



SPICER HILL WIND FARM EXTENSION

Volume I: Environmental Statement

October 2014



Prepared For:
JG Pears Ltd

**SPICER HILL WIND FARM
EXTENSION**

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Volume I: Environmental Statement

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Preface

This Environmental Statement assesses the environmental effects of the proposed Spicer Hill Wind Farm Extension project, which comprises three 2.3MW wind turbines with a height of 93m to blade tip and ancillary infrastructure. This is an Environmental Statement for the purposes of the Planning EIA Regulations (the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011) covering the major environmental effects arising from this proposal.

Green Cat Renewables Ltd is a consultancy acting as an agent on behalf of JG Pears Ltd. (the applicant), and is responsible for the studies compiled in the Environmental Statement (ES).

Hard copies of the planning application and supporting EIA documents can be viewed at:

The Civic Centre	Penistone Library
Eldon Street	High Street
Barnsley	Penistone
S70 2JL	S36 6BR

Hard copies of the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) can be provided for £5 and the full Environmental Statement (ES) for £250 per hard copy. Electronic copies (CD-ROM) of the ES package can be purchased for £10. Please contact:

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The Spicer Hill extension is being proposed by JG Pears Ltd, an established business in the South Yorkshire area and the operators of the Spicer Hill Wind Farm. Having expanded its farming base, in recent years J G Pears Ltd has been actively seeking opportunities to diversify this core business, with renewable energy being one of areas that has been targeted.

The development of the original Spicer Hill Wind Farm was part of this strategy. The Wind Farm is situated 2km to the north-west of Millhouse Green in the Penistone area of Barnsley, and was constructed in 2012. It consists of three turbines of 93m to tip located to the north of Crow Edge between Whitley Road and Spicer House Lane.

There are two other wind developments in the area, both of which are operated by third parties:

- Blackstone Edge, consisting of three 100m turbines which sits 800m to the north-west of Spicer Hill, and
- Royd Moor, consisting of thirteen 50m turbines which are adjacent to the southern edge of the Spicer Hill development.

The Spicer Hill extension project proposes an additional three turbines of 93m to tip. Two of these would be located on land between Spicer Hill and Blackstone Edge, whilst the third would sit to the east of the easternmost Spicer Hill turbine. The existing and proposed Spicer Hill turbines would appear as a coherent wind farm.

The Royd Moor development was consented in 1993, and is nearing the end of its 25 year consent period, which is due to expire in 2018. **An integral part of the proposal is that the Spicer Hill Extension would not be constructed until the existing Royd Moor turbines are decommissioned.**

Should the Spicer Hill Extension be consented the outcome of the scheme will be to:

- Replace thirteen 53m turbines with three 93m turbines.
- Replace 6.5MW (13 x 500kW) of installed capacity with 6.9MW (3 x 2.3MW). The proposed turbines are taller than those in operation at Royd Moor and would also be more efficient than these older models. Both of these factors mean that electrical output will increase by an estimated 46%.

- Visually 'de-clutter' the area. There will be fewer turbines than at present, and the remaining turbines will be of a similar scale to each other, rather than the current contrast between 50m turbines and 90m/100m turbines.
- Provide a more coherent layout than at present. The Royd Moor turbines are laid out in two straight rows with minimal spacing between the turbines. This creates a 'corridor effect' which contrasts with the more contemporary triangular designs of Blackstone Edge and Spicer Hill. The Spicer Hill Extension turbines have been designed to fit in to this triangular pattern.

1.2 Structure and Content of the ES

The ES comprises four volumes. In line with the EIA Directive and the local planning policies, this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) covers a number of key environmental, technical and social issues associated with the proposed development. This Environmental Statement (ES) forms **Volume I** and comprises the following chapters:

- **The Proposed Development;**
- **Planning Policy**
- **Project Design Considerations;**
- **Socio-Economic Impacts**
- **Ecology and Ornithology**
- **Landscape and Visual Impact;**
- **Noise;**
- **Cultural Heritage;**
- **Hydrology and Hydrogeology;**
- **Infrastructure;**
- **Shadow Flicker; and**
- **Climate Change.**

Wherever practical, each Chapter is structured as follows:

- **Introduction:** Identifies key objectives and issues;
- **Guidance:** summarises the relevant policy and guidance documents used to inform the assessment;
- **Consultation:** summarises the contact and responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees;
- **Methodology:** summarises the methods used in undertaking the assessment work;

- **Baseline:** summarises the existing situation;
- **Assessment of Predicted Impacts and Effects:** Identification and assessment of the predicted effects (both positive and negative) associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Development;
- **Mitigation:** a summary of measures envisaged to avoid, reduce or remedy predicted negative effects of the Development;
- **Summary of Predicted Impacts and Effects:** summary of the impacts and effects predicted and proposed mitigation measures; and
- **Conclusion:** summary of the conclusions of the assessment.

Volume II - LVIA Figures includes all relevant maps, plans, visualisations and diagrams supporting the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (**Chapter 7**).

Volume III – Supporting Figures includes all figures supporting the other technical chapters of the ES, including Ecology and Ornithology figures, Cultural Heritage Figures and Hydrology maps.

Volume IV – Non-Technical Summary.

Additionally, the ES is supported by the following planning application drawings:

APP-001: Site Plan and Block Plans;
APP-002: Turbine Elevation Drawing;
APP-003: Indicative Track and Hard-standing Details;
APP-004: Indicative Turbine Foundation Details; and
APP-005: Indicative Sub-Station Details.

Figures extracted from the planning application drawings have been inserted in the ES chapters where appropriate.

1.3 Community Consultation

JG Pears Ltd was keen to provide as much information as possible to members of the public prior to the application being lodged. A public exhibition was held on Wednesday 17th September at the St John's Community Centre in Penistone. The drop-in event ran from **3pm to 8pm** provided details about the proposed scheme and presented the findings of the environmental studies that had been carried out to date. Mr Pears and members of the Green Cat Renewables project team were on hand to answer any questions members of the public had about the scheme. The following methods of advertisement were used:

- The event was advertised in the Barnsley Chronicle on Friday 12th September, and was also the subject of a front page article in the Penistone version of the same edition, and a follow up article the following week.
- An invitation was posted to all of the properties within 1km of the site prior to the event.
- The Penistone Town Council, Denby Dale Parish Council, Dunford Parish Council and the Gunthwaite and Ingbirchworth Parish Council were notified of the event.
- An invitation was posted to each of the six elected members in the Penistone East and Penistone West wards.
- Public notices were put up in Millhouse Green, Penistone, Crow Edge and Ingbirchworth.

The exhibition material was left in the hall until midday on Thursday 18th September, when the weekly market was held in the Upper Hall. The exhibition was not staffed during this period, but members of the public were free to browse the stands.

2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

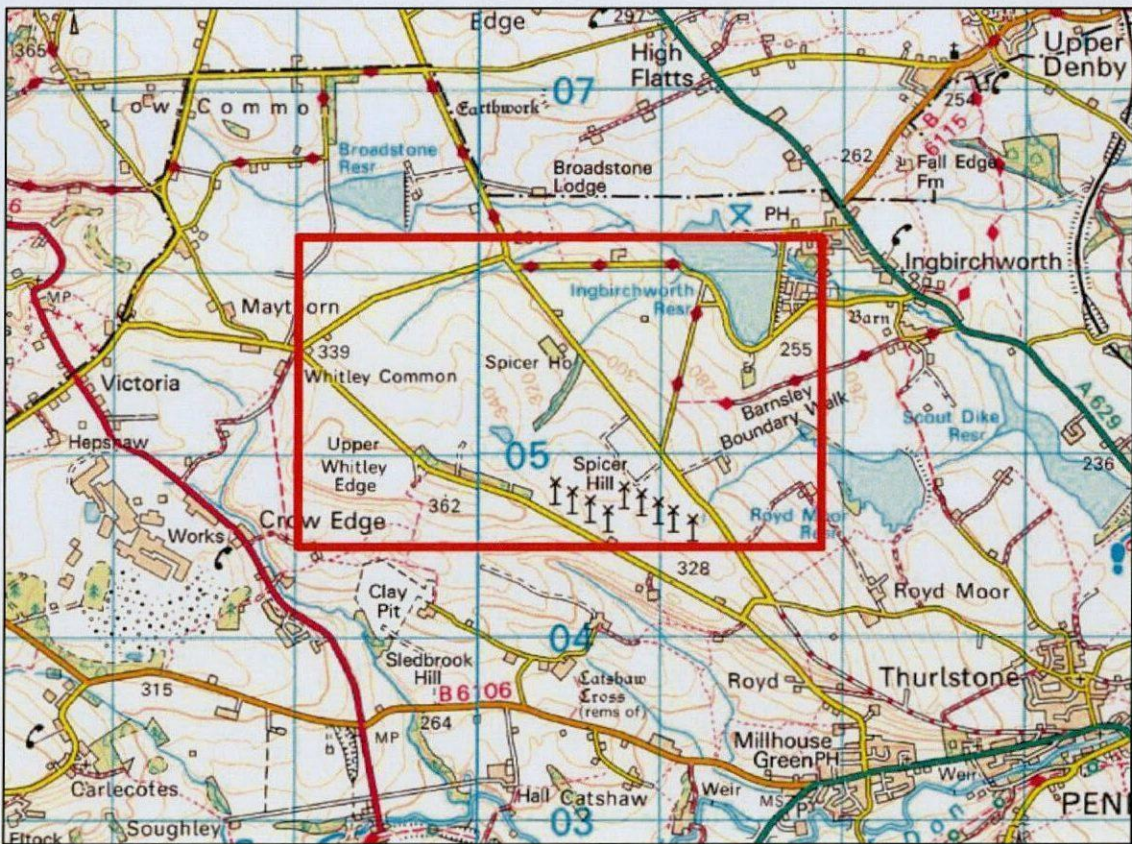
This chapter provides details of the proposal, including specifications of the turbines, access tracks and all other proposed infrastructure. It also describes the general construction methodology, timescales and typical construction equipment likely to be used on site. Operation and decommissioning phases are also discussed.

The construction methods detailed below build on best practice methodologies developed at other wind farms and comply with all Health and Safety requirements.

2.2 Location

The Spicer Hill Extension site is situated 2km to the north-west of Millhouse Green in the Penistone area of Barnsley, as shown in **Figure 2.1**.

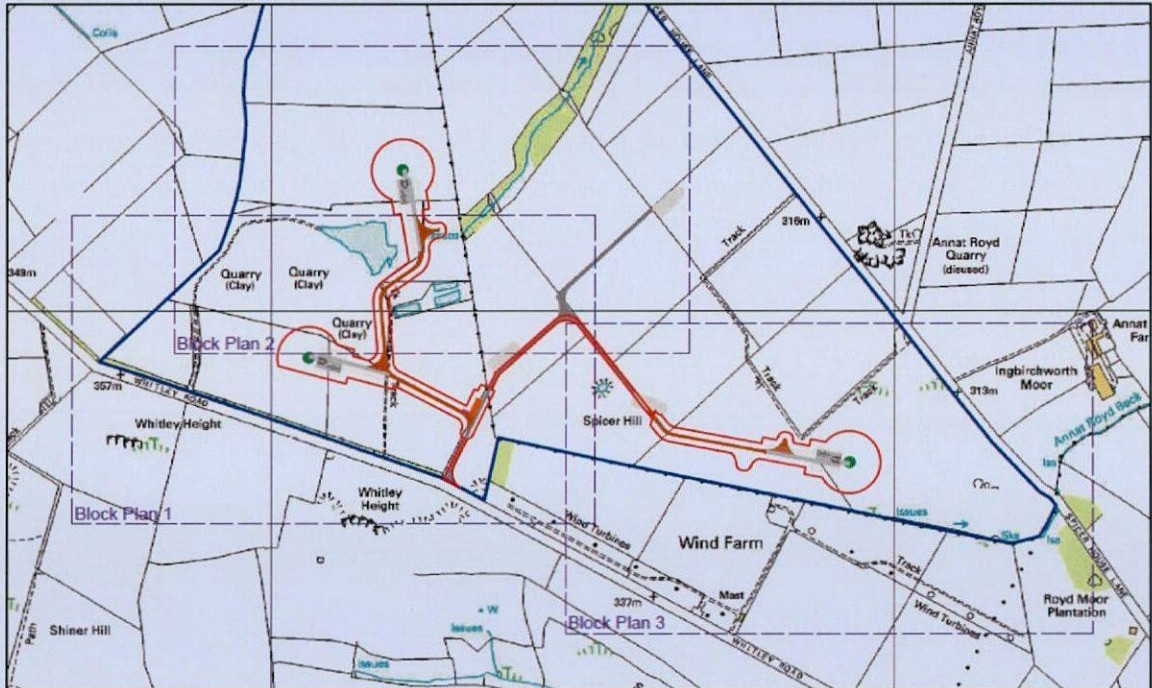
Figure 2.1 - Site Location



2.3 Site Layout

Figure 2.2 shows the location of the Spicer Hill Extension site infrastructure, including the turbines, access tracks and control building/sub-station compound. More detail is provided in drawing **APP-001** and associated Block Plans.

Figure 2.2 – Proposed Development Layout (Extract from APP-001)



KEY

-  PROPOSED TURBINE / FOUNDATION
-  CRANE HARD-STANDING
-  JIB ASSEMBLY AREA
-  NEW ACCESS TRACK
-  EXISTING ACCESS TRACK
-  ELECTRICAL SUB-STATION
-  EXISTING WIND TURBINE/HARD-STANDING
-  SPICER HILL LANDHOLDING
-  CONSTRUCTION COMPOUND
-  APPLICATION BOUNDARY (5.32 Ha)

The main considerations in terms of turbine locations were:

- Respecting noise limits at the nearest properties;
- Ensuring a sufficient spacing between the existing Blackstone Edge and Spicer Hill turbines to reduce turbulence effects;
- Ensuring a sufficient distance (turbine height plus 10%) from public roads;
- Ground stability in terms of distance from the on-site quarry; and
- The appearance of the wind farm from private houses, public roads and key viewpoints.

Chapter 4: Project Design Considerations, sets out the design strategy for the development, which aimed to strike the right balance between environmental, technical and economic considerations.

The applicant has applied for a micrositing allowance for turbine and track locations (as defined by the application boundary), and it is anticipated that this will form a planning condition accompanying the application. Beyond this distance, it is anticipated that any relocation of the proposed wind farm components will require written approval from the Council or will be treated as a formal variation to the application. Any micrositing of the turbines, track or associated infrastructure will be used to reduce the predicted impacts highlighted within this ES.

Ordnance Survey National Grid References for the three proposed turbines and associated infrastructure are presented in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1 – National Grid Reference for Proposed Infrastructure

T1	E420060 N404923
T2	E420211 N405224
T3	E420928 N404755
Sub station	E420310 N404845

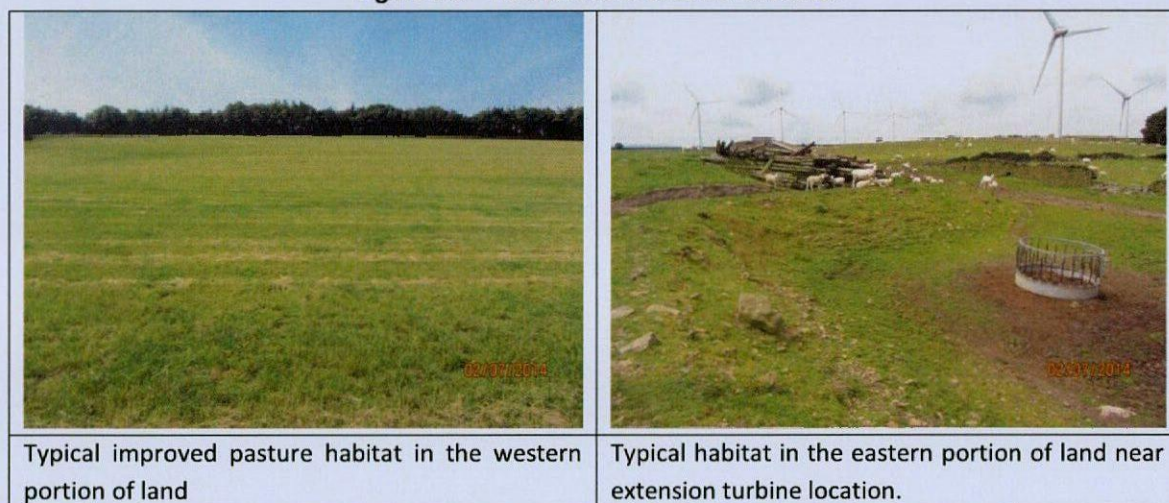
2.4 Site Characteristics

2.4.1 General

The site lies within an area of upland farmland and occupies a locally prominent ridge of high ground on the eastern foothills of the more extensive Pennine uplands. It sits within a transitional landscape area between the high moorland areas of the Peak District to the south-west and the urban conurbations of Huddersfield, Barnsley and Sheffield to the north, east and south.

The three extension turbines are proposed on two parcels of land. The western portion, which would contain two of the extension turbines, sits between the Blackstone Edge and Spicer Hill Wind Farms, and is bounded by Whitley Road to the south and Brown's Edge Road to the north. The land slopes gradually downwards from south to north, with a maximum elevation of ~353m AOD at Whitley Road falling to ~300m near the Blackstone Dike stream, which runs parallel to Brown's Edge Road. The land use is primarily improved pasture used for grazing animals, and the rectangular fields are typically bounded by well-maintained dry-stone walls. The only trees on this part of the site are a row of semi-mature conifers which screen Whitley Road.

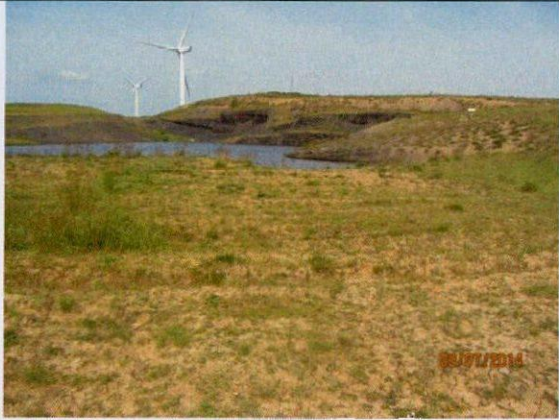
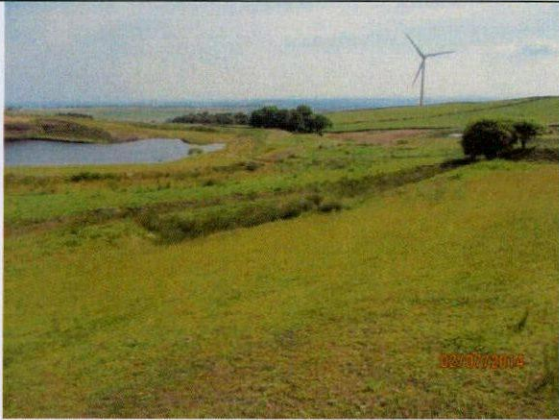
Figure 2.3 – Habitats near turbine locations



Greenley Carr Quarry is located centrally in this portion of land, 330m north of Whitley Road. The Quarry became active in 1986, and supplied shale to the local clay pipe works at Crow Edge. The working area of the quarry measures 2.7 hectares, and has a maximum depth of 15m. Three remnant lagoons lie to the east, and to the south lies an area of land that was previously quarried but has now been restored to agriculture.

At present the quarry is dormant, and a new application would be needed to excavate further stone reserves. Any new quarrying activity would not affect any areas where turbines are proposed.

Figure 2.4 – Site photos

	
Greenley Carr Quarry with the Blackstone Edge turbines visible in the background	Looking east towards Spicer Hill Wind Farm. A settlement lagoon is just visible in the foreground to the right of the turbine.

The eastern portion of land would contain one extension turbine, and is occupied by Spicer Hill Wind Farm. This sits on a gentle and dip slope with its boundaries defined by Spicer House Lane to the east, by Royd Moor Wind Farm and Whitley Road to the south and by walled field enclosures to the west and north. Again the landform steps down from a maximum elevation of about 360m AOD on Whitley Road to around 300m AOD adjoining Spicer House Lane.

A number of stunted trees are also dotted across this part of the site whilst a small belt of broadleaved trees follows the course of a minor stream which flows towards Ingbirchworth Reservoir.

Other man-made features in the immediate vicinity of the site include a coal depot and a small nursery with several polythene tunnels, both adjacent to Whitley Road.

2.4.2 Nearest Settlements

The area within 5km of the site is typified by ‘Gritstone’ towns, villages and hamlets such as High Flatts, Millhouse Green, Upper Denby and Penistone. The nearest settlements are Ingbirchworth, a small village clustered at a lower elevation around Ingbirchworth Reservoir, and Crow Edge, which sits to the west below a steep escarpment.

The immediate area is typified by scattered properties and clusters of properties which abound the minor roads which criss-cross the higher ground between Penistone and Holmfirth. These residences bound the site to some degree to the north, east and south.

These include Brown's Edge Farm, Spicer House (Owned by the applicant) and Annat Royd Farm on Spicer House Lane and Whitley House, Whitley Road Farm and Eagle Nest off Whitley Road. Slightly further to the west, below the Whitley Height escarpment are Small Shaw and Middle Cliff.

2.4.3 Road and Path network

The main roads in the area typically run through the valleys. The closest 'A' Roads are the A616 1.2km to the west and the A629 1.6km to the east, both of which link Sheffield and Huddersfield.

A fairly dense network of smaller unclassified roads cross the area, either linking the two main roads or running parallel to them along the broad ridgeline of higher ground.

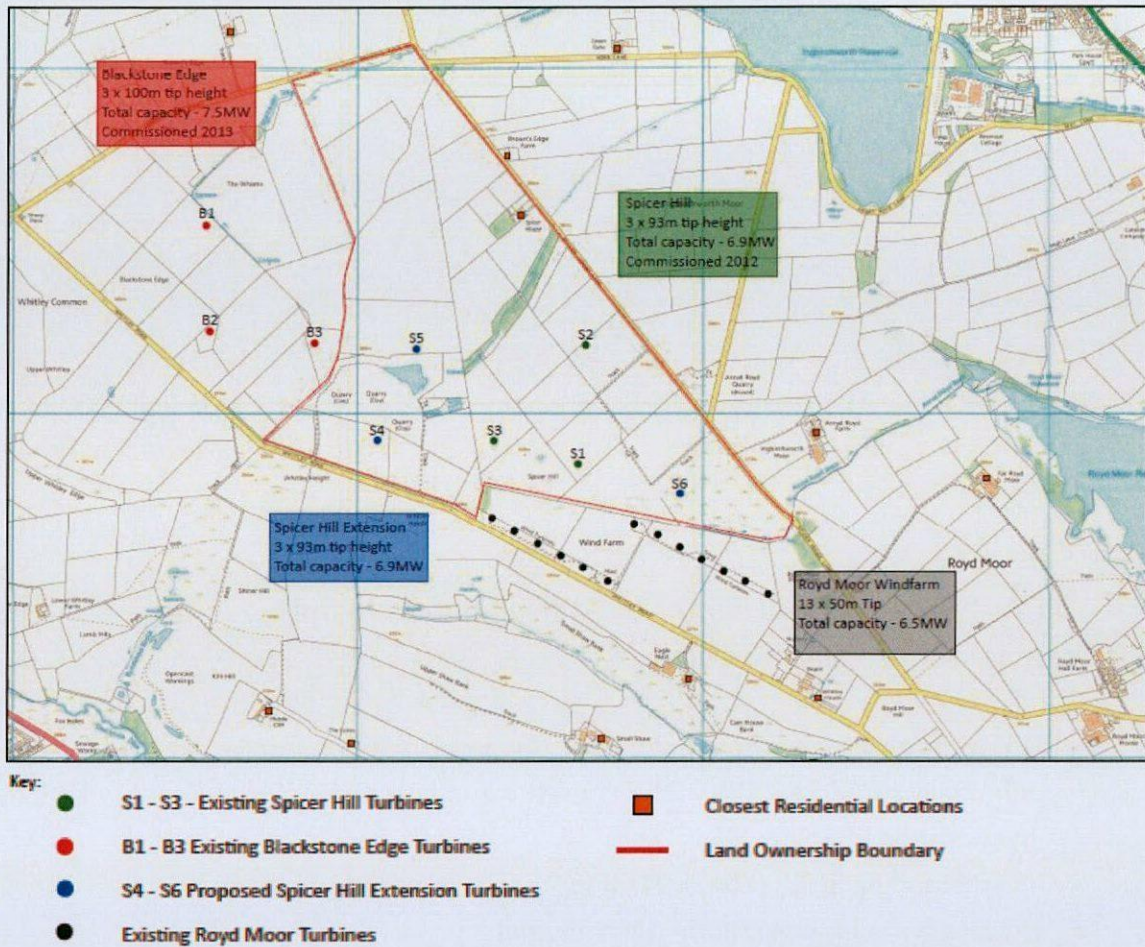
The Barnsley Boundary Walk passes within 400m of the north of the site as it runs to the south of Ingbirchworth Reservoir. A well-maintained viewing platform sits on Royd Moor Hill to the east of Spicer House Lane and south-west of the site.

There are numerous footpaths and bridleways in the area. The most notable is a path that runs from Royd Moor reservoir past the viewing platform located to the south-east of the site before dropping down Crow Edge via Carr House.

2.5 Adjacent Wind Developments

Figure 2.5 provides an overview of the closest wind developments to the site.

Figure 2.5 – Wind Farm overview map



2.5.1 Spicer Hill Wind Farm

Spicer Hill became operational in 2012, and comprises three Enercon E70 turbines of 57m to hub and 93m to tip.

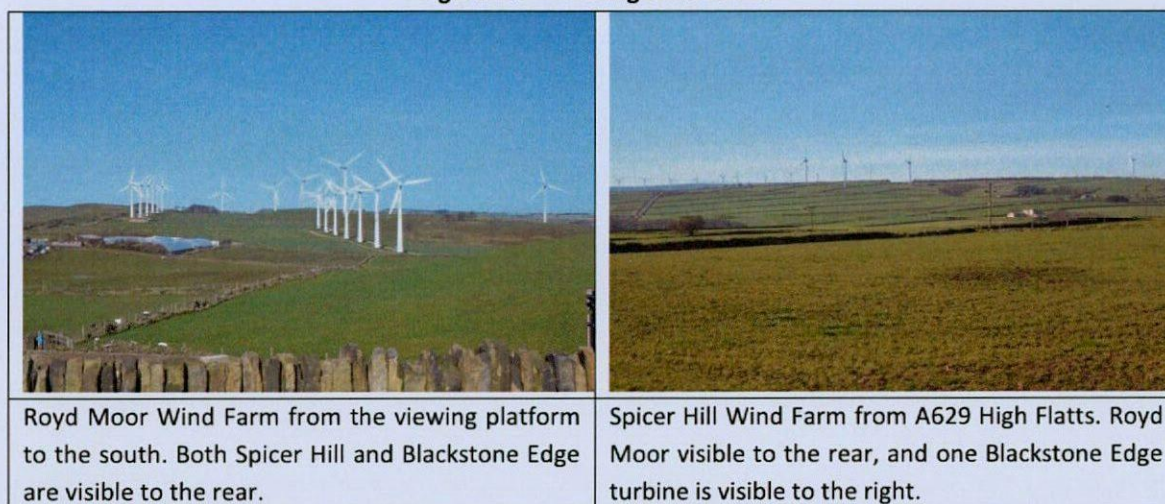
2.5.2 Blackstone Edge Wind Farm

Blackstone Edge consists of three Nordex N80 turbines of 60m to hub and 100m to tip. It became operational in 2013 and has an installed capacity of 7.5MW. Blackstone Edge sits 600m to the north-west of Spicer Hill, and the turbines are positioned in a broadly triangular arrangement.

2.5.3 Royd Moor Wind Farm

Royd Moor was constructed in 1993, and consists of 13 turbines of 53m in height. These are arrayed in two rows parallel to Whitley Road. The nearest row of 6 turbines is set back 30m from the centre of the road, with a further row of 7 turbines some 210m distant. The Wind Farm is due to be decommissioned in 2018.

Figure 2.6 – Existing wind farms



2.5.4 Proposed Wind Farm and Ancillary Infrastructure

The proposed development will comprise:

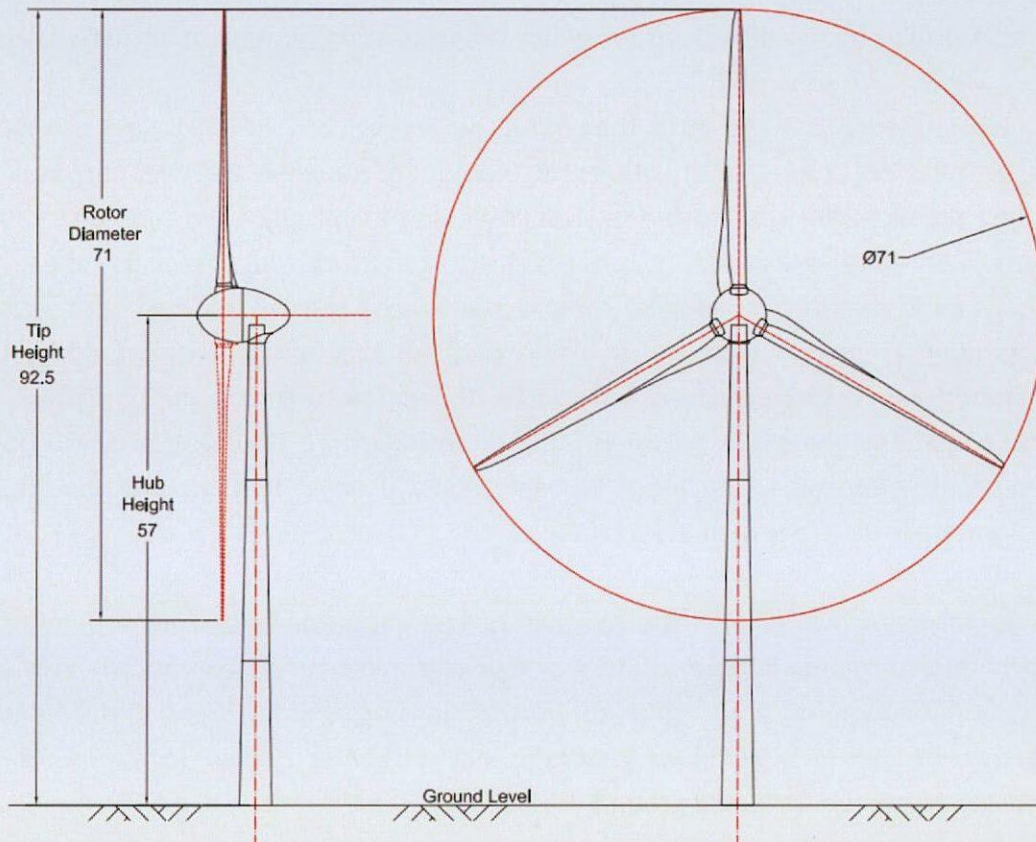
- Three three-bladed horizontal axis wind turbines of up to 93m tip height, nominally rated at 2.3MW, the chosen candidate turbine is an Enercon E70, as in operation at Spicer Hill;
- Hard-standing areas (30m x 22m) for cranes at each turbine location;
- Turbine foundations (18.4m outer diameter);
- On-site access tracks (of a minimum 4m and maximum 6m width);
- A single site entrance from the main road network (Whitley Road, to the south of the site). This is the existing entrance to the Spicer Hill Wind Farm.
- Drainage works;
- A sub-station building;
- An on-site electrical and control network of buried cables;
- A spur connection from the sub-station to the local grid network (not part of the wind farm planning application).
- A temporary construction compound, including parking, and welfare facilities;;
- Associated ancillary works;
- Engineering operations.

2.6 Wind Turbines

Wind turbine technology is evolving at a significant rate, and the most suitable turbine for a particular location can change with time. The most suitable machine for the proposed site will be chosen shortly before the time of construction, within the envelope of an overall tip height limit of 93m.

The assessments within this ES are based upon the Enercon E70-2.3MW, which is the machine in operation at the Spicer Hill Wind Farm and the preferred turbine for the extension project. The principal dimensions of the E70 are shown in **Figure 2.7**.

Figure 2.7 - Specification of Proposed Enercon E70 Turbine (Extract from APP-002)



The colour and finish of the wind turbines, rotor blades, nacelles and towers will be RAL 7038 (Agate Grey). A significant amount of research has been undertaken in relation to turbine colour and finish. A pale grey colour with a semi-matt finish is generally agreed to be the most appropriate.

All the turbines will rotate in the same clockwise direction. The computerised control system within each turbine continuously monitors the wind direction and instructs the turbine to turn (yaw) to face into the wind to maximise the amount of energy that is captured. The E70 turbines begin generating at a wind speed of 3-4 m/s and operate with a storm control feature.

Storm control facilitates reduced turbine operation in extremely high wind situations, enabling the turbine to continue generating in conditions which would normally cause

shutdown, and considerable loss of yields. Storm control for the Enercon E70 (2.3MW) begins operating at wind speeds approaching 29m/s (65mph), allowing the turbine to continue production up to wind speeds of 41m/s (92mph).

2.6.1 Site Tracks

The existing Spicer Hill infrastructure has been used as much as possible, and where new tracks are required these either follow the route of existing farm tracks or keep as close as possible to boundary walls to reduce the impact on farming operations.

As shown in **Figure 2.2** and in further detail on block plans **APP001**, approximately 900m of new or upgraded on-site track would be required for the purposes of providing access to the wind turbines. Tracks would be typically 4.0m wide on straight sections, 5.5m wide on corners (it is necessary to construct wider track to reflect the minimum bend-radii for the longest construction loads) and 6m wide on approach to hard-standing areas (for assembly of crane jibs). All sections of track would have a 0.5m shoulder on each side and would consist of crushed stone to a depth dictated by ground conditions, generally between 300mm and 600mm. On-site tracks will be of 'cut' type, as opposed to 'floating' types typically used in wet ground conditions. Typical track details are shown in **APP-003**.

Track construction will involve the removal of vegetation and adjacent top soil to a depth of approximately 200mm. Where practicable these turves will be side cast and used for reinstatement. Any surplus turves that are not used for dressing the sides of roads shall be stored in temporary storage locations. Any storage locations will be appropriately located on stable ground, further than 50m from any watercourse.

Where practicable, material for access track and hard-standings will be recycled material that is available on-site. Any additional material that is required shall be sourced from a local quarry, likely to be Sovereign Quarry located in Carr Lane, Shepley.

2.6.2 Water Crossings

No water crossings are required as part of the application.

2.6.3 On-site Sub-station and Control Building

The on-site sub-station and control building compound will accommodate metering equipment, switchgear, transformers, the central computer system and electrical control panels. The proposed sub-station would be identical to that already in place for the Spicer Hill Wind Farm, as shown in **Figure 2.8** and in plan in **APP-005**.

Figure 2.8 – Existing Spicer Hill sub-station.



The stone-built substation would measure 10.5m x 4m and be 3m in height. Although not permanently staffed, the buildings would be visited periodically by maintenance personnel. There is no requirement for any other permanent buildings on the site.

The proposed location for the on-site sub-station is shown on **Figure 2.2** and **APP-001**. This would be situated to the west of the access track ~100m from the site entrance. The sub-station has also been located to minimise the inter array cabling which has economic and environmental advantages.

2.6.4 On-site Electrical and Control Cable Network

A network of underground cables will be required to collect the output from individual turbines and to feed that output to the wind farm sub-station. The cables will operate at 11kV. The wind farm will be served by a central computer system located in the sub-station control building, which will monitor the performance and behaviour of each turbine. This 'SCADA' monitoring system will require a network of control cables to be laid, which will follow the same routing as the power cable network.

All power and control cabling between the sub-station and the turbines will be laid in trenches approximately 0.8m wide by 1m (minimum) deep, adjacent to the access tracks where possible. Cables will be laid in bedding material, soil of a suitable

composition will be used as bedding, elsewhere an approved bedding material will be used (e.g. sand) at the base of the trench with the upper trench being backfilled with previously removed topsoil.

The vegetation and top 100mm of soil will be stripped and laid beside the trench, and used to reinstate to original ground level immediately after the cables have been installed. Where practicable, vegetation over the width of the cable trench will be lifted as turfs, and replaced after trenching operations, to reduce disturbance. During the backfill of trenches, warning tape will be laid 300mm above the cables in case of future excavation.

2.6.5 Wind Turbine Foundations

APP-004 shows the dimensions of an Enercon E70 gravity turbine foundation. The foundation would have an 18.4m diameter, and a depth of 2.3m. When the foundations are excavated, a further metre around the foundation edge will be dug to allow working space during construction. A concrete blinding, 75mm thick, will be poured to provide a surface on which the foundation can be constructed.

The turbine foundations will be covered by consolidated backfill with a density not less than 18kn/m³. It is anticipated that the excavated material will be used for this backfilling. A layer of topsoil is placed on top of the fill, with turves used where possible, or re-seeding undertaken when construction is complete. A plinth of 6.2m in diameter is left, just above the surface level, upon which the turbine is bolted.

2.6.6 Crane Hard-standing

Crane platforms would be of similar construction to the access tracks, designed to withstand a minimum surface pressure of 18.5t/m². Full dimensions of the crane hard-standings are presented in **APP-003**.

2.6.7 Drainage

A preliminary drainage plan has been produced to manage all surface water in line with the CIRIA C697 'The SUDS Manual'. This aspect is discussed further in **Chapter 10: Surface and Groundwater Hydrology and Hydrogeology**.

2.7 Site Access

The existing entrance to the Spicer Hill Wind Farm on Whitley Road, 1.3km to the west of the junction between Whitley Lane and Royd Lane would be used for the extension.

The turbine components are likely to arrive from an east coast port, which is likely to be Hull. The route to site would follow:

- M1 to J36;
- Head north on the A61;
- Turn west onto the A616;
- Turn east onto the A628; and
- Turn north onto Royd Lane.

This is the route successfully used for the delivery of the original Spicer Hill turbines.

2.8 Grid Connection

The turbines will be connected to the national grid via a new on site sub-station, which would be in addition to that already in operation at Spicer Hill. This would be located close to the site entrance as shown in **APP-001**.

2.9 Wind Farm Construction

2.9.1 Principal Site Operations

There are a range of principal site operations that shall be required if the proposed project is approved. A detailed Construction Management Statement (CMS) will be submitted post-consent. This CMS will provide the sequence of works and details of the construction methods that are proposed.

2.9.2 Estimated Construction Programme

The construction phase would start after the financial and due diligence process has been completed and would be on-going for approximately 6 months, from construction of the access tracks through to erection and commissioning of the wind turbines. **Table 2.3** below presents an indicative programme.

Table 2.3 - Indicative construction programme

Activity	Timescale (months prior to commission)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Roads, hardstandings and drainage						
Foundation construction and curing						
On-site electrical works (including substation)						
Turbine delivery and erection						
Turbine commissioning						

2.10 Reinstatement and Decommissioning

2.10.1 Reinstatement

Reinstatement will incorporate restoration and landscaping of track verges, cable runs, temporary construction compounds, temporary hard standings (as required), temporary drainage control such as settlement ponds and any other features which are not required as part of the permanent works.

Prompt completion of reinstatement works shall be undertaken where reasonably practicable. Early reinstatement reduces the temporary storage of materials, and the associated visual impact.

Excavated materials will be replaced in a sequence and to a depth similar to those recorded during excavation, or similar to the surrounding undisturbed ground at the point of reinstatement.

Any reinstatement and restoration proposals will consider, and mitigate against, all residual risks to environmental receptors.

2.10.2 Decommissioning

At the end of the development's operational life, the wind turbines would be decommissioned, the principal elements removed, and the site restored leaving little, if any, visible trace.

The wind turbines would be removed from the site and the foundations, and hard standings would be covered over with topsoil and re-seeded. The access tracks are likely to remain in-situ to aid farming operations.

The electrical cables would be de-energised and left in place, with any cable marker signs removed. The electrical sub-station building would be removed and the building demolished to ground level with the foundations covered with topsoil and re-seeded.

The decommissioning process would take between two and four months to complete. A decommissioning programme would be agreed with the relevant authority prior to the commencement of decommissioning works.

3 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the planning policy framework against which the Spicer Hill Wind Farm extension ('the Development') will be assessed.

It establishes the national and local policy context that relevant to the Development and discusses these in relation to the topic chapters as set out in this Environmental Statement (ES).

3.2 National Planning Policy

National planning policy on renewable energy developments is principally set out in National Policy Statements (NPSs) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The relevant element of each is set out in the following sections.

3.2.1 National Policy Statements

The Planning Act of 2008 allowed for the production of National Policy Statements, which set out national infrastructure priorities across a range of policy areas. These documents are material considerations in the consideration of both nationally important infrastructure projects and for local authorities when determining smaller developments.

Six NPSs relating to energy were published in 2011, of which EN1 and EN3 are of most relevance to this application. These are:

- EN1 - Overarching NPS for Energy
- EN3 – NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure

EN1 outlines the importance of secure and reliable supplies of electricity in supporting the transition to a low carbon economy. The Policy states that in order to achieve this, a greater proportion of low carbon generation and a diverse mix of technologies and fuels are required alongside reliable supplies of gas and oil during the transition process.

The statement suggests that approximately 33 GW of new electricity capacity will need to be derived from renewable sources by 2025 and identifies onshore wind as the most well-established and currently the most economically viable source of renewable electricity available for future large-scale development in the UK.

EN3 is related specifically to renewable energy infrastructure. Section 2.7 relates to onshore wind development, and provides guidance relating to site selection and the principles of environmental impact assessment. The document also covers the technical elements that need to be considered in offshore wind schemes.

3.2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF (2012) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Paragraph 7 within the policy states that, *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*, and NPPF sets out three dimensions to this; economic, social and environmental.

Central to NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which in terms of decision making should be taken to mean:

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *Any specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (and in the context of this the footnote indicates that such policies may include those relating to a range of designations including landscape, green belt, nature conservation and heritage assets).*

NPPF sets out 12 Core Planning Principles that should underpin both plan making and decision taking. These include:

- *Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognizing the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*