



AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION  
WEAR VALLEY LOCAL PLAN  
LAND TO THE WEST OF BISHOP AUCKLAND  
COUNTY DURHAM  
JANUARY 1995

ADAS  
Leeds Statutory Group

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## SUMMARY

A detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey of 36 ha of land to the west of Bishop Auckland (Wear Valley Local Plan) was carried out partly in August 1992 and partly in January 1995.

All of the agricultural land on the site (35.7 ha) falls in Subgrade 3b. The soils are poorly drained and consist of medium-textured topsoils overlying gleyed and slowly permeable medium to heavy-textured subsoils at between 20cm and 40cm depth. Soil wetness is the factor limiting this land to Subgrade 3b.

The remainder of the land surveyed (0.3 ha) is Non Agricultural land in the east.

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1. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT ON LAND TO THE WEST OF  
BISHOP AUCKLAND FOR WEAR VALLEY LOCAL PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Location and Survey Methods

The site lies 2km west of Bishop Auckland and covers a total area of 36 ha. Survey work was carried out in January 1995 when soils were examined by hand auger borings at 100m intervals predetermined by the National Grid. Approximately 4 ha in the north of the site had already been surveyed in mid-1992. One soil pit was dug to allow a full profile description to be made. The 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).

1.2 Land Use and Relief

At the time of survey 99% of the site was agricultural land with oilseed rape in the south and set-aside and permanent grass in the north.

Site altitude varies from 120m AOD in the east to 145m AOD approximately in the south-west. The north of the site is level to gently sloping (typically 1-3° with a southerly aspect) while the south is moderately to strongly sloping (4-9°) with a northerly aspect.

1.3 Climate

Grid Reference	: NZ 189 287
Altitude (m)	: 135
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January - June)	: 1225 day °C
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	: 739
Climatic Grade	: 2
Field Capacity Days	: 194
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat	: 81
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes	: 63

#### 1.4 Geology, Soils and Drainage

The site is underlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures over which lies a thick layer of boulder clay derived from Carboniferous sandstones and shales.

The soils are typically poorly drained, falling in Wetness Class IV, and consist of medium clay loam topsoils overlying sandy clay loam or heavy clay loam subsoils which are gleyed and slowly permeable within 35 cm depth in most cases.

The soils on this site correspond to the Brickfield 3 Association as mapped by the Soil Survey and Land Research Centre.

## 2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The ALC grades occurring on this site are as follows:

<u>Grade/Subgrade</u>	<u>Hectares</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Area</u>
1		
2		
3a		
3b	35.7	99.2
4		
5		
(Sub total)	(35.7)	(99.2)
Urban		
Non Agricultural	0.3	0.8
Woodland - Farm		
- Commercial		
Agricultural Buildings		
Open Water		
Land not surveyed		
(Sub total)	(0.3)	(0.8)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>36.0</u>	<u>100</u>

2.1 Subgrade 3b

All of the agricultural land on this site falls in Subgrade 3b. The soils are poorly drained, falling in Wetness Class IV, and typically consist of medium clay loam topsoils overlying sandy clay loam or heavy clay loam subsoils which become gleyed and slowly permeable at between 20cm and 40cm depth. Soil wetness is, thus, the factor which limits this land to Subgrade 3b.

Slopes of around 9° in parts of the south of the site also limit the land to Subgrade 3b.

2.2 Non Agricultural

This category covers a grassed area adjoining housing and a steep bank to the stream in the east of the site.

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MAP