AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
SEDGEFIELD LOCAL PLAN
COBBLER'S HALL, NEWTON AYCLIFFE
COUNTY DURHAM

ADAS
Leeds Statutory Group

Ref:- 89/92
MAFF File:-

COBBLERS.ALC/MP

SUMMARY

The site covers a total of 11.85ha, 10.81ha of which was in agricultural use at the time of survey.

Almost 98% (10.57ha) of the agricultural land falls in Subgrade 3b. Soils typically consist of medium sandy loam or medium clay loam topsoils overlying heavy clay loam subsoils. Profiles are poorly drained (Wetness Class IV) and the land is restricted to Subgrade 3b by soil wetness.

In the south-west there is a small area (0.24ha) of Subgrade 3a land. Here soils are imperfectly drained (Wetness Class III) and typically consist of medium sandy loam or medium clay loam topsoils and upper subsoils overlying heavy clay loam lower subsoils. Slight soil wetness is the factor limiting the ALC grade of this land.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site is located around Grid Reference NZ 264263 and lies approximately 2Km north-west of Newton Aycliffe town centre.

It covers a total area of 11.85ha, 91% of which was in agricultural use at the time of survey.

Survey work was carried out in September 1992 when soils were examined by hand auger borings at 100m intervals predetermined by the National Grid. Extra borings were made where necessary to refine grade boundaries and one soil pit was dug to allow the assessment of subsoil structure.

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)

Climate

Grid Reference	NZ 264263
Altitude (m)	110
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January-June)	1253 day°C
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	702
Climatic Grade	2
Field Capacity Days	182
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat	87
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes	71

Land Use and Relief

At the time of survey, 91% of the site was in agricultural production (principally arable with a small area of ley grass in the west) and 9% consisted of farm woodland.

The site is flat to very gently sloping with a southerly aspect.

Geology and Soils

The site is underlain by Middle Magnesian Limestone and overlain by deposits of boulder clay.

Topsoils are light to medium-textured (medium sandy loam or medium clay loam) and subsoils generally heavy-textured (typically heavy clay loam). Profiles are generally poorly drained, falling in Wetness Class IV.

2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The ALC grades occurring on this site are as follows:-

Grade/Subgrade	Hectares	Percentage of Total Area
3a	0.24	2.0
3b	10.57	89.2
(Sub total)	(10.81)	(91.2)
Farm Woodland	1.04	8.8
TOTAL	11.85	100%

Subgrade 3a

Land in this subgrade occurs in a small area in the south-west of the site. Topsoils and upper subsoils consist of medium sandy loam or medium clay loam and overlie heavy clay loam lower subsoils. Profiles are imperfectly drained, falling in Wetness Class III, and the land is limited to Subgrade 3a by slight soil wetness.

Subgrade 3b

Most of the agricultural land on the site falls in Subgrade 3b. Topsoils consist of medium sandy loam or medium clay loam and overlie heavy clay loam subsoils. Profiles are poorly drained (falling in Wetness Class IV) with slowly permeable subsoils generally beginning at around 30cm depth. Soil wetness is thus the factor limiting this land Subgrade 3b.

Farm Woodland

This occurs in three separate areas in the centre and east of the site.

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