

**LAND TO THE EAST OF
EGLWYS BREWIS
ST ATHAN, VALE OF GLAMORGAN**

**AGRICULTURAL LAND
CLASSIFICATION SURVEY
RESULTS**

FEBRUARY 2014





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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Kernon Countryside Consultants Limited (KCC) on the instructions of Mr John Thomas. It sets out the findings of an agricultural land classification (alc) survey carried out over approximately 10.9 hectares of land to the east of Eglwys Brewis adjacent to the St Athan to Cowbridge Road.
- 1.2 Of this 10.9 hectares, 6.5 hectares has been the subject of a detailed survey and 3.2 hectares the subject of a desk-based survey. The remaining 1.2 hectares comprises of non-agricultural / urban land.

2. THE STUDY AREA

- 2.1 The site is situated on the eastern edge of Eglwys Brewis, St Athan. The site comprises of two fields which form part of an arable rotation and an area of non-agricultural land which forms open space connected to the existing residential development.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

- 3.1 Part of the site (6.5 hectares, which equates to 67% of the agricultural land) was surveyed by Kernon Countryside Consultants Limited in December 2001 as part of a much larger survey which covered approximately 250 hectares in and around St Athan. The survey was carried out in accordance with the current MAFF guidelines and criteria (MAFF 1988).
- 3.2 Sites over the entire survey area were examined on a 100 m grid basis and as part of the larger survey a number of topsoil samples were analysed to determine the particle size class, which was critical in determining the ALC Grade.

Factors affecting ALC grade

- 3.3 Climate affects the grading of land through the assessment of overall climatic limitation and also through the interaction with soils.
- 3.4 The key climatic variables for the site are provided by the Met Office (1989), interpolated from the published 5km grid datasets. The figures for a point

approximately 1.5 km to the south east of this site, were used as representative of the larger survey area and are set out in the table below:

Table 1: Climate and altitude data

Grid reference	SS 0020 6830
Altitude	48 m AOD
Average annual rainfall	1018 mm
Accumulated temperature >0°C (Jan-June)	1510 degree days
Moisture deficit, wheat	83 mm
Moisture deficit, potatoes	71mm
Field capacity period	209 days

3.5 The combination of rainfall and temperature at this site imposes no direct climatic limitation upon land quality.

3.6 Workability / access is limiting to land quality with the site having heavy textured topsoils.

Geology and soils

3.7 The 1:50,000 scale geology map of the Bridgend District shows rocks of the Jurassic age over the site. These comprise of mainly limestones with subordinate beds of mudstone belonging to the Porthkerry Formation. The rocks weather to give mainly heavy textured soil parent materials and the bulk of the soils over the area are clayey with limestone at variable depth.

3.8 The detailed soil survey carried out in 2001 recognises limestone over the site. Soil information at a semi-detailed scale covering the entire site (SSEW 1969) is available and shows an extensive distribution of well-drained calcareous clayey soils over the site. The detailed soil survey broadly agrees with the published survey above, with well-drained clayey soils over limestone at variable depth covering much of the ground.

Agricultural Land Classification

3.9 The provisional agricultural land classification map (MAFF 1977) shows Grade 3 land over this small site, as attached at **Appendix KCC 1**. The map is

provisional and was designed to be used for areas larger than about 80 hectares in extent and boundaries on this plan do not necessarily reflect the detailed situation. Since the map was constructed there have been changes to the classification. In particular the effects of the interaction between climate and soils are now more clearly stated which puts the land quality more clearly into the local context.

- 3.10 The detailed agricultural land classification survey which was carried out across part of this site in 2001 identifies 3b agricultural land.
- 3.11 The north-western part of the Site, some 3.2 hectares, has not been the subject of a detailed ALC survey. However based on the detailed ALC survey work which has been carried out in the area and a desk-based analysis this land which slopes down to the Nant Y Stepsau is also likely to comprise of Grade 3b quality at best. Land on the opposite side of the road bordering the Brook was graded as Grade 4 and 5 when surveyed in 2001 and it may be that if a detailed survey was carried out over the remainder of the Site this may identify some Grade 4 or 5 land immediately adjoining the Brook
- 3.12 In summary, based on a combination of detailed survey work carried out in 2001 and desk based analysis, the site at best comprises entirely of Grade 3b land. However if a detailed survey was carried out over the remainder of the Site this may identify some Grade 4 or 5 land immediately adjoining the Brook.

4. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are two principal agricultural considerations in the selection of development sites. These are:
- effect on land and its quality;
 - effect on farm businesses.
- 4.2 National Planning Policy on the non-agricultural development of land is set out in Planning Policy Wales Edition 5 (November 2012), and the accompanying Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) (July 2010).

- 4.3 Planning Policy Wales (2012) notes in paragraph 4.10.1 that high quality land is recognised as a finite resource which should be conserved for the future, wherever possible. Such land is described as that graded 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system and is described as **“best and most versatile agricultural land”** (BMV).
- 4.4 The policy states that **“Considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because it is of special importance. Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value recognised by a landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation which outweighs the agricultural considerations. If land in grades 1, 2 or 3a does need to be developed, and there is a choice between sites of different grades, development should be directed to land of the lowest grade”**.
- 4.5 Annex B of TAN 6 notes that there may be proposals for development of non-agricultural purposes that require significant amounts of higher quality agricultural land. In such cases it is a requirement for Local Authorities to consult the Welsh Assembly Government before granting any planning permission which is not in accordance with the development plan and would involve the loss of 20 hectares or more of grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land, or a loss which is less than 20 hectares but is likely to lead to further losses amounting cumulatively to 20 hectares or more.
- 4.6 No **“best and most versatile agricultural land”** has been identified across this site so there will be no requirement to consult with the Welsh Assembly Government over the non-agricultural development of this site.
- 4.7 Section 6.2 of TAN 6 also advises that as well as considering land quality planning authorities should also consider other agricultural factors including:
- i) the location of development in relation to farms, in particular the effects of urban fringe and trespass (para 6.2.5);

- ii) the effect on farm size, structure and efficiency, including land loss and severance issues and any implications for the remainder of the farm (para's 6.2.6 and 6.2.7);
- iii) any impacts on the use of buildings or other equipment (para 6.2.7);
- iv) the effects on irrigation (para 6.2.8);
- v) and effects on drainage systems and water supplies (para 6.2.9).

4.8 The effects on farm businesses are usually of secondary importance, and are only normally relevant when choosing between sites of similar quality. They tend to be more transient, in that they can change over time.

5. FARMING CIRCUMSTANCES

5.1 The land forms part of a substantial farming business located at Flemingston Court Farm to the north east of the Site. The loss of this small area of land, which appears to be heavily walked / trespassed and thus difficult to farm, is unlikely to have any significant effect on the occupying farm business.

6. SUMMARY

6.1 A detailed Agricultural Land Classification Survey was undertaken in January 2001. The survey which covered 6.5 hectares identified Grade 3b land. The area of the Site which has not been the subject of a detailed ALC survey is likely to comprise at best of Grade 3b land. A detailed survey may identify some poorer Grade land (4 or 5) immediately adjoining the brook on the northern boundary.

6.2 Accordingly the site does not comprise of **“best and most versatile quality agricultural land.”**

7. REFERENCES

B.G.S. (1989). 1:50,000 scale geology map. Sheet 262 - Bridgend.

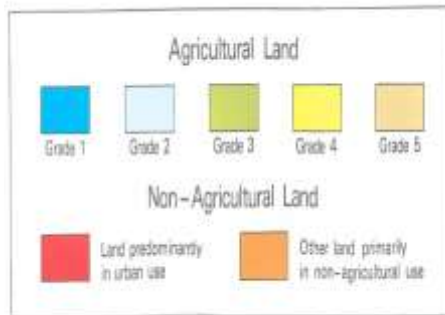
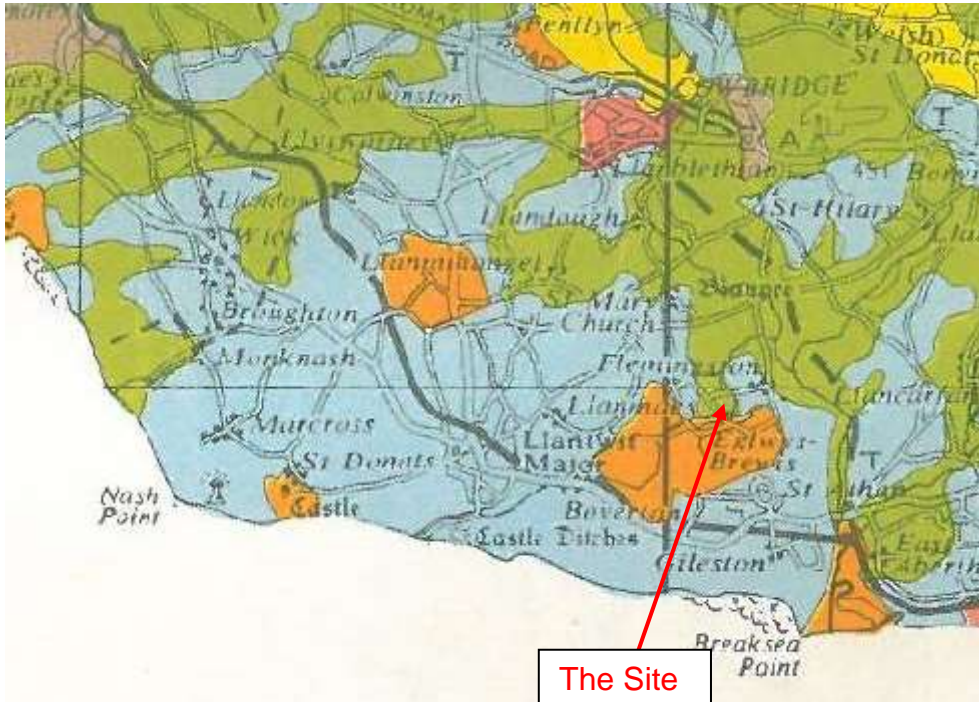
MAFF (1977). 1:25,000 series Agricultural Land Classification - Wales

MAFF (1988). Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.

METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE (1989). Climatological data for Agricultural Land Classification.

APPENDIX KCC 1

EXTRACT FROM THE PROVISIONAL ALC PLAN (1977)



NORTH



PLAN	KCC 1		
TITLE	Extract from the Provisional ALC Plan (1977)		
SITE	Eglwys Brewis		
CLIENT	Flemingston Court Farm		
NUMBER	KCC1675/01 02/14 vmd		
DATE	February 2014	SCALE	NTS











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APPENDIX KCC 2

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SURVEY RESULTS



KEY	Ha	%	PLAN	KCC 2			
	Grade 1		TITLE	ALC Survey Results			
	Grade 2		SITE	Eglwys Brewis			
	Grade 3a		CLIENT	Flemingston Court Farm			
	Grade 3b	6.5	60	NUMBER	KCC1675/02 /vmd 02/14		
	Grade 3b likely	3.2	29				
	Grade 4		DATE	February 2014	SCALE	NTS	
	Grade 5		KERNON COUNTRYSIDE CONSULTANTS LIMITED GREENACRES BARN, STOKE COMMON LANE, PURTON STOKE, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE, SN5 4LL Tel 01793 771333 This plan is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey under copyright licence 100015226.				
	Non-agricultural						
	Urban	1.2					11
	Agricultural Buildings						



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