

# An Irish offsite construction leader champions certification

**“If you want to grow, you can’t proceed without certification. To get into the large-scale developments, to have a meaningful factory and a profitable business – no, it’s not feasible without certification.”**

GERRY MCCARTHY, CEO, GREENSTONE STRUCTURES



# NSAI

## A building system that solves problems

An interview with Chief Executive Officer Gerry McCarthy and Managing Director Peter O’Connell of Greenstone Structures



*Pictured: Gerry McCarthy*

With unprecedented demand for new housing, Greenstone Structures offers a practical solution. The offsite construction company designs, manufactures and installs 3D panellised light-gauge steel-frame (LGSF) structures that make building more efficient, economical and environmentally sound.

The team in Ballinasloe, Co Galway has 26 people working in its factory and nine in its office. Its main customers are contractors in Ireland and the UK. Its extensive work in residential and commercial developments wouldn’t be possible without the certification it has achieved through NSAI.

### Agrément gives assurance that clients demand

For many modern construction methods such as LGSF, there aren’t yet published standards. That’s where Agrément certification comes in. It’s designed specifically to ensure the safety and suitability of new products and processes in building and materials technology.

In Ireland, NSAI Agrément is responsible for issuing this technical certification, in accordance

with the Irish Building Regulations and the rules of the European Union of Agrément Institutes for Construction (UEAtc).

In January 2023, Greenstone Structures achieved NSAI Agrément certification for its LGS building system for structures up to 30 metres.

Gerry describes the value of this achievement: *“Because these are new methods, without standards, certification gives huge credibility to the product. It gives assurance to the customer, the architect and the clients that our product is going to do what it says it does.”*

Peter adds: *“Without it, you’d cause problems for your clients. They can’t sell the properties without certification if there are banks involved, and their customers aren’t going to be able to get mortgages on them.”*

Agrément certification has also enabled Greenstone Structures to provide developments of hundreds of units under the Irish government’s Housing for All programme, which requires participating companies to be certified.

While specific to Ireland, Greenstone Structures has found Agrément certification can also boost its UK business.



*"When I'm sending a presentation to a customer in the UK," says Gerry, "I'll send them the Steel Construction Institute (SCI) certification, but I'll also send them the NSAI certification at the same time, because it reinforces our credibility."*

### **Building on strong foundations**

Before its Agrément certification, Greenstone Structures laid the groundwork for quality and compliance, achieving certification by NSAI for its:

- Steel fabrication, design and assembly (EN 1090)
- Quality management system (ISO 9001:2015)
- Environmental management system (ISO 14001:2015)
- Occupational health and safety management system (ISO 45001:2018).

*"NSAI was always the first port call for certification for ISO," Peter explains. "You build a relationship and you can count on constructive feedback that makes your products and processes better."*

For Greenstone Structures, regular NSAI surveillance audits – factory- or site-based – are a vital avenue for that constructive feedback.

*"I'm never afraid of an audit," says Gerry. "It's the best thing for your business, because if there's something wrong, we need to know about it. And even if everything is going right, it helps to have a fresh take on what you can do better. It adds value."*

### **More than a badge**

With over 20 years' experience in applying for certification for LGSF products, Gerry has advice for other companies: *"Certification isn't just a badge that you're getting, you're actually getting it for a reason. And you have to understand what that reason is. It's a smooth process if you start by understanding the requirements, and understand why certification is important for your products and processes, as well as your reputation. You have to do what you say, and say what you do.*

*That's the best way I can put it: You have to believe in it yourself."*

### **Future innovation, future certification**

As Greenstone Structures grows, its vision is to embrace new ideas and develop new products – so it expects its relationship with NSAI to continue developing as well.

*"Our goal is to maintain our Agrément Certification and build on that," says Peter. "In addition to working with NSAI to add some amendments and further detailing to our current certification, we'll be bringing new products on board that will need certification. So it's an ongoing process and partnership.*

*NSAI can see the vision we have and will be able to guide us through different scenarios."*

Gerry sums it up: *"It's building on what you have, giving confidence to the team, giving confidence to your customers, and then pushing on from there, making it happen."*

**Greenstone.ie**

**+ NSAI Agrément is responsible for Agrément assessment and certification.**

**+ To find out more about our work, visit [nsai.ie/certification/agreement-certification](https://nsai.ie/certification/agreement-certification)**



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