

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION  
CASTLE MORPETH DISTRICT  
LOCAL PLAN  
PARISH HAUGH, MORPETH  
FEBRUARY 1993

ADAS  
*Leeds Statutory Group*

Job No:- 50/93  
MAFF Ref:-

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## SUMMARY

An Agricultural Land Classification survey of approximately 35ha of land at Parish Haugh, Morpeth was carried out in February 1993.

26.3ha of this was in agricultural use of which 12.2ha falls within Grade 2. Soils on this land are well drained (Wetness Class I) and consist of black medium sandy loam topsoils over medium sandy loam subsoils. The very dark colour of the topsoil is a result of past night soiling. Slight soil droughtiness limits this land to Grade 2.

Subgrade 3a land covers 8.9ha. Soils are freely drained (Wetness Class I) and consist of black medium sandy loam topsoils over loamy medium sand often stony, subsoils which are limited to Subgrade 3a by droughtiness. South of the sewage works, however sandy loam top and upper subsoils overlie clay at depth and some land in this area is limited to Subgrade 3a by slight wetness.

Subgrade 3b land covers 5.2ha and consists of well drained deep sandy loams limited to Subgrade 3b by gradients of 8° - 11°. The remainder of the site is made up of urban and non-agricultural land.

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1. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT: CASTLE MORPETH  
DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN, PARISH HAUGH, MORPETH

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Local and Survey Methods

The site is located ½Km east of Morpeth town centre around National Grid Reference NZ 206860. It covers a total of 35.1ha. Survey work was carried out in February 1993 when soils were examined by hand auger borings at points predetermined by the National Grid. Overall boring density was approximately one per hectare with extra borings being made where necessary to refine grade boundaries. Land quality was assessed using the methods described in "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales" (MAFF 1988).

1.2 Land Use and Relief

At the time of survey, most of the site was under cereals, potatoes and vegetable crops. Some land in the southern part of the site consists of derelict grassland,

Site altitude varies between 25 and 55m AOD. The site is mostly level except for the strongly sloping north and north east facing area in the southern half of the site.

1.3 Climate

Grid Reference	: NZ 206 860
Altitude (m)	: 30
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January-June)	: 1319 day°C
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	: 673
Climatic Grade	: 1
Field Capacity Days	: 178
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat	: 95
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes	: 82

#### 1.4 Geology, Soils and Drainage

The site is underlain by Coal Measure Shales and Sandstones. On the lower flatter ground, in the northern and central parts of the site, this is covered by river terrace sands and gravels. Soils on these deposits are light textured and consist of well drained (Wetness Class I) medium sandy loam topsoils over similar, but sometimes stony subsoils. Clay occurs at depth in a few places, especially south of the sewage works.

A feature of this part of the site is the black colour of the topsoil. This is a result of past night soiling, the evidence of which remains as numerous cinders, pieces of coal and pottery fragments.

The steeply sloping southern part of the site consists largely of well drained sandy loam and medium clay loam soils.

## 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>
1		
2	12.2	34.8
3a	8.9	25.3
3b	5.2	14.8
4		
5		
(Sub total)	(26.3)	(74.9)
Urban	7.9	22.5
Non Agricultural	0.9	2.6
Woodland - Farm		
- Commercial		
Agricultural Buildings		
Open Water		
Land not surveyed		
(Sub total)	(8.8)	(25.1)
 TOTAL	 35.1	 100

## 2.1 Grade 2

Grade 2 land covers much of the lower lying part of the site. Profiles are well drained (Wetness Class I) and consist of black medium sandy loam topsoils over medium sandy loam subsoils. Slight soil droughtiness is the main factor limiting this land to Grade 2.

## 2.2 Subgrade 3a

Subgrade 3a land is also common in the northern area. Profiles north west of the sewage works are well drained (Wetness Class I) and consist of black fine to medium sandy loam topsoils over loamy medium sand subsoils which are stony at depth. Soils of this type are limited to Subgrade 3a by droughtiness. To the south of the sewage works sandy loam topsoils and upper subsoils overlie heavier, sometimes slowly permeable clayey subsoils. Profiles of this type are imperfectly drained (Wetness Class III) and limited to Subgrade 3a by wetness.

## 2.3 Subgrade 3b

Subgrade 3b occurs in the southern half of the site where the land is strongly sloping (8-11°). Profiles consist of medium clay loam or medium sandy loam topsoils over sandy loam, sandy clay loam or heavy clay loam subsoils. Soils are well to imperfectly drained (Wetness Class I-III). Gradient is the main factor restricting this land to Subgrade 3b.

## 2.4 Non Agricultural

This category includes a strip of river bank on the northern edge of the site and an area of scrubland adjacent to the sewage works.

## 2.5 Urban

The urban land consists of houses, roads and the sewage works.

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MAP