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ROTHER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN
Land at Worsham Farm, Bexhill

Agricultural Land Classification
ALC Map and Summary Report

August 1997

Resource Planning Team
Eastern Region
FRCA Reading

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION, SUMMARY REPORT

ROTHER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN
LAND AT WORSHAM FARM, BEXHILL.

INTRODUCTION

1. This summary report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of approximately 24 hectares of land at Worsham Farm, to the north of Bexhill in East Sussex. The survey was carried out during August 1997.

2. The survey was undertaken by the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), in connection with the Rother District Local Plan. This survey supersedes any previous ALC information for this land.

3. The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Eastern Region of the FRCA. 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 most of the agricultural land was in stubble, though the land between Roundacre Wood and the footpath was under permanent grassland. Land shown as 'Other Land' comprises a footpath and a small wooded area.

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 below.

Table 1: Area of grades and other land

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% site area	% surveyed area
1	5.9	25.8	26.1
2	9.7	42.3	42.9
3a	2.7	11.8	12.0
3b	4.3	18.8	19.0
Other Land	0.3	1.3	-
Total surveyed area	22.6	98.7	100.0
Total site area	22.9	100.0	-

7. The fieldwork was conducted at an average density of 1 boring every hectare. A total of 24 borings and 2 soil pits were described.

8. The majority of the agricultural land on this site has been classified as 'Best and Most Versatile', comprising Grades 1 (excellent quality), 2 (very good quality) and Subgrade 3a (good quality). A narrow strip of land along the valley, towards the centre of the site, has been classified as moderate quality; Subgrade 3b. This lower quality land is predominantly limited by gradient restrictions with some soil wetness, whilst the 'Best and Most Versatile' land experiences mainly soil wetness and occasional soil droughtiness limitations.

9. The soils are derived from the complex Ashdown Beds, and as such comprise variable fine and coarse silty, loamy or clayey profiles occasionally over weathered bedrock. Soil wetness is the principal restriction in most profiles where the clayey horizons were found to restrict drainage. The depth to clay determines the degree of soil wetness; where clay occurs at shallow depths in the profile, Subgrade 3b is mapped, while Subgrade 3a and Grade 2 is mapped where these horizons are deeper. In the valley bottom, high groundwater levels also restrict the land to Subgrade 3b. Excessive soil wetness may adversely affect crop growth and restrict land utilisation.

10. In places, the soils are lighter in texture (fine sandy) with variable amounts of weathered sandstone and siltstone. In this local climatic regime the amount of profile available water for crops may be reduced, thus causing the level and consistency of yields to be slightly lower. This land is typically classified as either Grade 1 or Grade 2 depending on the amount of sand and stone present. Occasional borings were equally limited to Grade 2 by both soil wetness and soil droughtiness.

11. The over-riding limitation on land running along the valley, towards the centre of the site, is gradient. Here, slope measurements generally range between 7.5-10°, thus limiting the safe and effective use of farm machinery and restricting the land to Subgrade 3b.