

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
CHESHIRE MINERALS LOCAL PLAN
BROWNLOW FARM (6), SILICA SAND**

**R D Metcalfe
Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON**

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**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR
CHESHIRE MINERALS LOCAL PLAN
BROWNLOW FARM (6), SILICA SAND**

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey for this site shows that the following proportions of ALC grades are present:

Grade/Subgrade	ha	% of site
2	21.2	48.7
3a	20.5	47.2
3b	0.8	1.8
Other land	1.0	2.3

- 1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 is soil droughtiness.
- 1.3 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrades 3a and 3b is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in March 1996. An Agricultural Land Classification survey was undertaken according to the guidelines laid down in the "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land" (MAFF 1988).
- 2.2 The 43.5 ha site is situated to the southwest of Congleton. The land surrounding the site is predominantly in agricultural use.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Cheshire Minerals Local Plan.
- 2.4 At MAFF Land Use Planning Unit's request this was a detailed grid survey at 1:10000 with a minimum auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The attached map is only accurate at the base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.
- 2.5 At the time of the survey the site was under permanent grass, cereals and fallow.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 836 618) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	806
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1346

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	198
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	82
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	68

4 SITE

4.1 Three site factors of gradient, micro relief and flooding are considered when classifying land.

4.2 These factors do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of the land.

5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Middle Keuper Marl - British Geological Survey Sheet 110 Macclesfield 1 inch. This is overlain with deposits of Boulder Clay and Glacial Sand and Gravel

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which either have a sandy loam texture in the east and centre of the site or sandy clay loam texture in the west, extreme south and in small areas of the north and east.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 21.2 ha (48.7%) of the survey area and is found in the east and centre of the site.

6.1.1 The soil typically has a sandy loam texture overlying loamy sand and sand and clay at depth, with few or no stones within the profile. The moisture balance places the soil into Grade 2.

6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 20.5 ha (47.2%) of the survey area and is found mainly in the west and extreme south of the site.

6.2.1 The soil has either a sandy clay loam or sandy loam texture over sandy clay loam and clay to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place the soil into Wetness Class III.

6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.

6.3 Subgrade 3b - occupies 0.8 ha (1.8%) of the survey area and is found in small areas in the north and east of the site.

6.3.1 The soil typically has a sandy clay loam texture overlying clay to depth. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place the soil in Wetness Class IV.

6.3.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.

6.4 Other land covers 1 ha (2.3%) of the site and includes agricultural buildings, woodlands, ponds and scrub covered hollows.

6.5 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
2	21.2	48.7	50.0
3a	20.5	47.2	48.2
3b	0.8	1.8	1.8
Other land	1.0	2.3	-
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Totals	43.5	100.0	100.0
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