

Abridged History of San Francisco's Bureau of Building Inspection: 1944 to 1992

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Introduction

A chance examination of an archived Annual Report¹ from the Department of Public Works (DPW) of the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) sparked the research and analysis summarized within this report.

As viewed from the narrowly focused perspective of this building codes professional, closer review of this cache of historical records dating from 1944 to 1992 revealed dramatic storylines within DPW's Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI), including tense turf wars with the Fire Department and the Board of Permit Appeals; the origins and development of the City's current building codes and the ultimately doomed decades-long battle against State control of these codes and standards; the career (and death in 1985) of renowned Superintendent Robert C. Levy; continued efforts to modernize record-keeping and management processes; and the Bureau's stout response to the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

This monograph, which is divided into three Parts, attempts to capture the essence of these stories and events:

- Part I (pages 02 to 07) presents an introductory chronology of San Francisco's Building Laws (beginning in 1906), Building Codes (beginning in 1946) and State code activities referenced within the Annual Reports for this 1944-1992 period;
- Part II (pages 08 to 17) then cites specific sentences and paragraphs within these Annual Reports to pinpoint major dates and events in the development and adoption processes for these new and updated building laws and codes; and
- Finally, Part III (pages 18 to 78) revisits each fiscal year's Annual Report to present expanded quotations that serve to further document these same events and to identify and summarize other interesting facets of the Bureau's history.
- Additionally, to better explain certain aspects of these storylines, scattered throughout this report are citations from other key reference resources, including archived monthly newsletters of the San Francisco chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute.

(This report is informal and qualitative in nature and is not authorized or intended for project-specific use by attorneys, building professionals or other participants in the construction, architectural, engineering, codes or litigation fields.)

¹ *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works*, City and County of San Francisco (fiscal year 1944 to fiscal year 1992)

Part I: Building Laws and Building Codes (1906-1990)

San Francisco's Building Laws and Building Codes and related State code activities referenced directly or indirectly within these DPW Annual Reports include:

- **1906 – The Building Law of the City and County of San Francisco**
 - Approved (Ordinance No. 31 – New Series) by the Board of Supervisors on July 5, 1906.
 - San Francisco's devastating earthquake occurred on April 18, 1906.
 - My 1908 hardbound edition of this 1906 Building Law includes various amendments adopted by individual ordinances in late-1906 and 1907.
- **1909/1910 – The Building Law of the City and County of San Francisco**
 - Approved (Ordinance No. 1008 – New Series) by the Board of Supervisors on December 22, 1909.
 - All of the following printed editions were based upon this 1909 Building Law:
 - 1921 Official Building Laws – City and County of San Francisco (*including amendments adopted in 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1920*).
 - 1926 Building Laws – City and County of San Francisco (*incl. amendments adopted in 1922, 1923 and 1924*).²
 - 1928 Building Laws of San Francisco (*amendments in 1926 and 1927*).
 - 1930 Building Laws – City and County of San Francisco (*incl. amendments in 1928 and 1929*).
 - 1934 Building Laws of San Francisco (*incl. amendments in 1930, 1931, 1932 and 1933*).
 - 1946 Building Codes [Building, Electrical, Fire, Plumbing & Heating Codes] – *extensively revised from the original Building Law of 1909/1910*.
- **1948 Building Codes of the City and County of San Francisco (Building Code, Electrical Code, Fire Code, Plumbing and Heating Code)**
 - Completely rewritten and reformatted.³
 - Approved (Ordinance No. 4547 – Series of 1939) on September 11, 1947.⁴
 - An amended edition of these 1948 Building Codes was published in 1952.

² “ORDINANCE 6300 – (New Series). Providing for the Removal of all Wooden and Frame Buildings Erected within the City and County of San Francisco subsequent to the Earthquake and Fire of April 18, 1906, in Violation of the Building Laws and Ordinances of the City and County of San Francisco, and Providing Penalties for the Violation Thereof.”

³ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1947: “There had been no complete revision of the building code since 1909. The old code was entirely obsolete and a new code was long overdue and vitally necessary if the supervision of building construction was to continue to be done intelligently. The production of a building code is at all times a controversial matter and at this time became particularly so, due to the fact that for the first time an effort was being made to introduce provisions which would insure reasonable public safety from damage to buildings caused by earthquakes.”

⁴ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1948: “The final passage of the Ordinance adopting a new Building Code was a major landmark in the history of the Bureau of Building Inspection of the Department.”

➤ **1956 San Francisco Building Code**

- Approved (Ordinance No. 9630 – Series of 1939) on April 6, 1956.⁵
 - Reissued (as 1960 Building Code) with amendments in August 1960.
- Republished (1962 Building Code) with extensive revisions in August 1962.⁶
- Republished (1965 Building Code) with extensive revisions in February 1965.⁷

➤ **1960's/1970's: State and Federal Efforts toward a Single Building Code**

- *“Mr. Bentson traced the history of the State code, noting in 1960 that one code was proposed for the entire State. The Federal government got interested in developing a nationwide uniform building code but ran into funding and other problems resulting in the program being bounced back to the states to solve. The Federal government has looked to California to take the lead in this movement because of our expanding population and the rapid growth of the construction industry. One result was the appointment (by the Governor) of a State Building Standards Commission of ten members... The committee set about to fashion a comprehensive Code (now known as Title 24). ...The aim is to condense all State codes into one document.”⁸*
- These State and Federal activities were strongly resisted by San Francisco’s Bureau of Building Inspection:
 - *“This is a very serious erosion of the basic home rule philosophy, and appears to be backed by certain minority factions in the building industry who feel that through the intervention of State or Federal governments they can get their materials used to a greater extent...”*
“The coming years will see still stronger attempts at a takeover made, which will require the concerted efforts of local government and the building industry to stop the empire building of the State and Federal Governments at the expense of the local public.”⁹

⁵ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1956: *“The new building code, enacted by the Board of Supervisors, became effective May 7, 1956. It has not yet been published in book form. There have been many changes in the new code with reference to the one it replaced. The changes are in keeping with the times.”*

⁶ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1961: *“It is anticipated that there will be over 400 changes, both major and minor in character, to the Building Code. Major changes involve reduction of corridor wall fire-resistive construction requirements from 2-hours to 1-hour; raising the requirement for doors in such corridors to 3/4-hour fire ratings; complete revision of Article 21 dealing with exits; complete review of designation for fire doors and fire windows to utilizing the hour rating system rather than alphabetical system; complete revisions to lateral force requirements of the code; provision for pre stress concrete design; plastic design in steel; and many other both major and minor text changes throughout the code.”*

⁷ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1964: *“Revisions to the Building Code were submitted to the Board of Supervisors in November, after review by industry and professional groups. These amendments were the second set submitted since the 1956 Code was adopted. The revisions included the adoption of the AISC structural specifications and the ACI concrete code by reference as well as increased the allowable carrying capacity for certain pilings. Other changes included administrative provisions covering the extent of alteration work that must be done in accordance with the present code. In all, there were approximately 100 code changes recommended. It is expected that the proposed legislation will be adopted at an early date.”*

⁸ Quoted from monthly newsletter (July 1968) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute.

⁹ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1967.

➤ 1969 San Francisco Building Code

- Approved (Ordinance No. 59-69) in 1969.
 - Generally formatted to the Uniform Building Code.¹⁰
 - No air conditioning or refrigeration provisions.¹¹
- Concurrent adoption of new 1969 Housing Code.¹²
- Reissued (as 1973 Building Code) with extensive revisions in May 1973.¹³
 - However, the 1973 Building Code was not printed for public distribution.¹⁴
- Additional revisions to the 1973 Building Code were made via multiple ordinances adopted in late-1973 and 1974.

➤ 1975 San Francisco Building Code

- Approved in June 1975.¹⁵
 - Revised and updated from predecessor 1969 Building Code.¹⁶
 - Second printing in April 1978.
- Note: in 1979, the Bureau began a multiyear process of review and revision intended to closely conform the successor edition of the San Francisco Building Code to the model Uniform Building Code.¹⁷

¹⁰ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1969: “After two and a half years of preparation, review, and meetings with all segments of industry and the professions, the completely rewritten and re-edited Building Code became effective on March 20, 1969. The new code utilizes a format completely compatible with the Uniform Building Code.”

¹¹ Ibid: “The new Building Code, therefore, contains no air conditioning or refrigeration provisions since no staff would be provided to enforce same. San Francisco is the only major city in the United States that does not have such inspection. It is the position of the Department of Public Works that no provisions of the Code should be enacted unless staff to provide enforcement is also furnished.”

¹² Ibid: “As a companion to the new Building Code, a new Housing Code was adopted into law. ... Transferred from the Housing Code into the new Building Code were all construction requirements. The Housing Code will be the ‘existing’ residential buildings code basically containing the retroactive requirements for all residential buildings. No changes were made in these retroactive provisions.”

¹³ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1973: “In May 1973 the triennial review of the building code was completed with approximately 225 code changes enacted into law. These changes range from editorial corrections to completely overhauled articles of the code. In addition new code provisions were added relating to life safety systems in high rise buildings, aluminum for structural use, etc.”

¹⁴ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1975: “Due to the financial crisis of the Cities, the 1973 Building Code amendments were never printed by the City.”

¹⁵ Ibid: “In early June the Building Code was completed with over twenty amendments including the major 1973 changes incorporated therein. It was placed on public sale on June 24, 1975. It represented a recodification, as well as a reprinted document.”

¹⁶ Explanatory Notes to 1975 edition of San Francisco Building Code: “The 1975 edition of the City and County San Francisco Building Code is a completely revised and updated edition. Essentially it is the same as the last preceding edition, published in the year of 1969, and incorporates all amendments which were enacted subsequent to that publication. However, many significant editorial changes have been made in the 1975 edition for greater clarity and grammatical sense. Because of the voluminous changes which were made in this edition, it is more practical that the previous 1969 edition, as amended, be repealed in its entirety and the new code which follows in this book be adopted its entirety.”

¹⁷ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1978: “A review of the Building Code is expected to commence early in 1979. This review is expected to compare each section of the San Francisco Code with the Uniform Building Code (which is used as a base by the State) with the expectation of making the San Francisco Code more similar to the Uniform Code as well as clarifying and up-dating it. It is hoped that the professional groups will aid the Bureau in this time consuming comparison.”

➤ **1978: Building Standards Commission (BSC) is Further Empowered**

- *“To correct the problems and confusion resulting from the uncoordinated proliferation of conflicting, duplicate, and overlapping state regulations, SB 331 (Robbins) (Chapter 1152, Statutes of 1979), effective January 1, 1980, provided the Commission with broader powers. As a result of SB 331, all proposed building regulations adopted by various state agencies must be reviewed and approved by the Commission before the regulations have any force or effect. Further, the legislation called for all building standards to be removed from other titles of the California Code of Regulations and put into a single code - Title 24 - that the Commission is responsible for codifying and publishing.”¹⁸*

➤ **1981: BSC Issues 1982 State Building Code (and State Electrical Code)¹⁹**

- *“Purpose – Sec. 2-101:*
 - a) “To provide minimum standards to safeguard life or limb, health, property, and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location and maintenance of all buildings and structures within the scope of this Code.”*
 - b) “To assure that barrier-free design is incorporated in all buildings, facilities, site work and other developments to which this Code applies to assure that they are accessible to, and usable by, physically handicapped persons.”*
- Effective date: January 1, 1982 (except July 1, 1982 for the new accessibility regulations promulgated by the Office of the State Architect²⁰).
- Adopted by reference the model 1979 Uniform Building Code.
- Amended via multiple individual amendments in 1982, 1983 and 1984. Further amended via: 1984 Annual Supplement; 1984 Addendum to the 1984 Annual Supplement; and a series of 1984 Emergency Supplements.

➤ **1984: BSC Develops Updated 1985 State Building Code²¹**

- Adopted by reference the 1979 and 1982 editions of the model UBC.²²
- Effective date: October 1, 1985.

¹⁸ http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt_bsc/history.aspx

¹⁹ Notice at page 1 of 1981 State Building Code (Title 24, Part 2): *“The 1981 publication of the (Compiled) State Building Standards Code only updates Part 2, State Building Code and Part 3, State Electrical Code to the new format. It is the intent of the State Building Standards Commission to update Part 4 and Part 5 to the new format in the 1982 publication of the (Compiled) State Building Code.”*

²⁰ John Raeber, AIA, CSI, California Architectural Barriers Laws and Interpretive Manual for Barrier-Free Design, Second Printing, Building News, Inc., Los Angeles, 1983: *“The regulations would have become law in January 1982, but the State Architect requested an extension to July 1, which was approved by the Building Standards Commission.”*

²¹ John Raeber, AIA, CSI, California Architectural Barriers Laws and Interpretive Manual for Barrier-Free Design, Second Edition, BNiBooks, 1989: *“...the changes in 1984 were predominately related to including the requirements held up by the State Fire Marshal and including the first Housing and Community Development regulations for privately funded housing.”*

²² Notice to 1985 Triennial Edition of the State Building Code (Title 24, Part 2): *“Except for the Department of Housing and Community Development, the state agencies adopting building standards have adopted by reference with amendments the 1979 Uniform Building Code. The Department of Housing and Community Development has adopted the 1982 Uniform Building Code. To minimize the confusion this may create, the State Building Standards Commission has placed the number 79 and 82 in the adoption tables.”*

➤ **1984 San Francisco Building Code**

- Extensively reviewed, revised and rewritten from 1980 thru 1982.²³
- Approved in 1983 (Ordinances #570-83 and 54-83) with an effective date of January 1, 1984.²⁴
- Adopted by reference the model 1979 Uniform Building Code²⁵ – with some provisions taken from the model 1982 UBC) – in general conformance with the 1982 State Building Code.²⁶

➤ **1988: BSC Takes Full Control of All City and County Building Codes**

- *“SB 2871 (Marks) provided that ...the building standards contained in specified codes (model codes) published by the Commission apply, with certain exceptions, to all occupancies throughout the state.”²⁷*

➤ **1988/1989 California Building Code**

- Renamed State Building Code (*aka*: “State of California 1989 Amendments to the 1988 Uniform Building Code”²⁸).
- Adopted by reference the 1988 UBC with an effective date of July 1, 1989²⁹ for State projects and January 1, 1990 (6 months later) for other projects.³⁰
- Note: all State agencies now required to reference the same model code.³¹

²³ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1982: *“The update of the building code initiated in 1980 was given full impetus in 1981-82, and the new code will be submitted for adoption by early 1983. This code will adopt by reference the Uniform Building Code with amendments to reflect the needs of local conditions.”*

²⁴ DPW Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1984: *“The Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code were adopted along with some amendments necessary to reflect local conditions, as codes of the City. This was the first step in the conversion of all the City’s heretofore unique construction codes to the model codes.”*

²⁵ Explanatory Notes to 1984 edition of San Francisco Building Code: *“The 1984 edition of the San Francisco Building Code is a completely revised and updated edition. This edition is a significant departure from all previous editions in that, for the first time, the Uniform Building Code (U.B.C.) is adopted by reference as an integral part of the San Francisco Building Code. The complete code consists of the 1979 edition of the U.B.C.; several Appendix chapters therein; and this volume of amendments to the U.B.C. The previous edition of the San Francisco Building Code (1975), including all code changes therein, has been repealed in its entirety.”*

²⁶ Monthly newsletter (October 1988) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: *“The 1984 San Francisco Building Code was written to make the City Code conform with the State Code, with only those variances necessary as determined by special circumstances.”*

²⁷ Building Standards Commission: http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt_bsc/history.aspx

²⁸ Monthly newsletter (July 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: *“Totally revised for the first time since 1979, the Building, Mechanical, and Plumbing Codes will be published as a California Edition of the 1988 Uniform Codes. Building News Inc., a Southern California publisher, has already published Part 3, California Electrical Code, based on the 1987 National Electrical Code.”*

²⁹ History Notes to 1988/1989 edition of California Building Code: *“The state of California amends the California Building Code ...and incorporates the 1988 edition of the Uniform Building Code (U.B.C.) by reference. Filed with secretary of state June 23, 1989; effective July 1, 1989. Issuing agencies: All adopting and enforcing agencies. Approvals completed by the State Building Standards Commission January 20, 1989.”*

³⁰ Monthly newsletter (July 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: *“On July 1st the California State Building, Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes goes into effect for state projects. On January 1, 1990 the new California Codes will go into effect for all projects.”*

³¹ Monthly newsletter (August 1987) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: *“For those not familiar with the present code, it consists of various agencies revisions to various editions of the Uniform Building Code (UBC). The twelve adopting agencies have referenced all three of the last UBC editions, 1979, 1982 and 1985. The next triennial edition should at least eliminate the use of the various editions of the UBC.”*

➤ 1990 San Francisco Building Code

- After extensive consultation with industry groups,³² approved in 1989 (Ordinance #395-89) with an effective date of January 1, 1990.³³
- Adopted by reference the model 1988 Uniform Building Code as amended by the 1988/1989 California Building Code.³⁴
- CCSF began to accept nationally recognized tests and procedures for product approval.³⁵
- To the widespread acclaim³⁶ of active design professionals, one model building code now controlled all construction projects (except Federal) throughout the State of California.³⁷
- Note: the long history of jurisdictional disputes (e.g., “*the great battle in the early 80’s*”³⁸) between San Francisco’s Building Department and Fire Department was substantially resolved with the new State codes.³⁹

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³² Monthly newsletter (July 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*San Francisco has been working on adopting the 1988 Edition of the Uniform Building code by the end of 1989. The draft copies have been under review by various groups and the new code will be adopted before January 1, 1990.*”

³³ Monthly newsletter (September 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*John Raeber, CCS ...next introduced speaker William Schock, a member of the San Francisco Bureau of Building Inspection, and code interpreter. The San Francisco Building Code will be amended to meet the new State Code, effective January 1, 1990.*”

³⁴ Introduction to 1990 San Francisco Building Code: “*Like the cities and counties, the State adopts model codes by reference, with substantial amendments to accommodate State needs. The State is mandated by law to adopt latest editions of these model codes within six months of their publication date. In turn, cities and counties are mandated by law to adopt the same editions of the model codes with six months of their adoption by the State.*”

³⁵ Monthly newsletter (October 1992) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*Lawrence L. Litchfield, P.E., Superintendent of the San Francisco Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI) was our guest speaker in September. Mr. Litchfield informed us that the bureau is starting to settle down and become adjusted to a new mayor, a new planning department, and a new city building code. ...For example, ‘The City’ no longer requires special product approvals. They have come on board with other building departments and accept nationally recognized tests and procedures such as ASTM and UL for product approval.*”

³⁶ Monthly newsletter (November 1988) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*There have been extensive changes to the Uniform Building Code (UBC) since the 1984 San Francisco Building Code adopted the 1979 UBC with modifications. Within a few months San Francisco plans to adopt the 1988 UBC with amendments. ... We are now faced with the possibility that for the first time most of the state and local municipalities will actually be using one edition of the UBC. This may not be quite as earthshaking as would be the adoption of a single model building code throughout the United States, but it’s close.*”

³⁷ Monthly newsletter (September 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*For perhaps the first time no matter where you are designing in California, you will be working with one and only one Basic Code in each discipline and surely the amendments or additions adopted by a city or county will be easier to deal with.*”

³⁸ Monthly newsletter (October 1988) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: “*In the early 80’s there were projects approved by the Building Department which were later rejected by the Fire Department. Moscone Convention Center became a focal point of interpretation of the concept of the City Code being able to be different from the State Code. The City Attorney’s office at that time held that the City Code requirements could not substantially vary from the State Code requirements.*”

³⁹ Ibid: “*The life safety requirements of the State Building Code are adopted by the State Fire Marshal, and enforcement in San Francisco is by members of the Fire Department. Where there are differences between the State Code and the City Code, the City Fire Department will be enforcing the State Code and the City Building Department (Bureau of Building Inspection or BBI) will be enforcing the City Code.*”

Part II: Abbreviated Bureau History (1944-1992)⁴⁰

- **1944–1947: development and adoption of 1948 Building Code:**
("...for the first time an effort was being made to introduce provisions which would insure reasonable public safety from damage to buildings caused by earthquakes.")
- **1948–1952: multiple revisions and updates to 1948 Building Code:**
("Consideration is being given to the many suggestions for revision of the Building Code. Some highly controversial matters, such as the lateral force provisions for new buildings, must be decided and it is intended to take them up later in the year.")
- **1953–1955: development and adoption of 1956 Building Code:**
("A revised building code was forwarded to the City Attorney on June 27, 1955. This code is now in the hands of the Board of Supervisors, and should shortly be enacted. This code revises the 1947 code and ...reflects a more comprehensive approach to building construction - in some cases less restrictive requirements have been made, in others, more.")
- **1954–1958: development and adoption of 1958 Housing Code:**
("Urban Renewal Program: This program commenced with the title of Slum Clearance Program and was later changed to the Urban Renewal Program. This program has been in effect for slightly over four years... The recommendations of a committee of the Mayor call for an accelerated program, as well as a more effective one. In order to accomplish this directive a new Housing Code has been enacted by the Board of Supervisors.")
- **1959–1960: development and adoption of San Francisco's 3R Report:**
("Report of Residential Record: In December, 1959, an ordinance was introduced in the Board of Supervisors requiring that before a residential building could be sold, a report must be obtained by the owner and delivered to the buyer. ...This ordinance was passed March 21, 1960 with the effective date of July 1, 1960. It was not possible to secure and train the necessary personnel... The effective date was postponed by action of the Board of Supervisors until December 1, 1960.")
- **1960–1961: extensive amendments to the 1958 Housing Code:**
("During the spring of 1960 the Bureau undertook the first revision of the 1958 San Francisco Housing Code. ...In January 1961 the proposed amendments to the Housing Code were sent to the Board of Supervisors. ...The recommended amendments to the San Francisco Housing Code were passed by the Board of Supervisors on September 27, 1961.")

⁴⁰ Unless otherwise noted, all citations in Parts II and III of this report are taken from DPW Annual Reports.

- **1961–1962: extensive amendments to the 1956 Building Code:**
("The first overall revision of the 1956 San Francisco Building Code was sent to the Board of Supervisors in late November 1961. ...The amendments to the San Francisco Building Code, which were under study since 1961, were passed by the Board of Supervisors in July 1962.")
- **1962–1963: resistance to State interference:**
("The Bureau was involved to a considerable extent in review and commenting upon proposed State regulation with regard to housing (Title 8) and the State Fire Marshal (Title 19). The efforts of the Bureau were not successful, however; and it is anticipated that serious problems will arise with regard to State rules and the City codes.")
- **1963–1964: begin drafting new Plumbing Code:**
("Work was started on a complete re-write of the San Francisco Plumbing Code by the Assistant Superintendent. ...The proposed new code will generally follow the format of the Western Plumbing Officials model code with modifications necessary for a highly concentrated populace.")
- **1963–1964: further amendments to the 1956 Building Code:**
("A second series of amendments to the San Francisco Building Code was passed in August 1964. The original code was completely rewritten in 1955 and substantially amended in 1962.")
- **1963–1968: begin drafting new Electrical Code:**
("The format of the code has been developed, based upon the National Electrical Code ...only amending those sections which it is felt require change due to the particular problems of a high-density city. Also, the pertinent portions of the State Code will be included so the code will be able, in general, to be the single reference for use in San Francisco.")
- **1964-1965: resolving Building Code conflicts with new Fire Code:**
("The Fire Department has, over the past several years, been preparing a complete revision to its Fire Code. Since 1960, this Bureau has been reviewing the contents of the proposed new code in order to eliminate and avoid areas of conflict, overlap and duplication. Unfortunately, an impasse was reached in 1962 in these negotiations for modifications of the code. The matter was referred by the Police Committee of the Board of Supervisors to the Chamber of Commerce for them to act as a mediator of both the intra-city agencies as well as those of industry and the professional organizations. This was done and the Chamber of Commerce has done an excellent job having reconciled the vast majority of the differences.")

- **1964-1968: battling the Board of Permit Appeals:**
(*"The Board of Permit Appeals continued in the same manner as in previous years in overruling over 90% of the matters presented to it relating to Building Code provisions.*
"...The actions of this Board continue to erode the Bureau enforcement efforts, and there appears to be little that the Bureau can do to change the trend.")
- **1965-1968: continued resistance to State and Federal interference:**
(*"The coming years will see still stronger attempts at a takeover made, which will require the concerted efforts of local government and the building industry to stop the empire building of the State and Federal Governments at the expense of the local public."*)
- **1966-1967: consolidation of Building & Fire Dept. inspection services:**
(*"In November 1966 Charter Amendment C ...was passed, which ...eliminated ...the duplication of inspection and plan checking for commercial office buildings and residential occupancies between this Bureau and the Fire Department.*
"Upon passage of this charter amendment there were transferred to the Bureau of Building Inspection four fire inspectors to assist as advisors from the Fire Department on fire matters as well as to assist in code preparation. This transfer ...was effected in February 1967...")
- **1966-1969: development and adoption of 1969 Building Code:**⁴¹
(*"After two and a half years of preparation, review, and meetings with all segments of industry and the professions, the completely rewritten and re-edited Building Code became effective on March 20, 1969. The new code utilizes a format completely compatible with the Uniform Building Code."*)
- **1966-1969: development and adoption of 1969 Housing Code:**⁴²
(*"As a companion to the new Building Code, a new Housing Code was adopted into law.*
"...Transferred from the Housing Code into the new Building Code were all construction requirements. The Housing Code will be the 'existing' residential buildings code basically containing the retroactive requirements for all residential buildings. No changes were made in these retroactive provisions.")

⁴¹ Monthly newsletter (June 1969) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute: *"Up to the time of this meeting the new Code has been available only in 'newspaper' form as advertised in the S.F. Examiner. Now, hopefully the Code in a regular printed edition should be available sometime this month. The arrangement and table of contents will now follow the same format as the Uniform Building Code."*

⁴² Ibid: *"The New San Francisco Housing Code is a companion to the Building Code and hereafter all buildings will be required to conform to it."*

- **1969–1970: no enforcement of new Parapet Ordinance:**⁴³
*(“The new Building Code contains provisions for the removal or reinforcement of parapets and other building appendages subject to failure from earthquake. The necessary funding to staff the parapet section was deleted by the Board of Supervisors from the 1969-70 budget.
“...Therefore, the Bureau is on record that the parapet ordinance is not and cannot be enforced at this time due to budget cuts.”)*
- **1969–1970: final development and adoption of 1970 Electrical Code:**
*(“The new San Francisco Electrical Code, prepared by a joint industry, construction and professional committee, was submitted to the Board of Supervisors and adopted in the Fall of 1970.
“...It represented the first major update of the Electrical Code in San Francisco history and the first such single document to be used by the industry.”)*
- **1969–1972: continued battles with the Board of Permit Appeals:**
*(“The relationship between the Bureau and the Board of Permit Appeals continues to be that the Board acts to overrule the requirements of the several City codes with little or no equivalent safety being provided in many structures.”
“It is the stated position of the Bureau of Building Inspection that it cannot be an administrator of an illegal act. We will continue to proceed in this same manner whenever we believe the Board has violated the law by waiving specific code requirements.”)*
- **1969–1972: continued resistance to State and Federal interference:**
*(“Unfortunately, there are increasingly being introduced preemptive legislation to remove, from the cities and counties, local control of local programs.”
“With the recognition of the increasing pressures in the State Legislature to remove home rule, greater importance has been cast on the review of legislation within the Bureau and participation in the California Chapter of International Conference of Building Officials...”)*
- **1969–1972: Systematic Housing Code Enforcement Program:**
*(“The program continued at the same level as in previous years since 1967 when this function for multi-family housing was transferred to the Bureau of Building Inspection.
“...The continued effort on the part of the staff to bring pressure upon owners to bring buildings up to minimum Housing Code levels is apparently succeeding.”)*

⁴³ Article 2.5 of the 1969 edition of the San Francisco Building Code mandates the removal, reconstruction or bracing of parapets at existing buildings “where failure ... would be a hazard to life or limb” to the public below.

- **1970–1972: final development and adoption of 1971 Plumbing Code:**
(“In the latter part of 1970, the Plumbing Code, which had previously been drafted and sent to industry in 1966 and then tabled, was revised and updated to comparability with the 1970 Uniform Plumbing Code. ...went into effect in April 1972.”)
- **1971–1974: continued lack of enforcement of the Parapet Ordinance:**
*(“Because of the short-staff situation and the inability of Civil Service to fill our personnel needs, the enforcement of the Parapet Ordinance has been held in abeyance.
“It is anticipated, however, that the new fiscal year will see ...staffing for the Parapet Section...”)*
- **1972–1973: extensive amendments to 1969 Building Code:**⁴⁴
*(“In May 1973 the triennial review of the building code was completed with approximately 225 code changes enacted into law. These changes range from editorial corrections to completely overhauled articles of the code. In addition new code provisions were added relating to life safety systems in high rise buildings...”
“Due to the financial crisis of the Cities, the 1973 Building Code amendments were never printed by the City.”)*
- **1972–1973: Plumbing Code accepts plastic ABS and PVC piping:**
*(“As a result of continued pressure by the Federal government involving jeopardizing millions of dollars of federal assistance, the Director of Public Works in September approved the use of plastic ABS and PVC piping for drain, waste and vent use in accordance with the installation provision of the Uniform Plumbing Code.
“It is the position of the Bureau to enforce the ruling of the Director while still retaining a negative position...”)*
- **1973–1974: continued resistance to Federal interference:**
*(“Increasingly there has been a greater degree of activity of Federal agencies entering the code field. This is evidenced by the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Consumer Product Safety Act, as well as the Fire Prevention Act now being considered in Congress at this time.
“...All of these areas will cause increased incursions into the building code field and will cause problems in this City and County resulting from overlaps and duplications of authority.”)*

⁴⁴ Monthly newsletter (August 1973) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute:
“A 300 page document covering the changes to the San Francisco Building Code is available at the office of the Chamber of Commerce at 400 Montgomery Street. The price is \$5.00. Note: This is not a copy of the code. If you do not have a San Francisco building code, the revisions would be meaningless.”

- **1973–1975: Systematic Housing Code Enforcement Program:**
*(“Another assist has been ...State Assembly Bill 475 enacted in 1974 and introduced by Assemblyman Willy Brown. This law permits the enforcement official ...to notify the Franchise Tax Board of any rental residential property wherein the owner has failed to abate the code violations...
“If not appealed or if the appeal is not sustained, the Franchise Tax Board then prohibits any tax exemptions from state taxes that the owner normally takes for his property. This has had a very powerful effect upon owners since in many cases the only profit they can see is that provided by the tax deductions on their income property.”)*
- **1973–1975: resistance to high-rise proposals by the State Fire Marshal:**
(“The code activities of the State Fire Marshal will cause serious problems to the City of San Francisco particularly in the area of existing high-rise buildings wherein they have the authority through state law to adopt regulations retroactively applicable to them. Working with the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, it is hoped that these regulations can be made realistic in their application to existing buildings.”)
- **1973–1975: private printer hired to publish the 1975 Building Code:**
*(“The Superintendent had recommended in 1969 that to speed up the process ...that ...a private printer do the job with his own capital and then to permit him to sell the codes to recapture his costs. This is the procedure used by the City of Los Angeles...”
“In early June the Building Code was completed with over twenty amendments including the major 1973 changes incorporated therein. It was placed on public sale on June 24, 1975. It represented a recodification, as well as a reprinted document.”)*
- **1974–1975: Security Regulations for multifamily buildings:**
(“Another new era of enforcement activity placed upon the Bureau is the recently enacted security requirements ordinance. These requirements will involve all multifamily residential buildings, both new and existing.”)
- **1974–1975: proposed reorganization of Bureau of Building Inspection:**
*(“In the reorganization, the duties assigned to the three major Deputy and Assistant Superintendents, would reduce the span of control now presently centered upon the Superintendent and would properly group the functions under conservation, on-line day-to-day inspectional activities, and administration.”
“The proposed reorganization discussed ...was fully approved by the Civil Service Commission and the Board of Supervisors with funding commencing July 1, 1975.”)*

- **1975–1976: failed reorganization of Bureau of Building Inspection:**
*(“During the fiscal year, the Assistant Superintendent, Property Conservation was financed and filled, but the other three positions were frozen.
“This standoff was well covered in the news media.”)*
- **1975: begin enforcement of the Parapet Ordinance:**
(“A Structural Engineer was appointed and assigned in April to the newly activated Parapet Safety Section to implement a program of enforcement for the Parapet Ordinance - Article 2.5 of the San Francisco Building Code.”)
- **1975–1976: reassessment of Parapet Ordinance by Board of Examiners:**
*“...the surveys and issuance of citations were halted pending a reassessment of the Program by the Board of Examiners. ...The absence of specific requirements, coupled with some unfortunate areas of ambiguity, permits differing interpretations as to what the ordinance requires.”
“It is expected that, with Program requirements now clearly defined by the Board of Examiners, and not likely to be changed to any significant extent, the Program will move forward at a more rapid pace.”)*
- **1975–1978: resistance to high-rise proposals by State Fire Marshal:**
(“During this fiscal year, additional opposition ...together with the appointment of a new State Fire Marshal, led to further changes to the proposed regulations. These changes removed many of the overly restrictive requirements and high cost items that provided questionable benefits.”)
- **1975–1986: implementation of Rehabilitation Assistance Program:**
(“Since the inception of the program... 4,559 structures with 17,303 dwelling units have been brought into compliance with displacement of less than 2% of residents. One thousand one hundred and forty-four loans totaling \$29.1 million have been disbursed for code compliance work with an additional \$24.4 million coming from private financing.”)
- **1976-1977: incomplete reorganization of the Bureau:**
(“These positions were approved in the 1974-75 budget but were frozen, and some were then deleted from subsequent budgets.”)
- **1977-1978: reviewing proposed revisions to the San Francisco Codes:**
*(“We will review the Uniform Building Code changes, as well as changes in State law and suggested changes by our staff in this update.
“...A similar review of the Electrical Code is being undertaken ...to update the San Francisco Electrical Code using the National Electrical Code as a model.”)*

- **1977-1992: increased workloads due to new State regulations:**
(*"The Department of Housing and Community Development has just adopted new housing regulations which affect access requirements for the handicapped..."*)
"The retroactive high-rise requirements promulgated by the State Fire Marshal ...will involve joint inspections by our building inspectors with the Fire Department inspectors..."
"A new Energy Code has been adopted by the State Energy Commission for non-residential buildings, to be enforced by the local building inspection departments...")
- **1977-1992: constrained enforcement of the Parapet Ordinance:**
(*"The Parapet Safety Program made slower than expected progress during its second year of operation. ...At the start of the Program, various groups that are interested in the City's environment and appearance ...were instrumental in limiting the Program essentially to parapets, cornices, freestanding statuary, chimneys, and roof tanks."*)
- **1978-1979: revising the San Francisco Electrical Code:**
(*"...a review of the Electrical Code using the National Electrical Code as a model ...is expected to be completed in late 1979."*)
- **1979-1984: adoption of 1984 SF Building Code and SF Mechanical Code:**
(*"A review of the Building Code is expected to commence early in 1979."*)
"The update of the building code initiated in 1980 was given full impetus in 1981-82, and the new code will be submitted for adoption by early 1983. This code will adopt by reference the Uniform Building Code with amendments to reflect the needs of local conditions.")
- **1980-1982: smoke & heat detectors at hotels and apartment buildings:**
(*"The Smoke and Heat Detector program is within 99% completion with 98% of the 19,500 buildings in compliance."*)
- **1980-1985: implementation of computerized permit tracking system:**
(*"The first phase of the Permit Tracking System was implemented in November, 1981. Applications for building permits are tracked throughout the approval process from filing to issuance."*)
"Programming was completed in FY 84/85, extending the scope of Permit Tracking to include Electrical and Plumbing permits from issuance to completion of work."
"With an unprecedented boom in construction activity from 1981 through 1984, the permit process would have been overwhelmed by the demands of this boom without some relief via automation.")

- **1984-1987: adoption of triennial cycles of national model codes:**
(“The Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code were adopted along with some amendments necessary to reflect local conditions, as codes of the City.”
“An ordinance to adopt the National Electric Code was awaiting action at the Board of Supervisors at year's end.”
“The adoption of the 1985 Uniform Building, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes and the 1984 National Electrical Code, and the updating of the San Francisco Housing Code, will be completed in FY 1986-87. The adoption of these codes will mark the beginning of a triennial cycle of national code adoptions.”
- **1985: the death of renowned BBI Superintendent Robert C. Levy:**
(“The events and achievements of the past year were overshadowed by the death of Superintendent Robert C. Levy on May 20, 1985. His talents, knowledge of codes, dedication, and national stature are irreplaceable.
“He has left an indelible imprint upon the face of this City, the Bureau of Building Inspection, and the Department of Public Works. His legacy includes the Broadway Tunnel, code innovations in fire safety and emergency exiting, and national leadership in the continuing evolution of building codes.”)
- **1985-1990: extensive restructuring of Bureau of Building Inspection:**
(“As part of the service improvements, the Bureau was restructured in December, 1985, with a greater emphasis placed on ‘over-the-counter’ permits.”
“The consolidation of the Abatement Division with the Building Inspection Division and reassignment of Senior Building Inspectors to more efficiently supervise staff made it possible to create smaller districts with more inspectors in the field.”
“Housing Inspection Division (HID), which assumed 50% of the work of the now-dissolved Abatement Division without an increase in staff ...has also been performing complaint inspections in single and two family buildings for one year now.”)
- **1989-1992: implementation of Disability Access Program:**
(“...in response to the public's concerns on various code enforcement issues regarding disabilities access, the Bureau established a Disability Access Program for coordination of information regarding all issues dealing with disabilities access.
“The Disability Access Coordinator has put into place a training program for the Bureau staff that brings expanded awareness to disability access issues. This expanded awareness is not only in the areas of plan checking and inspections, but also in the real-life difficulties experienced by the disabled community.”)

- **1989-1992: massive BBI response to the Loma Prieta earthquake:**
(“The devastating earthquake of October 17 provided the Bureau with its greatest challenge. Within minutes, BBI received reports of significant damage across the entire City. Phones were down, power was out, and towards the Bay, smoke could be seen billowing towards the sky. The needs of the public were overwhelming, and all too soon darkness began to fall.”
“The number of inspections and quantity of services provided by Bureau personnel was truly incredible. During the first 72 hours, over 1,600 inspections were performed.”
“The staff of the Code Enforcement Division were assigned to the special projects necessary to follow up on earthquake damaged buildings. Procedures were developed and implemented to inspect and enforce new City Ordinances regarding commercial energy conservation retrofit requirements in connection with permits and title changes of commercial properties. Special inspection procedures were revised and implemented for compliance with the 1990 San Francisco Building Code.”
- **1991-1992: further reforms & restructuring of the Bureau’s operations:**
(“During the 1991-1992 fiscal year, the Bureau began the challenge of carrying out business operation reforms. These reforms were in the areas of customer relations, communications, computerization and financial management and will continue to take place over the next two years. The Bureau has become more accountable, more accessible and increased its credibility and productivity through these reforms.
“The Bureau has also changed its role from that of an adversary to that of a consultant when responding to ...the public.”
“Although the earthquake of October 17, 1989 remained a challenge for the Bureau of Building Inspection, it has begun to approach the greater challenge of carrying out business operation reforms. These reforms will make the Bureau more accountable, accessible, and increase its credibility and productivity. These reforms are in the areas of communications, computerization, financial management and customer relations.”
“During fiscal year 1991-92, the Bureau continued to expand its computer communication network by installing 40 personal computers and their attendant support devices. The Local Area Network now connects the computers in the Bureau’s three locations. The installation of Electronic Mail (E-Mail) provided a vehicle for communication among the three locations. The Bureau will continue to use computers as the basis for changing its business operations.”)

Part III: Additional Information from DPW Reports

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1944

- *“The largest projects during the year have been construction of 3,769 United States government temporary housing units for war workers.”*
- *“During the year the Superintendent of the Bureau attended many meetings of the Pacific Coast Building Officials Conference and took an active part in these meetings. The present Building Code, originally enacted in 1906, has now become in some respects obsolete. Although frequently amended, it is now in need of a complete revision.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1945

- *“Building construction during the past year was carried on under the restrictions imposed by war conditions. Private residential construction was limited to homes built under Title VI of the Federal Housing Act, the Home Owners Loan Act and the Veterans Act.*

“The floor area of standard one-family dwellings, which previously was limited to 800 square feet, was increased successively to 900 and 1,000 square feet; the construction of two-family dwellings known as flats, discontinued during the first war years, was again permitted. Many existing buildings, sometimes quite dilapidated, were rehabilitated under the Home Owners Loan Act and additional housing units were thus made available.”

- *“Due to the scarcity of lumber and metal products, some requirements of the regular building code regarding the use of these materials were relaxed in accordance with emergency wartime building ordinances. Although it has been frequently amended, the present building code, originally enacted in 1906, has now become obsolete. In order that a revised building code may be printed, an appropriation of \$5,000 will be provided in the 1945-46 budget.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1946

- *“In the early part of the calendar year of 1946 a substantial rush of home building in anticipation of further OPA [Office of Price Administration] restrictions on both materials and construction overloaded our Bureau of Building Inspection to such extent that it became immediately necessary to obtain additional building Inspectors and structural engineering services.*

“This was done through an emergency allocation of funds from the Mayor's emergency budget. In spite of this additional help, the inspectors of this Bureau have been sorely tried by an excess of work.

“Under the veterans' home building program many homes have been started but, due to shortages of material, stand incompleted. The resulting extended construction period, for almost every building, has proportionately increased the number of inspection visits to be paid by the district inspectors.”

- *“In addition to its normal work the Bureau of Building Inspection, during the entire fiscal year, has been engaged in the production of a new Building Code. This code is badly needed since the present code passed in 1909 has long been obsolete.*

“The difficulties of writing a building code are little understood except to those involved in its production. Commercial advantages are sought by many groups and the pressure on code workers is ceaseless and long drawn out.”

“In spite of this, a complete New Code will be submitted to the Supervisors for adoption in the near future. We believe it will prove to be a creditable document.”

- *“One of the most important tasks performed by the Bureau in the past fiscal year was in connection with the preparation of the proposed new building code. One structural engineer devoted full time to this work and made a thorough study of practically all the important building codes in the United States, as well as the National Building Code of Canada.*

“The preliminary draft was completed March 1, 1946, and copies were submitted to all the interested organizations for study and suggestions. The response from these organizations was highly constructive and was utilized in the preparation of a revised draft, which work absorbed the balance of the fiscal year.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1947**

- *“Building construction during the past year was mainly of a residential character; many two-story and basement four-family apartments were built but no large apartment houses or hotels. Although much residential construction has been completed there is still a shortage of proper housing, due primarily to the influx of veterans to this State with the cessation of World War II.*

“Within the past several months there has been an increase to construction for commercial use; for instance, the expansion of telephone facilities, which has been reflected in additional telephone exchanges and the additions, horizontally and vertically, to already existing structures for telephone exchanges. Other public utilities, shipping, and industrial concerns in general have had to take care of increased demands by new construction and by additions to existing buildings.

“The shortage of essential materials for construction has eased up considerably and there is every indication of a continuing increase in building construction.”

- *“One of the most important tasks performed by the bureau for the second consecutive fiscal year was in connection with the preparation of the new building code. One structural engineer devoted his whole time to this work. The preliminary draft was completed under date of March 1, 1946, and copies submitted to all interested organizations for study and suggestion.*

The response from these organizations was highly constructive and was utilized in the preparation of a revised draft which was completed under date of August 10, 1946. This revised draft was sent to all who had received the original draft of

the code, and after adjustment of controversial matters the code was passed to print by the Board of Supervisors at a seating on June 9, 1947. This code is now ...will be voted upon for final passage in about three weeks' time."

- *"A considerable portion of the time of the Director of Public Works during the year, together with that of the Superintendent of the Bureau of Building Inspection and his staff, was consumed in the production of a new building code. There had been no complete revision of the building code since 1909. The old code was entirely obsolete and a new code was long overdue and vitally necessary if the supervision of building construction was to continue to be done intelligently.*

"The production of a building code is at all times a controversial matter and at this time became particularly so, due to the fact that for the first time an effort was being made to introduce provisions which would insure reasonable public safety from damage to buildings caused by earthquakes.

"After almost twenty-six months of work and many hearings before the Judiciary Committee and the Board of Supervisors, the code was finally passed and signed by the Mayor on August 12, 1947. Geo. S. Hill, Structural Engineer, was responsible for the actual writing of the code.

"Credit for collaboration should also go to John Q. Little, Superintendent of the Bureau, Felix H. Spitzer, C. H. Potts, Lester Bush, W.E. Laming (in connection with the Article on Boiler Inspection) and Frank Kelly, Chief of the Bureau of Fire prevention and Public Safety."

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1948**

- *"The final passage of the Ordinance adopting a new Building Code was a major landmark in the history of the Bureau of Building Inspection of the Department."*

"This ordinance was passed by the Board of Supervisors, signed by the Mayor, and made effective as of September 11, 1947."
- *"During the fiscal year 1947-1948, the Central Permit Bureau, a subdivision of the Department of Public Works under H.C. Vensano, Director, did the largest volume of business since its establishment under the Charter which became effective on January 8, 1932."*
- *"Under the old building code, permits were issued as Class A, Class B, Class C, Frame Buildings and Alterations. Under the new building code, permits are classed as Type 1-A, Type 1-B, Type 2, Type 3, Type 4, Type 5, and Alterations."*
- *"This new code is a great change from the old code... It has been in use for over nine months and some minor parts have been amended for purposes of clarification; however, many architects, engineers, and contractors have voiced their favorable comments in their use of this new code.*

"Less trouble was experienced in the change to the new code than had been anticipated."

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1949

- *“Central Permit Bureau & Bureau of Building Inspection:*
“These bureaus gave peak performance in the fiscal year of 1948/1949, issuing permits for and inspecting private building construction to a total value of \$77,802,043 against \$12,121,829 in 1943/1944. Total personnel increased only from 18 to 36 in the corresponding period.
“This was the first full year in which the new building code of 1947 was effectively put into operation. This was done entirely successfully, with little opposition or criticism from the public and apparently was well received by the outside business interests, considering the amount of opposition previous to its enactment.
“Under the provisions of this code it is mandatory upon the Director of Public Works to reopen it for discussion biannually. The first of such reviews should therefore occur in the latter part of 1949 and such weaknesses as have developed can be readily corrected at that time.”
- *“Building Code Revisions:*
“Considerable work and study has been done relative to revising certain portions of the building code; for example:
“The article on Boilers, Water Heaters and Tanks: Certain changes are desired and others will have to be incorporated to bring the article into conformity with regulations of the State of California.
“The article on Mechanical Refrigeration: Instead of making the Safety Code for Mechanical Refrigeration of the American Society of Refrigeration Engineers our code by reference, it is desired to make up our own code in order to have a more comprehensive code.
“The article on Elevators: Addition of material to cover elevators of all types rather than just residential is desired.
“The section of Fire Escapes is being studied and revised in order to provide a more adequate solution to this most important subject on safety.”
- *“Although there has been some falling off in Type 5 building construction there has been an increase in Types 1 and 3.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1950

- *“Consideration is being given to the many suggestions for revision of the Building Code. Some highly controversial matters, such as the lateral force provisions for new buildings, must be decided and it is intended to take them up later in the year.”*
- *“The Bureau examines and reports on all applications for permits submitted to the Department of Public Works for new buildings, alterations to existing buildings, billboards and signs (electric and non-electric); the bureau inspects all*

this work as it progresses, makes final inspection and issues Certificates of Final Completion when the work is finished.

“There are four ‘called inspections’ on buildings:

- a. Foundations or other concrete forms must be inspected and approved before concrete is poured.*
- b. Inspection before interior lathing. This is to see that all bracing, framing and fire stops are installed.*
- c. Inspection before exterior or structural plaster is in place.*
- d. Final inspection prior to occupancy.”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1951**

- *“Building Code:*

“At the present time two members of the Bureau are working with and under the supervision of the Superintendent in reviewing the present building code, which became effective in 1947, for the purpose of clarifying many portions of the code as well as eliminating conflicting requirements in the code itself and conflicts between other local and state building requirements.

“It is proposed to make such amendments to the code as to bring it into conformity with the latest construction and code practices and eventually to have as nearly as possible a performance code.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1952**

- *“Studies for revision of the 1948 Building Code are under way and it is believed that they will be completed for submission to the Board of Supervisors in the latter part of 1952.”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1953**

- *“Building Code:*

“The Building Code is being completely revised and will probably be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for adoption during the fiscal year 1953-1954.”

“...The first 29 Articles in first draft form have been mimeographed and distributed to the interested building industry organizations, individuals, and Code Committees for review and comment, and much of such comment is now being studied for acceptance or rejection.

“The Building Industry Conference Board has appointed a Building Code Committee which acts as a clearing house for all organization committees, and which will work directly with the Bureau in completing the final draft of the Code. Articles 30 to 46 are being mimeographed and will be delivered to the various committees in the near future.

“The Code in its final form will be patterned after the Uniform Building Code, and will have included up-to-date provisions of the National Fire Code.

“Somewhat new as far as building codes are concerned, but desirable, will be an article on the use of plastics and regulations regarding the insulation of buildings.

“Included also are requirements for inside wall and ceiling finishes. Other new provisions are those regarding mechanical ventilation, heating, and refrigeration.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1954**

- *“The previously referred to ‘Slum Clearance Program’ was changed to the ‘Rehabilitation Program’ in order to conform to the title of the ordinance enacted to further the endeavor of the City to eliminate or correct sub-standard living conditions. The use of the word Rehabilitation instead of Slum appeared to be a welcome change of name to the owners of sub-standard property.*

“In conjunction with the Department of Public Health and Fire Prevention Bureau, much work has been accomplished in the ‘South of Market Area’. Some buildings have been demolished, many others have been rehabilitated and it has been necessary to refer only a minimum to the City Attorney for abatement.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1955**

- *“Department Condemnation Program:*

“This program was placed in effect in this bureau in February 1954 under the authority granted in the San Francisco Building Code.

“All types of buildings are involved with the exception of occupied hotels and apartment houses which, however, may be involved where only structural or safety conditions are concerned.

“This program has been very effective in either restoring unsafe buildings to meet requirements of the codes, or in causing the demolition of them. This program supplements the Urban Renewal Program and accomplishes a great deal for our City.”

- *“New Building Code:*

“A revised building code was forwarded to the City Attorney on June 27, 1955. This code is now in the hands of the Board of Supervisors, and should shortly be enacted. This code revises the 1947 code and, based upon the experiences gained since 1947, reflects a more comprehensive approach to building construction - in some cases less restrictive requirements have been made, in others, more.

“This new code provides for possible future construction materials not now in use, but which may be approved for use without a complete revision of the code.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1956**

• *“Building Code:*

“The new building code, enacted by the Board of Supervisors, became effective May 7, 1956. It has not yet been published in book form. There have been many changes in the new code with reference to the one it replaced. The changes are in keeping with the times.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1957**

• *“A condemnation program was placed in effect in this bureau about three years ago under the authority of the San Francisco Building Code.”*

“This program has been very effective in either restoring unsafe buildings to meet requirements of the codes, or in causing the demolition of them. While this program does not involve the problem that Urban Renewal does, nevertheless it accomplishes a great deal for our city in correcting hazardous conditions in structures and abandoned buildings. In the more than 1100 cases investigated, 400 buildings were demolished, and 300 restored. There are 100 cases in the City Attorney's Office for abatement, and there is a backlog of about 300 others.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1958**

• *“Urban Renewal Program: This program commenced with the title of Slum Clearance Program and was later changed to the Urban Renewal Program. This program has been in effect for slightly over four years with a minimum number of personnel assigned. The recommendations of a committee of the Mayor call for an accelerated program, as well as a more effective one. In order to accomplish this directive a new Housing Code has been enacted by the Board of Supervisors. Also, our new budget for 1958 was approved for eleven new personnel to be used in an Urban Renewal Division, which will be created in this bureau for the purpose of planned area inspections.”*

• *“A spot condemnation program was placed in effect in this bureau about four years ago under the authority of the San Francisco Building Code. This work will continue without reduced volume, as required in the recertified workable program.”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1959**

• *“Urban Renewal Analyst. Under general direction assists in the planning, organization and direction of environmental surveys needed to satisfy Federal requirements for regulating and controlling Urban Renewal; directs planned area inspections for compliance with the San Francisco Housing Code and other codes pertaining to Urban Renewal; collects and evaluates data for statistical material which serves as a basis for administrative decisions and policies; maintains liaison with various city groups; develops records and forms; prepares reports; and performs related duties as required.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1960

- *“For the purpose of ensuring compliance with City Building, Housing, Plumbing, and Electrical Codes, the State Housing Act and other State laws, the Bureau of Building Inspection reviews, plans and inspects construction and installations involving structural, electrical, plumbing and mechanical work throughout the city. It also studies and reports on legislation affecting buildings and structures, and proposes new legislation affecting buildings and structures, and proposes new legislation as required and is the enforcing agency for the City Planning Code.”*
- *“Urban Renewal Program:*
“The Urban Renewal Program includes within its activities the work of the Urban Renewal Division and the Spot Condemnation units of the Bureau. The Urban Renewal Division works through designated areawide studies and planned area inspections, while the Spot Condemnation unit works City-wide via complaints and ‘spot’ investigations.”
“During the early part of the year, the field work for the feasibility study was completed and procedural studies for actual code enforcement work in a Conservation Area were made. Conferences were held with the Bureau of Fire Prevention and Public Safety, and the Department of Public Health, to define responsibility and determine standards of inspection to apply to existing buildings. It was decided that the Urban Renewal Inspectors, together with Fire Inspectors, would handle all inspection work, and the actual permit inspections would be done by the building inspectors assigned to the Urban Renewal Division.
“The first Conservation Area was in Pacific Heights and work of the Division started in December, 1959. During the fiscal year, two areas were designated and inspection work under study were under way in four other areas to determine their suitability for this type program.”
- *“Housing Appeals Board:*
“The Housing Appeals Board heard 20 appeals for the condemnation orders of the Director of Public Works and the Director of Public Health.
“This board, created last year, comprises five persons appointed by the Chief Administrative Officer, and in addition, the Director of the Department of City Planning and the Associate Urban Renewal Coordinator serve as ex-officio members without vote, and the Urban Renewal Analyst acts as Secretary of the Board.”
- *“Report of Residential Record:*
“In December, 1959, an ordinance was introduced in the Board of Supervisors requiring that before a residential building could be sold, a report must be obtained by the owner and delivered to the buyer.

“This report would indicate the zoning, original use, present legal occupancy and other pertinent information to be obtained from the legal records of the City and not from inspection. From this report, the prospective buyer could determine the legality of the building.”

“This ordinance was passed March 21, 1960 with the effective date of July 1, 1960. It was not possible to secure and train the necessary personnel, nor establish the necessary administrative procedures within that short period. The effective date was postponed by action of the Board of Supervisors until December 1, 1960.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1961**

- *“During the 1960 fiscal year, the Bureau of Building inspection was involved in several programs of both new and unusual character. These involved such diverse items as the revision of the 1958 San Francisco Housing Code; and establishing and commencing operations of the Residential Reports Requirements Division, stimulation of a need for a study of how to eliminate overlapping inspection jurisdiction by various departments...*

“...and the initiation of the first annual revision to the San Francisco Building Code since its adoption in 1956.

In addition several programs were initiated to improve the services performed by the Bureau. These programs will be more fully explained in the following text:

“1. San Francisco Housing Code:

“The main points involved in the new Housing Code amendments concerned retroactive provisions which would provide fire and safety features in existing apartment houses and hotels and primarily concerned themselves with smoke barriers and stairway enclosures, sealing of transoms and requirements relative to electrical outlets in each room.

“During the spring of 1960 the Bureau undertook the first revision of the 1958 San Francisco Housing Code. By September 1960 these proposed revisions had been sent to all groups concerned and in October 1960, the Bureau of Building Inspection held a public meeting of these groups so that they might express their views on the proposed amendments.

“The Chamber of Commerce, through its Building Code Committee coordinated the diverse industrial and management groups in this matter. In January 1961 the proposed amendments to the Housing Code were sent to the Board of Supervisors.

“There ensued a considerable number of hearings before the Public Health and Welfare Committee of the Board and the full Board. The main contention of the opposition revolved about the cost of the new retroactive legislation. The Bureau's position was, that although not in favor of retroactive legislation in general, these provisions were both necessary and economically justifiable.

"Its reports to the Board of Supervisors confirmed both the need and the costs. At the close of the fiscal year the matter was in committee for the third time awaiting transmittal to the Board of Supervisors."

"2. Residential Requirements (3-R) Reports:

"In the spring of 1960 the Board of Supervisors enacted into law the mandatory requirements that the seller of residential property must furnish the buyer with a report furnished by the City, stating the legal status of the property.

"The purpose of this ordinance is to furnish buyers of residential property the status of a building as recorded in the city records so that they may evaluate their economic risk."

"As an alternative the buyer might waive this report by signing a form and sending it to the Bureau of Building Inspection.

"In order to set up the complex machinery needed for this new law, the effective date was postponed from July 1, 1960 to December 1, 1960, and on that latter date the new division started operations."

"3. Overlapping Inspection:

"In order to eliminate overlapping inspections between this Bureau, Fire Prevention and Public Health, the Bureau of Building Inspection, at various meetings, urged that an outside study be made; first to determine the proper inspection jurisdictions for the various groups, building, health, and fire, and second, to suggest the changes in the laws that are necessary to set up the areas of jurisdictions.

"It was believed by the Bureau that because the various interests within the city were too close to the subject to be completely objective that the study would best be made by an outside management group."

"6. The San Francisco Building Code:

"The 1956 San Francisco Building Code included, within its enactment ordinance, the requirement for annual review. Due to lack of personnel in the intervening years and to the subsequent change in administrative personnel the Bureau was unable to prepare an annual revision until this fiscal year. However, throughout the last two years a file of recommendations, ambiguities, conflicts within the code, etc., was prepared so that these would form the basis of the code revision."

"It is anticipated that there will be over 400 changes, both major and minor in character, to the Building Code. Major changes involve reduction of corridor wall fire-resistive construction requirements from 2-hours to 1-hour; raising the requirement for doors in such corridors to 3/4-hour fire ratings; complete revision of Article 21 dealing with exits; complete review of designation for fire doors and fire windows to utilizing the hour rating system rather than alphabetical system; complete revisions to lateral force requirements of the

code; provision for pre-stress concrete design; plastic design in steel; and many other both major and minor text changes throughout the code.

“In order to lessen the amount of paper work and printing that would be necessary by this extensive change in the code a preliminary code change was submitted to the City Attorney for transmittal to the Board of Supervisors which would change the present sub-section designations throughout the Building Code into full section. This technical change in designation, it is believed, will save over 50% of typing necessary in the code change.

“The annual review of the Building Code on a continuing basis has been established with a cut-off date for submissions of new code changes set in November of each year. Therefore, the next annual code change study will commence November 1961, or approximately the date of submission of the 1961 code change to the Board of Supervisors.”

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- *“San Francisco Housing Code. The recommended amendments to the San Francisco Housing Code were passed by the Board of Supervisors on September 27, 1961.”*

“The ordinance allows apartment house and hotel owners until January 1966 to comply with the retroactive requirements stated therein except in the case of a fire hazard, as determined by the Chief of the Fire Department, in which case 6 months compliance can be obtained.

“Although this measure was bitterly fought by several groups, many groups felt that if safety can be afforded at a reasonable cost, that it would be constructive legislation, and the action by the Board of Supervisors, in passing the legislation concurred in this philosophy.”

- *“San Francisco Building Code. The first overall revision of the 1956 San Francisco Building Code was sent to the Board of Supervisors in late November 1961. It had the endorsement of all professional groups and many trade organizations as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association.*

“Hearings were held as described in the 1961 Annual Report and further hearings between the Fire Department and the Director of Public Works eliminated many of their objections. At the close of the fiscal year the Public Buildings and Lands Committee of the Board of Supervisors, after hearing this matter, had recommended to the Board passage of the amendments by unanimous vote, and it is anticipated that the full Board will pass the amendments in early July.”

- *“The Board of Examiners of the Bureau of Building inspection has been in existence since 1956. This very important Board hears appeals from denials of the Superintendent for new materials or methods of construction with relation to the Building Code. A great many technical problems dealing with interpretation of the code as well as approval of particular materials and methods have been ruled on by this Board.*

“The members of the Board constitute a cross-section of the highest caliber of professional services available in the City. Unfortunately there is no similar board established by the Electrical or Plumbing Codes and there is, therefore, no appeal presently set forth for either of their fields from decisions of the Superintendent with regard to new materials or methods of construction.

“It is the intention of the Bureau to propose amendments to both Electrical and Plumbing Codes so as to empower the Board of Examiners to act as an appeal body in technical matters regarding these codes.

“The Board, under this proposal, would be augmented with regard to Plumbing or Electrical matters by replacing the general contractor, who is presently on the 5-man Board, by an electrical or plumbing contractor as the case may be, dependent upon the matter before the Board being an Electrical or Plumbing Code problem.

“The right to appeal is a very vital matter and is one that should be afforded to any person from the decisions of a single person.”

- *“Activities on International Conference of Building Officials Committees:*

“The International Conference of Building Officials, which published the Uniform Building Code, and of which the Bureau is a member, appointed the Superintendent to two committees of that organization to help re-write the masonry and roofing portions of the Uniform Building Code.

“The Uniform Building Code is the guide for building regulations promulgated by the various State agencies and is used by all cities of the Bay Area with some minor modifications.

“The Bureau of Building Inspection, in preparing code changes to our code, recognizes those changes to the Uniform Building Code which are adopted from year to year and, upon study of these changes proposes similar legislation when appropriate, for the amending of the San Francisco Building Code.

“In this way the San Francisco Code is brought into agreement with the Uniform Building Code in those requirements where our special needs do not require different code requirements.”

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- *“A regular training program based upon the section-by-section review of the Building Code was instituted for all Building Inspectors and other interested persons in enforcement. This program is under the Superintendent so that all enforcement and interpretation of the Code is on a uniform basis. Group discussion is encouraged to clarify understanding of Code intent.”*
- *“The amendments to the San Francisco Building Code, which were under study since 1961, were passed by the Board of Supervisors in July 1962.*

“Further amendments are under study ...by industry and it is expected to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in the fall of 1963.

“One amendment proposed will change the requirement from annual code review to a mandatory review every three years. This will ease the workload on both the Bureau and industry. Major items requiring addition or correction to the code will be submitted as necessary, however.”

- *“Work was started on a complete re-write of the San Francisco Plumbing Code by the Assistant Superintendent. It is expected that drafts of the new code will be ready for distribution for review by industry in late 1963.”*
- *“The Superintendent was elected a vice-president of the newly formed California Chapter of I.C.B.O. This chapter has as its purpose the field of State legislation affecting the building official in California and has, in the 1963 Session of the Legislature, proven a vital organization in the protection of local government.”*
- *“The Bureau was involved to a considerable extent in review and commenting upon proposed State regulation with regard to housing (Title 8) and the State Fire Marshal (Title 19).*

“The Superintendent was appointed to advisory committees with regard to both these State codes. These committees were advisory to the State Building Standards Commission, which is the State agency that is charged with the review of all State regulations to avoid duplicating conflicts and overlapping of State laws.

“The efforts of the Bureau were not successful, however; and it is anticipated that serious problems will arise with regard to State rules and the City codes.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1964**

- *“The 1963-64 fiscal year represented the largest dollar volume and the greatest number of permits since the 1906 earthquake. It represented the third consecutive year of record breaking building activity in the City. The general increases covered all types of construction, but the major activity was in high-rise apartment buildings and office structures. As a result of this increase in activity, there has resulted an increased pressure on the Bureau due to the delays attendant to plan checking and permit processing.”*
- *“Arthur D. Little - Community Renewal Program Study. In the face of the problems of enforcement overlays and permit delays, there has been recognized by all a certain degree of duplication in the inspection functions of the Fire Department, the Department of Public Health, and the Bureau of Building Inspection.*

“In order to achieve a more efficient, as well as a more economical service, by the City, the initial phase of the one million dollar Community Renewal Program being prepared by the Arthur D. Little consulting firm was to investigate the present City functions of the several agencies and to recommend changes that would eliminate the overlap wherever practicable, and to assign to the various agencies the enforcement most properly done by them.

“The initial phases of this report were released in January, 1964, in which reorganization of this Bureau was recommended so as to include in its function the total inspection of construction in new and existing buildings and to effect the removal of certain of the enforcement requirements presently handled by the Fire Department and the Department of Public Health.”

- *“As indicated ...above, one of the areas of activity of this Bureau relates to apartment houses and hotels which presently are inspected by the Department of Public Health and a similar series of activities by the Fire Department with regard to all public assembly occupancies and, to some degree, apartment houses and hotels as well.*

“These two departments prepare lists of deficiencies or ‘check lists’ citing the areas they believe to be in violation of the code. The Building Inspector, as well as the Plumbing and Electrical Inspectors of this Bureau, then investigate each such check list and prepare a list of requirements in order to bring the building into code compliance. This list is prepared after the owner has filed for a permit to bring the structure into code compliance so that either the Department of Public Health or the Fire Department would then issue the necessary Permit to Operate to the owner.

“There are thousands of buildings involved in this program and the resultant inspection workload is very heavy. The list of deficiencies prepared by this Bureau is the consolidated list of all City agencies, and the owner is thereby subject to one enforcement agency, and thus is not ‘harassed’ by multiple enforcing groups.”

- *“Building Code. Revisions to the Building Code were submitted to the Board of Supervisors in November, after review by industry and professional groups. These amendments were the second set submitted since the 1956 Code was adopted. The revisions included the adoption of the AISC structural specifications and the ACI concrete code by reference as well as increased the allowable carrying capacity for certain pilings.*

“Other changes included administrative provisions covering the extent of alteration work that must be done in accordance with the present code. In all, there were approximately 100 code changes recommended. It is expected that the proposed legislation will be adopted at an early date.”

- *“Plumbing Code. Initial rewriting of the Plumbing Code was undertaken and the first two of six transmittals of the code were sent to industry. The proposed new code will generally follow the format of the Western Plumbing Officials model code with modifications necessary for a highly concentrated populace. It is anticipated that this code will take at least one more year in preparation.”*
- *“Fire Code. The Fire Department has, over the past several years, been preparing a complete revision to its Fire Code. Since 1960, this Bureau has been reviewing the contents of the proposed new code in order to eliminate and avoid areas of conflict, overlap and duplication. Unfortunately, an impasse was reached in 1962 in these negotiations for modifications of the code.*

“The matter was referred by the Police Committee of the Board of Supervisors to the Chamber of Commerce for them to act as a mediator of both the intra-city agencies as well as those of industry and the professional organizations. This was done and the Chamber of Commerce has done an excellent job having reconciled the vast majority of the differences.

“There still remains the matter of retroactivity and provisions which would conflict with the enforcement procedures of this Bureau. However, it is anticipated that upon the commencement of new committee hearings by the Board of Supervisors, these last two areas of difference may be resolved.”

- *“Electrical Code. A budget request for funds to employ a consulting electrical engineer to aid in the preparation was deleted in the 1964-1965 budget, as a result of the offer of the electrical industry to assume all costs for employment of necessary engineering aid. It is expected that this Bureau will also participate actively in its preparation, as well as review procedures. It is hoped this work will be well under way by the end of the next fiscal year.*

“A. In July, 1963, the ‘Uniform Interpretation Committee for the San Francisco Electrical Code’ was formed by the electrical industry and related groups. It consists of members of the electrical contractors, associates, the trust fund, the union, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and electrical engineering groups and meets once each month. Both the Superintendent and the Chief Electrical Inspector participate in all meetings, although not officially members of the group.

“The purpose of the group is to consider problems regarding the interpretation of the electrical code, discuss it, and recommend an interpretation of the code regarding the problem involved. The Bureau participates in the discussion, and, of course, need not follow the recommendation of the committee. Upon reaching a decision, the Bureau then publishes a bulletin to its inspectors and the industry regarding the matter.

“This committee ...has been a substantial contribution to our electrical code enforcement, and will undoubtedly assist in the future our rewriting of the Electrical Code.”

- *“Housing Code. The Housing Code contains provisions for the requirement of a sprinkler system for all garbage and trash chutes, and rooms. In amendments to the Building Code of 1962, an exemption was provided for single and two family dwellings covering these same areas. There, therefore, exists the conflict between the Building Code, which governs new construction and the Housing Code which, being retroactive, covers both new and existing structures.*

“Recommendations therefore, were sent to the Board of Supervisors to amend the Housing Code so as to be consistent with the Building Code exemption. Hearings were held at which the Fire Department opposed this deletion and no action was taken in this matter by the end of the fiscal year. The Codes, therefore, remain in conflict. It is hoped this matter will be reconciled at an early date.”

- *“Geneva Terrace Fire. In February, 1964, a tragic fire in a one family two-story frame building claimed four lives with three survivors. The building had 1/4” Philippine Mahogany Plywood bonded with urea glue on the first story. The second story contained four bedrooms with gypsum wallboard walls.*
“The intensity of the fire and its rapid spread was sufficiently unusual to warrant intensive investigation and possible code change recommendations.
“The Fire Department proposed that single family dwellings be provided with two exits on every floor; that interior finish regulations apply to single and two-family dwellings; and that the stairways in the buildings be enclosed. All of these requirements were to be retroactive.
“Recommendations of this Bureau were that thin combustible materials (less than 1/2” thickness) should be backed by gypsum wallboard or other similar incombustible material. In addition, one window in each bedroom should be sufficiently large and located not more than 3 feet off the floor so that exiting through the window would be facilitated.
“Hearings were held and the retroactive aspects of the Fire Department recommendations were dropped as being impractical and excessive. Further hearings modified the two exit requests, and the matter was sent to the various industry and professional groups for their comments before returning the matter to the Board of Supervisors. It is expected that hearings will be held in August.”
- *“State Legislation. The Bureau has continued its activity with regard to the State Legislature and the various State agencies in order to protect the local autonomy of the City and County of San Francisco in the areas of building and housing codes and their enforcement.*
“To this end, the State Attorney General issued an Opinion which indicated that a local legislative body may declare that the codes in their areas, together with the local conditions, are equal to or more restrictive than the corresponding State codes and that, therefore, the local codes would pertain.
“In August, such a resolution will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for their action. The resolution was transmitted to industry and professional groups for their comments and the initial response indicates strong support...”
“This Bureau is concerned with the increasing scope of the State activities in the areas of Housing and Building, and through its activities in the California Chapter of the International Conference of Building Officials, will continue to define local government and retain for local government the maximum degree of autonomy. The Superintendent is currently the First-Vice-President of the California Chapter of the International Conference of Building Officials.”
- *“The Board of Examiners and the Housing Appeals Board actions, over the several years, have resulted in general support of and overruling of the requirements of this Department. The action of the Board of Permit Appeals, however, by contrast, has been an almost total record of overrule in the cases heard by that Board.”*

“In a large number of the cases in which the Board has overruled the Department of Public Works, fire safety was the paramount issue.

“The Department of Public Works has grave concern over the possible hazardous conditions that may have resulted by the elimination of the needed safety requirements from many of the permit applications.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1965**

- *“Building Code:*

“A second series of amendments to the San Francisco Building Code was passed in August 1964. The original code was completely rewritten in 1955 and substantially amended in 1962.

“Provisions relating to interior finishes and plastics were to be reviewed for inclusion into the code in 1964. These were withdrawn by this Bureau due to studies still underway at the time the Board of Supervisors was to consider the second series of code amendments.

“The interior finish and plastics amendments were again transmitted to the Board on May 28, 1965, and these included the regulation of smoke generation by specific numerical values based upon the ASTM Standard E-84 Tunnel Test.

“This is the first inclusion of specific smoke regulations in the building code of any major city in the United States. It is expected that hearings will be held by the Board of Supervisors in early July, 1965, and the proposals have the endorsement of professional groups as well as the Society of the Plastics Industry.

“Hearings with regard the inclusion of fire retardant wood were held in 1964, in April 1965, and again in June 1965 by the Board of Supervisors Committee, and the matter is still unresolved.

“The position of the Bureau of Building Inspection has been against the inclusion of fire retardant wood for one-hour partitions in Types 1 and 2 buildings due to the increased fuel loading in the major buildings.

“A similar change has been before the Los Angeles City Council for several years and no decision has yet been rendered there due to the bitter controversy regarding its validity.

“As part of the changes made in August, 1964, were changes intended to emphasize as well as expand the area of special inspections for types of construction requiring close supervision and for which the inspection by the Bureau could not be adequate.

“Among these classes of inspection are welding, where design stresses exceed 50% of the allowable, pile driving, ‘plastic’ type fireproofing including plastering and spray-on fireproofing, prestress concrete, high strength concrete, reinforced masonry, etc.

“Some of the problems attendant to these special inspection requirements are the method of acceptance of testing agencies which have the facilities and the experienced personnel to carry out the inspection.

“Further problems relate to the type and contents of the reports from the inspection agency, or from the architect or engineer who may take upon himself the inspection, and the qualification of an inspector for the agency making the inspection.

“The Bureau is presently investigating the basic requirements for these areas and will shortly release its requirements so that uniformity of inspection for these critical areas can be provided and the method for accepting laboratories set forth so as to provide specific requirements for any new testing agency who wishes to be accepted by the Bureau.”

- *“Electrical Code Revision:*

“For the past several years a request has been included in the Bureau budget for the employment of an electrical engineer in order to prepare a new electrical code for the City. The Electrical Code has required change, and the use of the present code has presented a problem with regard to enforcement since it has required many interpretations in order to keep it correct. The electrical industry offered to employ a consultant electrical engineer for the preparation of the code at its own expense, and since the item was deleted by the Board of Supervisors from the 1964-65 budget this offer was accepted by the City. Accordingly, an ‘Advisory Committee for the Revision of The San Francisco Electrical Code’ was formed and meetings held in order to develop this new code. The Committee consists of the consultant, members of the contractors’ organizations, electrical union representatives and of the electrical utility company, and representatives from the Bureau of Building Inspection participate in these meetings.

“The format of the code has been developed, based upon the National Electrical Code, using the sections, numbers, and provisions thereof, and only amending those sections which it is felt require change due to the particular problems of a high-density city. Also, the pertinent portions of the State Code will be included so the code will be able, in general, to be the single reference for use in San Francisco. In addition, a considerable Administrative Section must be added in order to provide regulations that would parallel those of the other codes administered by the Bureau.

- *“Approved Materials Listing:*

“Under the Building Code, as well as other codes administered by the Bureau of Building Inspection, the approval of materials is a key factor in keeping the code up-to-date. Under the provisions of the code, performance is generally the basis of approval of new methods or materials of construction.

“The industry is constantly improving its products and developing new ones, and in addition the desire of industry to keep up with its competition also adds more products to the building field.

“All of this gives rise to a large number of approval requests which are acted upon each year. This has required the preparation of approved material listings, due to the fact that between 150 and 200 approvals are reviewed or approved each year, primarily for the use of the building inspectors and the plan checkers so that they would be aware of the new materials in the event plans are submitted indicating same.

“Listings are also forwarded to the American Institute of Architects, the Structural Engineers Association, and the Daily Pacific Builder, which publication has published all approved materials lists for the information of its readers as a service to the construction industry.

“However, the extremely large mass of approved materials has become unwieldy for the inspector to handle or refer to since there is no ready means of reference to a special class of work or manufacturer.

“Rather than continuously reprint and redistribute this material, in order to place it in proper categories another method of listing was found to be a necessity. In addition it has been found desirable to make available to architects and engineers, as well as the manufacturers of the materials, those approvals which have been granted by the Bureau in a concise, readily usable form.

“In the summer of 1964, therefore, a pilot set of approved materials cards was prepared incorporating all the approvals that had previously been granted by the Bureau and so coded to provide for access either by manufacturer or class of approved material. This pilot set is kept up-to-date by adding to it all approvals that have been granted within the last year.

“The Bureau investigated the possibility of having the material published and sold at a reasonable fee by the Daily Pacific Builder; however it was found that, after months of study of the matter, the Builder could not at the present time handle such work. The matter is presently being studied by the American Institute of Architects to determine whether they might be in a position to take upon themselves this service. It is our intent, however, that in the event this method of publication is not found feasible, to pursue the matter by having the City prepare and sell this listing to the construction industry. Probably supplements will have to be prepared and distributed on a bi-monthly basis. It is intended, if done by the City, that it be a self-supporting function.”

- *“ICBO Activities:*

“The Bureau has a Class A membership in the International Conference of Building Officials and attends meetings in the Central District thereof and the Peninsula Chapter. The Superintendent, as has been indicated, is also the President of the California Chapter which deals with legislative affairs affecting the building industry. The ICBO prepares the Uniform Building Code and this Bureau is active in the review of changes proposed for that code so that we are up-to-date with what is proposed, and where these changes are found favorable for inclusion in the San Francisco Building Code, these form part of the revisions of the San Francisco code.

“The Uniform Building Code is used as a basis for State regulations in certain fields, and the City codes must be equal to or more restrictive than the State regulations.

“Hence it is of vital importance that we insure that improper or highly restrictive legislation is not placed into the Uniform Building Code. In this manner we can assist the ICBO and also be kept current with the latest data and methods of solving code problems.”

“The San Francisco Building Code is similar in many respects to the Uniform Building Code except that due to the high density population in the City and the number of high-rise office and multifamily structures within the city we require more specific requirements for the protection of life and property. The City is, therefore, best served by a code specifically designed for the environment of San Francisco.”

- *“Board of Permit Appeals:*

“The number of cases that come before the Board of Permit Appeals, a lay appellate body of the City, continues to be very large. This is one of three appellate boards available to the citizen, the others being the Board of Examiners, which is a technical review body, and another lay body in the field of housing, namely the Housing Appeals Board.

“As in previous years the main denial of permits of the Bureau that were heard by the Board of Permit Appeals involved fire safety and in the majority of cases the Board overruled the requirements of the Bureau.

“In our opinion, this has resulted in an elimination or lessening of the fire safety requirements, and we continue to be quite concerned over this continuing reduction in safety.”

- *“State Legislative Activities:*

“1965 was an active legislative year in California as the Legislature met in its biennial legislative session. Literally thousands of bills were presented and those affecting the building industry numbered in the hundreds.

“These bills generally fall into two categories, namely those which would extend the preemption of enforcement exemption by the State for certain classes of occupancies so that local agencies could not enforce a higher standard if it was felt necessary in that jurisdiction, and secondly regulations which would require excessively high standards to be enforced by the building official.

“In this latter category such requirements as the requirement of painting by permit was proposed and passed in 1963, and a proposed deletion of this requirement was defeated in the 1965 legislature but was sent to an Assembly Interim Committee for study in depth. These regulations are still under study so as to provide regulations which would not require impossible inspection procedures or standards with which the building officials would have to comply.

“Also in this latter type of legislation are those relating to requirements for soil investigations for each parcel of land to be built upon, a proposal to require that all buildings be constructed of incombustible or fire retardant materials with no exceptions, and regulations requiring that all glass doors, walls, and windows be regulated regardless of the location.

“The first two of these legislative bills were successfully amended after concerted efforts were made by the building officials and other interested parties in the State.”

“The activities in the legislative field are extremely time consuming. ...San Francisco's stated policy of local sovereignty is constantly being challenged on the State level as witnessed the State preemption tendency and the vast number of regulations constantly being proposed in the building field at the State level.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1966**

- *“Consolidation of Inspection Services:*

“Throughout the fiscal year, a continuing and increasing amount of interest and activity within City government and especially among the industry, labor, property owners, and professional groups has been directed toward obtaining some consolidation of the inspection services involved in building construction.”

“Much of the past delay in permit processing and confusion has resulted from the fact that a building permit application must be reviewed by several departments, each having a veto power over its issuance.”

“Legislation to achieve this consolidation ...is expected to be presented to the Board of Supervisors at an early date. One portion of the proposed legislation is a Charter Amendment to Section 36 of the Charter dealing with the powers of the Bureau of Fire Prevention and Public Safety; and the remainder dealing with City Planning, Department of Public Health, and Bureau of Engineering will be in the form of an ordinance. It is hoped the Charter Amendment will be on the November 1966 ballot.

“While not as wide-sweeping as the A. D. Little proposal, it will solve most of the problems of plan checking delays and conflict of orders of the several departments now having joint Jurisdiction over construction. In its proposed form it will vest in the Department of Public Works the basic authority and responsibility for plan checking and construction.”

- *“The San Francisco Building Code regulations for plastics and other interior finishes, which were adopted in 1964-1965, have set the pace nationally in regulations of this type.*

“Almost as a direct result of the enactment of the new code provisions and simultaneous with the interest of the Federal Government in the matter of gaining a better understanding of the burning processes, the plastics industry undertook a study at the Illinois Institute of Technology to determine what sort of test program would result in a significant contribution in the new field.

“The Superintendent of Building Inspection was invited to become a member of an advisory group to plan the research. Several meetings of the advisory group were held in Chicago and a program of testing, together with a new test facility, was recommended. The field of burning and the products of combustion of plastics and other materials will be studied under varying conditions of physical arrangement of rooms as well as environment.”

“The San Francisco Code provisions form the basis of the recommended Code of the plastics industry today. The results of the test program at IIT will undoubtedly greatly influence future Code provisions. Only by conservative steps leading to the development of data does a Code progress and protect both the lives and property of the public while requiring only minimum standards.”

- *“The National Automatic Sprinkler and Fire Extinguisher Association offered to present a condensed course on sprinklers for all building and plumbing inspectors of the Bureau. This course was the first such undertaken by this Association in training inspectors. It was highly successful in familiarizing Bureau personnel with the entire picture of sprinklers, including the checking of sprinkling plans. As a result of this course, Bureau inspectors are now plan-checking partial sprinkler system plans submitted for residential occupancies to meet the retroactive requirements for enclosure of stairways.”*

- *“Approved Materials Cards Made Available:*

“The approved materials listings of all materials approved for use in San Francisco have finally been published by a private company in cooperation with the Bureau and are now available on a subscription basis. This listing consists, at present, of over nine hundred separate cards containing a description of the approved material, conditions attached to the approval, and a code number for the approval.

“The code number is the key to the filing of these cards in that it represents a coded description of the particular item. By using the code numbering system the file can be arranged by manufacturers either alphabetically or by subject or function.

“Bi-monthly supplements are to be issued to subscribers to keep the listing up to date with the latest approved materials. Copies of the listing have been obtained for each building inspector in the Bureau and are also located at the two building inspector counters.”

- *“Revision of Building Code Format:*

“One of the main comments received in the Bureau from users of the Building Code is, ‘Why can’t you use the same Occupancy designations as the Uniform Code?’.

“We have for some time been concerned with this matter as well as the Code format in general.

“People in California generally are familiar with the Uniform Building Code. Therefore, our occupancy numerical system is troublesome for someone versed in the Uniform Code's alphabetical system, which is the same as is used in many other areas.

“Furthermore, there is no reason why a particular article in the San Francisco Building Code does not correspond as to subject with the Uniform Code, and, if possible, even sections should relate if they are on a similar subject.

“To this end an item was placed in this coming year's budget to hire temporary personnel to effect this transition. This request was supported by the design professions. Unfortunately, it was deleted from the budget at final passage. We will attempt next year to obtain this needed revision so as to simplify the use and understanding of our Code by the construction industries.”

- *“Electrical and Plumbing Code Revisions:*

“The complete rewriting of the Electrical and Plumbing Codes continued during the year.”

“The detailed review of the codes being utilized to prepare the new Electrical Code has slowed down the timetable for completion of the draft; however, at the end of the fiscal year good progress was being made with meetings being held at a more frequent schedule...”

“Completion of the first draft is expected in early Spring 1967.

“The last portion of the proposed Plumbing Code was sent to industry groups in November 1965. ...It is contemplated that the second draft will be sent to all review groups in the latter part of 1966 together with all replies to comments that were unreconciled in making the second draft. These ‘unreconciled’ comments, together with our reply, will be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce for further review.”

“The extensive amounts of time required for code work, particularly in work on a new code or revision of existing codes, was the primary reason for requesting the additional Assistant Superintendent position that unfortunately was again disapproved in the 1966-67 budget.”

- *“Board of Permit Appeals:*

“There has been a continuing large number of cases which have been appealed to the Board of Permit Appeals. This Board is one of three appeals boards, the other two being the Housing Appeals Board, also a lay board, and the Board of Examiners...”

“The applicant in a given case always has the option of appearing before either of two Boards, and in some cases the option of all three to whom to present his case.

“As in previous years, the Bureau has been overruled by the Board of Permit Appeals on almost all cases presented to the Board.”

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- “Consolidation:

“The Chamber of Commerce, together with certain industry groups, undertook during 1966 to improve inspection operations, particularly the elimination of overlap of inspection services and also speeding up of permits. The overlap consisted of this Bureau, Bureau of Fire Prevention and Investigation of the Fire Department, and the Department of Public Health, all involved in inspection of residential buildings, and, to varying degrees, similar overlaps existed in other occupancies.

“In November 1966 Charter Amendment C on the ballot was passed, which spelled out the area of Jurisdiction of the Fire Department, limiting same to Title 19 Occupancies as designated by the State Fire Marshal's Code and with the addition of hazardous occupancies.

“This eliminated, therefore, the duplication of inspection and plan checking for commercial office buildings and residential occupancies between this Bureau and the Fire Department. Upon passage of this charter amendment there were transferred to the Bureau of Building Inspection four fire inspectors to assist as advisors from the Fire Department on fire matters as well as to assist in code preparation. This transfer to the Bureau was effected in February 1967, with one inspector assigned to the Superintendent's office, one to the Urban Renewal operation, and two to work with the district building inspectors.”

- “State and Federal Code Activities:

“This last year witnessed the increased pressures for preemption of the building code field simultaneously at the State level and at the Federal level, San Francisco's historical position favoring home rule was the basis of this Bureau's participation in activities to counteract this tendency.

“Appearances at the Building Standards Commission hearings and Federal meetings to present the arguments for home rule were undertaken by the Bureau. In addition, various interested organizations in the building industry inquired further into this matter in order to develop their own positions, and this involved meetings with industry groups on this critical subject.

“This is a very serious erosion of the basic home rule philosophy, and appears to be backed by certain minority factions in the building industry who feel that through the intervention of State or Federal governments they can get their materials used to a greater extent than going through the usual Code processes. A major campaign is under way based upon the mythical ‘Building Code mess’, which has been disproved by a number of authoritative investigations but is still a very catchy slogan.”

“The coming years will see still stronger attempts at a takeover made, which will require the concerted efforts of local government and the building industry to stop the empire building of the State and Federal Governments at the expense of the local public.”

- *“In the Fall of 1966 the Building Code revision was started, with a first draft of the first segment of the Code expected to be prepared in July 1967. This Code revision will have several objectives:
“Firstly, the Code will be changed completely to follow the Uniform Building Code format and to adopt Uniform Building Code occupancy designations;
“Secondly, the Code revision will update the entire Code to the latest standards for steel, concrete, wood, etc.;
“Thirdly, it is intended that this Code revision undertake to solve some of the basic Code problems that have plagued this Bureau, as well as other Code bodies, in such areas as mixed occupancies, office building floor layouts, school occupancies, and many others.”
“The general philosophy of the Building Code changes undertaken are not to increase restrictiveness, but to open equal avenues of Code compliance by Code-accepted alternative construction and to eliminate those items that are no longer applicable or which have been replaced by later reference documents or procedures.
“Finally, it is to evaluate the restrictiveness of certain portions of the Code in the light of State and Uniform Building Code requirements and the needs of San Francisco.”*
- *“Coincident with the presentation of the Building Code to the Board of Supervisors there will be prepared also a revised Housing Code...
“In addition, it is proposed to revise the administrative portions of the Housing Code to reflect the changes due to consolidation of the Fire Department personnel and Health Inspection into the Bureau with concurrent transfers of duties.”*
- *“The Board of Permit Appeals continued in the same manner as in previous years in overruling over 90% of the matters presented to it relating to Building Code provisions.
“The Board's activities have increased as the precedents established by them are known to more and more individuals.
“At this time there are more than two times the number of appeals filed annually than in a comparable period six years ago, with no change in the number of permits handled by the Bureau nor with any increase in restrictiveness of the Code.
“The Bureau substantiates each and every appeal case with a letter outlining the matter before the Board, the Code violation, and the effect of said Code violation on the general public.
“The actions of this Board continue to erode the Bureau enforcement efforts, and there appears to be little that the Bureau can do to change the trend.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1968

- *“Private building activity continued to show a high cost volume of commercial property construction and a slump in residential construction.
“The overall total value of the construction work for which building permits have been issued is estimated to be \$168,000,000, a decrease of 16% from the previous year.”*
- *“Building Code and Housing Code Near Completion:
“At the close of the fiscal year, the Bureau's effort toward the creation of a new Building Code and Housing Code was close to completion.
“These codes are being written with the cooperation and assistance of interested groups from industry, the professions, labor and government. Effective agreement has been reached with these groups on the great majority of topics under discussion.
“It is anticipated that these documents will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration in mid-September and hopefully become enacted into law by November.
“The Building Code reflects the latest developments and thinking in modern building technology.”*
- *“Structural Engineers Prepare For Computer Use:
“Consulting design engineers are increasingly making use of electronic computers for the solution of complex problems involved in frame analysis of high rise buildings.
“Since the Bureau's Engineers are charged with the responsibility of checking all structures for compliance with the Building Code it has been found necessary that they have access to a large capability electronic computer.
“Investigations toward this end have been conducted and an economical solution has been discovered. The Bureau intends to make use of a large capacity computer on a rental basis shared with other users. A small station is to be installed in the Bureau office which is connected to this computer by the use of telephone service.
“This program is scheduled to be effective in July 1968.*
- *“Enforcement of Housing Code regulations does not mean that a structure is brought up to present day Building Code standards.
“The Housing Code often has less stringent requirements than those applying to new construction.
“In general, what was considered as legal when a building was built retains this legal status even though today's standards are higher.
“Exceptions to this rule are related to basic health and safety hazards which are covered by specific retroactive requirements.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1969

- *“One of the first steps in attempting to improve the record systems in the Central Permit Bureau, which is vital to the operation of the Bureau of Building inspection, was a budget request that these records be placed on microfilm. The budget request, in the amount of \$250,000, was to photograph all the past permit records; and defined also that an annual expenditure of between \$5,000 and \$7,000 would provide for continued maintenance of the system. The request was approved by the Chief Administrative Officer but deleted by the Major as an economy move. The urgency of this matter is such that a very strong attempt will be made in the next fiscal year's budget considerations together with an approach to the construction industry at large to support this change in the records system.*

“At issue is the preservation and protection of the records of building construction of San Francisco. These same records predating 1906 were destroyed by fire and earthquake in 1906. There has been no change in the system of protecting these records and, therefore, a similar catastrophe can occur wiping out City records.

“By the use of microfilming, duplicate sets can be prepared and stored in the City Records Center providing security for the records of the City.”

- *“The Plans Approval Division, whose primary function is the review of proposed construction to gain compliance with the San Francisco Building Code, inaugurated a program utilizing the assistance of an electronic computer. The computer is used on a time-sharing basis with other users, providing the most economical service.*

“The personnel attended various structural engineering conferences and training sessions to keep abreast of the rapidly changing techniques and technology in the construction industry.”

- *“After two and a half years of preparation, review, and meetings with all segments of industry and the professions, the completely rewritten and re-edited Building Code became effective on March 20, 1969. The new code utilizes a format completely compatible with the Uniform Building Code. It is printed in loose-leaf form with slightly larger type for easier readability.*

“The Code contains many changes, generally less restrictive. The policy of referring to nationally available standards rather than reprinting them was carried out to a greater degree than heretofore. Reference standards are now employed for lumber, plywood, plastering and wallboard in addition to the concrete and steel provisions. The Code became available to the public just prior to the end of the fiscal year at a price of \$8.45.”

- *“One of the major changes in the new Building Code was to permit reinforced concrete structures to be built to a height of 26 stories or 160 feet. However, the greater height of structure requires the use of ductile moment resisting space frame in accordance with detailed code requirements based upon the*

recommendations of the Structural Engineers Association of California. A further provision requires that a Special Advisory Board be employed by the owner from a list of engineers nominated by the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California and approved by the Director of Public Works. That Board is required to review the concept and design of the structure and report to the Bureau on the compliance with the structural requirements of the Code.

“Ductile concrete structures require considerable additional care in design and construction, and must meet the detailed requirements of the criteria established by test.”

- *“A retroactive parapet ordinance was enacted at the request of the Chamber of Commerce and the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California. This was incorporated in the Building Code at the request of the Board of Supervisors.”⁴⁵*

“The required inspection and eventual anchoring or removal of hazardous parapets and exterior appendages on buildings would increase safety of the City population and visitors in the event of earthquakes. Falling parapets have been the No. 1 ‘killer’ in most earthquakes. Unfortunately, implementation of this ordinance was delayed due to lack of funds for the necessary staff resulting from deletion of the 1969-70 budget appropriations for staff and equipment.

“The Department went on record by letter to the Board of Supervisors that due to the deletion of staff for enforcing these retroactive provisions, the Department will not enforce same. It is expected that this matter will be reconsidered next year.”

- *“As part of the new Building Code, the air conditioning and refrigeration industry requested that provisions for their field of operations be included. It has previously been decided that due to failure, over an 11-year period, in obtaining personnel to enforce comparable provisions in the 1956 Building Code that these requirements be left out of the new code.”*

“The new Building Code, therefore, contains no air conditioning or refrigeration provisions since no staff would be provided to enforce same. San Francisco is the only major city in the United States that does not have such inspection. It is the position of the Department of Public Works that no provisions of the Code should be enacted unless staff to provide enforcement is also furnished.”

- *“As a companion to the new Building Code, a new Housing Code was adopted into law. The new Housing Code contains many of the less restrictive requirements previously a part of the Field Inspectors Manual. Transferred from the Housing Code into the new Building Code were all construction requirements. The Housing Code will be the ‘existing’ residential buildings code basically containing the retroactive requirements for all residential buildings. No changes were made in these retroactive provisions.”*

⁴⁵ Article 2.5 of the 1969 edition of the San Francisco Building Code mandates the removal, reconstruction or bracing of parapets at existing buildings “*where failure ... would be a hazard to life or limb*” to the public below.

- *“With the transfer of the Environmental Health Inspectors from the Department of Public Health, and the resultant consolidation of all housing enforcement in the Bureau of Building Inspection in July 1, 1967, the program to systematically bring about legal conditions in housing in San Francisco has progressed at an increasing pace.”*
- *“With the increased pressures for federal codes and state codes, the activities of the International Conference of Building Officials, (ICBO), sponsors of the Uniform Building Code, are of great importance.*

“The new San Francisco Building Code adopted the format and occupancy designations as well as the sections of the Uniform Building Code so that we would be as close to that Code as was possible.”

“It is felt that only through support of the ICBO and by attempts to utilize as much as possible the Uniform Building Code provisions, can we retain home rule and stave off federal or state codes. Continued activities with both ICBO and the California Chapter of that organization were carried on throughout the year.”

- *“The relationship between the Bureau and the Board of Permit Appeals continues to be that the Board acts to overrule the requirements of the several City codes with little or no equivalent safety being provided in many structures.*

“As a result of this continued attitude, the Bureau has refused to approve permits ordered to be issued by the Board when there is no equivalent furnished for the code requirements. Each case is examined individually, and with advice from the City Attorney, has requested that this request for advice be in writing.

“In the interim, while awaiting the City Attorney's reply, the permit is held in abeyance. Where we are advised that we can refuse to abide by the Board's ruling, abatement proceedings are commenced against the structure in order to bring about code compliance. This procedure has proven generally successful in resolving code deficiencies and gaining cooperation from the building owners.”

- *“During this year, the Board of Examiners heard many requests for variance from Building Code provisions as well as requests for approvals of new materials.*

“In addition, reconsideration was begun of all previous approvals for fire-rated floor and roof assemblies containing exposed steel members. Consideration of temperature criteria for such steel is required by the new Building Code as there is no assurance otherwise that adequate safety factors exist.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1970**

- *“Parapet Ordinance Enforcement. The new Building Code contains provisions for the removal or reinforcement of parapets and other building appendages subject to failure from earthquake.*

“The necessary funding to staff the parapet section was deleted by the Board of Supervisors from the 1969-70 budget.

“Due to the large increase in building permit activity, it is not possible to enforce these code provisions unless additional staff is provided.

“Therefore, the Bureau is on record that the parapet ordinance is not and cannot be enforced at this time due to budget cuts.”

- *“In the last year the Chamber of Commerce, has worked with the Fire Department and the Department of Public Works to improve relations between these Departments in regard to code enforcement.*

“The Fire Commission has taken steps to define the area of Fire Department responsibility and activity. There are signs that a marked improvement of this important inter-relationship is in the making. The public will be the main benefactor.”

- *“The Division of Apartment and Hotel Inspection (DAHI) has completed three years of operation as function of this Bureau.”*

“Well over 3,000 buildings were inspected by the Division with slightly under 1,000 buildings having been brought into compliance. ...About 150 cases originating in DAHI have been referred to the City Attorney for legal action.”

- *“Each year, among the thousands of bills introduced in the State Legislature, there are several that would have a direct application to the activities of the Bureau. The Superintendent reviews all such bills and submits recommendations, with supporting justification, for possible establishing a City position on the particular legislation. In addition, he is a member of the legislative committee of the California Chapter of the International Conference of Building Officials....”*

“In 1969, the major bills included those involving licensing of inspectors, State preemptive legislation on codes and factory built housing.

“In 1970, bills of major importance included reorganization of State code activities, tax moratorium on code compliance costs and State imposition of mandatory use of the uniform codes unless extensive justification were made for the use of local codes, licensing of inspectors, and changes in requirements for both public assembly and institutional occupancies.

“Unfortunately, there are increasingly being introduced preemptive legislation to remove, from the cities and counties, local control of local programs.

“This trend is based upon a widespread fallacy, that local government does not provide sufficient attention to those requirements and standards that raise the cost of building construction and that only the State can do the proper job.

“In spite of the fact that since this erroneous premise has been repeatedly proven to be unfounded and refuted by many national personages, most code legislation at the State level is still based upon that premise.

“Only by continual and intensive activity in this area can we assure, to the citizens of San Francisco, codes that reflect their concern with the hazards attendant to the construction and use of buildings.”

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1971

- *“Construction volume continued at the high level of the last several years.”*
“However, within the continued high volume, certain changes in the ‘mix’ are occurring. Office building construction is again dominant whereas industrial construction has again decreased. Additionally, construction of wood frame buildings, mostly residential, increased by over fifty percent.”
- *“In the latter part of 1970, the Plumbing Code, which had previously been drafted and sent to industry in 1966 and then tabled, was revised and updated to comparability with the 1970 Uniform Plumbing Code. The draft was transmitted to over 80 groups and individuals for their comments and review leading to submittal of the Code to the Board of Supervisors for action in July, 1971.*
“At the close of the fiscal year, final comments with regard to the third draft were in hand and the final preparation of the Code had been prepared for transmittal to the Board.
“This Code represents the first such complete revision since 1905 and is also the first code that is required by the State Health and Safety Law (AB 2300) to justify, by resolution of the Board, those variations from the Uniform Plumbing Code.
The Code, excepting for the administrative provisions, is virtually identical to the Uniform Plumbing Code except for approximately 20 percent for which there are no comparable provisions in the Uniform Plumbing Code. There is only 6 percent of the Code that differs from the Uniform Plumbing Code. The format of the new Code follows identically that of the Uniform Plumbing Code...”
“One omission, as compared to the Uniform Plumbing Code, is that plastic piping has not been specifically approved. Data has not been received to justify such inclusion. Mechanisms for inclusion through approval or code change are, however, provided for and mandatory reviews at three year intervals of the entire code are a basic requirement.
“It is hoped that the new Code will be adopted prior to the Fall of 1971; and for the first time since before the 1906 Earthquake, San Francisco will have a complete set of up-to-date code documents except for air conditioning and refrigeration.”
- *“New Electrical Code:*
“The new San Francisco Electrical Code, prepared by a joint industry, construction and professional committee, was submitted to the Board of Supervisors and adopted in the Fall of 1970. This was a major document incorporating in one volume those provisions of the National Electrical Code, State Safety Orders and specific local regulations for use by contractors. It represented the first major update of the Electrical Code in San Francisco history and the first such single document to be used by the industry.”

"The last attempt to include permissive use of non-metallic cable, as presented by the Chamber of Commerce, was defeated by the Board of Supervisors by an overwhelming vote. It was the position of the Bureau to support the use of non-metallic cable in residential buildings of wood frame construction not exceeding four stories. However, this amendment was not included in the Code."

- *"Board of Permit Appeals:*

"Increasing numbers of appeals are being filed relative to permits of the Department of Public Works. The main similarity in the permits being appealed involves or results from the Systematic Code Enforcement Program directed toward bringing apartment houses and hotels up to the Housing Code as part of our Workable Program commitments.

"Decisions, wherein the Board has waived compliance with the City's laws, have been referred to the City Attorney to determine whether or not the Bureau must comply with the orders of the Board. During the fiscal year, 41 such cases were referred to the City Attorney. Evaluations in 30 of these cases, based upon transcripts, indicated that in 20 of the cases referred the conclusion by the City Attorney was that the Board had erred and that for 10 of the cases his advice was that the Bureau had to issue the permit.

"It should be noted that a request for funds to provide specifically for transcripts rather than using surplus funds was denied by the Finance Committee relative to the 1971-72 budget. It is hoped that we will continue to use surplus funds or that eventually a transcript appropriation will be authorized.

"A major problem in the obtaining of the transcripts is the length of time, running into months, before we obtain them. There is a substantial backlog of orders for transcripts unfilled with the court report of the Board of Permit Appeals. Similarly, the City Attorney has Bureau requests for opinions pending back to 1969 which have not been forwarded to this Bureau with his conclusions.

"In some cases, therefore, illegal conditions have been allowed to exist due to our need to wait for guidance from the City Attorney on the permits at issue."

- *"The Superintendent continues his participation in various International Conference of Building Officials activities, particularly as a member of the Fire and Life Safety Committee of the Code Change Committee of International Conference of Building Officials, and in the activities of the California Chapter relative to state legislation.*

"It has long been the position of the Bureau of Building Inspection that one obligation that should be recognized by large jurisdictions is the participation in code development, based upon experience and expertise gained in these larger jurisdictions.

"The corollary to that is that code changes adopted by model code groups parallel those of San Francisco and thus strengthen the position of San Francisco and increase the protection of the public in all jurisdictions using the model codes."

- *“State Legislation:*

“It was expected that 1971 would be a quiet year in state legislation. However, by mid-Spring it became apparent that the contrary was to be true. Vast amounts of legislation, which in the main were found to be extremely bad, were introduced.

“Many of the changes involved increased state control of regulations and an entirely new group of legislation related to imposing a master appeal board at a regional or state level which, in fact, would have powers to overrule regulations or codes adopted by local governments.

“Much of the legislation would have been seriously adverse to San Francisco by lessening safety levels, increasing costs to be borne by taxpayers, and by removal of local control.

“With the recognition of the increasing pressures in the State Legislature to remove home rule, greater importance has been cast on the review of legislation within the Bureau and participation in the California Chapter of International Conference of Building Officials and legislative activities of National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Pacific Southwest Regional Council. Based upon this year's activities, it can be expected that future years will reflect similar strong attempts into the areas of pre-emption, superposition of regional or state bodies over local governments and changes reflecting substitution of regulations at the state level for those at the city level.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1972**

- *“Triennial Building Code Review:*

“The full scale review of the Building Code required at 3-year intervals was initiated in January 1972. It had been delayed for a few months until the new Plumbing Code was adopted. In the review, all changes adopted in the last 3 years in the Uniform Building Code will be considered and most of them will be incorporated into the code.

“One major addition to the code will be ‘Life Safety Requirements for High Rise Buildings’ involving fire protection systems. These requirements will also be considered for incorporation later in the year into the Uniform Building Code. As usual the code changes will be sent for review and comments to over 100 groups and individuals so as to obtain the maximum benefit of such critical evaluation. It is expected that the code change process will be completed by March 1973.”

- *“A new San Francisco Plumbing Code went into effect in April 1972. This was the first complete revision of the Plumbing Code since 1905 and it has brought San Francisco requirements into virtually complete parallel conformity with the Uniform Plumbing Code and the latest available standards.*

“Due to the controversial nature of some portions, work on this code proceeded at various times during the past seven years, including review and comment by over 80 groups and individuals.”

- *“Systematic Housing Code Enforcement Program:
“The program continued at the same level as in previous years since 1967 when this function for multi-family housing was transferred to the Bureau of Building Inspection. For the first time, the number of buildings brought into code compliance reached almost 1,000; that is, the same number of structures in which a complete inspection was made this year in the systematic program. The continued effort on the part of the staff to bring pressure upon owners to bring buildings up to minimum Housing Code levels is apparently succeeding. The Bureau emphasis is to rehabilitate rather than to demolish.”*
- *“As in previous years, this Bureau has been active in the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO). In particular, staff members were involved in the Seismology Committee and the Fire and Life Safety Committee. The Superintendent chaired a special committee on high rise life safety systems over the year. This committee developed at the end of the year a proposal which will be considered shortly by the full Conference for adoption of a Life Safety System for High Rise Buildings; that is, buildings over 75 feet in height. Considerable interest has been evidenced nationally and by participation on this committee by representatives of New York, Chicago, the fire services, the Federal government, etc. The same approach is being used in the new code changes now being prepared by the Bureau for submittal next year to the Board of Supervisors which will mandatorily require the Life Safety System be placed in all high rise buildings.”*
- *“The concept of Life Safety Programs for major buildings came out of national industry and governmental studies to improve the fire safety of high-rise buildings. The need to do so was the result of a series of disastrous and near-disastrous fires in New York City in 1970 as well as in major buildings in other areas.”*
- *“The State Legislature continues to consider bills which would have major effects on local governments by requiring, through preemptive legislation, additional code provisions. Recently, the Seismic Instrumentation Bill required that all cities collect a fee, on each permit, to be forwarded to the State for instrumenting using seismic recorders to be eventually placed throughout the State of California. This new approach towards taxing building permits is inequitable although it was enacted into law and will cost the City of San Francisco over \$14,000 annually for instruments that will generally be placed far from San Francisco.

“Other legislation introduced in the recent legislative session include thermal insulation requirements, sound insulation requirements, making all records of building investigation open and public including those listing violations found under the Systematic Code Enforcement Program. Other legislative proposals include those that would further add taxes on the building permit issuance fees to be collected by localities. It is apparent that the Legislature has found a method by which it can tax without a vote of the people and without being equitable but rather taxing only special groups; namely, those filing for permits.”*

- *“Microfilming of Building Records:*

“The Bureau's need for microfilming of building plans and records has been increasing each year as less space is available for storage of these essential documents. In 1971 the State passed legislation requiring the protection on a permanent basis of these records by all agencies and indicated that microfilming was a permissible means of doing so. The Bureau in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce Building Code Committee has been working toward the realization of such a system. It is expected that proposals for financing and contracting for such a system will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors prior to the end of 1972.”

- *“The failure to fund the Parapet Ordinance or establish air conditioning and refrigeration inspection leaves San Francisco in a vulnerable position in the event of a moderate to strong earthquake as well as being the only major city in the country that does not have inspection of such mechanical facilities as air conditioning and refrigeration.”*

- *“Board of Permit Appeals:*

“The Board of Permit Appeals procedures have continued to erode the distinction between those cases under its jurisdiction and those which are not subject to their jurisdiction. The problem of their overruling the code requirements continues at approximately the same level as in previous years. Their new approach is that though a permit has not been denied, the Board has seen fit to take these matters under their consideration and has ruled on these matters even though the Charter requires that a permit be denied to be heard by the Board.

“In addition, the Board has ruled on matters that are technical in nature rather than referring them to the appeals boards with the expertise in the technical areas such as the Board of Examiners for the Plumbing, Building, and Electrical Codes.

“The Superintendent has continued to select those cases where he believes the Board has clearly ignored the law of the City and/or State and has referred those cases to the City Attorney. It is the stated position of the Bureau of Building Inspection that it cannot be an administrator of an illegal act. We will continue to proceed in this same manner whenever we believe the Board has violated the law by waiving specific code requirements.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1973**

- *“1973 Building Code Amendments:*

“In May 1973 the triennial review of the building code was completed with approximately 225 code changes enacted into law. These changes range from editorial corrections to completely overhauled articles of the code. In addition new code provisions were added relating to life safety systems in high rise buildings, aluminum for structural use, etc.

“As in the past, the code review was assisted to a very great extent by the abilities of the professional associations and most particularly the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Building Code Committee. However, the work involved in producing the code changes has been carried by the Superintendent for the past 10 years and unless there is staff added to the Bureau, future code changes will be jeopardized. The changes enacted parallel many of those in the Uniform Building Code and maintain the San Francisco Code in close relationship thereto.”

- *“Electrical Code Changes Initiated:*

“As required by the 1970 Electrical Code, the triennial review of said code was commenced. Requests for code change recommendations were sent to all parties on the mailing list. The Electrical Industry Trust established a code advisory committee to assist the Bureau in the code review process. It is anticipated that the code changes will include those needed to correct ambiguity or errors and those changes based upon the latest National Electrical Code that are consistent with the level of safety desired by San Francisco. The code change review will extend in all probability to late 1973 or early 1974.”

- *“Plastic Pipe Approved For Drain, Waste And Vent:*

“As a result of continued pressure by the Federal government involving jeopardizing millions of dollars of federal assistance, the Director of Public Works in September approved the use of plastic ABS and PVC piping for drain, waste and vent use in accordance with the installation provision of the Uniform Plumbing Code.”

“It is the position of the Bureau to enforce the ruling of the Director while still retaining a negative position regarding the lack of technical data to support such use.”

- *“High Rise Life Safety Programs:*

“The concern nationally, as a result of fires in high rise buildings, prompted the development of new approaches to life safety in these buildings. The Superintendent chaired a committee of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) organization that developed a series of code provisions to assure a higher degree of life safety than the previous code provisions furnished.

“At the same time similar provisions were proposed as part of the triennial code changes to the San Francisco Building Code. The UBC code changes were adopted in September 1972 and the San Francisco changes in May 1973 as part of the overall code changes. Even prior to the adoption and as early as 1971, owners and architects for 6 buildings voluntarily proposed to incorporate these life safety provisions in their buildings. These include the Transamerica, Southern Pacific, Metropolitan Life, Western Merchandise Mart, and Standard Oil. The development and incorporation of this new concept in life safety is a direct result of the cooperative attitude now present in the Fire Department administration and the activities of the several code committees of the professions and the Chamber of Commerce.”

- *“Microfilm Record System:*
“A major step toward both the preservation of the building records of the city as well as increasing the accessibility of these records was achieved when the Board of Supervisors adopted ordinances to develop the necessary funds by surcharging permits and licenses. The added costs for these permits and licenses go to a special fund to develop the system. It is anticipated that in 1975 the system will be operative... This system and the development of same came about through the close cooperation of the Chamber of Commerce Building Code Committee and the Bureau...”
- *“State Activities:*
“The new two-year legislative term has not yet slackened the flood of bills that are introduced annually. The Superintendent reviews the bills for departmental recommendations as well as on behalf of the California Chapter ICBO and the California Information Center on Community Development. Only by continued vigilance and critical analysis can an effective legislative job be done.”

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- *“Parapet Ordinance Enforcement:*
“Because of the short-staff situation and the inability of Civil Service to fill our personnel needs, the enforcement of the Parapet Ordinance has been held in abeyance. It is anticipated, however, that the new fiscal year will see the staffing, including staffing for the Parapet Section, brought up to its full complement through the advent of a forthcoming Civil Service examination for the new classification of Structural Engineer for Plans Approval Division.”
“The establishment of a new classification, i.e. Structural Engineer with a 10% higher salary than Civil Engineer, was approved after a series of objections were made by unions representing existing classes. Strong support for the new classification by the construction industry was instrumental in the success in setting up the new engineering grades. It is contemplated that one of the Structural Engineers to be hired will head the Parapet Section.”
- *“Early in the fiscal year, the Superintendent developed a reorganization proposal for the Bureau of Building Inspection. This was based upon the fact that since 1957 the Bureau of Building Inspection, in both numbers of personnel and in the duties assigned to it by city ordinance and state law, has expanded enormously with no increase in management capability. The proposal developed by the Superintendent envisioned the establishment of a middle management level consisting of an Assistant Superintendent for Property Conservation, a Deputy Superintendent, an Assistant Superintendent for Administration and a Building Code Analyst. ...In the reorganization, the duties assigned to the three major Deputy and Assistant Superintendents, would reduce the span of control now presently centered upon the Superintendent and would properly group the functions under conservation, on-line day-to-day inspectional activities, and administration.”*

"The schedule at present would be for approval by September 1974 by both Civil Service and the Board of Supervisors of the proposed reorganization. The necessary examinations would then be held for the positions to be filled such that by the April 1st date the Bureau could begin under its new operational arrangement. Failing to satisfactorily complete the reorganization, the Superintendent has decided that many of the activities of the Bureau presently undertaken by it with inadequate staff would have to be eliminated or seriously curtailed."

- *"Work on the microfilm contract commenced in February 1974 with the contractor installing his equipment and staff in the basement of the building housing the records."*
- *"State Legislative Activities and State Agencies:*

"The State Legislature has been enacting legislation over the last three years increasing the amount of overlap between local government and state agencies. Furthermore, they have been, in the bills they consider, writing code at the legislative level rather than providing enabling legislation which would allow the use of the Uniform Building Code or equivalent.

"As a result, there have been serious problems developing with state agencies thru both the Legislature's code writing activities as well as the activities of state agencies duplicating code enforcement regulations and activities. These include the State Fire Marshal and the Division of Industrial Safety enforcing the California-OSHA regulations.

"Serious concern exists throughout the State of California and including fire authorities over this new development at the state level which will result in serious overlaps and conflicts between local ordinances and state regulations."

"The Superintendent, acting through the California Chapter ICBO, will attempt to work with the Division of Industrial Safety to resolve that problem; but as with Federal OSHA, there is a serious lack of awareness on the part of the state enforcement authorities as to the scope of the problem and, in fact, as to the details involved in code enforcement at the local level.

"The code activities of the State Fire Marshal will cause serious problems to the City of San Francisco particularly in the area of existing high-rise buildings wherein they have the authority through state law to adopt regulations retroactively applicable to them. Working with the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, it is hoped that these regulations can be made realistic in their application to existing buildings.

"The Department of Housing and Community Development adopted noise and energy regulations in February 1974 applicable to all new construction effective August 1974 and February 1975 respectively. The Commission of that department is aware of serious problems existing and deficiencies in the regulations and have been urged that they be rectified at an early date. At the close of the fiscal year, no such rectification was made."

“This is another example of the lack of awareness on the part of state officials as to what is needed for code enforcement activities when a mandated program is legislated into being and the regulations for such a program are to be developed. Unless such regulations are meaningful and enforceable, there is no way in which the Legislature’s intent can be carried out.

“The blame for failure to enforce will be laid at the local building official’s level since he is charged with said enforcement. It is the responsibility of state agencies, when charged by the Legislature to prepare regulations, that they do so in a way that will permit enforcement and not in a theoretical or impractical method or by utilization of regulations which are inadequate or incomplete.”

- *“Federal Legislation and Related Activities:*

“Increasingly there has been a greater degree of activity of Federal agencies entering the code field. This is evidenced by the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Consumer Product Safety Act, as well as the Fire Prevention Act now being considered in Congress at this time.

“All of these areas will cause increased incursions into the building code field and will cause problems in this City and County resulting from overlaps and duplications of authority.

“The Superintendent is active at the national level in all these areas, attempting to eliminate as much as possible the overlapping jurisdictional areas. It is too early to determine whether the actions taken by him, through the American Society of Civil Engineers in concert with other professional societies, will be effective but it is hoped so.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1975**

- *“Parapet Ordinance Enforcement:*

“A Structural Engineer was appointed and assigned in April to the newly activated Parapet Safety Section to implement a program of enforcement for the Parapet Ordinance (Article 2.5 of the San Francisco Building Code).

“By the middle of June the physical office facilities were set up, and two building inspectors and a senior clerk stenographer were hired and trained. Program procedures, policies, and technical criteria were formulated and were sent for review to various groups in the design and planning professions. Feedback from these groups was incorporated into the program. Preliminary field surveys to identify hazardous parapets and ornamentations, and the sending of correction notices to owners, were started during the last week of June.

“The field surveys were started in the Union Square area and are proceeding on a systematic, block-by-block basis. Phase 1 of the program will cover 170 square blocks in the Downtown, Financial, Chinatown, and South-of-Market areas. Based on the initial rate of progress being made, it will take approximately four years to complete the surveys and to have the hazards abated under Phase 1.”

- *“Reorganization of Bureau of Building Inspection:*
“The proposed reorganization discussed in last year’s report was fully approved by the Civil Service Commission and the Board of Supervisors with funding commencing July 1, 1975. Recruitment of the new middle management staff through examinations was initiated. Examination filing deadlines were kept open due to inadequate response. It is hoped that by the Fall of 1975 the staff will have been employed and the reorganization will have become operative.”
- *“Microfilm of Building Records:*
“The microfilm contract neared completion at the end of the fiscal year with final stages expected to be completed by September 1975. Over \$265,000 has been collected from the several surcharges imposed to pay for the work of the contractor and to purchase the in-house capability for the continuation of the work. All plans and applications were filmed and the final work to be done involves insertion of application film into IBM type aperture cards and then sorting same into street address order.”
“Begun during early 1974 was the program to convert to a microfilm system for retention of building permit records. The ongoing program has, at this writing, produced approximately 2,500,000 microfilm document frames of various records including all plan documents, permit applications and inspection records. Approximately three thousand square feet of storage floor space has been released thereby for other uses.”
- *“New Building Code Printing:*
“Due to the financial crisis of the Cities, the 1973 Building Code amendments were never printed by the City. Under the old procedures, the City put up all the funds needed to print the changes or new code and then charged enough per copy to recapture its outlay over a period of time. The Superintendent had recommended in 1969 that to speed up the process as well as to lessen the cost to the City of coming up with the front money, that there be an alternate approach used, namely to have a private printer do the job with his own capital and then to permit him to sell the codes to recapture his costs. This is the procedure used by the City of Los Angeles for many years.
“Finally in early fall 1974, the Finance Committee of the Board of Supervisors with the advice of the City Attorney and approval of the Purchaser, all agreed to institute this procedure for the Building Code and all future City codes and ordinances. The printing firm agreeing to do this was the one presently doing the Los Angeles codes, the Building News Company of Los Angeles.
“In early June the Building Code was completed with over twenty amendments including the major 1973 changes incorporated therein. It was placed on public sale on June 24, 1975. It represented a recodification, as well as a reprinted document.”
“Immediately thereafter the Plumbing and Electrical Codes have been similarly started into the process with completion expected in the fall of 1975.”

- *“Security Regulations Enacted by Board of Supervisors:*
 - “Another new era of enforcement activity placed upon the Bureau is the recently enacted security requirements ordinance. A proposed amendment to correct an inequity in regard to new buildings has been submitted and will probably be adopted by September 1975.*
 - “These requirements will involve all multifamily residential buildings, both new and existing.*
 - “For new buildings, once the proposed amendment is approved, all hotel and apartment entry doors will have to have one-inch deadbolt locks and all doors and windows within eight feet of the ground will have to have approved locks.*
 - “For existing buildings, the same requirements will apply commencing January 1980 on a retroactive basis. The Bureau will advise owners of the need for the locks and upon noting non-compliance will refer the matter to the Police Department who will issue citations for each violation with a gradually increasing fine assessed.*
 - “These ordinances are another ‘new’ area of code enforcement placed upon the Bureau and which are not strictly health and safety oriented in the traditional sense.”*
- *“Systematic Housing Code Enforcement (DAHI/AB475):*
 - “The Systematic Housing Code Enforcement program for apartment houses and hotels is the direct responsibility of the Division of Apartment House and Hotel Inspections. In the past year, new procedures to step up the pressures on owners to comply were initiated.*
 - “One action has been to notify all those having any financial interest in a property, i.e. the owner, the mortgage holder, the lenders of any outstanding loans etc. of pending abatement hearings by the Director about the property and also advising them that the permit of occupancy has been revoked due to non-compliance. Since most mortgages require that there be a valid permit of occupancy for the property at all times, this brings very considerable pressure upon owners to comply.*
 - “Another assist has been the result of State Assembly Bill 475 enacted in 1974 and introduced by Assemblyman Willy Brown. This law permits the enforcement official (the Superintendent) to notify the Franchise Tax Board of any rental residential property wherein the owner has failed to abate the code violations within six months after being advised of same. If not appealed or if the appeal is not sustained, the Franchise Tax Board then prohibits any tax exemptions from state taxes that the owner normally takes for his property.*
 - “This has had a very powerful effect upon owners since in many cases the only profit they can see is that provided by the tax deductions on their income property. Over 3700 notices of this new law were sent to all owners of property in the code compliance pipe line.”*

"Finally, a very aggressive program of court hearings has been pursued by Assistant City Attorney Ed Johnson for those cases condemned by the Director of Public Works in which the owner has failed to abate the violations. The rate of compliance actively resulting from the actions of the City Attorney's office in the past year is truly astounding, and full credit must be given to that office and Mr. Johnson in particular."

"By these major efforts and many other similar activities, the program is now proceeding at a very increased pace, with the backlog being reduced at an even greater rate."

- *"Board of Examiners - Conflict of Interest:*

"At the federal, state and local levels in the past two years there have been increasing concerns over conflict of interest rules governing elected, appointed and other officers of government. This is a valid concern in the post-Watergate era and is probably overdue. However, the 1974 Charter amendment in San Francisco has so tightened the conflict of interest rules, particularly as interpreted by the City Attorney, as to jeopardize the continuation of the Board of Examiners. In a related conflict of interest opinion involving one Board of Examiners member and a contract involving certain federal assistance to a city contract for the Municipal Railway, the Board member had to resign from the Board.

"The City Attorney has stated that, as a result of the Charter amendment, any Board member found to have any interest at all in a case coming before the Board can no longer abstain from participating in the hearing but must resign. The situation would be that a sub-contractor appealing a minor plumbing matter for a major building that might have had one of the Board members involved in either the structural or architectural design, that Board member would automatically have to resign even though he was in no way aware or involved in the appeal item.

"A proposed Charter amendment to lessen such harsh impact of the present provisions has been introduced. Unless it is passed by the electorate, the Board of Examiners will cease to exist in a relatively short time.

"The Board established by the 1956 Building Code, is unique in the country. It is made up of the most eminent men in their respective fields. Its scope of operations in the past eighteen years has been outstanding and has provided an essential service to the City and the construction industry. In its years of service there has never been anything but praise for the professionalism of its members. The conflict of interest rules have unfortunately claimed the innocent while searching for the guilty."

- *"State Fire Marshal - Retroactive High Rise Regulations:*

"The Superintendent spent a very considerable amount of time throughout the year, directly involved in attempting to modify the proposed high-rise regulations for existing buildings so as to make them reasonably acceptable."

“In December 1974, the Fire Marshal adopted his regulations on an emergency basis. In March 1975, he held hearings in San Francisco and Los Angeles at which time opposition of a considerable amount was evidenced, primarily at the San Francisco hearing. Following the March hearing, the Fire Marshal revised his regulations to a minor degree and again issued them on an emergency basis, with further hearings to be held the first week of July 1975. Very strong opposition was marshalled throughout the state during May and June for these pending hearings and the matter is still not resolved. The basic issues are the excessive requirements imposed by the proposed regulations and their very considerable cost.

“Many of the requirements exceed those needed or authorized by the Legislature and are therefore needlessly costly to the building owners. Another major issue is the failure to provide due process for enactment of retroactive regulations. The regulations have been prepared by the State Fire Marshal, hearings have been held by him without his answering to anyone as to the need or justification for any provision and the final determination as to the effect of the hearings is made by the State Fire Marshal. Any appeals as to proper enforcement are to be made to the State Fire Marshal. The constitutional question raised by this process may involve lawsuits.”

- *“Rehabilitation Assistance Program and Abatement:*

“In Feb. 1975, the California Court of Appeals ruled in S.F. vs Dolan that the sale of bonds for RAP was constitutional. This decision was upheld on appeal to the State Supreme Court in March 1975.

“An IRS ruling has been requested to determine whether the bonds will be tax exempt. This ruling is expected in August 1975.

“HUD has released \$598,606 in Community Development Special Revenue Sharing funds for administration, relocation benefits, hardship loan interest subsidy, acquisition for rehabilitation/resale, and temporary rent payments in the Inner Richmond RAP area.

“An Environmental Impact Report is being prepared by the Department of City Planning for the Upper Ashbury RAP area. This EIR should be completed in November 1975.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1976**

- *“Parapet Ordinance Enforcement:*

“The Parapet Safety Program has completed its first year of operation. From July thru January, a total of 63 square blocks, containing 850 buildings, were surveyed for potential hazards during earthquakes, and 700 of them received citations to investigate and/or correct various features.

“At that point the surveys and issuance of citations were halted pending a reassessment of the Program by the Board of Examiners.

“The Parapet Ordinance is a brief, performance oriented statement. The absence of specific requirements, coupled with some unfortunate areas of ambiguity, permits differing interpretations as to what the ordinance requires.”

“As some cited owners began obtaining estimates of costs for investigations and repairs, it appeared that these costs in many cases would be much higher than anticipated. ...There were fears that owners would generally opt for removal of these architectural features because removal would prove to be the least expensive method of compliance. Together with owners, these groups formed a Parapet Task Force to explore various courses of action. The group was instrumental in getting the Board of Examiners to review the entire Program.

“The Board of Examiners appointed a parapet technical advisory committee, composed of members from the SEA and AIA, to work with the Bureau in revising the policies and technical criteria.”

“It is expected that, with Program requirements now clearly defined by the Board of Examiners, and not likely to be changed to any significant extent, the Program will move forward at a more rapid pace.”

- *“Reorganization of Bureau of Building Inspection:*

“The reorganization of the management structure of the Bureau ...basically consists of the addition of four management positions: Assistant Superintendent, Property Conservation; Assistant Superintendent, Administration; Building Code Analyst; and Senior Systems and Procedures Analyst.”

“During the fiscal year, the Assistant Superintendent, Property Conservation was financed and filled, but the other three positions were frozen. The former Superintendent took the position that without these positions the Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP) could not be implemented, due to the drain on the Superintendent's and Deputy Superintendent's time. This standoff was well covered in the news media. The new Superintendent agreed to start the RAP program provided a high level position in the Property Conservation Division, previously unfunded, was restored. This was done, and the RAP program will proceed.”

- *“Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP):*

“In March of 1976, a favorable IRS ruling was received which designated the RAP bonds as tax exempt. This should allow a lower interest rate on these revenue bonds when sold to generate rehabilitation loan funds. Such funds will then be lent by the City to property owners in designated RAP areas. The bonds have not as yet been sold because the RAP start up has been delayed due to a dispute with the Board of Supervisors as to the need for additional top administrative positions in the Bureau.”

“RAP will begin in the Inner Richmond as soon as the bonds are sold (estimated to be November 1976) and the Upper Ashbury (February 1977), after the EIR/EIS and public improvement plan has been approved by the Board and the Mayor.”

- *“State Fire Marshal Retroactive Hi-Rise Regulations:*
“In the 1974-75 Annual Report there was a discussion of these regulations. During this fiscal year, additional opposition, especially from the San Francisco area, together with the appointment of a new State Fire Marshal, led to further changes to the proposed regulations.
“These changes removed many of the overly restrictive requirements and high cost items that provided questionable benefits.
“A remaining requirement still of serious concern is that all doors in high rise apartments and hotels must be at least one and three-eighths inch (1-3/8”) thick solid core doors. There are many thousands of wood panel doors in such buildings which do not meet this requirement. Their replacement, or in lieu of that, the installation of a sprinkler system in the corridors, will be a very costly item, and is believed to be of questionable need.
“Public hearings were held in May and June. With the elimination or lessening of many of the restrictive provisions, there was little opposition expressed at the hearings, and it is expected they will become effective in the next month or two.
“While the Fire Department is the enforcing agency, nevertheless building, electrical, and many times, plumbing, permits will have to be secured to perform the necessary work. A joint inspection by the Fire Inspector and the Building Inspector will be required for each building, as well as construction inspections during the period of the alteration work. We estimate there are about 700 buildings in the City that fall into this high-rise category. With only a three year period allowed to bring all of these buildings into compliance, a substantial additional workload will be placed on our already overstrained staff.”
- *“Gartland Apartment Fire:*
“On December 12, 1975, a very serious and tragic fire occurred at the Gartland Apartments, 495 Valencia Street, and at least 12 persons lost their lives. The fire was set in a stairwell by an arsonist, and spread by means of an unenclosed stairway. Such stairways are violations of the Housing Code. This tragedy again pointed out the problems of an abatement procedure which gives property owners who do not wish to correct code violations too many means of delay, and also the problems of understaffing in our Housing Code enforcement groups...”
- *“Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP):*
“The Division of Apartment and Hotel Inspection is responsible for this program. During the fiscal year, the residential environment inspectors made 1495 complete survey inspections and reports to owners, and additionally made required routine periodic inspections. This brings the total to approximately 9000 buildings, containing 90,000 units, out of a total of 18,000 apartment and hotel buildings with 180,000 units. These buildings have been selected on the basis of a rating giving priority to the inspection of the 1000 most hazardous buildings each year over the past nine years.”

- *“Assembly Bill 475:*

“State Assembly Bill 475, authored by Assemblyman Willie Brown, has been in effect since January 1975. Under this law, an owner of rental property loses his California State income tax exemptions connected with the property if he fails to correct his code violations within 6 months of being notified by the Superintendent. ...This has been a most valuable tool in the Bureau's housing code enforcement efforts.”

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- *“This year, although the dollar value of building permits decreased substantially, the number of building permits issued increased by more than 10%. The drop in dollar value reflected the decrease in Type 1 and 2 buildings (high-rise), while the new wood frame permits and alteration permits accounted for the increase in the number of permits. The larger number of permits placed an additional burden upon our plan checking and inspection personnel, as their work load is dependent to a greater degree on the number of permits than, on the size of the job. Alteration work, in fact, requires more time than comparable new work.”*
- *“The reorganization of the management structure of the Bureau of Building Inspection ...consists of the addition of four management positions: Assistant Superintendent, Property Conservation; Assistant Superintendent, Administration; Building Code Analyst; and Senior Systems & Procedures Analyst. These positions are necessary to provide the degree of management necessary to operate the Bureau efficiently, with its ever increasing duties in connection with new State and local programs. These positions were approved in the 1974-75 budget but were frozen, and some were then deleted from subsequent budgets. The Assistant Superintendent of Property Conservation was allowed in the 1975-76 budget. The Assistant Superintendent Administrative and Senior Systems Analyst were reinstated in the 1976-77 budget just adopted. It is hoped that the Building Code Analyst will be included in the 1977-78 budget to allow the management reorganization to be completed.”*
- *“Proposed Code Changes:*
“In the Building, Plumbing and Electrical Codes there is a provision that the Codes be reviewed on a triennial basis and necessary changes be made to update the Codes for new technology, to remove ambiguities and include various changes mandated by the State. While this Code work requires a substantial time commitment from the top level personnel of the Bureau, it is necessary if our codes are to remain current and provide a reasonable degree of safety and health at a minimum construction cost.
“We are commencing this review of the Building Code and soliciting suggestions from over 100 professional, industry, property owner, and citizen groups. We will review the Uniform Building Code changes, as well as changes in State law and suggested changes by our staff in this update. It is hoped this review will be completed ...by the fall of 1978.”

“A similar review of the Electrical Code is being undertaken by the Electrical Trust. They have formed a committee of professionals, contractors, labor union personnel, and public members to update the San Francisco Electrical Code using the National Electrical Code as a model. Personnel from the Bureau will be active on this committee.”

- *“Presale Inspection:*

“One of the recommendations of the Housing Rehabilitation Study, sponsored by the Department of City Planning, was the institution of a mandatory pre-sale inspection ordinance for residential property. This would require that an inspection be made of all residential buildings to determine whether or not there were any Code violations, with the inspection report furnished to the buyer prior to the transfer of such property.”

- *“State Regulations:*

“The State was active in the field of regulations which the City must adopt or enforce. The Department of Housing and Community Development has just adopted new housing regulations which affect access requirements for the handicapped, and plumbing fixture installation, primarily in residential buildings. ...These regulations must be adopted by the State Building Standards Commission before they become effective.”

“The retroactive high-rise requirements promulgated by the State Fire Marshal, ...became effective early this year, with the Fire Department as the lead agency. These will involve joint inspections by our building inspectors with the Fire Department inspectors to determine the necessary corrections which must be made. It then requires construction review by our building, plumbing and electrical inspectors, and will put a serious additional load on them, especially in the downtown area.”

“A new Energy Code has been adopted by the State Energy Commission for non-residential buildings, to be enforced by the local building inspection departments, and to be effective January 1, 1978. This is a performance code, and involves detailed energy computations by the design engineers and checking by our plan checkers. It will involve substantial additional training for plan checking, and additional complex items for review by our plan check engineers. Revisions for residential building energy requirements are also being promulgated by the State, to become effective later next year.”

- *“International Conference of Building Officials Activities:*

“The Superintendent was active in two Code Committees of the International Conference of Building Officials. He was chairman of the committee for testing of spray-on fire protection for high-rise buildings. This group studied various proposed changes to the Uniform Building Code (upon which the San Francisco Code is modeled) and it is expected that the adoption of several of these proposals will be voted on by the organization membership at the 1978 meeting. Among these is a test for damageability of material which was developed in San

Francisco. Another committee on which the Superintendent served dealt with the use of plastics in concealed spaces of major buildings, such as ceilings and walls. Several code changes were promulgated by the committee for vote for inclusion in the Uniform Code, and subsequent adoption in the San Francisco Code. It is important that the City have input into the model code work, as it forms a basis for our Code."

- *"Division of Apartment and Hotel Inspection (DAHI):*

"This Division is responsible for the Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP). On the basis of a rating made ten years ago establishing the degrees of hazard in the city's hotels and apartment buildings, complete inspections of rated structures have been carried out on a priority basis, whereby each succeeding year the next most hazardous buildings are examined.

"During the past year, a study of maps maintained by the Fire Department revealed that the Mission District is the only area in the City where the number of deaths due to fire has risen over the past ten years. This disclosure led to a 50% increase in the penalty point ratings previously established for the Mission, and the program in that area has been accelerated accordingly."

- *"Abatement Section:*

"The Abatement Section of the Bureau of Building Inspection is responsible for preparing cases for possible litigation when property owners refuse or are unable to bring their buildings into code compliance."

"A very aggressive program of court hearings has been pursued by the City Attorney for those cases condemned by the Director of Public Works in which the owners have failed to abate the violations.

"The rate of compliance actively resulting from the actions of the City Attorney's office in the past year is truly astounding and full credit must be given to that office."

- *"Parapet Safety Section:*

"The Parapet Safety Program made slower than expected progress during its second year of operation. The rapid initial inspections during the first year, coupled with the significant changes made to the Program, gave rise to more paperwork and time demands from the public than could be handled by the limited office staff.

"In order not to compound the problem, no new survey inspections were made during the fiscal year. However, progress was made in bringing into compliance buildings already cited.

"...As the two year deadline for compliance approaches for the earliest inspected buildings, preparations are being made to obtain compliance through legal procedures. It is anticipated that a few favorable court decisions will help significantly to increase the rate of compliance by owners."

“At the start of the Program, various groups that are interested in the City's environment and appearance expressed concern over the impact the Program may have on these characteristics of the City. They were instrumental in limiting the Program essentially to parapets, cornices, freestanding statuary, chimneys, and roof tanks. ...In almost all cases, the most economical correction has proved to be bracing the parapets and providing roof-to-wall anchors.”

“Additionally, the work performed to date has not included buildings with terra cotta or masonry cornices and statuary. Costs for corrections on such buildings are likely to be much higher. While relatively small in number, they are likely to be buildings of greater historical or architectural significance.”

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- *“The electrical industry, both contractors and union representatives, professional groups and Bureau personnel under the auspices of the San Francisco Electrical Trust have commenced a review of the Electrical Code using the National Electrical Code as a model, and it is expected to be completed in late 1979.”*

“A review of the Building Code is expected to commence early in 1979. This review is expected to compare each section of the San Francisco Code with the Uniform Building Code (which is used as a base by the State) with the expectation of making the San Francisco Code more similar to the Uniform Code as well as clarifying and up-dating it. It is hoped that the professional groups will aid the Bureau in this time consuming comparison.”
- *“State Regulations:*

“The Superintendent is a member of an ad hoc committee composed of various state-wide interests, appointed by the State Fire Marshal to consider updating the State Title 19 regulations concerning high-rise construction, and is a member of the subcommittee considering the detail changes. Considerable effort during the last year was expended on the definition of a high rise building, especially one on sloping terrain. This matter is, of course, of great concern to San Francisco, with its hillside building lots. The subcommittee meetings alternated between San Francisco and Los Angeles with occasional trips to Sacramento for full ad hoc committee meetings, and up to this time the Superintendent has attended all meetings. With the advent of Proposition 13, it is expected that there will be no funds available to attend the Los Angeles meetings, but it is still expected that local meetings will be attended...”
- *“State Energy Regulations:*

“...the non-residential State Energy regulations became effective on June 30, 1978 for all nonresidential building permits which were not issued by that date. Until that time, there were no requirements for energy conservation for non-residential structures. These regulations cover the insulation of the building envelope, requirements on sizing and use of heating and ventilating systems, and the use of electricity in building lighting.”

“The regulations and the design studies are quite complex, and it is expected that there will be confusion and many errors by the designers, and confusion and many interpretations needed to be made by the Bureau in the checking of the energy design. The State was responsible for preparing a manual, a computer program for certain phases of the design, and the training of building department personnel. The State has not met their commitment since the computer program is not available, and the training program was very meager.”

“Many of the proposed additional restrictions for residential buildings were challenged in court and at this time they are not operative.”

- **“Parapet Safety Section:**

“This was the third year of operation for the Parapet Safety Program. Although the Parapet and Appendages Retroactive Provisions have been in the building code since 1969, it was first funded in 1975.”

“Response from property owners who have been notified of potentially hazardous parapets has been very poor. A small number have been diligent and have taken out building permits to correct cited hazards.”

“At the present time, most of the applications filed for parapet work are the result of our referring delinquent buildings to the Director of Public Works for public hearings.

“The possibility of having a building condemned forces about two thirds of those cited to proceed in obtaining a building permit. The preceding procedure is very time consuming and expensive for the results obtained. It is planned to try to encourage more voluntary compliance by a further explanation of the program.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1979**

- **“Bureau of Building Inspection:**

“This Bureau reviews plans and inspects construction involving structural, electrical, mechanical and plumbing work throughout the City to ensure compliance with the San Francisco Building, Plumbing, Electrical and Housing Codes. As of June 30, 1979, there were 165 employees in the Bureau...”

“Top priority has been given to the smoke and heat detection program to be completed in 80/81.”

“Being a Bureau that functions largely for the private sector, the future is dependent upon the general economic conditions. At the present time there is no indication that the predicted recession has had any noticeable effect on the work of the Bureau.

“Adequate staffing of the various divisions has been a problem in the past; although the work load has increased the staff has not. Any additional legislated duties required of the Bureau without equal reduction in other duties could seriously affect the efficiency of the operation of the Bureau.”

- *“Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP):*
“Provides inspections and enforces code compliance for areas adopted by the Board of Supervisors. This program, which began in the Inner Richmond in December 1976, and the Upper Ashbury in May 1977, was extended to North of Market in April 1978.
“North of Market RAP has since been held up by questions of funding hotel rehabilitation. RAP staff are prepared to implement the program immediately upon solution of the funding problem.”

- **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1980**
- *“An indication of the City's economic health was the \$814 million value of Building Permits issued in 79/80 compared to \$347 million in 78/79. There was also a significant increase in the number of permits issued; 62,533 in 79/80 from 57,816 in 78/79.*
“A computerized permit tracking system is in the final planning stages and should be installed in 1981. This will be an effective tool to refine the permit process and shorten the overall process time.”
- *“An Ordinance has been submitted to the Board of Supervisors which would create a Housing Code Enforcement Loan Program. Funds from this program would be used in North of Market area for rehabilitation of apartment and hotel buildings which are in the Citywide Systematic Code Enforcement Program.”*
- *“RAP in Inner Richmond, a three year program, reached 95% completion on August 1 , 1980 and has been closed out. Upper Ashbury is a five year program on schedule in its fourth year of operation. As of June 30, 1980, RAP has brought 1,394 structures with 2,863 dwelling units into code compliance.”*

- **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1981**
- *“Highlights of this year's bureau activity include:*
 - *“After the record \$814 million value of building permits issued in 1979-80, a steep decline in construction activity was anticipated in 1980-81. However, construction activity remained vigorous as building permits with an aggregate construction value of \$548 million were issued in 1980-81.*
 - *“The Smoke and Heat Detector program was nearing completion by the fiscal year's end with 80% of the 19,000 apartments and hotels in compliance with the ordinance. 1981-82 will see the initiation of the Apartment and Hotel Security and the Residential Hotel Conversion programs.*
 - *“Specifications for the initial phase of the Building Permit Tracking and Issuance System were delivered to Controller's Data Processing for programming late in 1980-81. The resulting programs are now in testing with implementation expected before November.”*

- *“RAP, in the Upper Ashbury, which began in December of 1976 will be completed in June of 1982. 1,400 structures with about 4,000 dwelling units will be brought into code compliance.”*

“This program began in the Inner Richmond where 1196 buildings with 2234 dwelling units were inspected and brought into code compliance.”

“A RAP area, North of Market, was designated in December of 1977 but problems in selling RAP bonds for the area has delayed start up. There has now been agreement by the Urban Investment Committee of the Bank of America to buy RAP bonds for residential rehabilitation only. Inspection of apartment buildings in North of Market will start up by December 1981.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1982**

- *“Highlights of this year's bureau activity include:*
 - *“The 1981-82 building permit valuation was a record \$1,011 million, reflecting a continuing trend of vigorous construction activity, and an increase of 84% over last year.*
 - *“The update of the building code initiated in 1980 was given full impetus in 1981-82, and the new code will be submitted for adoption by early 1983. This code will adopt by reference the Uniform Building Code with amendments to reflect the needs of local conditions.”*
 - *“The Smoke and Heat Detector program is within 99% completion with 98% of the 19,500 buildings in compliance.*
 - *“The first phase of the Permit Tracking System was implemented in November, 1981. Applications for building permits are tracked throughout the approval process from filing to issuance.”*
- *“North of Market's Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP) started in January of 1982. Sale of bonds for loan funds was completed December 31, 1981 with a provision that RAP loans be restricted to apartment structures.”*
- *“Upper Ashbury RAP, scheduled for completion in June, 1982, has been delayed by challenges in the courts. Nonetheless, 376 structures with 1,227 units were brought into code compliance as of June 30. Seventy buildings remain uninspected but the area is 82% complete or working toward compliance.”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1983**

- *“Highlights of this year's bureau activity include:*
 - *“The record \$1.011 billion in construction activity in FY 81/82 was surpassed in this fiscal year, reaching \$1,018 billion.*
 - *“The effort to adopt the Uniform Building Code with amendments was 90% complete by the end of the fiscal year and will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in the summer of 1983.*

- *“A new program was implemented this year to ensure that adequate hot water and room heat is provided in residential hotels. Each fall, every residential hotel in the City will be surveyed for compliance with the Housing Code's heat requirements. In this, its first year, the program resulted in citations to 25% of the residential hotels.*
- *“The Building Permit Tracking System was converted from the City's main IBM computer to a IV-Phase minicomputer, resulting in both cost savings and improved performance. The system was extended to track the progress and completion of construction, and now encompasses the entire life of a project.”*
- *“RAP, since the program started in 1977, has brought 2400 structures with over 6700 units into code compliance, displacing fewer than 4% of the residents...”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1984**

- *“Highlights of this year's bureau activity include:*
 - *“The extraordinary high levels of construction activity of the previous two fiscal years continued unabated.”*
 - *“The Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code were adopted along with some amendments necessary to reflect local conditions, as codes of the City. This was the first step in the conversion of all the City's heretofore unique construction codes to the model codes. An ordinance to adopt the National Electric Code was awaiting action at the Board of Supervisors at year's end.”*
 - *“The computer capabilities of the Bureau were extended through additions and enhancements to the Permit Tracking System. Complaints and referrals from the public and City agencies can now be tracked through to final disposition. The validity of contractor's licenses and insurance coverage are checked before a permit is issued.”*
- *“RAP, since the program started in 1977, has brought 2800 structures with over 9,800 units into code compliance, displacing only approximately 2% of the residents...”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1985**

- *Highlights of this year's bureau activity include:*
 - *“Progress was made on the adoption of the 1985 Uniform Building, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes, and the Bureau expects to complete the process of adopting national codes in FY 85/86. The completion of the process in the coming fiscal year will mark the beginning of a triennial cycle of national code adoptions.”*
 - *“Programming was completed in FY 84/85, extending the scope of Permit Tracking to include Electrical and Plumbing permits from issuance to completion of work.”*

- *“With an unprecedented boom in construction activity from 1981 through 1984, the permit process would have been overwhelmed by the demands of this boom without some relief via automation.”*

“Due to deep cuts in Community Development Block Grants, the RAP/Community Development Program may be entering its final year of existence. ...The program has made a significant contribution to the improvement of the City's housing stock with minimum disruption and dislocation.

“The events and achievements of the past year were overshadowed by the death of Superintendent Robert C. Levy on May 20, 1985. His talents, knowledge of codes, dedication, and national stature are irreplaceable. He has left an indelible imprint upon the face of this City, the Bureau of Building Inspection, and the Department of Public Works. His legacy includes the Broadway Tunnel, code innovations in fire safety and emergency exiting, and national leadership in the continuing evolution of building codes.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1986**

- *“Highlights of this year's bureau activity:*
 - *“The management and supervision of the Bureau has been solidified with the appointment of Franklin Lew as Superintendent. Mr. Lew had been acting superintendent for over one year...”*
 - *“As part of the service improvements, the Bureau was restructured in December, 1985, with a greater emphasis placed on ‘over-the-counter’ permits. Over-the-counter permits are defined as those applications that can be processed by the Bureau in five days or less. Approximately one half of all applications received by the Bureau are of a size allowing processing in the over-the-counter category.”*
 - *“The adoption of the 1985 Uniform Building, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes and the 1984 National Electrical Code, and the updating of the San Francisco Housing Code, will be completed in FY 1986-87. The adoption of these codes will mark the beginning of a triennial cycle of national code adoptions.”*
 - *“Construction activity in FY 1985-86 rode the boom of lowered interest rates to an all-time record high for the valuation of construction permits issued...”*
 - *“Due to deep cuts in Community Development Block Grants, the RAP/Community Development Program ended on December 31, 1985. Since the inception of the program in 1977, 4,559 structures with 17,303 dwelling units have been brought into compliance with displacement of less than 2% of residents. One thousand one hundred and forty-four loans totaling \$29.1 million have been disbursed for code compliance work with an additional \$24.4 million coming from private financing.”*
- *“The Bureau of Building Inspection processed over 14,000 permit applications – 40% above budgeted level.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1987

- *“Highlights:*
 - *Inauguration of the Public Services Division, a general information and user's assistance center which assembles in one area staff activities concerned primarily with public information, resolution of complaints and provision of permit expediting services.*
 - *“The continued boom in construction activity during FY 1986/87 will push the valuation of permits issued to levels nearly equal to last year's figure. Dollar values of around \$1,000 million in this fiscal year were achieved. The number of permits issued exceeded 16,500 (compared to 14,287 last year), a new record for the Bureau.”*
- *“Plan checking started within the 18 day target increased from 39% to 91% in the current year. New building permits approved within 35 days rose from 61% to 92%, and alteration permits approved within 21 days increased from 57% to 96% in FY 1986/87. The Counter Services Division reduced alteration application turnaround time to 2 days for over 82% of applications processed this year. The result is a dramatic improvement over the 58% in 5 days achieved during the previous year.”*
- *“The consolidation of the Abatement Division with the Building Inspection Division and reassignment of Senior Building Inspectors to more efficiently supervise staff made it possible to create smaller districts with more inspectors in the field. Over 80% of violations are being resolved with the inspector and administrative hearings, with fewer complaints being referred to Director's hearings.”*
- *“Parapet Safety Compliance:*

	1985-86	1986-87
<i>“Buildings Surveyed</i>	18	31
<i>“Applications Processed</i>	168	134
<i>“Inspections Made</i>	501	333
<i>“Buildings in Compliance</i>	225	202
<i>“Cases Sent to Abatement</i>	21	63
<i>“Cases Sent to City Attorney</i>	23	21”

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1988

- *“Highlights:*
 - *“The Public Service Division (PSD) began its Roving Inspection Program. A 24-hour access phone number has been established for the public to phone in complaints of work without proper permits; such violations result in the assessment of penalty fees. This program provides inspections after normal working hours and on weekends, and emergency inspections can be made at any time. The Roving Inspector also performs other regular inspection tasks and aids the PSD staff in its day-to-day operations, which include public information, resolution of complaints and permit expediting services.*

- *“Management Information Systems were improved by the upgrading of the computer system to a Motorola 5000. This upgrade reduced the transaction time needed to process permits and has improved the availability of the public terminal used by applicants to check on the status of permits.”*
- *“The newly established monthly meeting of the Superintendent with the Chief and Senior Inspectors of each Division has resulted in an improved understanding and better working knowledge of BBI. The various suggestions for improvements at the meetings will result in the implementation of changes for a more efficient operation.”*
- *“This year the Electrical Inspection Division has seen an unusual increase in larger building projects with more sophisticated electrical systems. Some of these projects are the Bayside Village, South Bay Marina, Hills Brothers Complex, Rincon Square Building, Marriott Ball Room and the New Fillmore Center.”*
- *“Housing Inspection Division (HID), which assumed 50% of the work of the now-dissolved Abatement Division without an increase in staff ...has also been performing complaint inspections in single and two family buildings for one year now. Special emphasis is being given to responding to all complaints and requests for energy inspections within 48 hours.”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1989**

- *“Highlights:*
 - “On July 1, 1988, the Bureau became a ‘Special Fund’ entity rather than part of the general fund. Its services would be paid for by the inspection and permit fees that we collect.*
 - “Though the Bureau's permit activity increased by 28% and code violation complaint activity increased by 16%, the number of staff remained consistent, and we were able to process 94% of all applications for permits in 30 days or less.*
 - “The Board of Supervisors supported our continuing efforts in the area of code enforcement, passing legislation to increase code enforcement penalty fees and expanded service fees.”*
 - “Included in this legislation, and in response to the public's concerns on various code enforcement issues regarding disabilities access, the Bureau established a Disability Access Program for coordination of information regarding all issues dealing with disabilities access. The Bureau hired a Disability Access Coordinator, who will provide training to Bureau and City employees regarding disability access. He will also be the legislative and public liaison, and the code consultant for all disability access issues.*
 - “Plans Approval and Housing Inspection Divisions cooperated in developing a handbook explaining the State mandated Commercial Energy Conservation Ordinance (CECO). The handbook is ready for issuance.”*

- *“A new goal for the Plans Approval Division was established to approve 75% of all permit applications within 90 days of start time, including hold time. Hold time is the period of time between the plan reviewer mailing a deficiency comment list to the applicant and the applicant responding with the required information. Hold-time is controlled by the applicant.”*
- *“An Investigation and Enforcement Division has been developed to raise the level of enforcement and abatement of complaints and assist the City Attorney in litigation. Backlog of old abatement cases has been reduced from 1,167 to 570 cases.”*
- *“Procedures were developed and implemented to inspect and enforce new city ordinances regarding unlawful demolitions and installation of smoke detectors in existing buildings.”*
- *“The Boiler Inspection Program has been revised with emphasis on using all available inspection staff to regulate the maintenance and operation of pressure vessels in the city. Also, we will be placing more responsibility on boiler contractors, insurance companies, owners, and state inspectors to comply with California boiler regulations.”*

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1990**

- *“Highlights:*

“The devastating earthquake of October 17 provided the Bureau with its greatest challenge. Within minutes, BBI received reports of significant damage across the entire City. Phones were down, power was out, and towards the Bay, smoke could be seen billowing towards the sky. The needs of the public were overwhelming, and all too soon darkness began to fall.

“By 5:30 p.m., Bureau personnel had completed the first comprehensive inspection of City Hall and steps were taken to secure the structure. Other teams fanned out to inspect other municipal buildings. By 5:45 p.m., a task force had set up a command station downtown to begin a detailed evaluation of damage to that area. Other personnel began to mobilize at the Army Street Yard and throughout the night, the Bureau responded to reports of damaged and collapsed buildings, City wide. The Bureau waited for morning and planned for the worst that daylight might bring.

“The following day all available personnel were dispatched from Army Street throughout the City. The Bureau began an immediate evaluation of each district. Hundreds of buildings were checked and the Bureau started its first comprehensive list of damaged buildings. A Marina command post was established and a house-by-house check was made. Inspectors and engineers risked their lives entering buildings which later collapsed.

“By Thursday, a new post was opened at the Marina Middle School. Comprehensive services started to become available to the public. All employees from the Bureau pitched in. Although the staff of the Bureau had received a

minimal amount of training in the area of interacting, directing, deciding, counseling, and otherwise dealing with a crisis situation that involved such high levels of stress and emotion, they handled themselves in an exemplary fashion. The staff demonstrated untold amounts of courtesy, patience, and overall concern for their fellow humans. The earthquake assessment procedure became more than a job, it became a pursuit to restore life to normal.

“The number of inspections and quantity of services provided by Bureau personnel was truly incredible. During the first 72 hours, over 1,600 inspections were performed.”

“Today, the Bureau is still deeply involved in earthquake related activities. The Code Enforcement Division (CED) is still engaged in follow-up earthquake damaged buildings. ...The events of October 17 are something that the Bureau will need to address and continue to work on for many years to come.”

- *“The permit approval for earthquake repair work was streamlined to allow the property owners to repair their buildings and reoccupy their houses. A special window was established a few days after the earthquake to expedite the permits. As a result, over 1,500 earthquake repair related permits were issued and most of these permits were processed within 24 hours.*

“The Commercial Tenant Improvement (CTI) Section was reopened. Due to the redirection of the staff's efforts to inspect and make assessments of earthquake damaged buildings, and to process and expedite permits for earthquake related repair work, the CTI Section was temporarily closed. The CTI Section reviews and approves most office tenant improvement projects within 24 hours, responding to clients' needs for a quicker permit approval process.”

- *“Construction Inspection Program:*

“The program was impacted by the October 1989 earthquake, both by the urgency of post-earthquake damage assessment, and by the additional workload created by permits to repair buildings and structures damaged by the earthquake, in addition to the normal construction activity.

“The staff of the Code Enforcement Division were assigned to the special projects necessary to follow up on earthquake damaged buildings. Procedures were developed and implemented to inspect and enforce new City Ordinances regarding commercial energy conservation retrofit requirements in connection with permits and title changes of commercial properties. Special inspection procedures were revised and implemented for compliance with the 1990 San Francisco Building Code.”

“The Construction Inspection Program was divided to create a mechanical inspection program with Electrical and Plumbing Inspection Divisions to be assigned to the program effective July 1, 1990, under the supervision of an Assistant Superintendent.

“The Building Inspection Division and Code Enforcement Division will continue to be the Construction Inspection Program during Fiscal Year 1990-1991.”

- *“The major goal for the Bureau during FY 1990-91 will be the acquisition of additional work space. The working conditions at 450 McAllister are less than satisfactory. The Bureau feels that the acquisition of an appropriate work space will create a more productive work environment.*

“A more productive work environment will result in increased service to the public in the form of reduced permit processing time.”

➤ **DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1991**

- *“Highlights:*

“During the 1990-91 fiscal year, the Bureau processed 1,300 Earthquake Emergency Repair Permits. By expediting these permits, the Bureau made a solid contribution to the restoration of the earthquake-damaged buildings.

“The Bureau also required the securing of 350 earthquake-damaged buildings. The Bureau is still receiving 10 to 15 calls per week requesting the inspection of private buildings that could have earthquake damage.

“Although the earthquake of October 17, 1989 remained a challenge for the Bureau of Building Inspection, it has begun to approach the greater challenge of carrying out business operation reforms. These reforms will make the Bureau more accountable, accessible, and increase its credibility and productivity.

“These reforms are in the areas of communications, computerization, financial management and customer relations.

“When responding to the needs of the public, the Bureau intends to change its role from that of an adversary to that of a consultant. These reforms will take place over the next three years.”

- *“The Bureau has progressed with increasing its overall computer-based capabilities. During fiscal year 1990-91, the Bureau continued to expand its Local Area Network by installing another 25 personal computers with their attendant support devices.*

“The Bureau intends to use computers as the basis for changing its business operations.”

- *“The service provided to the public reflects the productivity of the Bureau. The primary measure of service to the public is the amount of time it takes to receive a permit and start construction. The important elements of the service are that the Bureau processed 82% of its permit applications within seven days. The Bureau also processed 94% of all permit applications in less than thirty days.”*
- *“The Disability Access Coordinator has put into place a training program for the Bureau staff that brings expanded awareness to disability access issues. This expanded awareness is not only in the areas of plan checking and inspections, but also in the real-life difficulties experienced by the disabled community.”*

➤ DPW Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1992

- *"HIGHLIGHTS.*

"During the 1991-1992 fiscal year, the Bureau began the challenge of carrying out business operation reforms. These reforms were in the areas of customer relations, communications, computerization and financial management and will continue to take place over the next two years. The Bureau has become more accountable, more accessible and increased its credibility and productivity through these reforms.

"The Bureau has also changed its role from that of an adversary to that of a consultant when responding to the needs of the public."

- *"The Bureau's productivity is in the service it provides to the public. The primary measure of service to the public is the amount of time it takes to receive a permit and start construction. The Bureau renovated the first floor of its 450 McAllister Street office to create space for the new Construction Services Center (CSC). The Construction Services Center will increase service to the public and reduce the amount of time to process a permit application.*

"The Construction Services Center went into operation on June 1, 1992. The CSC combines the building permit application intake, review and approval process by including the Department of City Planning, Fire Department, Bureau of Engineering and Department of Public Health personnel in the same location with the Central Permit Bureau, Plan Checking and Public Services functions of the Bureau.

"The consolidation of these resources into one work area is a major step toward the complete overhaul of the permit process, eventually leading to a "One Stop Permit Process."

- *"During fiscal year 1991-92, the Bureau continued to expand its computer communication network by installing 40 personal computers and their attendant support devices. The Local Area Network now connects the computers in the Bureau's three locations. The installation of Electronic Mail (E-Mail) provided a vehicle for communication among the three locations. The Bureau will continue to use computers as the basis for changing its business operations.*

"The Bureau initiated two Request for Proposals during fiscal year 1991-92, one for a Building Database and the other a 'Work Flow' analysis. The Building Database will contain a complete history of all permits, plans, energy inspections, etc., that pertain to a property. The purpose of the 'Work Flow' analysis is to develop an image based Permit Tracking System. At the end of this development, the Bureau will see 'Work Folders' containing permit applications, plans and all associated documentation, flowing electronically in parallel to all appointed reviewers."

- *"The Bureau is a 'Special Fund' entity and is not a part of the General Fund. The Bureau manages its expenditures to the revenues it generates. In fiscal year 91-92, the Building permit fees accounted for 61% of the total revenue with the*

issuance of 22,123 permits; the Electrical and Plumbing permits, for 23%, with the issuance of 25,680 permits; and license fees for Hotels and Apartments for 16%. The Bureau's revenues and expenses are a constant concern and are monitored weekly.

"The Bureau's workload volume increased over the past six fiscal years from 36,158 total permits issued in 1985 to 47,803 issued in 1991. During that same period, the Bureau's staffing decreased from 175 employees to 167. The Bureau absorbed this workload increase with decreased staffing because of the important contributions made by the entire Bureau staff. These contributions brought increased productivity as well as improved quality."

- *"FUTURE. While the progress made during the previous year has been major, it is only the beginning. Over the next two years, the Bureau will continue to make progress toward becoming a model building inspection function.*

"THE BUREAU IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO PURSUE ITS GOALS OF:

- *"Providing a more service oriented method of doing business."⁴⁶*
- *"Increasing the level of credibility with the public.*
- *"Increasing inspector efficiency and general work force productivity.*
- *"Gaining a tighter control of code compliance issues.*
- *"Providing a more cost effective method of delivering services."*

"IN SUPPORT OF THESE GOALS, THE BUREAU WILL:

- *"Schedule inspections throughout the Bureau.*
- *"Acquire additional two-way radios.*
- *"Expand the Construction Services Center in order to implement the 'One Stop Permit Process'.*
- *"Continue to accelerate the implementation of automation.*
- *"Improve Records Management.*
- *"Continue to monitor its fiscal activities."*

*** * * * ***

Lonnie Haughton is a principal codes/construction consultant with Richard Avelar & Associates in Oakland, CA (www.RAvelar.com) and is one of about 900 individuals nationwide who have been certified by the International Code Council as a Master Code Professional. His additional ICC certifications include California Commercial Building Inspector, California Residential Building Inspector, Certified Building Code Official, Certified Housing Code Official and Fire Inspector I. Haughton is registered by the Division of the State Architect as a Certified Access Specialist (CASp-030).

⁴⁶ Monthly newsletter (May 1989) published by the San Francisco Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute:
"Recently Dick Young, AIA, of the Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI) announced the initiation of a new Bureau service, Pre-Application Review, which will be available to design professionals after February 6, 1989. The purpose is to serve B.B.I. clientele on new buildings and major alterations by providing a formal conference where presubmitted questions concerning code interpretations and alternative solutions can be answered and approved in writing."