AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED GOLF COURSE AT SHELSLEY KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The site was visited by members of the Resource Planning Team on 4.12.92 and 7.12.92 to undertake a detailed Agricultural Land Classification Survey for the proposed golf course development. Soils were augered using a 100 metre grid and four soil pits were dug to help identify soil structure.

LOCATION, ALTITUDE AND RELIEF

The site is 2 kilometres to the west of Great Witley, immediately to the south of the B4203. It is surrounded by agricultural land and woodland. The land lies at an altitude between 160 metres in the east and 120 metres in the west. The site includes several steep slopes up to 16°, and the gradient is a limiting factor over much of the site. Soil erosion was commonplace on the steeper slopes.

CLIMATE AND RAINFALL

The main parameters used in the assessment of the climatic limitation are average annual rainfall (AAR) and accumulated temperature (ATO). For this site these figures are 697 mm and 1362°C respectively indicating that there are no climatic limitations on the site. The field capacity days figure for this site is 161 days.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The site is underlain by Lower Old Red Sandstone. The majority of the land is covered by stoneless reddish silty clay loams which pass on to silty shale or siltstone at depth. Some profiles reveal a higher clay content at depth. These soils are similar to those of the Bromyard Soil Series. Heavier clay soils occur in limited areas in the north and east of the site. There are also localised areas of weathered sandstone and siltstone outcrops near to the surface.

At the time of survey winter cereals were being grown on most of the site, apart from three small blocks of blackcurrants, and a ploughed field in the south. In the previous growing season most of the site supported blackcurrants.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Grade 2 accounts for 6.2 hectares and 23% of the site. Soils are typically silty clay loams to depth, or occasionally overlying silty clay or silt loam, or bands of weathered sandstone and siltstone. Some profiles were of grade 1 quality but the slight erosion risk has limited these soils. Elsewhere, soil wetness is the main limitation to the agricultural use of this land.

Sub-grade 3b accounts for 10.8 hectares and 39% of the site. The soils within most of this area are similar to the grade 2 soils, but slopes between 7° and 11° impose a gradient limitation of these areas. Limited areas in the north and east of the site have been downgraded on soil wetness where medium clay loams and silty clay loams overlie clays and silty clays.

Grade 4 accounts for 6.0 hectares and 22% of the site. The soils are similar to the grade 2 soils, but slopes between 11° and 18° impose a gradient limitation on these areas.

Non-agricultural land and woodland account for 4.4 hectares and 16% of the site.

Wolverhampton Statutory Unit
Resource Planning Team
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