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HAMPSHIRE MINERALS PLAN
SITE 6: DRIFT ROAD,
BLACKMOOR
AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
ALC MAP & REPORT
NOVEMBER 1993

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT

1.0 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 Hampshire. The work forms part of MAFF's statutory input to the preparation of the Hampshire Minerals Plan.

1.2 Approximately 6 hectares of land relating to Site 6 south east of Drift Road, Blackmoor in Hampshire was surveyed in November 1993. The survey was undertaken at a detailed level of approximately one boring per hectare. A total of 6 soil auger borings and 2 soil inspection pits were assessed 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 long-term limitations on its use for agriculture.

1.3 The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Guildford Statutory Group of ADAS.

1.4 At the time of the survey the land had been recently harvested of maize.

1.5 The distribution of grades and subgrades is shown on the attached ALC map and the areas are given in the table below. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:5,000. It is accurate at this scale, but any enlargement would be misleading. This map supersedes any previous survey information for this site.

Table 1 : Distribution of Grades and Subgrades

Grade	Area (ha)	% of Site	% of Agricultural Area
3b	5.0	80.6	90.9
4	0.5	8.1	9.1
Woodland	0.7	11.3	
			100% (5.5ha)
Total	6.2	100%	

1.6 Appendix 1 gives a general description of the grades and 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 agricultural land on the site has been classified as Subgrade 3b and Grade 4 with soil droughtiness and slope as the key limitations. Soil profiles typically comprise loamy sands or sands which commonly become impenetrable at depths ranging between 50 and 60cm. This is due to the presence of a compact sandy subsoil layer which impedes root penetration. The coarse textured, freely draining nature of the subsoil significantly restricts the profile available water and the range of crops that can tolerate such conditions. Slopes occur in the west of the site which are greater than 11 degrees, and limit this land to no better than Grade 4.

2.0 Climate

2.1 The climatic criteria are considered first when classifying land as climate can be overriding in the sense that severe limitations will restrict land to low grades irrespective of favourable site or soil conditions.

2.2 The main parameters used in the assessment of the overall climatic limitation are annual average rainfall, as a measure of overall wetness, and accumulated temperature (degree days Jan-June), as a measure of the relative warmth of a locality.

2.3 A detailed assessment of the prevailing climate was made by interpolation from a 5km gridpoint dataset (Met. Office 1989). The details are given in the table below and these show that there is no overall climatic limitation affecting the site.

2.4 No local climatic factors such as exposure or frost risk affect the site. However, climatic factors do interact with soil factors to influence soil wetness and droughtiness limitations. At this locality, the climate is relatively wet in regional terms, with field capacity days being high. This will increase the likelihood of soil wetness and workability problems whilst partially offsetting the chances of soil droughtiness risk.

Table 2 : Climatic Interpolation

Grid Reference :	SU 784 334
Altitude (m) :	80
Accumulated Temperature (days) :	1448
Average Annual Rainfall (mm) :	848
Field Capacity (days) :	189
Moisture Deficit, Wheat (mm) :	98
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes (mm) :	90
Overall Climatic Grade :	1

3.0 Relief

3.1 The site lies at an altitude ranging between 85 and 95 metres with steep slopes in the west of the site, where gradient restricts the quality of agricultural land. Elsewhere on the site gradient is not limiting.

4.0 Geology and Soil

4.1 The relevant geological sheet for the site (BGS Sheet 300: Alresford 1978) shows the underlying geology to be Folkestone Beds consisting of ferruginous sand.

4.2 The published soils information for the area (SSEW Sheet 6; Soils of South East England 1983) shows the soils on the site to be of the Shirrel Heath 1 association. These are described as well drained very acid sandy soils with a bleached subsurface horizon. Some similar soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (SSEW, 1983). Detailed field examination broadly confirms this, although the soils in some parts of the site are severely waterlogged due to the presence of a compact sandy subsoil layer.

5.0 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 the soil observation points are shown on the attached sample point map.

5.3 Subgrade 3b: The majority of the agricultural land on the site has been classified as Subgrade 3b, moderate quality land, with soil droughtiness as the main limitation. Soil profiles typically comprise deep medium loamy sand topsoils overlying medium sand. It became evident from soil augerings that a compact layer of medium loamy sand exists within the subsoils. Two soil inspection pits were dug to assess the nature of these soils. Pits 1 and 2 proved the existence of a compact sandy subsoil layer, which commenced at an approximate depth of 55cm. However this compact layer does not satisfy the criteria for classification as a slowly permeable layer, as although soils on parts of the site are waterlogged there is no evidence of gleyed soil profiles. Observations from the soil inspection pits show that this compact layer restricts root penetration into the lower subsoil, whilst at the same time causing a drainage imperfection, exacerbated after periods of high rainfall. Technically it is not possible to grade these soils on the basis of a wetness limitation, however it is possible to cite this compact subsoil as being at least partly responsible for soil droughtiness. This arises due to the effect it has upon rooting depths. A combination of soil textures, structures and the restriction on rooting depths alongside the local climatic regime means that these soils are downgraded due to a droughtiness limitation. There is a significant limitation on the amount of profile available water , and the range of crops that can tolerate such conditions. Therefore, these soils can be classified as no better than Subgrade 3b.

5.4 Grade 4 A small area of land on the site (0.5 ha) covers slopes which have a gradient exceeding 11 degrees. Steep gradients have a significant effect on mechanised farm operations since most conventional agricultural machinery performs more safely and effectively on level ground. The bearing strength of the topsoil, loamy sand topsoils have a relatively low bearing strength, is also critical in the safe operation of machinery on slopes. Furthermore, sandy soils on steep slopes can also be at risk from soil erosion. Because the slopes on this particular area of the site have gradients of 14 degrees there is a severe limitation on agricultural use. Therefore, this land can be classified as no better than Grade 4.

ADAS REFERENCE : 1502/211/93
MAFF REFERENCE : EL15/107

Resource Planning Team
Guildford Statutory Group
ADAS Reading

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF THE GRADES AND SUB-GRADES

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 on the 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.

Grade 3 : Good To Moderate Quality Agricultural Land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, 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.

Sub-grade 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.

Sub-grade 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 very 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 : housing, industry, commerce, education, transport, religious buildings, cemeteries. 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 re-claimed 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/airfields. Also active mineral workings and refuse tips where restoration conditions to 'soft' after-uses may apply.

Woodland

Includes commercial and non-commercial 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

REFERENCES

* British Geological Survey (1978), Sheet No.300, Alresford, 1:50,000

* MAFF (1988), Agricultural Land Classification of England And Wales : revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.

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

* Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983), Sheet No.6, Soils of South East England, 1:250,000, and accompanying legend.

APPENDIX III

DEFINITION OF SOIL WETNESS CLASSES

Wetness Class I

The soil profile is not wet within 70cm depth for more than 30 days in most years.

Wetness Class II

The soil profile is wet within 70cm depth for 31-90 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80cm depth, it is wet within 70cm for more than 90 days, but not wet within 40cm depth for more than 30 days in most years.

Wetness Class III

The soil profile is wet within 70cm depth for 91-180 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80cm depth, it is wet within 70cm for more than 180 days, but only wet within 40cm depth for 31-90 days in most years.

Wetness Class IV

The soil profile is wet within 70cm depth for more than 180 days but not wet within 40cm depth for more than 210 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80cm depth, it is wet within 40cm depth for 91-210 days in most years.

Wetness Class V

The soil profile is wet within 40cm depth for 211-335 days in most years.

Wetness Class VI

The soil profile is wet within 40cm depth for more than 335 days in most years.

(The number of days is not necessarily a continuous period. 'In most years' is defined as more than 10 out of 20 years.)

APPENDIX IV

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 database. This has commonly used notations and abbreviations as set out below.

Boring Header Information

1. GRID REF : national 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 HRT : Horticultural Crops PGR : Permanent Pasture LEY : Ley Grass RGR : Rough Grazing
SCR : Scrub CFW : Coniferous Woodland DCW : Deciduous Woodland HTH : Heathland BOG : Bog or Marsh
FLW : Fallow PLO : Ploughed SAS : Set aside OTH : Other

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

4. GLEY/SPL : Depth in cm to gleying or slowly permeable layers.

5. AP (WHEAT/POTS) : Crop-adjusted available water capacity.

6. MB (WHEAT/POTS) : Moisture Balance.

7. DRT : Best grade according to soil droughtiness.

8. If any of the following factors are considered significant, an entry of 'Y' will be entered in the relevant column.

MREL : Microrelief limitation FLOOD : Flood risk EROSN : Soil erosion risk EXP : Exposure limitation FROST : Frost
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 : Soil Erosion Risk WD : Combined 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
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 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 : Moule colour

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

6. STONE LITH : One of the following is used.

HR : all hard rocks and stones MSST : soft, medium or coarse grained sandstone
SI : soft weathered igneous or metamorphic SLST : soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone
FSST : soft, fine grained sandstone ZR : soft, argillaceous, or silty rocks CH : chalk
GH : gravel with non-porous (hard) stones GS :gravel with porous (soft) stones

Stone contents (>2cm, >6cm and total) are given in percentages (by volume).

7. STRUCT : the degree of development, size and shape of soil peds are described using the following notation:

- degree of development WK : weakly developed MD : moderately developed ST : strongly developed

- ped size F : fine M : medium C : coarse VC : very coarse

- ped shape S : single grain M : massive GR : granular AB : angular blocky SAB : sub-angular blocky PR : prismatic
PL : platy

8. 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

9. SUBS STR : Subsoil structural condition recorded for the purpose of calculating profile droughtiness.

G : good M : moderate P : poor

10. POR : Soil porosity. If a soil horizon has less than 0.5% biopores >0.5 mm, a 'Y' will appear in this column.

11. IMP : If the profile is impenetrable a 'Y' will appear in this column at the appropiate horizon.

12. SPL : Slowly permeable layer. If the soil horizon is slowly permeable a 'Y' will appear in this column.

13. CALC : If the soil horizon is calcareous, a 'Y' will appear in this column.

14. 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 : HANTS MINS S6 BLACKMOOR Pit Number : 1P

Grid Reference: SU78303345 Average Annual Rainfall : 848 mm
Accumulated Temperature : 1448 degree days
Field Capacity Level : 189 days
Land Use : Bare Soil
Slope and Aspect : degrees

HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	STONES >2	TOT.STONE	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE
0- 35	LMS	10YR41 00	0	0		
35- 55	MS	10YR62 00	0	0		
55- 57	LMS	10YR31 00	0	0		

Wetness Grade : 2 Wetness Class : I
Gleying :000 cm
SPL : No SPL

Drought Grade : 3B APW : 48 mm MBW : -50 mm
APP : 49 mm MBP : -41 mm

FINAL ALC GRADE : 3B
MAIN LIMITATION : Droughtiness

SOIL PIT DESCRIPTION

Site Name : HANTS MINS S6 BLACKMOOR Pit Number : 2P

Grid Reference: SU78223348 Average Annual Rainfall : 848 mm
Accumulated Temperature : 1448 degree days
Field Capacity Level : 189 days
Land Use : Bare Soil
Slope and Aspect : degrees

HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	STONES >2	TOT.STONE	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE
0- 42	LMS	10YR41 00	0	5		WKCSAB
42- 60	MS	10YR62 00	0	5		WKCSAB
60- 62	LMS	10YR31 00	0	0		

Wetness Grade : 1 Wetness Class : I
Gleying :000 cm
SPL : No SPL

Drought Grade : 3B APW : 51 mm MBW : -47 mm
APP : 53 mm MBP : -37 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	FLOOD	EROSN EXP	FROST DIST	CHEM LIMIT	ALC	COMMENTS
1	SU78403360	STU		02	000		1	1	48	-50	49	-41	3B				DR	3B	
1P	SU78303345	STU			000		1	2	48	-50	49	-41	3B				DR	3B	
2	SU78303350	STU		04	000		1	2	64	-34	58	-32	3B				DR	3B	
2P	SU78223348	STU			000		1	1	51	-47	53	-37	3B				DR	3B	
3	SU78403350	STU		01	000		1	1	73	-25	56	-34	3B				DR	3B	
4	SU78203340	STU	SE	05	085		1	2	57	-41	56	-34	3B				DR	3B	
5	SU78303340	STU	SE	01	000		3	3A	75	-23	78	-12	3B				DR	3B	
6	SU78403340	STU		01	000		1	1	54	-44	54	-36	3B				DR	3B	

SAMPLE	DEPTH	TEXTURE	COLOUR	MOTTLES COL	MOTTLES ABUN	MOTTLES CONT	PED COL.	GLEY	STONES >2	STONES >6	STONES LITH	STONES TOT	STRUCT/ CONSIST	SUBS STR	SUBS POR	SUBS IMP	SUBS SPL	SUBS CALC
1	0-40	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0						
	40-50	ms	10YR52 00						0	0		0		M				
	50-52	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0		M		Y		
1P	0-35	lms	10YR41 00						0	0		0						
	35-55	ms	10YR62 00						0	0		0		M				
	55-57	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0		M				
2	0-40	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0						
	40-90	ms	10YR52 00						0	0		0		M				
	90-92	lms	10YR32 00						0	0		0		M				
2P	0-42	lms	10YR41 00						0	0	HR	5	WKCSAB	VF				
	42-60	ms	10YR62 00						0	0	HR	5	WKCSAB	VF	M			
	60-62	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0		FM	M	Y		
3	0-35	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0						
	35-120	ms	10YR52 00						0	0		0		M				
4	0-35	lms	75YR21 00						0	0		0						
	35-75	ms	10YR61 00	10YR66 00	F				0	0		0		M				
	75-77	msl	10YR21 00						0	0		0		M		Y		
5	0-35	msl	75YR21 00						0	0		0						
	35-65	ms	75YR61 00						0	0		0		M				
	65-67	lms	75YR21 00						0	0		0		M		Y		
6	0-30	lms	10YR31 00						0	0		0						
	30-70	ms	10YR52 00						0	0		0		M				
	70-90	msst	75YR32 00						0	0		0		M				