

SALDEN CHASE  
OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

# Agricultural Land

**A0**

**MILTON KEYNES EXPANSION STUDY  
AREA 8 - WEST BLETCHLEY**

**Agricultural Land Classification  
Semi-Detailed Survey  
ALC Map and Summary Report**

**May 1998**

**Resource Planning Team  
Eastern Region  
FRCA Reading**

**RPT Job Number: 0301/021/98  
FRCA Reference: EL 03/01621**

# AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY REPORT

## MILTON KEYNES EXPANSION STUDY AREA 8 - WEST BLETCHLEY

### SEMI-DETAILED SURVEY

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This summary report presents the findings of a semi-detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey on 194.8 hectares of land to the west of Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. The survey was carried out during April 1998.
2. The survey was undertaken by the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA)<sup>1</sup> on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), in connection with its statutory input to the Milton Keynes Expansion Study. 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 agricultural land use on the site comprised winter cereals, oilseed rape and grassland, both ley and permanent. The areas mapped as 'Other land' include farm buildings, residential dwellings and a recycling centre.

#### SUMMARY

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the enclosed ALC map. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:15,000. 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 the Table 1 overleaf.
7. The fieldwork was conducted at an average density of 1 boring per 1.6 hectares. In total, 120 borings and 4 soil pits were described.
8. The agricultural land on this site has been assigned predominantly to Subgrade 3b, (moderate quality) with more restricted areas of Subgrade 3a (good quality) land occurring in the northwest, centre and southeast. The heavy soils are derived mainly from glacial Boulder Clay and the underlying Oxford Clay.

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<sup>1</sup> FRCA is an executive agency of MAFF and the Welsh Office

**Table 1: Area of grades and other land**

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% surveyed area	% site area
3a	17.0	9.1	8.7
3b	170.8	90.9	87.7
Other Land	7.0	-	3.6
Total Surveyed Area	187.8	100	96.4
Total Site area	194.8	-	100

9. The majority of the land on this site has been classified as Subgrade 3b on the basis of soil wetness/workability restrictions. Typical profiles comprise non-calcareous clay loam topsoils (with occasional clay topsoils) over clayey subsoils which impede soil drainage. The combination of soil drainage status and the heavy topsoils causes significant soil wetness/workability problems, such that the flexibility of cropping and the opportunities for cultivation or grazing by livestock are reduced. Land of Subgrade 3a quality occurs in three restricted areas of the site, where soils are less clayey, calcareous and/or better structured and thereby better drained.



## APPENDIX I

### DESCRIPTION OF THE GRADES AND SUBGRADES

#### **Grade 1: Excellent Quality Agricultural Land**

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

#### **Grade 2: Very Good Quality Agricultural Land**

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural or horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land of this grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1 land.

#### **Grade 3: Good to Moderate Quality Land**

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, the timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. When more demanding crops are grown, yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

#### **Subgrade 3a: Good Quality Agricultural Land**

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

#### **Subgrade 3b: Moderate Quality Agricultural Land**

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass, or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass that can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.





#### **Grade 4: Poor Quality Agricultural Land**

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or the level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (eg. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

#### **Grade 5: Very Poor Quality Agricultural Land**

Land with severe limitations that restricts use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.



KEY		Ha	%	PLAN	KCC 1		
	Grade 1			TITLE	KCC SURVEY RESULTS		
	Grade 2			SITE	SALDEN CHASE		
	Grade 3a	22.5	24	NUMBER	KCC237/08 03/10/vmd		
	Grade 3b	71.1	75	DATE	March 2010	SCALE	NTS
	Grade 4			 <p><b>KERNON COUNTRYSIDE CONSULTANTS</b>            BROOK COTTAGE, PURTON STOKE, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE, SN5 4JE            Tel 01793 771333 Fax 01793 778384</p>			
	Grade 5						
	Non-agricultural						
	Urban	1	1				
	Not surveyed						