

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
FOR A
PROPOSED MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA (MSA)
EAST OF M6 MOTORWAY AT JUNCTION 21**

**Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON**

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**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR A
PROPOSED MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA (MSA), EAST OF M6 MOTORWAY
AT JUNCTION 21**

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
3a	3.6	24
3b	0.2	1
4	1.2	8
Other land		
Non-agricultural	6.8	45
Not surveyed	3.4	22

- 1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a is soil droughtiness.
- 1.3 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3b is soil wetness.
- 1.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 4 is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in September and November 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 15.2 ha site is situated to the south east of Junction 21 on the M6 motorway extending to Brookside Farm. The land immediately to the west of the site is currently being used for works associated with the widening of the motorway. The land to the north and east of the site is in agricultural use.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with a planning application for a MSA on this site.
- 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 west of Statham Lane was in the process of being restored after the tipping of inert material generated from motorway construction work. The area of land being restored amounts to 5.9 ha. The land to the east of

Statham Lane either remains undisturbed and vegetated with grass or is occupied by caravans owned by the M6 construction workers.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 6330 890) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	847
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1441

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	200
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	91
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	79

4 SITE

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

4.2 At the time of the survey no signs of flood inundation from the River Mersey were identified. The local National Rivers Authority (NRA) office for this area informed the RPT that there were no records of this area flooding.

4.3 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 Upper Mottled Sandstone - British Geological Survey Sheet 97 Runcorn 1 Inch. This is overlain with deposits of undifferentiated alluvium and fluvio-glacial gravel.

5.2 The soils derived from these parent materials have a clay loam texture immediately east of Statham Lane and a sandy loam or loamy sand texture in the east near Brookside Farm.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

- 6.1 Subgrade 3a - occupies 3.6 ha (24%) of the survey area and is found near Brookside Farm.
 - 6.1.1 The soil typically has a sandy loam or loamy sand texture, overlying loamy sand and sand to depth, with few to many stones within the profile. Occasionally the lower subsoil contains loamy coarse sand.
 - 6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.
- 6.2 Subgrade 3b - occupies 0.2 ha (1%) of the survey area and is found in a low lying area next to the River Mersey.
 - 6.2.1 The soil typically has a medium clay loam texture to depth. Observations of gleying and water within the profile place these soils in Wetness Class IV.
 - 6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.
- 6.3 Grade 4 - occupies 1.2 ha (8%) of the survey area and is found next to Statham Lane.
 - 6.3.1 The soil typically has a medium clay loam texture overlying heavy clay loam to depth. Observations of gleying and water within the profile place these soils in Wetness Class V.
 - 6.3.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.
- 6.4 Other land in the survey area includes non-agricultural land which occupies 6.8 ha (45%) of the site and 3.4 ha (22%) of land which was not surveyed due to the presence of the caravans of the M6 motorway workers.
 - 6.4.1 Within the area of non-agricultural land, the majority of the area consists of soils undergoing restoration over inert infill. The physical conditions on restored sites such as this may take several years to stabilise and for this reason are not normally graded until the end of the statutory aftercare period.
 - 6.4.2 The remainder of the non-agricultural land is in the form of woodland/scrub and the disused Statham Lane.

6.5 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
3a	3.6	24	72
3b	0.2	1	4
4	1.2	8	24
Other land			
Non-Agricultural	6.8	45	
Not Surveyed	3.4	22	
Totals	15.2	100	100