4106/114/95

A0
Rother District Local Plan
Land at Pebsham, Bexhill
Agricultural Land Classification
ALC Map and Summary Report
May, 1995

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY REPORT

ROTHER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN
LAND AT PEBSHAM, BEXHILL

Summary

1.1 ADAS was commissioned by MAFF's Land Use Planning Unit to provide information on land quality for a number of sites in the vicinity of Bexhill . This work was in connection with the Rother District Local Plan.

1.2 The site comprises approximately 151.7 ha of land on the eastern side of Bexhill. The north eastern part of the site had been surveyed previously both in 1984 (reconnaissance level survey using the original ALC system) and also in August 1992 at a semi-detailed level of approximately 1 boring per 2 hectares and a map of the area was produced on both occasions (ADAS 1984 and 1992). The remainder of the site was surveyed in May 1995 at a detailed level of approximately one boring per hectare and on this area a total of 45 borings and 2 soil inspection pits were assessed in accordance with MAFF's revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land (MAFF, 1988). These guidelines provide a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long term limitations on its use for agriculture. A map and report covering the whole site has now been produced, which has resulted in some very minor modifications to the previous ALC grade boundaries.

1.3 The work was carried out by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Guildford Statutory Group of ADAS.

1.4 At the time of survey, the agricultural land was in grass and arable (wheat and linseed) use together with an area of set-aside. The Non-agricultural land includes a large area occupied by a landfill site together with an area of playing fields on the southern side of the site. In addition there are a number of areas of woodland and scrub. The area mapped as urban includes a permanent gypsy site and a Waste-derived Fuel Plant together with two houses and a hard surfaced lane.

1.5 The distribution of the grades and subgrades is shown on the attached ALC map and the areas are given in the table below. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:10,000. It is accurate at this scale but any enlargement would be misleading. This map supersedes any previous survey information for this site.

Table 1 : Distribution of Grades and Subgrades

Grade	Area (ha)	% of Site	% of Agricultural Area
2	1.5	1.0	1.9
3a	17.6	11.6	22.9
3b	46.5	30.6	60.5
4	10.0	6.6	13.0
5	1.3	0.9	1.7
Non Agricultural	61.9	40.8	**100% (76.9ha)**
Agricultural Bldgs	1.7	1.1	
Woodland	4.3	2.8	
Open Water	0.1	0.1	
Urban	6.8	4.5	
Total	**151.7 ha**	**100%**	

1.6 A general description of the grades, subgrades and land use categories is provided in Appendix I. The main classes are described in terms of the type of limitation that can occur, the typical cropping range and the expected level and consistency of yield.

1.7 The majority of the agricultural land on the site has been graded 3b with smaller areas of grades 2, 3a, 4 and 5. Land graded 3b comprises the poorly drained clayey soils mainly developed on the Wadhurst Clays. Other areas of the site are also included within this subgrade due to gradients between 7° and 11°. Grade 2 is confined to a small area of deep moderately well drained loamy soils having slight wetness and droughtiness restrictions. Land graded 3a comprises silty and loamy soils overlying fine grained sandstone which typically have poorly structured slowly permeable lower subsoil horizons giving rise to both wetness and droughtiness limitations. The areas of grade 4 land correlate with the very poorly drained alluvial soils found on the low lying areas of the site. The soils are typically clayey overlying peat and have a high groundwater table giving rise to a severe wetness limitation. Some further small areas at the northern end of the site are included within grade 4 due to the presence of steep slopes (11-18°). A small area of grade 5 has been identified on the low lying land on the western side of the waste tip where the land is extremely wet with water ponding on the surface.