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Horsham District Local Plan
Land south of New Tanbridge School,
Horsham, West Sussex.
Agricultural Land Classification
ALC Map and Report
March 1995

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT

HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN.

LAND SOUTH OF NEW TANBRIDGE SCHOOL, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX.

1. 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 district of Horsham in West Sussex. The work forms part of MAFF's statutory input to the preparation of the Horsham District Local Plan.
- 1.2 The site comprises 29.1 hectares of land to the south of New Tanbridge School and west of Hills Farm Lane, Horsham, West Sussex. An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey was carried out in March 1995. The survey was undertaken at a semi-detailed level of approximately one boring every 2 hectares of agricultural land. A total of 9 borings and one soil inspection pit were described 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 a long term limitation on its use for agriculture.
- 1.3 The survey work was carried out by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Guildford Statutory Group of ADAS.
- 1.4 At the time of the survey the agricultural land on the site comprised permanent grassland. An area of public open space has been mapped as Non-agricultural and an area of Woodland has been mapped on the site.
- 1.5 The distribution of grades and subgrades is shown on the attached ALC map, and the areas and extent 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.

Table 1 : Distribution of Grades and Subgrades

Grade	Area (ha)	% of Site
3b	20.7	71.1
Woodland	0.1	0.4
Non-Agricultural	<u>8.3</u>	<u>28.5</u>
Total area of Site	29.1	100%

- 1.6 Appendix I gives a general description of the grades, subgrades and land use categories identified in the survey. 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 All of the agricultural land on the site has been classified as Subgrade 3b, moderate quality land, with soil wetness as the main limitation. Soil profiles typically comprise heavy clay loam and clay topsoils resting upon clay subsoils. Profiles show clear evidence of soil wetness at shallow depth related to clay subsoils that are poorly structured and slowly permeable. Poorly drained wet soils such as these restrict plant growth and development and may be more susceptible to structural damage through trafficking by agricultural machinery or poaching by grazing livestock.

2. Climate

2.1 The climatic criteria are considered first when classifying land as climate can be overriding in the sense that severe climatic limitations will restrict land to low grades irrespective of favourable site or soil conditions.

2.2 The main parameters used in the assessment of an overall climatic limitation are average annual rainfall, as a measure of overall wetness, and accumulated temperature (degree days Jan-June), as a measure of the relative warmth of a locality.

2.3 A detailed assessment of the prevailing climate was made by interpolation from a 5km gridpoint dataset (Met. Office 1989). The details are given in the table below and these show that there is no overall climatic limitation affecting the site.

2.4 However, climatic factors do interact with soil factors to influence soil wetness and droughtiness limitations. At this locality the climate is relatively warm and moist, which may increase the likelihood of soil wetness limitations.

2.5 No local climatic factors such as exposure or frost risk are believed to affect the site.

Table 2 : Climatic Interpolation

Grid Reference	TQ 154 303
Altitude (m)	35
Accumulated Temperature (degree days, Jan-June)	1492
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	789
Field Capacity (days)	165
Moisture Deficit, Wheat (mm)	109
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes (mm)	104
Overall Climatic Grade	1

3. Relief

3.1 The site is flat, lying at an altitude of approximately 35-40m AOD.

4. Geology and Soils

- 4.1 The relevant geological map (BGS, 1984) shows the site to be underlain by Weald Clay with a small strip of Alluvium along the watercourse.
- 4.2 The published Soil Survey map (SSEW, 1983) shows the soils on the site to comprise those of the Curtisden and Wickham 5 associations. Curtisden associations are described as 'slowly permeable with slight seasonal water logging, silty over siltstone and some well drained coarse loamy soils over sandstone. Wickham 5 associations are described as 'slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey, fine silty over clayey and clayey soils' (SSEW, 1983).
- 4.3 Detailed field examination found the soils on the site to be clayey with slowly permeable upper subsoils.

5. Agricultural Land Classification

- 5.1 The location of the soil observation points are shown on the attached sample point map.

Subgrade 3b

- 5.2 All of the agricultural land on the site has been classified as Subgrade 3b due to a significant soil wetness limitation. Soil profiles were found to comprise heavy clay loam topsoils overlying clay subsoils. Profiles show evidence of imperfect drainage in the form of gleying commonly in topsoils and throughout the subsoils. The soil inspection pit was indicative of the borings and found the clay subsoil to be poorly structured with low porosity from the upper subsoil, therefore it is classified as a slowly permeable layer which will significantly impede soil drainage. The presence of gleying and the shallow depth to the slowly permeable layer means that these soils are assigned to Wetness Class IV, with a resultant classification of Subgrade 3b given the prevailing climatic conditions. Poorly drained wet soils can inhibit plant and root development, and may be more susceptible to structural damage through trafficking by agricultural machinery or poaching by grazing livestock.

ADAS Ref: 4205/24/95
MAFF Ref: EL 42/130

Resource Planning Team
Guildford Statutory Group
ADAS Reading

SOURCES OF REFERENCE

British Geological Survey (1984), Sheet No. 318/333, Brighton and Worthing, 1:50,000 Series (solid and drift edition).

MAFF (1988), Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales : Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.

Meteorological Office (1989), Climatological Data for Agricultural Land Classification.

Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983), Sheet 6, Soils of South East England, 1:250,000 and accompanying legend.

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION 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 (eg. 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.

Urban

Built-up or 'hard' uses with relatively little potential for a return to agriculture including: housing, industry, commerce, education, transport, religious buildings, cemeteries. Also, hard-surfaced sports facilities, permanent caravan sites and vacant land; all types of derelict land, including mineral workings which are only likely to be reclaimed using derelict land grants.

Non-agricultural

'Soft' uses where most of the land could be returned relatively easily to agriculture, including: private parkland, public open spaces, sports fields, allotments and soft-surfaced areas on airports. Also active mineral workings and refuse tips where restoration conditions to 'soft' after-uses may apply.

Woodland

Includes commercial and non-commercial woodland. A distinction may be made as necessary between farm and non-farm woodland.

Agricultural Buildings

Includes the normal range of agricultural buildings as well as other relatively permanent structures such as glasshouses. Temporary structures (eg. polythene tunnels erected for lambing) may be ignored.

Open Water

Includes lakes, ponds and rivers as map scale permits.

Land Not Surveyed

Agricultural land which has not been surveyed.

Where the land use includes more than one of the above, eg. buildings in large grounds, and where map scale permits, the cover types may be shown separately. Otherwise, the most extensive cover type will be shown.

APPENDIX II

FIELD ASSESSMENT OF SOIL WETNESS CLASS

SOIL WETNESS CLASSIFICATION

Soil wetness is classified according to the depth and duration of waterlogging in the soil profile. Six soil wetness classes are identified and are defined in the table below.

Definition of Soil Wetness Classes

Wetness Class	Duration of Waterlogging ¹
I	The soil profile is not wet within 70 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years. ²
II	The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 31-90 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth, it is wet within 70 cm for more than 90 days, but only wet within 40 cm depth for 30 days in most years.
III	The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 91-180 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer present within 80 cm depth, it is wet within 70 cm for more than 180 days, but only wet within 40 cm depth for between 31-90 days in most years.
IV	The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for more than 180 days but not wet within 40 cm depth for more than 210 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer present within 80 cm depth, it is wet within 40 cm depth for 91-210 days in most years.
V	The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for 211-335 days in most years.
VI	The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for more than 335 days in most years.

Soils can be allocated to a wetness class on the basis of quantitative data recorded over a period of many years or by the interpretation of soil profile characteristics, site and climatic factors. Adequate quantitative data will rarely be available for ALC surveys and therefore the interpretative method of field assessment is used to identify soil wetness class in the field. The method adopted here is common to ADAS and the SSLRC.

¹The number of days specified is not necessarily a continuous period.

²'In most years' is defined as more than 10 out of 20 years.

APPENDIX III

SOIL PIT AND SOIL BORING DESCRIPTIONS

Contents :

Soil Abbreviations - Explanatory Note

Soil Pit Descriptions

Database Printout - Boring Level Information

Database Printout - Horizon Level Information

Soil Pits and Auger Borings

1. **TEXTURE** : soil texture classes are denoted by the following abbreviations.

S :	Sand	LS :	Loamy Sand	SL :	Sandy Loam
SZL :	Sandy Silt Loam	CL :	Clay Loam	ZCL :	Silty Clay Loam
ZL :	Silt Loam	SCL :	Sandy Clay Loam	C :	Clay
SC :	Sandy Clay	ZC :	Silty Clay	OL :	Organic Loam
P :	Peat	SP :	Sandy Peat	LP :	Loamy Peat
PL :	Peaty Loam	PS :	Peaty Sand	MZ :	Marine Light Silts

For the sand, loamy sand, sandy loam and sandy silt loam classes, the predominant size of sand fraction will be indicated by the use of the following prefixes:

F :	Fine (more than 66% of the sand less than 0.2mm)
M :	Medium (less than 66% fine sand and less than 33% coarse sand)
C :	Coarse (more than 33% of the sand larger than 0.6mm)

The clay loam and silty clay loam classes will be sub-divided according to the clay content: **M** : Medium (<27% clay) **H** : Heavy (27-35% clay)

2. **MOTTLE COL** : Mottle colour using Munsell notation.
3. **MOTTLE ABUN** : Mottle abundance, expressed as a percentage of the matrix or surface described.

F : few <2% **C** : common 2-20% **M** : many 20-40% **VM** : very many 40% +

4. **MOTTLE CONT** : Mottle contrast

F : faint - indistinct mottles, evident only on close inspection

D : distinct - mottles are readily seen

P : prominent - mottling is conspicuous and one of the outstanding features of the horizon

5. **PED. COL** : Ped face colour using Munsell notation.

6. **GLEY** : If the soil horizon is gleyed a 'Y' will appear in this column. If slightly gleyed, an 'S' will appear.

7. **STONE LITH** : Stone Lithology - One of the following is used.

HR : all hard rocks and stones **SLST** : soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone

CH : chalk **FSST** : soft, fine grained sandstone

ZR : soft, argillaceous, or silty rocks **GH** : gravel with non-porous (hard) stones

MSST : soft, medium grained sandstone **GS** : gravel with porous (soft) stones

SI : soft weathered igneous/metamorphic rock

Stone contents (>2cm, >6cm and total) are given in percentages (by volume).

SOIL PROFILE DESCRIPTIONS : EXPLANATORY NOTE

Soil pit and auger boring information collected during ALC fieldwork is held on a computer database. This uses notations and abbreviations as set out below.

Boring Header Information

1. **GRID REF** : national 100 km grid square and 8 figure grid reference.
2. **USE** : Land use at the time of survey. The following abbreviations are used.

ARA : Arable	WHT : Wheat	BAR : Barley
CER : Cereals	OAT : Oats	MZE : Maize
OSR : Oilseed rape	BEN : Field Beans	BRA : Brassicae
POT : Potatoes	SBT : Sugar Beet	FCD : Fodder Crops
LIN : Linseed	FRT : Soft and Top Fruit	FLW : Fallow
PGR : Permanent Pasture	LEY : Ley Grass	RGR : Rough Grazing
SCR : Scrub	CFW : Coniferous Woodland	DCW : Deciduous Wood
HTH : Heathland	BOG : Bog or Marsh	FLW : Fallow
PLO : Ploughed	SAS : Set aside	OTH : Other
HRT : Horticultural Crops		
3. **GRDNT** : Gradient as estimated or measured by a hand-held optical clinometer.
4. **GLEYSPL** : Depth in centimetres (cm) to gleying and/or slowly permeable layers.
5. **AP (WHEAT/POTS)** : Crop-adjusted available water capacity.
6. **MB (WHEAT/POTS)** : Moisture Balance. (Crop adjusted AP - crop adjusted MD)
7. **DRT** : Best grade according to soil droughtiness.
8. If any of the following factors are considered significant, 'Y' will be entered in the relevant column.

MREL : Microrelief limitation	FLOOD : Flood risk	EROSN : Soil erosion risk
EXP : Exposure limitation	FROST : Frost prone	DIST : Disturbed land
CHEM : Chemical limitation		
9. **LIMIT** : The main limitation to land quality. The following abbreviations are used.

OC : Overall Climate	AE : Aspect	EX : Exposure
FR : Frost Risk	GR : Gradient	MR : Microrelief
FL : Flood Risk	TX : Topsoil Texture	DP : Soil Depth
CH : Chemical	WE : Wetness	WK : Workability
DR : Drought	ER : Erosion Risk	WD : Soil Wetness/Droughtiness
ST : Topsoil Stoniness		

SOIL PIT DESCRIPTION

Site Name : HORSHAM DLP TANBRIDGE SC Pit Number : 1P

Grid Reference: TQ15503040 Average Annual Rainfall : 790 mm
 Accumulated Temperature : 1487 degree days
 Field Capacity Level : 165 days
 Land Use : Permanent Grass
 Slope and Aspect : degrees

HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	STONES >2	TOT.STONE	LITH	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE	CONSIST	SUBSTRUCTURE	CALC
0- 26	HCL	10YR53 00	0	0		C				
26- 38	C	10YR53 00	0	0		M	WKCSAB	FM	P	
38- 70	C	10YR62 00	0	0		M	WKCSAB	FM	P	

Wetness Grade : 3B Wetness Class : IV
 Gleying : 000 cm
 SPL : 026 cm

Drought Grade : 3A APW : 092mm MBW : -17 mm
 APP : 104mm MBP : -2 mm

FINAL ALC GRADE : 3B
 MAIN LIMITATION : Wetness

SAMPLE NO.	GRID REF	ASPECT USE	--WETNESS--		-WHEAT-		-POTS-		M.REL		EROSN	FROST	CHEM	ALC	COMMENTS
			GRDNT	GLEYSPL	CLASS	GRADE	AP	MB	AP	MB	DRT	FLOOD	EXP	DIST	
1	TQ15403060	PGR	030	048	3	3B	099	-10	111	7	3A			WE	3B
1P	TQ15503040	PGR	000	026	4	3B	092	-17	104	-2	3A			WE	3B
2	TQ15303061	PGR	025	040	4	3B	083	-26	086	-18	3B			WE	3B
3	TQ15403060	PGR	025	040	4	3B	089	-20	095	-9	3A			WE	3B
4	TQ15403050	PGR	000	021	4	3B	000	0	000	0				WE	3B
5	TQ15503040	PGR	000	030	4	3B	000	0	000	0				WE	3B
6	TQ15423036	PGR	000	022	4	3B	000	0	000	0				WE	3B
7	TQ15203030	PGR	000	017	4	3B	000	0	000	0				WE	3B
8	TQ15483030	PGR	030	030	4	3B	094	-15	102	-2	3A			WE	3B
9	TQ15463026	PGR	000	026	4	3B	000	0	000	0				WE	3B
10	TQ15303020	PGR	000	025	4	3B	093	-16	101	-3	3A			WE	3B

SAMPLE	DEPTH	TEXTURE	COLOUR	----MOTTLES-----			PED	----STONES----			STRUCT/	SUBS					
				COL	ABUN	CONT	COL.	GLEY	>2	>6	LITH	TOT	CONSIST	STR	POR	IMP	SPL
1	0-30	hc1	25Y 52 00					0	0	0							
	30-48	c	25Y 63 00	10YR58	00	C		Y	0	0	0		M				
	48-70	c	25Y 63 00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0		P	Y		Y	
1P	0-26	hc1	10YR53	00	10YR58	61	C		Y	0	0	0					
	26-38	c	10YR53	00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0	WKCSAB	FM	P	Y	Y
	38-70	c	10YR62	00	10YR68	71	M		Y	0	0	0	WKCSAB	FM	P	Y	Y
2	0-25	c	10YR42	00				0	0	0							
	25-40	c	25Y 63 00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0		M				
	40-55	c	25Y 63 00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0		P	Y		Y	
3	0-25	hc1	10YR42	00				0	0	0							
	25-40	c	10YR53	00	10YR58	00	C		Y	0	0	0		M			
	40-60	c	25Y 63 00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0		P	Y		Y	
4	0-21	hc1	10YR52	00	10YR58	00	C		Y	0	0	0					
	21-60	c	10YR62	00	10YR68	71	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y	
5	0-30	hc1	10YR53	00	10YR58	61	C		Y	0	0	0					
	30-65	c	10YR62	00	10YR68	71	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y	
6	0-22	c	10YR52	00	10YR58	00	C		Y	0	0	0					
	22-60	c	10YR62	00	10YR68	71	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y	
7	0-17	hc1	10YR42	00	10YR58	00	C		Y	0	0	0					
	17-55	c	10YR62	00	10YR68	71	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y	
8	0-30	hc1	25Y 54 00					0	0	0							
	30-60	c	25Y 62 00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y		
9	0-26	c	10YR52	00	10YR58	00	C		Y	0	0	0					
	26-60	c	10YR62	63	10YR68	71	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y	
10	0-25	hc1	25Y 53 00					0	0	0							
	25-60	c	25Y 52 00	10YR58	00	M		Y	0	0	0		P		Y		