

Way clear for glazing firm to invest in £1.5m factory

By ELAINE MASLIN

A Suffolk-based architectural-glazing firm is set to invest £1.5m in a new purpose-built factory in Norfolk.

Bosses at Mildenhall-based Multi Fab, owned by glazing firm English Architectural Glazing, say demand is outstripping capacity at its current factory.

And this week they have been given the green light to build a new factory and offices on one hectare of land at the Bunns Bank industrial estate in Attleborough.

The firm sees the move as a chance to capture skills from the Norwich area, people who would otherwise not want to do the commute to Mildenhall.

It is also an opportunity to reduce sub-contracting work, as at the moment, demand has outstripped Multi-Fab's capacity and the firm is regularly using sub-contractors for work.

The £1.5m investment in the land, factory and new machinery will see the company's floor space grow by some 50pc, with 22,000sq m of new space at Attleborough adding to the 44,000sq m at the Chiswick Avenue site in Mildenhall.

A further 35 staff are due to be taken on, adding to the 45 already at Mildenhall, and the firm also has plans to create an EAG design office at Attleborough.

Simon Gladwin, managing director of Multi Fab's parent company, English Architectural Glazing, said: "We are very pleased. Hopefully, by having this purpose-built factory we



SIMON GLADWIN:
MD of English Architectural Glazing.

will have a big enough expansion to cover the next few years. When we looked at the figures, it became evident we needed to expand.

"We do not know what is going to happen in the construction industry at the moment. But the indication is that there is more work out there that we can do.

"And hopefully, over the next five years we are going to continue expanding at a rate we can control with the right people around us."

He said the expansion of Multi Fab and EAG has gone hand in hand through the year.

Turnover at EAG was £25m this year, compared with £18m last year, partially thanks to a £7m contract at Gloucester Quays.

Multi Fab, a labour-only firm, has turned over £2.5m this year, compared with £2.2m last year, and the firm is at capacity.

Mr Gladwin said about 47pc of its turnover was generated from EAG competitors through outside contracts.

The new Attleborough factory will carry out sheet-metal work, powder coating, manufacture of windows, doors and curtain walling.

Attleborough was picked for its position on the A11 corridor and proximity to Norwich.

EAG created Multi Fab as a stand-alone firm in 2002 and gave the firm's bosses free rein to win outside contracts.

The manufacturing arm of EAG started in 1983. Floor space was increased in 1997.

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Simon Gladwin