AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
WALSALL M.B.C HIGHFIELDS NORTH

S Hunter
Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR WALSALL M.B.C. HIGHFIELDS NORTH

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	7.6	43.7
3a	0.8	4.6
5	9.0	51.7

1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 is soil wetness and soil droughtiness.

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

1.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 5 is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in May 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 17.4 ha site is situated between Walsall Wood and High Heath, Brownhills. The land is predominantly in agricultural use. The majority of the site has been designated as a SSSI.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with consent for clay extraction.

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 permanent grass.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SK 030041) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	718
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1327

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	169
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	91
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	78

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 the land.

5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of upper coal measures of the Etruria Marl group - British Geological Survey Sheet 154 Lichfield, 1:63360. This is overlain by deposits of Quaternary Boulder Clay and Recent alluvium.

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

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 7.6 ha (43.7%) of the survey area and is found east of the drain.

6.1.1 These soils typically have a clay loam texture overlying sandy clay loam and clay to depth or sandy clay loam to depth, with few to many stones within the profile. These soils are gleyed with either a slowly permeable layer below 74 cm or no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm. This places these soils into Wetness Class II.

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

6.1.3 Within this area, some profiles immediately south of Highfield Farm, were found to have a sandy loam texture overlying sand to depth. The moisture balance places these soils into Grade 2.

6.1.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 0.8 ha (4.6%) of the survey area and is found in the north of the site.

6.2.1 The soil has a clay loam texture overlying sandy clay loam and clay to depth. These soils are gleyed, with a slowly permeable layer below 46 cm. This places these soils into Wetness Class III.

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

6.3 Grade 5 - occupies 9.0 ha (51.7%) of the survey area and is west of the drain.

6.3.1 These soils typically have either an organic or peaty, clay loam texture overlying organic sandy clay loam to depth or comprise humified peat. The soil profiles were considered to be wet within 40 cm for more than 335 days in most years and placed into Wetness Class IV.

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

6.4 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
2	7.6	43.7	21.8
3a	0.8	4.6	2.3
5	9.0	51.7	75.9
Totals	**17.4**	**100.0**	**100.0**