



**PROVISION OF  
AN AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT  
IN RELATION TO  
LAND TO THE WEST OF TYE LANE, WALBERTON,  
ARUNDEL, WEST SUSSEX  
BN18 0PY**

**for and on behalf of**

**DAVID WILSON HOMES**

Henry Adams LLP Rowan House, Baffins Lane, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1UA

Sales ► Lettings ► Commercial ► Rural ► Development ► Fine Art



## CONTENTS

|                                      | <u>Page</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Instructions .....                | 3           |
| 2. Qualifications .....              | 3           |
| 3. Description .....                 | 3           |
| 4. Soils & Topography .....          | 4           |
| 5. Agriculture in the Locality ..... | 4           |
| 6. Summary & Conclusion .....        | 6           |

### Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Plan showing the property
- Appendix 2 – Photographs
- Appendix 3 – Soils of the Area
- Appendix 4 – Agricultural Land Classification

## **1 INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1.1 Instructions were received from David Wilson Homes to provide an Agricultural Assessment over a parcel of land situated to the west of Tye Lane at Walberton.
- 1.2 The scope of the work is to comprise the provision of an agricultural assessment including all necessary research, surveys and the preparation of all necessary reports/documents required in support of an planning application that is to be submitted on the land in question

## **2. QUALIFICATIONS.**

- 2. I, Simon Lush am a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Fellow of the Association of Agricultural Valuers. I am a registered valuer (Member No. 0079266) and a Partner of Henry Adams LLP. I have worked in Chichester as a rural surveyor acting for numerous farmers, horticultural growers and landowners for over 30 years and therefore I feel I have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to undertake this exercise.

## **3. DESCRIPTION.**

- 3.1 The parcel of land lies to the north of Walberton and west of Tye lane. The land abuts residential properties to the west and south and it was noted that development of residential units was being undertaken on land to the east. I confirm that I have made an inspection of the land which shown edged red on the plan attached **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The parcel in question amounts to 7.67ha (18.95 acres) or thereabouts, is fairly rectangular in shape and abuts the Tye lane road being a public highway on its eastern boundary.
- 3.3 The access from the public highway to the pasture land is presently 70m to the south of Harvest house which is in the north east corner. The access to the arable land is off Field Close which runs off The Street to the south of the land as marked on the plan at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 Out of the total area of 7.42ha, 4.96ha is into arable cultivation and the remaining area is into permanent pasture and used for the grazing of horses. From my inspection noted a range of loose boxes/stabling in the south east corner and it is clearly evident that this area has been used for equestrian grazing for a considerable length of time. The arable land located to the west of the pasture has been used for combinable cereal crops.
- 3.5 The land is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). The present occupier claims the annual Basic Farm Payment from the Rural Payments Agency, but the land is not in any Stewardship scheme.
- 3.6 With the exception of the equestrian structures indicated above there are no other structures on the property.
- 3.7 There is a water supply servicing the equestrian land.
- 3.8 The field boundaries are primarily made of hedges with rabbit fencing abutting the cereal land and stock fence abutting the grazing land. Some years ago, a small stretch of internal hedge leading to the access has been removed. An internal ditch runs with the hedge splitting the pasture and arable land.

- 3.8 From my inspection there is minimal weed infestation in the arable land and the condition of the grassland is poor but at the time of my inspection it had been dry for some time so there was minimal growth.

#### **4 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 4.1 The parcel slopes gently from north to south and is approximately 20 m above sea level.
- 4.2 Attached at **Appendix 3** is a copy of the Soils of the Area and I have highlighted the area with a red cross where we have been asked to provide an Agricultural Assessment.
- 4.3 As will be noted there is a mix of soils. To the north there is a seem of Binsted Series (Bu1) which are a well-drained fine silty soil over clayey soils and locally very flinty which is the case here as flints are in very evident. Moving south there is a seem of Strettington Series (sG1). This is a very similar soil to the Binsted series. Further south there is a seem of Hook Series (hK1) which is deeper silty soil and tends to be a far less stony soil but can be affected by ground water. There is also a small area of Park Gate Series (Pz1) whose geology is 'Aeolian silty drift' and is described as a 'Deep stoneless silty soils variably affected by groundwater.
- 4.4 As will be noted from the copy of soils at **Appendix 3** these soils are fairly common to this locality and seems of soils in this area run east/west parallel to the South Downs with the better quality soils being further south on the coastal plain.
- 4.5 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies the land into grades by considering numerous aspects such as the physical and chemical characteristics which impose long term limitations on agricultural use. These include climate, (temperature and rainfall), site (gradient, micro relief and flood risk) and soils (texture, structure, depth and stoniness). The land is classed as Grade 3.
- 4.6 Grade 3 is generally classed as good to moderate quality with moderate limitations which effect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation etc. Grade 3 soils have been broken down into two subgrades being a and b. I feel that the soils in question would be Grade 3a.
- 4.7 Attached at **Appendix 4** there is a copy of the Agricultural Land Classification and I have marked the location of the land with a red cross. The green area is Grade 3 and it will be noted that the Grade 1 (dark blue) and Grade 2 (light blue) being the better quality soils are located to the south of the land in question.

#### **5 AGRICULTURE IN THE LOCALITY**

- 5.1 Having worked as an Agricultural Surveyor in Chichester for over 30 years, I am very aware of the farming practices that occur in the vicinity.
- 5.2 The majority of the productive land in this locality is now into an arable rotation which includes field vegetables such as lettuce, sweetcorn and potatoes. The number of dairies has reduced dramatically, particularly over the last 15 years. On the Chichester Coastal Plain I believe that there are now six dairies and 20 years ago the number would have been three times that amount.
- 5.3 I have already commented as to the quality of the differing grades of soils with Grade 3 soils due to their limitations tend to be more suited to combinable arable crops and grass with the Grade 1 and 2 soils being used more for field vegetables and arable crops.

- 5.4 Over recent years we have been finding that the size of agricultural machinery has increased dramatically and modern combines nowadays will have the ability to cut over 100 acres a day, therefore the labour requirements are vastly reduced. As a result the size of farming units are increasing where smaller farms have been amalgamated either through sale, contract farming arrangements, share farming arrangements or letting under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 to other growers.
- 5.5 Farmers are now finding that growing crops adjoining residential properties is becoming more of an issue due to the possibility of spray drift and allergies particularly as to oil seed rape.
- 5.6 I should also comment on the horticultural sector in that after the War the Government set up the Land Settlement Association which provided agricultural growers with the ability to take on what was considered then as a viable unit, being approximately four acres of land together with a house, pack house and glass housing which was primarily of timber Dutch Light construction. These units were set up primarily to the south of Chichester, Birdham and Sidlesham.
- 5.7 There were other horticultural areas one of which is around the Barnham area and to the south west of the land in question there was Angels nursery which is now being developed for a residential use. Hill Lane runs off the Yapton road to the west of the land and this leads to an area that was made up of a number of small nurseries but the majority have now ceased operating.
- 5.8 Off Lake Lane to the south there is a large operator, Eric Wall Ltd who established in 1971 on 2.5 acres of land and is now one of the largest UK tomato growers and crops under glass approximately 30 acres.
- 5.9 The principal reason for this was firstly the quality of the soils but primarily the reason was that light levels were better in this area than they were in other areas of the country. There was also good access to markets such as Covent Garden etc.
- 5.10 The LSA units were run on a co-operative basis and thrived until the 1990s when the oil price started to increase and therefore fuel for heating and fertilisers etc. increased dramatically and supermarkets put more of a squeeze on the price of products and therefore margins reduced. The heavy labour requirement meant it was very difficult for growers to sustain a living and unfortunately there is hardly any growing occurring on the ex-LSA units and much of the glass has been removed. A number of growers have tried to expand and look towards alternatives such as the production of bedding plants etc.
- 5.11 In addition to Eric Wall Ltd mentioned above there are, however, a number of sizeable horticultural growers and to give one example, Tangmere Airfield Nurseries located approximately one and half miles to the west grow purely peppers in a total of approximately 70 acres of glass.
- 5.12 The Chichester District Council has designated Horticultural Development Areas (HDAs) in the countryside, where glasshouses and related facilities, including pack houses, may be allowed and the impact of their large size and bulk is minimized. Areas include the old Tangmere airfield site and land at Runcton. The purpose was to ensure that the District's horticultural industry remains nationally and internationally competitive. The land I am commenting on is not included at any HDA.
- 5.13 I would add that to the north on the Downs and along some of the marshland areas along the coast there is some beef and sheep production and naturally these tend to occur on areas of rough grazing and permanent pasture and therefore the poorer quality productive soils. Economies of scale are also a major factor for livestock units. Fencing and putting on of a water supply for small areas is costly and therefore in many cases not viable. I would add that for sheep temporary electric fencing can be used. There are a number of flying sheep flocks that will take on small areas of grass but finding such operators is becoming harder as the time spent inspecting stock is often prohibitive and the income that can be generated is minimal. I would also add that grazing livestock, and in particular sheep next to

residential development is a concern to graziers due to the increased likelihood of disturbance primarily from both humans and dogs.

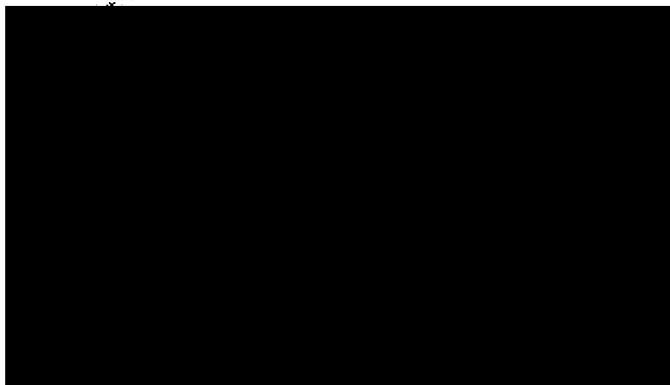
- 5.14 The demand for land for equestrian use is strong and the value of small areas of land are usually 2 to 3 times the agricultural value of the land. The proximity of bridleways to the land is important as is how dry the land is especially during the winter months.

## **6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 I have commented and it will be seen from the **Appendix 4** on the general quality of soils in the vicinity particularly to the south which are well above average when considering the country as a whole. The land that I have assessed under the Agricultural Land Classification is I feel Grade 3a at best and therefore has to be considered as good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations but is very average for the locality when you consider the amount of Grade 1 and 2 soils in the area.
- 6.2 However there are some major constraints that need to be taken into consideration. The existing access to the arable parcel is very limiting for modern agricultural machinery.
- 6.3 I have commented on the economies of scale and therefore size of agricultural and horticultural units and the total area here amounts to 4.96 ha or thereabouts. Sprayer booms can be 26m in width and the combine header 9.15m. I would suggest that with the size of modern machinery, ignoring the access implications, farming of arable parcels of this size is becoming more of an issue.
- 6.4 Due to the stone content the arable parcel is not of a suitable quality to grow potatoes or field vegetables.
- 6.5 I have commented that many of the smaller horticultural growers have ceased operating and the larger growers have only enlarged their operations and therefore this area is again too small for modern horticultural use. I would further suggest that as the land is not in any HAD and due to the slope on the land the likelihoods of achieving consent for glass on the land would be very remote.
- 6.8 I am of the opinion that although the Agricultural Land Classification would indicate that the land is good to moderate quality (3a), there are limitations which in relation to the arable parcel due to its access and location will only escalate in the future. The grassland used for equestrian use is in a poor condition but could be grazed by sheep or cattle and in terms of agricultural productivity is minimal. Therefore, the loss of this parcel of land as a natural resource is minimal.

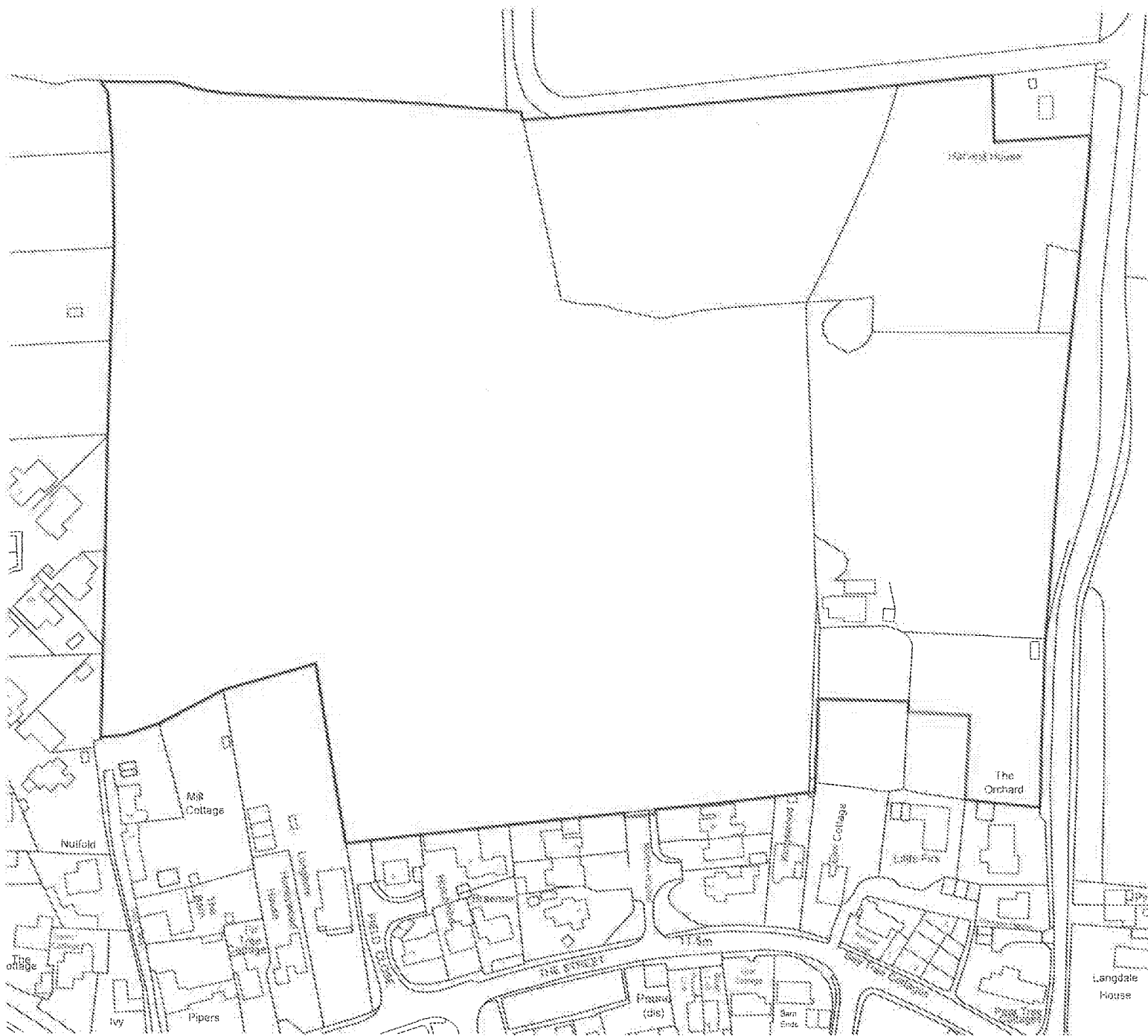
Signed:

Dated:



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **PLAN SHOWING LAND OFF TYE LANE, WALBERTON**



KEY:  
 Development Boundary

| Rev | Description        |
|-----|--------------------|
| P1  | Preliminary issue. |

| Date     | Aut | Ch   |
|----------|-----|------|
| 11.02.20 | MWP | C.M. |

**APPENDIX 2**

**PHOTOGRAPHS**



**Surface showing flint content**



Arable land



Pasture land

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **SOILS OF THE AREA**

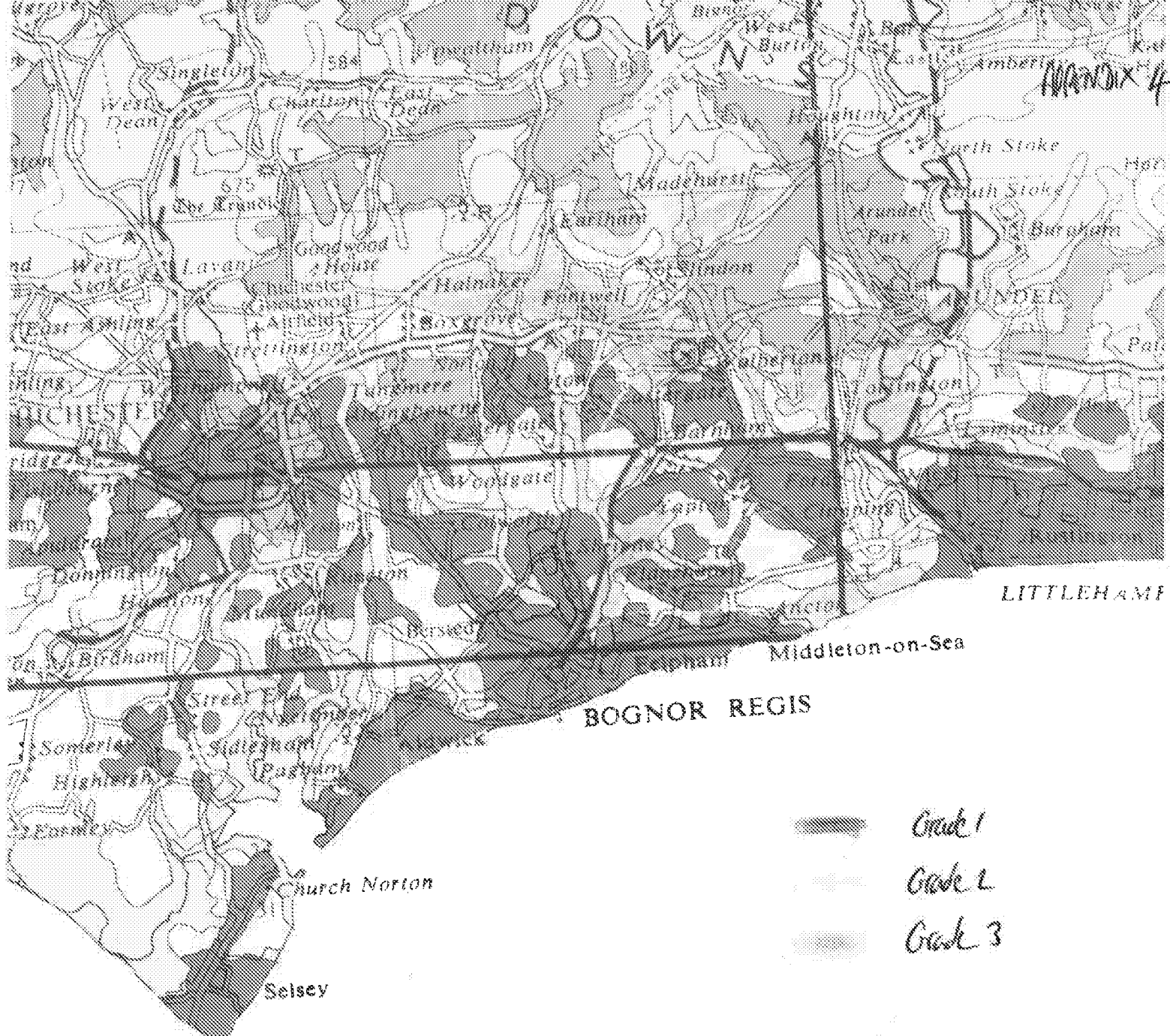
Map Dix 3



## **APPENDIX 4**

### **AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION**

ANNEX 4



SELSEY BILL

SCAL

