

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
FOUR ASHES (SITE 64)
STAFFORDSHIRE AGGREGATES LOCAL PLAN

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**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR
FOUR ASHES (SITE 64), STAFFORDSHIRE AGGREGATES LOCAL PLAN**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey for this site shows that the following proportions of ALC grades are present:

Grade/Subgrade	ha	% of site
2	18.5	57
3a	12.5	39
3b	1.1	3
Other Land		
Non-agricultural	0.3	1

1.2 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 are topsoil stone content, soil wetness and soil droughtiness.

1.3 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a are topsoil stone content and soil droughtiness.

1.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3b is soil wetness.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in November 1994. An Agricultural Land Classification survey was undertaken according to the guidelines laid down in the "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land" (MAFF 1988).

2.2 The 32.4 ha site is situated to the south west of Calf Heath Reservoir and Junction 12 of the M6 motorway. The land immediately to the south and west of the site is predominantly in agricultural use. The land immediately to the north is occupied by a reservoir and the east is bounded by an access road and the motorway.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Staffordshire Aggregates Local Plan.

2.4 At the request of the MAFF Land Use Planning Unit this was a detailed grid survey at 1: 10 000 scale with a minimum auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The attached map is only accurate at the base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.

2.5 At the time of the survey the site was under cereals and grass.

3. **CLIMATE**

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 928 097):

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	702
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1367

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	165
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	94
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	81

4. **SITE**

4.1 Three site factors of gradient, micro-relief and flooding are considered when classifying land.

4.2 These factors do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of this land.

5. **GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

5.1 The geology of the area is comprised of Upper Mottled Sandstone (British Geological Survey, Sheet 153 Wolverhampton 1 Inch). This is overlain with deposits of Quaternary boulder clay.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which have a sandy or a clay texture.

6. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 18.5 ha (57 %) of the survey area and is found in the west of the site.

6.1.1 These soils typically have a sandy loam texture overlying loamy sand and / or sandy clay loam and clay to depth, with profiles being slightly stony. Occasionally there may be lenses of lighter material such as sandy clay loam or sand in the subsoil which may be very stony in nature. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer places these soils in to Wetness Class III. The moisture balance places these soils in Grade 2.

6.1.2 The main limitations to the agricultural use of this land are topsoil stone content greater than 2cm, soil wetness and soil droughtiness.

6.2 Subgrade 3a occupies 12.5 ha (39 %) of the survey area and is found mainly in the south and east of the site.

6.2.1 These soils typically have a sandy loam texture over loamy sand and sand to depth, with common to many stones within the profile. In places the lower subsoil texture includes sandy clay loam and clay. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer places these soils in to Wetness Class III. The moisture balance places these soils in Subgrade 3a.

6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is topsoil stone content greater than 2cm in size and soil droughtiness.

6.3 Subgrade 3b occupies 1.1 ha (3 %) of the survey area.

6.3.1 These waterlogged soils were difficult to texture in the field. The soil had a sandy loam texture overlying saturated ground.

6.3.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.

6.4 Other land includes non-agricultural land which occupies 0.3 ha (1 %) of the survey area and is found in the north of the site as a hollow containing scrub.

6.5 **SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES**

Grade/Subgrade	Area (Ha)	% of survey area	% of agricultural land
2	18.5	57	58
3a	12.5	39	39
3b	1.1	3	3
Other Land			
Non Agricultural	0.3	1	
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Totals	32.4	100	100
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