est. Cost	-	20,500	-	10,000	15,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	45,500
Multi Families	No.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Est. Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Churches, Homes, Etc	No.	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3	119,500
Est. Cost	-	-	-	15,000	-	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	4,500	-	-	-
Amusement & Recreation	No.	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	5	178,000
Est. Cost	-	-	-	18,000	135,000	7,000	-	-	18,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Office Buildings and Banks	No.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	1	4	104,600
Est. Cost	28,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	40,000	36,300	300	-	-
Public & Municipal	No.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	131,000
Est. Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	123,000	-	-	8,000	-	-	-
Schools	No.	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	3,789,000
Est. Cost	2,000,000	200,000	-	-	-	300,000	2	-	-	-	128,000	-	-	-	-
Gasoline Stations	No.	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	125,600
Est. Cost	38,000	-	-	-	-	-	35,700	-	1,900	-	-	17,000	33,000	-	-
Garages	No.	4	10	7	31	10	15	2	9	2	3	3	2	-	-
Est. Cost	5,500	15,800	-	8,400	30,050	9,800	14,100	16,000	10,550	17,000	22,600	3,800	52,500	98	176,400
Stores	No.	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	9	377,500
Est. Cost	8,000	35,000	18,000	4,000	-	-	-	-	85,000	27,500	200,000	-	-	-	-
Storehouses	No.	1	-	2	-	1	1	-	2	3	-	-	1	-	-
Est. Cost	6,000	-	22,000	-	-	2,800	400	-	3,600	69,900	-	-	50,000	11	154,700
Manufactories and Shpps	No.	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	3	-	1	3	-	-
Est. Cost	10,000	-	-	20,000	15,000	-	19,500	-	1,400	29,000	-	7,500	52,500	13	154,900
Oil Burners	No.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Est. Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	No.	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Est. Cost	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600	2	700
Total Number by Wards	14	28	5	44	113	36	44	5	24	9	6	13	10	-	-
Estimated Cost by Wards	210,500	597,800	63,000	387,600	184,950	659,800	273,200	119,100	274,950	128,100	1,553,600	84,100	158,900	-	-

Total Permits 351
Est. Cost 7,223,600