AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
WIRRAL UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
SITE 14, LAND SOUTH OF PICKMERE DRIVE, EASTHAM

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ADAS Ref: **25/RPT/0729**
Job No: **056/95**
MAFF Ref: **EL 25/10909**

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR WIRRAL UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLANT SITE 14, LAND SOUTH OF PICKMERE DRIVE, EASTHAM

1 SUMMARY

1.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey for this site shows that the following proportions of ALC grades are present:

Grade/Subgrade	ha	% of site
2	2.7	31.4
3a	4.8	55.8
Other land		
Woodland	1.1	12.8

1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 is soil droughtiness.

1.3 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in September 1995. An Agricultural Land Classification survey was undertaken according to the guidelines laid down in the "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land" (MAFF 1988).

2.2 The 8.6 ha site is situated to the south of Eastham, north of the M53 motorway. The land immediately to the west and south of the site is predominantly in agricultural use, and that to the north in urban use. To the east and south east the site is bounded by New Chester Road and a motel respectively.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

2.4 At MAFF Land Use Planning Unit's request this was a detailed grid survey at 1:10000 with a minimum auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The attached map is only accurate at the base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.

2.5 At the time of the survey the site was under permanent grass.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (Grid Ref) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	780
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1424

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	178
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	94
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	82

4 SITE

4.1 Three site factors of gradient, micro relief and flooding are considered when classifying land.

4.2 These factors do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of the land.

5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Bunter Pebble Beds, overlain with deposits of Glacial Boulder clay and fluvio-glacial sand and gravel - British Geological Survey Sheet 96, Liverpool, 1:50 000.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which either have a sandy texture across the eastern half of the site or a clay loam texture across the western half of the site.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 2.7 ha (31.4%) of the survey area and is found across the eastern half of the site.

6.1.1 These soils typically have a sandy loam texture overlying sandy clay loam or occasionally loamy sand and sand to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. The moisture balance places these soils into Grade 2.

6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 4.8 ha (55.8%) of the survey area and is found across the western half of the site.

6.2.1 The soil has a clay loam texture over sandy clay loam to depth, or sandy clay loam and clay to depth. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer places these soils into Wetness Class III.

6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.

6.3 Woodland - occupies 1.1 ha (12.8%) of the survey area, along the south western boundary of the site.

6.4 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
2	2.7	31.4	36.0
3a	4.8	55.8	64.0
Other land			
Woodland	1.1	12.8	
Totals	**8.6**	**100**	**100**