AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN
BLYTHE BRIDGE

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN BLYTHE BRIDGE

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	37.3	29
3a	51.0	39
3b	13.3	10
4	1.6	1
Other land		
Agricultural buildings	2.3	2
Woodland	1.5	1
Urban	19.6	15
Non-Agricultural	0.3	1
Open Water	0.2	<1
Not Surveyed	1.7	1

1.2 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 are climate and soil wetness.

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

1.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 4 is microrelief.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in February 1995. 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 128.8 ha site is situated to the south of Blythe Bridge. The site is bounded by the A50 road in the north and east and railway line in the south and west. The southern boundary is formed by Cresswell Lane. The road is bissected by the A50 dual carriageway.

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

2.4 At MAFF Land Use Planning Unit's request this was a detailed grid survey at 1:10000 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 grass and part has been ploughed following harvest.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 972400, alt. 100m) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	843
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1284

3.2 There is ~~no~~ an overall climatic limitation of Grade 2 on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	208
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	73
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	55

4 SITE

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

4.2 The relief does impose a limitation on the agricultural use of the land in the south of the site and where former marl pits exist.

5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Boulder clay and river terrace and glacial sand and gravel deposits British Geological Survey Sheet 124 Ashbourne 1:50000).

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

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 37.3 ha (29 %) of the survey area and is found on the eastern side of the dual carriageway.

6.1.1 These soils have either a clay loam texture or occasionally sandy loam texture overlying loamy sand or sandy clay loam to depth. These soils fall into Wetness Class I.

6.1.2 Where a sandy loam texture occurs an overall limitation of Grade 2 is the main limitation to the agricultural use of the land. Over the rest of the Grade 2 land soil wetness is the main limitation to the agricultural use of the land.

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 51.0 ha (39%) of the survey area.

6.2.1 These soils typically have a clay loam texture to depth. Observations of gleying place these soils into Wetness Class III.

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

6.3 Subgrade 3b - occupies 13.3 ha (10%) of the survey area and is found mainly in the centre of the site close to the dual carriageway and close to the railway line.

6.3.1 These soils have a clay loam texture over clay. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place these soils into Wetness Class IV.

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

6.3.3 A former marl pit has been classified as Subgrade 3b, where relief is a limitation to the agricultural us eof the land.

6.4 Grade 4 occupies 1.6 ha (1%) of the survey area and is found in the southern part of the site.

6.4.1 The main limitation to the agricultural use of the land is the micro relief.

6.5 Other land on the site includes urban covering 19.6 ha (15%), woodland covering 1.5 ha (1%) and agricultural buildings covering 2.5 ha (2%); other non agricultural land account for 0.3 ha (1%) and open water 0.2 ha (1%). A paddock covering 1.7 ha (1%) adjoining a house was not surveyed.

6.6 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
2	37.3	29	36
3a	51.0	39	49
3b	13.3	10	13
4	1.6	1	2
Other land			
Agricultural Buildings	2 3	2	
Woodland	1.5	1	
Urban	19.6	15	
Non Agricultural	0.3	1	
Open Water	0.2	1	
Not Surveyed	1.7	1	
Totals	**128.8**	**100**	**100**

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLAND LOCAL PLAN

PREMIUM EMPLOYMENT SITE

PROPOSED SITE

Grade/Sub-grade	Ha	% of area	% of Agricultural Land
2	32.3	54	57
3a	20.0	34	35
3b	4.4	7	8
Other land			
Urban	0.5	2	
Woodland	0.1	<1	
Agricultural Buildings	0.2	<1	
Open Water	0.2	<1	
Not Surveyed	1.7	3	
Totals	**59.4**	**100**	**100**