

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

SEDFIELD LOCAL PLAN

SPENNYMOOR EAST:

SKIBBEREEN FARM

COUNTY DURHAM

SEPTEMBER 1992

ADAS

Leeds Statutory Group

Ref: 87/92

MAFF FILE: 2 FCS 6068

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6067

SKIBBERE.ALC/MP

SEDGEFIELD LOCAL PLAN
SPENNYMOOR EAST
SITE OF SKIBBEREEN FARM

SUMMARY

Land covering a total of approximately 32ha was surveyed at Skibbereen Farm. 98% of this is in agricultural production, of which 12.4ha has been classified as subgrade 3a, and 18.6ha as subgrade 3b.

Subgrade 3a land occurs in the north eastern part of the site and typically consists of medium clay loam topsoil over medium clay loam or sandy clay loam upper subsoils, which pass at depth into slowly permeable heavy clay loam or clay lower subsoils. This land is limited to Subgrade 3a by slight soil wetness.

Subgrade 3b land occurs in the western and southern parts of the site. Topsoils consist entirely of medium clay loam and directly overlie slowly permeable heavy clay loam or clay subsoils at a relatively shallow depth. Soils of this type are restricted to subgrade 3b by wetness which is more severe than on the adjoining Subgrade 3a land.

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1. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

SEDGEFIELD LOCAL PLAN, SPENNYMOOR EAST (SKIBBEREEN FARM)

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site at Skibbereen Farm is located around grid reference NZ 276340, adjacent to the A688 at Mount Pleasant, Spennymoor. The site covers an area of approximately 32ha, virtually all of which is in agricultural use.

Survey work was carried out in September 1992 when soils were examined by hand auger borings at 100m intervals predetermined by the National Grid. The land quality was assessed using the methods described in "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales, Revised guidelines for assessing the quality of agricultural land" (MAFF, 1988).

Climate

Grid Reference:	NZ 276340
Altitude (m):	110
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January-June)	1248
Average Annual Rainfall (mm):	686
Climatic Grade:	2
Field Capacity Days:	172
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat:	87
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes:	72

Land Use and Relief

At the time of the survey all of the land on the site was in agricultural production with the exception of a small area of urban land, consisting of a farm road and Skibbereen Farm itself. Of the agricultural land the majority was under permanent pasture with the remainder being under potatoes, recently drilled cereals or cereal stubble.

The site is gently sloping with a southerly aspect.

Geology and Soils

The site is underlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures over which there is a cover of boulder clay.

Topsoils consist entirely of medium clay loam. These overlie either slowly permeable heavy clay loam or clay or a permeable upper subsoil horizon of medium or sandy clay loam which passes to slowly permeable heavy clay loam or clay at depth.

Profiles are generally imperfectly or poorly drained (wetness Classes III or IV) over the whole site.

2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The ALC grades occurring on this site are as follows:-

<u>Grade/Subgrade</u>	<u>Hectares</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Area</u>
3a	12.4	39.1
3b	18.6	58.7
(Subtotal)	(31.0)	
Agric. Buildings	0.1	0.3
Urban	0.6	1.9
	—	—
Total	31.7	100
	—	—

Subgrade 3a

Land in this subgrade occurs in the north eastern part of the site.

Soils typically consist of medium clay loam topsoils overlying medium clay loam or sandy clay loam upper subsoils with a heavy clay loam or clay lower subsoil occurring at a depth of around 50cm. Profiles are imperfectly drained as a result of the slowly permeable nature of the heavily textured lower subsoil, and fall into wetness Class III.

This area of land is limited by soil wetness to subgrade 3a.

Subgrade 3b

Subgrade 3b land occupies the remainder of the agricultural land. Medium clay loam topsoils overlie heavy clay loam or clay subsoils which are gleyed and slowly permeable in nature.

Profiles are slowly permeable at less than 40cm depth and fall into wetness Class IV (poorly drained) as a result. They are restricted to Subgrade 3b by wetness and workability problems which are more severe than those on the adjoining Subgrade 3a land.

Agricultural Buildings

Agricultural Buildings

This consists of Skibbereen farmhouse and outbuildings.

Urban

The track leading to Skibbereen Farm falls into this category.