

The Sizewell C Project

6.4 Volume 3 Northern Park and RideChapter 10 Soils and AgricultureAppendix 10A Agricultural Land Classification

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Exec	utive Summary	
	Northern Park And Ride Site: Agricultural Land Classification	
1.1	Introduction	2
Refer	rences	8
Tabl	les	
Table	e 1.1 Northern park and ride ALC climate data	2
Table	e 1.2 ALC grade distribution	£

Plates

None provided.

Figures

None provided.

Appendices

Appendix 10A1 – Auger log and key

Appendix 10A2 – Particle size distribution



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Executive Summary

An assessment of agricultural land quality, involving a desktop study and a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey, has been undertaken to determine the quality of agricultural land at the proposed Northern Park and Ride development for Sizewell C. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the ALC system for England and Wales, October 1988 ('the ALC Guidelines').

The detailed survey found agricultural land in Grades 3a (21.8ha) and 3b (4.5ha), along with a small area of non-agricultural land (1.6ha). Grade 3a land is considered to be among the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land in England and Wales, the lowest ALC grade to fall in this category.



1 Northern Park and Ride Site: Agricultural Land Classification

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report presents an assessment of agricultural land quality (Agricultural Land Classification; ALC) at the proposed northern park and ride development (hereafter referred to as the proposed development) for the Sizewell C Project.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this report is to present details of the agricultural land quality at the site. This report has been prepared by Arcadis on behalf of SZC Co.
- 1.1.3 The site is approximately 27.9 hectares (ha) in size and is located to the west of the village of Darsham and the A12, to the east of the mainline railway and to the north of Darsham Station. The site includes approximately 26.3ha of agricultural land, and is approximately six kilometres (km) to the north-west of the main development site.
- 1.1.4 When surveyed the site was in arable production (wheat with some areas of fallow) with the southern tip excluded from cultivation.
 - a) Agricultural Land Planning Policy and Context
- 1.1.5 This ALC assessment is consistent with the direction given by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref. 1.1).
- 1.1.6 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. This includes a requirement that planning policies and decisions should recognise "the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland."
- 1.1.7 A footnote to this adds that "Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality."
- 1.1.8 Agricultural land in England and Wales is graded between 1 and 5, depending on the extent to which physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. Grade 1 land is excellent quality agricultural land with very minor or no limitations to agricultural use, and Grade 5 is very poor quality land, with severe limitations due to adverse soil characteristics, relief, climate or a combination of these. Grade



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3 land is subdivided into Subgrade 3a (good quality land) and Subgrade 3b (moderate quality land).

- 1.1.9 Grades 1, 2 and 3a are defined as the BMV land.
- 1.1.10 The site falls within the area covered by the Suffolk Coastal District Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (Ref. 1.2). A number of references are made to the need to, where possible, preserve prime agricultural land for essential food production. No specific policy is, however, set out and it should be considered therefore that guidance related to BMV land reverts to the NPPF.
 - b) Agricultural Land Classification Methodology
 - i. MAFF Agricultural Land Classification System
- 1.1.11 The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) ALC (Ref. 1.3) system of grading land quality for use in land use planning purposes divides farmland into five grades according to the degree of limitation imposed upon land use by the inherent physical characteristics of climate, site and soils. As detailed above, Grade 1 land is of an excellent quality, whilst Grade 5 land has very severe limitations for agricultural use.
- 1.1.12 Accordingly, a detailed assessment of the proposal site has been undertaken using the MAFF revised guidelines and criteria for ALC published October 1988. The proposed approach to undertake detailed ALC surveys on areas which had not previously been surveyed was accepted by Natural England during consultation in 2016.
- 1.1.13 The detailed survey involved examination of the soil's physical properties at 28 locations on a 100m by 100m grid. The grid reference of the sample locations was recorded to enable these to be relocated for verification, if necessary.
- 1.1.14 At each location, the soil profile was examined to a maximum depth of approximately 1.2m by hand with the use of a 5cm diameter Dutch (Edleman) soil auger. A number of soil pits were excavated at selected locations with a spade in order to examine the physical soil profile characteristics, including subsoil structure, of the main representative soil types.
- 1.1.15 The soil profile at each sample location was described using the Soil Survey Field Handbook: Describing and Sampling Soil Profiles (Ref. 1.4). Each soil profile was ascribed an ALC grade following the MAFF ALC Guidelines.



- 1.1.16 These MAFF guidelines require that the following factors be investigated:
 - climate: Average Annual Rainfall (AAR) and Accumulated Temperature above 0°C between January and June (AT0);
 - site: gradient, micro relief and flooding;
 - soils: texture, structure, depth, stoniness, and chemical toxicity; and
 - interactive factors: soil wetness, soil droughtiness and liability to erosion.
- 1.1.17 To confirm soil texture a topsoil sample was collected from 1 auger location and sent to an accredited laboratory for particle size distribution analysis. The data sheet is included as **Appendix 10A.2** of this volume of the **Environmental Statement (ES)**.
 - ii. Natural England Technical Advice Note 049
- 1.1.18 Use of the ALC methodology is also supported by Natural England Technical Advice Note 049 (TIN049) (Ref. 1.5), published in 2012.
- 1.1.19 TIN049 describes a detailed ALC survey as having approximately one sample point per hectare. To achieve this sample density and to remove surveyor selection bias, as noted above, sample points were set at 100m intersections aligned with the national grid, located in the field by hand held GPS.
 - c) Agricultural Land Classification Assessment
 - i. Climate
- 1.1.20 Climatological data for ALC are provided for 5km intersections of the National Grid by the Meteorological Office, in collaboration with the National Soil Resources Institute. The data from these points can be interpolated providing climate data for specific sites. Interpolated data for the site is given in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 Northern park and ride ALC climate data

Reference Point	National Grid Reference TM 407 702
Altitude (m)	27
AAR (mm)	595
AT0 (day degrees)	1411
Moisture Deficit for wheat (mm)	123



Reference Point	National Grid Reference TM 407 702
Moisture Deficit for potatoes (mm)	119
Field Capacity Days (FCD)	111

- 1.1.21 The main parameters used in the assessment of an overall climatic limitation are AAR as a measure of overall wetness, and AT0 as a measure of the warmth in the growing season.
- 1.1.22 Climate does not impose an overall limitation on ALC grade at this site. Climate does, however, have an important influence on the interactive limitations of soil wetness and soil droughtiness. The site has both relatively low rainfall and a long growing season, acting to decrease the severity of any potential soil wetness limitation, but increasing the severity of any potential soil droughtiness limitation.

ii. The Site

- 1.1.23 Land within the site is gently sloping down to the south and east, levelling out on the higher ground to the north-east. Gradient and microtopography do not limit ALC Grade within the site.
- 1.1.24 No natural watercourses adjoin the site which appears to drain to a surface water ditch running along the edge of the East Suffolk line.
- 1.1.25 There is no evidence that flood risk limits ALC grade at any part of the site (Ref. 1.6). However, the site is quite low lying so achieving adequate fall for field drainage may be problematic.

iii. Soils and Parent Materials

- 1.1.26 The British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer (Ref. 1.7) shows the site to be underlain by an area mapped as the Crag Group (quaternary shallow-water marine and estuarine sands, gravels, silts and clays), with an overlying drift deposit of superficial diamicton of the Lowestoft Formation (an extensive sheet of poorly-sorted matrix-supported chalky till as well as outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays).
- 1.1.27 Field survey work at the site found soil material that was predominantly medium to heavy textured (loams to clays) with some lighter textured (sandy) material found at depth.
- 1.1.28 Stone content often rises in the lower subsoil but the topsoil content of larger stones (above 2cm) is not high enough to limit ALC Grade.



iv. Interactive Factors

- 1.1.29 A typical soil profile found at the site has a clay loam topsoil over a clayey subsoil.
- 1.1.30 The clayey subsoil impedes the drainage of excess water down through the soil profile, trapping water in the topsoil after rain and leaving this land vulnerable to persistent structural damage from livestock hooves, vehicle wheels and cultivators.
- 1.1.31 Avoiding or minimising such damage limits land management options. However, due to the relatively low rainfall the land is only occasionally wet (Wetness Class III) rather than seasonally waterlogged. Soil wetness limitations at the site are dependent on the topsoil clay content and the presence of carbonates. A higher clay content increases the vulnerability of topsoil to structural damage when wet, giving rise to a stronger soil wetness limitation. The presence of calcium carbonate in the topsoil can mitigate this limitation as it acts to improve soil structural development.
- 1.1.32 The slowly permeable clayey subsoil has a poor structure that limits root penetration as well as drainage. As a result, the volume of water held by the soil that is available to the plant is further limited. Soil profiles across the site are all limited to ALC Grade 3a by soil droughtiness; however, some have an equal or greater limitation due to soil wetness.
 - v. Agricultural Land Classification Grade Distribution
- 1.1.33 A small area of the site is classed as non-agricultural land. This comprises the section of the A12 that falls within the site. The remainder of the site is agricultural land in ALC Grades 3a and 3b.
- 1.1.34 The extent of ALC grades across the site shown on **Figure 17.1** attached to the **ES** chapter, with area measurements given in **Table 1.2** below.

Table 1.2 ALC grade distribution

ALC Grade	Area (ha)	Area (%)
3a - good quality agricultural land	21.8	78.14
3b – moderate quality agricultural land	4.5	16.13
Non-agricultural	1.6	5.73
Total	27.9	100.00

1.1.35 Grade 3a land covers approximately 78% of the site, an area of 21.8ha, comprising soils with a number of key characteristics. There are small areas of land with medium textured topsoil over a light textured subsoil.



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This land is limited to Grade 3a by soil droughtiness. The majority of the land falling within Grade 3a has a medium textured non-calcareous topsoil over a slowly permeable heavy textured subsoil. The land is occasionally waterlogged (Wetness Class III) and limited to Grade 3a by both soil wetness and soil droughtiness. Some soil profiles are present with a calcareous heavy textured topsoil, also limited to Grade 3a by soil wetness and droughtiness.

1.1.36 Grade 3b land comprises 4.5ha in total (approximately 16% of the site) in three parts of the site. Soil profiles comprise a heavy textured and non-calcareous topsoil above a heavy textured and slowly permeable subsoil. As for the Grade 3a land described above the land is occasionally wet (Wetness Class III) but has a more severe soil wetness limitation as the higher clay content of the topsoil increases the vulnerability to structural damage.

d) Conclusions

1.1.37 A detailed ALC survey of the site found agricultural land in Grades 3a (21.8ha) and 3b (4.5ha). Grade 3a land is considered to be among the best and most versatile agricultural land in England and Wales, the lowest ALC grade to fall in this category.



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- 1.7 British Geological Survey Geology of Britain viewer. http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/home.html?src=topNav

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APPENDIX A: APPENDIX 10A1: AUGER LOG AND KEY

oint	Grid re	ef.		Alt	Grad	Aspect	Land use	Dent	th (cm)		Soil matrix	Mott	le 1	Mott	le 2	Glev	Texture	St	ones	SUBS STR	Calc.	Mn C	SPL	Droi	ight		Wet		Classifi	cation	Point notes
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-	ΓM 4	10504	69907	11	2	NW	FLW	0 25 40 75 110	25 40 75 110 120	25 15 35 35 10	10yr32 10yr54 10yr56 10yr56 10yr51		10yr51 10yr54			Y	MCL MCL HCL MSL C	5 2 0	HR HR HR	M P M	N		Y Y	15	-20	3a	III	3a	3a	Drought/Wet	
-	ГМ 4	10598	69907	16	3	NW	WHT	0 25 65 75	25 65 75 120	25 40 10 45	10yr32 10yr54 10yr51	CD CD	10yr51 10yr56	CD	10yr58	Y Y	HCL C C	10	HR CH CH CH	P P	N		Y Y	1	-18	3a	III	3b	3b	Wet	
1	ΓM 4	10599	70006	17	3	NW	WHT	0 25 55	25 55 120	25 30 65	10yr32 10yr56	CD	10yr51	CD	10yr68	Y	HCL C		HR 5 CH) CH	P P	N	С	Y	-1	-22	3a	III	3b	3b	Wet	
	ГМ 4	10702	70008	22	0		WHT	0 25 40 60	25 40 60 120	25 15 20 60	10yr32 10yr54 10yr54	FD FD	10yr52 10yr51	CD	10yr56	Y	MCL HCL HCL HCL	15	HR HR 5 CH	P P	N	С	Y Y	-4	-26	3a	III	3a	3a	Drought/Wet	
-	ΓM 4	10602	70108	16	4	NW	WHT	0 25 40 45	25 40 45 120	25 15 5 75	10yr32 10yr54 10yr54	CD CD	10yr52 10yr61	FD FD	10yr56 10yr58	Y Y	MCL HCL HCL HCL	15 20	HR 5 HR 0 CH 0 CH	P P P	S		Y Y	-6	-29	3a	Ш	2	3a	Drought	
-	ΓM 4	10699	70109	19	0		FLW	0 25 110	25 110 120	25 85 10	10yr32 10yr54 10yr51	CD	10yr51	CD	10yr65	Y Y	MCL HCL C	5 4 10		P P	N	С	Y Y	-1	-22	3a	III	3a	3a	Drought/Wet	
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	ΓM 4	10616	70308	22	2	NW	ARA STB	0 25 50 80	25 50 80 90	25 25 30 10	10yr32 10yr51 10yr56 10yr51	CD CD CD	10yr56 10yr51 10yr56			Y Y Y	HCL C HCL MSL	10 20	HR CH CH	I	N M		Y	8	-17	3a	III	3b	3b	Wet	

oint	Grid ı	ref.			Alt	Grad	Aspec	t Lar	nd use	Dept	h (cm)		Soil matrix	Mott	le 1	Mott	le 2	Gley	Texture	St	ones	SUBS STR	Calc	. Mn (SPL	Drou	ght		Wet	C	Classification	Point notes
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2	ТМ	405	95 70	70408	21	2	NW	AR	A STB	0 25 80	25 80 120	25 55 40	10yr32 10yr54	CD	10yr52	CD	10yr56	Y	HCL C	5 2 50	HR CH CH	P P	N	F	Y	1	-18	3a	III 3	Bb 3	Bb Wet	
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Point	Grid	l ref.			Α	lt l	Grad	Aspe	ct Lan	d use	Depti	h (cm)		Soil matrix	Mott	tle 1	Mot	tle 2	Glev	Texture	Sto	ones	SUBS STR	Calc	. Mn (SPL	Drought	W	et	Class	ification	Point notes
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											70	92	22	Gley1 7N	CD	10YR56			Υ	С	15	CH CH	Р	V		Υ						
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21	TM	40	843	7056	52 3	0	0		ARA	STB	0	30	30	7.5YR33						CL	2	HR					-9.14 -14.3 3a	III	2	3a	Drought	
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											80	100	20	10YR61	CF	7.5YR58			Υ	С	5	CH	Р	V	Υ	Υ						
											IMP																					Stop @ stiff clay
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											23	60	37	Gley1 7N	CD	7.5YR58			Υ	С	2	CH	Р	s	Υ	Υ					· ·	
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Auger Log key

Depth - Top

GH

GS

<u>xx</u> Underlining denotes depth to the top of a slowly permeable layer

Gravel composed of non-porous (hard) stones

Gravel composed of porous (soft) stones

Land use		Mottle	1,2 - Form	Texture		Limitat	ions
ARA	Arable	FF	Few Feint	CS	Coarse Sand	NN	None
CER	Cereal	FD	Few Distinct	MS	Medium sand	OC	Overall climate
WHT	Wheat	FP	Few Prominent	FS	Fine Sand	AE	Aspect
BAR	Barley	CF	Common Feint	LCS	Loamy Coarse Sand	EX	Exposure
MZE	Maize	CD	Common Distinct	LMS	Loamy Medium Sand	FR	Frost risk
OAT	Oats	СР	Common Prominent	LFS	Loamy Fine Sand	GR	Gradient
OSR	Oilseed rape	MF	Many Feint	CSL	Coarse Sandy Loam	MR	Microrelief
LIN	Linseed	MD	Many Distinct	MSL	Medium sandy loam	FL	Flood risk
FBE	Field beans	MP	Many Prominent	FSL	Fine Sandy Loam	TX	Texture
POT	Potatoes	VF	Very many Feint	CSZL	Coarse Sandy Silt Loam	DP	Soil depth
SBT	Sugar beet	VD	Very many Distinct	MSZL	Medium Sandy Silt Loam	CH	Chemical
BRA	Brassicas	VP	Very many Prominent	FSZL	Fine Sandy Silt Loam	WE	Wetness
FOD	Fodder crops			ZL	Silt Loam	WK	Workability
FRT	Soft and top fruit			SCL	Sandy Clay Loam	DR	Droughtiness
HRT	Horticultural crops			MCL	Medium Clay Loam	ER	Erosion risk
PAS	Pasture			HCL	Heavy Clay Loam	WD	Wetness/Droughtiness
LEY	Ley grass			MZCL	Medium Silty Clay loam	ST	Topsoil stoniness
PGR	Permanent pasture			HZCL	Heavy Silty Clay Loam		
RGR	Rough grazing			SC	Sandy Clay		
SCR	Scrub			ZL	Silty Clay		
HTH	Heathland			С	Clay		
BOG	Bog or marsh			Р	Peat		
DCW	Deciduous Woodland			SP	Sandy Peat		
CFW	Coniferous woodland			LP	Loamy Peat		
PLO	Ploughed			PL	Peaty Loam		
STB	Crop stubble			PS	Peaty Sand		
FLW	Fallow (inc. set aside)			MZ	Marine Light Silts		
SAS	Set aside (where known)			IMP	Impenetrable to roots		
OTH	Other						

Stones -	Туре	Subs S	tr (subsoil structural condition)	Calcare	eousness	Mn C (ferrimanganous concretions)
						_	_
HR	All hard rocks and stones	G	Good	N	Non-calcareous (<0.5% CaCO3)	F	Few
MSST	Soft, medium or coarse grained sandstone	M	Moderate	VS	Very slightly calcareous (0.5 - 1% CaCO3)	С	Common
SI	Soft weathered igneous or metamorphic rock	Р	Poor	S	Slightly calcareous (1 - 5% CaCO3)	M	Many
SLST	Soft oolitic or dolomitic limestone			M	Moderately calcareous (5 - 10% CaCO3)	V	Very many
FSST	Soft, fine grained sandstone			V	Very calcareous (>10% CaCO3)	Υ	Common or greater
ZR	Soft, argillaceous or silty rocks			Υ	Calcareous (>1% CaCO3)		
CH	Chalk or chalk stones						



NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

APPENDIX B: APPENDIX **DISTRIBUTION SHEETS**

10A1: PARTICLE

SIZE

Building better energy together



Analysis Results (SOIL)

Customer

ARCADIS (UK) LIMITED

THE MILL

BRIMSCOMBE PORT

STROUD GL5 2QG Distributor

ARCADIS (UK) LTD

THE MILL

BRINSCOMBE PORT

30/07/2019 (Date Issued: 05/08/2019)

BRINSCOMBE STROUD

GLOS GL5 2QG

Sample Ref

DARSHAM TS 13

Sample No

E337879/25

Crop

Date Received

Analysis	Result (%)
Sand	46.93
Silt	34.71
Clay	18.36
Very Fine Sand	6.06
Fine Sand	14.72
Medium Sand	22.01
Coarse Sand	4.13
Very Coarse Sand	< 0.01
Stones >2mm	2.80
Soil Type	CILo
	Clay Loam

Property	Assessment
Available Water	Medium to High
Drainage Rate	Medium to Slow
Inherent Fertility	Medium to High
Potential C.E.C.	Medium to High
Leaching Risk	Moderate to Low
Warming Rate	Medium

