

WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN
Objector Reference 0731
Agricultural Land Classification
ALC Map and Report
June 1997

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RPT Reference: 011/97 & 25/RPT/0626
FRCA Reference: EL 21/10095A
LURET Job Number: ME1AF1W

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT
WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN
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INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey on 4.9 hectares of land. The results of this survey supersede any previous ALC information for this land. The land is located to the south west of Town Green, Ormskirk. The survey was in connection with the West Lancashire Local Plan.
2. The survey was undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) in May 1997 by the Resource Planning Team of the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA)- Northern region of FRCA.
3. The land has been graded in accordance with the publication "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land" (MAFF 1988) .
4. At the time of survey the agricultural land on this site was under grass which was primarily being used for turf production.

SUMMARY

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the enclosed ALC map. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:10000 with an average auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The ALC map is only accurate at this base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.
6. The area and proportions of the ALC grades and subgrades on the surveyed land are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Area of grades and other land

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% surveyed area	% site area
1	-	-	-
2	-	-	-
3a	2.6	54	53
3b	2.2	46	45
4	-	-	-
5	-	-	-
Agricultural land not surveyed	-	N/A	-
Other land	0.1	N/A	2
Total surveyed area	4.8	100	
Total site area	4.9		100

7. The agricultural land on this site has been classified as Subgrade 3a (good quality) and Subgrade 3b (moderate quality). The key limitations to the agricultural use of this land are soil droughtiness and soil wetness.

8. The area of good quality land is located on the land in the centre and east of the site. The soils have a medium sandy loam topsoil overlying either loamy sand and sand to depth or loamy sand, sand and clay to depth.

9. The area of moderate quality land is mapped towards the south and west of the site. The soils in this area have a medium clay loam topsoil overlying a gleyed and slowly permeable clay subsoil.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ALC GRADE

Climate

10. Climate affects the grading of land through the assessment of an overall climatic limitation and also through interactions with soil characteristics.

11. The key climatic variables used for grading this site are given in Table 2 and were obtained from the published 5km grid datasets using standard interpolation procedures (Meteorological Office, 1989).

Table 2: Climatic and altitude data

Factor	Units	Values
Grid reference	N/A	SD 404 053
Altitude	m, AOD	40
Accumulated Temperature	day°C (Jan-June)	1406
Average Annual Rainfall	mm	895
Field Capacity Days	days	206
Moisture Deficit, Wheat	mm	80
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes	mm	65
Overall climatic grade	N/A	Grade 1

12. The climatic criteria are considered first when classifying land as climate can be overriding in the sense that severe limitations will restrict land to low grades irrespective of favourable site or soil conditions.

13. The main parameters used in the assessment of an overall climatic limitation are average annual rainfall (AAR), as a measure of overall wetness, and accumulated temperature (AT0, January to June), as a measure of the relative warmth of a locality.

14. The combination of rainfall and temperature at this site means that there is no overall climatic limitation. The site is climatically Grade 1.

Site

15. The site lies at an altitude of approximately 38-42 metres AOD. Cock Beck drains the centre of the site from north to south.
16. The three site factors of gradient, microrelief and flooding are considered when classifying the land. At the time of the survey there was no evidence of any flooding from Cock Beck.
17. These factors do not impose any known limitations on the agricultural use of this land.

Geology and Soils

18. The solid geology of the area is comprised of Bunter Sandstone. This is overlain with deposits of Shirdley Hill Sand and Boulder Clay - British Geological Survey (1950 & 1957).
19. The soils that have developed on this geology are generally of a sandy loam texture over clay or sand at depth.

Agricultural Land Classification

20. The details of the classification of the site are shown on the enclosed ALC map and the area statistics of each grade are given in Table 1, page 1.

Subgrade 3a

21. Land of good quality occupies 2.6 hectares (53%) of the site area.
22. The soil has a sandy loam texture over either loamy sand and sand to depth with few or no stones within the profile or sand and clay to depth. The moisture balance places the soils with a sand subsoil in Grade 2. Where there is clay in the subsoil the depth to gleying and the slowly permeable layer place these soils in Wetness Class III.
23. The main limitations to the agricultural use of this land are either soil wetness or soil droughtiness.

Subgrade 3b

24. Land of moderate quality occupies 2.2 hectares (45%) of the site area.
25. The soil has a sandy clay loam texture overlying clay to depth, with few stones within the profile. The soil to the west of the track shows signs of soil mixing and disturbance.
26. The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.

Other Land

27. Other land occupies 0.1 hectares (2%) of the site area and is found as a trackway.

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SOURCES OF REFERENCE

British Geological Survey (1950 & 1957) Sheet 84, Wigan Solid and Drift Editions.
1:63 360 Scale.
BGS: London.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of
England and Wales: Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural
land.
MAFF: London.

Meteorological Office (1989) Climatological Data for Agricultural Land Classification.
Meteorological Office: Bracknell.