



S57 Declaration

In accordance with Part IV, Section 57 (2) of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000 (as amended).

Louth County Council:

This declaration specifies what works would, or would not, in the opinion of the planning authority materially affect the character of the protected structure, or any element thereof, and, as a result, require planning permission. Under the Act, protection extends to the entire structure including its interior and the land lying within its curtilage. It also extends to any other structures lying within the curtilage of the protected structure, to their interiors and to all fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures. Where specified in the Record of Protected Structures, protection may also extend to any other feature within the attendant grounds of the protected structure.

Nothing in this declaration exempts works that would not otherwise be exempt from a requirement for planning permission. Changes of use or intensification of the current use may require planning permission. If in doubt, the owner/occupier should consult the planning authority for further advice before commencing any works.

This Declaration may be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for review within 4 weeks of its issue, upon payment of the requisite fee in accordance with Part IV, Section 57 (8) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended.

Applicant Name:	Fr Damian Quigley		
Status (i.e. Owner or Occupier):	Occupier (church)		
Date of Request for Declaration:	06/08/2026		
Decision Due Date:	26/10/2026	Previous Declarations:	Yes
Date of Issue of Previous Declaration:	12/12/2024		

Address:

Location:

Name of Building:	St Finian's Church	National Grid co-ordinates:	E 702,87 0.822	N 789,452 .461
Address 1:	Dromin	O.S. Map Type:		
Address 2:	Co Louth	Map Sheet:		
Address 3:	A92 E732	Site Number:		

Protection Status:

Under the Planning and development Act 2000
(as amended)

☒ Y / N

Details: Regional Importance

Record of Protected Structures:

Y

LHS018-049

Architectural Conservation Area:

N

Record of Monuments and Places:

N

Zone of Archaeological potential:

N

Preservation Order or Temporary
P.O.:

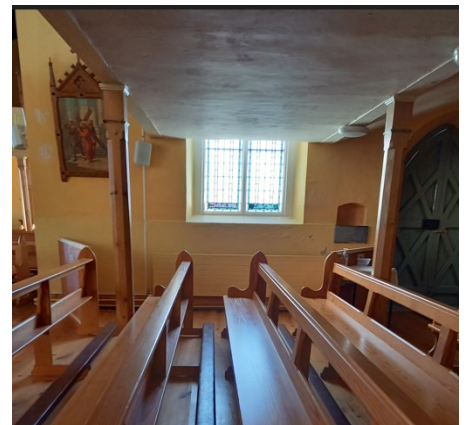
N

NIAH Registration No.:

13901832

Introduction:

The referrer has sought a Section 57 Declaration as per the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of internal works to be carried out to St Finian's Church, Dromin that involve painting and decorating.



Protection Status:

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Record of Protected Structures is set out in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) and it outlines the following:

Lhs018-049 (NIAH No.13901832) listed as St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Dromin

Description:

Freestanding double-height Roman Catholic church, built 1826. T-plan, two-bays to nave, single-bay to transepts; four stage pinnacled stone entrance tower, added 1843, terminating in broach spire, added 1877.

Appraisal:

Saint Joseph's is a charming rural Roman Catholic church of simple but pleasing design. The entrance tower makes a dramatic counterpoint to the low, rendered nave and acts as a religious beacon to the local population. The interior retains much of its early appeal, including an unusual fanlight at the narrow porch and attractive panelled galleries.

NIAH No. 13901832 refers to Saint Finian's Catholic Church (also historically referred to as St. Josephs) located in Dromin, Co. Louth

NIAH Description:

Freestanding double-height Roman Catholic church, built 1826. T-plan, two-bays to nave, single-bay to transepts; four stage pinnacled stone entrance tower, added 1843, terminating in broach spire, added 1877. Pitched slate roofs, clay ridge tiles, stone verge coping to gables with stone crucifix finials, cast-iron gutters, circular cast-iron downpipes. Painted roughcast-rendered walling, painted smooth rendered plinth and block-and-start quoins, squared-and-snecked limestone walling to tower, tooled limestone block-and-start quoins, string courses to each stage, tooled limestone pinnacled clasping buttresses to east gable. Pointed arch window openings, painted smooth rendered block-and-start surround, smooth rendered panel to plinth, flush chamfered sills, painted timber tracery, leaded lights; triple lancet window to west, stained glass lights. Pointed arch door opening to tower, dressed limestone chamfered surround, painted timber vertically-sheeted double doors, surmounted by stone date plaque "Erected Anno Domini MDCCCXLIII in Honour and Glory to God"; pointed arch openings to east elevations of north and south transepts, painted smooth rendered block-and-start surrounds, painted timber vertically-sheeted double doors. Interior with timber sheeted ceiling, painted plaster walling, carved timber pews, timber floor, encaustic tiles to central aisle; balconies to north and south transepts, choir loft to east; decorative carved marble altar to west. Church set back from roadway on slightly elevated site, graveyard to east.

NIAH Appraisal:

Saint Joseph's is a charming rural Roman Catholic church of simple but pleasing design. The entrance tower makes a dramatic counterpoint to the low, rendered nave and acts as a religious beacon to the local population. The interior retains much of its early appeal, including an unusual fanlight at the narrow porch and attractive panelled galleries. Saint Joseph's forms, together with the graveyard to its east, an attractive architecturally and socially significant group.

Planning History:

Application 78/464 – Ladies and gents' toilets at Dromin, Dunleer

Applicant – Rev J Mulgrew

Permission Granted 21st August 1978

Section 57 Declaration LHS24-05 issued 12th December 2024 pertaining to the repair of internal floor to address rotting of joists and consequent wearing of floor with the finish and look of floor to be replicated.

Description of the Structure:

The site contains St Finian's Catholic Church within Dromin Level 5 Rural Node (as designated in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied)). A graveyard is to the rear and front of the church.

A number of monuments are located within the church grounds and graveyard:

LH 018-13001 – Motte

LH 018-13002 – Souterrain

LH 018-014003 – graveyard

LH 018-014001 – Church

LH 018-014002 – font



Above: erected on roadside wall of graveyard on the eastern side of the church.

Referral Question:

Would works materially affect the character of the protected structure and as a result, require planning permission?

Description of Proposed Works

Painting and decorating interior of church. The Section 57 application does not include a Conservation Method Statement but includes a schedule of the painting and decorating by Patrick Meehan & Sons (Painters and Decorators Ltd) for the interior of the church.

The schedule outlines the painting of the following areas: -

- Balcony ceilings (3)
- Balcony fronts (3)
- Windows (8)
- Doors
- Radiators
- Pipes
- Trunking

- Dado
- Reveals etc
- Sacristy

The submitted report states that the Church has been found to have very cold walls that have resulted in black mould/damp being found probably caused by lack of heat, ventilation/circulation. The painter/decorator has suggested using a paint system that it is stated suitable for churches called Zinsser Grade 1.

The processes to be carried out involve the following: -

Walls Etc,

Wash down all areas with fungicidal solution,, fill all cracks, touch up with primer, paint all walls etc with three coats of Grade 1

Dado, Rads, Pipes, Doors, Windows, Front of Balconys:

Clean down, fill where necessary, and paint with two coats of oil paint

Balcony ceilings:

Prepare and paint with two coats of emulsion paint

Ceiling: Prepare & apply 2 coats of satin varnish to all panels, supplying scaffolding etc.

Legislative Provision

Section 4(1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states the following shall be exempted development for the purposes of this Act –

(h) development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures;

Section 57(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states ‘that notwithstanding Sections 4(1)(h) and any regulations made under Section 4(2), the carrying out of works to a protected structure, or proposed protected structure shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of:

- (a) the structure; or
- (b) any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Section (5) states that if the declaration relates to a protected structure that is regularly used as a place of public worship, the Planning Authority

- (a) In addition to having regard to the guidelines and recommendations referred to in subsection (4), shall respect liturgical requirements, and
- (b) For the purpose of ascertaining those requirements shall –
- (c) (i) comply with any guidelines concerning consultation which may be issued by the Minister for

Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, or

(ii) if no such guidelines are issued, consult with such person or body as the Planning Authority considers appropriate.

Section 68 of the Act stipulates that the carrying out of any works specified in a notice under section 59 (1) or 60 (2) shall be exempted development.

Assessment

The Planning Authority has considered the works to St Finian's Church, Dromin which involve those matters outlined above in '*Description of Proposed Works*' and in the submitted document by Patrick Meehan & Sons Painters and Decorators Ltd. It is considered that the proposal would fall within the definition of 'works' as set out in Part 1, Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended) which includes: -

"works"

includes an act
or operation—

- (a) of construction, excavation, demolition, extension, alteration, repair or renewal (including in relation to a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or a structure situated in an architectural conservation area), on, in, over or under land or a maritime site,
- (b) consisting of the application of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material to the surface of a protected structure or proposed protected structure or the removal of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material from such surface, and
- (c) consisting of the application of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material to the exterior of a structure situated in an architectural conservation area or the removal of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material from such exterior.

I am satisfied, based on the information submitted and having visited the church, that the proposal meets the definition of works as defined in Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended), that these works consist of the repair (fill cracks in walls), the application of paint or other material (i.e. primer) to the interior walls, ceilings, balconies, radiators and dado rails of the church/protected structure and having regard to Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (and Section 4(1)(h) of the same Act) do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure and do not materially affect the character of the protected structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. The proposed use of Zinsser grade 1 paint (which is a high performance, breathable 3 in 1 interior primer, sealer and finish) is suitable for the walls and ceilings of traditional and historic period properties and is mould resistant.

Recommendation:

I hereby recommend that a Declaration of Exemption be granted for the development described above, for the reason(s) set out hereunder.

WHEREAS the question has arisen as to whether the proposed works would or would not materially affect the character of protected structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest at St Finian's Church, Dromin, Co. Louth.

AND WHEREAS Fr Damian Quigley requested a declaration on the question from Louth County Council on the 7th August 2026.

AND WHEREAS Louth County Council in considering this referral, had regard particularly to –

- a) Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2024, as amended,
- b) Section 4 (1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- c) Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended,
- d) The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities,
- e) The special interest pertaining to the protected structure in question and
- f) The nature and extent of works set out in the referral question and associated documentation.

AND WHEREAS Louth County Council has concluded that –

- (i) The stated works to the protected structure comprise of “works” as defined in Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended);
- (ii) The stated works would not materially affect the character of the protected structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest,
- (iii) The stated works consist of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures,
- (iv) The said development, therefore, comes within the scope of Section 4(1)(h) and Section 57(l) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).



NOW THEREFORE Louth County Council, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 57 of the 2000 Act as amended, hereby decides that the painting and decorating of the interior of the church would not materially affect the character of the protected structure St Finian's Church, Dromin, Co. Louth, and **constitutes development that is exempted development.**

Signed by:

Lisa Grant

Assistant Planner

Date: 02/09/2026

Signed by:

Eugenia Thompson

Senior Executive Planner

Date: 02/09/2026