

**Michael A. Burke** (B. Arch.)  
**M. Burke Associates,**  
**Architectural Services,**  
Main Street,  
Pallaskenry,  
Co. Limerick.



Tel: 061-220851  
087-2146727

Our Ref. J7

Your Ref.:

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025

The Secretary  
An Coimisiú Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 V902

**Re: Section 5 Referral** – Solar Panels at The Forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick (Ref: EC/18/25) –

**Applicant:** Declan Carey, The Forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick

**Correspondence to:** Agent at Main Street, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed a **Section 5 referral** on behalf of **Declan Carey** in respect of Limerick City & County Council's decision dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025, which determined that the proposed installation of roof-mounted solar panels at The Forge, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick, **does not constitute exempted development.**

The referral package includes:

1. Completed referral submission and associated photographs.
2. Limerick City & County Council Section 5 decision.
3. Architectural Visual Impact Assessment (M. Burke Associates, 1 October 2025)
4. Site location (with camera positions noted thereon)
5. Drawings: Site plan, floor plans and elevations
6. The statutory fee of €220.

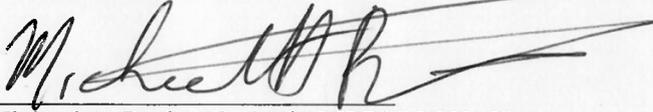
The proposed solar panel installation:

- Is **low-profile, roof-integrated, and set back** to minimise visual impact
- Will have **minimal visibility from surrounding areas**
- Is **fully reversible**, leaving the roof fabric intact if removed
- Complies with **Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2023–2029** objectives for sustainable energy while respecting the character of the Architectural Conservation Area

- Represents a **minor, sympathetic intervention** consistent with heritage-sensitive best practice.

On this basis, we respectfully request that An Bord Pleanála determine that the proposed works **constitute exempted development** under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Burke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael A. Burke (B. Arch. MRICS MCIAT)

# Section 5 Referral – Solar Panels at The Forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick

**Ref:** EC/18/25

**Submitted by:** Declan Carey The Forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick  
**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025

**To:**  
The Secretary  
An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1, D01 V902

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## 1. Introduction

This referral is submitted on behalf of **Declan Carey**, in relation to the decision of **Limerick City & County Council**, dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025, determining that the proposed roof-mounted solar panels at The Forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick, **are not exempted development** under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Under **Section 5(4)** of the Act, we request An Bord Pleanála to determine whether the proposed works constitute exempted development.

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## 2. Site Context

- The property is within the **Castleconnell Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)**.
  - The ACA is characterised by **traditional pitched rooflines**, consistent building heights, and restrained streetscape features.
  - The dwelling is not a Protected Structure but contributes to the **visual cohesion and character** of the ACA.
- 

## 3. Description of Proposed Development

- Installation of 10 **photovoltaic (PV) panels** on a single roof slope.
- **Panel dimensions:** 1961 mm x 1134 mm x 30 mm.

- **Setbacks:** Minimum 500 mm from roof edges; 200 mm from ridge cap. (see drawing attached)
  - **Projection:** 100 mm max above roof plane.
  - **Finish:** Dark, non-reflective to minimise visual contrast.
  - Panels aligned with roof pitch, preserving roof geometry.
  - Installation is fully **reversible**, leaving roof fabric intact if removed once slates are replaced at the bracket fixing.
- 

## 4. Grounds for Referral

### 4.1 Minimal Visual Impact

- Panels are partly visible from the west at position 4, fully visible only from directly opposite the road particularly when the deciduous tree sheds its leaves. All other views further west than position 4 are screened by a mature cotoneaster tree (see Location Map)
- Eastern views are obscured by a high stone wall and partly visible from position 7 but not obtrusive. They become visible at position 8. (see Location Map)
- Setback and low-profile mounting reduce visual prominence.
- Non-reflective finish ensures minimal contrast with existing roof materials.

### 4.2 Heritage and Policy Compliance

- The proposal aligns with **Castleconnell Local Area Plan (2023–2029)**:
  - Supports climate action and renewable energy objectives. (see section 8, page 49)
  - Works are designed to be **sympathetic to the ACA**, maintaining scale, materials, rooflines, and visibility.
- The development respects **heritage sensitivity** and is consistent with LAP guidance for reversible, low-impact interventions.

### 4.3 Reversibility & Long-Term Compatibility

- Panels may be removed without permanent alteration to the roof structure.
- Intervention is modest and does not introduce cumulative streetscape changes.

### 4.4 Justification

- Installation is minor, roof-integrated, and **does not materially affect the character of the ACA**.
  - Supports national and local policy for **sustainable energy and climate mitigation**.
  - Follows established best practice for **modern interventions in heritage-sensitive areas**.
-

## 5. Supporting Documentation

1. Copy of Limerick City & County Council Section 5 decision
2. **Architectural Visual Impact Assessment** (M. Burke Associates, 1 October 2025)
3. Site location Map showing **camera positions**
4. **Photographs** substantiating claims of minimum visual impact
5. **Drawings:**

C01 Site Plan  
C02 Floor Plans  
C03 Elevations and Section

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## 6. Fee

- The statutory fee of €220 is enclosed.
- 

## 7. Conclusion & Request

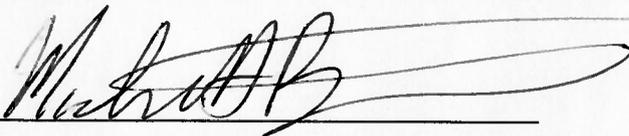
Based on the AVIA and assessment of the site context, the proposed roof-mounted solar panels:

- Will have **minimal visual impact** within the ACA
- Are **reversible** and preserve roof and streetscape character
- Align with **local planning and climate policy objectives**
- Do not materially affect the character or special interest of the ACA.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that An Bord Pleanála determine that the development **constitutes exempted development** under Section 5 of the Act.

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Yours sincerely,



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Michael A. Burke (B. Arch. MRICS MCIAT)

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# Land Registry Compliant Map

CAMERA POSITIONS - SEE REPORT 1 AND ASSOCIATED PHOTOGRAPHS

**CENTRE**  
ITM 566124,662549

**ORDER NO.:**  
50122488\_1

**MAP SERIES:**  
1:2,500

**MAP SHEETS:**  
4624-B

THE FORGE, CASTLE STREET  
CASTLECONNEL, CO. LMK

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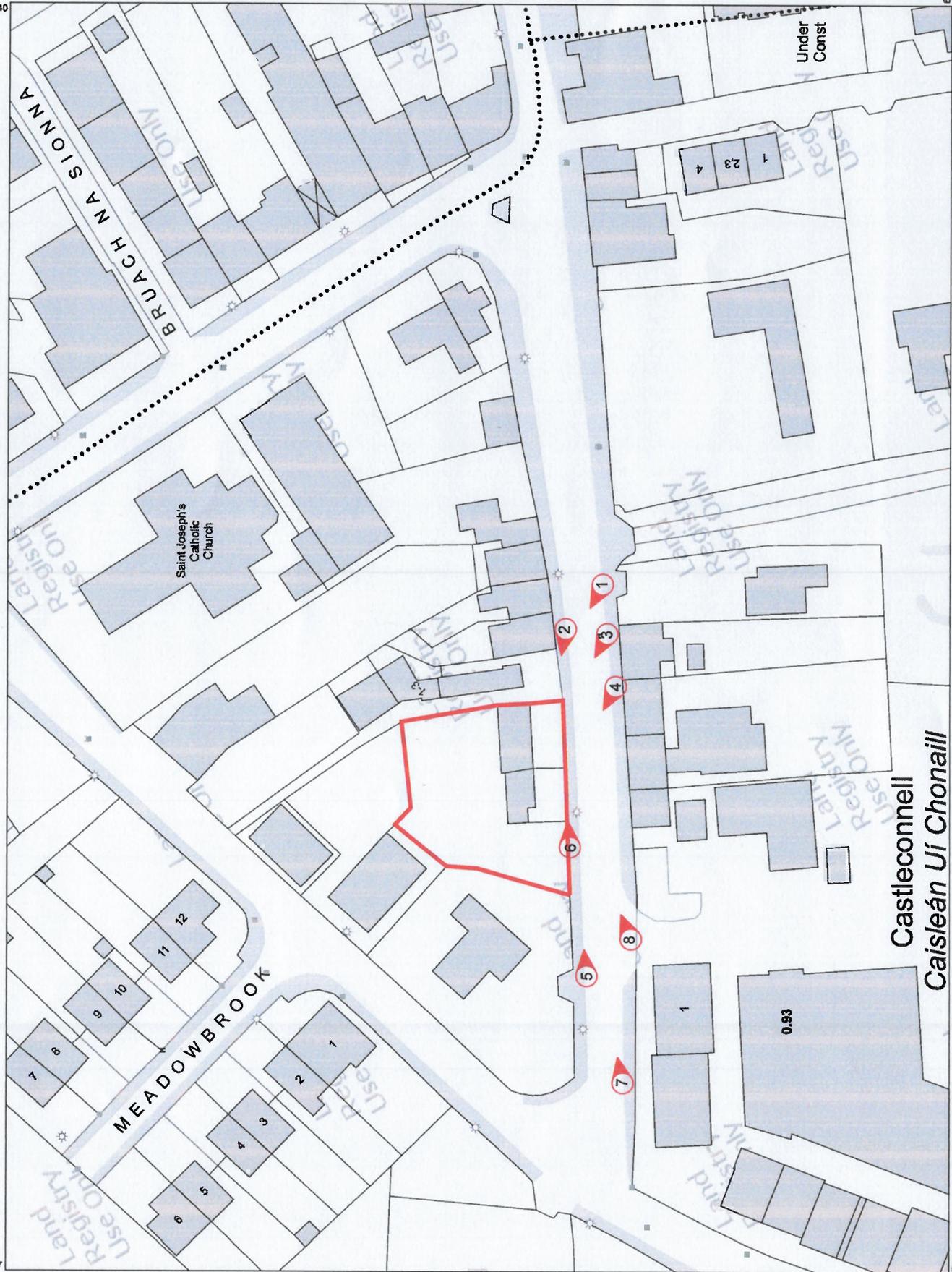
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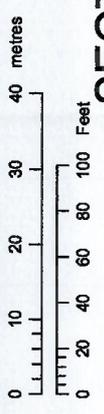
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**OUTPUT SCALE:** 1:1,000



## SECTION 5 REFERRAL



**Re: Section 5 Referral – Solar Panels at The Forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick (Ref: EC/18/25) –**

To be read in conjunction with submission



PV Panels **not** visible from across the street at Location 1 – Cotoneaster Tree provided screening



PV Panels **not** visible from the footpath on the same side of the street at Location 2



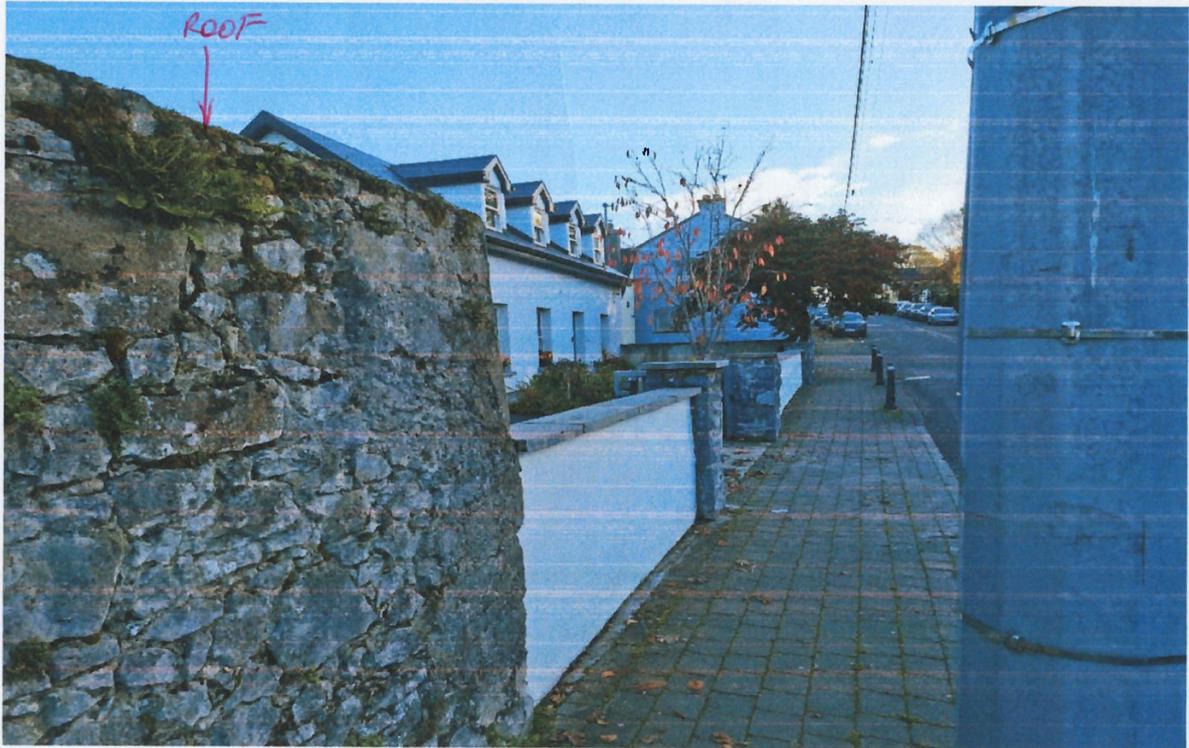
PV Panels **not** visible from across the street at Location 3- Tree still provided screening



PV Panels **are visible** from location 4 because the leaves have fallen from the deciduous tree



PV Panels **not** visible from location 5



PV Panels are **not** visible from location 6



PV Panels **not** obtrusive or injurious to the streetscape at this distance – Location 7



PV Panels **are visible** from this junction. Location 8

**Michael A. Burke** (B. Arch.)  
**M. Burke Associates,**  
**Architectural Services,**  
Main Street,  
Pallaskenry,  
Co. Limerick.

Tel: 061-220851  
087-2146727

Our Ref. J7

Your Ref.: EC/18/25

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025

## **Architectural Visual Impact Assessment Report**

Declaration under Section 5 Reference No EC/18/25

Proposed Solar Panel Installation

Location: The forge, Castle Street, Castleconnell Co. Limerick V94 K5YP

Context: Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

### **1. Introduction**

This report has been prepared in response to the request by Limerick City & County Council to provide an Architectural Visual Impact Assessment in respect of a proposed solar panel installation at the above property. The purpose is to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed works on the character and appearance of the Castleconnell ACA, and to demonstrate alignment with relevant policy in the Castleconnell LAP 2023–2029.

### **2. Policy Framework & Planning Context**

#### 2.1 Castleconnell Local Area Plan (2023–2029)

- The LAP is the operative local planning document for Castleconnell and provides policy direction for development, heritage protection, sustainable transport, and climate action.
- The Office of the Planning Regulator in its acknowledgement of the LAP highlighted the plan's positive approach to climate action and sustainable transport, along with detailed auditing of infrastructure needs.
- The LAP commits to protecting and enhancing the character of the ACA by ensuring that alterations and new works are sensitive to the existing built environment in terms of scale, materials, rooflines, and visibility.
- The plan also promotes active and sustainable modes of transport and low-carbon objectives as part of its broader settlement strategy, which underscores the importance of renewable energy interventions to help meet climate goals.

By referencing the LAP's objectives, this report positions the solar panel proposal as consistent with local policy supporting sustainable practices while respecting heritage constraints.

### 3. Site Context & Streetscape Characteristics

The subject property is located within the Castleconnell ACA. The ACA is characterised by a traditional streetscape defined by pitched roofs (often in slate or tile), restrained cornice lines, and uniform roof profiles. Roofscapes across the ACA tend to maintain consistent building lines and minimal visual clutter.

While the property is not a Protected Structure, it contributes visually to the character and cohesion of the area. Any change to the roof must therefore be assessed in terms of how it affects the roofscape rhythm, profile, and material harmony.

### 4. Description of Proposed Works

The proposal is for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on one roof slope of the dwelling. Key features are:

- 6 Number full panels and 4 half panels
- Panel sizes are 1961mm x 1134mm x 30mm
- Set back 500mm from the edges of the roof and 200mm from the ridge cap of the roof.
- Projection from the roof plane is 100mm.
- The finish is dark, non-reflective surface designed to limit contrast with existing roof materials
- PV Panels will be located at the front of the property (see photographs below)

The design intention is that the panels minimise visual contrast and glare.

### 5. Visual Impact Assessment

#### 5.1 Visibility & Viewpoints

From assessment of the ACA and the property's orientation, the panels will be partly visible from the west and fully visible from directly across the road. They will not be visible from the east because they are hidden by the higher roof that contains dormer windows (see photograph below) There is a considerable gradient away from the property towards the West. This elevated vantage, the set back of the building and neighbouring obstructions such as chimneys, parapet walls, etc, visibility will be limited and mostly indirect.

#### 5.2 Impact on Character & Roofscape

In the context of the ACA, the proposed panels represent a modern intervention.

Nevertheless:

- The dark, non-reflective finish helps reduce visual contrast with the predominant roof surfaces.
- The low-profile mounting means the panels do not significantly alter the roof line or silhouette when viewed from street level.
- The alignment of panels to follow the pitch and slope of the roof preserves the geometry of the roofscape.
- The intervention is modest in scale and does not disrupt the rhythm of rooflines across the ACA.

By adopting this strategy, the proposal aligns with the LAP's direction that modifications

within the ACA should be “sympathetic to the existing built environment” (in terms of scale, materials, and rooflines) and preserve the character of the ACA.

### 5.3 Cumulative and Contextual Considerations

Given that this is a single property, the proposal does not introduce a new pattern of roof alterations across the ACA. The modest scale ensures that the overall visual coherence of the streetscape remains intact. In the event similar sympathetic interventions arise elsewhere, the precedent remains low-impact.

### 5.4 Reversibility & Long-Term Compatibility

The solar panels are fully reversible, meaning that they may be removed in the future without lasting damage to the original roof fabric. This is consistent with good practice in heritage areas where reversible adaptations are preferred.

## 6. Alignment with Local Policy & Justification

- Climate Action & Renewable Energy: The LAP’s emphasis on sustainable transport and climate responsibility provides a policy basis for renewable energy installations, especially when designed sensitively.
- Heritage Sensitivity: The LAP requires that works within the ACA preserve or enhance the character of the area through sensitive treatment of materials, scale, and visual impact.
- Minimal Material Impact: Because the intervention is low-profile, reversible, and designed to minimise contrast, it should not be regarded as materially altering the special character of the ACA.
- Precedent of Thoughtful Interventions: The approach taken here follows best practice for heritage contexts — modern elements introduced only when they do not dominate the heritage fabric.

## 7. Conclusion

On the basis of the foregoing, it is my considered opinion that:

1. The proposed solar panel installation, in its design, finish, and scale, will have minimal and acceptable visual impact within the Castleconnell ACA;
2. The intervention is sympathetic to the existing roofscape and does not unduly disrupt the character of the streetscape;
3. It is consistent with the policy aims and heritage sensitivity embedded in the Castleconnell LAP 2023–2029;
4. Because the installation is reversible and modest, it does not represent a lasting detriment to the architectural character of the ACA.

Accordingly, I submit that the proposed works should not be considered to “materially affect” the character or special interest of the ACA and thus can be justified in support of the Section 5 referral.



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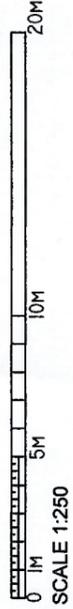
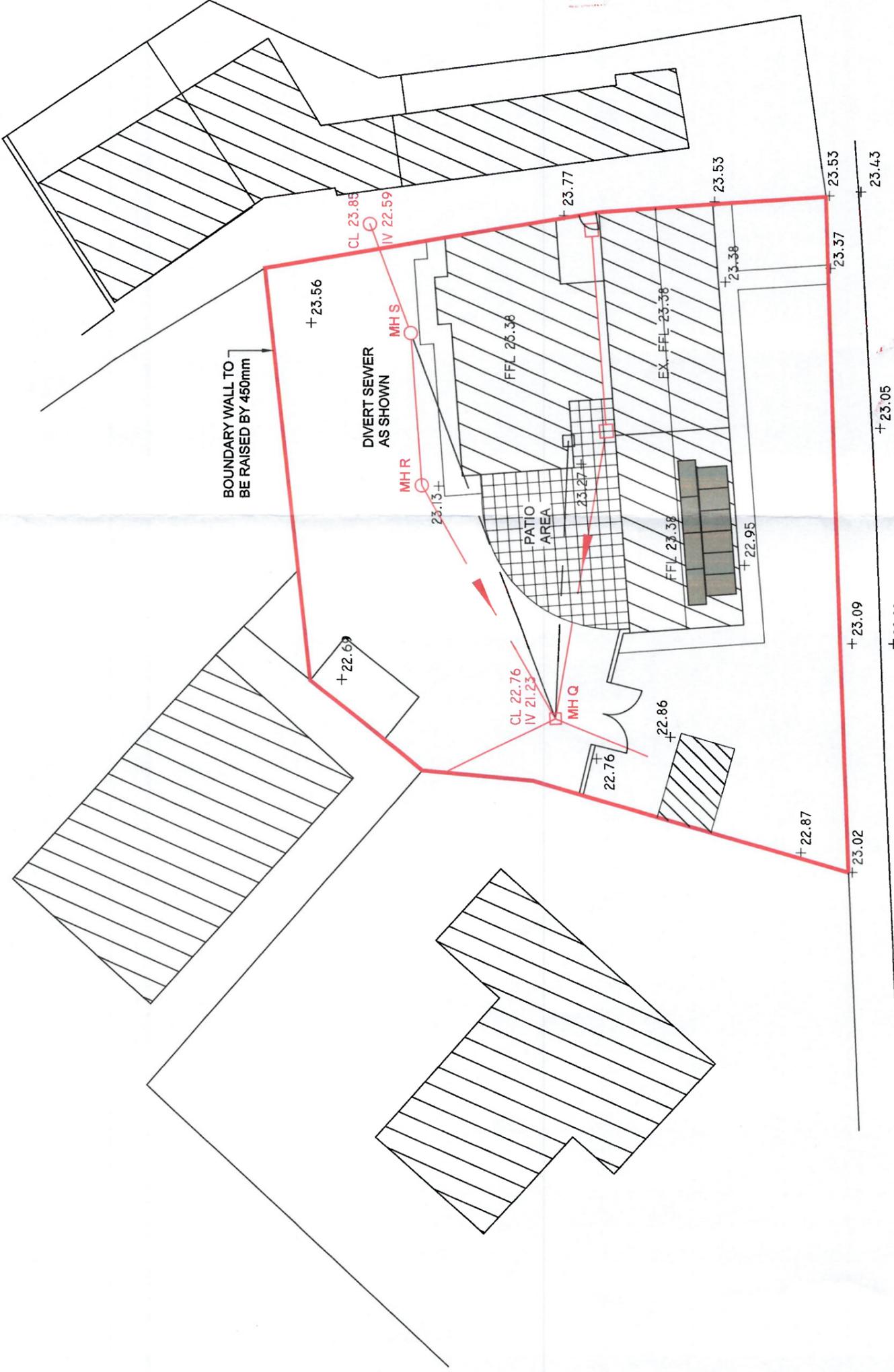
Michael A Burke (B. Arch. MRICS, MCIAT)



Solar (PV) panels to be located on this roof



Front Elevation - P V Panels to be located on the lower roof to the Left



**PROPOSED SITE PLAN**

**AN COIMIISIUN PLEANÁLA**

**3 0 OCT 2025**

LTR DATED          FROM APD

LDG. 323842-25

ACP.         

PROPOSED  
PV PANELS

Rev	Description	Date
	SITE PLAN	
<b>Project :</b> PROPOSED PV PANELS AT THE FORGE CASTLE STREET, CASTLECONNELL CO. LIMERICK		
<b>Client :</b> PATRICIA JORDAN AND DECLAN CAREY		
<b>Stage :</b> SECTION 5 EXEMPT		
<b>Dwn. By :</b> MAB		
<b>Date :</b> 24-10-2025		
<b>Drawing No. :</b> J7-18-C01		
<b>Scale :</b> AS SHOWN @ A3		
<b>Revision :</b>		
M Burke Associates Architectural Services 100 WATERLOO STREET, PALAISTOWN CO. DUBLIN 15 Tel/Fax: 01-220851 Mobile: 087-2144727 Email: mburkeassociates@gmail.com		

C01