

**NINETEENTH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
1974 - 1975**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
BUILDING INSPECTION**

**VINCENT DIMASE, P. E.  
DIRECTOR**



[Redacted signature area]

**IN CITY COUNCIL**

**NOV 6 1975**

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

*Vincent Casper*  
CLERK

DEPT. CITY CLERK  
PROVIDENCE, R.I.

OCT 17 10 22 AM '75



CITY OF PROVIDENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION  
112 Union Street

N I N E T E E N T H    A N N A L    R E P O R T

1974 - 1975

VINCENT DIMASE, P.E.  
DIRECTOR

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July 28, 1975

The Honorable Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Mayor  
and The Honorable City Council  
City of Providence, Rhode Island

Gentlemen:

I am pleased to submit the Nineteenth Annual Report of operations, work carried on, and achievements of the Department of Building Inspection during the year 1974-1975 as required by ordinance.

The details of the operations of the Department are covered in the following reports of each of the divisions.

Our accomplishments, such as they may be, reflect our continuing vigilance to keep pace with new developments in all facets of the building construction industry.

During the past year the permit valuations amounted to \$21,361,249.41. The Department collected \$123,098.33 in permit fees.

The assistance and cooperation received by the Department from you has aided greatly in the realization by the accomplishments described herein. With your continued cooperation and counsel and through the conscientious efforts of the employees of this Department, we shall continue to improve the quality and efficiency of the services we render in the interest of public safety.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Vincent DiMase, P.E.  
Director

## THE BUILDING CODE

The drastic laws of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, approved 2000 years before Christ, exacted the death penalty on the builder if the house collapsed killing the owner. If the son of the owner was killed the son of the builder was put to death.

From these beginnings, the building codes and construction specifications have developed in response to the increasing complexity of social organizations and to advances in the building arts. As communities grew and people came to live in closer proximity, more pressing problems of public health, safety and welfare were generated. On the other hand, technological progress opened—continues to open—the way for meeting these problems through the use of new and improved construction materials, components and techniques.

The Providence Building Code is patterned after the Building Officials and Code Administrators, International, known as BOCA Code.

The Providence Building Code is a Model Performance Code and, insofar as practicable within the limits of public safety, allows the use of any material, type of assembly, method of construction, or style of architecture that meets the required standards of strength, and fire resistance. Provisions for safety to life require exit ways that will be safe to use under fire conditions and also require physical restrictions to the spread of fire such as: limitation of areas; proper enclosure of all vertical openings,

shafts, and elevators; fire walls (and in some cases exterior walls) having stability under fire conditions as well as fire resistance; restrictions of flame spread of materials used as interior finish; protection of window openings against fire exposure; and installation of automatic sprinkler system for certain occupancies, including those with readily combustible contents. Lack of one or more of the above features has frequently been an important factor in the injury or death of persons from fires in buildings. The requirements of the BOCA Code take into account the accumulation of years of study of these factors by men familiar with the phenomena of fires and their spread in buildings.

There are at present thirty-five cities and towns in Rhode Island that have adopted the BOCA Basic Code, some with modifications.

This is a great achievement for Rhode Island because uniformity of codes encourages building construction; reduces construction costs; and results in greater convenience for the building industry and the public.

The proposed R.I. State Building Code will be the 1975 Edition of BOCA Basic Code. This will achieve uniformity for the entire state.

The nature and conditions under which most individuals come in contact with building codes frequently leads to misunderstanding of the reasons for such regulations. The first experience many persons have with the building code in their community is when they are prevented by the code from doing what they want. The natural

reaction of each of us when we are told, "you can't do this", is to try that much harder to do it. When a law, with which we are not familiar, is responsible for this situation, our natural reaction is that the law is not good. But, just because we are displeased for the present with the law, we really have no justifiable reason to condemn it.

Governments are responsible to provide protection for the people whom they serve and by whom they are elected. This is why they have police departments, sheriffs and deputies, and many other of the municipal functions which watch over the lives and property of the people of the community. As a part of its police power, the government must look after the construction and remodeling of buildings—not for the purpose of forcing upon the public some individual's ideas of construction and design—but to be sure that buildings will be strong and enduring; that they will have adequate light, ventilation and sanitary facilities; that they will be reasonably free from fire hazards; and that each property owner's rights are equally respected.

This is accomplished through a law known as the building code. A good building code, well administered, is one of the best assurances for the orderly development of a community; the prevention of slums and blight; the safeguarding of life, health and property.

Where buildings of private ownership and use are well separated from each other there is minimum hazard resulting from their construction and use. As communities become more congested

and buildings are occupied by numerous persons, these hazards increase substantially. Great changes have taken place in the past few years. The country has changed from a rural to a metropolitan community. There have been great advances in construction materials and technology. More building components are now factory fabricated and delivered to the site as large units. Home building has been transformed from a craft to an industry providing houses before sale, instead of custom building them for prior purchasers.

Modern manufacturing techniques demand large, clear-span open buildings to accommodate assembly-line techniques and mechanical handling devices. To satisfy these requirements, industry is moving out into the country, purchasing large tracks of land for modern manufacturing buildings. Home building follows such developments, absorbing additional acreage to permit mass production of houses. Commercial development results, to provide services for the families of the factory workers who occupy the homes.

As a consequence, building codes, which were once considered only necessary in large cities, are now required in smaller communities, particularly those surrounding urban centers where here-to-fore rural townships are rapidly being transformed into bustling suburban villages and small cities with many of the problems and hazards of the central urban areas. Unfortunately, few areas recognize these conditions until they have been substantially started.

## What Should the Building Code Do?

Since building codes directly affect the property rights of individuals, it is important that they be properly drafted and well administered. They should be established and enforced by the unit of government closest to the people affected by them consistent with the ability to establish efficient administrative organization.

The building code is a law to provide for the safety of those who occupy or pass adjacent to any building; and to prevent a neighbor from building something that will be an undue hazard to an individual's property, or that individual from unduly hazarding his neighbor's property. It imposes certain limitations on individual rights for the greatest benefit to all concerned. Because it affects the lives, personal liberties and property rights of every citizen, the extent of the regulations must be carefully defined; there must be minimum requirements for safe and enduring construction, not maximum design specifications.

The building code is not an engineering manual; it is not a guide to the "do-it-yourself" enthusiast, although it will materially assist both of these. Ordinary, good construction, using sound materials will generally meet the requirements of a good building code. There is little reason to believe that an ordinary citizen, possessing elementary knowledge of the use of materials and tools, could not build his own house, garage, or shed in conformity with a good building code if he chose to do so. At the same time such a code would be a measure of assurance to him of a safe and sound building if he chooses to have it built

for him by another. It must be noted, however, that the building code is not intended to secure optimum conditions; to guarantee the best possible construction or even the best workmanship or materials. Rather, it establishes minimum standards of safety for varying conditions of use and type of construction of buildings for the general communal good.

#### How Building Codes Developed

For many years the only tangible method of preparing building regulations was by the use of local voluntary professional talent. This method was subject to certain abuses. The men who comprised local building code committees frequently injected into the codes which they prepared their own personal prejudices, many of which may have only remote relation to safety. Such committees were particularly vulnerable to pressures from local industry and commercial interests, so that their judgment was often influenced by the desire to be a "good neighbor". Lacking detail knowledge on certain subjects, these committees were also often influenced by free advice from vested interests.

The results were two-fold: the broader aspects of public benefit which the building code is supposed to serve, were often suppressed by regulations favoring special interests; and such activities inevitably produced differing requirements even in closely adjoining communities. Neither of these could be justified as suitable governmental service to the public.

To overcome this undesirable situation, organizations of public officials developed building codes that can be adopted by local governments. One of these organizations is --- BOCA International (Building Officials and Code Administrators International). In 1956 Providence adopted a new Building Code, patterned after BOCA Code.

The BOCA Building Codes were first published after more than five years of comprehensive study. They are the product of the combined thinking of more than ninety men in public offices of nearly as many cities, towns, villages, counties or states from all parts of the country. They were reviewed and criticized by the most qualified persons industry could find in the numerous branches of the construction field. They were revised and re-studied until it was generally agreed that they provided sound, minimum performance requirements for safety and endurance, commensurate with good enforcement techniques.

But it was realized that the ingenuity of the construction industry and continued research and development would produce conditions, materials and methods that could not be envisioned when the codes were first published. Therefore, provision was made to keep them up-to-date by a system of annual review and approval of changes. This is carried on with the same sincerity of purpose and careful scrutiny that characterized the initial development of the codes. The results are made available to local governments in convenient and economical form for adoption as amendments to the codes where they have been adopted.

Numerous other services are supplied to assist local administrators of codes in recognizing the qualities of materials and products, determining compliance with the code requirements, and keeping up-to-date with developments in the construction industry.

Vincent DiMase, P.E.  
Past President  
BOCA International

## THE BUILDING OFFICIAL

The building official is an elected or appointed public officer responsible for the administration and enforcement of the various codes regulating construction, use or occupancy of buildings and structures - public or private. His primary responsibility is to assure that the safety and health of the public is maintained through adherence to those requirements established by law in the construction or use of every building in the community. This includes buildings in which people live, eat, sleep, play, work, worship, study, recuperate, or are entertained. It even includes those buildings which restrict liberties - prisons and similar institutions. Stated more simply - all buildings of a municipality. Inherent in all of these facilities, even the most ornate and costly are characteristics that, if installed without proper controls, could pose threats to life, health or safety. In order to minimize such a possibility to every extent possible, the building official is invested with considerable authority. His knowledge, competence, experience, and the manner in which he assumes his responsibilities and exercises his authority make a significant difference between attainment of the safety contemplated by the codes, or missing built-in, hidden and insidious danger that, like dormant volcanoes, are unpredictable and deadly.

An individual aspiring to become a building official, who lacks training, experience and education in ALL aspects of construction, particularly related to code requirements, should be

considered to be deficient. Municipalities considering the employment of an individual to run a Building Department would be well advised to utilize a panel of experienced Building Officials to assist them in making a proper selection.

Personal deficiencies are alleviated to some extent when a department has a properly qualified staff of experts occupying key positions, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

The duties of the Building Official are to organize, plan, coordinate, train, direct, control, review, and to represent his municipality as its expert in the field of code administration and enforcement. He is responsible for its smooth and proper performance and, likewise, accountable for all its actions - good and bad.

If one were to compare objectively the duties, responsibilities and knowledge requirements of a Building Official with other municipal administrators, it is fairly certain that the comparison would show some startling differences. In no other field of municipal administration are the responsibilities of administrators as diverse and demanding as those imposed on the person responsible for the function of the Building Department.

The effective and successful Administrator requires skills in many different and unrelated disciplines, including the physical sciences, political science, law, hygiene, administration, and perhaps most important, human relations.

These may seem to be extreme examples (they do occur:) but they help to make the point that it is very much to your interests as a property owner that the zoning ordinances, building codes and other codes in the community are properly-drawn and well-administered.

If inspection procedures become lax, or if the building code and housing code are not firmly and fairly enforced, conditions can develop which could make your community or your own block a less pleasant place in which to live.

Experience has proven that if a community is to develop in a healthy fashion, with an attractive environment that is preserved and protected by official policy, there are three fundamental requirements:

- (1) A modern zoning ordinance;
- (2) A sound performance building code, well-enforced; and
- (3) An ordinance setting minimum standards for construction.

If there is a breakdown in any of these categories the community is bound to suffer.

It should be understood that code enforcement is not primarily intended to punish offenders. Certainly, the codes should provide for strong legal action to compel compliance of persistent violators in cases involving extreme and persistent neglect.

However, the most effective enforcement is that which detects deterioration before it becomes severe, and achieves compliance

with standards through the cooperation of the private or corporate owner or landlord.

Your police officials will tell you that crime becomes a greater problem in downgraded areas, and that crime flourishes in sections where slums have been permitted to develop.

In a similar vein, fire officials everywhere know that the fire hazard is greater when building and housing enforcement is poor, construction is sub-standard, and inspection procedures are inadequate.

If your building official does his job under a realistic and modern system of codes and ordinances, your community can reduce the incidence of fires and help to avoid conditions that are conducive to crime. The building official is a partner to your policemen and firemen.

He works closely with the building industry; with contractors, craftsmen, architects and engineers; with lawyers and planners, and everyone else whose work affects the overall appearance and value of the community. He spends many hours of his own time in study and at schools in order to become more efficient in administering his job.

He makes every effort to be knowledgeable about materials and construction methods and he administers his office efficiently and impartially.

Construction, as one of the nation's major industries, in cooperation with building officials, can make real contributions to the well-being of a community.

While the work of a building inspector is seldom publicized and doesn't have the "glamour" of certain other public agencies, a community that lacks a sound building code ordinance and good enforcement can go downhill very rapidly.

The property owner's personal contact with his building inspector may, at times, seem irritating or burdensome. It may seem like an unnecessary expense and waste of time to have to go through the process of getting permits, clearances, inspections and verifications that workmanship and wiring and plumbing, and so forth, are up to standard.

There may be points along the way when the property owner, builder or contractor feels that he is running into "bureaucratic" interference.

If that does happen, it often can be traced to a breakdown in communication. Either the building official has not fully explained the reasons for certain restrictions in the code, or the owner does not appreciate the fact that the restrictions are there to protect him and his property value.

Providence has a modern performance code which has been developed over many years of hard-won experience and kept up-to-date by constant study and review.

A community will not progress the way it should if the building Code is a hangover from the horse-and-buggy days. Construction methods and materials change; the building code should change with them as they are proven to be sound. Proper code

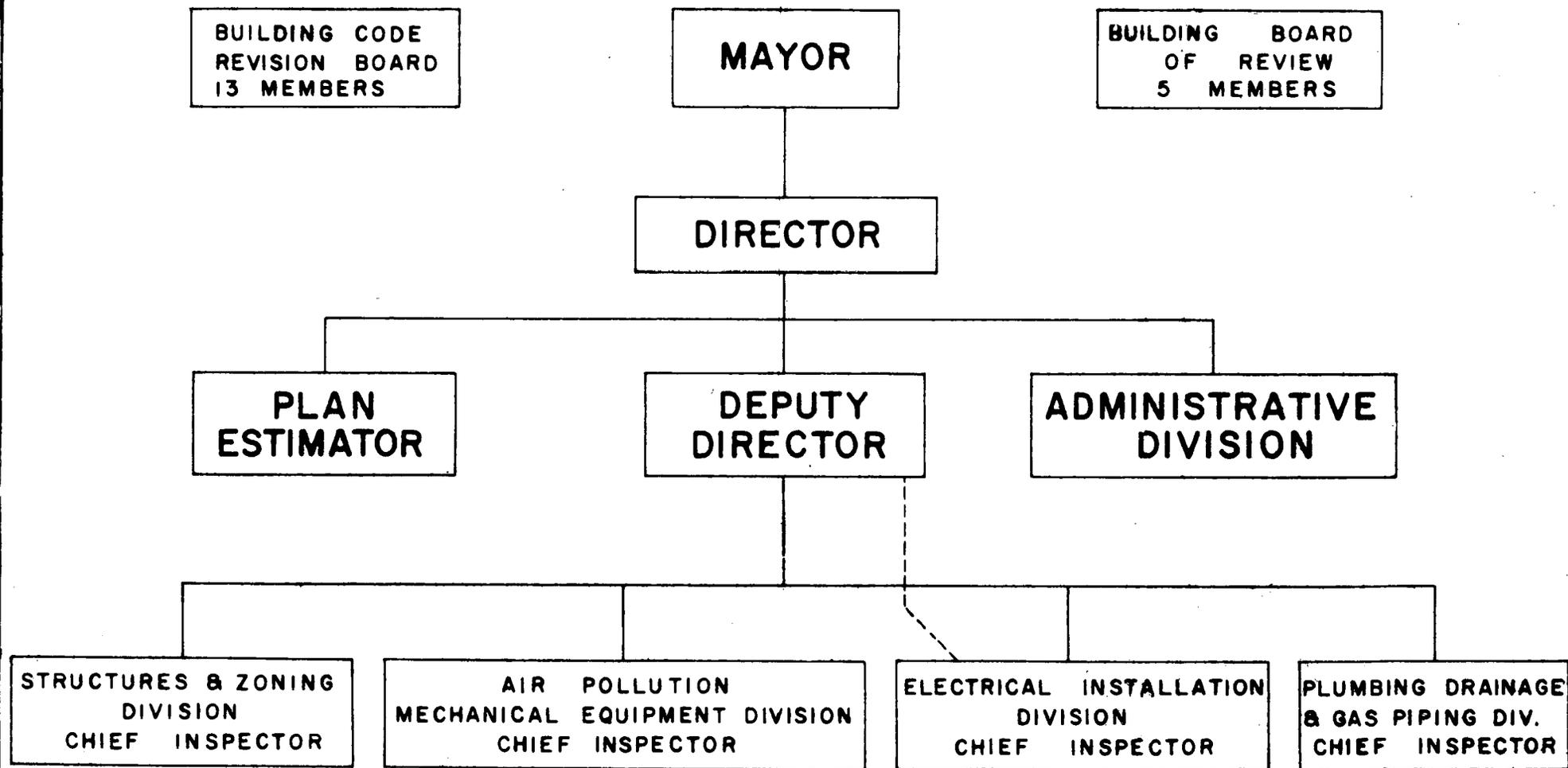
enforcement and inspection of the highest quality, administered by a knowledgeable, conscientious man, dedicated to the task of protecting the community's citizens and at the same time helping builders to conform to code standards, will be beneficial to all concerned.

Working with the zoning board, health officials, historic commission, fire department, and other protective agencies, your building official is indispensable in keeping the community in good order.

Vincent DiMase, P.E.  
Director

# DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION

## ORGANIZATION CHART



DIVISION OF STRUCTURES AND ZONING

Mr. Vincent DiMase, Director  
Department of Building Inspection

Dear Sir:

I respectfully submit for your information and consideration a report of the work of the Division of Structures and Zoning, for the Fiscal Year from July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975.

Attached hereto are two tables setting forth by types of occupancies, the number of building 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.

**ESTIMATED COST OF BUILDING OPERATIONS BY MONTHS 19 74-75**  
**NEW**

MONTHS	DWELLING 1 FAMILY	DWELLING 2 FAMILY	MULTI FAMILY	CHURCHES HOMES, ETC.	AMUSEMENT & RECREATION	OFFICE BLDGS. & BANKS	PUBLIC AND MUNI.	SCHOOLS	GASOLINE STATIONS	GARAGES	STORES	STORE- HOUSES	MFG. AND SHOPS	OIL BURNERS	MISC.	TOTAL
JULY	29,000	42,000				16,000							55,000			142,000
AUG.	90,000			250,000		60,000										400,000
SEPT.	38,000												45,000			83,000
OCT.	52,000				300,000			335,000		1,500			30,000		1,000	719,500
NOV.	64,500															64,500
DEC.			600,000							2,000			10,000			612,000
JAN.	16,000					15,000									3,000	34,000
FEB.	12,000	108,000	1,524,000		950,000					1,500						2,595,500
MAR.	73,000															73,000
APR.																0
MAY	119,500	34,000									75,000				300	228,800
JUNE	75,000		55,000							2,500						132,500
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>569,000</b>	<b>184,000</b>	<b>2,179,000</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>1,250,000</b>	<b>91,000</b>		<b>335,000</b>		<b>7,500</b>	<b>75,000</b>		<b>140,000</b>		<b>4,300</b>	<b>2,055,000</b>
											<b>NEW #OF</b>	<b>PERMITS</b>				
JULY	2	2				1							1			6
AUG.	6			1		1										8
SEPT.	3												2			5
OCT.	3				1			1		1			1		1	8
NOV.	4															4
DEC.			3							1			1			5
JAN.	1					1									1	3
FEB.	1	6	2		1					1						11
MAR.	4															4
APR.																0
MAY	6	2									1				1	10
JUNE	5		1							1						7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>71</b>

**ESTIMATED COST OF BUILDING OPERATIONS BY MONTHS 1974-75  
NEW ALA.**

MONTHS	DWELLING 1 FAMILY	DWELLING 2 FAMILY	MULTI FAMILY	CHURCHES HOMES, ETC.	AMUSEMENT & RECREATION	OFFICE BLDGS. & BANKS	PUBLIC AND MUNI.	SCHOOLS	GASOLINE STATIONS	GARAGES	STORES	STORE- HOUSES	MFG. AND SHOPS	OIL BURNERS	MISC	TOTAL
JULY	61,400	59,400	58,700	27,000	1,500	835,900		35,000	13,000	1,300	17,000		51,500		3,000	1,164,700
AUG.	67,000	34,200	31,200		200,000	92,500		19,400	27,200		29,500		163,500		1,300	665,800
SEPT.	71,800	31,300	25,400	24,500	2,500	29,500		39,700	1,500	3,700	32,700		63,600		6,500	332,700
OCT.	70,300	26,900	41,000			24,500		426,500	2,000	2,500	18,000		162,700			774,400
NOV.	29,100	31,900	19,500	23,000	300,400	99,000		13,000	300	400	14,100	68,000	64,300		7,800	670,800
DEC.	10,200	15,100	12,000	200,000	5,000	19,500		300	10,100	900	19,400		9,200			301,700
JAN.	10,000	19,700	12,700	7,000	12,000	53,200		4,800	25,600	200	22,100		9,000			176,300
FEB.	43,500	15,500	21,000	56,400		35,500		500	25,000	400	22,000		187,900		5,000	412,700
MAR.	39,600	21,800	14,900			143,000			4,000	1,000	48,300		21,800		1,100	295,500
APR.	38,800	49,100	29,300	3,700		28,700		901,400		600	11,600		9,900		3,300	1,076,400
MAY	50,300	45,900	12,100			65,500		37,000	1,200	9,700	50,500		21,500		10,700	304,406
JUNE	41,900	47,900	35,700	81,300		60,700		200		9,200	46,900		15,500		6,500	345,800
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>533,900</b>	<b>398,700</b>	<b>313,500</b>	<b>422,900</b>	<b>521,400</b>	<b>1,487,500</b>		<b>1,477,800</b>	<b>109,900</b>	<b>29,900</b>	<b>332,100</b>	<b>68,000</b>	<b>780,400</b>		<b>45,200</b>	<b>6,521,200</b>
<b>ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS # OF PERMITS</b>																
JULY	26	19	17	2	1	13	-	2	1	4	7	-	6	-	1	99
AUG.	25	21	11	-	1	11	-	2	3	-	11	-	6	-	2	93
SEPT.	20	22	14	3	1	3	-	3	1	2	9	-	8	-	1	87
OCT.	30	24	17	-	-	6	-	6	1	4	11	-	5	-	-	104
NOV.	16	15	10	2	2	8	-	1	1	1	8	1	5	-	1	71
DEC.	5	8	8	1	1	4	-	1	3	1	10	-	4	-	-	46
JAN.	6	9	5	1	1	5	-	1	3	1	8	-	3	-	-	43
FEB.	19	10	8	2	-	6	-	1	2	1	10	-	6	-	1	66
MAR.	23	14	8	-	-	3	-	-	2	1	13	-	5	-	2	71
APR.	30	24	13	2	-	5	-	3	-	2	9	-	4	-	3	95
MAY	27	26	12	-	-	6	-	2	2	3	17	-	3	-	6	104
JUNE	28	29	17	4	-	5	-	1	-	3	16	-	3	-	7	113
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>882</b>

From the tables, the estimated cost of construction for the fiscal year from July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975 is as follows:

New Buildings	Permits 71
Estimated Cost	\$5,084,800.00
Additions & Alterations	Permits 882
Estimated Cost	\$6,521,200.00
Total Estimated Cost of Construction	\$11,606,000.00

Permits (not included in tables) issued during the period from July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975 are as follows:

Razing of Dilapidated Buildings	Permits 383
Sandblasting of Buildings	Permits 5
Moving of Buildings	Permits 3
Erection of Billboards	Permits 5
Erection of Wall Signs	Permits 53
Erection of Signs Over Sidewalks	Permits 52
Erection of Fire Escapes	Permits 17
Construction of Vaults	Permits 0
Storage of Dangerous Chemicals	Permits 7
Storage of Petroleum Products in Bulk	Permits 2
Total	527

(Total Permits Issued During the Fiscal Year - 1480)

Total number of buildings demolished in the City was 383, a total of approximately 618 dwelling units.

During the fiscal year, 204 family units were added as a result of private buildings activities.

The additional units are grouped as follows:

(a) New Buildings

One Family                      35 Family Units

Two Family                      20 Family Units

Multiple Family                108 Family Units

(b) Conversions                41 Family Units

Total 204 Family Units

The total fees collected during the year July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975 amounted to \$58,304.79. During the fiscal year this Department processed 2250 building and zoning violations, including South Providence and East Side Renewal Project Areas. The Field Inspection Section of the Division conducted 19,850 construction inspection and violation investigations.

During the fiscal year, this Division reviewed the design and plans for many major structures. The following are buildings for which permits were issued with a declared estimated cost of \$50,000.00 or more:

Permit #56	1 Orms St. Robbins Interstate Inc. Hotel Bldg. A Ballroom (600 People) and Restaurant	\$950,000.00
Permit #55	1 Orms St. Robbins Interstate Inc. Hotel Bldg. B (125 Rooms)	804,000.00
Permit #228	188 <del>p</del> 220 Prairie Ave. City of Providence Nursery School and Health Center	775,000.00
Permit #54	1 Orms St. Robbins Investment Inc. Hotel Bldg. C (65 Rooms)	720,000.00
Permit #613	15 Westminster St. R.I. Hospital Trust Bank and Offices	540,000.00
Permit #942	250 Lloyd Ave. Moses Brown School	335,000.00
Permit #917	216-224 Benefit St. R.I. School of Design Museum & Lecture Hall	326,000.00
Permit #1013	160 Broad St. Y.M.C.A. Gym	300,000.00
Permit #956	179 Doyle Ave. Y.M.C.A. Recreation Bldg.	300,000.00

Permit #715	386 Broad St. Salvation Army Salvation Army Center	250,000.00
Permit #1061	41-53 Knight St. Broadway Assoc. Apartments (36 Units)	236,000.00
Permit #1062	30-38 Swiss St. Broadway Assoc. Apartments (36 Units)	236,000.00
Permit #705	1111 No. Main St. Eleven Eleven Assoc. Tennis Facility	200,000.00
Permit #1054	50 Maude St. Womens & Infants Hospital Hospital	200,000.00
Permit #81	75 Fountain St. Providence Journal Newspaper Printing	150,000.00
Permit #158	234 Washington St. N.E. Telephone Co. Offices	137,000.00
Permit #1063	70-80 Ridge St. Broadway Assoc. Apts. (24 Units)	128,000.00
Permit #223	2 Washington Ave. David Friedman School Dormitory	125,000.00
Permit #630	111 Westminster St. Industrial National Bank Bank & Offices	94,000.00
Permit #941	250 Lloyd Ave. Moses Brown Gymnasium	88,000.00
Permit #894	387 Charles St. Danal Realty Manufacturing Bldg.	80,000.00

Permit #271	327 Washington St. DeLuca Realty Lounge	75,000.00
Permit #1030	450 Potters Ave. Gretel Realty Corp. Warehouse	68,000.00
Permit #915	1-9 No. Main St. R.I. School of Design Power Plant	64,000.00
Permit #765	111 Stella St. A.M. Gallo Offices & Storage	62,000.00
Permit #51	807 Broad St. Home for the Aged Home	56,000.00
Permit #604	49 Westminster St. R.I. Hospital Trust Bank & Offices	56,000.00
Permit #649	1 Holyoke St. Harold N. McPanst Warehouse	55,000.00
Permit #453	953-955 Chalkstone Ave. Apt. Realty Inc. Apts. (12 Units)	55,000.00
Permit #702	56-62 Holden St. Brown & Sharpe Foundry	54,500.00
Permit #745	146 Westminster St. Citizens Trust Co. Offices	53,000.00
Permit #625	345 Harris Ave. Oster Realty Court Facility	50,000.00
Permit #444	807 Broad St. Home for the Aged Home	50,000.00

The declared estimated cost of construction of the buildings and structures listed on the previous pages is \$7,672,500.00, or 66% of the total estimated construction cost figures; while the number of permits issued for the construction of these buildings is only 33, or less than 2.5% of the total number of permits issued for the construction of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings during the fiscal year.

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 usual reluctance on the part of some people to declare fair or true cost 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 declared estimated costs of construction is considerably less than it should be.

Respectfully submitted,

Merlin A. DeConti, Jr.  
Chief, Structures and Zoning

Inspectional Activities Pertaining to  
Safety Requirements in Buildings

The annual inspection of all licensed occupancies, such as theatres, hotels, assembly halls of all types, 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 types, condition and location of fire protection equipment, such as automatic sprinkler system (wet and dry), fire extinguishers; fire hose and standpipe installations, fire alarm systems, etc.

The 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.

In cases of serious life hazard, revocation of license is employed in order to prevent possible disaster.

The processing of complaints is another important function requiring inspectional services. During the past year, more than 19,850 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 system;
- (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 protections;
- (h) Installation of opening protective 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.

Steady pressure has been maintained behind the program of dilapidated dwellings and the elimination of fire hazard and unsanitary conditions. Because of the unprecedented number of unsafe, vacant, open and abandoned, and vandalized buildings, the Department devoted more time and effort in processing and demolishing vacant and dangerous structures. The Department of Building Inspection demolished one hundred twenty eight (128) buildings. There was a total of 383 buildings demolished in the City.

DIVISION OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

Mr. Vincent DiMase, Director  
Department of Building Inspection

Dear Mr. DiMase:

I respectfully submit the following report of the Division of Electrical Installations' activities during the fiscal year July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975, including a summary of its revenue, expenditures and operations.

SUMMARY

REVENUE: The Division of Electrical Installations received credit for fees collected by the Department of Building Inspection as Follows:

There were Forty Eight (48) Limited Premises Permits issued and One Thousand Four Hundred Forty-Six (1,446) electrical permits for installation of electrical wiring and apparatus including alterations and repairs, for which a total fee of \$23,446.44 was collected.

ELECTRICAL INSPECTION DIVISION

From July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975

Number of rough wiring inspections	701
Number of defective installations re-inspected	650
Number of certificates of approval issued	1111
Number of inspections after fire	928
Number of investigations requested by the Narragansett Electric Company	560
Number of special investigations	4705
Minimum Housing Inspections	114
Limited Premises Inspections	48
Approved Fire Alarms	14
Total number of Inspections	8831
Letters to Owners	1088
Number of disconnects ordered	67
Sign Locations cleared	90
Sign Locations non illuminated cleared	37
Sign Locations illuminated	53
Estimated value fee	\$2,140,516.00
Total number of permits issued	1446
Total fee	\$ 23,446.44

## R E P O R T

The City has changed considerably over the past five years with the new high rise buildings, our inspectors carried a much heavier workload although every effort is being made to keep this workload to a minimum

Nevertheless, the Electrical Division will attempt to maintain its reputation for high safety standards and will perform the services expected to the limit of its capacity.

The Electrical Division has participated in the following Public Safety Programs:

1. State of Rhode Island Fire Safety Code for Fire Alarm and Emergency Exit Lighting.
2. State Seminar on Minimum Housing Codes.
3. The City of Providence Fire Department Training School.
4. The Election of the Chief Inspector to the Executive Committee of the Eastern Section International Association of Electrical Inspectors.
5. Lecturing on the safe use of electricity at the State Vocational Facility in Providence, Lincoln and Smithfield, Rhode Island.
6. Member of the Underwriters Laboratories Steering Committee for the Study of Non-Metallic Plastic Conduit, boxes and fittings Representing the International Association of Electrical Inspectors.
7. Instructor at James J. Hanley Education Center, Electricity Adult Education

Future Plans:

The future plans of the Electrical Division are:

To provide more frequent inspections of the progress on new construction work.

To provide inspections for Limited Premises more promptly than was possible in the past year.

To review the latest edition of the National Electrical Code for possible up-dating of its Rules and Regulations.

To provide better service to contractors, architects and engineers who are planning electrical installations for buildings and structures in the City of Providence.

Respectfully submitted,

Oliver O. Dore  
Chief Electrical Inspector

DIVISION OF PLUMBING, DRAINAGE AND GAS PIPING

Mr. Vincent DiMase, Director  
Department of Building Inspection

Dear Sir:

As requested, this will show the activities and statistical record of the Plumbing Division for the fiscal year July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975.

Plumbing Inspections	1846		
Drain Inspections	871		
Miscellaneous Visits	121		
Minimum Housing	<u>1203</u>		
		Total	4041
Plumbing Plans Filed	615		
Drain Plans Filed	<u>147</u>		
		Total	762
Work on Old Buildings	548		
Work on New Buildings	<u>68</u>		
		Total	616
Sewer Connections	616		
Cesspoll Connections	<u>0</u>		
		Total	616
Final Inspections	678		
Estimated Cost of Plumbing Plans		\$1,383,924.00	
Estimated Cost of Drain Plans		<u>164,990.00</u>	
	Total	\$1,548,914.00	
Fees for Limited Sprinkler License Issued		\$125.00	
Fees for Limited Drain Layer's			
License Issued		<u>300.00</u>	
	Total	\$425.00	
Fees for Plumbing & Drainage Permits and Limited Licenses		\$10,891.95	

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony M. Santagata, Chief  
Plumbing, Drainage & Gas Piping

## REPORT

The year 1974-1975 has been a very unstable year for the Building trades. Due to tight money policies, inflation and shortages, housing has dropped 50%. This reflection has affected the Plumbing Industry. In turn our Plumbing Permits have been down about the same percentage.

Mr. DiMase, Director of the Building Inspection Department has been concerned with illegal work throughout the City. This is putting more of a burden on the tax payer for fees that are not collected. The main concern is protecting the health of its citizens.

Too often the Plumbing is installed incorrectly. The Plumbing Inspection Division is very concerned with the protection of potable water supply

Throughout the country there have been a number of cross connection installations, causing a considerable amount of persons to become ill.

The average person doesn't realize that they are causing a cross connection. The ordinary garden hose is the most common offender, as it can be easily connected to the potable water supply and used for a variety of potentially dangerous applications.

An example is the common garden hose attached to a still cock with the end of the hose lying in a cesspool, swimming pool or on the ground which may be contaminated with fertilizer.

The inspectors of this Department have been on the alert looking for these violations. We will keep on striving in this direction until all our citizens are safe from any plumbing hazards.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony M. Santagata, Chief  
Plumbing, Drainage & Gas Piping

DIVISION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS

Mr. Vincent DiMase, Director  
Department of Building Inspection

Dear Mr. DiMase:

This is the Annual Report of the Mechanical Division for the fiscal year July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975.

The following is an accounting of the estimated valuation of all mechanical equipment and the revenue of fee charges that were obtained by this division.

The Chief and staff of the Division of Mechanical Equipment and Installations thank the Honorable Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Mayor of Providence and Vincent DiMase, Director of the Department of Building Inspection for their unfailing support and advice to this division throughout this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph F. Kane, Chief  
Mechanical Equipment Division

There were 618 permits issued for 842 units from  
July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975:

<u>EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>UNITS</u>
Oil Burners	68
Gas Burners	49
Boilers	91
Gas Water Heaters	189
Oil Fired Water Heaters	2
Furnaces	34
Ductwork	48
Air Conditioning	38
Radiation	52
Tanks	71
Ventilation	15
Sprinklers	21
Refrigeration	4
Elevators	15
Hoods & Exhaust Systems	18
Generators	6
Unit Heaters	14
Miscellaneous	<u>107</u>
	842

There were 3,758 locations visited and 9,828 inspections and investigations made.

INSPECTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Complaints	24
Violations (Illegal & Incorrect installations of Equipment	97
Oil Burners	68
Gas Burners	49
Boilers	91
Gas Water Heaters	189
Oil Fired Water Heaters	2
Furnaces	34
Ductwork	48
Air Conditioning	38
Radiation	52
Tanks	71
Ventilation	15
Sprinklers	21
Refrigeration	4
Elevators	15
Hoods & Exhaust Systems	18
Generators	6
Unit Heaters	14
Miscellaneous	107
Progress Inspections	6,493
Investigations	<u>2,372</u>
	9,828

In addition to the above mentioned inspections and investigations:

Elevator Tests	15
Sprinkler Tests	21
Generator Tests	6

The following is an accounting of the Division of Mechanical Equipment and Installations from July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975. The estimated valuation of such equipment is \$6,065,819.41 for which the following revenue in fee charges were collected:

REVENUE

Oil Burners	587.75	
Gas Burners	622.75	
Boilers	4,531.66	
Gas Water Heaters	997.00	
Oil Fired Water Heaters	12.75	
Furnaces	570.65	
Ductwork	901.10	
Air Conditioners	1,998.74	
Radiation	504.75	
Tanks	724.00	
Ventilation	1,483.00	
Sprinklers	564.15	
Refrigeration	62.25	
Elevators	930.35	
Hoods & Exhaust Systems	325.75	
Generators	1,246.95	
Unit Heaters	145.25	
Miscellaneous	<u>4,016.30</u>	
	\$20,225.15	
		\$20,225.15
New Licenses:		
Boiler Operator	609.00	
Operating Engineer	518.00	
Refrigerating Machine Operator	56.00	
Apprentice Fireman	71.00	
License Renewals:		
Boiler Operator	2,084.00	
Operating Engineer	2,528.00	
Refrigerating Machine Operator	<u>124.00</u>	
	\$5,990.00	
		<u>5,990.00</u>
		\$26,215.15

## DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Administration Division provides direction and coordination over the business management functions of the Department of Building Inspection.

In order to establish uniformity in law enforcement and consistency in operating procedures, the Department has been organized under separate Divisions. Through the Division Chiefs, the activity of each of these Divisions is coordinated by the Director.

The Division performs administrative research and investigation, budgeting, personnel, records management and forms control, purchasing and supplies. This Division also researches, investigates, and prepares written administrative procedures and systems, furnishes recommendations and advice in its several areas to Department supervision and management. The Division's responsibilities include preparing payrolls, car allowances, purchase orders, inter-departmental orders, and other related documents.

The Division collects fees for various types of permits, licenses, Zoning, Building and Housing Board applications for exceptions and variances.

The Division collected \$123,098.33 in fees for the entire Department for the Fiscal Year July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975.

The Director serves as the policy making and coordinating head of the Department to the end that the Department may function still more effectively through planning, direction and coordination.

REVENUE SUMMARY

To: Mr. Vincent DiMase, Director

Subject: Fees collected by all Divisions of the Department of Building Inspection and deposited at the City Collector's Office for the fiscal year starting July 1, 1974 and ending June 30, 1975, inclusive.

Total Collections and Deposits                    \$123,098.33

Total Collected from Inter-Office Divisions:

Structures and Zoning Division	\$58,304.79
Electrical Division	23,446.44
Mechanical Division	26,215.15
Plumbing and Drainage Division	10,891.95
Zoning Board	3,115.00
Building Board	1,100.00
Housing Board	25.00
Total	<u>\$123,098.33</u>

Respectfully submitted,

Marie D'Elena

## DIVISION OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

Housing Code enforcement involves considerably more than having inspectors go from door to door and handing out violation notices. It involves working with the people involved to explain the violations, to give them advice and assistance on how they can best be corrected.

The Housing Inspection Division is responsible for carrying out, area by area, the city-wide Housing Inspections necessary to comply with certain Federal Government requirements for recertification of the City's Workable Program for Community Improvement. The City of Providence, by having a Workable Program approved by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, is eligible for Federal monetary assistance for a wide range of programs, including Model Cities, Urban Renewal, Neighborhood Development, Interim Assistance, and Code Enforcement.

The Workable Program Recertification currently commits the City to a house by house reinspection.

During the year 1974-1975, the Division of Code Enforcement referred to the Department of Building Inspection 855 Complaints which they uncovered during their survey. These complaints had to be verified by the four Divisions of the Department of Building Inspection before a violation notice was sent to the owner. Also, before the permit was issued for this work, zoning had to be checked to be sure that the premises were not in violation of the Zoning Ordinance. The Department of Building Inspection, because it has

qualified experts in Structures, Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing fields, inspected and supervised all the work until completed.

The intensive inspectional activities of the Department of Building Inspection is evidenced in the greatly improved appearance of the areas which have been inspected. The Inspectional Program is generally being carried out with the cooperation of property owners and is coming to be recognized by the public as being in their best interest in maintaining property values, as well as safe and healthful neighborhood conditions.

People really want stricter code enforcement was the surprising findings of a survey of ten cities made recently by the Survey Research Program of the Joint Center for Urban Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University. So great is the concern for better housing inspection that the majority of people surveyed indicated that city government should spend more money for this service.

## FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

The Fire Prevention Bureau and the Department of Building Inspection frequently discuss plans on proposed new buildings and alterations so as to define and set standards, before the Department of Building Inspection issues a permit for the work.

The Fire Department usually approves the following items:

1. Size of water main and its capacity.
2. Nearest hydrants.
3. Access for fire fighting and rescue.
4. Locations of the siamese connections.
5. Provisions for a fire pump if necessary, and a secondary source of power for same.
6. Provisions for dual water supply if needed.
7. Electrical supervisory control of fire pump.
8. Size, location, thread size, etc. of standpipes.
9. Flow control valves if needed for zone control of sprinklers.
10. Fire alarm panel, annunciator and supervisory controls of sprinklers and standpipes and fire alarm systems.
11. Location and type of smoke, heat, and combination detectors.
12. Necessary pressure gauges on standpipes, sprinklers, etc. to visually supervise systems.
13. Locations, types of fire alarm boxes, horns, speakers, and audio visual devices.
14. Elevator keys for control during fires, etc.
15. Approval of plans for all fire alarm systems.
16. Smoke control.

Institutes and organizations now put greater stress on fire safety in planned structures. Every new proposed project includes a section "Fire Precautionary Measures", covering everything affecting the building's fire safety, e.g., the combustibility of the building materials, the fire resistance of the structure as a whole, the classification of machines according to potential fire hazard, outside and inside water requirements, the danger of explosion in various areas and outside installations of a plant, and protection of buildings and structures with stationary

extinguishing units, automatic signaling, etc. Thus, it is easier for planners to arrive at the right degree of fire precaution in a given building.

Additional requirements for life-saving fire protection devices and systems in homes, apartments and high-rise buildings, will be included in the newly revised Minimum Property Standards being issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

According to the Department the new requirements are the results of many months of study by the HUD-FHA Office of Technical and Credit Standards. When in use they will offer vastly increased protection to occupants from deaths due to fires.

The purpose of the revisions will be to give early warning to occupants of the presence of fire, the confinement of fire, safe refuge areas, and early fire control through the use of sprinklers in selected areas, as well as furnish realistic, safe and economic fire protection.

The Fire Prevention Bureau investigates all fires of incendiary origin or of suspicious nature and all fires which cause injuries to persons. The Fire Marshal works closely with the Director of the Department of Building Inspection.

The Fire Prevention Bureau during its routine inspections uncover violations of the Building Code. These violations are referred to the Department of Building Inspection for investigation.

The Director directs the violation to one of the four

Divisions; namely, Division of Structures and Zoning, Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing.

The proper Division makes:--

- (1) A re-inspection of premises;
- (2) Sends out letter to owner informing him of violation;
- (3) Issues a permit for the work;
- (4) Supervises work until violation is corrected.

If violation is not corrected within thirty (30) days from the date of notice, the Department of Building Inspection institutes legal action against the owner. Most cases involving code violations were resolved and cases dismissed by the time of the hearing.

After a building has been completed and the building department has indicated by their final approval that the building complies with all pertinent building regulations, it will be under the surveillance of the fire prevention official, periodically, for the rest of its life.

Clearly, a close liason between these two agencies is necessary. The Building Official must know and understand the needs of the fire prevention official when recommending codes and ordinances relating to building construction.

The fire prevention official must know and understand building regulations as they relate to fire and panic so that he can intelligently limit the use of buildings in accordance with their design, and so that he can advise the Building Official in proposed building regulation matters related to fire and panic.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Historic District Commission under the leadership of Mrs. George E. Downing, has made considerable progress in preserving both the buildings and architectural value of buildings in the Historic District. More and more of Benefit Street and College Hill has been rescued from slum conditions or threatened demolition. This area has become one of the most beautiful and charming residential streets in the city.

The College Hill district contains more than 150 restored 18th and early 19th Century buildings, which according to the Interior Department were once the "wealthy nucleus of the city".

The landmarks, are "recognized to encourage preservation of historically significant properties". Owners receive plaques and certificates if they wish.

College Hill was chosen for its "largely undisturbed area of 18th and early 19th Century structures which, as a group, exemplify the urban New England setting of the period". The district is also the nucleus from which developed the City of Providence.

Since 1960 more than 150 buildings have been restored in the area.

The First Baptist Meeting House, and the Providence Athenaeum Library have been especially cited as "noteworthy structures".

The Corliss-Carrington House on Williams Street was built in 1810-11, and the Department of the Interior describes it as a

"tall square mansion (which) well expressed the sophistication attained by some 19th Century urban New England residences".

The three and one-half story brick Ives House on Power Street was built in 1803-06. The department calls it a "magnificent Federal-style mansion".

The restoration of the 19th Century mansion known as Woods-Gerry House at 62 Prospect Street, by Rhode Island School of Design, has helped to keep Prospect Street "as one of our great streets".

Preservation of our common cultural heritage is a moral obligation which rests squarely on the shoulders of every citizen. Since World War II, a new generation of Americans has awakened to the importance of historic preservation and in doing so they are giving the movement strong impetus and broader scope. Once concerned primarily with saving and restoring notable individual buildings as historic house museums, the movement now seeks to perpetuate our much wider heritage of history and architecture as an irreplaceable part of the living fabric and beauty of our communities. Once supported chiefly by historians and antiquarians, the movement now extends into all walks of life and touches the work of planners, architects, public officials, realtors, landscape architects, bankers, and all the citizens. Modern preservation is, therefore, directed toward perpetuating architectural and aesthetic as well as historic and patriotic values; historic districts as well as individually notable buildings.

The Historic District Commission must verify all plans before the Department of Building Inspection can issue a permit for the work

The inspectional supervision pertaining to beauty and restoration is done by Mrs. Downing. The inspectional supervision pertaining to safety is done by the Department of Building Inspection.

The Director of the Department of Building Inspection, as an ex-officio member of the Historic District Commission, sat during all their executive sessions when matters of importance concerning the Historic District were discussed.

REMOVAL OF JUNKED VEHICLES

FROM PRIVATE PROPERTY

The City is continuously combating the nuisance of junk yards marring the landscape of our city. Science must and will find new ways to use the growing stockpiles of scrap metal building up in our auto graveyards. But, in the meantime, we must do what we can to ease the pain during this extensive period of convalescence. Continued pressure in the enforcement of the "Ordinance Providing for the Removal of Junked or Abandoned Vehicles from Private Property" resulted in removing junked cars from:—

- (1) Private Property
- (2) Housing projects
- (3) Churches
- (4) Schools
- (5) Redevelopment areas
- (6) State-owned property
- (7) Cars with Police Department courtesy notices

Upon notification of abandoned or stolen vehicles to be towed away, the Department must first tag the vehicles by placing a sticker on the car for a period of 7 days. This gives the owner ample time to claim the vehicle before it is removed. Many of the cars removed were rodent infested and with great difficulty the men had to be extremely careful in removing these vehicles.

Children are often attracted to these abandoned cars and very often are subject to injury caused by broken fragments and loose equipment.

We are grateful to the Police Department for removing junk cars from public and private property. The Department's effort has helped immensely to keep our city clean.

The problem of junked cars is by no means a local one. The President of the United States has recently shown his deep concern over this problem on a national basis. Steps have been taken by the Federal Government to combat the nuisance of junk yards marring the landscape on our principal roads throughout the nation.

## THE DIRECTOR'S ACTIVITIES

The Director is responsible for the planning, direction, supervision and coordination of the activities and programs of the Department of Building Inspection, and performs the following functions, personally or by delegation:

1. Establishes general policies and procedures of conduct of the department.
2. Establishes performance standards for all personnel.
3. Establishes standards of department and conduct for all personnel.
4. Prepares annual budget.
5. Establishes level of public relations.
6. Makes final Departmental decisions on legal actions.
7. Makes final actions on code amendments.
8. Makes final decisions on code interpretations.
9. Makes work assignments to supervisory and key personnel.
10. Develops formats for correspondence.
11. Makes contact with other Department Heads on matters of mutual concern or interest.
12. Establishes methods for the conduct of special projects.
13. Compiles and submits annual reports.
14. Reviews effectiveness of field inspection.
15. Keeps himself informed on all the latest engineering technology as it affects the Building Inspection Department.
16. Recommends code amendments and code changes.

17. The Director develops processes and procedures to insure the effective and convenient flow of work traffic pertaining to the office functions.

18. Issues Certificates of Occupancy.

19. The Director is an ex-officio member of the:

- (a) Zoning Board of Review
- (b) Building Ordinance Board of Review
- (c) Historic District Commission
- (d) Committee on Licenses

20. Commissioner of the Mayor's Restoration of City Hall Task Force.

21. Secretary of the Building Code Revision Board.

The Director performs the Engineering Research for the Department. The primary objective is to review new materials, standards and techniques of the building industry to determine whether they meet the purpose and intent of the Providence Building Code, and if so, to make provision for their use.

The acceptance of new materials and methods of construction in the City of Providence is a cooperative function of professional and construction groups. The one all important question "Does this provide Code equivalency as to safeguarding life, limb, health, property and public welfare". Many new materials and construction approaches have been approved which include: sandwich panels for low-cost residential buildings; precast prestressed hollow core floor slabs; revised fire ratings for concrete block walls; anchorage systems for precast concrete, and computer designed diaphragms for wind loadings.

Technological advances have soared to heights undreamed of fifty years ago. But a technological advance that means new convenience, new comfort, new leisure - can also mean hazard to life and property. Such unforeseen dangers can be conquered, and they must.

The full sophistication of many new products far surpasses most users' understanding. At the same time, there is a growing public concern that people should be protected against potential hazards in the new products and new materials, by someone who understands their complexities. The Director has the responsibility in accepting new materials and equipment which conform to national standards. The local government has delegated the "police power" pertaining to building regulations to the Director because there are sufficient standards in the code to guide him in making decisions as to the conformity of proposed construction to the code.

Among other functions of the Director are: to review requested variances and exceptions to the Building Code and the Zoning Ordinance, and make appropriate recommendations and send referrals of the proper sections of the Ordinances to the Secretary of the Zoning Board of Review, so that the Secretary can have the cases advertised in the newspaper for public hearing.

The Director, on September 17-18, 1974, attended the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards - Northeastern Regional Committee meetings held in Providence, R.I.

On September 19, 1974, spoke before the New England Building Code Association, Inc. at Bradley International Airport, in Connecticut. Subject: "Fire Safety in Buildings."

On October 1, 1974, attended a Public Hearing on the new "Massachusetts State Building Code", in Boston.

On October 17, 1974, spoke before the "Managers, Owners, and Superintendents of Buildings Association", in Providence; luncheon meeting. Subject: "The BOCA International Organization"; BOCA Program, and showed BOCA Film.

On October 21, 1974, lectured at R.I. Junior College in Warwick, R.I., on "Building Codes as an Aid in Fire Prevention and Fire Protection"; also on "Building Construction"; showed the "BOCA International Organization" Film.

On November 6, 1974, spoke to the Mt. Pleasant Elementary School children, on the Building Code, the Department of Building Inspection, What the Inspectors do, etc.

On December 2, 1974, attended "Corner Fire Test" sponsored by Factory Mutual, at the Factory Mutual Test Center in West Gloucester, R.I.

On January 23, 1975, attended a meeting of the New England Building Code Association in Auburn, Massachusetts. The Director spoke on "Building Codes".

On February 6, 1975, as Chairman of the R.I. Building Code Standards Committee, conducted a Public Hearing on the proposed "R.I. State Building Code".

On February 20, 1975, spoke before the "Society of Fire Protection Engineers", New England Chapter, at Valley Steak House in Newton, Massachusetts. Subject: "Code Enforcement".

On March 5-6-7, 1975, attended the Eastern States Building Officials Federation - 26th Annual Building Inspectors School, at Grossinger, New York. The Director spoke on the "Development of Code Uniformity".

On April 17, 1975, lectured at Roger Williams College. Subjects: "Zoning, Building Code and Code Enforcement."

On April 22, 1975, participated in acting as one of three judges in passing on qualifications and oral examination on candidates for Building Inspector of East Providence.

On June 28, to July 4, 1975, attended the BOCA International 60th Annual Conference and School in Portland, Oregon. The Director as Past President of BOCA International, presided at numerous functions, and took part on many "Code Panels". The Director spoke on "Fire Safety in Buildings", and "Code Enforcement". He was also appointed to the Educational Committee. The Director received a beautiful jacket with the BOCA International Seal, as a token of appreciation for his untiring efforts on behalf of BOCA International.

The continued public relations program resulted in numerous other speaking engagements for the Director. The primary purpose of this speaking engagement program is to acquaint the public with the operations of the Department. Also, community organizations gain an opportunity to explain their views on some of the common problems governed by the Building Code and Zoning Ordinance.

## C O N C L U S I O N

During the past year, as always, the Department of Building Inspection continued to strive toward encouragement of better building construction in the City of Providence....not as policemen of construction, but through greater service to the public and the industry....by improving procedures, revising the codes, and aiding in reducing construction costs. Such continuing efforts are part of the constant effort in this direction.

We will continue to make substantial progress in these and other ways....all the while increasing our efforts to protect the safety of the public.

Enforcement of damaged and abandoned buildings was given impetus by the Director. The City demolished 128 buildings and placed a lien on the property as prescribed by law. There were 255 buildings demolished by Owners, making a total of 383 buildings demolished. The Director strove for enforcement rather than legal prosecution. However, when legal action became necessary as a last resort, success was attained in 100% of the cases.

High-Rise Buildings pose a major threat to the safety of the occupants from fire as well as an exceptional, and extremely difficult fire suppression problem. Today's new buildings are becoming ever larger in height and area, more complex in mechanical features, and the use of a new generation of building materials all create a problem.

Fires in high-rise buildings have forcefully pointed out that present building concepts, as demonstrated by many modern, well-built, code-conforming high-rise buildings, are not adequate.

The average citizen living in a modern country expects that a combination of design skills and scrutiny by public officials will ensure his safety - particularly in glistening new buildings. He expects to be protected from harm and to be able to go about his daily activities with confidence.

Sound judgment and leadership are demanded in examining the fire safety worth of alternatives.

The problem of high-rise buildings presented one more challenge to the Director. Therefore, the Director proposed an amendment to the Building Code to provide fire safety regulations for high-rise buildings. The City Council approved the new regulations as submitted. The provisions of the new ordinance apply to all buildings of (1) (Use Group E, Business Buildings; (2) Use Group L-1, Residential (hotel) Buildings; and (3) Use Group L-2, Residential (multi-family) Buildings that are more than six (6) stories or seventy-five (75) feet in height.

We hope that this ordinance will provide buildings where people can be confident of safety for themselves, their loved ones, their possessions, their investments, and their jobs.

Floods have been and continue to be one of the most destructive national hazards facing the people of the United States.

Because Providence has been subjected to flooding and inundation of normally dry land areas from the overflow of streams, rivers and other inland water, the Building Code was amended by adding Article 21, and approved by the City Council on September 28, 1974, relative to "Flood Plain Land Use and Structure Control".

The Flood Plain Land Use and Structure Control Measures for the City of Providence are set up for the public purpose of contributing to overall community and areawide social and economic development goals by:

- (a) Diverting unwarranted and inappropriate development away from flood-prone areas;
- (b) Encouraging flood control and flood damage prevention efforts through public and private means;
- (c) Deterring the inappropriate development of public utilities and public facilities in flood-prone areas;
- (d) Requiring such construction and land use practices as will reduce, to the maximum practicable extent flooding from surface runoff, improper drainage or inadequate storm sewers; and by
- (e) Protecting the storage and absorption capacity of flood plains and to assure retention of sufficient floodway area to convey flood flows.

This Ordinance prohibits any person, firm or corporation from erecting, constructing, enlarging, altering, repairing, improving, moving or demolishing any building or structure without first obtaining a building permit for each building or structure.

The Department must examine all plans and specifications for the proposed construction when application is made for a building permit to determine whether proposed building sites will be reasonably safe from flooding. If a proposed building site is in a location that has a flood hazard any proposed new construction or

substantial improvement (including prefabricated and mobile homes) must (1) be designed (or modified) and anchored to prevent flotation, collapse, or lateral movement of the structure; (2) use construction materials and utility equipment that are resistant to flood damage; and (3) use construction methods and practices that will minimize flood damage.

The Department must review subdivision proposals and other proposed new developments to assure that (1) all such proposals are consistent with the need to minimize flood damage; (2) all public utilities and facilities, such as sewer, gas, electrical, and water systems are located, elevated, and constructed to minimize or eliminate flood damage; and (3) adequate drainage is provided so as to reduce exposure to flood hazards.

A "revolutionary" new method of construction will allow the early opening for this "Bicentennial", the new Marriott Inn.

The process, Batemetal, employs a new method of pouring concrete into reusable metal forms. This method eliminated more than two months of construction time since individual hand-built wooden forms for the concrete pouring were not needed.

Batemetal, developed in France in the early 1960's, makes use of special three-dimensional metal forms. Some are exactly room-size. Others conform to the shapes of passageways, windows, doors; even stairwells.

After the concrete has been poured around these forms and hardened they can be collapsed and slipped out of place.

Since more work could be done more quickly, installers of the building's heating, plumbing and electrical systems could keep better pace with construction. The project was completed with only 35 "pours" for two towers of five and six stories, considerably less than with traditional construction. Since more of the Marriott is made of concrete, rather than of paneled steel beams or other partition materials, a maximum rating against fire is obtained. Further, the rating against sound transmission is maximized, providing greater privacy between rooms with regard to noise. These factors, plus greater freedom of design for the architect, make Batemetal especially useful for hotels, apartments, etc.

The areas of judgment in building inspection have vastly increased and the knowledge needed to make those judgments has increased with them. This is why the selection of building inspectors today has been upgraded. With the higher standards, of course, we should offer both higher salaries and greater responsibilities to the better quality of men we hope to attract to this profession.

To insure that we have a constant supply of well-trained men for such a profession, the Federal government should help to pay for the training of building inspectors and subsidize the salaries.

Such assistance by the Federal or State government is especially appropriate because building inspectors are needed not only in this city, but everywhere. Unless this is done there will be a time when structures will be built with no inspection,

in the midst of great numbers of people. We will, at such a time, have to live with our past mistakes sitting amongst us ready at any moment to falter and fail, causing great tragedy.

The enforcement of the Building Code and Zoning Ordinance are necessary for the development of the community. Although all of these laws, ordinances and codes are necessary for the healthful development of the community, their effectiveness will be greatly diminished unless well qualified administration is provided. The administrative staff should be carefully selected and well organized to serve the public effectively and efficiently.

The Building Code and Zoning Ordinance affect the lives and activities of the citizens of our community more than any other ordinance or code. The proper enforcement is a most important and serious responsibility of the Director of the Department of Building Inspection.

Code implementation takes courage. It's not the easy way out----but, it's the right way. It's a job that has to be faced up to, and what's more, it's a local responsibility.

Code enforcement can be popular particularly when it is realized that these are the tools of government best suited to help the citizen. This course of preventive action is by far superior to the alternative of either taking no action at all, or waiting too late and being confronted with buildings in such poor conditions that nothing short of total clearance will be necessary.

The desire to retain and to strengthen good municipal government shared by the elected officials and by the residents they represent is reflected in our efforts to make the buildings they live in....and work in....more meaningful and more enjoyable, and at the same time, to continuously improve our great City of Providence.

The Department of Building Inspection continued to strive toward encouragement of better construction through greater service to the public and industry....by improving procedures, revising the codes, allowing new materials and new methods of construction so as to reduce construction costs.

We will continue to make substantial progress in these and other ways....all the while increasing our efforts to protect the safety of the public.

The continued loyalty of the employees, and guidance and cooperation extended by His Honor the Mayor, have greatly assisted in the solution of many problems which arose during the year. For their assistance I express my deep appreciation.

Respectfully submitted,

*Vincent DiMase*  
Vincent DiMase, P.E.  
Director