

FILE NOTE 8RL 2473/8FCS 3151 07/10/91

ALC FARLEIGH ROAD, BACKWELL, AVON

In September 1991 a field survey was carried out at the above site in order to assess the Original ALC classification carried out in 1985.

The latter showed bands of Grade 1 and 2 with smaller map units of 3A. The 1991 fieldwork took the form of pit examinations in the three main map units.

Initially the topsoil textures had been classified as Fine Sandy Loams but a problem was identified with the clay contents in these soils. Samples were taken for PSD analysis which confirmed that the textures were in fact medium clay loams. Under the Revised ALC system this means that there is a workability limitation for these soils which restricts them to Grade 2 at best (the prevailing FCD level is +190days).

The Original map has therefore been ammended to remove the Grade 1 classification. The Original area of 3A in the west remains as this experiences a droughtiness limitation. The central area of 3A which had been mapped as a result of a slope limitation had been downgraded earlier to 3B after discussions with the appellant's consultant. This area of 3B has now been expanded to take account of slopes in the 7-8 degree range (previously these slopes could qualify for 3A, but this is no longer the case).

FROM : DE BLACKTO : MR WATSON

04/10/91

ALC Farleigh Road, Backwell

The PSD results for the above are now with us, with the inevitable surprises :-

*The topsoils are generally MCL, not MSL

*Two field MCLs are in fact HCL and C

The above means that there is now no Grade 1 on the site (due to a workability limitation related to the MCL textures) and that Grade 2 becomes the predominant grade.

A copy of our new ALC map is attached together with the Original.

The distribution of grades is now :-

Farleigh Road Site

Grade 2 : 16.8ha

Grade 3A : 2.4ha (Grades 2&3A are less than 20ha)

Grade 3B : 2.5ha

Total : 21.7ha (Non-Agric : 1.2ha)Church Road Site

Grade 2 : 1.7ha

Grade 3B : 0.2ha

Total : 1.9haCombined Sites

Grade 2 : 18.5ha

Grade 3A : 2.4ha

Grade 3B : 2.7ha

Total : 23.6ha (Non-Agric : 1.2ha)

The PSD results further highlight the problems in distinguishing the various clay percentages to an accurate (and consistent) level. Five of the six samples are within 2% of a critical clay percentage. I believe such fine distinctions to be beyond our ability in the field. A revision to the Blue Book may need to contain a caveat which says that when PSDs are close to a critical boundary (eg. 2%) the final decision rests with the surveyor. This is how, for example, I have interpreted the Farleigh Rd. results - where PSDs are seen to vary between 25 and 29% the surveyor has the option of placing all these soils in the one ALC grouping should he feel that no practical distinction can be made in the field.