

**A1**  
**Canterbury District Local Plan**  
**WHT 1: Land near Swalecliffe**  
**Agricultural Land Classification**  
**ALC Map and Report**  
**July 1995**

# **AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT**

## **CANTERBURY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN WHT 1: LAND NEAR SWALECLIFFE**

### **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 Canterbury district of Kent. The work forms part of MAFF's statutory input to the Canterbury District Local Plan.
- 1.2 WHT 1 comprises 8.8 hectares of land to the north of Colewood Road, immediately east of Swalecliffe in Kent. This site was the subject of a previous survey in 1986 (ADAS Reference 2002/003/86). This survey was carried out to assess agricultural land quality and classified the land as Subgrades 3c and 3b. This survey was, however, carried out prior to the revision of MAFF's guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land, (MAFF, 1988) which came into effect on 1 January 1989. Consequently, this site was re-evaluated during July 1995. Applying the revised ALC guidelines, which have more refined droughtiness and wetness criteria compared with the original guidelines, the entire site is now classified as Subgrade 3b.
- 1.3 The 1995 survey was undertaken at a detailed level of approximately one boring per hectare. A total of 7 borings and one soil inspection pit were described in accordance with the revised guidelines. 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.
- 1.4 The work was carried out by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Guildford Statutory Group of ADAS.
- 1.5 At the time of survey the land was under rough grass.
- 1.6 The site surveyed is shown on the attached ALC map which 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 the 1986 survey.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 All of WHT 1 (8.8 hectares) has been classified as Subgrade 3b, moderate quality land, because of significant soil wetness and workability limitations. The recent classification confirmed similar soils to those described in the 1986 survey. Non-calcareous clay or heavy clay loam topsoils directly overlie clay subsoils. The subsoils are slowly permeable and act to cause imperfect soil drainage conditions.

The interaction between the heavy textured topsoils and impeded drainage with the nationally dry prevailing climatic regime acts to restrict the flexibility of cropping, stocking and cultivations.

## **2. Climate**

- 2.1 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.
- 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, 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. However climatic factors do interact with soil factors to influence soil wetness and droughtiness limitations. The soil moisture deficits are relatively high and the field capacity days relatively low, in a national context, at this locality. These climatic factors respectively increase the likelihood of soil droughtiness limitations and decrease that of soil wetness restrictions.

**Table 1 : Climatic Interpolation**

Grid Reference	TR 143 673
Altitude (m)	6
Accumulated Temperature (degree days, Jan-June)	1487
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	582
Field Capacity (days)	119
Moisture Deficit, Wheat (mm)	128
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes (mm)	126
Overall Climatic Grade	1

- 2.4 Climatic reports from the Meteorological Office (Met. Office, 1971) suggest this area to be rather exposed. However, at the time of survey exposure was not felt to have significant impact on the site. No other local climatic factors, such as frost risk, are believed to affect the site.

## **3. Relief**

- 3.1 The site is essentially level and lies at approximately 6 m AOD.

## **4. Geology and Soil**

- 4.1 The published geological sheet (BGS, 1974) shows the entire site to be underlain by London Clay.

- 4.2 The most recent published soils information (SSEW, 1983) shows the site to be unsurveyed. However, land to the immediate south comprises soils of the Windsor Association. These soils are described as 'slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils mostly with brown subsoils. Some fine loamy over clayey and fine silty over clayey soils and, locally on slopes, clayey soils with only slight seasonal waterlogging'. Soils of Kent (SSEW, 1980) again shows the site as unsurveyed with similar soils to those above occurring to the south,
- 4.3 Detailed field examination found heavy textured soils which are imperfectly drained.

## **5. Agricultural Land Classification**

- 5.1 The site surveyed is shown on the attached ALC map.
- 5.2 The location of the soil observation points are shown on the attached sample point map.

### **Subgrade 3b**

- 5.3 All of the agricultural land surveyed has been classified as Subgrade 3b. This land is subject to significant soil wetness and workability limitations resulting from soils derived from the underlying London Clay. Non-calcareous clay or heavy clay loam topsoils directly overlie clay subsoils. The subsoils are slowly permeable and act to cause imperfect soil drainage conditions, as indicated by gleying from the surface. However, this soil wetness limitation is partially offset by the very dry local climate, such that Wetness Class III is appropriate. Such profiles are represented by Pit 1. The interaction between the heavy topsoil textures and impeded soil drainage with the nationally dry prevailing climate acts to significantly restrict the flexibility of cropping, stocking and cultivations.

ADAS Ref: 2002/078/95  
MAFF Ref: EL 20/642

Resource Planning Team  
Guildford Statutory Group  
ADAS Reading

## **SOURCES OF REFERENCE**

British Geological Survey (1974), Sheet No. 273, Faversham, 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 (1971), Unpublished Climate Data.

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

Soil Survey of England and Wales (1980), Bulletin No. 9, Soils of Kent and accompanying maps at 1:250,000.

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 <sup>1</sup>
I	The soil profile is not wet within 70 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years. <sup>2</sup>
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.

<sup>1</sup>The number of days specified is not necessarily a continuous period.

<sup>2</sup>'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 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.  

<b>ARA</b> : Arable	<b>WHT</b> : Wheat	<b>BAR</b> : Barley
<b>CER</b> : Cereals	<b>OAT</b> : Oats	<b>MZE</b> : Maize
<b>OSR</b> : Oilseed rape	<b>BEN</b> : Field Beans	<b>BRA</b> : Brassicae
<b>POT</b> : Potatoes	<b>SBT</b> : Sugar Beet	<b>FCD</b> : Fodder Crops
<b>LIN</b> : Linseed	<b>FRT</b> : Soft and Top Fruit	<b>FLW</b> : Fallow
<b>PGR</b> : Permanent Pasture	<b>LEY</b> : Ley Grass	<b>RGR</b> : Rough Grazing
<b>SCR</b> : Scrub	<b>CFW</b> : Coniferous Woodland	<b>DCW</b> : Deciduous Wood
<b>HTH</b> : Heathland	<b>BOG</b> : Bog or Marsh	<b>FLW</b> : Fallow
<b>PLO</b> : Ploughed	<b>SAS</b> : Set aside	<b>OTH</b> : Other
<b>HRT</b> : 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.

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

## Soil Pits and Auger Borings

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

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

<b>F</b> :	Fine (more than 66% of the sand less than 0.2mm)
<b>M</b> :	Medium (less than 66% fine sand and less than 33% coarse sand)
<b>C</b> :	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. **GLEYS** : 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.

<b>HR</b> :	all hard rocks and stones	<b>SLST</b> :	soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone
<b>CH</b> :	chalk	<b>FSST</b> :	soft, fine grained sandstone
<b>ZR</b> :	soft, argillaceous, or silty rocks	<b>GH</b> :	gravel with non-porous (hard) stones
<b>MSST</b> :	soft, medium grained sandstone	<b>GS</b> :	gravel with porous (soft) stones
<b>SI</b> :	soft weathered igneous/metamorphic rock		

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

8. **STRUCT** : the degree of development, size and shape of soil peds are described using the following notation:

degree of development    **WK** : weakly developed            **MD** : moderately developed  
   **ST** : strongly developed

ped size                            **F** : fine                                    **M** : medium  
   **C** : coarse                                **VC** : very coarse

ped shape                            **S** : single grain                        **M** : massive  
   **GR** : granular                            **AB** : angular blocky  
   **SAB** : sub-angular blocky        **PR** : prismatic  
   **PL** : platy

9. **CONSIST** : Soil consistence is described using the following notation:

**L** : loose    **VF** : very friable    **FR** : friable    **FM** : firm    **VM** : very firm  
**EM** : extremely firm            **EH** : extremely hard

10. **SUBS STR** : Subsoil structural condition recorded for the purpose of calculating profile droughtiness : **G** : good    **M** : moderate    **P** : poor

11. **POR** : Soil porosity. If a soil horizon has less than 0.5% biopores >0.5 mm, a 'Y' will appear in this column.

12. **IMP** : If the profile is impenetrable to rooting a 'Y' will appear in this column at the appropriate horizon.

13. **SPL** : Slowly permeable layer. If the soil horizon is slowly permeable a 'Y' will appear in this column.

14. **CALC** : If the soil horizon is calcareous, a 'Y' will appear in this column.

15. Other notations

**APW** : available water capacity (in mm) adjusted for wheat  
**APP** : available water capacity (in mm) adjusted for potatoes  
**MBW** : moisture balance, wheat  
**MBP** : moisture balance, potatoes

SOIL PIT DESCRIPTION

Site Name : CANTERBURY DLP WHT 1 Pit Number : 1P

Grid Reference: TR14406720 Average Annual Rainfall : 582 mm  
 Accumulated Temperature : 1487 degree days  
 Field Capacity Level : 119 days  
 Land Use : Permanent Grass  
 Slope and Aspect : degrees

HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	STONES >2	TOT.STONE	LITH	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE	CONSIST	SUBSTRUCTURE	CALC
0- 27	C	10YR42 00	0	1	HR	C				
27-120	C	10YR53 00	0	0		M	MASSIV	VM	P	

Wetness Grade : 3B Wetness Class : III  
 Gleying : 0 cm  
 SPL : 27 cm

Drought Grade : 3A APW : 124mm MBW : -4 mm  
 APP : 101mm MBP : -25 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	TR14206740	RGR	0	30	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B
1P	TR14406720	PGR	0	27	3	3B	124	-4	101	-25	3A			WE	3B
2	TR14306740	RGR	30	30	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B
3	TR14306730	RGR	0	25	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B
4	TR14406730	RGR	0	30	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B
5	TR14506730	PGR	0	30	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B
6	TR14306720	RGR	0	35	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B
8	TR14506720	PGR	0	30	3	3B		0	0					WE	3B

SAMPLE	DEPTH	TEXTURE	COLOUR	----MOTTLES-----			PED		----STONES----			STRUCT/ CONSIST	SUBS			SPL	CALC
				COL	ABUN	CONT	COL.	GLE	>2	>6	LITH		TOT	STR	POR		
1	0-30	c	10YR41 00 75YR46 00 C					Y	0	0	HR	1					
	30-70	c	10YR51 00 75YR56 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
	70-120	c	10YR61 00 10YR66 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
1P	0-27	c	10YR42 00 75YR46 00 C					Y	0	0	HR	1					
	27-120	c	10YR53 00 10YR56 00 M				10YR53 00	Y	0	0		0	MASSIV VM	P	Y		Y
2	0-30	hc1	10YR53 00						0	0	HR	1					
	30-120	c	10YR53 00 10YR56 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
3	0-25	c	10YR53 00 75YR46 00 C					Y	0	0	HR	1					
	25-45	c	10YR52 00 75YR46 56 C					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
	45-120	c	10YR51 00 75YR46 56 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
4	0-30	c	10YR52 00 75YR46 00 C					Y	0	0	HR	0					
	30-120	c	10YR53 00 10YR56 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
5	0-30	hc1	10YR52 00 75YR46 00 C					Y	0	0	HR	1					
	30-120	c	10YR53 00 75YR46 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
6	0-35	hc1	10YR42 00 75YR56 00 C					Y	0	0	HR	1					
	35-120	c	10YR52 00 75YR56 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
	120-121	c	10YR52 00 75YR56 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	
8	0-30	c	10YR52 00 75YR46 00 M					Y	0	0	HR	0					
	30-120	c	10YR53 00 75YR46 00 M					Y	0	0		0		P		Y	