OWNER-OCCUPIERS' ATTITUDES TO AND PERCEPTIONS OF DISREPAIR: A STUDY WITHIN THE CYNON VALLEY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Open University for the degree of Master of Philosophy

April 1993

Cardiff Institute of Higher Education
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and that due reference is made where necessary to the work of other researchers and authors.

I further declare that this dissertation has not been accepted in substance for any former degree and is not currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

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DEDICATION

To my family and friends for their encouragement and support
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

D.O.E. Department of the Environment
G.I.A. General Improvement Area
H.A.A. Housing Action Area
M.H.L.G. Ministry of Housing and Local Government
N.E.D.O. National Economic Development Office
O.P.C.S Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
W.O. Welsh Office
ABSTRACT

Recent surveys have indicated that high levels of unfitness and disrepair exist in the Cynon Valley, a district in Mid-Glamorgan, Wales. In order to determine the reasons for these conditions the historical development of national housing policy with regard to the owner-occupied sector was examined. The effect of the implementation of national housing policy in Wales, and more specifically the Cynon Valley is discussed.

Due to the significant number of owner-occupied houses known to be in disrepair in the Cynon Valley, a review was also carried out of surveys and literature examining occupants' attitudes towards the maintenance and repair of their housing.

It was concluded that many owner-occupiers are unable to identify that their dwellings are in disrepair, and that this research should examine the perceptions of owner-occupiers with respect to the repair of their dwellings.

This research determines whether owner-occupiers can identify whether items of the external fabric of their dwelling are in disrepair, and what other factors may determine whether repairs are carried out.

In order to obtain the information necessary for this research a survey was carried out which included both a social survey and house condition survey.

The results of the survey demonstrate that there are a large number of owner-occupiers who are unable to identify disrepair and that the extent of disrepair of the properties surveyed was not significantly related to any particular variable considered in this research.

From the results of this survey, conclusions and recommendations were made which were considered to provide further assistance to owner-occupiers in the maintenance of their properties. The implications of these recommendations at both national and local levels are also discussed.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Evidence provided by recent House Condition Surveys (Welsh Office, 1986; Department of the Environment, 1986) indicate that due to a lack of maintenance, a significant proportion of the national housing stock is falling into disrepair. High levels of disrepair are experienced in Wales, particularly in localities where there is a high proportion of older housing, for example, the South Wales coal field.

The Cynon Valley is such an area which developed during the Industrial Revolution. Consequently 60.2% of housing in the area was constructed prior to 1919. A high incidence of disrepair is now experienced within the Valley's housing stock, the majority of which is owner-occupied, with 15.7% of dwellings requiring repairs costing in excess of £5000 (Welsh Office, 1988).

Such a high incidence of disrepair has generally been attributed to the fact that the area has a large proportion of low-income households and elderly households. However, it is also important to determine whether owner-occupiers are aware of the repairs required to their properties, as this would also have implications as to whether the houses are maintained or not. This research aims to examine whether owner-occupiers are able to perceive whether the external fabric of their dwellings is in disrepair.

In order to achieve this it is necessary to compare the respondent's opinion of the condition of the external fabric of their property with the repair costs found to be necessary by a surveyor, and to determine whether they correspond.

A further aim is to consider the attitudes of owner-occupiers
towards the maintenance of their property. This includes the opinions that owner-occupiers hold towards external factors such as their surrounding area, and the local authority. Thus, it is intended to obtain an appreciation of the owner-occupier's decision-making process as to whether or not repair works should and will be carried out or not. Comparisons are also made of various other relevant factors, for instance, the occupier's satisfaction with their house and area, the age of the head of household, income and savings, with estimated repair costs to determine what other reasons may underlie why a certain proportion of owner-occupiers do not carry out repairs. The research consisted of a house condition survey and questionnaire conducted in two areas of the Cynon Valley, the exact methodology of which can be found in Appendix B. The population chosen for the sample were owner-occupiers living in housing constructed prior to 1919, as this would provide an almost homogeneous type of housing with regard to construction. It is also within this category of housing that a particularly high incidence of disrepair has been identified (W.O., 1988). The method of selection used ensured that each sample of properties was representative of the area that it was taken from. Each property was visited, and where access was obtained, a questionnaire-based interview was carried out by means of which a substantial amount of quantitative and qualitative information was obtained. This was followed by an inspection of the external fabric of the house, noting for the purpose of costing, quantities for each item of disrepair.
Information from both the questionnaire and repair costings were transferred to a database for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSPC).

An historical background to the development of housing policy in Britain is provided in chapter two in order to demonstrate changing policies in response to perceived problems affecting the housing stock and the gradually changing role of the government in the provision and maintenance of the national housing stock. It also describes the growth of owner-occupation from a minority tenure to what is now the predominant tenure in Britain.

Chapter three provides an account of the historical development of housing in Wales, including the reasons for its traditionally high levels of owner-occupation. It provides evidence from successive house condition surveys of the nature and extent of the housing problem within the owner-occupied sector in Wales. This relates particularly to localised areas such as the South Wales Valleys, where there is a large proportion of older housing, occupied by a high percentage of elderly households.

Finally, the chapter highlights how past policies have served to make some improvement to housing conditions in Wales but outlines problems that continue to exist in certain areas.

Chapter four examines the survey area, namely the Cynon Valley. A geographical setting is provided, followed by an account of its development both economically and with regard to the housing stock in the area. Socio-economic factors are examined briefly, followed by a discussion of current housing conditions and the impact of recent housing policies. From this overall view, an
appreciation of the type of housing-related problems currently faced in the Cynon Valley can be obtained.

Chapter five discusses previous survey results, research findings, and other relevant information concerned with occupiers awareness of the need to carry out repairs to their houses, with particular concentration on owner-occupiers. It considers factors which must be present if an owner-occupier is to carry out repairs and those which may provide a disincentive. Concepts such as the 'prisoner's dilemma', obsolescence, and 'achieved' and 'received standards' are discussed, in addition to the relationship between satisfaction and the perception of disrepair.

Many of the issues which are raised in chapter five have been incorporated into this research, influencing the design of the questionnaire used in the field survey. This was in order to determine whether the observations made could be applied to the research in question.

Chapters six to eleven provide the results to the survey, and chapter twelve the conclusions which can be drawn from the results. Recommendations are made on the basis of the conclusions which are intended to increase repair and maintenance activity. These recommendations have been made in light of the nature of the housing problem in the Cynon Valley and provides implications for national housing policy and its implementation at a local level.
CHAPTER TWO: THE ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
HOUSING POLICY IN INFLUENCING HOUSING CONDITIONS IN
ENGLAND AND WALES

Housing policy prior to 1919

National housing policy has been concerned with the condition of
the housing stock since the 1850's, when legislation was initially
introduced to improve housing conditions in the interests of public
health. This was largely through concern that the conditions under
which many people were living, notably those in accommodation
provided during the Industrial Revolution, were conducive to moral
depredation, ill-health, and disease, and a consequent burden
upon the Poor Law (Chadwick, 1842). State intervention in the
standard and provision of housing was, however, met with
reluctance as it contradicted the laissez-faire attitude prevailing at
that time (Malpass and Murie, 1987)

The Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, 1868 (the Torrens Act)
required the Medical Officer of Health to report on premises that
were 'in a condition or state dangerous to health as to be unfit for
human habitation'. Local Authorities were empowered but not
compelled to require owners to remedy the situation at their own
expense.

Following this the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement
Act 1875 (the Cross Act), and the Housing of Working Classes Act
1890, empowered Local Authorities to formulate schemes for
clearance and redevelopment of slum areas. These Acts were not
particularly effective, as neither imposed a duty upon Local
Authorities with regard to their implementation, and, due to the
absence of Exchequer subsidy for rebuilding the areas cleared,
little action was taken. Private builders were also unlikely to be interested in providing houses for the poor that had been displaced (Malpass and Murie, 1987). Where clearance did occur, if not supplemented by redevelopment, it only exacerbated the situation by causing overcrowding in surrounding areas.

At this time, the private-rented sector was predominant but in line with the prevailing *laissez-faire* attitude, self-help was encouraged in the form of home-ownership. This was seen to be synonymous with respectability and status and also a form of security against unemployment and old age. Owner-occupation was facilitated, particularly to the working class, by the formation of building clubs, and building societies (Saunders, 1990)

Table 2.1: Housing tenure change in England and Wales, 1914-86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Public rented</th>
<th>Private rented</th>
<th>Housing association</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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1919 - 1939

After the First World War there was a general housing shortage, a shrinking private rented sector, and social unrest. This resulted in a concentration upon clearance, and subsequent redevelopment with local authority housing in order to provide 'homes fit for
heroes'.

Direct state intervention in housing provision was encouraged by the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 when Exchequer subsidy was provided for Local Authorities to construct general needs housing on cleared land. Legislation introduced by subsequent governments varied the amount of subsidy available, and despite cut-backs in subsidy, nearly half a million council houses were built in the 1920's out of a total of one and a quarter million new houses built (Gibson and Langstaff,1982).

With the Housing Act 1930, commitment to slum clearance as a means to improve housing conditions was continued in the 1930's. The Act introduced further slum clearance provisions, and a new standard of fitness for human habitation which involved consideration of sanitary conditions and repair. The Government began to move away from providing housing for the 'working-class', to a role of providing 'general needs housing'.

Owner-occupation increased during this period due to landlords selling their houses to sitting tenants at discounted prices. The private rented sector had begun to decline as a result of the imposition of rent controls.

Owing to an abundance of funds, building societies set out to attract owner-occupiers and builders of housing for owner-occupation.

1939-1965

After the Second World War, the immediate concern of Local Authorities was the provision of general needs housing to alleviate
the shortage caused by the consequent destruction. Attention was directed towards reconstruction of war-damaged properties and redevelopment to provide extra units of accommodation. A large proportion of those houses built were of non-traditional, prefabricated construction.

The Housing Act 1949 allowed for local authorities to provide housing to all those considered to be in housing need and regardless of social class, thus adopting a 'general needs' role.

The Act also introduced financial aid to owner-occupiers and landlords, in the form of a discretionary improvement grant. This made available grants for the improvement, and conversion of houses into self-contained flats. These provisions were extended in 1959 to provide mandatory grant aid for the installation of basic amenities, such as a bath, water closet, and hot and cold water.

The post-war expansion of the owner-occupied sector can be accounted for by a rise in real incomes accompanied by low interest charges and low inflation (Saunders, 1990).

In the period 1954-9 housing policies changed in that they began to encourage private building for owner-occupation, leaving the Local Authorities to resume their slum clearance programs which had been postponed due to the war. This was brought about by the Housing (Rent and Repairs) Act 1954, in which the proposals of the White Paper, Houses: the Next Step, M.H.L.G. 1953, (Cmnd.8996) were implemented. Private investment in older housing was encouraged through the further de-control of rents, increased availability of improvement grants, and the encouragement of low-income owner-occupation by providing incentives for building
societies to lend on pre-1919 houses. The Housing Subsidies Act 1956 reduced subsidies for general needs Council housing and introduced a subsidy structure that encouraged the building of high rise accommodation (Smith, 1989).

The national clearance programme was based upon returns from Local Authorities, which indicated the number of unfit houses present in their districts, based upon a statutory definition introduced by the Housing Repairs and Rents Act 1954. However, the returns in 1955, indicating that nearly 850,000 out of a total 12.9 million houses were unfit in England and Wales, were subject to certain anomalies (Cullingworth, 1960) and were found to be gross underestimates of the actual extent of unfitness, mainly due to several authorities including only those houses that were actually involved in clearance programmes. Attempts were made to eliminate these anomalies and a renewed impetus for slum clearance and redevelopment was initiated by the White Paper 'The Housing Programme 1965-70'.

From redevelopment to rehabilitation

The concern expressed regarding inadequate information on housing conditions was further endorsed by the Denington Committee, a subcommittee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, which was appointed in 1965, 'to consider the practicability of specifying objective criteria for the purposes of slum clearance, rectification of disrepair and other housing powers relating to minimum tolerable standards of housing accommodation; and to make recommendations' (Central Housing Advisory Committee, 1966).
In response to the Denington report, the 1967 House Condition Survey was carried out by Public Health Inspectors (now known as Environmental Health Officers) in England and Wales. This brought to light the magnitude of the housing problem in declaring that in accordance with the fitness standard contained in the Housing Act 1957, 1.8 million houses were found to be unfit. A tandem policy of clearance and improvement followed in order to tackle the problem.

Clearance and redevelopment gradually became more problematic resulting in substantial discontent due to the break-up of communities, dissatisfaction with the accommodation in which they were rehoused, the amount of bureaucracy involved, and lack of communication. Also, "inadequate resources, ineffective management of the process and lack of sensitivity" (Gibson and Langstaff, 1982), often gave rise to housing blight, and delay in redevelopment, subsequently causing a worsening of housing conditions, and the general frustration of the residents.

As a result of a weakening economy during the mid-1960's, economics played an increasing role in the formulation of housing policy, with the new Labour government looking to involve private enterprise in areas intended for redevelopment. Studies carried out indicated that such private investment was unlikely to be forthcoming, and the changing view that housing shortage was no longer an outstanding problem with the consequence that the emphasis should now be on the quality of the stock rather than the quantity, served to favour improvement of housing rather than redevelopment (Gibson and Langstaff, 1982).
At a time of 'worsening economic outlook and devaluation of the pound' (Gay, 1985) housing could not escape being used as an economic regulator, and improvement rather than redevelopment would provide a way of cutting costs. Research into the economics of redevelopment and improvement also favoured the latter (Needleman, 1969).

The 1968 White Paper, *Old Houses into New Homes* (Cmnd. 3602) proposed that there should be emphasis on the improvement and repair of those houses that were capable of being improved, and gradual renewal through the clearance of the worst housing, rather than the previous policy of comprehensive redevelopment. This was implemented by the Housing Act 1969.

Greater flexibility of grants resulted in increased uptake, particularly when the percentage of grant aid rose from 50% of the cost of approved works to 75% in 1971. This was reflected in the 1971 National House Condition Survey by a reduction of 1.1 million houses lacking basic amenities. It is claimed that 0.65 million of this was accounted for by improvement rather than clearance, the latter of which had began to fall substantially.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the exemption of housing from Capital Gains Tax, the introduction of the Option Mortgage Scheme in 1967, aimed at subsidising low-income buyers, and the exemption of mortgage interest payments from the abolition of tax relief in 1969, the owner-occupied sector continued to expand (Saunders, 1990).
The area renewal approach

As a result of concern expressed as to whether individual voluntary improvement via grant aid was an effective method of improving general housing conditions, and that grants were not always directed to those in most need [Balchin, 1985], the House of Commons Expenditure Committee on House Improvement Grants was appointed to consider these matters. This resulted in the publication of the White Paper, *Better Homes-The Next Priorities*, 1973.

In line with recommendations made in the Denington report [Central Housing Advisory Committee, 1966] which recognised that environmental factors should be considered a criteria of whether a house provides suitable living conditions or not, the emphasis became one of area-based action. The concept of area-based improvement was first introduced by the Housing Act 1964 which imposed a duty upon local authorities to inspect their districts in order to identify areas that would be suitable for improvement, and to be known as Improvement Areas. Local authorities were empowered to compel landlords to improve their properties, although these powers were not available in the case of owner-occupiers.

Improvement Areas were later superseded by General Improvement Areas (GIA's) introduced by the Housing Act 1969. These areas were to consist of relatively sound housing with a potential for upgrading, where confidence in the area could be restored, thus encouraging residents to invest in the maintenance of their housing. Although these areas derived benefit from environmental
improvements, they also worked to the disadvantage of many, including tenants, who often found themselves displaced when landlords wanted to sell their properties with vacant possession. Such areas were often subject to speculation and gentrification (Balchin, 1985) with the result that help was not directed to those residents that were intended to benefit from such schemes. Those areas experiencing housing stress were to be dealt with by designating Housing Action Areas (HAA's), introduced by the Housing Act 1974. Higher level grants were made available in both types of areas, including a new grant for approved repairs, with controls reimposed. This included a rudimentary means test based on the rateable value of the property. Provision was also made for Local Authorities to require compulsory improvement of both tenanted and owner-occupied housing. The Rent Act 1974 introduced security of tenure for furnished lettings in an attempt to deter landlords from evicting their tenants, however the abuses encountered in GIA's were also often found in HAA's. These areas have had some success although they have not always achieved what they were intended to (Monck and Lomas, 1981; Balchin, 1985). Much has depended upon the activities of the Local Authorities, the input of resources, efficiency, and the priority given to those who suffered social disadvantage, and whose houses were in need of repair or lacked amenities. This type of area action has also been subject to the usual disincentives associated with grants, such as conditions imposed as to the sale of the property, the extent of works required by the local authority in contrast with those desired by the owner, the ability of the owners to afford their
financial contribution, and the actual application process. Merrett (1982) is particularly critical of the motives which lead to the encouragement of such area-based schemes, believing that the 'area concept was an ideological rather than a material policy innovation' (Merrett, 1982). Factors contributing towards successful, and unsuccessful HAA's have been described by Monck and Lomas (1981), although the actual work achieved in the HAA's studied has not been dealt with in any detail. More detail of this nature can be found in a report by Niner and Forrest (1982) regarding a monitoring exercise of six Housing Action Areas, carried out on behalf of the Department of the Environment.

In addition to this, the actual number of GIA's and HAA's declared was claimed to be too small to achieve any notable effect (Thomas, 1986). Rehabilitation therefore became the accepted alternative to clearance and redevelopment, although demolition was considered appropriate where it was the most suitable option. Grant assistance reached its most comprehensive form with the introduction of 'enveloping', a term used to describe a scheme pioneered in Birmingham, involving 100% grant towards the renewal of the envelope of houses. The aim of enveloping was that once external works have been carried out, and confidence in the area increased, owners would be able to concentrate on the internal fabric of the house and provide amenities where necessary.

A further development in the grant system, introduced by the Housing Act 1980, was the extension of availability of repairs
grants for houses falling outside GIA's and HAA's.

In response to the results of the 1981 English House Condition Survey, which indicated that unsatisfactory housing was increasingly due to unfitness and serious disrepair as opposed to lacking basic amenities, the 1982 Budget increased grants to 90% of the 'eligible expense' for a limited period. This resulted in a massive increase in demand for grants, particularly repairs grants. When these resources were withdrawn by Central Government a substantial backlog of grants resulted, causing problems for many local authorities. Such stop-go policies are not conducive to the long-term improvement of the housing stock (N.E.D.O., 1986).

The distribution of grants again became the subject of scrutiny when, in 1983, the Department of the Environment carried out the Distribution of Grant Enquiry, to establish what types of people and property received home improvement grants, the condition of the property before and after work had been carried out, and the influence of grant availability on the decision to repair or improve. This seemed to confirm that grants were not always directed to those in most need. The main results of the Enquiry were discussed in the Green Paper, *Home Improvement: A New Approach* (D.O.E., 1985). This introduced the radical proposal of means-testing grant applicants, and if they proved to be ineligible, they would be able to obtain loans on an equity-sharing basis. The Green Paper was the subject of considerable adverse comment and subsequently was not implemented. It was subsequently amended substantially and became the White Paper, *Home Improvement Policy: the government's proposals* (D.O.E., 1987).
Current housing policy

Present housing policy now reflects the Government's long-held belief that the responsibility for repairs lies with the owner and that private investment should play a greater role [D.O.E., 1987]. Recent legislation, namely the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, has introduced a means test of the person applying for the grant, as first proposed in the Green Paper of 1985, in response to the concern expressed regarding the equitability of distribution of grants. The proposal regarding equity sharing loans, however, was omitted.

A criticism of means-testing might be that even where higher percentage grants are made available to low income owners, they may still be unable to afford their contribution for the works required. As grants are awarded according to Local Authority rates for works, the financial award may not always meet the actual bill required by the builder. Therefore, a '100% grant' may not necessarily cover the total cost of the works.

The threshold applied to income, above which works are not grant-aidable, and the fact that outgoings such as mortgage repayments are not taken into consideration, could serve to prevent the improvement of housing which has fallen into disrepair. This is particularly so when bought by those who are only able to afford a property which requires substantial works to be carried out, but are fully committed financially to a lending institution [Leather and MacKintosh, 1989; Mackintosh and Leather, 1992].

In addition to means-testing, the Act introduced a new minimum fitness standard, for which grant aid is mandatory, and a higher
target standard, for which grant aid is discretionary. There would no longer be separate conditions applied to the eligibility for repairs and improvement grants as it would now be one unified grant. However there would be separate special grants such as the minor works grant for the elderly. Recent work has shown that these grants, with the assistance of agencies such as 'Care and Repair' and 'Staying Put' have proved to be successful [Mackintosh and Leather, 1992]. However, criticisms have been directed at the lack of funding provided by the government for agency services [Samuel, 1992].

In order to aid the expansion of home-ownership, making it more accessible to low-income households, the government has introduced low cost schemes such as 'homesteading', and 'equity sharing'. However, the sale of public sector housing to tenants at discounted prices has made the greatest impact on the expansion of the owner-occupied sector, with over one million council tenants purchasing their homes between 1979 and 1989 (Forest et al., 1990).

It is claimed that the majority of people aspire to own their own homes [D.O.E., 1987]. Supposed benefits of owner-occupation include security, the ability for the individual to express themselves freely, and the opportunity for substantial capital gains (Balchin, 1985). Such benefits are not, however, equally distributed, and increasing proportions of home-owners are becoming marginalised through their inability to keep up mortgage repayments, carry out repairs or improvements to their properties, or afford to move in order to realise their invested wealth (Forrest
A survey commissioned by the Building Societies Association, and carried out by the British Market Research Bureau in 1989, showed that 81% of adults interviewed expressed that owner-occupation would be their ideal tenure in two years' time. It has however been argued that Government policies have had an adverse effect on home ownership [Karn, et al., 1986] and the retention of mortgage interest tax relief merely sustains high house prices [Ball, 1983]. However the Government continues to believe that owner-occupiers 'take a strong interest in maintaining and improving their homes' and the spread of home-ownership would therefore be conducive to the improvement of housing conditions generally [D.O.E., 1987].

As highlighted by various studies, (Doling, et al., 1988; Karn, et al., 1985; Forest, et al., 1990) the experiences of home-owners within the housing market can be diverse. They may vary, for instance, according to the circumstances of the owner in question, the condition of their accommodation, their ability to acquire assistance from financial institutions, the characteristics of the local housing market, and allocations of finance within the respective local authority.

Present Government philosophy, however, has clearly placed the responsibility on the owner to ensure that his, or her, dwelling is maintained to a satisfactory standard [D.O.E., 1987]. With the increasing encouragement of owner-occupation, direct state involvement in the nation's housing is becoming more and more limited, to the extent that it sees its responsibility for providing
assistance only to those who are in greatest need. The fact is, that
owner-occupation does not necessarily guarantee security to the
owner-occupier, nor the satisfactory maintenance of a property.
The area approach to the repair of housing now takes the form of
Renewal Area Assessments whereby a comprehensive appraisal of
selected areas must be made in order to secure their improvement
by the most appropriate method, be it block improvement of areas,
clearance, or a combination of both.
The emphasis of housing policy has varied considerably
throughout the century. Originally developed to resolve unhealthy
living conditions, policy then became concerned with solving the
housing shortage caused by two world wars.
Central Government has changed its role from being a major
provider of housing to one of enablement, encouraging private
sector involvement and assisting the expansion of owner-
occupation.
Whereas initial housing policy was concerned with the clearing of
substandard housing to provide new housing, rehabilitation, area
renewal, and selective demolition have gradually been adopted as a
means to maintaining and improving the housing stock.
In order to facilitate rehabilitation, grant aid was eventually made
generally available, but is now being restricted to those who are in
greatest need of financial aid.
Central Government policies have developed as reactions to
problems which are believed to affect the housing stock and its
occupants. Circumstances inevitably change both locally and
nationally, and therefore housing policy must be continually
reviewed.
To this end, not only quantitative data regarding the condition of the housing stock and the characteristics of its occupants must be investigated, but also the occupants' attitudes towards their accommodation and the mechanisms by which they actually maintain their property or not, as the case may be. This will not only provide an indication of the quality of the housing stock and the different categories of people occupying that housing, but also a better understanding of the processes by which owner-occupiers maintain their property.

Conclusions
From this historical account of housing policy in England and Wales, current circumstances, with regard to the tenure of the housing stock and its condition, can now be put into perspective.
It is the fact that the condition of the majority of the nation's housing stock depends to such an extent on the initiative of each owner-occupier that this tenure was selected for study. Although privately rented housing has a high incidence of poor conditions (W.O.,1988; D.O.E.,1988), there tends to be more recourse to legislation in order to remedy adverse conditions. Such recourse would be taken by the Local Housing Authority under legislation contained in the Housing Act 1985 (amended by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) or by the occupier taking civil proceedings against the landlord for breach of contract under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, (Arden, 1989).
If the national housing stock is to be maintained to a satisfactory
standard, owner-occupiers must be given sufficient opportunity to ensure that their homes are kept in good repair for instance, this might require persuasion, encouragement, assistance, or education. In order to do this, it is necessary to continue to examine the many different circumstances of owner-occupiers, together with their attitudes and opinions towards their housing and the maintenance of it, so that suitable strategies can be devised to encompass as much of the sector as possible.

The ability of the owner-occupier to perceive disrepair is significant, in that it is a determining factor as to whether a property will be prevented from deteriorating. If an owner-occupier is unable to perceive disrepair then even the provision of extra public funding, in the form of renovation grants, would not achieve its maximum effect with regard to the improvement of the housing stock.
CHAPTER THREE: HOUSING CONDITIONS IN WALES

Historical development of housing in Wales

One of the most prominent features of the Welsh housing stock is the predominance of the owner-occupied sector. In 1986, owner-occupation accounted for 67.5% of the Welsh housing stock, compared with England consisting of 65%, and Scotland with 42.1% (D.O.E., 1987).

Certain areas of Wales experienced a rapid growth in population during the Industrial Revolution, particularly the North and South Wales coal fields, and slate mining areas of North Wales. Houses were initially constructed by the coal mining companies when a pit was sunk, however building clubs were common, particularly in South Wales. These came to be the main source of house construction, whereby the workforce would eventually own their houses (see page 41-42). Of all new houses built on the South Wales coal field before 1914, one-quarter were by means of building clubs (Daunton, 1983).

Home-ownership provided extra security to the employees of the mining companies. Many houses owned by mining companies were also sold to sitting tenants.

Saunders (1990) relates the rate of ownership in an area with its social composition, stating that there is a tendency for middle-class people to be more likely to own their homes. However, he points out that this is not always applicable, for instance, South Wales has traditionally had high rates of working class ownership.
Map 1: Wales - Counties and Districts

Counties and Districts

Boundaries

--- District
--------- County

25 mls

40 km

29
Saunders suggests that:

'there are important cultural variations which
can only be explained by analysing the
distinctive histories of different places.'

[Saunders, 1990]

This would include the expectations of those living in the areas
with regard to owner-occupation, and the transmission of these
expectations through future generations. This suggestion might
explain the continuation of the predilection towards owner-
occupation in Wales.

According to the 1986 Welsh House Condition Survey, 36.8% of
dwellings in Wales were constructed prior to 1919, nearly 84.4% of
which were owner-occupied. Of these owner-occupied, pre-1919
dwellings, 22.8% required repairs of £3000 or more at 1986 prices
(W.O., 1988).

Hence, a considerable proportion of the Welsh housing stock which
is in poor condition, for reasons which often include its age and
original standard of construction, occurs within the owner-
occupied sector.

House condition surveys - the extent of the problem
The first national house condition survey was carried out in 1967
and included dwellings in both England and Wales. However, the
survey was not large enough to provide adequate data for Wales.
The first Welsh House Condition Survey took place in 1968 and
consisted of approximately 4,800 dwellings. This survey revealed
that 10.4% of the housing stock was unfit.

Subsequent house condition surveys were carried out in 1973 and 1976 and 1981. The sample size was increased for the 1976 survey in order to provide estimates at county level.

Table 3.1: Condition of Privately Owned Stock 1968-81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unfit</th>
<th>Lacking amenity</th>
<th>Out of repair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Committee on Welsh Affairs, 1987

It can be seen that over this period substantial improvements have been made in reducing the number of dwellings lacking amenities. This is attributed to the availability of mandatory grant aid towards the provision of basic amenities. However, little improvement has been achieved in reducing the number of unfit properties, and a long term trend towards disrepair is indicated.

In 1981, a social survey was carried out in addition to the house condition survey in order to relate unfitness to the characteristics of the households occupying the dwellings surveyed. It was observed that there was a strong relationship between households of a pensionable age, repair costs, and the fact that their accommodation was found to be unfit or lacking amenities.

It was also found that unfitness was associated with the head of household being economically inactive.

The 1986 Welsh House Condition Survey also consisted of two parts, the first, a social survey and the second of the physical condition of the sample of stock. In this case the sample was large
enough to provide data on a district level.

The 1986 Welsh House Condition Survey showed 7.2% of all dwellings to be unfit and 4.3% to lack amenities. Compared with the results for the 1981 survey there had been some improvement, although the results remained consistently worse than those for England.

Table 3.2: Percentage of dwellings unfit and lacking amenities in Wales and England in 1981 and 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfit</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking amenities</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The fitness standard, as defined by Section 604 of the Housing Act 1985, is a subjective standard consisting of a number of criteria which must be considered [see Appendix A]. The application of this standard can vary between individuals applying the standard depending on their own expectations, and over time. The lack of basic amenities is an objective standard but it gives no indication of the condition of the fabric of the house. Therefore, repair costs tend to be the most useful indicator of the condition of the housing stock.

The Welsh House Condition Survey 1986 found that total repair costs for all dwellings amounted to £1.27 billion compared with
£2.4 billion in the 1981 survey, at 1986 prices. It has been suggested that repair costs may have been overestimated in the 1981 survey, but that there is a clear overall improvement in the condition of the stock (W.O., 1988).

This may, or may not be the case, however there are certainly localised areas of Wales, both urban and rural, where poor housing conditions are prevalent particularly amongst housing constructed prior to 1919. Average repair costs for pre-1919 dwellings in rural areas such as Montgomeryshire and Dwyfor are in excess of £3000 compared with the Wales average repair cost of £2,227 (W.O., 1988). Unfitness rates are also found to be high in many rural areas, for instance, Ceredigion, Dinefwr and Dwyfor, each with unfitness rates in excess of 13%, whereas the Wales average is 7.2%.

Housing conditions are consistently found to be poor particularly in the South Wales Valleys where original methods of construction were often poor [see page 41-44]. As a result of the topography of the land on which much of the housing was built, and proximity to mining excavations, instability problems are often experienced (Committee on Welsh Affairs, 1987). The average repair cost per dwelling in the Cynon Valley is £2,421 compared with the regional average, namely Mid-Glamorgan, which is £1,299.

The districts of Mid-Glamorgan experience some of the highest unfitness rates in Wales. Rhondda, Merthyr Tydfil and Cynon Valley have unfitness rates of 15.3%, 10.5%, and 16.4% respectively, compared with the Wales average of 7.2%. The same districts have 13.3%, 9.6%, and 10.9% of dwellings respectively,
lacking one or more basic amenities compared with the Wales average of 4.3% (W.O., 1988). These facts are of particular concern as a large proportion of the population of these areas are elderly, and on low income.

The effect of housing policies in Wales
Recognising the fact that problems existed regarding the condition of the housing stock in Wales, the Committee on Welsh Affairs was convened during 1986/87 to discuss the condition and repair of privately-owned housing in Wales. Submissions were received from local authorities in Wales, and various other organisations concerned with the condition of housing in Wales. Matters concerning the extent and causes of disrepair of the Welsh housing stock were considered.

It is apparent that although the implementation of a national housing policy has served to improve much of Wales' housing there remain problems which need to be addressed.

Grant aid has reduced the number of houses lacking basic amenities and has contributed towards the repair and improvement of Welsh housing. However, financial allocations to local authorities fall short of the demand experienced by those authorities for grant aid.

The short-term initiative announced in 1982 to increase the rate of grant available, resulted in the submission of approximately 141,000 grant applications, whereas during the years 1975 to 1981, the average number of grants paid annually averaged under 7,000. As a result of the 1982 initiative the total number of grants
paid rose from 7,449 in 1981-82 to 32,820 in 1983-84. However, due to the local authorities' lack of sufficient administrative resources, and local building industries' inability to cope with the increased workload, the majority of applications could not be dealt with. This short-term initiative has resulted in a backlog of grant applications and may well have served to increase the problems experienced by many local authorities.

Initiatives, such as enveloping have been encouraged in Wales, with additional capital allocations being made for this specific purpose [Committee on Welsh Affairs, 1987]. By 1987 35 enveloping schemes had been approved for 3613 houses. Certain local authorities, for instance Cardiff City Council began to find it increasingly more difficult to identify areas suitable for enveloping and other block repair schemes, due to the distribution of properties that had been improved individually [Committee on Welsh Affairs, 1987]. A further problem experienced was that due to the large number of grants awarded, insufficient staff and resources were available to ensure the quality of works carried out. It was found in Cardiff that enveloping works often included previously grant aided works.

In areas where houses were built on inadequate foundations and poor site conditions, the cost of works often rendered an enveloping scheme unviable. Where block repair schemes were proposed involving grant aid, owners often preferred to have cheaper, poor quality works carried out, as they were unable to afford their contribution towards the works. This would also occur in individual cases as well as group schemes.
In rural areas, group repair schemes are not practicable due to the isolated nature of a large proportion of the housing. Grant aid for individual properties must therefore be relied upon. Problems continue to exist where owners are reluctant to apply for grant aid due to the bureaucracy that is frequently encountered. Some authorities, such as Newport Borough Council, have, with considerable success, set up agencies to act on behalf of the owner (Committee on Welsh Affairs, 1987).
A problem which is consistent throughout is the fact that a large proportion of owner-occupiers are elderly and do not wish to spend large amounts of money on repairs, or go to the trouble of applying for grants, although agencies have served to improve this situation. In addition to this, certain areas of Wales experience a high incidence of low-income owner-occupation. Initiatives such as the means-testing of grants may assist owner-occupiers who receive low income although it is possible that there will still be those who will not be able to afford their contribution.

Conclusion
Despite the policies which have been introduced to maintain the national housing stock, unsatisfactory housing conditions continue to exist in Wales. An area which experiences many of the problems discussed in this chapter was selected for this research, namely the Cynon Valley. The area developed as a result of intense industrial activity, which is now in decline, and consequently has a high rate of low income owner-occupation. The majority of the housing was constructed prior to 1919 and is occupied by a
population of which a substantial proportion is elderly. The unfitness rate and average repair cost per dwelling for this area are above the regional and national average.

It is the aim of this research to determine whether owner-occupiers are unable to identify whether their dwellings are in disrepair and thus a contributing cause to the deterioration of the housing stock.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE STUDY AREA - THE CYNON VALLEY

In order that the information contained in subsequent chapters can be put into context, a description of the Cynon Valley and its historical development is provided.

The Cynon Valley and its development

The Cynon Valley is a district within the county of Mid Glamorgan. It is situated on the north eastern outcrop of the South Wales Coal field between the Rhondda and Merthyr Valleys. It is approximately 12 kilometres long, 4.8 kilometres wide at Aberdare, the widest point, and covers an area of 18,065 hectares. It has access to the South via the A470 trunk road connecting Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil, and the North via the A465 Heads of the Valleys trunk road. Transport communications are generally good within the Borough, with bypasses for Aberdare and Abercynon, and a railway link to Cardiff. However, many of the roads linking towns within the Borough have a tendency to become congested.

The Borough consists of small towns and surrounding communities, the administrative and commercial centre being Aberdare.

In common with other industrial valleys of the South Wales coal field, the development of the Cynon Valley was stimulated entirely by the expansion of industry in the valley.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were very few domestic dwellings in the Cynon Valley which was, at that time, essentially an agricultural area.

The first industry to develop was the iron industry when an ironworks was built in 1757 in the northern part of the Valley at
Map 3: The Cynon Valley

CYNON VALLEY

To Brecon

To Neath

To The Rhondda Valleys

Hirwaun

Mountain Ash

Aberdare

Abercyon

Ynysybwl

To Merthyr Tydfil
Hirwaun. It became necessary to house those employed in the ironworks, and as more ironworks were developed, so the construction of houses and the formation of settlements became inextricably linked.

The iron industry initially used charcoal in their foundries which was obtained from the extensive woodlands in the Valley. Eventually, locally-mined coal was used instead. The coal industry was as yet undeveloped outside the vicinity of the ironworks. The production of steam coal was confined to valleys which possessed well-developed communications and existing labour supplies. This was particularly so at Aberdare in the Cynon Valley, which, with its vast reserves of steam coal, soon came to dominate the steam-coal industry.

However '....the leadership of the Cynon Valley in the economic and demographic development of the Coal field was a very transient feature; coal production in fact reached its peak in Aberdare in 1862 during the period 1850-1885.' [Richards,1958]

**Housing development in the Cynon Valley**

House-building in the South Wales Coal field was left to the speculator, with the actual colliery companies playing only a minimal role, usually providing housing when a mine was initially sunk [Richards and Lewis,1956].

The supply of housing in the coal fields originated from several agencies, normally:

1) Investors and speculative builders, who would build houses to sell or let in order to make a profit.
2) Building clubs which were run on a share basis between a group of potential owner-occupiers. Shares would be paid periodically and gradually each dwelling would be built. The deeds of a house would be given to each member of the club as and when his shares had been paid in full. The type of employment which so many held in common, the unions, working men's clubs, and the churches and chapels, all served to sustain a very strong community feeling in the area. Consequently the Building Clubs were normally formed, for instance, by a number of frequenters of the same Public House or workers of the same colliery.

3) Colliery companies

4) Building companies

5) Individual owner-occupiers owning contract-built houses, although according to Richards (1958), these were relatively rare.

Due to the geographical relief of the valleys, land for housebuilding became a considerable source of income. As construction costs were greater because of the necessity for excavation, infilling works, and retaining walls, this was compensated for by building at a high density. Terraced housing therefore became characteristic in these areas.

Houses were generally of an austere standard built on rows of rubble with no foundations. They were constructed of random rubble stonework and later, of dressed stone. The walls could vary from 15 to 20 inches thick, with no foundations. The party wall would contain an open fireplace with an oven, and a stone spiral staircase. Some still remain in many houses of the Cynon Valley. The ground floors would consist of flagstones, with no damp-
proofing membrane. The walls would sometimes have a layer of slate inserted in the lower course of stonework which would act as an impervious layer. There were normally two bedrooms with access to one afforded only by going through the other. Headroom was limited, particularly in the bedrooms. On the earliest houses the roofs were stone-clad but these were later replaced with slate.

Housing standards improved little up till the end of the nineteenth century and were often aggravated by overcrowding due to the shortage of housing for the increasing number of employees and their families. As a consequence of the inadequate sanitation and absence of a wholesome water supply, disease was common, sometimes reaching epidemic proportion, for example, the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1849 [Cynon Valley Borough Council, 1984]. In the early 1900's the standard of living began to rise thus enabling people to afford better quality housing [Jones, 1965]. Also, different levels of the housing market had to be catered for as the community continued to develop. Not only was there the labour force that had to be accommodated but also the tradesmen, businessmen, and those in charge of the collieries. The standard of housing generally reflected the status of its occupants.

An influential factor on the development of housing was the Public Health Act 1875. It included the provision of compulsory water supplies to dwellings and piped sewage removal. It also contained provisions for the making of bylaws controlling the standard of new-building and for securing the improvement of housing conditions. Plans were required for proposed house-building,
building techniques were improved, and works were inspected by a surveyor of the local Board of Health.

Municipal Authorities were empowered to construct dwellings under the provisions of the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890, but few authorities, including the Cynon Valley took advantage of this.

The standard of construction continued to improve in all tenures, and after the First World War the public sector became more noticeably involved in house production.

While clearance policies were in favour, this was not exercised extensively in the Cynon Valley, although some of the worst housing was removed.

In 1972 the Borough of Cynon Valley was created by the Local Government Act 1972, and was the result of the amalgamation of the Councils of Aberdare and Mountain Ash.

**Socio-economic factors**

For over a century the coal industry has been the most important economic influence in the Valley, being a major employer providing jobs for both the skilled and the unskilled. In addition to this it supported a host of satellite industries and businesses. The coal industry has now virtually disappeared, its main replacement being light industry, usually based on electronics or the service sector. In general these are not large employers, and the net result has been severe unemployment, with 15.5% males registered as unemployed (W.O.,1987). This, in the opinion of the Cynon Valley Borough Council (1989) has had a debilitating effect on the
community which has manifested itself in the form of vandalism, boarded-up shops and a deteriorating infra-structure. Unemployment is seen to be the main cause and reason for the continuation of most of the Valleys social problems. The population in the Valley is slowly declining with a large proportion of elderly households. This and the high level of unemployment tends to produce low mobility within the Valley. As it is claimed that a high turnover can precipitate property improvement, (Kirwan and Martin, 1972) this may be one reason for a lack of investment in the maintenance of homes.

A report prepared by Durham County Council to support an application for E.E.C. aid in Mid-Glamorgan, using data from the 1981 Census, looked at 14 Census indicators as well as a number of others, based upon economic, health, housing, and social factors. It was demonstrated that Mid Glamorgan ranked the most deprived county in Wales. The study showed that the Cynon Valley experienced severe deprivation, however the data is now dated and as the data for the Cynon Valley, Rhondda Valley, and Merthyr Tydfil were grouped together, the conditions are not specific to the Cynon Valley.

A report, more recently carried out by the Welsh Business School, University of Wales College Cardiff, draws upon various sources of data in order, also, to rank the Welsh local authorities on the basis of social indicators. Cynon Valley appears lowest on the scale for four of the indicators, including income. It also ranks highest with regard to unemployment, and unfit housing in an urban area. Where all indicators are scored and amalgamated the Cynon Valley
ranks the lowest, and is thus 'identified as clearly the least prosperous district of Wales' (Morris and Wilkinson, 1989).

Local housing policies from the 1960's and their effect on housing conditions in the Cynon Valley

Up until the late 1960's, rehabilitation of housing was not a major concern of the local authority, whose policy concentrated upon new-build and redevelopment, clearing some of the worst housing in the Borough. Even with the encouragement of rehabilitation in the form of Housing Action Areas introduced by the White Paper, 'Better Homes: The Next Priorities' (Cmd.5339) in 1973, the emphasis continued to be upon new-build although the Council carried out its statutory duty by providing improvement grants.

In October 1973 Cynon Valley Borough Council declared its first General Improvement Area and by 1981, 150 of the 274 houses in the area had been improved. Its success was attributed to the Council obtaining a large government grant to carry out improvement works to areas of industrial dereliction (Yaseen-Masseri, 1990)

In 1978 an area of 29 houses was selected as a potential Housing Action Area (H.A.A.). Following a physical and socio-economic survey of the area the Council decided not to go ahead with the declaration of the H.A.A. and determined that H.A.A.'s should no longer be considered an option in the local authority. One of the reasons given for this policy decision was that the targeting of resources to a particular area would be unfair to other areas in the Borough which were just as needy, a valid point where poor
housing is distributed throughout the Valley.
The Local Authority therefore operated the normal grant system, and continued to reject the use of an area-based approach until the early 1980's. The result of this policy was an unco-ordinated approach to the improvement of the housing stock.
The grants that were available, prior to their revision by the Housing Act 1985, were as follows:

1) Improvement grant - this grant was for major improvements plus associated repairs and replacements, or for the conversion of a house. These grants were discretionary and in the Cynon Valley tended to be awarded only to those living in declared Housing Action Areas [which were later implemented by the Council] and to disabled applicants.

2) Intermediate grant - this grant was for installing standard amenities, namely an inside toilet, bath, sink, wash-hand basin, hot and cold water. In addition to this, associated repairs and replacements carried out at the same time were grant aidable. These grants were mandatory, and in the case of Cynon valley Borough Council were awarded throughout the year.

3) Repair grant - these grants were available for those houses built prior to 1919 and which required substantial structural repairs. These grants were discretionary, however if a house was deemed to be unfit, having regard to Section 4 of the Housing Act 1957 [now replaced by Section 604 Housing Act 1985], a repair grant was mandatory.

Applications for repair grants would be invited during the months of March and April by way of public advertisement. Those
applications received within those months would be dealt with within the financial year. Any other applications that were received would be dealt with in turn, as and when resources became available.

4) Special grants - these grants were provided for installing standard amenities and means of escape from fire in houses in multiple occupation, and for associated repairs and replacements. These grants were normally discretionary except where a property was subject to a statutory notice.

With the presentation of the Council's own House Condition Survey in 1984, its damning results prompted a change in what was recognised to have been a short-sighted policy. In light of Birmingham's success in implementing H.A.A.'s in the form of enveloping schemes, this new approach to housing rehabilitation was adopted by the Council. Initially two schemes were undergone and by early 1990 seven schemes had been completed consisting of 730 houses.

It is claimed that there was difficulty in identifying areas for enveloping schemes. The cost limit per house tended to be inflexible, and excluded larger houses unless there were others in the scheme that would be cheaper to repair. Obviously both the nature and extent of disrepair of the houses had an effect on the cost and '... areas originally chosen met the guidelines given by the Welsh Office but it is now quite clear that social deprivation alone cannot justify enveloping and that the physical condition and size play a more important part in choice of such areas' (Yaseen-Masseri, 1990).
At this time, staff and resources were still under pressure as a result of the increase in grant applications following the raised levels of grant assistance in 1982. In 1983, both mandatory and discretionary grants had to be suspended due to this lack of capacity to process grants.

The lack of progress in improving conditions in the Borough has been explained by the fact that the mechanism for grant approvals has not managed to keep pace with demand, and also that many grant approvals have had to be aborted due to the inability of applicants to fund their contribution towards the grant. The latter is a result of the low economic activity and incomes to be found in the Borough.

However, since 1986, there has been an increase in grant uptake. The number of repair grants approved increased from 105 in 1985, to 256 in 1986, and 970 in 1987. £4 million worth of grants was processed in 1987 as opposed to £2.4 million in 1986.

The introduction of enveloping schemes in the Cynon Valley represented a major change in policy as it displayed an acceptance of the need to tackle disrepair with an area-based approach.

Also as a result of the Council’s own House Condition Survey it was found that those properties requiring mandatory intermediate grants tended to be either,

a) large, where standard amenities could be installed easily, or,

b) small, two up-two down, properties with insufficient space for the accommodation of amenities. These were normally in poor condition, the cost of repairs not being covered by the intermediate grant. The improvement grant required for these repairs and the
necessary extension of the property, was of course, discretionary.

In May 1986 the Council altered its policy in that those properties which lacked standard amenities which could only be installed by extending the house, and which required a large amount of repair, should be awarded an improvement grant. Those properties which fell outside these criteria, however poor the condition, would not be eligible.

As this would obviously prove inequitable, in June 1988, the Council allowed that properties that were not eligible for improvement grant but in substantial disrepair, could be considered by the Director of Technical Services who would use his discretion as to whether grant aid should be awarded, subject to available finance.

The introduction of group repair schemes and renewal areas, by the Housing Act 1985, has ensured the continuance of area based improvement.

The intention of renewal areas is to take a more holistic approach which would include the consideration of social and environmental issues as well as the condition of the housing stock. However, they involve large areas of not less than 500 houses, of which a minimum of 75% must be unfit, and 30% of householders must be in receipt of benefits. The administration of such a scheme would be demanding, and the selection of such an area given the required criteria may prove a difficult task, given the non-area based improvements that have so far been carried out.

The revised grant system has removed conditions such as the rateable value limit, and properties now only have to be over 10
years old. This will therefore extend the number and variety of properties now eligible for grant aid.

The introduction of means-testing of applicants' resources will also have a considerable impact in an area such as the Cynon Valley. The high prevalence of low income levels is expected to result in greater numbers of applicants qualifying for increased grant aid. For this purpose the number of administrative staff has been increased to deal with the greater workload.

At present there is a Home Improvement Agency which was established under the management of representatives of the Borough Council, Cynon Taff Housing Association, the Housing Corporation, Building Societies and Building Traders Employers Federation. A project director was appointed, and two employees seconded from the Local Authority and the Building Society involved in the scheme. The Agency deals mainly with clients who are elderly, infirm, or who would otherwise have difficulty in negotiating the grant system.

It is intended that a more generally available agency service will be developed in the near future.

Current housing conditions in the Cynon Valley
According to the most recent Welsh House Condition Survey, of the Mid Glamorgan valley areas, the Cynon Valley, Merthyr Tydfil, and Rhondda Valleys have the highest rates of unfitness, and dwellings lacking amenities.
Table 4.1: Dwellings lacking one or more amenity and unfit dwellings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>% Dwellings lacking one or more basic amenity</th>
<th>% Total Dwellings</th>
<th>Unfit Dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cynon Valley</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogwr</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhondda</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhymney Valley</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taff-Ely</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Glamorgan</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Welsh House Condition Survey 1986

The Cynon Valley has the second highest percentage of dwellings lacking basic amenities, and the highest percentage of unfit dwellings. It must be noted, however, that the fitness standard [see Appendix A] includes a number of criteria, and thus the condition of the housing must also be assessed by examining repair costs.

The Cynon Valley has 15.7% of dwellings requiring repairs in excess of £5000 compared with 4.6% in Merthyr Tydfil, and 7.1% in the Rhondda Valleys. The average repair cost per dwelling in the Cynon Valley is £2,421, almost twice that of Merthyr Tydfil and the Rhondda Valleys [W.O., 1988].

Amongst the Mid Glamorgan valleys, repair costs in the owner-occupied sector are again highest in the Cynon Valley averaging at £2,921 per dwelling. The percentage of owner-occupied properties having a repair cost in excess of £3000 was consistently the highest, being 33.5%.

Such high repair costs have even greater significance when it is realised that 60.7% of households in the Cynon Valley have as
income less than £4000 per annum. This percentage exceeds all the other Mid Glamorgan Valleys. In fact, the Cynon Valley has a consistently lower percentage of households in the higher income categories compared with the other valleys in Mid Glamorgan.

Table 4.2: Household Income per Annum for Districts in Mid-Glamorgan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Up to £4000</th>
<th>£4000-£7999</th>
<th>£8000-£11999</th>
<th>£12000 or more</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cynon Valley</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>24000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>21800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogwr</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>47000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhondda</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>29700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhymney Valley</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>37100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taff-Ely</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>33100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Glamorgan</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>192700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition to this, according to a House Condition Survey, commissioned by Cynon Valley Borough Council carried out in 1983, of all the houses in the Borough, it was estimated that 48% of dwellings in the borough were unfit. This, as might be expected, caused considerable concern, although doubts have since been expressed regarding the accuracy of these estimates. Although the fitness standard can be considered a subjective one, the survey also estimated that 24% of dwellings were lacking one or more
amenities, a totally objective measure. This survey represented 92.4% of the private housing stock, constituting one of the most comprehensive surveys of private housing stock at that time. Owing to the lack of data on a district basis, comparisons between the Cynon Valley Borough Council Survey and the Welsh House Condition Survey 1981 were not practicable.
The results of these House Condition Surveys intimate that housing in the Cynon Valley is of a relatively poor standard, and, on the socio-economic evidence it would appear that prevailing circumstances such as high unemployment and low income could only serve to exacerbate the situation. The Cynon Valley was therefore felt to be an appropriate area for the study in order to highlight problems that may currently be facing home-owners in such an area.

Summary
Housing strategies in the Cynon Valley have tended to respond to problems as perceived by the Council given the available resources. However in attempting to be equitable, the result has often been the improvement of housing conditions in a piecemeal, and often confused fashion.
The Local Authority showed initiative in carrying out its own house condition survey which demonstrated the prevailing problems in the area.
Socio-economic factors have exacerbated the problems encountered in attempting to improve housing conditions in that uptake of grant aid has often been hampered by the inability of
applicants to afford their contribution.

Improvement of housing conditions now lies in the promotion of area-based projects, and increased grant uptake as a result of higher percentages of grant aid. There will, however, be those who may not take up grant aid due to their inability to afford their contribution. It is also suspected that many first time buyers purchasing properties in poor condition will be offered low percentage grants and therefore unable to finance the works as high mortgage costs will use up any available finance they have.

Improvement of housing conditions and housing choice is also being provided by new-build schemes formulated jointly between the Local Authority who have reclaimed industrial sites, and private companies who then develop the site.

A further survey of a selected area of the authority was carried out recently to establish the socio-economic and housing conditions of that area in order to devise an improvement strategy. This type of survey is expected to be conducted in other areas of the authority and is seen to be significant of the progressive role being played by the authority to ensure the gradual improvement of the housing stock.
CHAPTER FIVE: OWNER-OCCUPIERS AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO CARRY OUT REPAIRS TO THEIR HOUSES.

The strategy adopted by an owner-occupier with regard to carrying out repairs and maintenance will primarily depend upon income, the condition of the house, and the perception of the need for investment [Thomas, 1986].

As Kirby states,

'In the first place, it must be appreciated that a problem is primarily a state of mind - it is a situation that worries members of society either as individuals or groups. Thus a problem only exists when it is perceived. Second, a problem may be perceived differently by different individuals and different sectors of society.'

[Kirby, 1979]

Kirby discusses work regarding the problem of slums and their occupants. Although one would not presume to describe the housing in the Cynon Valley as slum housing, some of the observations and comments made by Kirby could perhaps be applied to areas of the Cynon Valley.

It would therefore seem appropriate to assume that prior to actually carrying out repairs, the owner-occupier must first be able to identify the repairs that are needed, and to appreciate the importance of carrying out those repairs. There must also be an inherent desire that their property be in satisfactory repair. Whether works are in fact carried out then depends upon the availability of the necessary finance, the priority attached to repairs as opposed to other matters requiring expenditure, and the ability of the owner to carry out the works or to find somebody else...
who can do them.
The actual process of whether repairs are carried out is therefore a complex one and may vary considerably between different types of areas and households. Previous research and literature has therefore tended to look at the separate issues which determine expenditure on maintenance, and which consequently affect the condition of the housing stock.

For instance, economists have put forward the theory of the 'prisoner's dilemma' as an explanation for the lack of maintenance in certain run-down areas. This is when the owner perceives that he will receive no financial reward for maintaining his property, in the form of an increase in value, due to the poor condition of surrounding properties, and would not find it beneficial to prevent his property falling into disrepair (Le Grand and Robinson, 1987, Davis and Whinston, 1961). There may even be a rational decision not to repair where

'If the discounted present value of the costs [of repair] exceed the present value of the future revenues then it would be rational for the individual property owner to allow the property to deteriorate'.

[Jackson, 1980]

These are considered to be neighbourhood externalities which affect the decision to carry out repairs, and Jackson (1980), makes much reference to landlord owners in inner city areas who are able to charge high rents for poor quality accommodation which they themselves do not have to live in. Conversely, the encouragement provided by grant aid to renovate homes could result in the gradual improvement of an area, particularly by owner occupiers.
It has been claimed that there is generally a preference for people of the same socio-economic group to live within the same neighbourhoods as it presents certain advantages, both tangible and intangible (Balchin, 1979). It may therefore be the case that households that are unable to maintain their houses due to social conditions, will tend to be concentrated within particular areas, which will consequently deteriorate. This leads to the question of whether schemes such as enveloping, are adequate long-term solutions for such areas, without first eliminating the causes of the social conditions which may in turn give rise to the recurrence of poor housing conditions.

Factors influencing the decision to carry out repairs

Quantitative surveys such as house condition surveys provide evidence of the positive correlation between low income and the age of the owner with unsatisfactory housing (D.O.E., 1988; W.O., 1988; W.O., 1987). Surveys such as that carried out in Birmingham by Karn, Kemeny and Williams (1985) highlight the difficulties that are being experienced by particular factions of the owner-occupied sector, in this case, recent low-income, home buyers in the inner-city areas, which will deter them from incurring costs on the repair of their properties.

In a paper presented by Malpass, Garnett, and Mackintosh (1987), it is suggested that more focus should be put on the process of maintenance, treating the owner-occupier as a housing manager. Research has either tended to concentrate on the management of maintenance in the public sector, for which comprehensive
databases are available for a large stock, or, in the case of social research, has ignored the process of maintenance and dealt mainly with questions of access and mortgage finance (Malpass et al., 1987). It is suggested that the actual decision to carry out maintenance work, and the consequent effectiveness of the approach taken by the owner, both financially and as reflected in the quality of the finished work, is influenced by the resources available to him or her in their role as a manager. Such resources are time, knowledge, skills, contacts, enthusiasm, confidence, and resilience. A survey carried out in a low-income area (Malpass et al., 1987), found that there were cases where although people had similar financial resources and similar maintenance and improvement problems, they tackled these problems in different ways, some being much more effective than others. It also appeared that where some were prejudiced by their lack of income, they were considerably better off with regard to having contacts in the trade, where sometimes the reverse was true for those with better incomes. The authors point out that research should now be directed more towards understanding how owner-occupiers approach the question of maintenance, how resources are deployed, and how they perceive their role in maintenance management. As owner-occupation becomes more accessible, particularly to those on low-incomes whose houses are more likely to be in need of repair, this understanding is of greater relevance. A survey carried out in Bristol (Leather and Reid, 1989) examined householders' views on the repair and condition of their properties, their ability to invest in their properties, and the ways in which
works were accomplished. The survey included private tenants as well as owner-occupiers. The survey tended to suggest that owners bought their houses even though they were aware of repair problems. It also carried the advantage that purchase prices were lower. There was also evidence to suggest that households perceived external repair jobs as relatively important compared to less structural jobs. This,

'tends to conflict with suggestions that many households are unable or unwilling to carry out the more fundamental types of job and that cosmetic works or those which enhance the facilities of the dwelling are preferred to those which enhance its structural integrity.'
[Leather and Reid, 1989]

When the types of work carried out was investigated it was found that a high proportion of investment had been devoted to basic structural work which would support this assumption. It was found that the overall level of investment was more of a problem than the type of investment.

When asked why works were carried out, the majority specified were to remedy a specific defect rather than to improve the value of the property.

Although this study begins to examine the perceptions of householders with regard to the repair of their properties it does not compare their opinion of the condition of their property with that of a surveyor.

Merrett (1982) suggests that before an owner carries out repairs or improvements, there must first be some commitment felt towards the house and its spatial location. Supposedly, the extent to which
the house is then repaired or improved will depend somewhat on the owners' aspirations, and their ability to complete the works. If the owner is dissatisfied with the house, this can be expressed either in the alteration of the house where possible, or in the household moving to more suitable accommodation. This is of course dependent on the means and ability of the owner. The link between dissatisfaction and intention to move was also brought to light in the Deeplish study (MoHLG, 1966), which involved a detailed physical and social survey of this older urban neighbourhood in Rochdale, Lancashire. The aim of the survey was to determine the most appropriate method of improving the housing of such an area. Surveys regarding the mobility of households are discussed by Nutt et al (1976), and Murie (1974), and examine which housing constraints have the greatest influence on the propensity to move, for instance, income, the availability of loans from financial institutions, employment, and suitable housing in a chosen area. They also examined the characteristics of those households most likely to move, such as the size of household, the age of the head of household and their position in the family cycle, and again, income. Nutt et al (1976) also distinguish the group of occupants who would appear to be in circumstances of high housing constraint but who show a relatively low propensity to move. In the case of owner-occupiers these might be low-income households with an elderly head, or households occupying old dwellings in which they have lived for a number of years.

Where a household is dissatisfied with the surrounding area there
is no resort but to move, and where this is not practicable, which may be for a variety of reasons, the household may be inclined to neglect their house. Conversely, it may be possible that the household would concentrate more on the quality of the house in order to compensate for dissatisfaction with the area.

**Obsolescence and the decision to repair**

A concept used to describe the state of affairs where 'there is a gap at a particular point in time between the existing physical standard of a house and some perceived alternative' (Merrett, 1982) is that of obsolescence. Obsolescence can take several forms, for instance, social or functional obsolescence which has caused the demise of deck access and tower blocks (Thomas, 1986), and occurs when a dwelling does not possess, or permit a household to possess facilities and amenities which is regarded essential. It can therefore be seen as an index of human progress. Certain methods of building, or characteristics of buildings may increase the rate of obsolescence, such as non-traditional constructional methods, thus resulting in constructional obsolescence (Thomas, 1986). In an area such as the Cynon Valley with its typically terraced housing built within the topography of the valley, obsolescence may result from a lack of basic amenities, and the lack of space to accommodate those amenities. The house may even become obsolete due to its lack of capacity to accommodate a household comfortably. Many of the houses may now be considered to be constructionally obsolete in that they do not have adequate damp proof courses or foundations (Thomas, 1986). It may also be that
extension to accommodate these facilities may be limited due to lack of ground space, or its unsuitability for building upon.

Kirwan and Martin (1972) confine obsolescence to two categories, physical, and economic obsolescence. The former being determined largely by the nature and construction of the building, and its subsequent maintenance, and the latter being concerned with explaining the use to which buildings are put and explaining why the level of maintenance has or has not been sufficient to prevent deterioration. They suggest that physical obsolescence could be a cause or a consequence of economic obsolescence if it occurs at all and go on to investigate this economic obsolescence with regard to urban renewal. Merrett (1982) concludes that 'for any given house its obsolescence differs between households to the degree that their preferences differ; similarly for any given household obsolescence differs between houses to the degree that their physical attributes differ' (Merrett, 1982). This is borne out in a study carried out on behalf of the Building Research Establishment (Britten, 1977). The aim was set to find out what householders consider to make a satisfactory house. This originated from the feeling that as the 'fitness' standard was devised by professionals, it might in fact be beneficial to obtain the views of householders as to what features they felt to be necessary in a house. Respondents were asked to place each of 42 features into categories of 'basic necessity', 'desirable', or 'unnecessary'.

A two-stage random sample was used involving stratification and clustering techniques. The results were felt to be broadly
representative of the populations from which the samples were drawn but unlikely to be representative of the national stock. As the sample tended to consist largely of semi-detached and detached housing, built mainly after 1919, most with front gardens or at least some space, with 7% opening directly onto the road it could be that the sample consisted of generally better housing. In fact 68% of the properties were assessed as being in areas where all were well-maintained, 28% where some were poorly kept, and 3% where most were badly kept. It was found however that similar relationships with regard to the necessity of the various facilities existed between views of respondents in dwellings of different types, regions, household types and sizes for instance. Satisfaction with both the house and the neighbourhood tended to increase with a rise in the 'quality' of each. Also, the 'quality' of the respondents present accommodation seemed to affect the number of items listed by the respondent as basic necessities. Britten puts forward that there are two standards held by the householder, a 'received standard', and an 'achieved standard'. The 'received standard' is the householder's own idea of what is required of a home for someone in his circumstances. This standard changes over time as expectations and ability change. As the householder makes changes to his house or moves to another house in order to bring it nearer to his 'received standard', at each stage he reaches an 'achieved standard' below which he will find it unacceptable to live. Those features considered to be necessities by householders tended to be amenities within the house such as electric light, hot water supply, refuse disposal, internal w.c. In addition to these
were certain environmental, locational, and social items. To have a well-maintained house came relatively low on the list of priorities, although freedom from damp was rated amongst the first ten. To have a well-maintained property was considered a necessity by 30.3% of respondents and desirable by 59.6%.

It is suggested that the 'received standard' may be influenced by past housing experience which could explain why many elderly people who have always lived in accommodation lacking certain amenities appear to be content with their circumstances. Niner and Forrest (1982) in explaining that attitudes and satisfaction are closely associated with expectations and aspirations put forward a similar example, and point out that expectations of the same household could change over time.

'Improvement itself raises expectations, and there is no common coin in expressions of satisfaction.'

(Niner and Forrest, 1982)

When comparing likes and dislikes held by residents in selected survey areas, certain differences appeared to reflect the expectations of respondents, for example the importance of having a bathroom where respondents had previously experienced not having a bathroom (Niner and Forrest, 1982)

The importance of possession of an item being classed as a necessity was displayed by Britten (1977) in several ways, and as further confirmation, correlation coefficients were evaluated for certain control variables including tenure, social class, age of respondent and the number of people in the household.
Correlation related more positively to possession of an item than any other of the control variables (Britten, 1977).

Britten, however, points out that the demonstration of this relationship,

'cannot indicate the direction of the causality of the relationship; e.g. were the respondents so conditioned by their present facilities that their answers in the ranking exercise merely reflected the state of their accommodation (they were only voting for what they had experienced) or are their homes truly satisfactory in relation to their independently determined requirements?'

(Britten, 1977)

A well-maintained property although thought desirable by many respondents was not thought worthy as ranking as a basic necessity. One must question, however, what respondents might have understood to be well-maintained; whether it implied a house in good repair or merely that it and its grounds were well kept, for instance.

The relationship between satisfaction and disrepair

It is important to distinguish between occupants' satisfaction with their house, and their actual opinion of its state of repair. From Britten's survey, it would seem possible that provided certain amenities were present, the state of repair of the house might not significantly affect their satisfaction with the house. Rodwell (1981) used data from the 1976 English House Condition Survey and the 1978 National Dwelling and Housing Survey to point to the fact that of those owner-occupiers living in unfit housing, 81% said they were satisfied with their homes. For tenants, this was reduced
to 57%, still a considerable number. In addition to this, on examination of the features that were disliked by those expressing dissatisfaction, the predominant reply given by tenants was the state of repair, whilst the number, and size of bedrooms were of greater concern to owner-occupiers. It would be unjustifiable, however, to claim that this alone demonstrates a greater concern or awareness amongst tenants of the condition of their accommodation without knowing the actual condition of the houses that the respondents were living in. The fitness standard is based on several criteria, and a house might not necessarily be in disrepair even though it is classed as unfit. In addition to this the private-rented sector tends to include a higher proportion of stock that is in disrepair, compared with the owner-occupied sector, which may account for this apparently greater concern.

In the Deeplish study, which was commissioned to examine the problems experienced in a 'twilight area', most dissatisfaction was expressed by those with children, average incomes, and less space per person; satisfaction appeared to be related to density (MoH.L.G, 1966). Without distinguishing between tenures, in Niner and Forrest's (1982) survey satisfaction with accommodation was generally associated with low density of occupation and owner-occupiers were found to show consistently higher satisfaction indices than tenants (Niner and Forrest, 1982)

In the English House Condition Survey 1976, when occupants were asked what they liked and disliked about their accommodation, the most frequent replies consisted of environmental, locational, and social characteristics, with no
reference being made to the house itself. It would therefore seem that satisfaction may not always be an adequate guide to an owner's impression of the condition of his or her house, thus emphasising the importance of gaining information dealing specifically with repair, if the condition of the housing stock is of primary concern.

The capability of the occupier to perceive the condition of their property

As well as determining the importance with which the householder regards the condition of the house it is also necessary to investigate their capability of recognising defects in the event that any positive aspects of the former criterion may be negated by the latter. House condition surveys carried out in England in 1976 and 1981 asked occupants questions regarding their opinions of the repair of their property. The 1976 survey differed from the 1981 survey in that it made the distinction between the occupants' recognition of the need for repair, and the occupants' satisfaction with the repair of the property. In both cases owner-occupiers were less likely to acknowledge that their property was in disrepair, or to express dissatisfaction with the condition of their property (Thomas, 1986). The Welsh House Condition Survey 1986 compared the respondents' opinion of disrepair with the age of the head of household and found that households headed by under-30 year olds were more likely to be of the opinion that their dwellings were in disrepair (W.O., 1988).
Only 23% of those dwellings which were thought to be in major disrepair by the respondent were actually found to be unfit.

It is questionable whether the respondents' opinion of disrepair should be compared with unfitness as the 'fitness standard' consists of various criteria of which repair is one item [see Appendix A]. A comparison with actual repair costs would provide a better indication of the respondents' perception of disrepair.

The English House Condition Survey 1986 found that the surveyor's view of disrepair was more likely to be supported by younger households than elderly households [D.O.E., 1988]. The survey also found that respondents on low-income or who were unemployed were more likely to report repairs than those on a higher income and employed. However, the majority of the former tended to be local authority tenants who had been found to be more critical generally than owner-occupiers or private-sector tenants.

A study of the capability of occupants, both owner-occupiers and tenants, in maintaining their homes was carried out by the Polytechnic of London in 1978 [The Polytechnic of London, unpublished]. This type of study was considered necessary due to the growth in do-it-yourself maintenance work, the increase in owner-occupation, and the growing number of elderly households. The study was based on comparisons between ratings given by occupants and professionals for the same maintenance task. Ratings were initially given for the quality of a decoration or repairs job. This may have been carried out by a contractor, landlord, or the occupant.
A highly significant positive correlation was found between occupant and professional ratings although there tended to be a slight 'rosiness' of opinion on the part of the occupiers. It was concluded that occupants of all tenures and ages tended to have a good appreciation of standards of repair. However, only 3% of a total of 658 jobs were considered to be poor by the professional surveyor and it is likely that a sample containing a higher proportion of properties in poorer condition would have produced different results. The upkeep of the housing stock does, after all, rely on the ability to identify disrepair. The comparison also appears to have been carried out on the basis of repair jobs required or carried out. It does not indicate the number of respondents who are able to perceive accurately the standard of repair works, merely the proportion of jobs that were accurately perceived. The survey could be biased by particular respondents, who may have been in the minority, but who have had extensive repairs carried out and have a relatively sound perception of standards of repair.

Ratings for the urgency of outstanding repairs and the likely cost of those repairs were also compared and again there was found to be a high positive correlation. The accuracy of the latter however is undermined by the fact that a large number of occupants could not give an opinion as to the likely cost of the works.

The study has however begun to examine the question of whether owner-occupiers (and in this particular survey, tenants) can recognise defects, with what urgency they regard repairs, whether they are aware of the costs associated with carrying out repairs,
and to what extent they are satisfied with works carried out and whether this satisfaction is justified.

Doubt as to whether owner-occupiers are able to identify the need of repairs, is expressed by Karn et al. (1987) in that opinion data from household surveys was not felt adequate for the purpose of assessing housing conditions 'because buyers' judgements as to whether the house needs a new roof or window frames replaced may vary and are unreliable guides to house condition'. However, the works carried out by householders were taken as an indication of house condition.

In a more psychological approach, Crosby (1985) studied user responses to the housing environment, adopting the concept that man perceives selectively, and does not attend to everything in his or her environment at any one time. He may therefore selectively model his concepts of his physical environment. According to Crosby (1985), the psychology of cognition also shows that perceived items are interpreted in the light of other things. Thus what man knows or believes has much to do with what he perceives and how he interprets it. This may provide justification for carrying out more qualitative investigations, or case studies in particular localities to determine whether external factors may have some effect on householders perceptions of repair and the need to maintain their properties. Crosby (1985) examined an area of similar type of housing, namely terraced, with a top-heavy age structure, characteristics which are in common with this particular study. Various categories of data were collected for example, previous accommodation history, evaluation of present
accommodation, experience of dealing with institutions, how residents came to know the area and the mechanism of moving into it, cultural and socio-economic groupings of the residents, and individual and group expectations of the housing environment. This would involve investigating the residents' perceptions of the potential for change and of their ability to influence it. An Environmental Status Index was developed based upon demographic changes in the areas, and various features of the physical environment. Analyses were then carried out to assess whether any relationship existed between certain factors. With relation to Crosby's study there was found to be no close relationship between household income and the condition of the property as perceived by the respondents. This may indicate that whatever income a householder may be receiving, aspirations and expectations will always cause householders to find a need to improve their properties. Respondents were however left to suggest repairs or improvements that were needed. A different result may have been obtained had they been invited to comment upon the condition of particular items. In addition to this, no assessment was made as to whether the repairs thought necessary by the respondents were in fact correct. It was pointed out in Crosby's survey that in one particular area the comparatively poor economic level was not directly reflected in housing characteristics because of a local authority renovation scheme. This is a factor which could tend to prejudice results in such surveys where house condition is compared with variables characteristic of relatively poor areas, namely financial, and socio-economic.
Conclusion

In contrast with the literature discussed, the research undertaken in this particular study specifically examines owner-occupiers' perception of disrepair, and extends upon the research previously discussed in that it compares the respondent's opinion of the condition of the property with its actual condition. This is to provide a more exacting assessment of the ability of the owner-occupier to detect certain items of disrepair. The research also inquires into the opinions held by owner-occupiers which may influence repair activity, in addition to socio-economic characteristics.

The majority of research in this field has so far been concentrated in England, particularly in inner-city areas, however this research has set out to examine an area in the South Wales Valleys which has a high density of low income households, and characteristics strongly associated with its historical development, the results of which may be applied to other areas of a similar nature.
CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS - Characteristics of the population samples

An account of the response rates achieved is given in Appendix C accompanied by the reasons for unsuccessful interviews. Although the response rates were not as high as originally anticipated, approximately 50% response rates were achieved in each area.

In order to illustrate the types of area from which the samples were drawn, descriptive information for Abercynon and Aberdare is initially provided for individual areas. However, the intention of the survey is to examine whether owner-occupiers are able to perceive disrepair, and not to compare whether perception differs between areas. Therefore, for this purpose, the remainder of the results are amalgamated.

In addition to this, the size of the samples for individual areas were unsuitable for cross-tabulation rendering the comparison of areas impractical.

The results of the survey are both quantitative, providing factual data, and qualitative, in that opinions expressed by the respondents and comments made during the course of the interview are referred to.

Initially, a descriptive account of the areas studied is provided.
Type of housing

The first characteristic to be examined is the type of housing in which the sample populations live.

Table 6.1: Composition of dwelling types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Detached</th>
<th>Semi-detached</th>
<th>Terraced</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdare</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abercynon</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynon Valley*</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Glam.*</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales*</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The greatest proportion of houses in the survey areas are terraced, with semi-detached and detached houses being fewer in number. There is a higher percentage of semi-detached housing in Abercynon than Aberdare and is possibly due to the fact that the area developed at a later period than Aberdare, when housing standards were improving, and construction styles becoming more diverse. The percentage of terraced housing in each sample is greater than the percentage for the Cynon Valley as found in the 1986 House Condition Survey. This would indicate that figures provided on a district level are subject to local variations.

Household characteristics and housing history

The characteristics and housing history of respondents is examined so as to provide an impression of the type of population being studied.
FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE TERRACED DWELLINGS

SOURCE: RESULTS AND WELSH HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY, 1996
FIGURE 2: COMPOSITION OF DWELLING TYPES

SOURCE: RESULTS AND WELSH HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY 1986
The following table shows the age of the head of household for each sample area.

**Table 6.2: Age of Head of Household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Household</th>
<th>Aberdare % [No.]</th>
<th>Abercynon % [No.]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>2.0% [2]</td>
<td>2.1% [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>12.7% [13]</td>
<td>23.2% [22]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>16.7% [17]</td>
<td>18.9% [18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>16.7% [17]</td>
<td>14.7% [14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>15.7% [16]</td>
<td>20.0% [19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>22.5% [23]</td>
<td>14.7% [14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 - 84</td>
<td>9.8% [10]</td>
<td>5.3% [5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 and over</td>
<td>3.9% [4]</td>
<td>1.1% [1]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A considerable proportion of the households surveyed were headed by an elderly person, and this is consistent with information contained in the Welsh Intercensal Survey 1986. Direct comparisons with the Intercensal Survey are not possible as the Intercensal Survey divides the population into males and females and the age groups are related to the different pensionable ages for each. From the Intercensal Survey 27.6% of male heads of household were between the age of 45 and 64 and 14.8% over the age of 65; 3.4% of female heads of household were between the age 45 and 59, and 15.6% were over the age of 60.

The information tends to suggest that Aberdare has a higher proportion of elderly heads of household than the Cynon Valley, as indicated by the Welsh Intercensal Survey 1986 (W.O., 1988), whereas Abercynon has a slightly lower proportion.

This may be due to the fact that Aberdare has a long standing population with less inward migration of younger people. Although Aberdare is the main commercial centre of the Valley, the availability of employment may be too low to sustain all sectors of
FIGURE 3: AGE OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
the population requiring work. However, the city of Cardiff and the M4 is more accessible to the residents of Abercynon, thus providing greater possibilities for commuting. Abercynon is also in greater proximity to many local light industries which would tend to favour those of a younger age group, or those who still require employment.

As shown in table 6.3 almost a quarter of the sample in Aberdare were single owner-occupied households. Again the lower proportion of single member households in Abercynon could be the result of a relatively younger population.

Table 6.3 : The number of persons in household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of persons in household</th>
<th>Aberdare % [No.]</th>
<th>Abercynon % [No.]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.5% [25]</td>
<td>14.7% [14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>35.3% [36]</td>
<td>33.7% [32]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.7% [16]</td>
<td>15.8% [15]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.8% [9]</td>
<td>9.5% [9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.0% [1]</td>
<td>1.1% [1]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Number of households | 102 | 95 |

In order to demonstrate the well-established nature of the communities being studied, it was enquired as to how long the respondent’s household had lived in their present accommodation, the results of which are shown in table 6.4
It can be seen that a large proportion of the interviewees had lived in their present accommodation for a considerable length of time, indicating that there is a stable population. In Aberdare and Abercynon, 43.1% (44) and 37.9% (36) of households respectively, had lived in their present accommodation in excess of 20 years. 3.9% (4) and 6.3% (6) of households, respectively, had lived in the same house 'all their life'. Most of the respondents had previously lived in the same town, or a neighbouring one in the same valley. From additional comments made by interviewees when this question was asked, it did not seem uncommon to find that people had merely moved from one street to another in the same area, or even between houses in the same street.

In order to confirm the high incidence of owner-occupation in the area and the normal progression into that tenure, respondents were asked the nature of their previous accommodation.
Table 6.5: Type of previous accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>22.5% [23]</td>
<td>18.9% [18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>45.1% [46]</td>
<td>30.5% [29]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with parents</td>
<td>20.6% [21]</td>
<td>42.1% [40]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council house</td>
<td>7.8% [8]</td>
<td>5.3% [5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.9% [4]</td>
<td>3.2% [3]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from table 6.5 highlight the predominance of owner-occupation. In addition to this, when asked how long the respondent expected to live in their present accommodation, in Aberdare and Abercynon respectively, 87% [89] and 82% [78] respondents stated that they did not intend to move or that they would stay in the house indefinitely.

This will have a bearing on the assumption that owners are more likely to maintain their houses if they intend to remain in them for some time, or feel a commitment to the area.

The ownership of houses outright was also a common feature reaching 67% [68] in Aberdare and 53% [50] in Abercynon, constituting latent equity which could be used to raise a loan for home improvements and repairs if required.

The majority of respondents, 99% [101] in Aberdare and 91.6% [87] in Abercynon, owned the freehold of their property, the remainder being leaseholders. Of the latter, purchase of the leasehold was intended, or was not felt to be necessary due to the length of the lease, normally 999 years.

Socio-economic characteristics

Information regarding unemployment and the types of employment respondents were engaged in was examined due the implications it may have on their ability to maintain their houses.
The employment status of the head of household is provided in table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Employment status of Head of Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>49% [50]</td>
<td>59% [56]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5% [5]</td>
<td>3% [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>38% [39]</td>
<td>26% [25]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily sick</td>
<td>2% [2]</td>
<td>2% [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases</td>
<td>100% [102]</td>
<td>100% [95]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of heads of household are employed, with only 5% [5] in Aberdare and 3% [3] in Abercynon unemployed in contrast to the higher unemployment rate experienced in the Valley generally at the time of this survey. As with the age of the population in the area, the percentage of retired heads of household is correspondingly high at 38% [39] and 26% [25] in Aberdare and Abercynon respectively. It was also elicited during the interviews that many of those who were permanently sick or disabled were of the opinion that this was due to the nature of their previous occupation. In addition to this many of those who were retired felt that their health may have been affected in some way by their previous occupation, namely working underground or in related industries.

The sample from Abercynon contained 10% more respondents in employment than Aberdare. This corresponds with the reduced percentages of retired and unemployed heads of household found in Abercynon.

As previously stated, it is not possible to make accurate comparisons between this data and that contained in the Welsh Intercensal Survey due to the fact that this survey concentrates on
FIGURE 4: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
the head of household whereas the former segregates males and females of employable age, and also uses different categories of employment status to this particular survey. However, for the purpose of reference, the results of the Welsh Inter Censal Survey 1986 are as found in Appendix F, table F.1, and refer to all males between the age of 16 and 64, and all females between the age of 16 and 59.

Similarly, this applies to data regarding the classification of the sample into socio-economic groups, which is shown in table 6.7. Socio-economic groupings provided by the Welsh Inter Censal Survey 1986 are provided in Appendix F table F.2 and refer to all males and females over the age of 16. This information is not yet available from the 1991 Census.

Table 6.7 : Socio-economic status of Head of Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-economic group</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2% [2]</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers and managerial</td>
<td>16% [16]</td>
<td>15% [14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate and junior non-manual</td>
<td>28% [29]</td>
<td>23% [22]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual</td>
<td>26% [26]</td>
<td>34% [32]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled manual</td>
<td>19% [19]</td>
<td>20% [19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never employed</td>
<td>3% [3]</td>
<td>2% [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases</td>
<td>100% [102]</td>
<td>100% [95]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The classification of the samples into socioeconomic groups provides a description of the population being examined with regard to their social and economic status. The allocation of heads of households to particular socio-economic groups is dependent upon their employment status and occupation, and is based upon
principles and methodology to be found in OPCS (1980).

In accordance with Saunders (1990), those who were not economically active at the time of the survey were classified according to their last job.

The majority of occupations fall into the manual category as opposed to non-manual. Of those that have been employed at some time in Aberdare, 46% (47) have non-manual jobs whereas 51% (52) have manual jobs. Similarly, in Abercynon, 39% (37) have non-manual jobs whereas 58% (55) have manual jobs. The difference in proportions is not as great in Aberdare as in Abercynon and would seem to reflect the changing emphasis in the nature of employment in the area, from manual jobs associated with the coal industry, to those associated with administrative, business and commercial type of occupation. Many of those included in the manual categories will be involved in industries which have now replaced the coal industry, Abercynon tending to have more skilled manual workers than Aberdare, possibly due to the expansion of smaller industries in the area. Those who have never been employed would include the long-term unemployed, disabled, and those heads of households that are female and were housewives while their husbands were alive.

**Household income**

The data regarding the income of households in each area sample is contained in table 6.8.
FIGURE 5: HOUSEHOLD INCOME

SOURCE: RESULTS AND WELSH INTERCENSAL SURVEY 1986
Table 6.8: Household income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
<th>*Cynon Valley</th>
<th>*Mid- Glam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £3999</td>
<td>24.6% [25]</td>
<td>19.0% [18]</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4000-£7999</td>
<td>33.4% [34]</td>
<td>24.2% [23]</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£8000-£11999</td>
<td>15.7% [16]</td>
<td>26.3% [25]</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£12000 or more</td>
<td>21.5% [22]</td>
<td>29.4% [28]</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal/don't know</td>
<td>4.9% [5]</td>
<td>1.1% [1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The corresponding information for the Cynon Valley and Mid-Glamorgan is also provided for comparison.

The income of those households sampled in each area appears to be substantially higher than that of the Cynon Valley as a whole, and Mid-Glamorgan, although 6.9% [7] and 1.1% [1] of the samples in Aberdare and Abercynon respectively claimed to have annual incomes of less than £2000. The reasons as to why household income seems to be favourable in these samples is not known however the correspondingly high percentages of employment is likely to be a contributing factor.

**Household Savings**

The information regarding household savings can be found in table 6.9. In addition, the corresponding information for Cynon Valley and Mid-Glamorgan is provided for comparison.
FIGURE 6: HOUSEHOLD SAVINGS

SOURCE: RESULTS AND WELSH INTERCENSAL SURVEY 1986
Table 6.9: Household savings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
<th>*Cynon Valley</th>
<th>*Mid-Glam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0 - £999</td>
<td>35.3% [36]</td>
<td>40.0% [38]</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1000 - £2999</td>
<td>20.6% [21]</td>
<td>22.1% [21]</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3000 and over</td>
<td>35.3% [36]</td>
<td>31.7% [30]</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal/don’t know</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Welsh Inter Censal Survey 1986, [1988]*

Again, the household savings for the areas sampled appear to be substantially higher than those obtained for the Cynon Valley and Mid-Glamorgan generally. In fact, 15.7% [16] and 13.7% [13] of the samples taken from Aberdare and Abercynon respectively claimed to have savings of £8000 or more. The accuracy of the information provided in each of the surveys is dependent on the honesty of the answers given.

Summary

It can be said that the age structure of the respondents in the samples surveyed and the types of houses they live in are representative of the population in the Cynon Valley. There is, however, a marked difference in the unemployment rates, socio-economic groupings, and household income as compared with, for instance, the results of the Inter Censal Survey 1986. An explanation of this may be that Aberdare, being the more business and commercially oriented area of the Cynon Valley would tend to have a higher concentration of non-manual workers. Abercynon, being closer and having better access to neighbouring authorities where there are greater opportunities for employment would also
tend to exhibit this characteristic. Both areas would thus have higher employment rates, and as a consequence more households with a higher income.

As previously stated, the aim of the study was to examine owner-occupiers of this type of area as an entity and not only those on low income or living in poor accommodation. It does however stress the importance of examining areas in more detail than on a district basis when considering policy implications as circumstances can vary considerably within a single district.
CHAPTER SEVEN: RESULTS - Opinions held by the respondents regarding the area lived in, their dwelling, and their relevance to repair costs.

Having examined the characteristics of the population sample the study then examined the results obtained regarding opinions held by the respondents with regard to factors including the area they live in, and their house, which may influence their perception of disrepair and the decision to maintain their properties.

Satisfaction of respondents with area

The first variable to be considered was the respondents' satisfaction with the area in which they lived. This would provide an indication of the extent of commitment they have to the area which is claimed to be a prerequisite to owners being inclined to carry out works to their properties (see page 60-61). Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the area they lived in. As table 7.1 shows, the majority were very satisfied, or fairly satisfied with the area as a whole, 84.3% (86) and 88.4% (84) in Aberdare and Abercynon respectively.

Table 7.1: Satisfaction of respondent with the area lived in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>50.0% [51]</td>
<td>32.6% [31]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>34.3% [35]</td>
<td>55.8% [53]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No strong feelings</td>
<td>2.9% [3]</td>
<td>3.2% [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather dissatisfied</td>
<td>5.9% [6]</td>
<td>6.3% [6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>6.9% [7]</td>
<td>2.1% [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% [102]</td>
<td>100% [95]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked what they particularly liked about the area, the response was similar in each. Many thought the area was very convenient for public transport, and surrounding towns and areas
were within easy access. Respondents frequently praised the location in which they lived, in particular that they were not far from the 'countryside'. This was particularly so in Abercynon where the picturesque views were often commended. Most respondents commented upon the friendliness of the people although they hastened to add, particularly the elderly, that things were not as they used to be. In previous years, people would constantly be visiting each other, and would know everybody they passed in the street; they could leave their front door open without fear for their safety. These opinions were also reflected when asked whether it was felt that there was a strong community spirit in the area. This question was asked in order to demonstrate the type of area that is being examined, with its strong community ties and hence commitment to the area.

Table 7.2: Opinions as to whether there is a community spirit in the area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes there is</td>
<td>52.0% [53]</td>
<td>77.9% [74]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is declining</td>
<td>31.4% [32]</td>
<td>11.6% [11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No there is not</td>
<td>16.7% [17]</td>
<td>9.5% [9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.1% [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% [102]</td>
<td>100% [95]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A high proportion still thought that there was a strong community spirit, more so in Abercynon than Aberdare. This may be due to the fact that Aberdare tends to have a larger proportion of elderly or long-standing residents who may have noticed greater changes in the community than the younger generations or those who had not lived in the area so long. Remarks that were often made were the fact that many strangers were moving into the area, that people now tend to keep themselves to themselves. Respondents
also referred to the provision of community facilities such as churches (traditionally a community-based activity), old age pensioner centres, clubs, and societies.

Depending on each individual’s aspirations, some people felt that the shopping areas needed more variety and upgrading although they were perfectly satisfactory for others. It was regularly stated that there was a lack of playing areas for young children, that entertainment was often restricted to productions performed by locally based organisations, and that there were no cinemas in the area.

The main dislikes of both areas were that they were generally dirty, that there was a lot of litter, felt to be the result of an inadequate street cleaning service, and that dog fouling was a problem. Indeed, the number of dogs roaming the streets and the fouling of pavements was quite a prominent feature. More specifically, the condition of the characteristic back lanes was frequently commented upon due to their unkempt nature, their inaccessibility, and the poor, if not dangerous state of the boundary walls. Many felt that the areas had become generally run down. Those resident in Aberdare were aware of work that was presently ongoing in the town centre to improve the general environment, and many respondents complimented this. However there were others who expressed an opinion that funds might be better spent in other parts of the area, and not just the commercial section.

In Aberdare particularly, a common complaint, often a result of hearsay, was the rowdiness and violence that tended to occur in the town centre, which in the respondents’ opinions was due to the number of night-clubs and public houses in the vicinity. There
PLATE 1

Poor condition of rear lane and boundary walls.
Derelict Miners Hall in background.
PLATE 2

Poor condition of rear lane and boundary wall.
were often frequent complaints, too, of the lack of parking facilities. Householders nearer the town were unable to park in front of their own houses and congestion often occurred due to the difficulty experienced by traffic passing through what are already narrow roads. It was ironic that during the course of the survey 'Pay and display' parking was introduced at what was previously a free parking area. It was observed that the numbers of cars frequenting that car park was hence drastically reduced, and presumably more cars were then parking along side streets causing further annoyance to householders.

Many in Abercynon, expressed feelings of neglect by the Borough Council in the services that were provided, and put forward the reason for this as being the location of Abercynon at the extremity of the Borough.

Thoughts about the area in general tended to be positive in that the respondents liked the area they lived in and would not consider leaving unless they had to. However, there seemed to be dissatisfaction expressed regarding the infrastructure of both the residential and commercial areas, and to those social factors which may have detrimental effects upon both their environmental and living conditions.

Opinions regarding housing disrepair in the survey areas
When respondents were asked what they particularly liked or disliked about the area they lived in, the condition of housing was rarely commented upon. However, in response to being asked whether there was a problem of housing disrepair in the area, 42% [43] and 35% [33] of respondents in Aberdare and Abercynon respectively felt that there was a problem. The remaining
respondents felt that there was not.

It should be noted that many of those who felt that there was a problem did not seem to be referring to the repair of the housing stock as a whole, but to the problems which individual householders may find in maintaining their property. For instance, the problems associated with obtaining grants, difficulty in finding a reputable contractor, old age, and lack of income.

In addition to this, a frequent comment was that all or most of the properties in the area were owner-occupied. It was therefore assumed that everybody attends to their own house, seemingly concluding that there would not be a problem. The proviso, however, being that 'everybody does their best though they may not have enough money'. People felt reluctant to criticise others for not carrying out works as there may be perfectly legitimate reasons for this. Comments were sometimes received, however, implying that some householders just did not care.

Respondents were asked for their opinion of the repair of the street in which they lived as this would indicate whether the characteristic known as 'prisoner's dilemma' might occur (see page 57). The results do appear to be consistent in that Aberdare is perceived as experiencing greater problems of disrepair, both as an area and on a street by street basis.
1. A characteristic street of Aberdare.

2. A characteristic street of Abercynon.
1. Characteristic property in Abercynon.

2. Characteristic properties in Aberdare.
Table 7.3: Respondent's opinion of the condition of houses in the street in which he/she lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Aberdare</th>
<th>Abercynon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In good repair on the whole</td>
<td>49.0% (50)</td>
<td>57.9% (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some are in need of repair</td>
<td>49.0% (50)</td>
<td>41.1% (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In poor repair</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1.1% (1)</td>
<td>1.0% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>100% (102)</td>
<td>100% (95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both survey areas, few, if any, respondents felt that the houses in their street on the whole were in poor repair, and during the course of the survey this was found to be so. From general observation during the course of the survey, it appeared that many houses that were in poor repair were often situated sporadically amongst groups of houses in good repair.

Enquiries were made of neighbours, who were included in the sample, as to why the houses might be in poor repair. A variety of reasons were put forward, particularly the fact that the owners of those houses were elderly or infirm.

Respondents' opinions regarding their own house

Respondents were initially asked their reasons for buying their particular house, the results of which are shown in table 7.4. This question was asked in order to determine what importance was attached to the house itself and what features were found to be attractive. Each respondent could provide multiple reasons if they wished. The results from each sample have now been amalgamated as the numbers dealt with are small for each variable. The purpose of the survey is not to compare results from each area, and it should be noted that the areas were selected in order to provide a
sample representative of the area with regard to the stages of development of housing in the Cynon Valley.

Table 7.4: Reasons given for buying house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>% of responses [No.]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liked the house itself</td>
<td>28% [78]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable price</td>
<td>15% [42]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked external features</td>
<td>2% [6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherited / member of family lived previously</td>
<td>10% [28]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented the house prior to buying it</td>
<td>4% [11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to live in the area / relatives live near</td>
<td>32% [90]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to become owner-occupier</td>
<td>5% [14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job was in the area</td>
<td>3% [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1% [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of responses</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where respondents bought the house because they liked that particular house, this tended to be for the suitability of its size, for its condition, and mainly because they just felt an affinity towards that particular house. In actual fact, as the housing stock tends to be homogeneous in nature, that is, the majority of housing is consistent in that it is terraced, there would be few features that would distinguish the houses except for size, whether the house had been significantly modernised, or its exact location. The most commonly given response was the fact that respondents wished to live in that particular area. The reasons for this were normally because they had always lived in the area, or had wished to move to that area from another part of the valley. Many of the respondents wanted to live in the area because their relatives also lived there. This demonstrates the close bonding between families in the area, and in turn their commitment to the area itself. Again, the continuity of the population of these areas is shown by the
proportion of people who have stayed in houses left to them by relatives or who have bought houses that belonged to relatives.

Additional external features, such as the garden or a garage, were commented upon, however they did not seem to hold much importance. As previously stated, the homogeneity of the houses meant that one garden might be very much like the other. The deciding factor regarding the size and additional external features accompanying a house would be the price, and this was stated to be the reason for buying a particular house by 15% [42] of respondents.

Other responses received were that it was necessary to live in the area for their job, and that they wished to become owner-occupiers. Several respondents had in fact rented their properties prior to buying them.

Respondents were later asked whether they were satisfied with their house generally, the majority of which, were. 91% [179] were very satisfied or fairly satisfied, 4% [8] had no strong feelings, and 6% [12] were rather dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Respondents' satisfaction with their houses was then compared with their opinion of its condition, the results of which can be seen in table 7.5. The respondents' opinion of condition is a subjective one depending upon their perception, expectations, and aspirations.
Steep rear gardens.
To qualify this, when asked what respondents liked and disliked about their houses, the size of the house featured prominently. People disliked the fact that their bathroom might be on the ground floor, and the lack of scope for extending the house at the rear due to lack of available space and the gradient of the ground. Where extensions were built this often affected the lighting of the house. While larger houses were praised for their spaciousness, lighter rooms, and larger gardens, smaller houses were thought to be easily maintained and more economic to run. The fact that houses were old was generally felt to be an advantage in that they were solidly built, soundproof, had character, and tended to retain heat in the winter, and be cool in the summer. Drawbacks tended to be the large amount of work often required to improve the house, for instance the insertion of a damp proof course, and the alteration of the layout of the house, although this tended to be limited. Frequently commented upon was the dislike of steep steps often found at the rear of the house, lack of a rear access, and lack of privacy.

Other likes included the fact that they had furbished their house to their own preferences, and that it was their own. Many respondents referred to the fact that they had been born and bred in the area, if not in the house, and had kept the memories which accompanied this.

Desired improvements to house

When respondents were asked in what way their house could be improved, they were as follows, in order of descending frequency. Respondents could provide multiple responses.
Table 7.6: Desired improvements to respondent's house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External repair/decoration</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension/change of layout</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal repair/decoration</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewiring/double glazing/heating/damp proofing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden / repair of boundary wall</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/fittings</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that external repair is highly rated as a desired improvement. However, when asked whether these improvements were likely to be carried out only 49% (97) of respondents felt that they definitely would. Of the reasons given for not carrying out improvements 65% (65) felt they were unable to afford the works, 13% (13) did not want to go to the trouble, and 13% (13) felt that improvements including extending and changing the layout of the property, or having a better garden, were not practicable. Other reasons given were the respondent's age, that it was not worth the investment, that the respondent was moving, or that circumstances were currently unsuitable, for instance, a member of the household was suffering ill health.

**Respondent's opinion of state of repair of their house compared with actual repair costs**

A more objective comparison was then made between the respondent's opinion of the condition of their house and the actual cost of repairs found to be required. The data for both areas has been amalgamated for the purpose of examination and is presented
in table 7.7.

Table 7.7: Respondent's opinion of the condition of their house compared with the actual cost of repairs required to the house (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>Good repair</th>
<th>In need of minor repairs</th>
<th>In need of major repairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£5000 - £5999</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
<td>5% [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£7000 or more</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
<td>5% [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% [76]</td>
<td>100% [101]</td>
<td>100% [20]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.5148

The extent of disrepair is categorised according to the repair cost in the English and Welsh House Condition Surveys. In the Welsh House Condition Survey, a property is considered to be in serious disrepair if the repair cost is £3000 or more (W.O., 1988). In the English House Condition Survey, a property is considered to be in serious disrepair if the repair cost is in excess of £7000 at 1981 prices (D.O.E., 1988).

There is considerable disparity between these figures, the relevance of which can vary depending on factors such as the size of the house. It was therefore felt inappropriate to adopt terms for the measure of disrepair and instead rely solely on repair costs.

From table 7.7 there does not appear to be a relationship between the respondents' perception of the state of repair of their houses and the actual repair cost.

Of the respondents who felt that their properties were in good repair, 68% [52] of those properties required repairs costing less
than £500. The maximum repair costs extended to £3999.

The distribution of repair costs for those who were of the opinion that their properties required minor or moderate repairs tended to be concentrated in the range of £0 to £3999, but extended to £7000 plus. Of those who were of the opinion that their houses required major repairs, costs tended to be concentrated in the range of £3000 to £7000 plus.

There are exceptions who do not seem to have any perception of the condition of their house, for instance, the respondent who was of the opinion that minor repairs were required but in fact had a repair cost of £7000, and those who felt that major repairs were required when in fact 15% [3] required less than £500 repairs.

Other factors were considered against the actual cost of repairs required, such as the satisfaction of the respondent with the house and area, the length of time the respondent intended to live in the house, and whether the respondent had a mortgage or owned the house outright.

Table 7.8 : Satisfaction with house compared with actual cost of repairs required [areas amalgamated]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with house</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Fairly satisfied</th>
<th>No strong feelings</th>
<th>Rather dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repair cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£7000+</td>
<td>2% [2]</td>
<td>- [ ]</td>
<td>- [ ]</td>
<td>- [ ]</td>
<td>- [ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient : 0.1195
Of those respondents who were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their houses, 44% (44) and 38% (30) respectively required repairs costing less than £500, however 14% (14) and 19% (15) respectively required repairs in excess of £3000. 41% (41) and 44% (35) respectively, required between £500 and £2999 which would be likely to involve major repair works. Those respondents who replied that they were rather dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their houses were small in number and there was little evidence to indicate that the fact that they were dissatisfied was because they lived in houses requiring extensive repairs; of those who were rather dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their houses, only 30% (3) required repairs in excess of £3000, and none were in excess of £7000.

Area satisfaction and repair costs

From the results shown in table 7.9, it appears that although respondents are satisfied with the area, their house may still be in considerable need of repair. Although houses belonging to some of those who are dissatisfied with the area require repairs they are in no greater proportion than for any of the other categories. It would therefore appear that any dissatisfaction with the area has not manifested itself in the owners neglect of their houses.
Table 7.9: Respondent's satisfaction with the area compared with the required repair cost to the house (areas amalgamated)

Satisfaction with area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Fairly satisfied</th>
<th>No strong feelings</th>
<th>Rather dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£7000+</td>
<td>2% [2]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.0022

Expected residence and repair costs

From the results shown in table 7.10 there would appear to be very little evidence to imply that those respondents who intend leaving their houses in the near future have taken less care with regard to the condition of their properties. The samples, however, contain only a small number of respondents in this category, mainly due to the long-standing communities from which they were drawn. The samples may thus be inadequate to draw reliable conclusions about this category of owner-occupiers. Conversely, the results do demonstrate that even those respondents who have no intention of moving and presumably feel committed to their property, have allowed their property to deteriorate.
Table 7.10: Expected residence of respondent in present house compared with the cost of repairs required (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>Less than 2 years</th>
<th>2-5 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>More than 10 years</th>
<th>Indefinitely</th>
<th>Do not intend moving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under £500</td>
<td>43% (3)</td>
<td>38% (3)</td>
<td>67% (6)</td>
<td>35% (9)</td>
<td>43% (57)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£500-£2999</td>
<td>57% (4)</td>
<td>63% (5)</td>
<td>33% (3)</td>
<td>42% (11)</td>
<td>41% (55)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3000-£6999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19% (5)</td>
<td>16% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£7000+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4% (1)</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (7)</td>
<td>100% (6)</td>
<td>100% (8)</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>100% (26)</td>
<td>100% (134)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary
During the course of the survey the favourable qualities of each of the areas became apparent, demonstrating characteristics of an area that had strong community ties. However, much of this is gradually being eroded and can only be put down to a 'sign of the times'. Respondents in the main had a very high opinion of the area, demonstrated by the fact that the most frequent reason for buying their houses was in order to live in that area, usually to be near relatives, and most had no wish to leave the area. However, much concern was displayed regarding the deterioration of the general environment, and problems regarding unemployment. The closing down of a local smokeless fuel plant typified the dilemma of improving the general environment at the expense of the loss of jobs. Those respondents that mentioned this were grateful of the fact that the plant had closed down, which would be accompanied by the removal of an eyesore and the major air pollutant in the
area, but were also very sympathetic to those who would inevitably become employed. This can also be said for the gradual closure and removal of other major industrial sites in the past which has occurred not only in the Cynon Valley but in all the South Wales Valleys.

Housing disrepair was not considered to be a problem in the area although it was acknowledged that many owner-occupiers faced difficulties in repairing their properties, and the repair costs of the respondents' dwellings had little association with the respondents' satisfaction with both their house and the area lived in.
CHAPTER EIGHT: RESULTS - Perception of disrepair regarding individual items

Further analysis was carried out comparing the respondents' opinion of repair of individual items of the external features of their dwellings with the corresponding repair costs found to be necessary for those items. Spearman rank correlation co-efficients are provided to determine whether there is a relationship between the opinion of the respondent with regard to the repair required to individual items and actual repair costs.

All results are for the amalgamated areas.

Item 1 - Chimneys.

Table 8.1: Respondent's opinion of required works to chimney[s] compared with estimated cost of repair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>£0</th>
<th>£1-£199</th>
<th>£200-£499</th>
<th>£500-£999</th>
<th>£1000-£1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.4741

As can be seen in table 8.1, of those who thought that no repairs to the chimneys were required, 153 in number, 79% corresponded with the opinion of the surveyor. A fairly accurate assessment of disrepair was demonstrated, however, approximately 21% of the respondents were unable to detect minor or major disrepair.

Of those who felt that only minor repairs were required, it would seem that although the majority of these respondents recognised the need for repair the extent was somewhat underestimated.
1. Properties in state of disrepair.

2. Roofs that have been replaced with tiles and are now deflecting.
Two respondents considered there to be major repairs required and these were estimated to require corresponding repair costs of between £500-£999 demonstrating an awareness of the condition of the chimney(s).

Of the 19 respondents who felt that their chimney(s) required replacement it would appear that approximately 73% of the respondents made an accurate assessment. As for the remaining 26%, these may have been merely over-cautious possibly due to the age of the properties, or perceived that the chimneys required replacement for reasons known to themselves. As the survey was based on an external inspection, problems of disrepair manifesting themselves inside the dwelling would not have been apparent to the surveyor although the respondent may have been aware of them.

Item 2 - Roofs

Table 8.2: Respondent's opinion of works required to roof compared with estimated repair costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requires</th>
<th>£0</th>
<th>£1-£99</th>
<th>£100-£499</th>
<th>£500-£999</th>
<th>£1000-£2999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major or replacement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient : 0.6750

Of the 151 respondents believing there to be no need for repairs 79% were in accordance with the surveyors opinion. Although the majority perceived accurately that no repairs were required, approximately one fifth did not perceive that repairs were required.
Rear of properties in poor condition with lean-to extensions.
Of those that considered minor repairs were necessary approximately 50% of these respondents had perceived the condition of their roof satisfactorily.

Of the 35 respondents who felt that major repairs or complete replacement were required most respondents made a satisfactory assessment of the state of repair of their roofs, although 3 had overestimated the repairs required.

A more positive correlation exists between the respondent's opinion of works required to the roof and actual repair cost, the correlation coefficient being 0.6750.

Item 3 - Walls

Table 8.3: Respondent's opinion of works required to exterior walls compared with estimated repair cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repairs required</th>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>£0</th>
<th>£1-£99</th>
<th>£100-£499</th>
<th>£500-£999</th>
<th>£1000-3999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor or replace</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.5343

Of those respondents who felt that no repairs or only aesthetic works were required i.e. painting, 122 in all, 44% were also considered by the surveyor to be in no need of repair. However, there does appear to be a lack of perception with regard to recognising the need for repairs to walls and wall coverings, this normally being for instance pointing, rendering, damage to window heads.

One would consider minor works to be those costing less than £100 although this is subjective depending on the size of the house.
and the nature of the disrepair. This being the case, those that considered minor repairs to be necessary have tended to underestimate the works needed.

The majority of those who were of the opinion that the walls or wall covering were in need of major repair or total replacement were generally accurate in their perception although there were cases where works were underestimated.

Item 4 - Rainwater goods

Table 8.4: Respondent’s opinion of works required to rainwater goods compared with estimated repair cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repairs required</th>
<th>£0</th>
<th>£1-£49</th>
<th>£50-£99</th>
<th>£100-£199</th>
<th>£200-£299</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major or replace-ment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient : 0.3668

164 respondents felt that no works were required to the rainwater goods of their properties and of these, 76% were found to be in accordance with the surveyor’s assessment.

The remainder of the respondents show a poor perception of the condition of the rainwater goods in both underestimating and overestimating the extent of disrepair.
Item 5 - Weather boards

Table 8.5: Respondent's opinion of works required to weather boards compared with estimated repair cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repairs required</th>
<th>£0</th>
<th>£1-£99</th>
<th>£100-£299</th>
<th>£300-£499</th>
<th>£500-£999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major or replace</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.3819

166 respondents felt that no repairs were required to the weather boards and of these, 69% (115) were felt to be correct in their assumption.

Of those who felt that minor repairs were needed the majority of cases would appear to have assessed the condition of the weather boards quite accurately.

26 respondents felt that major works or complete replacement of their weather boards was required and of these 68% (18) were found to require repair costs between £0 and £99. It would therefore appear that there was an overestimation of the extent of disrepair of this item.

Item 6 - Doors and Windows

Table 8.6: Respondent's opinion of works required to doors and windows compared with estimated repair cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required repairs</th>
<th>£0</th>
<th>£1-£99</th>
<th>£100-£299</th>
<th>£300-£499</th>
<th>£500-£999</th>
<th>£3000-£7000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major or replace</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.6347

120
Deterioration of bargeboard
PLATE 9

Deterioration of woodwork to sash window.
Of those that felt that no works were required, 127 in all, 55% corresponded with the surveyors opinion. There appears to be a considerable lack of awareness of disrepair regarding these items.

Of the 6 respondents that considered minor repairs to be necessary, 33% (2) were found to require repair costs between £500 and £2999 indicating a lack of perception of disrepair.

Of those that expressed the opinion that major repairs or replacement were required, it would appear that the majority of these respondents correctly perceived the requirement of repairs or replacement of their windows and/or doors with 69% (44) requiring repair costs of between £500 and £7000.

A positive relationship is demonstrated between the opinion of the respondent of the works required to the windows and/or doors, with a correlation co-efficient of 0.6347.

**Summary**

Respondents' perception of the state of repair of specified external features of their houses tended in the main to be good. However, many concluded that their houses required repairs based on the amount, and how recently, works had already been carried out. The age of the house was also presumed to be synonymous with the fact that repairs would be required. There was a tendency to assume, for example, that when original windows had recently been painted, they were sound. They may have looked sound but were in fact subject to rot. As one respondent interceded, 'putty and paint makes the devil a saint'. Another gentleman remarked 'these are the original windows - great aren't they!'. The windows were subsequently found to be rotten. This is not to undermine owner-occupiers' capabilities, it merely demonstrates that defects
can be overlooked. This is particularly the case where the condition of certain parts of a house such as the chimney, roof, rainwater goods, and weatherboards are not easily examined. The results indicate, therefore, that there are respondents who are unable to identify that the external fabric of their house requires repair.
CHAPTER NINE: RESULTS - Respondents' attitudes with regard to the repair and maintenance of their houses.

After having obtained the respondents' opinions as the condition of specific elements of the exterior of their houses, this was pursued further with regard to the respondents' activities with regard to the repair and maintenance of their properties.

Respondents were initially asked whether they thought it was important to keep the outside of the house in good repair, the response being shown in table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Respondent's opinion of the importance of the repair of the outside of the house (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes it is important</td>
<td>98% (193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No it is not important</td>
<td>1% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know / other</td>
<td>1% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overwhelmingly favourable response was obtained. In fact many respondents were incredulous that the question was even asked.

In order to verify this response, respondents were asked to give reasons for why it was important. Multiple answers were allowed and are given in table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Reasons for the importance of keeping the outside of the house in good repair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage of answers [number]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic value</td>
<td>41% (115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep the property weather tight</td>
<td>29% (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To maintain the structural components</td>
<td>15% (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To maintain the value of the property</td>
<td>7% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For own comfort or benefit</td>
<td>5% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To save money in the long term</td>
<td>2% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prevent the property becoming dangerous</td>
<td>1% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the answers given are commendable and show an awareness of the implications of allowing a property to fall into disrepair. It is also interesting with what priority the appearance of the property is regarded.

However, considering that the majority acknowledged that the condition of the outside of the house is important, this does not correspond as would be expected with regard to the frequency of checking for repairs and actually carrying them out.

Respondents were asked to make an assessment of their activities as to the frequency with which they checked to see whether repairs were needed to their properties, and on establishing that repairs were required, when they would actually carry them out.

Table 9.3: Respondent’s frequency of checking for repairs (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of checking</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>52% (102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>37% (72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>8% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents claimed they regularly checked for repairs, particularly after inclement weather. Those that occasionally, rarely, or never checked put forward various reasons for this. Some merely did not check themselves but relied on other people such as relatives or friends. This was mainly in the case of elderly people, and occasionally female heads of household. Some claimed that they would be unable to see whether, for instance, the roof or chimney required repair due to failing eyesight or the inability to climb a ladder to obtain a closer look.

Some claimed that they had just carried out works to the house
therefore there should be no need to check for disrepair. Others claimed they knew what the problems were and therefore did not need to make regular checks. Several respondents replied that they would only check if a problem arose; one would presume that these respondents would prefer to wait until a defect had manifested itself in such a way that it became a nuisance, rather than preventing it at an earlier stage. Reasons given for never checking for repairs were that they were afraid to look for fear of what they might find, and that they would be unable to afford what repairs were necessary anyway.

Respondents were then asked which of a number of statements regarding the immediacy of their response to disrepair, applied to themselves.

Table 9.4: Immediacy of respondent's response to repairs found to be required [areas amalgamated]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to disrepair</th>
<th>% of respondents [No.]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As soon as possible</td>
<td>73% [143]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When absolutely necessary</td>
<td>24% [47]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely carry out repairs</td>
<td>3% [5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never carry out repairs</td>
<td>1% [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the majority of respondents claimed that they would carry out repairs as soon as possible, this was generally qualified by stating that it would also be when they were able to afford it.

The reason for not carrying out repairs was almost exclusively due to lack of finance, however there were some, notably the elderly who felt that the house in its present condition would last them their lifetime and saw no point in spending substantial sums of money or going through the inconvenience of works which they could ill-afford and may not be around to enjoy for very long. A
rather pessimistic view, but one shared by several, was 'they can
do what they like with it [the house] when I've gone'. Comments
were also received from older respondents that any money they
had was to go towards ensuring that they would be able to finance
any necessary measures should they suffer ill-health, or have to
obtain accommodation in a home or sheltered housing.
Respondents were also asked as to which received the greatest
priority with regard to repair, the inside of the house, the outside
of the house or whether they received roughly the same. Many
respondents found themselves in a dilemma when answering this
question. 22% (43) felt that the inside of the house received
greater priority whereas 26% (52) felt the outside received greater
priority. 52% (102) felt that both received roughly the same
priority. If repairs were required to either then they would be
carried out, it would merely depend on which seemed most urgent.
Although some of those who felt that the inside received greater
attention admitted that their priorities were probably misplaced,
they generally felt that as so much time was spent indoors it was
more desirable to ensure that their direct living environment was
satisfactory, and therefore the exterior of the house came second to
the inside. Similarly, those who felt that the outside of the house
received greater attention justifiably claimed that if the outside
shell of the house were not sound then it would only be a matter of
time before the inside was affected.
When asked whether they felt capable of recognising the presence
of defects to the outside of the house, 73% (144) of the respondents
felt they were able and 27% (53) felt they were not.
There may be some doubt as to whether all the respondents were
being completely honest as some may have felt loathe to admit that
they were unable to recognise when repairs were needed. However, over a quarter of the respondents felt that they would be unable to recognise defects, which is a substantial proportion. These were in the main female, but also included males who felt that they 'did not have the first idea' regarding disrepair.

The respondents' opinion of their capability to recognise defects has been compared with the total repair costs for their property, the results of which can be seen in table 9.5.

Table 9.5: Respondent's opinion of capability to recognise defects compared with estimated repair costs (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair costs</th>
<th>Capable of recognising defects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than £500</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£500-£2999</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3000-£6999</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£7000+</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is true that a greater percentage of those who do not feel capable of recognising defects have correspondingly higher repair costs than those who felt they could recognise repairs. However, a considerable proportion of those who feel they are capable of identifying defects live in properties which have high repair costs.

It may of course be that they are able to identify the repairs required but have been unable to get the works done.

When asked later who would carry out repairs that were required, a combination of answers was given, normally depending on the nature of the works that would be required. 39% (77) of respondents would carry out works themselves, 77% (152) would employ a contractor, and 28% (55) would ask a friend or relative to carry out the works.
The effect of neighbouring houses

As has previously been suggested, a disincentive to carrying out repairs may be the condition of neighbouring houses, precipitating the so-called 'prisoner's dilemma'. When respondents were asked whether the condition of neighbouring houses would affect their decision to carry out repairs, 98% (193) replied that it would not. Respondents frequently claimed that they would do what they wanted to their house regardless of what their neighbours did to their house, and it was sometimes necessary to confirm whether this also applied when neighbouring properties were in poor condition. Some commented that if neighbours did not look after their houses it would cause them to be more determined to ensure that their own houses were well-kept, and expressed that they would be aggrieved by ill-kept houses to the point of complaining to the owner. Only two people displayed any recognition of the fact that it may not be worth investing in their property if neighbouring houses were in poor condition, and one of these had been advised by a relative.

Summary

It was found that respondents acknowledged the fact that the condition of the exterior of the house was important; when asked what improvements they would like to make to their house, the most frequent response was the external repair and decoration of the house. They would, however, concede that the inside of the house would normally receive most attention, unless an urgent repair was required to the outside. In addition to this, even though most respondents were of the opinion that they regularly checked for repairs and carried them out as soon as possible, they would in
fact add that they would carry them out when they could afford it.

One respondent, who was in the minority, claimed 'I'm not materialistic, so long as I've got my paintings and books around me the house could fall down'. Another claimed that 'we live within our means, we don't go out a lot, the house comes after food, I would not carry out repairs until the mortgage is paid off...the car is a necessity and the caravan would come before repairs.'

Conversely, there were those who felt they went to great pains to ensure the upkeep of the condition of their house. For instance, a pensioner claimed that she had 'a fund for repair etc....even if I have to go short on things'. A couple who were also pensioners paid an insurance company specifically for roof repairs. A contractor would visit annually to see if any slates needed replacing. On inspection it was observed that there were in fact several cracked slates present. Participation in this type of scheme was not uncommon in the area.

Many respondents were also of the opinion that it was unfair that owners who had allowed their properties to deteriorate were then able to obtain grant aid, whereas those who had taken care of their properties, and not allowing them to deteriorate, were paying for works themselves.

Generally respondents displayed a pride in the appearance of their house. As one respondent commented 'if the outside of the house is looking a mess then they'll wonder who's living inside, won't they?'.

The theory of the 'prisoner's dilemma, where owner-occupiers are discouraged from maintaining their properties does not appear to hold strictly true in the areas studied. From the evidence obtained during this survey a considerable amount of improvement work appeared to have been carried out, and the majority of respondents
were adamant that the poor condition of neighbouring properties would not deter them from maintaining their properties. Many qualified this by stating that it would make them more determined to carry out work.

The reason for this may be the fact that the respondents had generally lived in the area for a considerable length of time, and intended to continue doing so. They therefore felt a commitment to the area and would wish to make their homes as desirable to live in as possible. They would not be concerned about the recognition in value of the house for the immediate future.

The majority of respondents felt capable of recognising defects, although this was not demonstrated when compared with the repair costs required to their dwellings.
CHAPTER TEN : RESULTS - The respondents' circumstances and their relevance to repair costs

Age and repair costs

From the results shown in table 10.1, although there is a tendency for repair costs to increase where there is an elderly head of household, this is certainly not the rule. It was often the case that elderly respondents had children or other relatives who would help in the maintenance of the house.

All repair costs where the head of household was under 25 were less than £2999.

Many female respondents, particularly the elderly, expressed during the course of the survey that they felt vulnerable with regard to the maintenance of the house in that, for instance, they were not able to assess what works are required, and were unsure as to who to approach to carry out repairs for them. This is likely to provide additional explanation as to why repair costs tend to be greater for elderly households.

Table 10.1 : Estimated cost of repair compared with age of head of household (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>£0-£499</th>
<th>£500-£2999</th>
<th>£3000-£6999</th>
<th>£7000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient : 0.1757
Method of financing repair works

When respondents were asked as to how they would finance repair works carried out on their houses, apart from grant aid, the following results were obtained. Multiple responses could be given.

Table 10.2: Method of financing repair works (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary income</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank loan</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building society loan</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other loan</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended/second mortgage</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/friends</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents claimed they would use their savings or ordinary income to finance repair works. There was a general reluctance for respondents to commit themselves to anything that would involve long term payments. Many were reluctant even to use their savings, particularly the elderly, who felt they would need this money to ensure that they would be looked after in their later years. This fact would tend to reduce the likelihood of the elderly carrying out satisfactory repairs to their houses.

The mention of any form of scheme involving the release of equity from the value of their property was met with an unfavourable response as it was felt that the house was the only security many respondents possessed.

Repair costs by household income

The results given in table 10.3 show that the houses belonging to those in the lower income groups tend to have higher repair costs. However this is not exclusively so; those properties having repair
costs in excess of £7000 belong to households having an income of £8000 plus. Also, those in the household income band of £8000 to £11999 appear to have higher repair costs than might be anticipated in comparison with those having a lower income.

Table 10.3: Estimated cost of repair compared with household income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>£0-£499</th>
<th>£500-£2999</th>
<th>£3000-£6999</th>
<th>£7000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.2136

Repair costs in comparison with household savings

Again repair costs tend to be less as the savings possessed by the household increase. However, somewhat incongruously, those properties with highest repair costs belong to those households with greater savings.

Also, whereas the percentage of households having repair costs within the range of £500 to £2999 decreases for those who have savings between £1000 and £2999, it sharply increases again for those households with savings in excess of £3000.
Table 10.4: Estimated repair costs compared with household savings (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>£0-£499</th>
<th>£500-£2999</th>
<th>£3000-£6999</th>
<th>£7000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: 0.0716

Cost of repairs by type of household

When comparing repair cost for the number of persons in a household one might assume that the more members of a family there are, normally implying a greater number of dependants, the less money there will be available to maintain the house.

Table 10.5: Cost of repairs compared the number of persons in the household (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>£0-£499</th>
<th>£500-£2999</th>
<th>£3000-£6999</th>
<th>£7000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>50% [1]</td>
<td>50% [1]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
<td>- [-]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation co-efficient: -0.0644

When the results shown in 10.5 are examined, it is found that single-person households tend to have a high percentage of expensive repair costs. This can be accounted for by the high percentage of single old age pensioners in the samples.
Higher percentages of the larger households tend to have higher repair costs, however the difference is not great. The largest households have lower repair costs but these are not well represented in number.

An exception to the assumption that larger households will have less money available for the maintenance of their house is, perhaps, where the members of the household are adult and would not be as financially demanding as children and could even contribute towards the payment for repairs.

Finally, it was considered whether the ownership of a house outright would result in those properties being in better repair than those for which mortgages were still being paid, the results being shown in table 10.6.

Table 10.6: Comparison of ownership against required repair costs (areas amalgamated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair costs</th>
<th>Owned outright</th>
<th>Buying with a mortgage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under £500</td>
<td>36% [42]</td>
<td>48% [38]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£500-£2999</td>
<td>44% [52]</td>
<td>38% [30]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3000-£6999</td>
<td>19% [23]</td>
<td>13% [10]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£7000+</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
<td>1% [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% [118]</td>
<td>100% [79]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again there appears to be little evidence that those respondents who own their homes outright are able to keep them in better repair. There may of course be other factors present which could negate the benefits endowed by outright ownership, such as old age, disability, and low income.

Summary

Repair costs tend to correspond with the age of the head of
household although there are exceptions. Similarly, from the information provided, repair costs tend to correspond with those households who receive a low income and who have least savings although this is not exclusively the case. It is assumed that many elderly people who have savings will be unlikely to spend them on repairing their houses as they were intended to keep them should they require care in their old age. There were respondents, however, approaching old age who were concerned that repairs be carried out while they were still able to afford it. Most repair works were claimed to be financed from savings and income, with a minority obtaining a loan or second mortgage. The latter two would be obtained with great reluctance. Finally, the fact that a house was owned outright did not necessarily imply that a house would be in better repair.
CHAPTER ELEVEN: RESULTS - Respondents attitudes regarding assistance towards maintaining their properties.

Local Authority grant aid

It was felt necessary to investigate grant take-up as this is the main instrument by which local authorities can encourage investment in the repair of properties. The reasons for not applying for grant may be vital towards the success of grant aid.

It was found that 66% [130] of the total sample had applied for a grant, 33% [65] had not, and 1% [2] did not know.

It was then enquired of those who had not made an application whether they would consider making one. 71% [46] replied that they would consider applying for one, and the remaining 29% [19] replied that they would not. When respondents were asked the reasons for not wishing to consider applying for a grant the following results were obtained.

Table 11.1: Reasons given for not applying for grant assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only want to do a small amount of work</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found out that we were not eligible</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought we were not eligible</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to work at own pace</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had the money so we got on with it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not afford our contribution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[One response not given]

It appears that the main reason for not wanting to apply for a grant is the preference expressed to carry out works at their desired pace rather than have to carry them out within the time required by the local authority - normally one year.
The main obstructions to applying for grant appear to be that of presumed ineligibility, restrictions imposed on the time in which works must be carried out, the requirement that works over and above those felt necessary by the owner which in turn increases the total cost of the works, and lack of finance on the part of the owner to afford their contribution.

One respondent felt that as he had the money available he may as well carry on with the works without grant aid.

Of those respondents that had applied for a grant, 52% (68) did not receive one. Various reasons were given for this. As previously stated, many found that the extent of works required was too much, or that they were unable to afford their contribution. Some found that they were ineligible for grant, sometimes due to the priority system adopted by the local authority, for example, if they had all basic amenities. Some respondents felt that they could not wait the time involved before their application was considered, this being due to the length of the waiting list. Sometimes it was merely due to a change in circumstances, such as a member of the family falling ill and thus not wishing to go through the upheaval of carrying out extensive works at that time.

**Concern regarding maintenance of house and response regarding the provision of assistance to owner-occupiers**

When asked whether they were concerned about the condition or the maintenance of their house 40% (79) of respondents claimed that they were, 59% (116) claimed they were not, and 1% (2) declined to answer. The reasons were varied and ranged from the house being too big, that it was difficult to get someone to carry out odd jobs, that the property was very high, and the cold and
discomfort caused due to lack of money to maintain the house. Respondents often expressed concern as to when they would become elderly, unable to carry out jobs themselves, and have less money to get the jobs done.

Respondents were then asked whether they would use the following services if they were available:

1) A structural survey pointing out what repairs are needed to the outside of their house.
2) A local authority scheme to carry out repairs to the houses in their street.
3) An agency service to give advice, and help organise a grant application.

87% (171) of respondents were in favour of having a structural survey, although some respondents felt they would rather not know if there were any major structural defects present in their house. The main concern was whether this service would be free of charge, and the fact that they may be unable to afford any defects that might be pointed out.

87% (171) of respondents were in favour of a local authority scheme such as enveloping, however some displayed scepticism over the quality of workmanship of such schemes and expressed that they would prefer to have some input as to the contractors employed for such schemes.

84% (165) of the respondents were in favour of an agency service. The availability of such services may therefore be of advantage in maintaining the condition of the housing stock. Some respondents felt that adequate advice was already obtainable, for example from the local authority itself or from citizens advice bureaux. Those in Abercynon, however, felt that their distance from the local
authority offices was a disadvantage. Many respondents seemed to form their opinions from hearsay which was often inconsistent, therefore such schemes may serve to improve the accuracy of information obtained by owner-occupiers.

Summary
Approximately 31% of the respondents included in the sample had received grant aid although the majority expressed that they had or would consider applying for grant aid. Several criticisms were made regarding the grant system which may be particularly relevant to this particular type of area. For instance, due the low income of a large proportion of the population, and the number of elderly households, it may be preferable to allow owners to decide how much work they wish to have carried out according to how much they can afford and the amount of disturbance they wish to undergo.

Initiatives such as the provision of a service to conduct a survey of owner-occupiers properties pointing out what repairs were required was welcomed, although there were reservations held about any financial implications.

The continuation of area-based schemes such as enveloping was also welcomed. A certain amount of resentment was sometimes detected from respondents who felt it unfair that selected areas should have works carried out free of charge, although they would agree that the effects were beneficial. Those who expressed no interest in such a scheme were those who had already been involved in such a scheme, or those who remained sceptical about the quality of service that would be provided.

The suggestion of an agency service was considered by the majority
to be a good idea, although many expressed that access to it might be difficult for those who were in most need of such a service. This concern was based on the fact that access to the local authority offices based in Mountain Ash and Aberdare was sometimes difficult for those living in other areas of the authority, particularly the elderly. Most respondents, when asked, were unaware that such an agency service for the elderly was already in existence in Aberdare, which demonstrates the need to publicise such services.
CHAPTER TWELVE: CONCLUSIONS

Although the responsibility for carrying out repairs is mainly that of the owner, the problem of disrepair must be addressed in order to maintain the condition of the national housing stock.

Although Wales has traditionally experienced high levels of owner-occupation, Government policies have relentlessly encouraged the growth of the tenure, providing opportunities to low-income owner-occupiers, while reducing its role in the repair and improvement of the properties to one of assisting those in greatest need through the means-testing of grants. Remaining owner-occupiers are left to their own means as to whether they wish to, or are able to carry out repairs. Disrepair in the owner-occupied sector has mainly been accounted for by factors such as insufficient finance and the fact that the owner is elderly. A variety of other reasons have been put forward, such as the bureaucracy involved in applying for a grant, the disturbance caused by extensive works, and the fact that any investment in the house is not recognised by an increase in its value due to the poor condition of surrounding properties.

Wales is experiencing high rates of unfit housing and disrepair particularly in localised areas, one of these areas being the South Wales Valleys where there is a particularly high percentage of old housing stock, the majority of which is owner-occupied. For reasons such as prevailing socio-economic circumstances and the fact that there is a high incidence of elderly households, there has been a long term trend towards disrepair of the housing stock (see chapter 3 and 4).

This study has approached the problem of disrepair in the owner-occupied sector by examining the attitudes and perceptions of owner-occupiers with regard to the condition of their dwellings. It
has set out to determine whether owner-occupiers in this particular area of Wales are able to identify that the external fabric of their dwellings require repair, which is fundamental as to whether works will actually be carried out. Subsequently, the attitudes of the owner-occupier are examined to ascertain what factors, in addition to financial circumstances, will affect their decision to carry out repairs.

The area studied is typical of other areas in the South Wales Valleys with regard to the type of housing to be found there, and the socio-economic characteristics of the population. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that the findings of this research may be applied to areas displaying similar characteristics. The main variable which may affect the application of these results is the way in which housing policy is implemented locally by the local authority.

It is also recognised that these conclusions are based on results obtained from the survey which was carried out during 1988/1989. Since the survey was conducted, the housing market has undergone a recession. If the survey were now repeated this may be reflected in owner-occupiers' opinions of the condition of their property, and the priorities and attitudes they hold towards repair and maintenance. The effects of other related issues such as the revised grant system would also have to be taken into account.

The effect of the respondents' attitudes towards their house and the area lived in, with regard to the repair of their property

From the opinions expressed by the respondents, it is indicated that they are generally satisfied with the area that they live in, however they have witnessed a general decline in the
infrastructure of the area and social attitudes. Many expressed feelings of neglect by the local authority in the general standard of services provided. It was apparent, particularly with the elderly respondents, that over the years there had been a demonstrable loss of community spirit which was once strongly associated with this type of area, and which was probably largely responsible for the commitment which most respondents felt towards the area.

Respondents generally tended to exhibit a pride towards the appearance of their property and seemed particularly conscious of the impression that others may form of them if their houses did not look acceptable. Many respondents would recount when everybody would scrub their own steps and sweep the pavement in front of their house, some of whom would still do this.

In addition to this, almost all the respondents claimed that they would not be deterred from carrying out repairs if neighbouring properties were in poor condition.

From this information it therefore seems unlikely that the disrepair experienced in the area could be accounted for by a lack of commitment to the area or the theory of 'prisoner's dilemma'.

Housing disrepair in the area was not deemed to be a particular problem by most respondents, but it was accepted that some owner-occupiers were faced with difficulties in maintaining their properties either due to their age, financial circumstances, or difficulties in obtaining grant aid. Respondents appeared to be hesitant to criticise those who had genuine problems in maintaining their properties but had little sympathy towards those who they felt did not care about their properties. This would again indicate an underlying feeling that owners should maintain their properties.
With regard to their own accommodation, the majority of respondents were generally satisfied. Any dissatisfaction expressed was largely due to the limitations imposed by the nature of the property for instance its size, the internal arrangement, and the steepness of gardens due to the topography of the area thus restricting the possibility of extending the property substantially. Grant activity in the area has served to ensure that a large proportion of properties have been improved by means of extension and provision with basic amenities, although many respondents had carried out works without the aid of grant.

The dissatisfaction expressed could be considered to indicate that the properties were tending to become obsolete with regard to the respondents' aspirations, however, respondents appeared to be content to remain in their accommodation having carried out what works they could to improve it. This may be due to the fact that although the respondent may aspire to have a certain standard of accommodation, they do not expect to be able to achieve that standard due to the limitations imposed by the nature of the housing in the area. In the Cynon Valley, although houses are of similar construction, there are variations in the size of houses, obviously relating to the status of the original occupant. There were therefore opportunities to move to larger, and possibly more desirable houses depending on the respondent's needs and aspirations. It was not unusual to find that respondents had lived in several houses, sometimes in the same community, often within neighbouring streets.

Examination of the information regarding respondent's satisfaction with their accommodation, repair seemed have little influence on their opinions. The fact that they owned the house and felt a
strong affiliation to the area often outweighed any disadvantages the house might have. This would tend to confirm the predilection for those living in this area towards becoming an owner-occupier.

Generally, respondents had an accurate perception of the general state of repair of their houses however, there were exceptions who appeared to have little perception of the condition of their property. There was little evidence to suggest that repair costs were associated with the satisfaction of the respondent with their accommodation, the area in which they lived, or their expected length of residence.

It can be concluded that although respondents expressed a desire to ensure that their properties were in good repair, it would not necessarily affect their satisfaction with the house, unless for instance, the disrepair was causing a nuisance, such as a leaking roof, or rising damp.

The ability of respondents to perceive the condition of individual items of the external fabric of their property

From the results obtained by comparing the respondents opinion of the repairs required to individual items of the external fabric, and the estimated repair costs found to be necessary, where there were felt to be no repairs required, the majority of respondents opinions corresponded with repair costs. The majority of respondents who identified items to be in disrepair generally demonstrated that their perception corresponded closely with the estimated repair costs.

However, discrepancies did occur in several cases as to the degree to which an item was in disrepair. Whereas underestimation of disrepair clearly indicated a lack of perception, overestimation of
repairs may have resulted where respondents were aware of problems that the surveyor was not, or where respondents were of the opinion that attention was needed to certain elements due to the age of the property.

The correlation co-efficients also failed to provide indication that there was a relationship between the perception of the respondent and estimated repair costs, although they indicate that respondents are better able to identify repairs required to the roof, windows and doors, and to a lesser extent the walls. In the case of walls, windows and doors, this is likely to be due to the fact that they are more easily inspected. Again, many respondents were of the opinion that the roof required repair or replacement due to the fact that it was the original roof. The results do, however, reveal that there are owner-occupiers who fail to recognise that their house requires repair and it is this problem that must be addressed.

Almost every respondent acknowledged the importance of maintaining the exterior of their house, the most frequently mentioned reason being its aesthetic value. The majority of respondents claimed they checked for disrepair regularly or occasionally, and that they carried out repairs as soon as possible, normally when they were able to afford to. Although the majority of respondents felt they were capable of recognising disrepair the results were not convincing. Results indicated that the respondents either could not or did not wish to carry out repairs, or that they were not as capable of recognising disrepair as they thought they were.

This, and previous results regarding the inability of some respondents to perceive disrepair would again indicate that there is
a need to ensure that owner-occupiers are made aware of the condition of their property.

Circumstances of the respondent and their effect on repair cost
As indicated by previous house condition surveys (W.O., 1982; W.O., 1988) repair costs tended to increase where the head of household was elderly, and where household income and savings were low, however this was not exclusively so, and no relationship was indicated by the correlation co-efficient calculated.
One cannot deduce that because a household has substantial income or savings these households must be able to afford to carry out the necessary repairs. They may be elderly and keeping these savings as security should the need arise, or they may be younger, with a family, and possibly saving for their education. It is not always possible to categorise households and automatically deduce whether they should be carrying out repairs without knowing their individual circumstances. A further factor to complicate this issue is that of the priority which the owner-occupier attaches to the condition of his or her house compared to other seemingly necessary matters.
There was also no evidence to suggest that houses that were owned outright were less likely to require greater repairs than those still mortgaged. In fact, slightly higher percentages of the former required greater repair costs. As has been suggested previously, the advantages of owning a property outright may be negated by factors such as old age, disability or low income.

Methods by which owner-occupiers execute repair works
This aspect was investigated as it would provide an indication as to
how owner-occupiers in such an area actually go about the maintenance of their properties and the problems they encounter. Difficulties in executing works have been found to be due both to external and self-imposed factors.

It was found that most respondents would finance repair works from their savings and ordinary income. Although some respondents were prepared to obtain a loan, take on a second or extended mortgage, or rely on family or friends, the majority were reluctant to commit themselves to any form of borrowing.

Any scheme that involved compromising the security of their property such as an equity scheme or one where repairs were carried out and a charge left remaining on the house, were not found to be acceptable. It is therefore unlikely that the promotion of such schemes in this type of area would meet with considerable success.

The majority of respondents claimed they would employ a contractor to carry out repair works, and to a lesser extent, some felt they would attempt certain repairs or ask a friend or relative to carry out repairs.

Many respondents, particularly the elderly, and female, claimed that they felt vulnerable when it came to employing a contractor and lacked confidence in the workmanship provided by contractors. It was also pointed out that the availability of contractors to carry out minor works and lack of information as to their reliability was a concern.

A situation such as that created by the 1982 budget when grant aid was substantially increased, resulted in a proliferation of firms which were not bona fide, and were unable to provide a warranty of any worth, and many of which are no longer operating.
The majority of respondents had applied or would consider applying for a grant. Those who had not, and would not consider applying for a grant gave reasons relating mainly to the conditions imposed by the local authority, for instance the extent of works to be carried out and the time in which they had to be completed. This would indicate a need to provide a more flexible system, whereby the extent of works carried out are more in line with what the owner feels necessary and is able to finance. This may include the introduction of secondary grants which the owner could apply for when he or she is again able to, and would include works not carried out previously.

There is also a demonstrated need for the accreditation of building contractors, which could be carried out locally by the local authority. The existence of, for example, a list of accredited contractors must also be publicised if it is to be of any effect.

**Implications for future housing policy**

Where disrepair can be accounted for by reasons such as low income, and lack of savings, it may be presumed that the means-testing of grants will assist such households. Although the success of this initiative is not considered in this research, recent work has found that means-testing does not encompass all those that are in need of financial assistance. This would include, for example, first-time buyers who have acquired properties in need of extensive repairs, due to the fact that housing costs including mortgage repayments, are not accounted for.

From this research it has become apparent that the majority of respondents are able to identify disrepair but choose not to carry out works either due to lack of resources, more pressing
commitments, or that they just do not wish to carry out the works. However, it has been shown that there are respondents who are unable to identify when their properties require repair and it is this problem that must be addressed. The suggestion of a structural survey to indicate what repairs were needed to the external fabric of the house was met with a favourable response by the respondents, and would be a way in which to ensure that owners are aware of the condition of their property. The main concerns expressed regarding such a scheme were the cost of the survey, and the respondent's ability to carry out works should they be needed. Such a scheme would be particularly helpful to the elderly who may have difficulty in inspecting their property. In the case of the elderly, subsequent problems will include encouraging them to carry out works that may incur considerable cost and disturbance. Agencies such as 'Care and Repair' and 'Staying Put' may be of assistance in providing such services. Minor works grants for the elderly have proved to be successful particularly as they are more easily administered, and although not a long-term solution to the improvement of the housing stock, they can serve to improve living conditions and maintain the condition of properties until more extensive works can be carried out.

Again, the majority of respondents were in favour of group repair schemes organised by the local authority. The feasibility of such schemes are now being affected by the widespread 'pepper-potting' that has occurred, making it difficult to meet the criteria necessary to designate areas for such schemes. Areas such as the Cynon Valley are experiencing problems of structural instability due to mine excavations, and the topography
of the land on which the housing was built. Expensive works may be necessary such as underpinning of properties, and replacement of retaining walls which have deteriorated, which even those with savings may be unable to afford. Where demolition or clearance cannot be considered, it is recommended that such works be carried out on an area basis, with sufficient cost limits applied to enable such a scheme to be successful. Such schemes would improve the area structurally and environmentally, and from the opinions expressed by respondents in this survey, it would increase residents satisfaction with the area generally.

A review of the current requirements for the declaration of renewal areas providing greater flexibility would facilitate the improvement of areas such as the Cynon Valley.

The availability of an agency service was also met favourably by respondents and the provision of such a service is recommended. It is important, however, that sufficient resources are made available to deal with the consequent number of applications received and that it is organised efficiently. The service must also be well publicised. It may wish to target certain groups of the population, such as the elderly, which is currently the situation in the Cynon Valley, but ideally this type of service would be generally available.

As well as the provision of an agency service to organise grant applications, a more accessible information service is recommended. Many respondents, particularly the elderly, felt that local authority offices were too far away. If elderly owners do not have a telephone or are apprehensive about using one, particularly in order to contact an official body, the local authority will indeed appear inaccessible. Failing the provision of local offices in
strategically positioned areas, it is recommended that information regarding home improvement and its importance be made available in public places such as shops, leisure and community centres, libraries and doctors' surgeries. Although mail drops may have some success there may be a tendency to treat information obtained in this way as 'junk mail' and subsequently dispose of it without reading it. It is recommended that information be available at all times in areas that are likely to be regularly frequented. It would also be advantageous if local authority personnel were able to make home visits when members of the public are unable to get to the local authority offices, to explain what assistance is available and the procedures involved. Again this service should be publicised, which would have significant implications for both local authority staffing and financial resources.

Further improvement of owner-occupied housing in areas such as the Cynon Valley may be achieved by first ensuring that owners are aware of the condition of their property and the importance of maintenance, followed by ensuring that the process of carrying out repair works is made as manageable as possible. This has implications at a national and local level. The factors determining the means-testing of grants would need to be examined in order to include those requiring financial assistance but who are found to be ineligible under the present system. Also, the prerequisites to group repair schemes and the declaration of renewal areas should be made more flexible, and the process of declaration less complex. Increased financial commitment by the Government is necessary in order to ensure that grant-aid can be provided to ensure that properties are improved to a high standard and not merely the basic fitness standard for which grant aid is mandatory.
Cost limits for area-based schemes should be increased due to the structural problems frequently encountered in areas such as the Cynon Valley, and to ensure that environmental works can be accomplished in order to achieve greatest impact.

Extra financial resources are also necessary to fund the extra staff resources required to facilitate the efficient processing of the more complex grant system, and to expand home improvement agencies. At a local level, implications would include the organisation of local authority services to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the grant system and the organisation of group repair schemes and renewal areas.

The service provided by the local authority must be accessible to the public, particularly certain factions such as the elderly, and disabled. Ultimately, the local authority must play a proactive role in the repair and maintenance of the owner-occupied housing stock.
APPENDIX A

THE STATUTORY FITNESS STANDARD - as defined by the Housing Act 1985 as amended by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Fitness for human habitation
Section 604. [1] ..., a dwelling-house is fit for human habitation for the purposes of this Act unless, in the opinion of the local housing authority, it fails to meet one or more of the requirements (a) to (l) below and by reason of that failure, is not reasonably suitable for occupation -

a. it is structurally stable;
b. it is free from serious disrepair;
c. it is free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants (if any);
d. it has adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation;
e. it has adequate piped supply of wholesome water;
f. there are satisfactory facilities in the dwelling-house for the preparation and cooking of food, including a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water;
g. it has a suitably located water-closet for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any);
h. it has, for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any), a suitably located fixed bath or shower and wash-hand basin each of which is provided with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water and
i. it has an effective system for the draining of foul, waste and surface water.
and any reference to a dwelling-house being unfit for human habitation shall be construed accordingly.
APPENDIX B

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The main aims of this research were to determine whether owner-occupiers were able to perceive whether their houses required repairs or not, and to obtain an insight into their attitudes towards the condition and maintenance of their dwellings.

The study concentrated on owner-occupied properties in the Cynon Valley. The survey was further limited to those houses constructed prior to 1919 being the predominant age group of housing in the Valleys areas and the fact that it is housing of this age group that exhibits the greatest problems with regard to disrepair.

In order to assess whether the owner-occupier is able to perceive disrepair it was necessary to obtain information regarding the owner-occupier's opinion of the condition of their house, and a quantitative measure of the actual disrepair found to be present by the surveyor against which to make a comparison.

For the purpose of this study, only the external features of each house were examined. This is due to the fact that one of the underlying themes of the study is the maintenance of the condition of the housing stock, which in turn depends more so on the condition of the external fabric of the dwelling than its internal repair. By ensuring that the property is free from structural defects, and is wind and weather tight, the internal fabric of the house will be less likely to fall into disrepair. It was also felt that the requirement to make an internal inspection may have a detrimental effect on the response rate.

Additional quantitative data, descriptive information, and opinion data of the sample population was required to provide a further insight into why owner-occupiers may or may not carry out repairs
to their properties, which is vital to ensuring the adequate maintenance of the housing stock, and may not be solely due to a lack of perception of disrepair.

It was therefore necessary to design a questionnaire, and a house condition inspection form so that the respondent's opinion of disrepair could be compared with that of the surveyor.

A structured questionnaire was selected as opposed to an interview, in order to standardise the survey and reduce bias. As the information obtained in the survey was to be transferred to the computer database package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a structured interview with coded answers would facilitate this process, but would also be flexible in that qualitative information could be obtained by asking open-ended questions.

A postal survey was not considered to be a suitable option as it would reduce the likelihood of obtaining a good response rate. This is particularly relevant in the light of the publicity which this area (that is, the Cynon Valley, and the South Wales Valleys as a whole) has been subjected to with regard to housing condition and deprivation. This could result in an intolerance of residents to a further survey of this nature. A survey conducted in this manner would also provide the opportunity to persuade reluctant respondents to participate.

A structured interview would also allow the interviewer to probe certain aspects which may appear to be of interest, and to provide further explanation of questions which respondents may not fully understand. However the necessity for this was reduced as much as possible when devising the questionnaire. It was anticipated that many respondents, particularly the elderly, would need encouragement with regard to the importance of their contribution.
to the survey, and reassurance as to its confidentiality.

The Questionnaire [see Appendix D]

The questionnaire was designed to obtain a considerable volume of information although not be so time consuming that the interviewee would find it tedious.

Initially, information was obtained to provide descriptive information with the regard to the 'housing careers' of the population being surveyed in order to appreciate the types of owner-occupiers that are encountered in the study areas. Such information included the length of residence in their present house, what their previous residence was, and what characteristics attracted them to their house.

Information providing an indication of the interviewee's commitment to their house was obtained by enquiring as to whether they possessed the leasehold or freehold to their house, the length of time they intended living there, and the reasons they may have for moving.

Information as to whether the respondent owned the house outright or whether they had a mortgage was obtained as an indication of available income that could be put towards maintenance of the house.

Questions involving self-appraisal were asked at various stages, for instance, whether they felt they were capable of recognising defects. Although this type of question is susceptible to fabrication by the respondent, it could yield relevant information regarding the attitudes of interviewees towards disrepair, and their own activities and capabilities.

Other opinions were sought in an attempt to establish whether
there was any correlation with widely-held beliefs used to explain the neglect of maintenance by owner-occupiers.

Following this, interviewees were asked whether they felt particular elements of the external fabric of their dwelling were in need of repair, and the extent required. This formed the basis of the research in that this information would be used to assess the ability of the respondent to perceive the condition of his or her property.

Information regarding grants was obtained, and also the services that would be considered helpful. This also provided an opportunity for any opinions regarding local organisations, including the local authority, to be aired.

Finally information regarding the household composition, social, economic, and financial factors were obtained. Those questions which were most likely to cause offence to certain individuals, notably those concerning finance, were left until the end of the questionnaire so as not to jeopardise its completion.

**External Inspection Form [see Appendix E]**

The purpose of the inspection form was essentially to identify those repairs that would render the property in a satisfactory state of repair, ensuring that the house would remain wind and weather tight. The defects might not necessarily have had any effect on the internal structure at the time of inspection, but would be expected to be remedied as soon as possible in order to prevent further deterioration. The intention was not to suggest that extensive repairs or improvements should be made where more moderate ones would have sufficed. This might justifiably occur in an inspection for grant purposes in order to ensure that the condition
of the property will be maintained for a reasonable length of time.
The form was designed to follow a logical progression and to be easily completed, but recording as much information as possible in order that reference could be made to each inspection should the need arise and defects easily identified.
The Welsh House Condition Survey 1986 measured disrepair in tenths of the particular element being inspected, or as units where applicable. A computer model was then used to arrive at a repair cost based on standard house types (W.O., 1988). The form used in this particular survey, however, utilised traditional measures of length and area. This would enable accurate measurement of the item in disrepair, and hence the repair cost, which was arrived at using a computerised database package.

A pilot survey was carried out consisting of 10 houses in a nearby area, so that the author could become familiar with the interviewing procedure, and to make any necessary alterations to the questionnaire and inspection form. The order of certain questions was changed so that the questionnaire proceeded more fluently, and the format of the inspection form was adapted so that it could be conducted more speedily. It was also felt that respondents reacted more favourably when the questionnaire preceded the inspection rather than vice versa. It tended to allow the author to explain the survey more fully, and strike up a certain rapport with the respondent, which was not possible during the first encounter on the doorstep. The respondent tended to be less co-operative when the inspection preceded the interview thus creating a rather uncomfortable atmosphere. The former format was therefore adopted.

Once the questionnaire and inspection forms had been designed,
the areas which were to be sampled were selected.

As a result of the way in which the Cynon Valley developed industrially, and hence residentially, most of the pre-1875 housing is situated in the north of the Valley, and similarly, most of the 1875-1919 housing is situated in the south.

As the condition of a house can be assumed to be dependent upon its age, and standard of construction as well as its subsequent maintenance, it was considered appropriate that housing from each of these age-bands should be represented.

It was decided that the survey should be carried out in specific areas rather than the Valley as a whole. This was due to the fact that given the size of the samples which could be practicably surveyed, the results would be more likely to be representative if smaller identifiable areas were selected than if taken across the whole of the Valley. Also, as the residential areas in the Valley tended to form specific communities, it was felt that this would provide more useful qualitative data with regard to the attitudes of the residents towards the areas in which they were living as they would be referring to an identifiable area.

The other factor which determined the number of areas to be examined was that of the size of the sample required. It was decided that it would be of more benefit to select fewer areas and subsequently increase the sample size. This would produce more data for each area, thus providing greater depth and significance to the results obtained.

It was therefore deemed appropriate to select two areas forming readily identifiable communities. From each of these it would be aimed to obtain 150 cases. The sample size was largely determined by what was thought to be practicable and which would also
provide adequate data for analysis. The areas were chosen on the
criteria that they each contained sufficient numbers of dwellings to
obtain an adequate sample; one area containing housing
constructed predominantly during the former period of the
development of the Valley, and the other containing housing built
predominantly during the latter period.
At the request of the Local Authority, two areas were excluded from
selection as they had recently been the subject of house condition
surveys. This would also avoid the possibility of the residents being
sensitised to a survey of this type.
The areas were selected with the aid of a survey carried out by
Cynon Valley Borough Council in 1985, listing the number of
houses on street by street basis for each area in the borough, and
their period of construction. From this information, and after
consultation with Local Authority officials to confirm that the areas
were likely to provide a satisfactory representation of housing
conditions, two survey areas were chosen. The areas selected were
Aberdare, and Abercynon, being two of the largest communities
which satisfied the required criteria - Aberdare consisting of
predominantly pre-1875 housing, and Abercynon, of
predominantly 1875-1919 housing (Table B.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of dwellings</th>
<th>Pre-1875</th>
<th>1875-1919</th>
<th>1919-1945</th>
<th>Post-1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdare</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(74%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aber-cynon</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1711</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td>(94%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey carried out by Cynon Valley Borough Council, 1985.
The sampling frame was obtained with the use of the Borough
Valuation Register. From the register it was possible to identify the nature of the property, notably whether it was residential or commercial, and in some instances whether it was recently constructed. This was preferable to the use of the electoral register as it was more likely to be complete.

It was intended that only those households living in dwellings that were wholly residential would be included in the final sample and subsequently surveyed. This was due to the fact that partially commercial properties were unlikely to constitute a large proportion of the sample and any information regarding this type of property may not be generally applicable to the owner-occupied sector.

All dwellings that appeared to fall into these categories from their description in the register, were not included in the sampling frame.

The only properties remaining in the sampling frame that were not required, were those built after 1919, and rented properties that were not identified in the register. These had to be accounted for when determining the size of the final sample required for each area in order to provide the desired number of cases.

The factors affecting the size of the required sample were:

1) The percentage of pre-1919 dwellings in the survey area.
2) The percentage of owner-occupiers in the survey area.
3) The number of interviews required.
4) The response rate.

In order to arrive at a suitable sample size, estimates had to be made of the factors mentioned above. These were only approximations that may themselves be subject to errors inherent in the survey from which they were obtained, and also due to
changes that might have occurred since the data was collected. For instance, Census data was now almost 10 years old, and ward boundaries of the Census and the Cynon Valley House Condition Survey do not correspond exactly with the survey areas. The percentage of pre-1919 dwellings was estimated from a survey carried out by Cynon Valley Borough Council in 1985, to provide the age of properties in the area. These were found to be 95% and 96% for Aberdare and Abercynon respectively. It had to be considered that any private construction and demolition carried out since the survey might affect these percentages. Since 1985 any new-build that had occurred was on the periphery of the survey areas, mainly in the form of private developments. This is due to the lack of available land for development within the existing residential areas. Only 2 demolitions had been carried out within the same period, both of these in Aberdare. The percentage of pre-1919 housing was unlikely to be affected to any great extent and was reduced further by actively removing any properties known to be recently constructed as indicated in the register. The percentage for owner-occupation was derived by obtaining an average of the percentages given by the 1981 Census, the Welsh House Condition Survey 1985, and the Cynon Valley House Condition Survey. The percentages arrived at were 90% for Aberdare and 87% for Abercynon. Finally, the response rate, based upon that obtained from the Welsh House Condition Survey 1985, was anticipated to be 80%, although the Welsh Inter Censal Survey obtained a rate of 85%, and the Cynon Valley House Condition Survey over 90%. It was, however, preferred to err on the side of caution, given that the total population in each area was large enough to accommodate the
resulting sample size required.

From these estimates, the sample required in each area to generate 150 interviews was determined.

This was calculated by dividing the number of required responses by each of the values for all of the above mentioned factors consecutively.

**Aberdare**

Total number of dwellings = 1520
% dwellings pre-1919 = 95%
% dwellings owner-occupied = 90%
Response rate = 80%
Required sample = \( \frac{150}{0.95 \times 0.90 \times 0.80} \)
= 219 dwellings

**Abercynon**

Total number of dwellings = 1305
% dwellings pre-1919 = 97%
% dwellings owner-occupied = 87%
Response rate = 80%
Required sample = \( \frac{150}{0.97 \times 0.87 \times 0.80} \)
= 230

A representative sample was obtained by drawing a systematic random sample from the final list of properties. This involved selecting the required number of dwellings at a uniform interval from the list, the first dwelling being randomly chosen. This method can be considered equivalent to a simple random sample (Blalock, 1972), and combined with the fact that the sampling frame consisted of a street by street listing of properties, it was ensured that the sample was drawn from across the whole of the study area. It must be stressed that this did not introduce bias to
the samples as the listing did not bear any trend corresponding to the variable being examined, namely, disrepair.

For Aberdare it was found that a 1 in 7 sample would provide 217 dwellings, and for Abercynon a 1 in 6 sample would provide 217 dwellings also. These fractions were deemed the most appropriate for the number of cases required.

The addresses were subsequently selected from the sampling frame for the corresponding areas and recorded.

The survey was carried out over a period of 5 months. Each visit was preceded by a letter to the occupants informing them of the nature of the survey. Co-ordination of the administering of letters and carrying out the visits was important so that delay between the receipt of a letter and the actual visit was not excessive and the likelihood of the occupants forgetting about the survey consequently reduced. It was also necessary to restrict revisits as it was evident that the progress of the survey would otherwise be deterred. Up to three visits were made if necessary, each at different times of the day, including evenings and weekends when necessary.

The interview was carried out with the head of the household or their spouse, and was found to last between three-quarters of an hour and two hours.

The data obtained from the social survey was input to the statistical analysis program, SPSS/PC (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), and the house condition data input to a computer program devised by Llantech, at Cardiff Institute which provided costings for the repairs required to each property (see Appendix G). The information regarding costs was then transferred to the SPSS program in order that it could be cross-tabulated with information
obtained from the social survey.

The information was analysed, including the calculation of correlation co-efficients for particular data to determine whether a relationship existed. The correlation co-efficient test used was the Spearman Rank Correlation Co-efficient test. The technique ranks the variables in ascending order and once this process has been completed the normal correlation co-efficient test is carried out. Correlation co-efficients have been provided where the test was conducted, and commented upon where the result is significant.
APPENDIX C

Response rates

As the properties were visited they were categorised as follows:

1) A successful interview and inspection carried out
2) A refusal
3) A non-response after at least three calls
4) A rented property thus not suitable for the survey
5) A property constructed after 1919 thus not suitable for the survey
6) A vacant property
7) Other properties which could not be included in the survey, for example, where the address could not be found.

The response rates for each area were as follows:

**Aberdare**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful interviews</td>
<td>102/217</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>48/217</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-response</td>
<td>32/217</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>13/217</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1919</td>
<td>5/217</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>12/217</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5/217</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abercynon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful interviews</td>
<td>95/216</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>55/216</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-response</td>
<td>33/216</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>9/216</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>15/216</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1919</td>
<td>6/216</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3/216</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response rates were not as high as anticipated. Many of the refusals were made by older people although this was not the rule. Suspicion of strangers, and lack of interest or time may have been responsible for their reaction. A common response was that of 'another questionnaire', and also that the survey was unlikely to help their situation. Overall, 197 successful interviews were carried out. Of the properties visited, 182 and 183 properties in Aberdare and Abercynon respectively were suitable for inclusion in the survey samples, that is they were owner-occupied and constructed prior to 1919. In view of this, response rates were in effect 56% for Aberdare and 52% for Abercynon.
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE

Type of house - Detached
              Semi-detached
              Mid-terraced
              End-terraced

Housing career

1. How long have you lived in this house?
   
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1 year or more but less than 2
   - 2 years or more but less than 5
   - 5 years or more but less than 10
   - 10 years or more but less than 20
   - 20 years or more
   - All life

2. What were your main reasons for buying this particular house?
   (If they have lived there all their life, ask why they stayed)
   
   - Suitable size
   - Affordable price
   - Good condition
   - Poor condition-wanted a place to do up
   - Rented it before buying
   - Inherited
   - Wanted to stay in area
   - To become an owner-occupier
   - Other

3. Could you tell me what your previous accommodation was?
   
   - Rented
   - Owner-occupied
   - Lived with parents
   - Council house
   - Other

4. Could you tell me if the house is leasehold or freehold?
   
   - Leasehold [Go to 5]
   - Freehold [Go to 6]

5. Could you tell me how many years are left on your lease?
6. Are you:
   The owner of this house outright, i.e. no mortgage
   Buying it with a mortgage
   Other

7. Could you tell me how long you intend to live in this house for?
   Less than 2 years
   2-5 years
   6-10 years
   More than 10 years
   Indefinitely
   Do not intend to move

8. What would be your reasons for moving?
   Larger house
   House in better repair
   Area
   Job
   Family
   Other

Attitudes

I'd like to ask you some questions to get an idea of what you think of the area and your house.

9. Thinking about this area, generally, would you say you are:
   [Show card]
   Very satisfied
   Fairly satisfied
   No strong feelings
   Rather dissatisfied
   Very dissatisfied

   What, if anything, do you particularly like about this area?

   What, if anything, do you particularly dislike about this area?

10. Do you think this area has a strong sense of community?
    Yes
    No/Not really
    Declining
    Don't know

11. What, if anything, do you think could be done to improve the area?


12. Do you think housing disrepair is a problem in this area?
   Yes
   No
   Comments, if any..............................................

13. Considering this house in general, would you say that you are:[Show card]
   Very satisfied
   Fairly satisfied
   No strong feelings
   Rather dissatisfied
   Very dissatisfied

14. What, if anything, do you particularly like about the house?
                                                                                     ..............................................

15. What, if anything, do you particularly dislike?
                                                                                     ..............................................

16. Is there any way in which you feel your house could be improved, either inside or outside? [Prompt]
   Made larger/more rooms
   Layout of the house
   Internal fittings/furnishings
   Lighting
   Internal repair
   Internal decoration
   External repair
   External paint work
   Excavation work
   Other..........................................................
   None

17. Will you carry out those improvements you mentioned?
   Yes  [Go to ]
   No   [Go to ]
   Other..........................................................

18. What is your reason for saying that?
   Cannot afford it
   Do not want to go to the trouble
   Not worth the investment

19. Would you say that, generally, the houses in this street are:[Show card]
   In good repair
   Some are in good repair
   The street is in poor repair on the whole
   Don’t know

175
20. What do you think of the condition of the outside of your house?
   Would you say that it is: [Show card]
   - In good condition with no need for repairs
   - In need of minor or moderate repairs
   - In need of major repairs
   - Don't know

21. Do you think that the outside of a house should be kept in good repair?
   - Yes
   - No

22. Can you tell me why you think this?
   - Aesthetic reason
   - To maintain structure
   - To maintain value
   - To keep weather tight
   - Other.................................

23. Thinking about the outside of your house, could you tell me which of the following statements applies to you? You may wish to give your own answer if you prefer? [Show card]
   - I regularly check to see if repairs are needed
   - I occasionally check to see if repairs are needed
   - I rarely check to see if repairs are needed
   - I never check to see if repairs are needed
   - Other.................................

24. Could you give me the reason for this?

25. Again thinking about the outside of your house, could you tell me which of the following statements applies to you? if none of these apply, you may give your own answer. [Show card]
   - I get repairs done as soon as possible
   - I get repairs done when they become absolutely necessary
   - I rarely get repairs done
   - I never get repairs done
   - Other.................................

26. Could you tell me the reason why?

27. Would the condition of neighbouring houses affect your decision to carry out repairs to the outside of your house?
   - Yes
     - In what way?............................
   - No
     - Comments.............................
28. Which would you say receives greater priority as far as repairs or improvements are concerned?
   - The inside of the house
   - The outside of the house
   - About the same
   - Don't know

Opinion of repair of individual external features

29. Could you tell me whether you think the following parts of your house are in need of repair?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Minor repair</th>
<th>Major repair</th>
<th>Replace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chimneys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof structure / covering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutters/downpipes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External walls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows and doors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. Do you think you will be able to get these repairs done?
   - All of them [Go to 34]
   - Some of them [Go to 31]
   - None of them [Go to 31]

31. Why is this?
    ........................................................................................................

32. Would you get them done if you were able to get a grant?
   - Yes [Go to 34]
   - No

33. Why do you say that?
    ........................................................................................................

34. Would you say that: [Show card]
   You feel capable of recognising if repairs are needed to the outside of your house.
   You would not always be able to recognise when repairs were needed to the outside of your house.
   Other ........................................................................................................
Grants

35. Have you ever applied for a grant from the local authority to do repairs or improvements?
   Yes [Go to 38]
   No

36. Would you ever consider applying for a grant?
   Yes [Go to 40]
   No

37. Is there any particular reason for this?
   Didn’t know about grants
   Found out we weren’t eligible
   Didn’t think we were eligible
   Don’t like filling in forms
   Want to sell within 5 years
   Want to work at own pace
   Only want to do a few jobs
   Could not afford contribution
   Other ........................................
   [Go to 40]

38. Did you receive the grant money?
   Yes [Go to 40]
   No

39. Can you tell me why?
   ..................................................

40. Does the condition of your house, or the maintenance of it, worry you in any way?
   Yes
     Could you tell me why?..............
     ..................................................
   No

41. If the following services were available, would you take them up?
   A structural survey pointing out what repairs are needed to the outside of your house
   A local authority scheme to carry out repairs to the houses in your street
   An agency service to give advice, and help organise a grant application

Comments ..................................................
The household

The next set of questions are for general information about the people who live in this house.

42. The following questions are to be answered on the table below.

Can you tell me who normally lives in this house and what their relationship to the head of the household is?
How old was each person last birthday?
If 16 years or more, are they:
   Employed
   Housewife
   Unemployed
   Retired
   Temp. sick
   Perm. sick/disabled
   In education
   Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Relationship to head of household</th>
<th>Sex [M/F]</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HOH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of persons:
Age of HOH:
Sex of HOH:
E.S. of HOH:

43. Ask those members of the household who are in paid employment:
   What is ....'s occupation/job title?

In addition, ask the head of the household:

What type of industry or business is that?
Is .... an employee or is he/she self-employed?
Does .... supervise or is he/she responsible for the work of other people?
If yes, how many people does he/she supervise?
Is that job full-time (i.e. 30 hours or more per week) or part-time?
Where is ....'s place of work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Type of industry</th>
<th>Employed/ Self-employed</th>
<th>Supervisory [Y/N]</th>
<th>No. supervised</th>
<th>Full time/ part time</th>
<th>Place of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socio-economic group of HOH ......

Finance

The next set of questions are for me to compare what people are able to spend on their houses, and whether they would be able to obtain a grant or not.

44. [Apart from grant] how would you finance the repair works you may carry out?
   - Ordinary income
   - Savings
   - Bank loan
   - Building society loan
   - Other loan
   - Extended/second mortgage
   - Family/friends
   - Other

45. Could you please tell me the letter opposite the category which shows the net income of the whole household. i.e. after N.I. and tax have been deducted, and taking into account all sources of income except minor contributions e.g. board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Net annual household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Less than £2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>£2000-2999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£3000-3999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£4000-4999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>£5000-5999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>£6000-7999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>£8000-9999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>£10000-11999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>£12000-14999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>£15000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Refused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
46. Could you please tell me the letter opposite the category which your total household savings falls into?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>£0 - £999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>£1000-£1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£2000-£2499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£2500-£2999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>£3000-£3999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>£4000-£4999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>£5000-£5999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>£6000-£6999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>£7000-£7999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>£8000 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Refused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for your co-operation!
## APPENDIX E

### HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY FORM

**REFERENCE NUMBER:**

**ITEM**

**CHIMNEY STACKS**

Number: Main

Other

Faults/Remedy:

Lead work:

Faults/Remedy:

### REAR ELEVATION

**ROOF STRUCTURE**

Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitched</th>
<th>Flat</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

**ROOF COVERING**

Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tile</th>
<th>Slate</th>
<th>Felt</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Asbestos</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

**WALL STRUCTURE**

Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masonry cavity</th>
<th>Masonry solid&lt;9</th>
<th>Masonry solid=9</th>
<th>Masonry solid&gt;9</th>
<th>Concrete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:
WALL SURFACE
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brick</th>
<th>Render</th>
<th>Stone</th>
<th>Timber</th>
<th>Tile</th>
<th>Concrete</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

GUTTERING
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>150hr</th>
<th>100hr</th>
<th>OG</th>
<th>Square</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>Cast</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

DOWNPIPES
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plastic</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Asbestos</th>
<th>Metal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

WEATHERBOARDS
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Plastic</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

WINDOWS AND FRAMES
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wood case</th>
<th>Wood sash</th>
<th>Steel</th>
<th>uPVC</th>
<th>Aluminium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

No.:

Defects/Remedy:

DOORS AND FRAMES
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>uPVC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

No.:

Defects:
EXTENSION

**ROOF STRUCTURE**

Type:

| Pitched | Flat   | Other |

Defects/Remedy:

**ROOF COVERING**

Type:

| Tile | Slate | Felt | Metal | Asbestos | Other |

Defects/Remedy:

**WALL STRUCTURE**

Type:

| Masonry cavity | Masonry solid<9 | Masonry solid=9 | Masonry solid>9 | Concrete |

Defects/Remedy:

**WALL SURFACE**

Type:

| Brick | Render | Stone | Timber | Tile | Concrete | Other |

Defects/Remedy:

**GUTTERING**

Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>150hr</th>
<th>100hr</th>
<th>OG</th>
<th>Square</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>Cast</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

**DOWNPIPES**

Type:

| Plastic | Cast | Asbestos | Metal |

Defects/Remedy:
WEATHERBOARDS
Type:
Wood  Plastic  Other  None
Defects/Remedy:

WINDOWS AND FRAMES
Type:
Wood case  Wood sash  Steel  uPVC  Aluminium
No.:
Defects/Remedy:

DOORS AND FRAMES
Type:
Wood  Metal  uPVC
No.:
Defects:

SIDE ELEVATION

ROOF STRUCTURE
Type:
Pitched  Flat  Other
Defects/Remedy:

ROOF COVERING
Type:
Tile  Slate  Felt  Metal  Asbestos  Other
Defects/Remedy:
WALL STRUCTURE
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masonry cavity</th>
<th>Masonry solid&lt;9</th>
<th>Masonry solid=9</th>
<th>Masonry&gt;9</th>
<th>Concrete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

WALL SURFACE
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brick</th>
<th>Render</th>
<th>Stone</th>
<th>Timber</th>
<th>Tile</th>
<th>Concrete</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

GUTTERING
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>150hr</th>
<th>100hr</th>
<th>OG</th>
<th>Square</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>Cast</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

DOWNPIPES
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plastic</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Asbestos</th>
<th>Metal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

WEATHERBOARDS
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Plastic</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

WINDOWS AND FRAMES
Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wood case</th>
<th>Wood sash</th>
<th>Steel</th>
<th>uPVC</th>
<th>Aluminium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

No.: 186
Defects/Remedy:
DOORS AND FRAMES

Type:

| Wood | Metal | uPVC |

No.: 
Defects:

FRONT ELEVATION

ROOF STRUCTURE

Type:

| Pitched | Flat | Other |

Defects/Remedy:

ROOF COVERING

Type:

| Tile | Slate | Felt | Metal | Asbestos | Other |

Defects/Remedy:

WALL Structure

Type:

| Masonry cavity | Masonry solid<9 | Masonry solid=9 | Masonry solid>9 | Concrete |

Defects/Remedy:

WALL SURFACE

Type:

| Brick | Render | Stone | Timber | Tile | Concrete | Other |

Defects/Remedy:
**GUTTERING**

Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>150hr</th>
<th>100hr</th>
<th>OG</th>
<th>Square</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>Cast</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defects/Remedy:

**DOWNPIPES**

Type:

| Plastic | Cast | Asbestos | Metal |

Defects/Remedy:

**WEATHERBOARDS**

Type:

| Wood | Plastic | Other | None |

Defects/Remedy:

**WINDOWS AND FRAMES**

Type:

| Wood case | Wood sash | Steel | uPVC | Aluminium |

No.: 

Defects/Remedy:

**DOORS AND FRAMES**

Type:

| Wood | Metal | uPVC |

No.: 

Defects:
APPENDIX F

Table F.1: Economic status of population of Cynon Valley of employable age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time work</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered unemployed</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not working and not registered unemployed</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Welsh Inter Censal Survey 1986, [1988], p58

Table F.2: Socio-economic group of males and females over the age of 16 in the Cynon Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-economic group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers and managerial</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate and junior non-manual</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled manual</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled manual</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never worked / inadequately described</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Welsh Inter Censal Survey 1986, [1988], p66
APPENDIX G

Use of the house condition survey form and calculation of repair costs

The survey of the external condition of the properties was recorded on the form found in Appendix E. Details regarding the type and/or construction of individual elements of the house, the defects that were present with the appropriate remedy, and the relevant measurements, were recorded.

The author being a qualified Environmental Health Officer, was able to carry out the inspections.

The information recorded was then transferred to a computer program developed by Llantech, a consultancy based at Cardiff Institute of Higher Education, providing services to both public and private bodies, which included conducting house condition surveys.

The database program used was DBIII which provided unit costs for repairs based upon those provided in standard texts. The program was flexible in that costs could be altered and items added when necessary.

The computer program allowed for various remedies to be input ranging from the repair of the element to its replacement.

The details regarding the type and construction of the element in disrepair, the appropriate remedy, and measurements, were inputted to the program and repair costs calculated.

The information regarding repair costs for both individual elements and the house as a whole, externally, were then transferred to the SPSSPC databases to facilitate the comparison of information obtained in the social survey, with repair costs.
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