

**CASTLE MORPETH DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN
Sites 8, 9, 17 and 19**

**Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)
Maps and Summary Report**

MAY 1998

**Resource Planning Team
Northern Region
FRCA, Leeds**

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY REPORT

CASTLE MORPETH DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys of 4 proposed sites at Morpeth referred to in the local plan as sites, 8, 9, 17 and 19. The survey of sites 9, 17 and 19 was carried out during May 1998. Site 8 was surveyed in autumn 1997.
2. The survey was carried out by the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), in connection with a proposal in the local plan to allocate land for a cemetery.
3. The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Northern Region of FRCA. The land has been graded in accordance with the published MAFF ALC guidelines and criteria (MAFF, 1988). A description of the ALC grades and subgrades is given in Appendix I.
4. At the time of survey the land at the Clifton Lodge (site 19) site was in arable use. Land at sites 9 and 17 was in permanent pasture. Site 8 at East Riding was in arable use last year.

SUMMARY

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the enclosed ALC maps. The maps have been drawn at a scale of 1:5,000. They are accurate at this scale but any enlargement would be misleading.
6. The area and proportions of the ALC grades and subgrades on the surveyed land are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Area of grades and other land

ALC GRADE - Area (ha)								
Site	1	2	3a	3b	4	5	Other land	Total
8	-	2.8	-	-	-	-	0.1	2.9
9	-	-	3.6	0.6	-	-	0.4	4.6
17	-	-	-	3.6	-	-	-	3.6
19	-	-	-	3.2	-	0.7	0.3	4.2

7. The fieldwork was conducted at an average density of one boring per hectare. A total of 16 borings and 4 soil pits were described.

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GRADES AND SUBGRADES

Grade 1: Excellent Quality Agricultural Land

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

Grade 2: Very Good Quality Agricultural Land

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural or horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land of this grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1 land.

Grade 3: Good to Moderate Quality Land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, the timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. When more demanding crops are grown, yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

Subgrade 3a: Good Quality Agricultural Land

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Subgrade 3b: Moderate Quality Agricultural Land

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass, or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

Grade 4: Poor Quality Agricultural Land

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or the level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

Grade 5: Very Poor Quality Agricultural Land

Land with severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.