

**SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION RE PLANNING APPLICATION BY
GROW LIMITED
TO REDEVELOP SITE AT LES QUARTIERS, ST. SAMPSON**

INTRODUCTION

Following a pre-Application meeting between Planning and three Directors of and the architect for GROW Limited held on Wednesday 29 July 2020, the company has been asked to submit additional information to explain and clarify certain aspects of their application.

These elements comprise:

- The scale and utilisation of the portal-frame administration building
- Reasonings behind size of building, number and variety of rooms etc;
- The use of shared facilities and policy towards co-location with similar charities
- Training facility for retail and hospitality training – demonstration café

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

GROW Limited has occupied the Les Quartiers site for over thirty years after it was donated to MenCap Guernsey (beneficial owner of 100% of the issued shares in GROW Limited) to offer sheltered workshop facilities focused on horticultural activity for learning-disabled islanders.

Despite careful maintenance of our facilities, the assets are now showing their age and need replacement.

Additionally, the economic landscape has changed substantially and employment opportunities in horticulture are many fewer than they were in 1990 so we need to offer our clients (Crew) a wider range of skills-training than purely in horticulture. For this reason, wood and metal working, the safe use and maintenance of tools and retail and hospitality skills are front and centre of the wider range of experience we intend to offer. These skills will fit our Crew for the modern employment scene.

Finally, GROW Limited is conscious that it needs to offer its training and mentoring services on a gender equal basis. This alone requires expanded facilities.

For these reasons we have resolved upon a comprehensive redesign and spatial optimisation of the site to deliver a wider range of training to a significantly larger number of Crew. We believe that this will deliver quantifiable benefits to the island's social and economic wellbeing.

We are firmly of the belief that the Board of GROW Limited together with government agencies have a responsibility to maximise the social and economic benefit arising from our activities and assets.

The scale and utilisation of the portal-frame administration building

The current site demonstrates a somewhat haphazard provision of facilities from which GROW Limited delivers its services and shortcomings in areas which are important to meeting client expectations. Our approach to the redevelopment has been to bring all ancillary facilities together under one roof to optimise their impact, simplify their delivery and reduce both initial and recurrent costs. In summary we aim for maximum useable volume at minimum unit cost.

Existing = 1293sqm glasshouse footprint area

Proposed = 913sqm admin. building footprint area

The proposed glasshouses have a ridge height some 600mm higher than the existing glasshouses, The proposed administration building has an eaves height only 150mm higher than the replacement glasshouses, and a shallow pitch roof of only 10° to keep the ridge height to a minimum. The ridge height of the proposed administration building is 300mm lower than the adjacent property 'Longchamp' along La Route des Capelles.

The proposed administration building is 91m away from La Route des Capelles and 10m away from Verte Rue, a 4m further into the site than the current glasshouses no. 3.

The administration building looks to combine the following;

- 4960m³ volume of existing glasshouse no. 3
- 150m³ store adjacent boundary wall with Verte Rue
- 300m³ existing administration building and staff/meeting room
- 270m³ existing workshop and produce processing / sorting building by the current water tank

Total 5680m³ combined volume of existing structures.

Which is better utilised into one building, over two storeys to make more efficient use of land and resources while delivering extra facilities;

5460m³ volume of proposed building

Referring to site plan **056-3-003** attached we have set out the functional spaces for which provision has been made within the building. These comprise:

- Administration office
- Crew / Staff canteen
- Crew changing rooms and locker room
- Crew training room
- Disabled toilets – male and female
- Equipment maintenance area
- First Aid room
- Galley kitchen
- Kitchen / Servery
- Lift & stairs lobby
- Manager's office
- Meeting rooms
- Mencap support office
- Metal and woodworking workshop – Social therapeutic training workshop
- Personal Health & Physical Training room
- Plant room / store
- Public interface training and sales area
- Quiet room
- Shower rooms – male and female
- Staff room
- Storage areas
- Training room

The scale of the building is similar to that of the current No 3 glasshouse albeit it will be set back further from the southern, road-side boundary. The final ridge height will be slightly higher than the adjacent new glass but is otherwise of very similar dimensions.

Reasonings behind size of building, number and variety of rooms etc;

Reference to British Standard BS8300:2009 'Design of buildings for Disabled People'. We have noted a number of reasons for the size of the facilities provided in reference to those in wheelchairs, however it is noted that those with learning disabilities or neurological disorders such as autism also require greater space for movement and assistance with some tasks.

Each room within the building, including staff-only areas needs to be as accessible as possible. The administration/ Crew building at GROW Limited. should be accessible and non-discriminatory to all, conveying equality and inclusivity at it's core design and layout.

- Lobby sufficiently sized for circulation and means of escape for potential number of occupants including Crew of up to 50 plus staff, some of which may be in wheelchairs and a number of others will require greater assistance in event of a fire. Seating will also need to be provided in entrance and space allowed for it.
- Lift access provided, suitability sized for wheelchairs and vertical transport of goods. 1.1x1.4m but may increase in size dependant upon final supplier chosen.
- General circulation spaces larger including wider corridor widths to allow for greater personal space for those with proprioception restrictions or physically disabled Crew. We have allowed between 1.5-1.6m widths which is between the BS8300 minimum of 1.2m and ideal of 1.8m for places of public assembly.
- The stairs to the first floor have been designed to be ambulant disabled with goings and shallow risers as such to comply with BS8300
- With regards to the number of storage rooms available BS8300 notes; *Wherever storage facilities are available for use by the general public, at least one fully accessible storage unit for disabled people should be provided.*
- For the kitchen and servery; both the kitchen and the servery need to allow sufficient space for movement of wheelchairs and assisted Crew members. This is to be 1.8m in front of the servery for general circulation.
- The number of covers allowed for in the canteen is currently 52 although it is possible a lower number of covers will be provided in reality to provide sufficient circulation space between tables. The proposed number of Crew is 50 without including staff.
- A number of Crew do and will prefer eating outside. This is particularly true of some individuals on the autistic spectrum who enjoy being outside in all weather and therefore require covered outdoor seating areas.
- As part of an holistic approach to care and wellbeing, it is considered that there should be specific assistance with physical activity. There is no such place on the island that caters for the specific physical needs of some of the existing and proposed Crew members. It is therefore proposed to provide this facility in house in a sympathetic environment.
- The first aid room and maintenance area are a requirement for the type of work conducted by GROW.

- We have provided 4 accessible WC's on the ground floor and an additional 4 accessible shower rooms incorporating WCs. There needs to be separate provision on the first floor for which we have provided 4 additional accessible WCs near the Crew training rooms. An accessible shower/ WC needs to be a minimum of 2x2.2m or 2.4x2.5m with a corner WC. Independent use with ceiling hoists require the shower room to be 2.5x3.1m in size which demonstrates the area required for these facilities. An individual accessible WC should be a minimum of 1.5x2.2m but current on-island research notes that this is still tight for a wheelchair user to use effectively and privately.
- For training rooms and meeting rooms, there needs to be greater circulation space provided between tables in accordance with BS8300. This amounts to 1550mm minimum where a table is near a wall or 2050mm between tables.
- In addition, given the variety of workshop activities GROW Limited. undertakes it is required to provide different training rooms for different uses.

Also, of note under BS8300: **13.3 Administrative and commercial buildings**

COMMENTARY ON **13.3**. *Disabled people need access to all spaces and fittings in administrative and commercial buildings, whether as members of the public or as members of staff. Access to all public and private areas in office and retail spaces is also necessary if disabled people are to function independently in the building.*

13.3.2 Offices and commercial buildings

Disabled people should have access to offices and commercial buildings so that they can carry out their work independently.

13.4.2 Accessibility in health and welfare buildings

Health and welfare buildings should be fully accessible to disabled people.

BS6465 – Sanitary Installations

Notes minimum 6 WCs for workplaces with 61 to 75 staff. It is however noted that some members of the Crew may require the use of sanitary facilities greater than the minimum provision allowed for in the British standards.

7.1d) notes that where there are four or more WC cubicles, at least one should be larger for those who need extra space and should be provided in both male and female separate sex toilets.

The use of shared facilities and policy towards co-location with similar charities

Within the list of spaces detailed above there will be certain areas, particularly administration and training areas, which will not be in continuous use and we have been asked by a number of charities if they might share such facilities with GROW. These charities include Guernsey Alzheimers, Autism Guernsey and Action for Children, Guernsey.

We, and they, believe that creating a charities hub where more than one charitable service is delivered from the same physical footprint offers social and economic efficiencies and limited flexibility of this nature should not be ruled out.

Sharing these facilities does not increase the size of the facilities required, merely makes optimum use of what will already be there.

Training facility for retail and hospitality training – demonstration café

As referenced in our introduction, GROW Limited is acutely aware of the need to deliver a wider range of gender-equal training and mentoring services. We need to fit those learning-disabled Crew who exhibit the confidence, ability and enthusiasm to cope in the real-world with skills demand by real-world employers. Today horticultural skills are rarely demanded. More common are retail and hospitality skills and, while we will continue with our traditional schemes, it is this demand that GROW Limited also aims to meet.

We have discussed such need with Waitrose, amongst others, and they have stated that they are often prevented from opening their cafes because they experience constant staff shortages and, thus, are hugely supportive of GROW's aims. We believe that this will be a growing problem post-BREXIT and we should do all we can to harness the resource that some learning-disabled islanders represent. Although modest, there is no reason why GROW Limited efforts in this area should not be an economic enabler.

For this reason we have resolved to include a dedicated building within the redeveloped site where our Crew might experience and learn relevant skills. Clearly this demands that they be exposed to and interact with real-world clients.

We believe that while the primary aim of visitors to GROW Limited is, and will continue to be, to purchase our plants, produce and manufactured products – planters, bird, bat and owl boxes, bug hotels, bird tables and garden furniture – they will also identify with our training objectives and be happy to patronise the hospitality and retail training café and encourage the Crew in their endeavours. We are clear that this will not be a net revenue earner, rather we regard it as Training not Trading and urge the Planning Authority to understand this distinction.

We have been asked to estimate the scale of operation. We envisage that the facility would be available to train the Crew for some period each working day and we might open it to the public from 12pm to 3.30pm. Clearly this will depend upon demand from and availability of suitably capable Crew. No more definitive prediction can be made at this time.