

**CASTLE MORPETH
DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN**

**Agricultural Land Classification
Summary ALC Map and Report**

September 1997

**Resource Planning Team
Northern Region
FRCA, Leeds**

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY REPORT

CASTLE MORPETH DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of 11 sites within Castle Morpeth District. The surveys were carried out in August and September 1997. The survey was carried out by the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), in connection with the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan. These surveys supersede any previous ALC information for this land.
- 1.2 The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Northern Region of FRCA. The land has been graded in accordance with the published MAFF ALC guidelines and criteria (MAFF, 1988). A description of the ALC grades and subgrades is given in Appendix I.
- 1.3 At the time of survey the land use on the sites was as follows:-

Site N/M 26, Lancaster Park

All of the agricultural land use on this site was under ley grass. Non-agricultural land consists of West Lane End Farm, its access road and gardens.

Site N/M27, Fulbeck

The easternmost field of this site was in winter cereals whilst the remaining agricultural land consisted of ley grass. Other, non-agricultural, land consisting of scrub and gardens occurs in the east of the site.

Site MH1/ME1/ME2.ME3, Land at St George's Hospital

All land was in grass except for a field of wheat in the north of the site and hospital buildings in the south.

Site ME3, Fairmoor

All of this land was in ley grass at the time of survey.

Site ME1, Loansdean

All of the agricultural land was in winter wheat. Other land occurs in the west and south and consists of recently planted woodland.

Site MPS4, Loansdean

The south of this site consists of recently planted woodland whilst the remainder was in winter wheat.

Additional Land at Lancaster Park/Fairmoor

This land was under grass at the time of survey.

Site ME3, East Riding and Swinneys Field

The site comprises a mixture of arable and grass uses along with some sports fields mapped as other land.

Site ME3, Adjacent Searle's

At the time of survey this site was in arable use.

Site N/PG16, Pegswood North Farm

Most of this site was under either ley or permanent grass. A small area of disturbed land (mapped as Other, non-agricultural, land) occurs in the centre of the site.

Site E2A, Newcastle Airport

Most of the agricultural land was in arable use with part of the site comprising airport car parking and new woodland plantation (mapped as Other land).

SUMMARY

- 1.4 Fieldwork was conducted at an average density of one boring per hectare. Additional borings were made where necessary to refine grade boundaries and at least one soil pit was dug at each site.
- 1.5 The survey findings are shown on the attached ALC maps which are drawn at a scale of 1:5,000. They are accurate at this scale but any enlargement would be misleading.

The areas of ALC grades and subgrades are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Site	Area (ha)				
	Grade 2	Subgrade 3a	Subgrade 3b	Grade 4	Other land
N/M 26, Lancaster Park	-	-	10.1	-	0.7
N/M27, Fulbeck	-	-	5.8	0.3	0.8
MH1/ME1/ME2.ME3	-	7.5	45.3	-	1.4
ME3, Fairmoor	-	-	7.6	-	-
ME1, Loansdean	-	4.1	2.9	-	0.5
MPS4, Loansdean	-	1.2	-	-	1.7
ME3, East Riding and Swinneys Field	4.3	-	0.2	-	1.3
ME3, Adjacent Searle's	-	-	13.1	-	-
N/PG16, Pegswood North Farm	-	1.4	1.7	-	0.1
E2A, Newcastle Airport	-	-	13.9	3.9	4.7
Fairmoor/Lancaster Park	-	-	36.8	1.7	0.6
Additional Area					

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APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTIONS 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 (e.g. 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.