



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 Bord 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:	Monastery NS Board of Management		
Status (i.e. Owner or Occupier):	Owner		
Date of Request for Declaration:	4 th March 2025	Date of Inspection:	1 st May 2025
Date of Issue of Declaration:	15 th May 2025	Previous Declarations:	N/A

Address:		Location:	
Name of Building:	Ardee Monastery National School	National Grid co-ordinates:	E N
Address 1:	Drogheda Road	O.S. Map Type:	
Address 2:	Ardee	Map Sheet:	
Address 3:	Co. Louth	Site Number:	
Eircode:	A92 X788		

Protection Status: Under the Planning and development Act 2000 (as amended)	<u>Y</u> / <u>N</u>		Details:
Record of Protected Structures:	Y x	N	LHS017-061
Architectural Conservation Area:	Y	N x	
Under the Planning and development Act 2000 (as amended) Record of Monuments and Places:	Y	N x	
Zone of Archaeological potential:	Y	N x	
Preservation Order or Temporary P.O.:	Y	N x	

Introduction:

The referrer has sought a Section 57 Declaration as per the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of the installation of 34 no. solar PV panels on an 'internal' south facing roof elevation, of a protected structure at Monastery National School, Drogheda Road, Ardee, County Louth. The roof elevation fronts onto the rear courtyard area of the structure.



Figure 1 – Shows Monastery National School outlined in red, with the location of the proposed PV solar panels annotated.

Protection Status:

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is set out in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied. The subject building is included within the RPS under record LHS017-061 as is described as: *Detached multiple-bay single-storey school, built 1938.*

RPS Appraisal:

This strongly symmetrical school building has close associations with Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church to the west and the convent to the east.

Planning History:

Planning history on the subject site:

73745 – Two prefab classrooms

71573 – Prefab classroom

061341 – Alterations and additions to existing single storey Monastery National School

Enforcement:

None

Description of the Structure:

The **NIAH** description of this regionally important property (NIAH Ref: 13823023)– is as follows:

Detached multiple-bay single-storey school, built 1938. Central gabled projecting wing at front (west), L-plan south and north wings each returning to east, return of north wing longer than south, each with lower flat-roofed corridor to north side approached by steps at east end, flat-roofed porches in internal angles between west wing and north and south wings. Hipped slate roofs, clay ridge and hip tiles, lead-lined valleys, profiled uPVC gutters on projecting cast in-situ eaves course, louvred ventilators set into roof slope, concrete verge copings with springer on stepped brick corbels to west wing, circular-cast-iron downpipes. Red brick English bond walling, projecting concrete plinth, three full-height shallow recessed panels to shallow projections to west elevation north and south wings, carved stone circular plaque in gable of west wing inscribed "SIGNUM FIDEI" with feathered enrichments around five-sided star set in oval-shaped roundel, pre-cast concrete oblong plaques above entrance doors both inscribed in Gaelic and also "ARDEE MONASTERY NATIONAL SCHOOL". Square-headed window openings with continuous in-situ concrete heads, pre-cast concrete sills, recessed brick panels above windows in west elevation of west wing, aluminium casement windows, paired leaded light windows to projections on west elevations of north and south wings. Square-headed door openings, pre-cast concrete moulded architraves, painted timber double doors each with four panels, plain-glazed leaded overlights; painted timber doors to east ends of corridors to both wings each with four panels. Concrete paved paths, driveways and playgrounds, grass lawns rising to embankment to east, palisade fence to east and north, classroom block with pitched roof and roughcast rendered walling to east of south wing, wrought-iron gates and railings on painted render piers and plinth walls with pre-cast concrete feathered copings. Set back from road to west.

The **NIAH** appraisal of this property's further states:

This strongly symmetrical school building has close associations with Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church to the west and the convent to the east. Plain red brick walling is enlivened by recessed panels to shallow projections in the wings and central street-facing gable. Leaded light windows in projections and overlights to main entrance doors also add interest and quality to the building. The roundel incorporated in the gable of the west wing is of some artistic interest and is well executed.

Referral Question:

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

The submitted question as set out in Question 10 of the S57 declaration request form states:

"Our school's annual electricity usage is between 25,000 and 27,000 KWH. As part of the Schools Photovoltaic Programme we would propose to install 14 Solar PV Panels on an internal south facing roof of our school. This would generate 4000 to 5000 KWH of electricity for our school annually. Our Board of Management also proposes to fund the installation of an additional 20 Solar PV Panels on the same roof, producing approximately 5000 to 7000 KWH.

The installation of a total of 34 solar PV panels on an internal south facing school roof could potentially halve our annual electricity bills.

The works would also include the installation of a 10kva inverter in our switch room and a centralized display where our pupils can monitor the generation of electricity by our solar PV panels."

Legislative Provision:

Section 57(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, states:

“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 68 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, 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 proposed works relate to work to a Protected Structure, specifically the southern roof elevation of the northern wing of the structure.

The assessment of this application is based on the supporting documentation received, which includes the Section 57 declaration form, an image of the roof elevation, an OS map indicating the location of the PV solar panels and a spreadsheet containing data on Monastery National School’s energy consumption.

Under Section 57 (1) of the Planning Act 2000, as amended, *notwithstanding section 4(1)(h), the carrying out of works to a Protected Structure, or a proposed Protected Structure, shall be exempted 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 57 (4) of the Planning Act 2000, as amended states:

Before issuing a declaration under this section, a planning authority shall have regard to-

- (a) any guidelines issued under Section 52, and*
- (b) any recommendations made to the authority under Section 53.*

The applicant has submitted an image showing the southern roof elevation of the northern wing, where the solar panels are to be installed (see Figure 2 below). The image has been annotated to include a note that states the 2 no. solar panels were installed in 2007. I have reviewed the supporting documentation and the RPS and NIAH in respect of this property. Having regard to the profile and nature of solar panels, and the proposal to install 34 no. solar panels on this roof elevation, I consider that these would impact the external appearance of the structure. Notwithstanding this, the proposed roof elevation faces inward into the playground area of the existing school and this particular roof elevation is not visible from any local road or public vantage points. It is also noted that the school building is not in close proximity with any neighbouring protected structures, nor does it lie within any designated Architectural Conservation Area. On balance, having considered that the orientation of the roof elevation, the location and setting of the protected structure, it is considered that although the proposed installation of solar panels will impact the

external appearance of the structure, it will not result in a material inconsistency with the character of the protected structure, as it will not be visible from any public vantage points or impact the character or setting of any neighbouring protected structures.



Figure 2: Image of roof where 34 no. solar panels to be erected.

Any further documentation attached (maps, photographs, sketches, notes etc.)?

- Declaration form.
- OS map indicating position of PV panels
- Google Image submitted
- SEAI Energy Consumption Data Excel file

Conclusion:

WHEREAS a question has arisen as to whether the proposed development detailed under Section 10 of the Request for Section 57 Declaration 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 Monastery National School, Drogheda Road, Ardee, County Louth.

AND WHEREAS Monastery National School requested a declaration on the question from Louth County Council on the 11th February 2025.

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

- a) Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- b) Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- c) Section 4 (1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,

- d) Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended,
- e) The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities,
- f) The special interest pertaining to the protected structure in question and the nature and extent of works set out in the referral question which seeks whether 34 solar panels to be installed on an internal south facing roof would materially affect the character of the protected structure and require planning permission.

AND WHEREAS Louth County Council has concluded that –

- (i) the stated works to the protected structure comprise of works and are, therefore, development, and
- (ii) the stated works would not materially affect the character of the 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 would consist of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement and alteration of this structure which would 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.

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 proposed works to Monastery National School, Drogheda Road, Ardee, Co. Louth as detailed above, **constitutes development that is exempted development.**

Signed by Inspector

Signed by Planning Authority Officer



Niamh Boyle, Assistant Planner

Turlough King, A/ Senior Planner

Date

Date

15th May 2025

15th May 2025