HARROGATE LOCAL PLAN SITE 5

Agricultural Land Classification report on the Bilton Triangle
(May 1993 Revision of 1986 report)

INTRODUCTION

The site is located around grid reference SE 320 565, between Bilton and Starbeck in Harrogate. It covers an area of 31.6 ha of which 21.5 ha are currently in agricultural production. ALC survey work was carried out in October 1986 and soils were examined by hand auger at points predetermined by the National Grid at a density of one boring per hectare. Additional borings were made where necessary to check on soil variability and to refine grade boundaries.

This report and accompanying map covers part of the area originally surveyed in 1986. The map has been re-drawn and the report revised (May 1993) to cover the smaller area included in the current Local Plan proposals. ALC grade boundaries and descriptions of these areas, however, except for some very minor text changes, are those made at the time of the 1986 survey.

CLIMATE AND RELIEF

Mean annual rainfall in the area is approximately 740 mm and the growing season approximately 240 days.

Altitude varies from about 107 m AOD in the south of the site to about 90 m AOD in the north. The southern half of the site is generally level or gently sloping. To the north of the railway line the land becomes moderately sloping.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The whole of the site is underlain by deposits of Boulder Clay over Millstone Grit shales and grits. Soils on the site are generally lighter towards the north and east of the site and heavier in the south and west. The lighter soils consist of medium sandy loam and lay loam topsoils and subsoils with sands in places. These soils are typically very slightly to slightly stony. Drainage status is generally well to moderately well drained although it may occasionally be imperfect.
Heavier soils on the site typically have medium loam topsoils and subsoils with clay subsoils in places. Drainage is predominantly poor.

LAND USE

Most of the area in agricultural production is in cereals with a small area down to grass. Of the land not in agricultural production most is taken up by an old petrol depot.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Grade 2 (4.2 ha)

The area mapped as Grade 2 has light topsoils, predominantly sandy loams, with a mean depth of 35 cm. Subsoils textures are generally sandy clay loams and sandy loams with loamy sands and sands in places. These soils are very slightly to slightly stony and are well or moderately well drained.

Subgrade 3a (6.2 ha)

Topsoils in the area mapped as Subgrade 3a have a mean depth of 33 cm. Typical topsoil textures are sandy clay loams and sandy silt loams. Subsoils are predominantly sandy clay loam in texture with sands in places. They are moderately well and imperfectly drained and are slightly or very slightly stony in places.

Subgrade 3b (11.1 ha)

The areas mapped as Subgrade 3b generally consist of clay loam or sandy clay loam topsoils overlying clay loam with occasional sandy clay loam and clay subsoils at a mean depth of 26 cm. These soils are predominantly poorly drained.

The small area of Subgrade 3b land besides the disused railway line on the north-eastern boundary of the site is a bank of material presumably excavated during construction of the railway line. Soil profiles consequently are very variable and show much evidence of disturbance with subsoil lying at the surface in many places.

R P G Leeds November 1986 (Revised May 1993)
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