

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ZONE 1

MAFF
Leeds Regional Office

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1. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT ON ZONE 1 OF THE
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 The site is located around national Grid Reference NZ250 710 approximately 7 km north of Newcastle Upon Tyne city centre. It covers 271.3 hectares, only 12.5 per cent of which is in agricultural use.

1.2 Survey Method

Survey work was carried out during March 1990 when agricultural soils were inspected using a 1 metre hand auger at 100 metre intervals, at points pre-determined by the National Grid.

Principal land uses for all non-agricultural land were also recorded. This was done by on-site inspection and air photo interpretation, where access proved difficult.

1.3 Land Use

Most of the site is in various non-agricultural uses. These include golf courses, playing fields, woodland and the Newcastle Race Course. Agricultural land is confined to the north western quarter of the site. It is mainly in arable production with winter cereals forming the main crop at the time of survey. A smaller area of permanent grass occurs on land immediately north west of the race course.

1.4 Climate

Average Annual Rainfall (AAR) is approximately 681 mm. Accumulated temperature above 0°C between January and June (ATO) is 1290 day °C and the land is at field capacity for about 171 days a year. The rainfall and temperature figures place an overall climatic restriction of Grade 2 on the agricultural land.

1.5 Relief

Altitude on the site varies between 55 and 67 metres above Ordnance Datum and the relief is gently undulating. Slopes rarely exceed 4-5° except near Matts Bank plantation where gradients slightly over 7° occasionally occur.

1.6 Geology and Soils

Soils on the site have formed on Boulder Clay drift deposits and typically consist of fine loamy topsoils over gleyed and slowly permeable clayey subsoils to depth. All profiles are non calcareous and are stoneless to very slightly stony.

2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

The ALC grades occurring on this site are as follows:

Grade/ Subgrade	Hectares	Percentage of Total Area
3a	0.8	0.5
3b	32.6	12.0
Urban	11.8	4.5
Open Water	13.8	5.0
Other Non Agricultural	<u>212.3</u>	<u>78.0</u>
TOTAL	271.3	100

Subgrade 3a

A small area of subgrade 3a land occurs near the western boundary. Soils fall within Wetness Class III and consist of medium clay loam topsoils and upper subsoils passing into boulder clay at depth.

The soils are limited to subgrade 3a by a combination of wetness and workability problems.

Subgrade 3b

Most agricultural land on the site falls within this subgrade. Soils fall within wetness classes III or IV and consist usually of heavy clay loam topsoils over gleyed and slowly permeable clay. Wetness workability problems are more restricting than on the subgrade 3a land and are the main limitation on ALC grade.

Urban

The 11.8 hectares of urban land uses on the site consist of the cemeteries near Coach Lane, an hotel and various buildings connected with the race course.

Open Water

This includes Gosforth Lake and a small pond near Matts Bank Plantation.

Other Non Agricultural

The various other non-agricultural land uses include plantation woodland, a golf course and driving range, playing fields and the race course.

Resource Planning Group
Leeds Regional Office

MAPS