

PROPOSED GOLF COURSE AT WILLOW HOUSE HOTEL ALSAGER
Agricultural Land Classification
May 1996

S Kangh
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ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR PROPOSED GOLF COURSE AT WILLOW HOUSE HOTEL, ALSAGER

1 SUMMARY

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

Grade/Other land	Area (ha)	% Surveyed area
2	13.1	41.6
3a	10.5	33.3
3b	2.3	7.3
Other land	5.6	17.8

- 1.2 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 are either soil droughtiness or soil wetness.
- 1.3 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a is soil wetness.
- 1.4 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3b are either soil wetness or site gradient.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in May 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 31.5 ha site is situated to the south of Alsager. The railway line forms the northern boundary. The land immediately to the east, south and west of the site is predominantly in agricultural use.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with a proposed golf course development.
- 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 and cereals.

3 CLIMATE

- 3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 791 546) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	779
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1350

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	187
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	86
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	72

4 **SITE**

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

4.2 Gradient imposes a limitation to the agricultural use of the land in isolated pockets over the site. The gradient ranges from between 8° and 11° placing this land into Subgrade 3b.

5 **GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Triassic Red Keuper Marl-British Geological Survey Sheet 123 Macclesfield 1 Inch.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which either have a clay loam texture to the south and south west of 'The Hall' or in the northern part of site a sandy loam or sandy clay loam texture.

6 **AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION**

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 13.1 ha (41.6%) of the survey area and is found in the north east and north west of the site.

6.1.1 These soils typically have either a sandy loam or sandy clay loam texture overlying loamy sand and sand to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. The moisture balance places these soils into Grade 2. Where sandy clay loam topsoils overlie clay loam, observations of gleying place these soils in Wetness Class I.

6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land with a sandy loam topsoil is soil droughtiness. The main limitation to the agricultural use of the land with a sandy clay loam topsoil is soil wetness.

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 10.5 ha (33.3%) of the survey area and is found mainly in the south west of the site.

6.2.1 The soil has sandy clay loam texture over heavy clay loam and clay to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. Observations of gleying, topsoil texture and the number of field capacity days place these soils in Wetness Class II.

6.3 Subgrade 3b - occupies 2.3 ha (7.3%) of the survey area and is found to the north east and south east of "The Hall".

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 these soils in Wetness Class IV. Gradients of between 8° and 11° also limit the land to Subgrade 3b.

6.3.2 The main limitations to the agricultural use of this land are soil wetness and gradient.

6.4 Other land occupies 5.6 ha (17.8%) of the survey area and includes buildings, tracks, ponds and an area of woodland.

6.5 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/other land	Area (Hectares)	% Surveyed Area
2	13.1	41.6
3a	10.5	33.3
3b	2.3	7.3
Other land	5.6	17.8
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Totals	31.5	100.0
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