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Ernest Wilson

Derry horticultural landmark Altnagelvin garden centre goes up for sale



One of the Derry’s largest and best loved garden centres has been put up for sale for the first time, after over four decades of ownership by the same family. Altnagelvin Garden Centre, on Irish Street, is being marketed by commercial property estate agent Ernest Wilson with an asking price of £1.25m.

The 1.25 acre garden centre, which is well known for its wide range of high quality plants as well as Christmas trees and pet supplies, is a favourite destination for Derry shoppers and also attracts regular repeat visits from customers from as far afield as Omagh and Fermanagh.

The garden centre’s owners Pauline and Ian Peilow are selling the £1m-turnover business, which employs ten staff, in order to retire. Started by her parents in 1977, Pauline had lived in the four-bedroom bungalow on the garden centre site since she was born, moving away for 12 years as a young adult, before returning home to run the business with her husband in 1996.

“Gardening has changed so much since we started out at Altnagelvin all those years ago,” said Pauline. “There was a huge upsurge in gardening as a hobby in the 1990s which continued to develop, but the love that people began to show to their gardens during the pandemic certainly looks like it’s an obsession that’s here to stay and this year we have been busier than ever.”

She added: “It’s the end of an era for us. In many ways we will be sad to leave Altnagelvin, but the amazing feedback we get from our customers, who return season after season to buy our top-quality plants, as well as garden products such as furniture and pots, is something we will take with us as proof that we have created a fantastic business.

“In the hands of enthusiastic new owners I’m confident Altnagelvin will absolutely flourish.”

Since 2018 the garden centre’s annual turnover has grown by 40% from £716,000 to £1m.

Included in the sale of the 1.25 acre site is an extensive shop, greenhouses and a large car park. The on-site private bungalow is also part of the sale. With four bedrooms, a conservatory and home office, the property is set within its own private gardens.

Paul Williamson, managing director of Ernest Wilson, the specialist commercial property agent that is marketing the garden centre, and which buys and sells hundreds of businesses across the UK every year, said: “The chance to buy a local landmark business like this one, and in a market which is so buoyant, doesn’t come along very often. Altnagelvin garden centre is an incredibly successful business, with an unrivalled reputation that Pauline and her family have worked tirelessly over more than four decades to build.

“The potential to develop the garden centre further as a business is enormous, and needless to say we have already had a great deal of interested from prospective buyers.”

Anyone interested in the sale of the garden centre should contact the Leeds head office of Ernest Wilson on 0113 238 2900, or at www.ernest-wilson.co.uk.

Ernest Wilson was founded in 1956 and specialises in buying and selling hundreds of small businesses every year, from fish and chip shops to convenience stores and hotels.