

# AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

## BUSINESS PARK, LAND EAST OF KING STREET, NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE

### 1. SUMMARY

60.2 ha of land at Northwich were graded under the Revised Agricultural Land Classification System. 2.8% of the site was found to be Grade 2, 3.7% Sub-grade 3a, 84.2% sub-grade 3b and 4.8% Grade 4. The remainder of the site (2.7%) is non-agricultural. The main limitation to land quality is soil wetness.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey was undertaken during July 1993, by the Resource Planning Team, Wolverhampton, using the Revised ALC Guidelines (MAFF, 1988), in order to determine the land quality of some 60.2 ha of land at Northwich, of which 57.5 ha are agricultural land.

2.2 The site lies south of the A556(T) and is bounded to the west by the A530 (King Street), to the east by the B5082 and to the south by a minor road.

2.3 The survey was carried out at a scale of 1:10,000 with auger borings taken at 100 m intervals. Results should only be reported at this scale due to the inaccuracies that may result from any enlargement.

2.4 The site is predominantly under grass, with some cereals in the south west.

### 3.0 CLIMATE

3.1 The relevant climatic factors for ALC are Average Annual Rainfall (AAR) as a measure of overall wetness, Accumulated Temperature (ATO) as a measure of the overall warmth of the area and Field Capacity Days (FCD).

Altitude (m)	30
AAR (mm)	783
ATO (Day °C)	1425
FCD	185

The site is not limited by climate.

### 4.0 SITE

4.1 The assessment of site factors for ALC is primarily concerned with the way in which gradient and micro-relief influence the use of agricultural machinery and therefore the cropping potential of the land.

4.2 The site is generally level and not limited by gradient or micro-relief.

## 5.0 GEOLOGY AND SOIL

5.1 The solid geology of the site, comprised Middle Keuper Marl. This is overlain by Boulder Clay and the soils developing in this area typically clay loam topsoils over clay subsoils. Some areas of sandy incursions also occur.

## 6.0 ALC

Grade/Sub-grade	Area (ha)	% of Total	% of Agricultural Land
2	1.7	2.8	3.0
3a	2.2	3.7	3.8
3b	50.7	84.2	88.2
4	2.9	4.8	5.0
Non-Agricultural	1.2	2.0	
Agricultural Buildings	0.2	0.3	
Open Water	0.1	0.2	
Not surveyed	<u>1.2</u>	<u>2.0</u>	—
Total area	60.3	100.0	
Total Agricultural Area	57.5		100.0

### Grade 2

Grade 2 quality land is found over a small area (1.7 ha) to the north west of High House. The soils have sandy loam and clay loam texture over loamy sand subsoils with sand below 70 cm. The main limitation is drought.

### Sub-grade 3a

Sub-grade 3a land comprises 3.7% (2.2 ha) of the site. Land is limited by soil wetness. The soils have a medium clay loam texture over clay subsoils. The slowly permeable layer (SPL) lies below 50 cm and the soils fall into wetness class III.

Sub-grade 3a land occurs in a small area on the western boundary. Several isolated areas occur within the sub-grade 3b land, but these are too small to map at a scale of 1:10,000.

### Sub-grade 3b

84.2% (50.7 ha) of the site is Sub-grade 3b land. The limitation to land quality is soil wetness. The soils have medium clay loam texture over clay subsoils. The SPL lies within 50 cm and the soils fall into wetness class IV.

### Grade 4

Land limited to Grade 4 occurs across 4.8% (2.9 ha) of the site, although further isolated borings were found across the site, within the Sub-grade 3b. The soils have heavy clay loam texture and clay subsoils, an SPL within 50 cm, and fall into wetness class IV.

### Land in Non-agricultural Use

The remaining 4.5% (2.7 ha) of the site is in non-agricultural use. This includes trackways, farm buildings and open water. Of the 4.5%, 2.0% was not surveyed.

Resource Planning Team  
ADAS Wolverhampton - July 1993