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**Proposed Addition of the Central Classroom Block of the De La Salle National Schools,  
Ballyfermot, Dublin 10 to the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with  
Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.**

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**Procedure Followed**

In accordance with the procedures set out in Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, Dublin City Council indicated its intention to add the Central Classroom Block of the De La Salle National Schools, Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10 to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The proposed addition of the structure was brought forward to the South Central Area Committee on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 where it was agreed by the elected members to initiate the procedure to add it to the RPS.

The proposed addition was advertised in the Irish Independent on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The public display period was from Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019, inclusive.

**Submissions/ Objections Received:**

None.

**Request for Addition**

- Councillor Hazel de Nortúin, People Before Profit Alliance.
- Councillor Vincent Jackson, Independent.
- Mr. Martin Walsh, Resident.

**Summary of Applicants Reasons for Seeking Addition:**

- Councillor Hazel de Nortúin: *This Council will agree to initiate the process to assess the De La Salle school building, hall and Monastery for the list of protected structures due to its social significance in the area. These building[s] have been central to Ballyfermot since its conception and should continue to be there for future communities to utilise, (note that the 'Monastery' has been assessed separately under ADD683, Mount La Salle Monastery, Ballyfermot, D10 Addition Report).*
- Council Vincent Jackson: *Retaining a building, which dates from the commencement of the Ballyfermot suburb, for future generations.*
- Mr. Martin Walsh: *This [De La Salle National Schools] is an iconic building in Ballyfermot, well known in the area for its striking copper roof and imposing twin stairwell structures. It is one of the first social centres in the area and is of immense cultural significance having educated countless residents of the area. The applicant also notes that the school is the biggest primary school in Dublin and that the schools assembly hall (equipped with projection room) functioned as the first cinema in the area.*

## PHOTO OF STRUCTURE

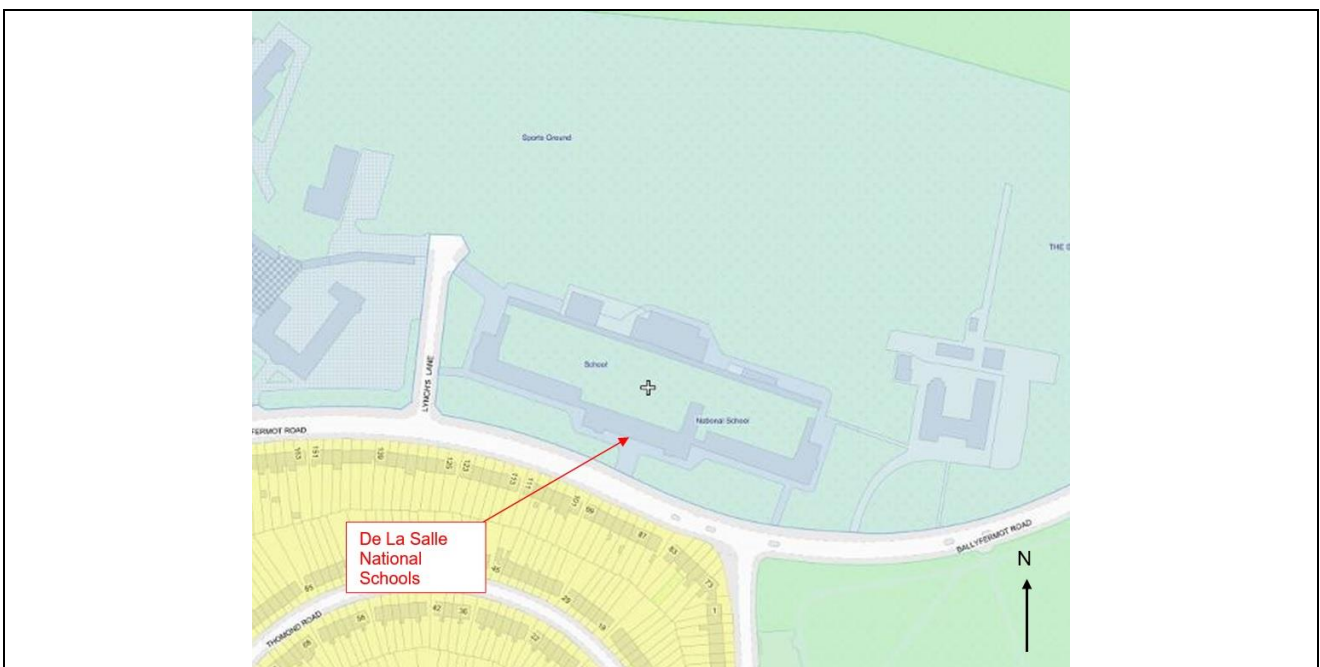


### Site Location & Zoning Map:

*Zone 15: To provide for institutional, educational, recreational, community, green infrastructure, and health uses.*

*Permissible Uses: ATM, Buildings for the health, safety and welfare of the public, Childcare facility, Community facility, Cultural/recreational building and uses, Education, Medical and related consultants, Open space, Place of public worship, Public service installation, Residential institution.*

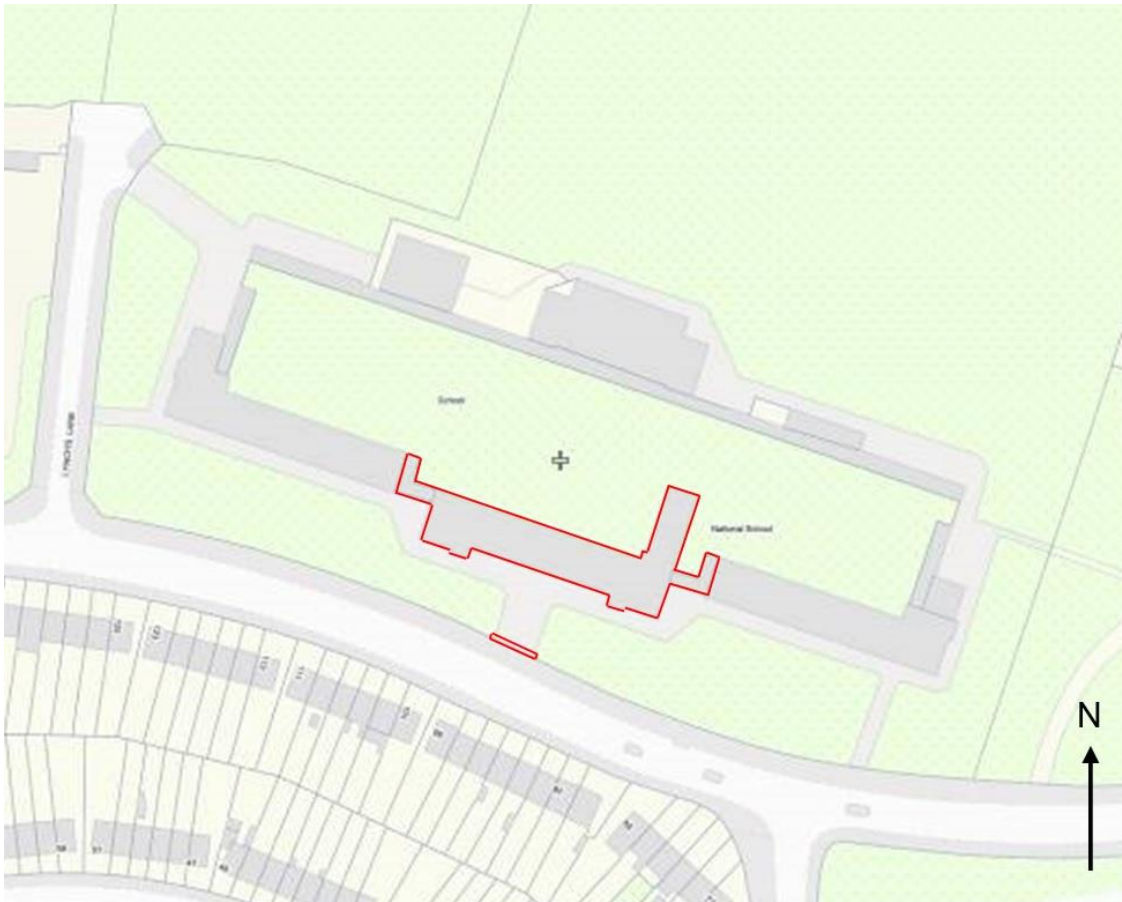
*Open for Consideration: Bed and breakfast, Car park ancillary to and subject to the main use remaining as community or institutional, Funeral Home, Guesthouse, Hostel, Hotel, Municipal Golf Course.*



Extract from Zoning Map from 2016-2022 Development Plan

**Extent of Protected Structure Status & Curtilage**

The proposed protected structures and their curtilage are outlined below in red. The curtilage extends to the boundaries as shown on the map below.



**Planning History:**

Ref No.	Description	Decision
0194/01	The construction of a new concrete block wall to the rear section of the Western Boundary, supplementary high level metal fence on top of existing walls to the Southern and part Eastern Boundary and to the front section of the Western Boundary with localised building up of existing concrete block wall to the Northern Boundary and part Eastern Boundary with new replacement gates and ancillary works.	GRANT PERMISSION 26-Mar-2001
5819/06	Erect security fencing inclusive of new vehicular and pedestrian gates and all associated site works to boundary of the above named schools.	GRANT PERMISSION 03-Jan-2007
4207/06	The Board Of Management of the De La Salle National Schools (Scoil Losagain Mhuire and Scoil Seosamh Mhuire) wish to apply to Dublin City Council for full planning permission to erect security fencing inclusive of new vehicular and pedestrian gates and all associated site works to the boundary of the above named schools located at Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10. The Schools are bounded Ballyfermot Road, Lynches Lane and the N4 Chapelizod bypass.	APPLICATION DECLARED INVALID 11-Aug-2006
5009/06	The Board of Management of the De La Salle National Schools (Scoil Losagain Mhuire and Scoil Seosamh Mhuire) wish to apply to Dublin City Council for full planning permission to erect security fencing inclusive of new vehicular and pedestrian gates and all associated site works to the boundary of the above named Schools located at Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10. The Schools are bounded by Ballyfermot Road, Lynches Lane and the N4 Chapelizod by-pass.	APPLICATION DECLARED INVALID 20-Oct-2006

3345/07	Erect a new steel structure ESB substation and all associated site works.	GRANT PERMISSION 17-Jul-2007
3419/08	Demolish existing changing rooms and construct a new single storey changing rooms/multi-purpose building and all associated works. The Schools are bounded by Ballyfermot Road, Lynches Lane and the N4 Chapelizod by-pass.	GRANT PERMISSION 21-Aug-2008

### **Summary Description:**

*Exterior:* Detached former National Schools built as a single complex 1950-51, enclosing a recreation yard and comprising: 3no. classroom blocks to the south (accommodating junior, intermediate and senior schools); double-height assembly hall to the north; single-storey cycle shed to the northeast; single-storey colonnaded play shelters to the north, east and west, having circular pre-cast concrete piers; and single-storey changing room block constructed c.2008 on site of former cycle shed to northwest, (fig.1). Classroom range to south of recreation yard comprising multi-bay two-storey central block having 2no. raised and projecting stairwell towers (fronting onto Ballyfermot Road) with flanking and set back multi-bay two-storey blocks to east and west, connected by single-storey gated loggia.

Single-storey rear/north returns to classroom blocks housing toilets, with larger return to central block additionally housing communal staff room. Pitched and flat copper strip-clad roofs to principal structures having copper pyramidal roofs with cross finials to towers; flat felt membrane roofs to single-storey elements; replacement steel and felt membrane roofs to localised areas (most notably to assembly hall building). Red-brick chimney stack having stepped capping to central block of classroom range. Copper eaves gutters having cast-iron downpipes. Roughcast rendered walls with smooth rendered plinth course and fluted eaves band to towers. Raised bronze lettering to south elevation of classroom ranges reading 'SCOIL ÍOSAGÁIN SCOIL NÁISIÚNTA'(west block), 'SCOIL MHUIRE SCOIL NÁISIÚNTA'(central block) and 'SCOIL SEOSAIMH SCOIL NÁISIÚNTA'(east block) in Irish script. Square-headed window openings, with concrete sills, and replacement uPVC windows to south elevation of classroom blocks, having projecting concrete canopy running the partial length of elevations. Vertical strip windows to tower projections surmounted by porthole windows. Clerestory light windows to first floor north elevation of classroom range. Square-headed entrance doorways having timber and glazed doors to gable-end elevations of classroom blocks (accessed via single-storey gated loggia). Modern shared entrance inserted to central classroom block c.2007.

*Interior:* The 3no. classroom blocks retain their original floor plans which reflect a standardized layout, having classrooms on two levels arranged on one side of an axial corridor. In addition to classrooms, each block houses a principal's office, a cloak room and toilet block. A shared staff room and specialist science room (later repurposed as the library) are located within the central block. The assembly hall comprises a double-height space having a plastered shallow elliptical barrel vault with a raised stage area to the west and a 'projection room' with separate 'rewind room' to the east, at first floor level.

There is a significant amount of surviving original internal features and finishes including: terrazzo flooring to corridors and stairwells; parquet flooring to classrooms; terrazzo staircases having sweeping timber handrails; flat plaster walls with rebated channel at dado level; glazed and timber paneled doors; mild steel laylight windows at high level to corridor/classrooms; blackboards having splayed canopies; fitted furniture (cupboards for copy books to classrooms and storage to principal's offices); numbered coat pegs; loose furniture items including classroom desks and chairs.

### **Historical Background:**

Construction of the Ballyfermot schools complex commenced in 1950, to designs by Simon Aloysius Leonard (b.1903 d.1976), who had joined the architectural practice of W. H. Byrne & Son in 1936. The school was built by the De La Salle Order, as a response to much needed amenities for the rapidly expanding new suburban community of Ballyfermot.



The school was to serve a wide catchment area, with provision for over 1000 pupils. The large numbers of students warranted segregation between senior, intermediate and juniors with the design providing for three separate schools on a single shared campus. The three school ranges share a standardized layout with classrooms arranged on one side of an axial corridor, allowing each to take best advantage of the natural lighting. The recreational buildings were removed from the principal classroom blocks with the assembly hall, colonnaded play shelters and cycle sheds placed on the northern flank of the school yard. In addition to school assembly, the hall also served as a community centre providing facilities for cinema and bingo (noted by the applicant, Mr. Walsh).

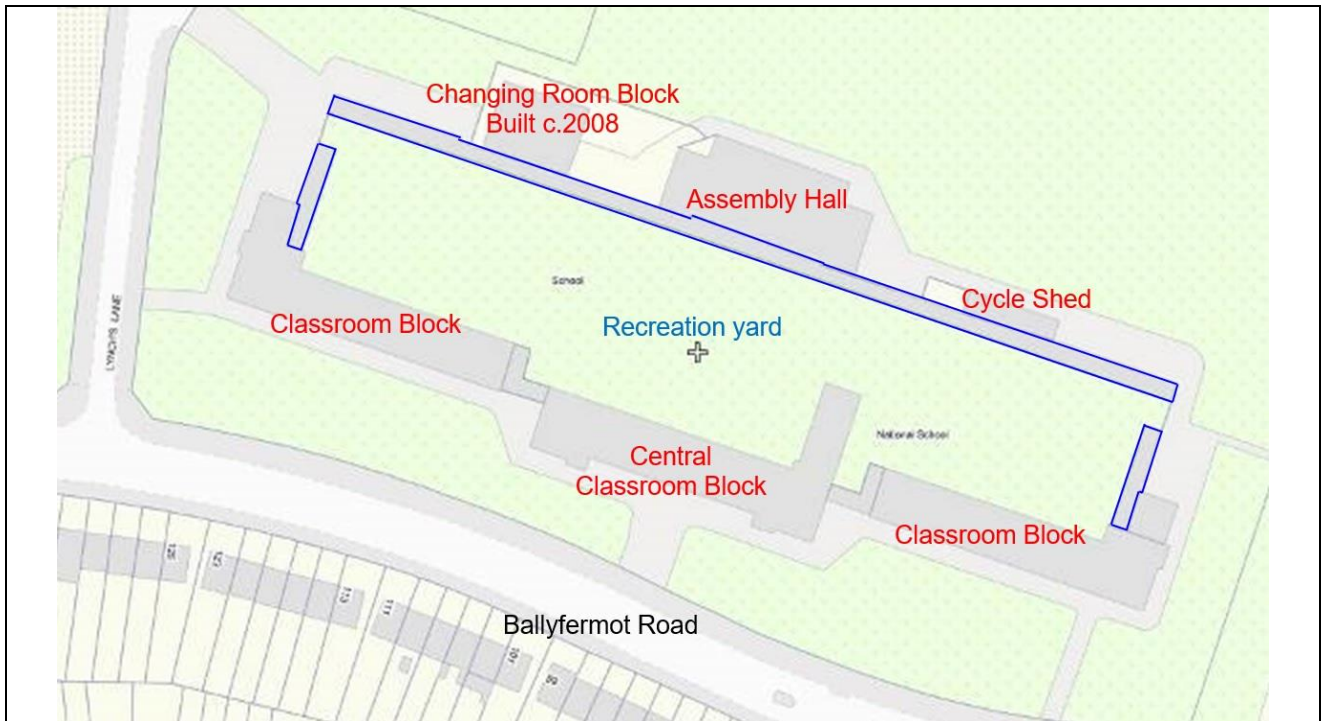


Fig.1: Site location plan. The colonnaded play shelters have been highlighted in blue.

In 1981 the three schools merged to become two, and a number of alterations and interventions were carried out to the buildings during the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to include: replacement of the original mild steel glazing in 1987; the provision of a new singular entrance to the central block in 2001 and the replacement of the western cycle shed with a changing room block in 2008. Scoil Íosagáin Muire and Scoil Muire Seosamh merged in 2011 to become the De La Salle National Schools. The school was earmarked for closure in 2008 with the complex finally closing its doors, after 70 years of education, in June 2019.

#### References:

- Drawings of De La Salle School & Mount La Salle Christian Bother's Home, 1950 & 1951, W.H Byrne Collection, Irish Architectural Archive, (IAA Ref: 2006/142 POO336).
- Hamlin, A. D. F. (Ed.). (1910). *Modern school houses; being a series of authoritative articles on planning, sanitation, heating and ventilation* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: The Swetland Publishing Co.
- Rowley, Ellen (Editor) (2019). *More than concrete blocks: Dublin city's twentieth-century buildings and their stories, Vol 2 1940-72*. Dublin: Four Courts Press. p.48-59.
- McManus, Ruth (2008). *Crampton built*. Dublin: G. & T. Crampton. p.188-189.
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- Anon. *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720 - 1940*. Available: <https://www.dia.ie/architects/view/874/LEONARD%2C+SIMON+ALOYSIUS>. Last accessed 26th April 2019.

Whelan, Z. (2018). *In Ballyfermot, Concerns Over Future of School and Monastery Site*. Available: <https://dublininquirer.com/2018/09/19/in-ballyfermot-concerns-over-future-of-school-and-monastery-site>. Last accessed 26th April 2019.

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### **Assessment of Special Interest under the Planning & Development Act 2000:**

The Central Classroom Block of the De La Salle National Schools, Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10 is considered to be of special interest under the following headings: ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORICAL, TECHNICAL and SOCIAL.

The remaining structures, including the eastern and western classroom blocks and the assembly hall building reflect a more reserved and sparing deployment of detail. Although these structures contribute to the group setting of the complex as a whole, these do not merit being placed on the RPS.

#### Architectural

- The school is a notable local landmark, designed by a known architectural practice (W.H. Byrne & Son) which contributes greatly to the character of the mid-twentieth century suburb. The practice is also responsible for the adjacent Dominican Convent Girls School and Infants School built c.1953.
- The central classroom block displays architectural ambition, making its mark on the street scene through the picturesque composition of the two stair towers. Further notable design elements include the fluted eaves band to towers (echoed in the fluted neck band to entrance piers), the deep overhanging eaves and the shallow concrete canopy at ground floor level. The remaining structures display an overall sparing deployment of detail, compared to the central classroom block, leaving these somewhat lacking in interest.
- The external palette of materials is dominated by three elements, copper, glass and render. Though the use of copper affords interest, not least of all in terms of technical merit (see below), the complex as a whole lacks a richness and diversity of materials which would set this aside from similar education sites. Furthermore, the composition has been diluted through the replacement of the original mild steel windows to external elevations and the replacement of the copper roofing to the assembly hall building and other localised areas of the site.
- The complex includes a well-preserved interior displaying an impressive level of intactness which adds some considerable interest to the site. Surviving internal fittings and features include terrazzo flooring and staircases, parquet flooring, purpose-built fitted furniture, desks, chairs, blackboards and coat pegs.

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#### Historical

- The building is one of the first civic structures to have been built for the emerging community at Ballyfermot.

#### Technical

- The building represents an early use of copper roofing (laid in the 'copper strip method'), following the lifting in 1949 of war time restrictions and embargos on the use of the material. Furthermore, email correspondence with Jonathon Good, author of *'The Care and Conservation of Copper Roofing to Historic Buildings, 2009'*, notes that the early use of 'copper strip' cladding may reflect the developmental transition from traditional 'sheet' method to the more current practice of 'copper strip' method, (email correspondence with Jonathon Good dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019).

### Social

- The school is of social interest to the area and was built as a response to the demands for education, forming part of the essential infrastructure for the growing suburban community.
- The assembly hall served as a community centre for the area providing a variety of activities, to include cinema and bingo.
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### **Significance/NIAH Rating:**

The De La Salle National Schools, Ballyfermot Road, is located within the 'Stage 2 Phase 3' survey area of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). This survey area has been completed and the De La Salle National Schools site was not included for recommendation by the Minister.

It should be noted that the architecture of the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century is largely underrepresented in both the early surveys of the NIAH and in Dublin City Councils Record of Protected Structures, as contained in earlier Development Plans. Recent NIAH survey stages/phases and revised priorities of the Conservation Section of Dublin City Council acknowledge an increased appreciation for 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture and have now sought to survey and assess sites/structures of this era.

The Conservation Section has, as part of this review carried out an independent assessment of the De La Salle National Schools and has considered the applicants reasons for addition. The Conservation Section considers the central classroom block to be of 'Regional' significance, comparable with other 20<sup>th</sup> century schools which were later recorded and rated 'Regional' by the NIAH, elsewhere within the city (for example St Audeon's National School, Cook Street, Dublin 8; NIAH ref:50080526).

The remaining structures, including the eastern and western classroom blocks and the assembly hall building reflect a more reserved and sparing deployment of detail. Although these structures contribute to the group setting of the complex as a whole, these do not merit being placed on the RPS.

### **Conclusion:**

The Conservation Section is of the opinion that the central classroom block (including 2no. staircase towers, 2no. flanking single-storey loggia and the principal paired entrance gate piers) are of 'Regional' significance. The central classroom block is the most ambitious in terms of architectural treatment, making its mark on the street scene through the use of copper roofing and the picturesque composition of the two stair towers. This building is considered comparable with other 20<sup>th</sup> century schools which were later recorded and rated 'Regional' by the NIAH, elsewhere within the city (such as St Audeon's National School, Cork Street, Dublin 8).

The remaining structures, including the eastern and western classroom blocks and the assembly hall building reflect a more reserved and sparing deployment of detail. Although these structures contribute to the group value of the complex, these do not merit being placed on the RPS.

It is noted that the area is currently zoned as 'Zone 15' and it is considered that the existing central classroom block structure lends itself favourably to provide for institutional, educational, recreational, community, green infrastructure and health uses.

### **Recommendation to the City Council:**

In accordance with section 55 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, it is recommended that central classroom block including 2no. staircase towers, 2no. flanking single-storey loggia and the principal paired entrance gate piers only to the De La Salle National Schools, Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10, be added to the Record of Protected Structures in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022. It is noted that the interiors of the classroom blocks are largely standardised and the retention of the central block would ensure survival of a representative exemplar; (fabric from the other two blocks could be used to reinstate any missing elements).

<b>Recommendation</b>	
<b>Address</b>	<b>Description (to appear on RPS)</b>
De La Salle National Schools, Ballyfermot Road, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10.	Central classroom block including 2no. staircase towers, 2no. flanking single-storey loggia and principal paired entrance gate piers only.

The making of any addition to the Record of Protected Structures is a reserved function of the City Council.

**Resolution:**

“That Dublin City Council notes the contents of Report No. 37/2020 and approves the addition of the Central Classroom Block of the De La Salle National Schools, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10 to the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000”.

**Richard Shakespeare**  
**Assistant Chief Executive.**

**Dated: 22/01/2020**