AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
TIMBERHONGER LANE, BROMSGROVE

The site at Timberhonger Lane, which covers c.25 hectares was surveyed by the Resource Planning Group using the revised Agricultural Land Classification system in November 1990. The site is situated on the western edge of Bromsgrove and is bounded by Watford Road to the east, Timberhonger Lane to the north, the M5 motorway forms part of the western boundary and there are houses and further agricultural land to the south and south-west. At the time of survey, the whole site was in agricultural use with permanent pasture grazed by sheep. The small wooded, scrub area on the ridge top in the west is not fenced from the pasture and is used freely by the stock.

CLIMATE

The average annual rainfall in the vicinity of the site is 682mm and the accumulated temperature above 6°C for the period January to June is 1384 day °C. The combination of rainfall and temperature indicate that there is no overall climatic limitation to the agricultural use of this site. The balance between summer rainfall and evapotranspiration gives moisture deficits of 97mm for winter wheat and 86mm for potatoes. The median duration of field capacity is 157 days. The growing season extends to about 240 days from the end of March to late November and the mean date of the last frost is early May.

SITE

The land ranges in altitude from 90 metres along Timberhonger Lane to just over 120 metres at its highest point on the south-west edge of the site. In general the land slopes down from the south to the north, but the direction and angle of slope vary, from almost level in the north to strongly sloping from the western edge down towards the east. In places the underlying rock is at or close to the surface, giving small rocky knolls. These are particularly noticeable in the centre of the larger of the two fields. The slope and micro relief are limiting factors over much of this site, notably the western half.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The underlying geology in this area is Lower Keuper Sandstone which gives rise to sandy textured soils of varying depth over rock. Profiles range from rock at or very near the surface to deep, virtually stoneless sandy loams over loamy sand and sand. Droughtiness is the main soil limitation for these soils.

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Grade 2

Grade 2 land is found on the more level land in the north and north-east of the site. Soils are deep, well drained sandy loams with loamy sand and sand below about 60cm in some profiles. In places the sand is quite fine and in the northern of the two fields heavier sandy loam and sandy clay loam textures were encountered. A few profiles have some weathering sandstone at depth, but in general these soils are stoneless. Slight drought risk limits the land to this grade.

Grade 3A

Land mapped as Grade 3A occurs in a narrow band alongside Timberhonger Lane in the north, and in the south-east corner of the site where the land is gently or moderately sloping. Soil profiles are slightly more variable than those mapped as Grade 2 with loamy sand below about 50cm and sandstone rock at depths below 70cm leading to increased risk of droughtiness. Blocks of weathering sandstone were more commonly found in these areas. Within this area there are profiles of Grade 2 quality but because of the greater variability in the soils, they have been mapped as Grade 3A.

Grade 3B

Most of the western half of the site has been mapped as Grade 3B. Gradient is a major limiting factor with slopes from 7-11°, and much more variation in the direction and angle of slope. Where slope is less than 7°, for example in the south-west corner of the

site and around the rockly knolls in the centre, shallow drought prone soils restrict the land to this grade. The area shown as Grade 3B in the northern of the two fields has limiting slopes over part of it and the remainder has been disturbed by the dumping of soil and rubble in the small valley.

Grade 4

A small area of Grade 4 has been mapped on the western edge of the site where slopes exceed 11°. This corresponds quite closely with the area of wood and scrub.

AREA OF LAND IN EACH GRADE

Grade	Hectares	% of total area
2	7·1	29
3A	5·3	21
3B	11·5	47
4	0·7	3
	24·6	

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Wolverhampton

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