

**Shropshire Minerals Local Plan
Objection 413/6176
Agricultural Land Classification
ALC Map and Report
April 1997**

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT
Shropshire Minerals Local Plan
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INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey on 5.3 hectares of land. The results of this survey supersede any previous ALC information for this land. The land is located to the east of Morville Heath, near Bridgnorth. The survey was in connection with the Shropshire Minerals Local Plan.
2. The survey was undertaken in April 1997 by the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team (RPT) in the Northern Region of FRCA.
3. The land has been graded in accordance with the publication "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land" (MAFF 1988) .
4. At the time of survey the agricultural land on this site was under potatoes.

SUMMARY

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the enclosed ALC map. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:10000 with an average auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The ALC map is only accurate at this base map scale and 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

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% surveyed area	% site area
1	-	-	-
2	-	-	-
3a	4.2	100	79
3b	-	-	-
4	-	-	-
5	-	-	-
Agricultural land not surveyed	-	N/A	-
Other land	1.1	N/A	21
Total surveyed area	4.2	100	-
Total site area	5.3	-	100

7. The agricultural land on this site has been classified as Subgrade 3a (good quality) with the key limitation being soil wetness.

8. The area of good quality land has a sandy clay loam topsoil which overlies sandy clay loam and loam and heavy clay loam to depth.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ALC GRADE

Climate

9. Climate affects the grading of land through the assessment of an overall climatic limitation and also through interactions with soil characteristics.

10. The key climatic variables used for grading this site are given in Table 2 and were obtained from the published 5km grid datasets using standard interpolation procedures (Meteorological Office, 1989).

Table 2: Climatic and altitude data

Factor	Units	Values
Grid reference	N/A	SO 687 935
Altitude	m, AOD	84
Accumulated Temperature	day°C (Jan-June)	1398
Average Annual Rainfall	mm	706
Field Capacity Days	days	169
Moisture Deficit, Wheat	mm	96
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes	mm	85
Overall climatic grade	N/A	Grade 1

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

12. The main parameters used in the assessment of an overall climatic limitation are average annual rainfall (AAR), as a measure of overall wetness, and accumulated temperature (AT0, January to June), as a measure of the relative warmth of a locality.

13. The combination of rainfall and temperature at this site means that there is no overall climatic limitation. The site is climatically Grade 1.

Site

14. The relatively level site lies at an altitude of approximately 84 metres AOD.

15. The three site factors of gradient, microrelief and flooding are considered when classifying the land.

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

Geology and Soils

17. The solid geology of the area is comprised of purple and green Marls which are interbedded with Micaceous Sandstone. This is overlain with deposits of boulder clay - British Geological Survey (1975).

18. The soils that have developed on this geology are generally of a sandy clay loam texture over heavy clay loam to depth.

Agricultural Land Classification

19. The details of the classification of the site are shown on the enclosed ALC map and the area statistics of each grade are given in Table 1, page 1.

Subgrade 3a

20. Land of good quality occupies 4.2 hectares (79%) of the site area.

21. The soil has a sandy clay loam texture over sandy clay loam and heavy clay loam to depth with few stones within the profile. The depth to gleying and the slowly permeable layer place these soils in Wetness Class III.

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

Other Land

23. Other land occupies 1.1 hectares (21%) of the site area and forms a recently planted shelter belt of trees.

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