

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

SINGAPORE BOTANICAL GARDEN (SINGAPORE)

The area of nominated property is 49ha, with a proposed buffer zone of 137ha.

IUCN has considered this cultural landscape nomination based on a desk review of the nomination and considered the comments of seven (7) external reviewers.

The property is nominated under criteria (ii) and (iv). IUCN notes that ICOMOS will evaluate the nomination in relation to the cultural criteria under which the property is nominated.

IUCN notes that the *ex-situ* conservation values of this property are important at an international level. IUCN reviews confirm that the site is recognised as amongst the most important botanic gardens, currently and historically, in the world. Its importance is based on its contribution to the knowledge of South-East Asia plant diversity, reference herbarium and ex-situ living plants collection. It has played an extremely important role in understanding the science (botany to mycology) of the flora of south-east Asia. Equally significant in a cultural / economic sense was its role in plant introduction of economic importance such as rubber, palm oil and continuing today with its globally significant work on the *Orchidaceae*.

The size and nature of the area proposed appears sufficient to represent the values for which the property is nominated and apart from some impact from city development outside the boundaries of the garden, it has not suffered from adverse development or serious neglect.

The collection of plants, including the relict small forest ecosystem is at the core of its significance. These plant collections, including herbaria (with over 8,000 type specimens) are considered definitive for the tropics.

The site is also, incidentally a refuge for a number of species of fauna, from insects to avian species, which are rare in South-East Asia.

The laws, regulations, institutions and community support for this site are a model for the protection and management of botanic gardens, and protected areas in urban settings.

While there will always be pressures from time to time to undertake actions that might impact this site the high level of community support demonstrated should provide one effective means to protect its values.

Recommendations to ICOMOS

IUCN recommends that ICOMOS consider carefully with the State Party if the boundaries adopted in the nomination are fully appropriate. For instance it could be discussed if it would be appropriate to include two area of the current buffer zones, the Bukit Timah and Tyersall Learning Forest Areas in the boundary of the property.

IUCN suggests that a short “Living Collection Conservation Policy” be established to complement the 10 Year Living Collection Management Plan, but setting the vision and long-term philosophy of the Botanical Garden Ex-Situ Plant Conservation.

IUCN also recommends that an effective management plan for the remnant primary forest within the boundaries of the nominated property be maintained and kept updated, as it is unlikely that this relatively small patch of forest will be sustained over time if left unmanaged, and that its character may adapt over time due to the process of management intervention required to sustain it.