A1 MEDWAY TOWNS LOCAL PLAN Site 24, Wainscott

Agricultural Land Classification February 1996

Resource Planning Team Guildford Statutory Group ADAS Reading ADAS Reference: 2008/003/96 MAFF Reference: EL 20/1376 LUPU Commission: 02367

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT Medway Towns Local Plan, Site 24: Wainscott

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of 15 ha of land on the north eastern side of the district of Wainscott, Rochester. The site is bounded to the south by the main A289 road and to the west by residential development fronting Higham Road. To the north of the site is a small road across which is a military establishment, whilst to the east is a narrow field beyond which is a disused quarry used for military purposes. The survey was carried out in February 1996.

2. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) Land Use Planning Unit, Reading in connection with the Medway Towns Local Plan. This survey supersedes any previous ALC surveys on this land.

3. The work was carried out under sub-contracting arrangements by NA Duncan & Associates, supervised by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Guildford Statutory Group of ADAS. The land has been graded in accordance with the published MAFF ALC guidelines and criteria (MAFF, 1988). A description of the ALC grades and subgrades is given in Appendix I.

4. At the time of survey the majority of the area was in winter cereals, with a field in setaside along the north western edge of the site and a narrow field of permanent grass on the low lying land along the eastern side.

SUMMARY

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the enclosed ALC map. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:10,000 it is accurate at this scale but 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.

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% agricultural	
2	11.2	75.2	74.7
3a	0.9	6.0	6.0
3b	2.8	18.8	18.6
Other land	0.1	<u> </u>	0.7
Total survey area	14.9	100.00	
Total site area	15.0		100.0

Table 1: Area of grades and other land

7. The fieldwork was conducted at an average density of one auger boring per hectare. A total of 16 borings and 2 soil pits was described.

8. The majority of the site has been classified as Grade 2, very good quality agricultural land, comprising well drained fine silty soils overlying stony fine loamy deposits on the western side and silty clays on the east. The main limitation associated with this land therefore is slight droughtiness during the drier periods of the year. A small area of good quality agricultural land, Subgrade 3a, has been identified on the northern edge of the site, where shallower soils similar to the Grade 2 area were found, giving rise to a moderate droughtiness limitation. In addition on the low lying land at the northeastern corner of the site heavy textured alluvial soils were identified, which displayed evidence of periodic waterlogging, restricting this area to subgrade 3a as a result of wetness and workability restrictions. Over the remaining low lying alluvial area, strongly mottled clayey soils were found giving rise to a moderate 3b, moderate quality agricultural land.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ALC GRADE

Climate

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

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

Factor	Units	Values
Grid reference	N/A	TQ 747 713
Altitude	m, AOD	10
Accumulated Temperature	day°C	1483
Average Annual Rainfall	mm	625
Field Capacity Days	days	122
Moisture Deficit, Wheat	mm	125
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes	mm	122

Table 2: Climatic and altitude data

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. The combination of rainfall and temperature at this site mean that the area is relatively dry and warm. The site is not considered to be exposed or subject to any particular frost risk and as such no climatic limitation exists on this site.

Site

14. The site is located on the western side of a shallow valley, with a small stream forming the eastern boundary of the site. The land slopes very gently $(1-2^{\circ})$ toward the north east falling to a narrow flat area alongside the stream, from approximately 12 m AOD on the western side to approximately 6 m AOD in the east. The stream is contained in a well defined channel and it is unlikely that even the low lying land is subject to more than very rare flooding at times of extreme rainfall. Site factors therefore do not impose any limitation to land quality.

Geology and soils

15. The published geological information (BGS, 1977), shows the site to comprise Thanet Beds with Head Brickearth overlying the southern part of the site and alluvium along the eastern margin.

16. There is no detailed published soil map for this district but the reconnaissance soil survey map (SSEW, 1983) has mapped the site as Fyfield 4 association. Fyfield 4 soils are described as 'deep, well drained often stoneless coarse loamy and sandy soils, with some fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils' (SSEW, 1983).

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

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

18. The location of the auger borings and pits is shown on the attached sample location map and the details of the soils data are presented in Appendix III.

Grade 2

19. The majority of the site has been classified as Grade 2, very good quality agricultural land. This area comprises free draining fine, silty soils overlying stony, fine loamy deposits at depth on the western side, whilst to the east the deeper subsoil comprises silty clay. A typical profile on the western side has a medium silty clay loam topsoil over a medium silty clay loam subsoil with moderate structure. Stony heavy clay loam horizons were encountered below 70-80 cm depth in some profiles, although this did not impede drainage or root extension. On the eastern side, the upper soil profile is similar although below 50-80 cm depth the texture is a stoneless silty clay and in some profiles on the lower slopes, shows evidence of faint ochreous mottling. The main limitation associated with this land soil droughtiness, and moisture balance calculations indicate that in this low rainfall area such soils will be slightly droughty restricting the land quality to Grade 2.

Subgrade 3a

20. A small area of Subgrade 3a, good quality agricultural land, has been mapped along the northern boundary of the site. This area encompasses some of the gently sloping land, comprising free draining, fine silty soils similar to those of the Grade 2 area, but which overlie a stony layer within 0.5 m depth giving rise to a moderate droughtiness restriction, together with part of the lower lying land on the site where wetness and workability is the main limitation. The alluvial soils on the lower lying land typically have a heavy clay loam topsoil over a mottled heavy clay loam subsoil with manganiferrous concretions at depth. These soils have been assessed as Wetness Class II (see Appendix II) which, associated with the heavy clay loam topsoil, will give rise to a moderate workability limitation restricting the land to Subgrade 3a.

Subgrade 3b

21. The majority of the low lying flat land along the eastern side of the site has been mapped as Subgrade 3b, moderate quality agricultural land. The soils in this area comprise clayey alluvial deposits and a typical soil profile has a heavy clay loam topsoil with common ochreous mottles overlying a prominently mottled, slowly permeable, stoneless clay subsoil. These soils are assessed as Wetness Class III which, under the prevailing climatic conditions, will give rise to a significant wetness and workability limitation restricting the versatility of the land, principally in terms of timing of cultivations and stocking, if structural damage to the soils is to be avoided.

NA Duncan for Resource Planning Team ADAS Reading

SOURCES OF REFERENCE

British Geological Survey (1977) Sheet No. 272. 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.

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

Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983) Sheet 6, South East England. SSEW: Harpenden.

Soil Survey of England and Wales (1984) Soils and their Use in South East England SSEW: Harpenden

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GRADES AND SUBGRADES

Grade 1: Excellent Quality Agricultural Land

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

Grade 2: Very Good Quality Agricultural Land

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural or horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land of this grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1 land.

Grade 3: Good to Moderate Quality Land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, the timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. When more demanding crops are grown, yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

Subgrade 3a: Good Quality Agricultural Land

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Subgrade 3b: Moderate Quality Agricultural Land

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass, or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

Grade 4: Poor Quality Agricultural Land

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or the level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

Grade 5: Very Poor Quality Agricultural Land

Land with severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.

APPENDIX II

SOIL WETNESS CLASSIFICATION

Definitions of Soil Wetness Classes

Soil wetness is classified according to the depth and duration of waterlogging in the soil profile. Six soil wetness classes are identified and are defined in the table below.

Wetness Class	Duration of waterlogging ¹
I	The soil profile is not wet within 70 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years. ²
п	The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 31-90 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth, it is wet within 70 cm for more than 90 days, but only wet within 40 cm depth for 30 days in most years.
ш	The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 91-180 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer present within 80 cm depth, it is wet within 70 cm for more than 180 days, but only wet within 40 cm depth for between 31-90 days in most years.
īv	The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for more than 180 days but not wet within 40 cm depth for more than 210 days in most years or, if there is no slowly permeable layer present within 80 cm depth, it is wet within 40 cm depth for 91-210 days in most years.
v	The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for 211-335 days in most years.
VI	The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for more than 335 days in most years.

Assessment of Wetness Class

Soils have been allocated to wetness classes by the interpretation of soil profile characteristics and climatic factors using the methodology described in Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land (MAFF, 1988).

¹ The number of days is not necessarily a continuous period.

² 'In most years' is defined as more than 10 out of 20 years.

APPENDIX III

SOIL DATA

Contents:

Sample location map Soil abbreviations - Explanatory Note Soil Pit Descriptions Soil boring descriptions (boring and horizon levels) Database Printout - Horizon Level Information

SOIL PIT DESCRIPTION

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Grid Ret	erence: TQ	Land Use			: 148 : 122 : Per	: 1483 degree days : 122 days : Permanent Grass						
HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	STON	ES >2	TOT.S	TONE	LITH	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE	CONSIST	SUBSTRUCTURE	CALC
0- 30	HCL	10YR43 0	0	0	C)		С				
30- 55	С	10YR52 0	0	0	C)		С	MDCSB	FM	M	
55120	С	10YR62 6	3	0	C)		С	MDVCPR	FM	Ρ	
wetness (Grade : 38		Wetnes	s Clas	S	: 111						
			Gleyin	9		:030	cm					
			SPL			:055	cm					
Drought (Grade : 2		APW :	136mm	MBW	: 1	1 mm					
			APP :	114mm	MBP	:	8 mm					

MAIN LIMITATION : Wetness

SOIL PROFILE DESCRIPTIONS: EXPLANATORY NOTE

Soil pit and auger boring information collected during ALC fieldwork is held on a computer database. This uses notations and abbreviations as set out below.

Boring Header Information

- 1. GRID REF: national 100 km grid square and 8 figure grid reference.
- 2. USE: Land use at the time of survey. The following abbreviations are used:

ARA:	Arable	WHT:	Wheat	BAR:	Barley
CER:	Cereals	OAT:	Oats	MZE:	Maize
OSR:	Oilseed rape	BEN:	Field Beans	BRA:	Brassicae
POT:	Potatoes	SBT:	Sugar Beet	FCD:	Fodder Crops
LIN:	Linseed	FRT:	Soft and Top Fruit	FLW:	Fallow
PGR:	Permanent Pasture	LEY:	Ley Grass	RGR:	Rough Grazing
SCR:	Scrub	CFW:	Coniferous Woodland	DCW:	Deciduous Wood
HTH:	Heathland	BOG:	Bog or Marsh	FLW:	Fallow
PLO:	Ploughed	SAS:	Set aside	OTH:	Other
HRT:	Horticultural Crops				

- 3. **GRDNT**: Gradient as estimated or measured by a hand-held optical clinometer.
- 4. GLEY/SPL: Depth in centimetres (cm) to gleying and/or slowly permeable layers.
- 5. AP (WHEAT/POTS): Crop-adjusted available water capacity.
- 6. **MB (WHEAT/POTS)**: Moisture Balance. (Crop adjusted AP crop adjusted MD)
- 7. DRT: Best grade according to soil droughtiness.

8.	If any of t	he following factors are co	nsidered signi	ificant, 'Y' will	be entered in	the relevant column.		
	MREL:	Microrelief limitation	FLOOD:	Flood risk	EROSN:	Soil erosion risk		
	EXP:	Exposure limitation	FROST:	Frost prone	DIST:	Disturbed land		
	CHEM:	Chemical limitation						

9. LIMIT: The main limitation to land quality. The following abbreviations are used:

OC :	Overall Climate	AE:	Aspect	EX:	Exposure
FR:	Frost Risk	GR:	Gradient	MR:	Microrelief
FL:	Flood Risk	TX:	Topsoil Texture	DP:	Soil Depth
CH:	Chemical	WE:	Wetness	WK:	Workability
DR:	Drought	ER:	Erosion Risk	WD:	Soil Wetness/Droughtiness
ST:	Topsoil Stoniness				

Soil Pits and Auger Borings

1. **TEXTURE**: soil texture classes are denoted by the following abbreviations:

S :	Sand	LS:	Loamy Sand	SL:	Sandy Loam
SZL:	Sandy Silt Loam	CL:	Clay Loam	ZCL:	Silty Clay Loam
ZL:	Silt Loam	SCL:	Sandy Clay Loam	C :	Clay
SC:	Sandy Clay	ZC:	Silty Clay	OL:	Organic Loam
P :	Peat	SP:	Sandy Peat	LP:	Loamy Peat
PL:	Peaty Loam	PS:	Peaty Sand	MZ:	Marine Light Silts
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For the sand, loamy sand, sandy loam and sandy silt loam classes, the predominant size of sand fraction will be indicated by the use of the following prefixes:

- F: Fine (more than 66% of the sand less than 0.2mm)
- M: Medium (less than 66% fine sand and less than 33% coarse sand)
- C: Coarse (more than 33% of the sand larger than 0.6mm)

The clay loam and silty clay loam classes will be sub-divided according to the clay content: M: Medium (<27% clay) H: Heavy (27-35% clay)

- 2. MOTTLE COL: Mottle colour using Munsell notation.
- MOTTLE ABUN: Mottle abundance, expressed as a percentage of the matrix or surface described.
 F: few <2% C: common 2-20% M: many 20-40% VM: very many 40% +
- 4. MOTTLE CONT: Mottle contrast.
 - F: faint indistinct mottles, evident only on close inspection
 - D: distinct mottles are readily seen
 - P: prominent mottling is conspicuous and one of the outstanding features of the horizon
- 5. PED. COL: Ped face colour using Munsell notation.
- 6. GLEY: If the soil horizon is gleyed a 'Y' will appear in this column. If slightly gleyed, an 'S' will appear.
- 7. STONE LITH: Stone Lithology. One of the following is used:

HR: CH:	all hard rocks and stones chalk	soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone soft, fine grained sandstone
ZR: MSST:	soft, argillaceous, or silty rocks soft, medium grained sandston	gravel with non-porous (hard) stones gravel with porous (soft) stones
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SI: soft weathered igneous/metamorphic rock

Stone contents (>2cm, >6cm and total) are given in percentages (by volume).

8. STRUCT: the degree of development, size and shape of soil peds are described using the following notation:

degree of development	WK: weakly developed	MD: moderately developed					
	ST: strongly developed						
ped size	F: fine	M: medium					
	C: coarse	VC: very coarse					
ped shape	S : single grain	M: massive					
	GR: granular	AB: angular blocky					
	SAB: sub-angular blocky	PR: prismatic					
	PL: platy						

9. CONSIST: Soil consistence is described using the following notation:

L: loose	VF: very friable	FR: friable	FM: firm	VM: very firm
EM: extreme	ely firm	EH: extremely	hard	

- SUBS STR: Subsoil structural condition recorded for the purpose of calculating profile droughtiness: G: good M: moderate P: poor
- 11. POR: Soil porosity. If a soil horizon has less than 0.5% biopores >0.5 mm, a 'Y' will appear in this column.
- 12. **IMP**: If the profile is impenetrable to rooting a 'Y' will appear in this column at the appropriate horizon.
- 13. SPL: Slowly permeable layer. If the soil horizon is slowly permeable a 'Y' will appear in this column.
- 14. CALC: If the soil horizon is calcareous, a 'Y' will appear in this column.
- 15. Other notations:
 - APW: available water capacity (in mm) adjusted for wheat
 APP: available water capacity (in mm) adjusted for potatoes
 MBW: moisture balance, wheat
 MBP: moisture balance, potatoes.

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LIST OF BORINGS HEADERS 23/07/96 MEDWAY TOWNS LP SITE 24

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	9	TQ74707140	Set	NE	01	000		1	1	000	0	000	٥						DR	2	IMP	85
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	30-55	mzc]	75YR55 00						0	0	HR	2						Y
	55-100	hzc1	75YR56 00						0	0		0						Y
-	100-120	zc	75YR56 00						0	0		0						Y
6	0-35	mzcl	75YR43 00						0	0	HR	3						
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1				MOTTLES		PED		STONES			STRUCT/	SUBS					
SAMPLE	DEPTH	TEXTURE	COLOUR	ΩL	ABUN	CONT	COL.	GLEY	>2	>6	LITH	TOT	CONSIST	STR PO	RIM	P SPL	CALC
•																	
10	0-35	mzcl	75YR43 00								HR	9					
	35-55	hc1	75YR54 00								HR	18					
•	55-60	scl	10YR55 00						0	0	HR	25					
11	0-30	mzcl	10YR43 00						0	0	HR	3					
	30-80	zc	75YR56 00						0	0		0		М			
-	80-120	hc1	75YR56 00						0	0	HR	20		M			
12	035	mzcl	75YR43 00						0	0	HR	3					
	35→50	mzcl	75YR54 00						0	0	HR	1		м			
	50-70	hzcl	75YR55 00						0	0		0		м			
	70-120	zc	75YR56 00						0	0		0		M			
13	0-30	fszl	10YR43 00						0	0	HR	3					
	30-50	z]	75YR54 00						0	0		0		M			
	50-80	mzcl	75YR55 00						0	0		0		м			
•	80-120	hzc1	75YR56 00						0	0		0		M			
14	0-35	mzcl	75YR43 00						0	0	HR	3					
	35-65	mzcl	75YR54 00						0	0	HR	1					
	65-120	zC	75YR64 00	75YR6	500C				0	0		0					
15	0-30	mzcl	10YR43 00						2	0	HR	4					
-	30-70	mzcl	75YR54 00						0	0		0					
	70-120	zc	75YR56 00						0	0		0					
16	0-25	hcl	10YR32 00	75YR44	5 00 C			Y	0	0		0					
	25-90		10YR62 00					Ŷ	Ō	Õ		Ō				Y	
	90-120		05Y 61 00					Ŷ	0			0				Ŷ	
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SOIL PIT DESCRIPTION

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Site Nam	e : MEDWAY	TOWNS LP	SITE 24	Pit Number	: 1	P				
Grid Ref	erence: TQ	74807150	Average Annu Accumulated Field Capaci Land Use Slope and As	: 1483 degree days						
HORIZON	TEXTURE	COLOUR	stones >2	TOT.STONE	LITH	MOTTLES	STRUCTURE	CONSIST	SUBSTRUCTURE	CALC
0- 30	MZCL	10YR43 0	0 O	2	HR					
30- 55	MZCL	75YR54 0	0 0	1	HR		MDCSB	FR	м	
55- 90	ZC	75YR55 0	0 0	0			MDVCSB	FR	м	Y
90-120	ZC	75YR64 0	0 0	0			MDCPR	FM	м	Y
Wetness (Grade : 1		Wetness Clas	s:I						
			Gleying	:000	cm					
			SPL	: No	SPL					
Drought (Grade : 2		APW : 147mm	MBW : 2	2 mm					
			APP : 121mm	MBP: -	1 mm					

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FINAL ALC GRADE : 2 MAIN LIMITATION : Droughtiness