

ANNEX 10 - Housing Executive Domestic Vacant Rate Property Survey

Background

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Research Unit was asked to carry out research into vacant dwellings by Rating Policy Division, Department of Finance and Personnel. The main aim of the research was to examine the reasons why properties become vacant and record the condition of a sample of these dwellings.

The survey fieldwork was conducted in Belfast, Omagh, Downpatrick and Cookstown districts to allow comparisons of results in both urban and more rural areas.

A random sample of thirty addresses were selected from a database supplied by the Rates Collection Agency and the primary fieldwork took place in January/February 2003. A total of 104 properties were visited by research staff (all of whom had worked on the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey) and observations were recorded on the condition and occupancy of each property, giving a response rate of 87%.

An attempt was made on each visit to a property to gather information from neighbours, builders on site, owners etc but in a lot of cases the source of information recorded was the research staffs' personal estimation.

| | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Estimate/Appearance | 64 | 62 |
| Neighbour | 26 | 25 |
| Occupant | 6 | 6 |
| Former Occupant | 3 | 3 |
| Builder | 2 | 2 |
| Workmen | 2 | 2 |
| Owner | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

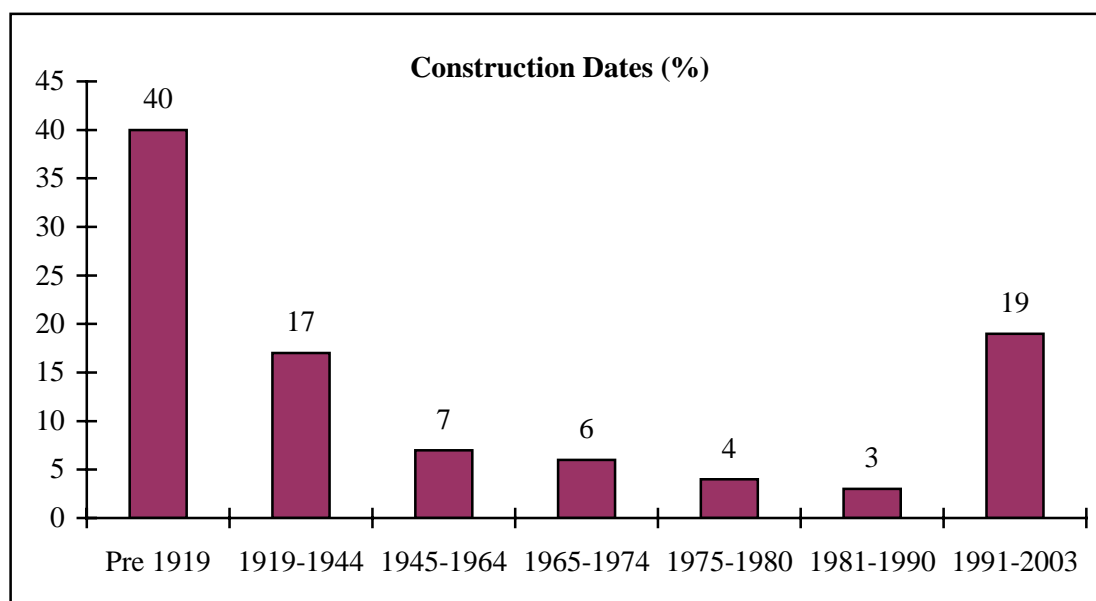
Survey Results¹

Construction Dates

The construction date of the highest proportion of dwellings (40%) was pre 1919. 17% were estimated to have been built between 1919 and 1944 and 13% between 1945 and 1974. Almost one-fifth (19%) of properties were estimated to have been built between 1991 and the present.

¹ Due to rounding figures may not add to 100%.

Figure 1: Construction dates



Omagh district had the highest proportion of pre 1919 dwellings (58%) followed by Cookstown (44%), Belfast (32%) and Downpatrick (30%). The situation is reversed for dwellings constructed from 1991 to date: Downpatrick (37%), Belfast (18%), Cookstown (16%) and Omagh (7%).

Dwelling Type

The highest proportion of dwellings (42%) were detached properties. One-fifth (20%) of all properties visited were mid-terrace and almost one-tenth (8%) were end terrace.

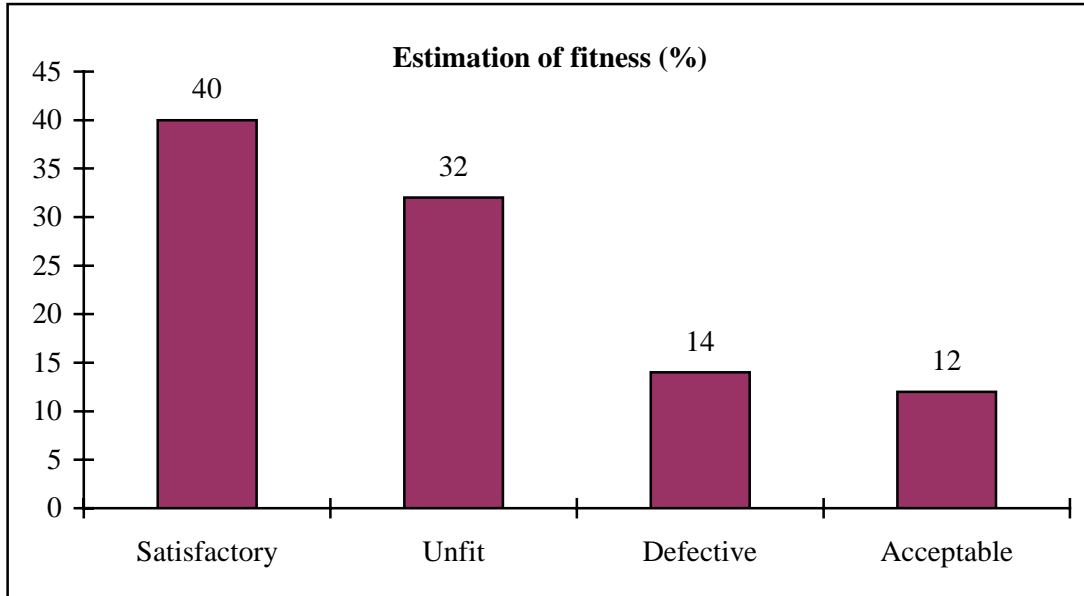
Of the 104 properties visited 81 (78%) were bungalows.

Three-quarters (75%) of all properties visited were considered to be (or have previously been) permanent residences. 7% were considered to have been second or holiday homes and it was impossible to determine the former use in 18% of cases.

Estimation of Fitness

Almost one-third (32%) of the properties visited were considered to be unfit, 14% were considered defective, 12% were considered acceptable and 43% were considered to be in a satisfactory condition.

Figure 2: Estimation of fitness

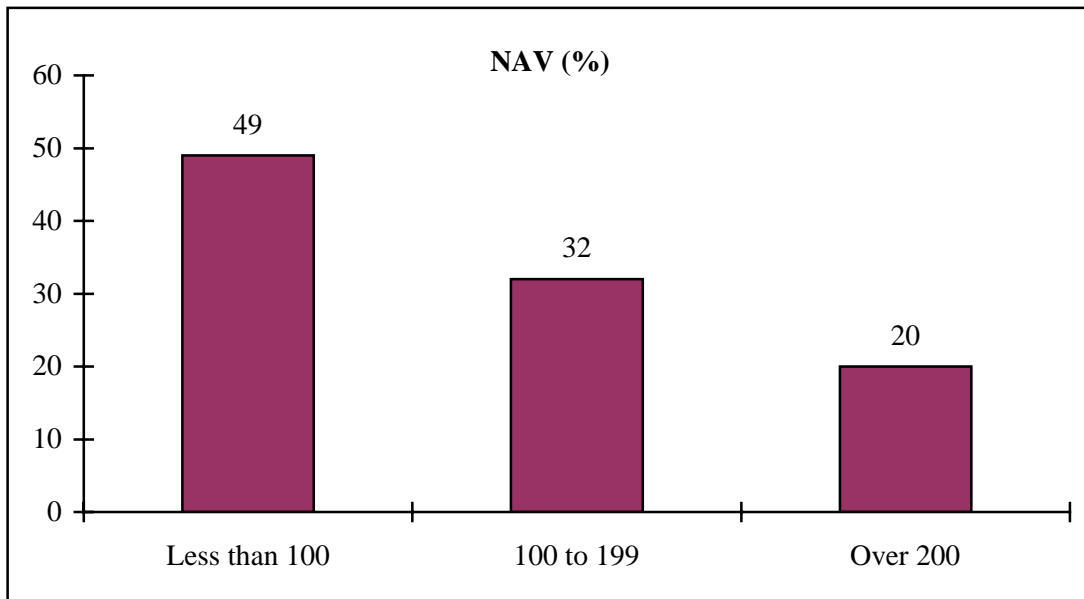


The level of fitness varied across the four districts covered. Research staff considered Cookstown district to have the highest level of unfit (56%), in contrast with Belfast where 7% of properties were considered to be unfit. 42% of properties visited in Omagh and 26% of properties visited in Downpatrick were considered to be unfit. Belfast had the highest number of properties considered to be in a satisfactory condition (57%). 50% of properties in Omagh district were considered to be satisfactory, compared to 41% in Downpatrick and 24% of dwellings in Cookstown.

Net Annual Value (NAV)

Almost half (49%) of the properties had an NAV of less than one hundred. 32% had an NAV of between 100 and 199 and one-fifth (20%) of properties had an NAV of over 200.

Figure 3: Net Annual Value (NAV)



Two-thirds of the properties visited in Omagh had an NAV of less than 100 as did 56% of the properties in Cookstown, 44% in Downpatrick and 32% of the properties visited in Belfast had an NAV of less than 100.

43% of properties in Belfast had an NAV of between 100 and 200, 37% of properties in Downpatrick, 28% in Cookstown and 17% of properties in Omagh had an NAV of between 100 and 200.

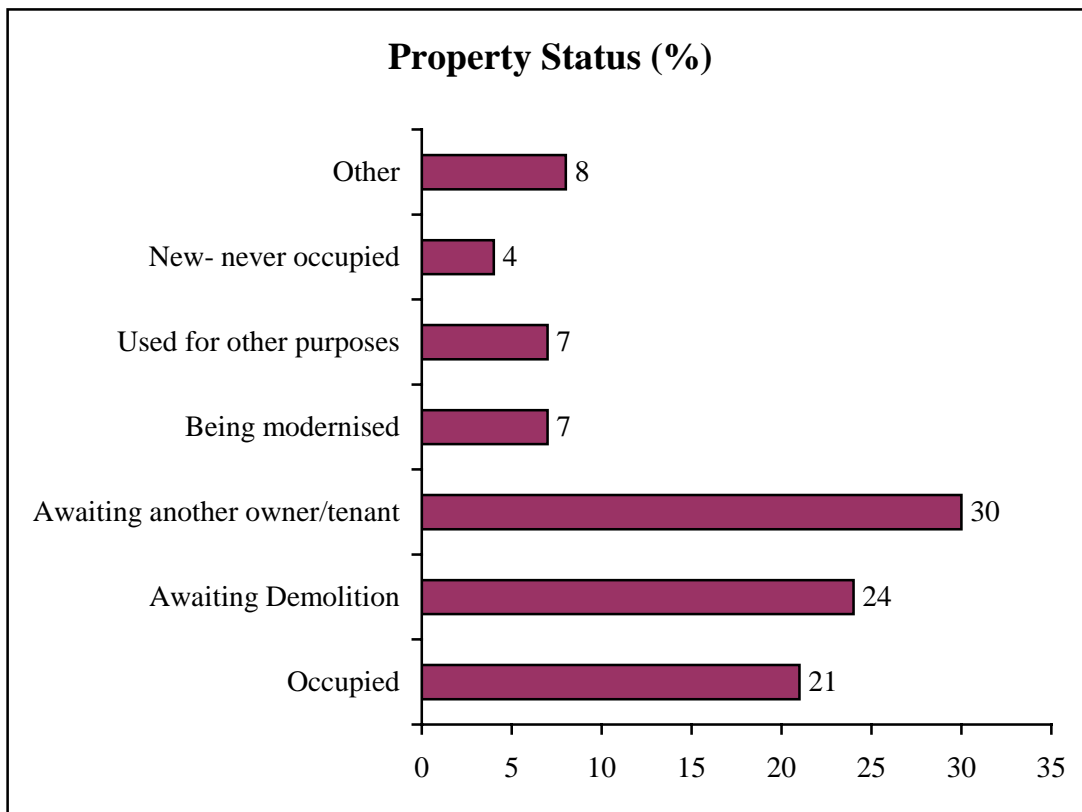
One-quarter of properties visited in Belfast had an NAV of over 200, 19% in Downpatrick, 17% in Omagh and 16% of the properties in Cookstown had an NAV of 200 or more.

Occupancy

Over one-fifth (21%) of the properties visited were considered by the research staff to be currently occupied. Four dwellings were considered to have been occupied for less than one year, five for between one and two years and one dwelling had been occupied for more than three years. It was impossible for fieldworkers to establish how long the remaining twelve dwellings had been occupied. A small percentage (4%) were new properties (under construction) which had never been tenanted/owned.

Of the remaining vacant properties (75%), 30% were awaiting another owner/tenant; 24% were derelict/awaiting demolition; 7% were being modernised; and 7% were being used for other purposes.

Figure 4: Property status



37% of the properties visited in Downpatrick were considered by Research staff to be occupied, as were 21% of properties in Belfast, 14% of properties in Omagh and 8% of properties visited in Cookstown.

Almost half (46%) of properties visited in Belfast were awaiting another owner/tenant.

44% of properties in Cookstown were derelict/awaiting demolition.

It was estimated by the research staff that 16% of all vacant properties had not been lived in for more than twenty years. Just over one-tenth (12%) of properties were considered to have been vacant for between ten and twenty years, 5% for between five and ten years and one-quarter (25%) were considered to have been vacant for between one and five years. A small percentage (3%) were considered by fieldworkers to have been vacant for less than one year. In the majority of cases (40%) it was impossible for the fieldworkers to gain any information from neighbours, surrounding businesses, workmen etc on the length of time the property had been vacant.

16% of all dwellings were boarded up or secured.

Conclusions

This research supplies a snap shot of the condition/occupancy of a small random sample of dwellings in four district council areas in Northern Ireland.

Although it reports some valuable information, it was impossible for the fieldworkers to determine the reasons why many of the properties visited had become vacant.

It may be useful to note that the two more rural areas (Omagh and Cookstown) had the highest proportion of properties built pre 1919 (58% and 44% respectively) and also the highest level of unfitness (42% and 56% respectively).

**Research Unit
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
May 2003**

Appendix 1 Comparison Graphs

Construction Dates

Figure 5:

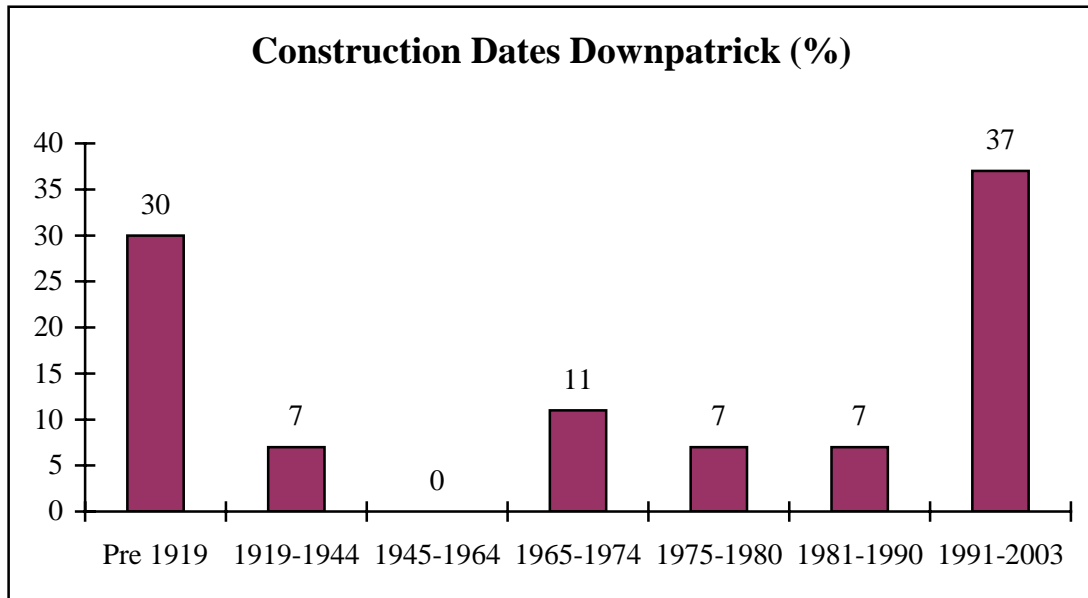


Figure 6:

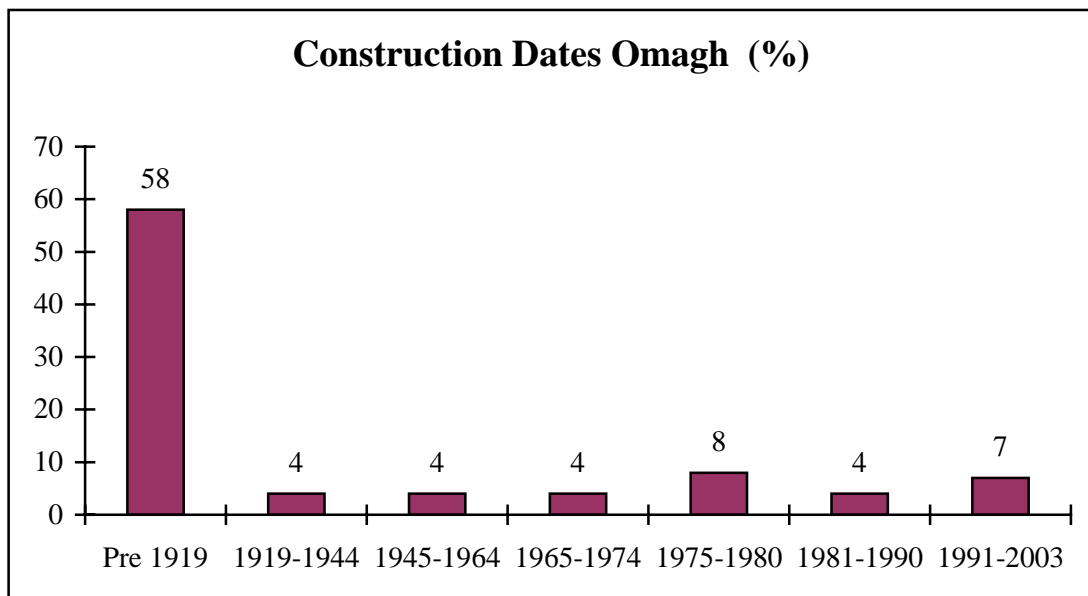


Figure 7:

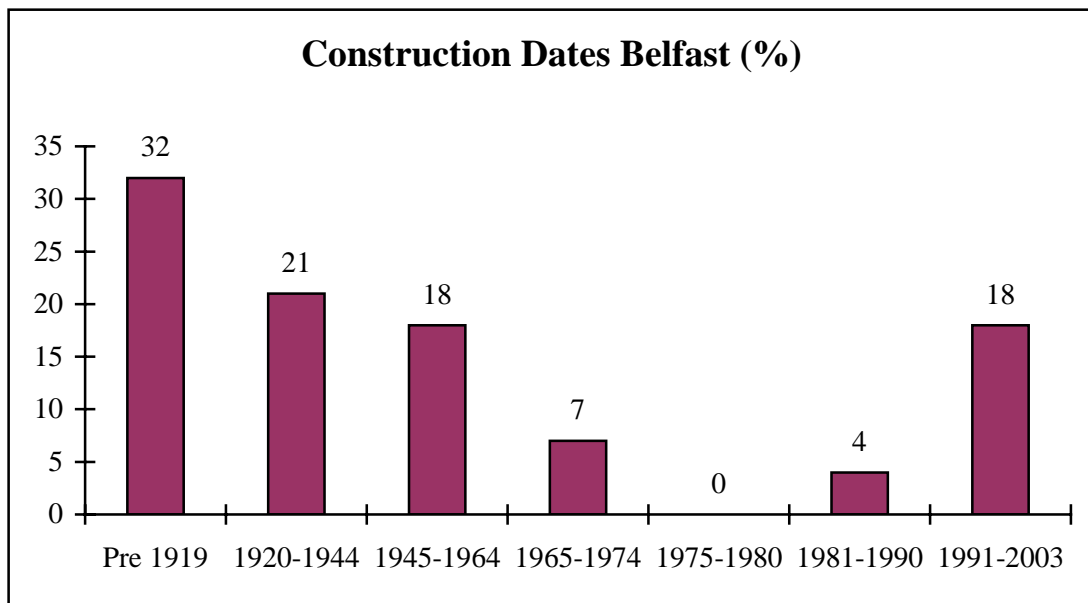
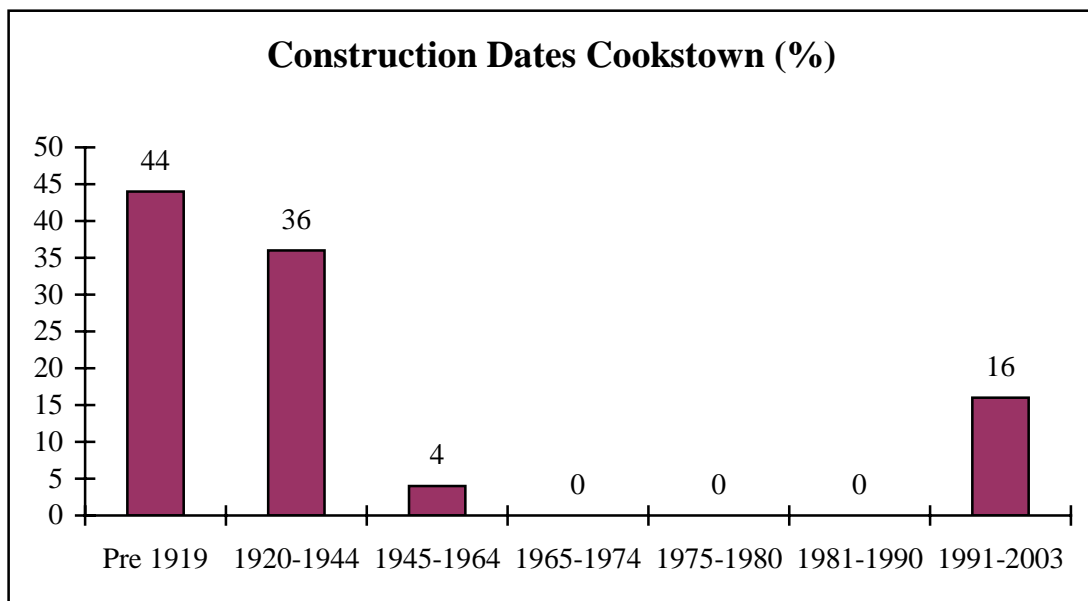


Figure 8:



Estimation of Fitness

Figure 9:

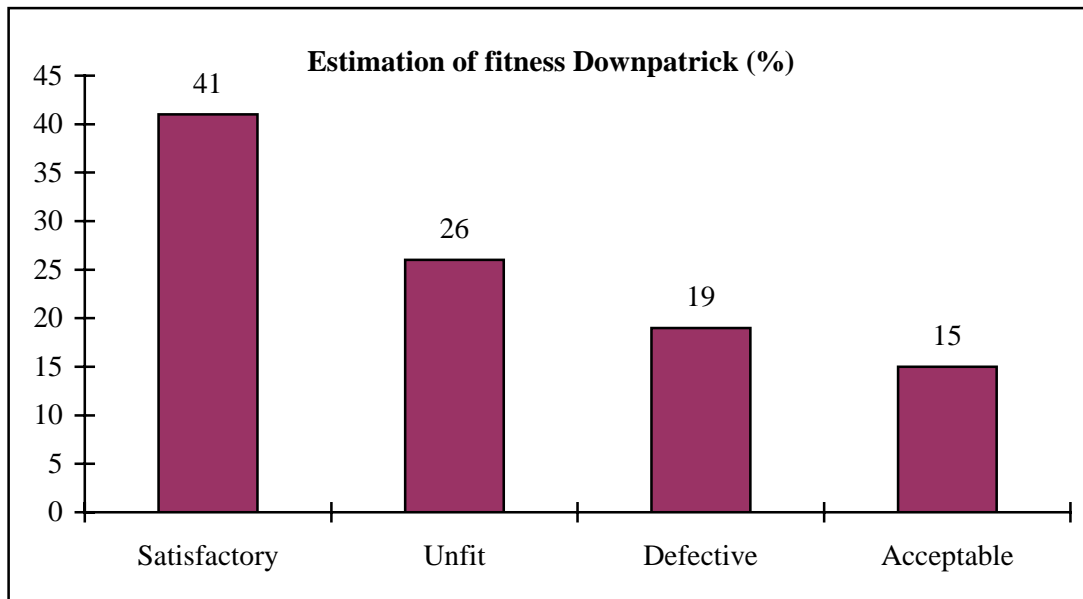


Figure 10:

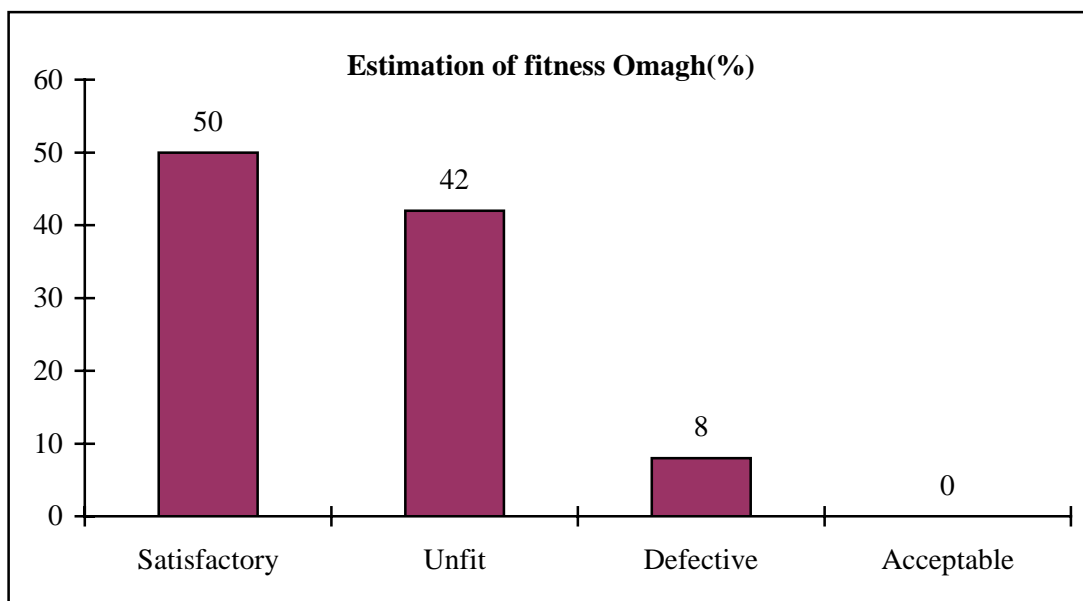


Figure 11:

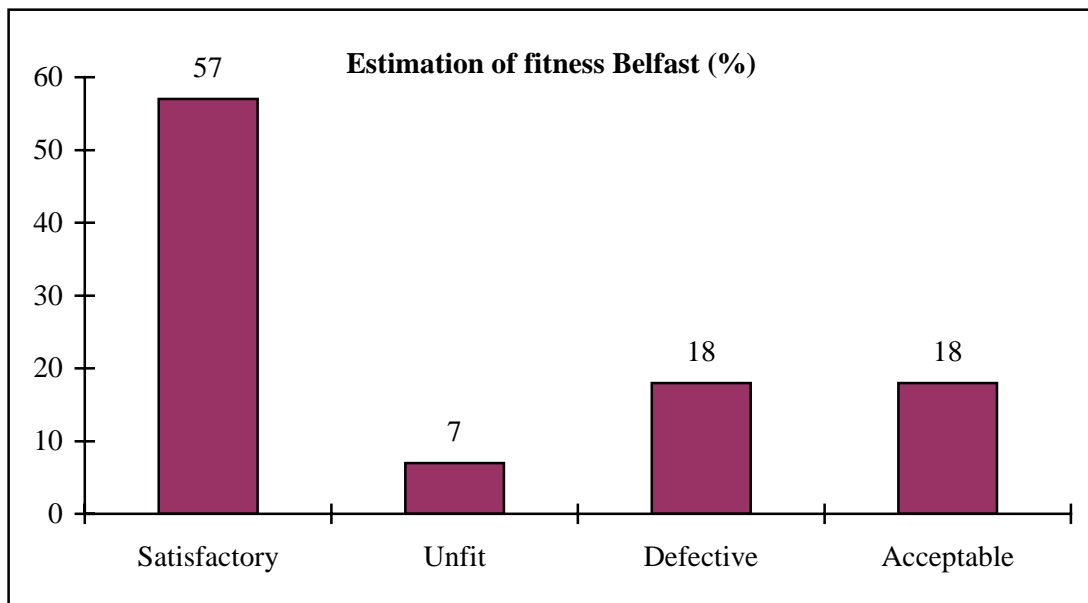
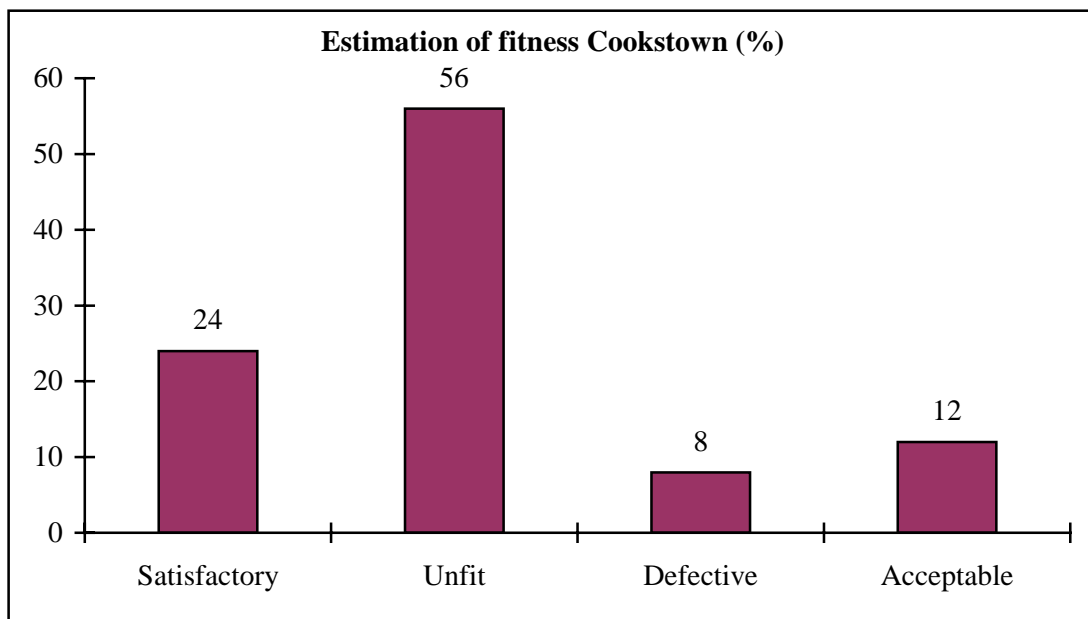


Figure 12:



Net Annual Value (NAV)

Figure 13

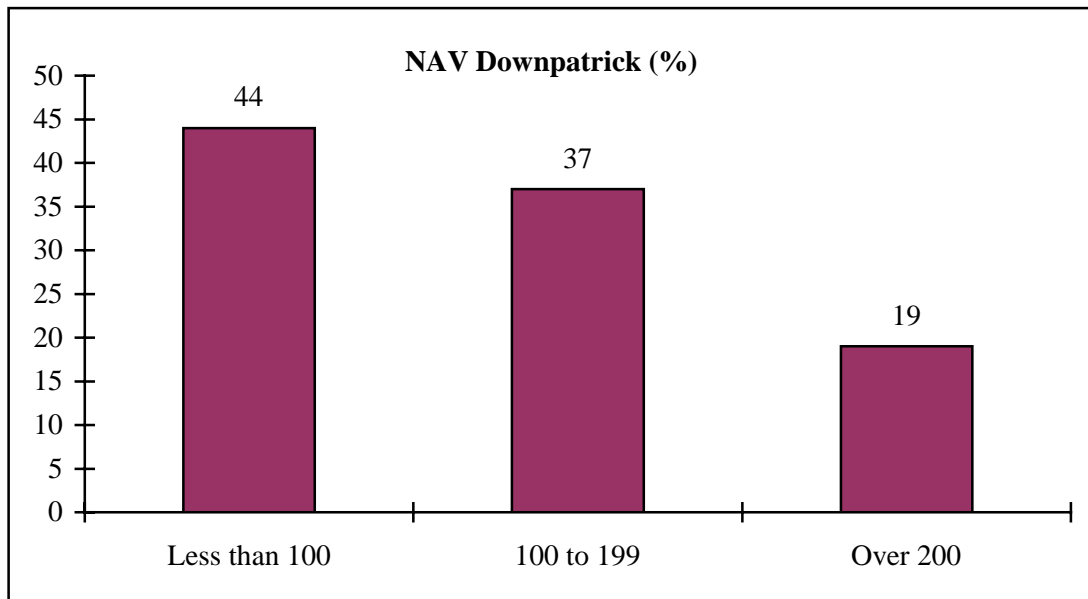


Figure 14:

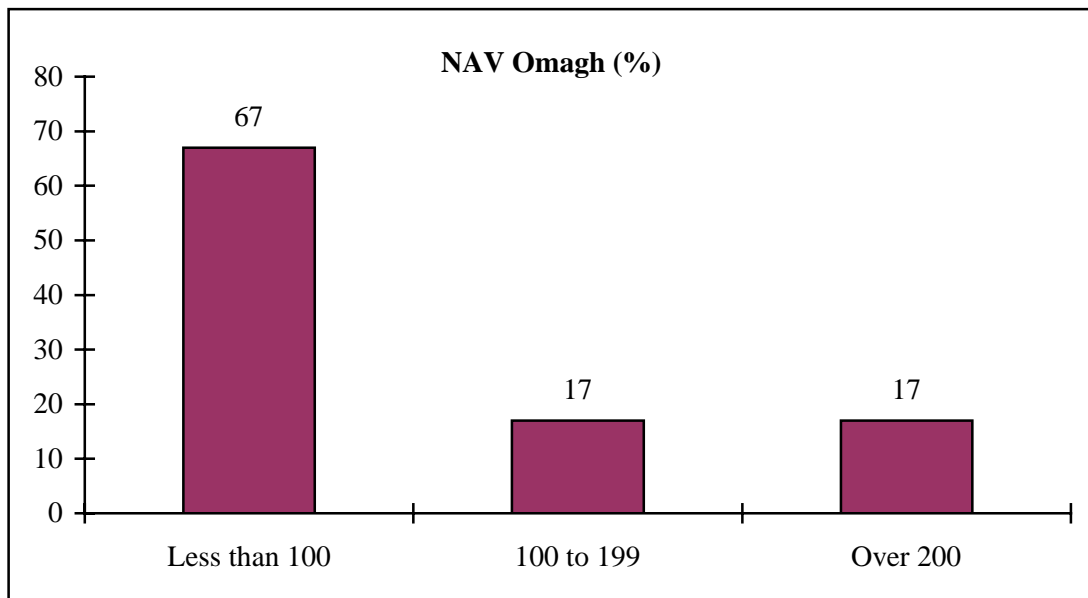


Figure 15:

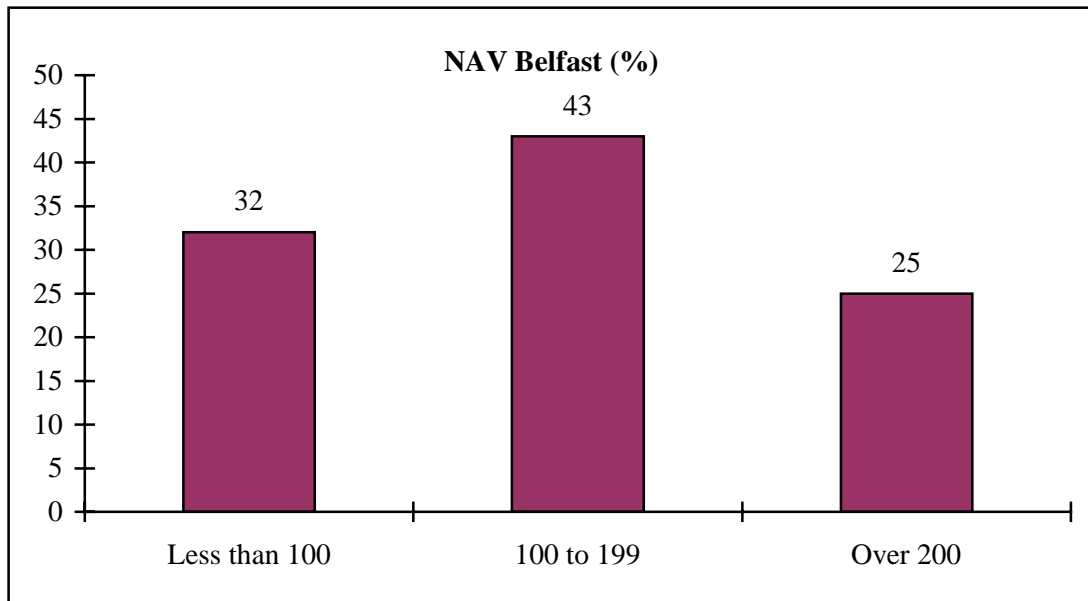
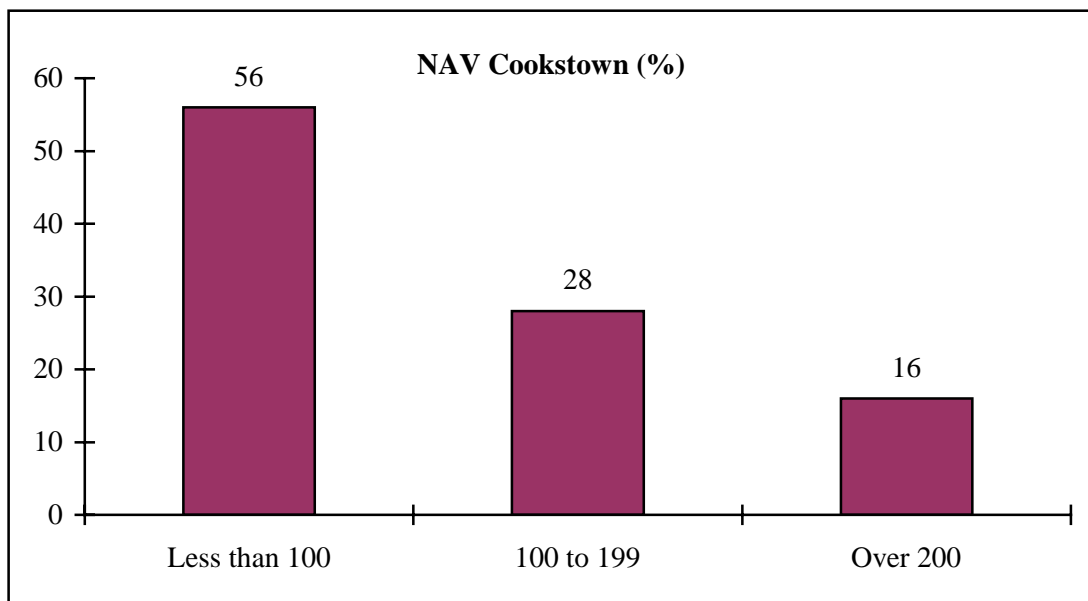


Figure 16:



Occupancy

Figure 17:

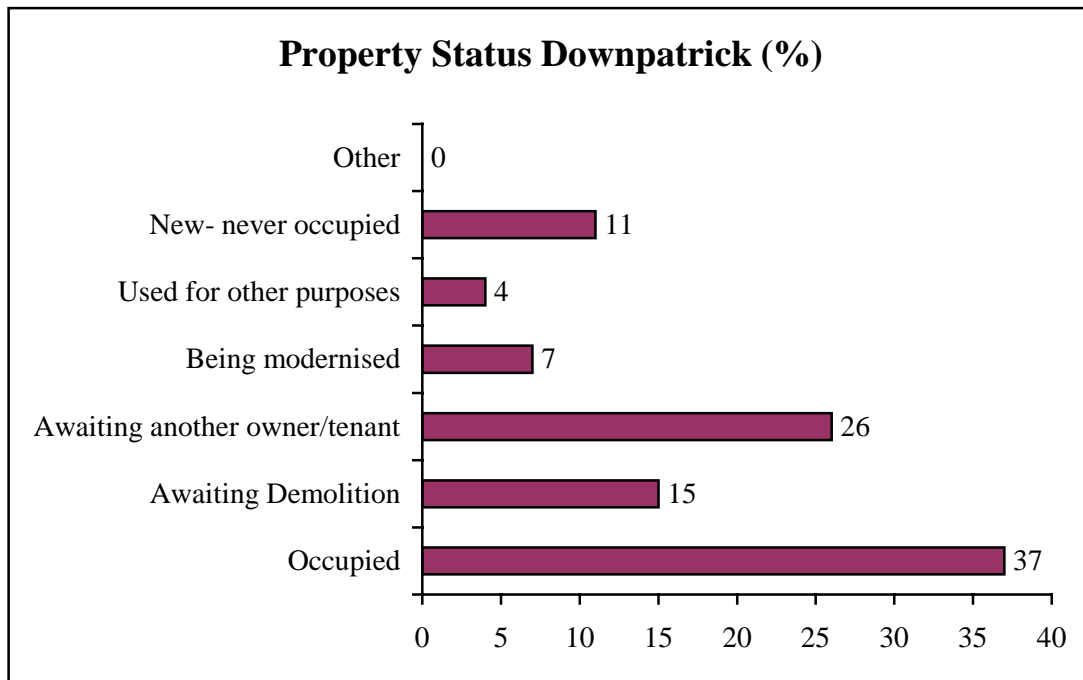


Figure 18:

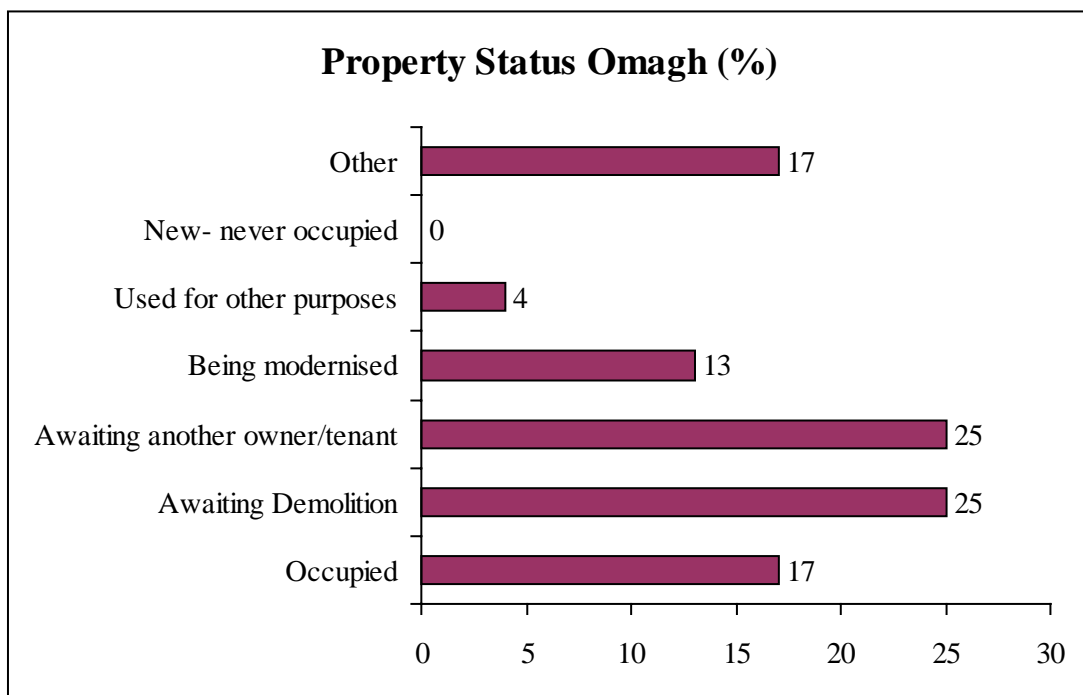


Figure 19:

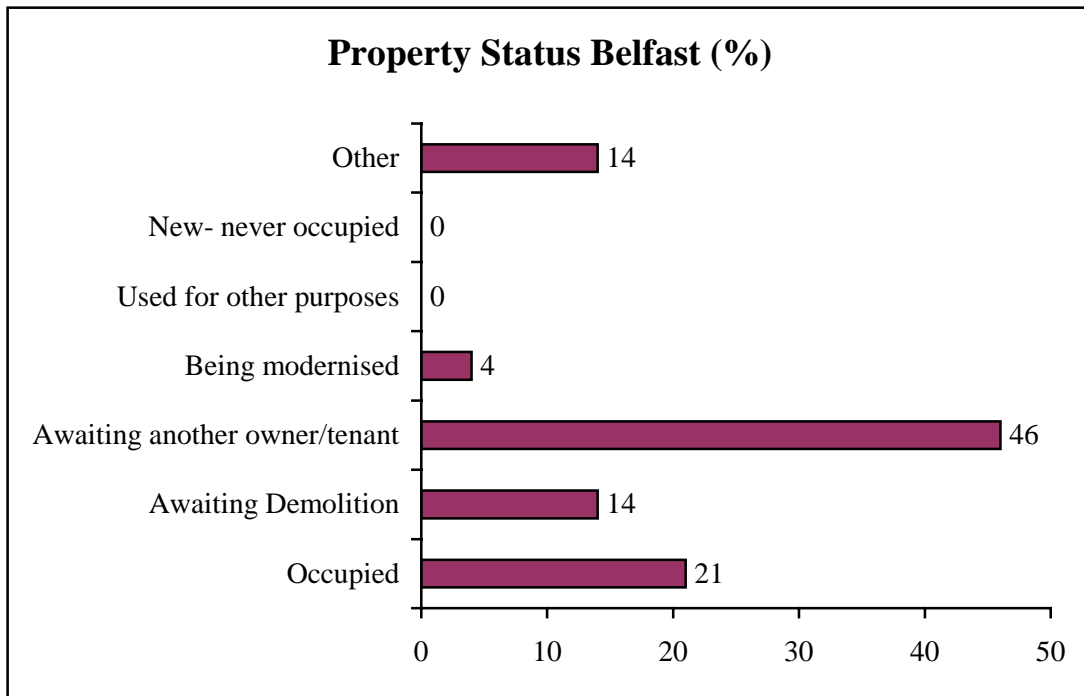
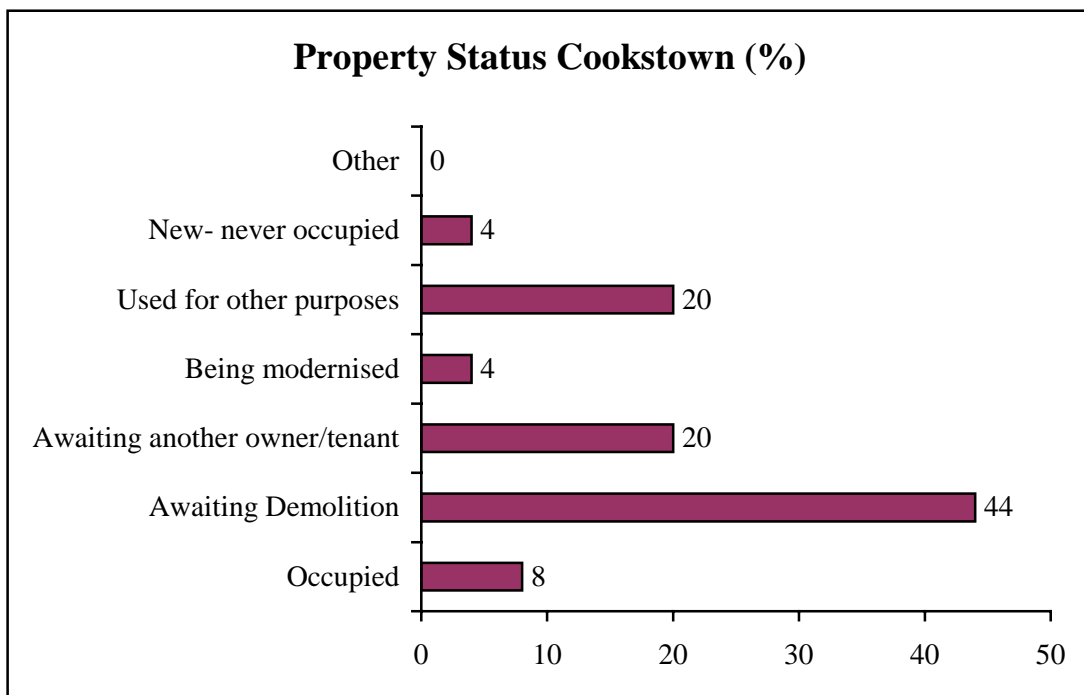


Figure 20:



Appendix 2:**Vacant Properties – Tables**

N.B. Due to rounding percentages may not equal 100%

Sample of 120 dwellings/ 104 responses = 87% response rate.

Table 1: Is the Dwelling Unfit?

| | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|--------|------------|
| Satisfactory | 45 | 43 |
| Unfit | 33 | 32 |
| Defective | 14 | 14 |
| Acceptable | 12 | 12 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 2: Survey Outcome

| | Number | Percentage |
|------------------------------|--------|------------|
| No contact made | 48 | 46 |
| Full survey | 30 | 29 |
| Derelict dwelling | 18 | 17 |
| Dwelling demolished | 4 | 4 |
| No longer used as a dwelling | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 3: Net Annual Valuation

| | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|--------|------------|
| Less than 50 | 21 | 20 |
| 50 to 99 | 30 | 29 |
| 100 to 149 | 22 | 21 |
| 150 to 199 | 11 | 11 |
| 200 to 249 | 12 | 12 |
| Over 250 | 8 | 8 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 4: First Impression of Condition/NAV

| | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| Seriously defective | 30 | 29 |
| Defective (Lower) | 6 | 6 |
| Defective (Higher) | 10 | 10 |
| Acceptable (Lower) | 7 | 7 |
| Acceptable (Higher) | 6 | 6 |
| Satisfactory (Lower) | 14 | 14 |
| Satisfactory (Higher) | 31 | 30 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 5: Dwelling Type

| | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------|------------|
| Detached | 44 | 42 |
| Mid terrace | 21 | 20 |
| Semi-detached | 14 | 14 |
| End terrace | 8 | 8 |
| Purpose Built | 6 | 6 |
| Dwelling demolished | 4 | 4 |
| Business | 2 | 2 |
| Non residential plus flat | 2 | 2 |
| Temporary | 2 | 2 |
| Converted | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 6: Is it a Bungalow?

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|
| No | 23 | 22 |
| Yes | 81 | 78 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 7: Tenure

| | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| Owner occupied | 54 | 52 |
| Occupied by either owner or private tenant | 17 | 16 |
| Private rented | 15 | 14 |
| Don't know | 14 | 14 |
| Business premises | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 8: Construction Date

| | Number | Percentage |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Pre 1919 | 42 | 40 |
| 1919-1944 | 18 | 17 |
| 1945-1964 | 7 | 7 |
| 1965-1974 | 6 | 6 |
| 1975-1980 | 4 | 4 |
| 1981-1990 | 3 | 3 |
| 1991-2003 | 20 | 19 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 9: Source of Information

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------|------------|
| Surveyors estimation | 64 | 62 |
| Neighbour | 26 | 25 |
| Occupant | 6 | 6 |
| Former occupant | 3 | 3 |
| Builder | 2 | 2 |
| Workmen | 2 | 2 |
| Owner | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 10: Occupancy

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Awaiting another owner/tenant | 31 | 30 |
| Derelict/awaiting demolition | 24 | 24 |
| Occupied | 22 | 21 |
| Being Modernised | 7 | 7 |
| Being used for other purposes | 7 | 7 |
| New never occupied | 4 | 4 |
| Other | 8 | 8 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 11: If other, specify

| | Number | Percentage |
|------------|--------|------------|
| Rubble | 4 | 11 |
| Business | 2 | 6 |
| Don't Know | 2 | 6 |
| Total | 8 | 100 |

Table 12: If occupied, for how many years?

| | Number |
|------------------|--------|
| Less than 1 year | 4 |
| 1 year | 4 |
| 2 years | 1 |
| 3 years | 1 |
| Don't know | 12 |
| Total | 22 |

Table 13: If vacant, for how many years?

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------|--------|------------|
| Less than 1 year | 2 | 3 |
| Between 1 and 5 years | 19 | 25 |
| Between 5 and 10 years | 4 | 5 |
| Between 10 and 20 years | 9 | 12 |
| More than 20 years | 12 | 16 |
| Don't know | 31 | 40 |
| Total | 77 | 100 |

Table 14: Is dwelling boarded up/secured?

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|
| No | 87 | 84 |
| Yes | 17 | 16 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 15: Is this the permanent residence?

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 78 | 75 |
| No – second home | 6 | 6 |
| No – holiday home | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know | 19 | 18 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 16: Source of Information

| | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Estimate/appearance | 64 | 62 |
| Neighbour | 26 | 25 |
| Occupant | 6 | 6 |
| Former occupant | 3 | 3 |
| Builder | 2 | 2 |
| Workmen | 2 | 2 |
| Owner | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 17: Type of Occupancy

| | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------|------------|
| Single family home | 77 | 74 |
| bed-sits or flats | 9 | 9 |
| Business | 2 | 2 |
| Hostel/B&B | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know | 15 | 14 |
| Total | 104 | 100 |

Table 18: Additional Information

| | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| Dwelling unfit/in need of repairs | 34 | 21 |
| Town/city dwelling | 32 | 20 |
| No one living at address | 26 | 16 |
| Rural/agricultural dwelling | 21 | 13 |
| House sold/for sale | 9 | 5 |
| Owner died/moved out, left dwelling to relatives | 9 | 5 |
| New build | 7 | 4 |
| All houses to be knocked down in 5 years | 5 | 3 |
| Holiday home/ used for friends/relatives to stay | 5 | 3 |
| Now used for agricultural purposes | 5 | 3 |
| Dwelling being renovated/modernised | 3 | 2 |
| Entire building blocked up | 2 | 1 |
| Dwelling occupied/possibly occupied | 2 | 1 |
| Dwelling vandalised | 1 | 1 |
| Mobile homes behind locked gate | 1 | 1 |
| Outbuilding converted to dwelling | 1 | 1 |
| Shop closed 6 months ago | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 164 | 100 |