



AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
SEDFIELD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN,
LAND AT HILL HOUSE FARM,
NEWTON AYCLIFFE, COUNTY DURHAM
AUGUST 1994

ADAS
Leeds Statutory Group

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SUMMARY

A detailed survey of 66.7 ha of land at Hill House Farm, Newton Aycliffe was carried out in August 1994.

7.8 ha were graded 3a. Two areas of subgrade 3a contained medium textured imperfectly drained soils limited by soil wetness. A further small area of subgrade 3a land with light textured stony soils was limited by droughtiness.

The remaining 49.7 ha of agricultural land were graded 3b. Topsoils were medium textured over slowly permeable, clayey subsoils. This imperfectly drained land is limited by soil wetness.

Farm woodland and Farm buildings occupy 0.2 ha and 0.4 ha respectively.

8.6 ha of land were not surveyed at the request of the owner occupier.

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1. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT ON LAND AT HILL HOUSE FARM, NEWTON AYCLIFFE, CO DURHAM

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Location and Survey Methods

The site is located approximately 4km south of Newton Aycliffe town centre to the west of the A167 (T). It covers a total of 66.7 ha and lies around National Grid Reference NZ 278 210. Survey work was carried out in August 1994 when soils were examined by hand auger borings at a density of one per hectare at locations predetermined by the National Grid. Appropriate soil inspection pits were dug to assess soil physical characteristics. Land quality was assessed using the methods described in "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land." (MAFF, 1988).

1.2 Land Use and Relief

At the time of the survey most of the site was in agricultural use, being a mixture of wheat, permanent grass and set-aside. The remainder of the site being woodland and farm buildings .

Site altitude varies between 70m AOD in the north east to 90m AOD in the north. The land is generally level to moderately sloping (0-6°) with two small areas to the north east and centre strongly sloping (8-9°).

1.3 Climate

Grid Reference	: NZ 278 210
Altitude	: 80m
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January - June)	: 1289
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	: 670
Climatic Grade	: 2
Field Capacity Days	: 170
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat	: 93
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes	: 80

1.4 Geology, Soils and Drainage

Solid Magnesian Limestone does not outcrop within a metre of the surface at the site.

Soils are mostly developed from boulder clay although lacustrine clay and sand and gravel have also weathered to produce separate soil types.

Boulder clay and lacustrine clay soils have medium clay loam or sandy clay loam topsoils over clayey slowly permeable subsoils. These poorly drained soils fall within Wetness Class IV although some profiles are imperfectly drained (Wetness Class III).

The sand and gravel deposits have produced freely drained stony, droughty soils. Topsoils are sandy clay loam or medium sandy loam over loamy sand or sand subsoils.

3. 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>
1		
2		
3a	7.8	11.7
3b	49.7	74.5
4		
5		
(Sub total)	(57.5)	(85.5)
Urban		
Non Agricultural	0.2	0.3
Woodland - Farm		
- Commercial		
Agricultural Buildings	0.4	0.6
Open Water		
Land not surveyed	8.6	12.9
(Sub total)	(9.2)	(14.5)
TOTAL	<u>66.7</u>	<u>100</u>

2.1 Subgrade 3a

Three small areas of subgrade 3a land were identified on the site. The two areas to the west contain imperfectly drained medium textured soils. Soil wetness is limiting. The subgrade 3a area to the east contains light textured soils limited by drought.

2.2 Subgrade 3b

This subgrade is common across the site. Medium textured topsoils overlie clayey slowly permeable subsoils. These poorly drained (Wetness Class IV) soils are limited by soil wetness.

2.3 Farm Woodland

This comprises a small wooded area in the centre of the site.

2.4 Farm Buildings

This includes Hill House Farm.

2.5 Not Surveyed

This area was not surveyed at the request of the owner occupier.

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MAP