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Vale of the White Horse District Local Plan
Site H28: Land West of Cherry Tree Close, Kingston Bagpuize
Agricultural Land Classification Report
October 1994

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION, REPORT

VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN
SITE H28: LAND WEST OF CHERRY TREE CLOSE, KINGSTON BAGPUIZE

1. Summary

1.1 ADAS was commissioned by MAFF's Land Use Planning Unit to provide information on land quality on a number of sites in the Vale of the White Horse District of Oxfordshire. The work forms part of MAFF's statutory input to the preparation of the Vale of the White Horse District Local Plan

1.2 Site H28 comprises 4.3 hectares of land to the west of Cherry Tree Close, Kingston Bagpuize in the district of the Vale of the White Horse, Oxfordshire. An Agricultural Land Classification, (ALC), survey was carried out during October 1994. The survey was undertaken at a detailed level of approximately one boring per hectare. A total of five borings and one soil inspection pit were described in accordance with MAFF's revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land, (MAFF, 1988). 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.

1.3 The work was carried out by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Leeds Statutory Centre of ADAS.

1.4 At the time of survey the whole of the site was in set aside.

1.5 The distribution of grades and subgrades is shown on the attached ALC map and the areas and extent are given in the table below. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:10,000. It is accurate at this scale, but any enlargement would be misleading.

Table 1: Distribution of Grades and Subgrades

Grade	Area (ha)	% of Agricultural Land
3a	4.3	100% (4.3 ha)
Total area of site	4.3 ha	

1.6 Appendix 1 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.

1.7 The whole site has been classified as Subgrade 3a quality. Soils consist of well drained loamy medium sand top and upper subsoils over medium sandy loam or sandy clay loam lower subsoils. This land is limited to Subgrade 3a by soil droughtiness restrictions.

2. Climate

2.1 Estimates of climatic variables relevant to the assessment of agricultural land quality were obtained by interpolation from a 5km grid point dataset (Met. Office, 1989) for a representative location in the survey area.

Table 2: Climatic Interpolation

Grid Reference	SU 395 980
Altitude (m)	82
Accumulated Temperature (degree days, Jan-June)	1426
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	644
Field Capacity (days)	135
Moisture Deficit, Wheat (mm)	110
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes (mm)	102
Overall Climatic Grade	1

2.2 Climatic factors are considered first when classifying land since climate can be overriding in the sense that adverse climatic conditions may restrict land quality irrespective of favourable site and soil conditions. The details in the table above show that there is no overall climatic limitation affecting this site. In addition, no local climatic factors such as exposure or frost risk are believed to affect the land quality.

2.3 However, climatic factors do interact with soil factors to influence soil wetness and droughtiness limitations. At this locality, the climate is relatively warm and dry in regional terms. As a result the likelihood of soil droughtiness problems will be enhanced whilst soil wetness limitations may be partially offset.

3. Relief

3.1 The site lies at an altitude of approximately 82 metres and is flat. Nowhere on the site do gradient or microrelief affect agricultural land quality.

4. Geology and Soil

4.1 The British Geological Survey (1971) 1:50,000 scale drift map of the area (sheet 253, Abingdon) shows the whole site to be underlain with Jurassic Corallian Beds, mostly, sandstone.

4.2 The Soil Survey of England and Wales (1971) has mapped the area at 1:63,360 scale (sheet 253, Abingdon). Soils on the site are mapped as Fyfield Series these being well drained, coarse loamy and loamy over sands and sandstone.

4.3 Detailed field examination of the soils on the site revealed no impediment to drainage although soils were sandy and droughty.

5. Agricultural Land Classification

5.1 Table 1 provides the details of the area measurements for each grade and the distribution of each grade is shown on the attached ALC map.

5.2 The location of soil observation points are shown on the attached sample point map.

Subgrade 3a

5.3 Good quality land has been mapped on all the agricultural land on the site. Typical profiles comprise very slightly stony, (ie, 2% flints by volume), loamy medium sand topsoils over similarly textured very slightly stony subsoils comprising horizons of sandy clay loam, sandy loam and sand as well as loamy sand. Weathering bedrock is occasionally encountered within 120 cm depth. These light texture and occasionally shallow soils are restricted to Subgrade 3a by a droughtiness limitation. Soils are well drained falling into Wetness Class I, Soil Pit 1 being typical of these profiles. However, the combination of soil characteristics and the local climatic regime leads to a restriction in profile available water. Yield potential may thus be adversely affected. Such land is 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.

ADAS Ref 3304/251/94
MAFF Ref EL33/0127

Resource Planning Team
Leeds Statutory Centre
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SOURCES OF REFERENCE

British Geological Survey (1971) Sheet No. 253, Abingdon.

MAFF (1988) "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land".

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

Soil Survey of England and Wales (1971), Sheet 253.

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, religous buildings, cemetries. 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[1]
I	The soil profile is not wet within 70 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years.[2]
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.

[1]The number of days specified is not necessarily a continuous period.
[2]'In most years' is defined as more than 10 out of 20 years.

APPENDIX III

SOIL PIT AND SOIL BORING DESCRIPTIONS

Contents :

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.

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

3. **GRDNT** : Gradient as estimated or measured by a hand-held optical clinometer.

4. **GLEY/SPL** : 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.

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

Soil Pits and Auger Borings

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

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

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

HR :	all hard rocks and stones	**SLST** :	soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone
CH :	chalk	**FSST** :	soft, fine grained sandstone
ZR :	soft, argillaceous, or silty rocks	**GH** :	gravel with non-porous (hard) stones
MSST :	soft, medium grained sandstone	**GS** :	gravel with porous (soft) stones
SI :	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 **ST** : strongly developed	**MD** : moderately developed
ped size	**F** : fine **C** : coarse	**M** : medium **VC** : very coarse
ped shape	**S** : single grain **GR** : granular **SAB** : sub-angular blocky **PL** : platy	**M** : massive **AB** : angular blocky **PR** : prismatic

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 appropiate 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 : VALE OF WHITE HORSE H28 Pit Number : 1P

Grid Reference: S039509790 Average Annual Rainfall : 644 mm
Accumulated Temperature : 1426 degree days
Field Capacity Level : 135 days
Land Use : Set-aside
Slope and Aspect : degrees

HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	STONES >2	TOT.STONE	LITH	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE	CONSIST	SUBSTRUCTURE	CALC
0- 37	LMS	10YR44 00	0	0						
37- 80	LMS	10YR56 00	0	0			SDMSAB	FR	G	

Wetness Grade : 1 Wetness Class : I
Gleying : cm
SPL : No SPL

Drought Grade : 3B APW : 082mm MBW : -28 mm
APP : 080mm MBP : -22 mm

FINAL ALC GRADE : 3B
MAIN LIMITATION : Droughtiness

SAMPLE NO.	GRID REF	USE	ASPECT	GRDNT	GLEY	SPL	--WETNESS-- CLASS	GRADE	-WHEAT- AP	MB	-POTS- AP	MB	M.REL DRT	EROSN FLOOD	FROST EXP	CHEM DIST	LIMIT	ALC	COMMENTS
1	SU39509800	ARA			80		1	1	123	13	080	-23	3A				DR	3A	
1P	S039509790	SAS					1	1	082	-28	080	-22	3B				DR	3B	
2	SU39609800	ARA					1	1	110	0	066	-37	3B				DR	3B	
3	SU39409790	SAS					1	1	127	17	086	-17	3A				DR	3A	
4	SU39509790	SAS					1	1	131	21	083	-20	3A				DR	3A	
5	SU39609790	SAS			100		1	1	126	16	097	-6	2				DR	2	

SAMPLE	DEPTH	TEXTURE	COLOUR	----MOTTLES----- COL	ABUN	CONT	PED COL.	GLEY	----STONES---- >2	>6	LITH	TOT	STRUCT/ CONSIST	SUBS STR	POR	IMP	SPL	CALC
1	0-25	lms	10YR43 00						2	0	HR	2						
	25-60	lms	10YR44 00						0	0	HR	2		G				
	60-80	msl	10YR44 00						0	0	HR	2		G				
	80-120	scl	10YR53 00	10YR32 00	C			Y	0	0	HR	2		G				
1P	0-37	lms	10YR44 00						0	0		0						
	37-80	lms	10YR56 00						0	0		0	SDMSAB	FR G				
2	0-25	lms	10YR43 00						2	0	HR	2						
	25-60	ms	10YR46 00						0	0	HR	2		G				
	60-80	msl	10YR56 00						0	0	HR	2		G				
	80-120	scl	10YR54 00	10YR31 00	M			S	0	0	HR	2		G				
3	0-30	lms	10YR42 00						0	0		0						
	30-55	lms	10YR44 00						0	0		0		G				
	55-120	scl	10YR66 00						0	0		0		G				
4	0-30	lms	10YR42 00						0	0		0						
	30-60	lms	10YR44 00						0	0		0		G				
	60-120	msl	10YR44 00						0	0		0		G				
5	0-50	lms	10YR44 00						0	0	HR	2						
	50-65	msl	10YR56 00						0	0		0		G				
	65-100	scl	10YR46 00						0	0		0		G				
	100-120	ms	10YR62 00	75YR56 00	C			Y	0	0		0		G				