

---

## Kulangsu (China) No 1541

---

### Official name as proposed by the State Party

Kulangsu: A historic international settlement

### Location

Fujian Province  
China

### Brief description

Kulangsu is a tiny island located at the estuary of Chiu-lung River facing the 600 metres distant city of Xiamen across the Lujiang Strait. Based on earlier traditional settlements, the international settlement, which formally carries this title since 1903, integrated influences of foreigners living there is the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the vicinity of Yamen international port and later in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of Chinese returning from abroad. Its heritage reflects the composite nature of a modern settlement composed of 931 historical buildings of a variety of local and international architectural styles, natural sceneries, a historic network of roads and historic gardens.

### Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

21 January 2013

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

### Date received by the World Heritage Centre

29 January 2016

### Background

This is a new nomination.

### Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committees on Shared Built Heritage, Historic Towns and Villages, and several independent experts.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 16 to 21 October 2016.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent by ICOMOS to the State Party on 29 September 2016 requesting further clarification and

additional information on disaster preparedness, the relation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value to the gardens and conservation measures undertaken. A response was received from the State Party on 23 November 2016.

On 20 December 2016, ICOMOS sent an Interim Report to the State Party, which contained further requests for additional information on the justification for the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, protection of the property and its visitor management. The State Party responded on 22 February 2017. All additional information has been incorporated into the relevant sections below.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2017

## 2 The property

### Description

The nominated property covers the entire island of Kulangsu and its adjacent coastal waters with an overall size of 316.2 hectares. The boundaries in the waters are demarcated by the extension of the surrounding coral reefs. The buffer zone, which covers the adjacent Dayu and Monkey islands and reaches until the shoreline of Xiamen, includes additional 886 hectares.

The nominated property is located in sub-tropical marine monsoon climate, which determines its evergreen ecological landscape. Two ridges extending across the island, one in north-south and the other in east-west direction, divide the area into distinct areas with limited visual sight relations. The urban spaces and highest architectural density is framed by these ridged towards the north east of the island facing the city Xiamen.

The island hosts an urban settlement of close to a thousand historic buildings and is further characterized by historic roads, natural landscape elements and historic gardens. The architectural structures include private residences, public buildings of administrative, judicial or diplomatic function, commercial structures, including former office and warehouse buildings of foreign firms and religious structures of Buddhist, Taoist, Christian and Ancestral communities. Educational, recreational and sports structures complete the spectrum of facilities for the Kulangsu community. The private residences are often larger structures in form of villas and mansions but also include the former staff quarters of foreign firms.

These architectural structures represent a variety of architectural styles, most of which can be traced back to the interaction with or import of foreign architectural traditions. These styles are referred to as traditional southern Fujian Style, Veranda Colonial Style, Western Classical Revival Style, Modernist Style and Art Deco, as well as their fusion in what is considered unique of Kulangsu and called the Amoy Deco Style.

Kulangsu also integrates four roads designated as of historic importance as well as the natural landscapes of several hill and cliff sites. Such natural features, in particular reefs and rocks are associated to narratives of local history and traditional culture and, hence, bear special cultural connotations. Its preserved and diversified historic gardens, both independent and affiliated with historic buildings, like the architectural features reflect combined layouts of both Chinese and Western styles demonstrating the interaction and integration of different cultures.

### History and development

The history of Kulangsu is part of the history of Chinese migration to Southern Asia and further abroad. Early residents, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE and before, supposedly migrants from the north, established scattered traditional settlements on the island. They were moved to the mainland in 1387, and returned after 1487. Three large settlements were formed during the Ming and Qing dynasties (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries), and were located at: Neicuo'ao (being the oldest of the three), Lu'erjiao and Yanzaijiao.

As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, foreign traders have been attracted to the island, a fact attested by a tomb of a Spaniard sea trader named Manuel (1729-1759). After the Opium War in the 1840s, Kulangsu became administratively independent from the British Settlement in Xiamen, which was then an open commercial port. However, its development as a residential settlement remained dependent on Xiamen. It was determined by the presence of foreign missionaries, consular and diplomatic officers and foreigners working in larger city visible across the strait. These foreign residents brought with them western and South Asian architectural styles and concepts of modern community amenities including schools, hospitals, roads and cemeteries, as well as their respective religious and cultural lifestyles. Thus, Kulangsu became a nucleus of the introduction of international culture towards China as well as a base for modern western culture and technology that were to be disseminated to the wider region and inland China.

The history of the introduction of modern western culture can be divided in two phases. The first beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was a 'phase of collision and exchange', with relatively distinct residential areas. The second, a phase of blending and maturation, symbolically started when the 1903 Land Regulations for the Settlement of Kulangsu took effect. The starting of the Pacific War in 1941 caused many foreigners and overseas Chinese to settle in Kulangsu, which accelerated the maturation of the multi-cultural blending in the island. This resulted in the development of culture, education, industry, new architectural and decorative styles with local features, modern spaces, facilities and infrastructure such as the historic road system established in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Another remarkable trait of this second period is the shifting of the driving force behind construction and development from foreigners to returned overseas Chinese. The latter

renovated the traditional settlement and developed new ones. At the same time, they initiated the integration of Chinese and foreign residential areas. Parallel to this development, Kulangsu witnessed a boom in community service facilities and infrastructure, which remains well evidenced in tangible heritage. Finally, it is worth noting that the 20<sup>th</sup> century also witnessed the introduction of alien plant varieties that enriched the botanical diversity of the island, and changed its previously somewhat desolate landscape.

## 3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

### Comparative analysis

The State Party presents a comparative analysis of the nominated property with properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and the UNESCO Tentative Lists. It is focused on Chinese Historic Towns and other Building Complexes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reflecting exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures. This comparative analysis is accordingly focused on a chronological, regional approach, comparing similar phenomena within the same historical period and broader geographic location, but also considers the function and nature of the site, and the nature of its foreign cultural influence.

The comparative analysis shows that most of Latin America's properties are from the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries and were generally developed under the cultural influence of one country (Spain, or Portugal). Among Latin America's World Heritage properties, only "Historic Quarter of the Seaport City of Valparaíso", Chile (2003, criterion (iii)), and the "Urban Historic Centre of Cienfuegos", Cuba, (2005, criteria (ii) and (iv)) date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The latter was mainly a sugar and tobacco production centre and the former a business and trade centre. In terms of function, both properties, like most of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List in Latin America, are mainly trade, industry, and administrative centres.

Comparison with cities from the Asia-Pacific region inscribed on the World Heritage List shows that also these towns display different features for various reasons. Towns from the 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> centuries like Macao ("Historic Centre of Macao", China, 2005, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)) have an overall planning system based on western ideas. Singapore witnessed a urban planning transformation, which aimed at spreading western culture, but its residential areas were based on ethnic separation.

Comparison with Malacca ("Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca", Malaysia, 2008, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)) shows that Kulangsu's building heritage is more diverse in styles and typology. Comparison with "Kaiping Diaolou and Villages" (China, 2007, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)) shows how Kaiping illustrates a peculiar architectural form under a special social and historic context. Comparison with fifteen other Chinese cultural heritages sites likewise indicates how the unique geographical location and the autonomous

management system with diverse groups and cultures produced a city fabric without clear divisions of settlement between people from different countries. When compared with Shanghai's Bund, a regional trade centre developed under the influence of European and American cultures, or with Guangzhou, and Yantai Hill, the analysis shows that all these sites are merely architectural ensembles but not cities reflecting multicultural influences.

Among all cities, which could provide such representation, Kulangsu is shown to be unique in that it witnessed mutual reference and a cultural fusion between diverse cultures that materialized in an organic urban fabric, and a slow self-transformation.

The State Party concludes that Kulangsu through the overall comparison is confirmed a unique example of modern settlement with exceptional multi-cultural characteristics, that have influenced its social governance, quality of life and environmental features. It also concludes that no other cultural heritage site of this historical period from the Asia-Pacific region is comparable in terms of these aspects while retaining a principally residential function.

ICOMOS concurs that Kulangsu settlement stands out in terms of its multi-cultural influences and their evidence in the urban and architectural fabric. ICOMOS therefore considers that the comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated property is a unique and representative example of a multicultural international settlement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries based on its well-preserved architectural, urban and garden heritage which retains a full range of public facilities illustrating the rich blending of modern habitat concepts with a traditional local culture.

---

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

---

#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Kulangsu was an important window for Sino-foreign exchanges, initially since the opening of a commercial port at Xiamen in 1843, and later the establishment of the island as an international settlement in 1903. As such it stands out as a witness to China's modernization in the early processes of globalisation.
- Under the special Sino-foreign joint management agreement, Kulangsu became an international settlement of outstanding cultural diversity and remarkable modern living quality. Its development appears as a unique demonstration embodying modern habitat concepts from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The history of the island is by itself a tangible evidence for the extensive and exchanges of diverse Chinese and foreign cultures in all aspects of material culture.

Its well preserved historical remains are an authentic and integral record of its tortuous development process and vivid style changes, and a crystalized reflection of the history of an era with intense reforms.

- Kulangsu's development is said to clearly document the spread of foreign cultures and the shaping of the basic characteristics of early modernization by the southern Fujian people, who returned from their overseas undertakings. Today, Kulangsu exemplifies a historical experience of mutual understanding and joint development among different cultures and values across the world.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is indeed an exceptional example of cultural exchanges in South-East Asia, which provides reference to the cultural fusion between Chinese and diverse other cultures. This materialized intermingling remains legible in an organic urban fabric, which formed over decades through slow transformation constantly integrating more diverse cultural references. In documentation of this, Kulangsu's built heritage illustrates a large variety of architectural styles including Traditional Southern Fujian Style, Veranda Colonial Style, Western Classical Revival Style, Modern Style and Art Deco. Most exceptional however is the fusion of these stylistic influences into a genuinely new architectural movement representative of South East Asia, called the Amoy Deco Style. Kulangsu is established as the origin and best representation of this style and hence illustrates potential for Outstanding Universal Value.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

The integrity of the historic landscape has been maintained, primarily as result of consistent conservation of historic architectural structures and effective development controls regarding height, volume and form of new buildings. The historic relationship of built up and green spaces also contributes to the overall landscape integrity which includes the preserved natural sceneries of cliffs and rocks and the historic gardens, both affiliated courtyard and independent private gardens.

The completeness of the property is demonstrated in the delimitation of the entire island including its surrounding coastal water until the edge of the reef. By means of this boundary designation, the island is not only included based on the architectural structures which document the Amoy Deco Style but also in relation to its ecological and geological characteristics, which underpins that the built structures and the natural setting of the island form one harmonious whole. The early recognition of this harmony has also prevented extensive development in waters surrounding the island, which can be witnesses on other islands or the nearby mainland. Essential for the recognition of the value of the island is that it was never connected to Xiamen via traffic infrastructure and remains solely accessible by ferry. Today, this restriction constitutes

an essential element of visitor management processes ensuring the continued intactness of the island.

Tourism pressures are indeed a concern that could affect the integrity of the island and hence require strict controls. In its additional information submitted in February 2017 at the request of ICOMOS, the State Party specified that the maximum number of visitors per day would amount to 15,000 while measures towards a better distribution of these on the island were being developed. ICOMOS considers that effective tourism management is key to the future integrity of the property.

Lastly, typhoons represent a serious threat, as demonstrated by the September 2016 typhoon, which has damaged several historic buildings. Adequate risk preparedness and disaster response strategies are therefore equally essential.

#### Authenticity

Kulangsu island has retained its authenticity in a number of qualifying conditions, including form and design, location and setting and in many elements of the island material and substance and – to a lower extent – use and function. As regards the information source of form and design, both the urban settlement patterns as well as the architectural structures have retained their characteristic layout and stylistic features. The latter remain credible representations of the various architectural styles the island unites.

Kulangsu further retains its original location and natural landscape setting and has preserved the atmospheric qualities of an ideal residential settlement with a wide range of public services, which continue to serve their original function. The urban structures remain protected by the original legal context, which was created for the establishment of the international settlement in 1902 and remains valid until present, contributing to the continuity of the ideas of the settlement as well as its early design principles.

The various spatial contexts of the island, both natural and built-up retain their original links and relations including road connections and sight relations. The continuation of these ensures that the perception of Kulangsu today conveys a credible representation of what a visitor would have encountered at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Strict development controls ensure the protection of these essential interlinkages and spatial relations.

---

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

---

#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property presents an outstanding international cultural exchange window with unique characteristics in East and Southeast Asia from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, which exhibits many architectural styles including Traditional Southern Fujian Style, Veranda Colonial Style, Western Classical Revival Style, Modernist Style and Art Deco, as well as their fusion in the unique Amoy Deco Style. Its diversified historic gardens, both independent and affiliated, reflect combined layouts and features of both Chinese and Western styles demonstrating the interaction and integration of different cultures.

ICOMOS considers that Kulangsu island exhibits in its architectural features and styles the interchange of Chinese, South East Asian and European architectural and cultural values and traditions produced in this variety by foreign residents or returned overseas Chinese who settled on the island. The settlement created did not only mirror the various influences settlers brought with them from their places of origin or previous residence but it synthesized a new hybrid style – the so-called Amoy Deco Style – which developed in Kulangsu and exerted influences over a far wider region in South-east Asian coastal areas and beyond.

ICOMOS therefore considers that the nominated property exhibits the extensive and in-depth exchanges between the traditional Chinese culture and in particular also local vernacular traditions and Western styles and technologies. The settlement illustrates the encounters, interactions and fusion of diverse values during an early globalization stage in East Asia and South-east Asia coastal areas.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

---

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the development of the nominated property is a testimony to China's joining the early waves of globalization, and 'evidence of the pioneering and inclusive migration culture of southern Fujian'. This south Fujian migration culture demonstrated great openness to heterogeneous cultures while keeping its roots in ancient Chinese culture. This has been fully exhibited in the modern reforms at multiple aspects, such as the community governance, public facility construction, economic activities and cultural innovations that were boosted by the returned overseas Chinese in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

ICOMOS considers that the justification is not in line with the understanding of cultural tradition or civilization usually applied in the demonstration of criterion (iii). To understand Kulangsu as the epitome of China's modernization processes is difficult as the settlement seems far too specific in its intercultural development and

local setting to be representative of modern reforms in the larger South-East Asian context. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property cannot be said an outstanding example representative of China's modernization and that the Fujian migration does not suggest to be considered a cultural tradition, which could be considered outstanding at a wider regional or even global scale.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

---

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is 'a unique example of an international settlement with high living quality and initial modernization characteristics in East and Southeast Asia in modern times. It is said to display, within a small island, a completely functional organic urban structure, which boasts fashionable buildings and gardens of various styles, and introduced 'the most advanced public facilities' at that time. Finally, it is a well preserved and integrated historical island landscape, presenting the leading form of modernity at that moment, and the modern concept of habitat resulting from the syncretism of Chinese and foreign cultures.

In its interim report sent in December 2016, ICOMOS requested the State Party to augment the justification for criterion (iv) to demonstrate its validity. In its response received in February 2017, the State Party indicated that Kulangsu reflected a specific relationship between urban structure and natural environment during each phase of its historic development. It is mentioned that for example during its initial development under the Ming Dynasty, the crossing ridges the island were viewed as the "gathering of fives dragons" and three traditional villages were located in harmony with the traditional FengShui concept, while after, later foreigners compared these ridges and towering rocks with a galleon, and built their settlements on the top of the hills or the slopes.

ICOMOS considers that this justification highlights that Kulangsu brings together a variety of typological approaches illustrating significant stages of history on Kulangsu Island, but that none of these landscape interpretations could be said of Outstanding Universal Value. However, ICOMOS consider that Kulangsu has the capacity to justify criterion (iv) in relation to it being the origin and best representation of the Amoy Deco Style. Named after Xiamen's local Hokkien dialect name Amoy, Amoy Deco Style refers to an architectural style and typology, which first occurred on the island facing Xiamen, Kulangsu, and illustrates the fusion of inspirations drawn from local building traditions, early western and in particular modernist influences as well as the southern Fujian Migrant culture. Based on these the Amoy Deco Style shows a transformation of traditional building typology towards new forms, which were later referenced

throughout South-East Asia and became popular in the wider region. ICOMOS therefore considers that Kulangsu is an outstanding example of Amoy Deco architecture, which reflects the moment of transition from traditional local towards a modernist and international approach to architecture in South-East Asia.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

---

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (ii), and (iv) and conditions of authenticity and integrity, but it does not meet criterion (iii).

---

#### **Description of the attributes**

Kulangsu's attributes lie in the division of the island and establishment of its settlement plan and urban layouts in subsequent phases guided by the natural topography as well as its distinct architectural styles, which together illustrate the fusion of different cultural influences in the international settlement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, 931 historic architectural structures, natural sceneries and historic gardens as well as a network of historic roads mark these features.

Specific emphasis among these structures should be given to those which are exceptional representations of the Amoy Deco Style. Prominent examples of these many buildings are the Hongning Hospital, the Yanping Complex, the former water supply facility, the building of the former Kulangsu Telephone Company, and the former building of China & South Sea Bank Limited.

## **4 Factors affecting the property**

The State Party indicates that in recent years Kulangsu witnessed a strong demographic decline from 19,600 in 2000 to 13,343 and some 3,489 floating inhabitants in 2012. This decline resulted in several vacant building, which henceforth lacked regular maintenance. The situation was however remedied by state controls on maintenance, and programmes towards the reuse of vacant buildings.

According to the State Party, environmental pressures are limited since motor vehicles are prohibited in the island, except for the fire department, garbage collection and medical assistance. Besides, industrial activities have been relocated from the north of the island to Xiamen. However, the sea waters of the nominated property are affected by the quality of the water of Chiu-lung River, especially during the flooding season. ICOMOS notes that the sea waters constituting both the property and the buffer zone are subject to contamination from the neighbouring cities, the Lujian River, and the active sea traffic, but that none of these seems to have immediate adverse effects on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The State Party asserts that historical records indicate that the main threats to historic buildings are collapse due to typhoons, fire, plant diseases and insect pests. Over the

past 50 years, some 180 typhoons have hit Xiamen and Kulangsu. Façade decorative elements, which are very important stylistic features of the historic buildings, are very vulnerable to this threat. In actual fact, some damages of recent typhoons are still waiting their repairs. As a measure of prevention, a monitoring and warning system, together with mitigating measures have been put in place. The responses to the September 2016 typhoon, the strongest in recent years - which caused the fall of three thousand trees, among them nineteen designated Historic Trees and damaged up to 42 historic buildings - indicate the gravity of the threat and the appropriateness of the monitoring and warning system, as well as the efficiency of the recovery measures and the strong commitment and involvement of the local community. Climate change may further affect the nominated property if it amplifies the frequency of typhoons and their strength.

ICOMOS notes that Typhoons are a real threat to the property, and at the same time confirms that the typhoon targeted preparedness plans are adequate. ICOMOS also notes that the nominated property is in a seism prone location, and consequently recommends that a retrofitting plan for brick and stone historic buildings be drawn up and implemented. The State Party considers that the upgrading of the ongoing firefighting infrastructure and the projected prevention measures constitute an effective prevention and mitigation plan against this threat. It further asserted that despite theoretical seismic risks, the property has no historic record of seismic destruction.

The State Party indicates that Kulangsu has recently faced a sharp rise in visitor numbers, which increased from 5,748,500 in 2009 to 12,463,000 in 2014. The local authorities indicated however that this increase had not yet resulted in negative impacts on the historic buildings. However, tourism has a negative impact on the environmental level. The State Party also considers that the ideal tourism capacity of the property is 13,000,000 visitors per year, and that the control measures taken are effective.

ICOMOS considers that tourism is a key threat to the tangible heritage and the environment of the island, especially during the holiday peak season. The ban on private motor vehicle is an appropriate prevention measure; however, the density of tourists is very high. With inscription on the World Heritage List, tourism interest would likely increase and it is essential that the cap limits introduced would be effectively controlled.

In the Interim Report, ICOMOS informed the State Party about its concerns in relation to visitor numbers and access management and recommended to further elaborate a restrictive tourism management strategy and a calendar to avoid the negatives impacts of tourism. In its response received in February 2017, the State Party informed ICOMOS that the daily maximum capacity of 65,000 persons mentioned in the nomination dossier already included 15,000 residents and commuters. The maximum number of visitors to the island is therefore 50,000 per day. More importantly, a new study commissioned by the State Party, which was completed in 2017 indicates that the

optimum capacity of Kulangsu Scenic Area is 25,000 persons per day, including visitors and commuters. Xiamen Municipal Government has accordingly decided to adopt this number, and an official order is being drafted and is foreseen be implemented starting from 15 June 2017. To meet this goal, a series of measures will be taken including the separation of visitor and resident transportation (ferry) to the island, sale of visitor tickets through a special platform (combined with checkpoint control measures at the ferry terminal), the opening of more areas to visitors, expanding of tour routes, improvement of the monitoring system and other measures including the effective involvement of the local community and stakeholders.

---

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are tourism pressure, environmental, pollution and natural disasters, especially typhoons and earthquakes.

---

## **5 Protection, conservation and management**

### **Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone**

The boundaries of the 316.3 hectares property include the entire Kulangsu Island and its adjacent coastal waters that are delineated according to the furthest extension of the surrounding reefs. In ICOMOS' view, these boundaries are clearly delineated, and include all the elements expressing the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

Likewise the buffer zone, entirely drawn in the waters and including two adjacent smaller islands, is clearly delineated, and includes the surrounding waters of the island and its immediate settings. The buffer zone covers a zone of 886 hectares.

Both, the nominated property and its buffer zone are protected as the Kulangsu Mountain Scenic Area under the 2006 Management of Scenery Areas Regulations. The regulations of Scenery Areas that govern both the nominated property and its buffer zone are effectively implemented.

---

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zone are adequate.

---

### **Ownership**

The land parcels of the entire island belong to the State but built structures fall under four management categories, which include state managed public structures, houses administrated by management communities, houses entrusted by their owners to state management and maintenance and private properties. Most of the designated heritage structures on the island belong to the first category and are exclusively state managed.

### **Protection**

Kulangsu was recognized by the State Council as a National Scenic Area in 1988 under the National Scenic Area framework. The boundaries of the property and its

buffer zone coincide with the delimitation of the national scenic area, which also became the basis for the management areas designated in the Conservation Management Plan for Kulangsu Cultural Heritage Site (2014). Fifty-one representative historic buildings, gardens, structures and cultural sites are included in Heritage lists: nineteen as National Heritage Sites, eight as Provincial Heritage Sites, and twenty-four as County Heritage Sites. Moreover, all the provincial and county protected sites will be added to the 8<sup>th</sup> Tranche of the National Heritage List. These sites will be under the 2013 revised Law of the People's Republic of China on the Preservation of National Relics, and the Rules on Implementation of the same law.

The nominated property and its buffer zone are also part of the Kulangsu Mountain Scenic Area, which is governed by the 2006 Management of Scenery Areas Regulations. Xiamen Municipal Government further created special laws and regulations for the scenic area conservation and management of Kulangsu, implemented among others through the ban of private motor vehicles on the island.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to further clarify the protection status of historic architectural structures, not explicitly listed in the above described heritage listing schemes. In its response, the State Party indicated that through the provisions of the General Plan of Kulangsu Scenic Area (2017-2030) issued by China's State Council, all major construction projects be submitted to, and approved by the heritage and construction department of the State Council, regardless of the status of concerned or adjacent structures. The State Party further elaborates that the 931 historic buildings not protected at a national level were subject to the *Regulations of Xiamen Special Economic Zone on the Conservation of Historic Buildings on Kulangsu* (2009).

---

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate and effectively implemented.

---

## Conservation

The historic architectural structures on Kulangsu Island are fully inventoried. All structures are listed on either national, provincial, county or municipal registers. The inventory and further information, drawings and photographs on each structure and the history of Kulangsu in general is made available to the public at the Cultural Archives Center in Kulangsu Municipal Library.

The overall state of conservation of historic structures in Kulangsu is acceptable. The fifty-one representative Historic Buildings listed on various heritage registers are said in satisfactory condition, while the condition of other historic structures is good in 68% of the cases, good but with slight damages for 26% and in need of attention with obvious damage for 6 % of the historic structures. The natural setting as well as historic road network has been well maintained and is in a good state of conservation.

A Conservation Master Plan for Kulangsu Historic Buildings was drafted in 2010 and revised in 2012. The Conservation and Management Plan for all heritage elements on Kulangsu likewise includes the key notions and references the earlier conservation plan for historic structures. A research and practice centre to transfer knowledge on historic construction and maintenance techniques was created in 2016.

Conservation measures are not only addressed at individual houses but the complete island and its attributes. Since 2006, industrial and mining enterprises located in the north of the island were relocated to Xiamen city, buildings and structures that impacted spatial and visual corridors of historic buildings were removed and 170 historic buildings were conserved based on tailor-made conservation approaches for each and fully accompanied by detailed analysis and documentation.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures taken are adequate and efficient. However, ICOMOS notes that the main focus of conservation documentation and preservation is directed towards the building exteriors and recommends that equal attention is given to their historic interiors.

---

ICOMOS considers that the conservation plan and active conservation measures implemented are adequate.

---

## Management

Management structures and processes  
including traditional management processes

The property is jointly managed by two structures established in cooperation of the State Council, Fujian Province, Xiamen Municipality and Kulangsu Sub-district Office of Siming District. These are the Administrative Committee of Kulangsu Scenic Area, an agency of the Government of Xiamen city in charge of Cultural Heritage and Scenic Areas and the Kulangsu Sub-District Office of the Siming District, in charge of other settlement related aspects of Kulangsu Island management.

Following the information on available human and financial resources, these two management bodies are adequately equipped to effectively deal with the protection, conservation and management of the site. Further training measures and continuous capacity building and qualification control for personnel are envisaged by the management authorities. The management structures also rely on external expertise from the University of Xiamen and international experts who advice in an individual capacity.

Policy framework: management plans and  
arrangements, including visitor management  
and presentation

The Conservation and Management Plan for Kulangsu Cultural Heritage was officially adopted 2011 and is being implemented by the Government since 2014. The plan establishes management strategies and actions based on

an extensive analysis of the property's conditions and threats. The strategic documents also integrate the provisions of all other plans and protective regulations into a comprehensive management system institutionalizing the cooperation between all concerned management stakeholders. Indicated by the plan as a necessity, the Conservation and Management Plan is supported by Guidelines on Control of Commercial Activities on Kulangsu, which have been adopted in 2014. These guide scale and quality assurance measures for commercial services on the island, in particular those in the tourism sector.

As tourism pressures remain a key threat to the integrity of Kulangsu, several studies have addressed the property's carrying capacity and limits of acceptable change and maximum permitted visitor numbers have recently been revised. Controls were firstly implemented in 2014 under the "Design of Tourism Capacity and Tourists Control of Kulangsu" (2014) framework, a policy tools which based on a multi-factor analysis defined maximum visitor numbers to the island. Following ICOMOS' request for additional information in its interim report, the State Party added information in February 2017, indicating that the visitor numbers which guided this control framework had once more been reduced.

The latest 2017 Capacity Calculation Report of Kulangsu Scenic Zone indicates that the optimum number of people on the island is 25,000 while the absolute maximum lies at 50,000 people per day. Since this number includes the residents and commuters to the island, the effective maximum number of visitors is now controlled at 35,000 visitors on peak days while the average optimum desired lies at 15,000 visitors per day. Effective tourism controls on the access ferries are to be implemented towards this end starting from 15 June 2017.

In terms of presentation and interpretation the property offers a variety of services due to its strong visitor attraction and high numbers. It can be explored by guided tours on boat or land as well as individually via sign-guided routes and maps. Signage also communicates historic data and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and the online presentation of the property allows for a virtual tour by means of a GIS based exploration platform.

#### Involvement of the local communities

The State Party asserts that community involvement was key to the preparation of the management system of Kulangsu and remains essential in its implementation. Continuous community consultation and participation is in particular implied in the idea that the whole island is a living community site, the attributes of which are based on the continuity of functions nurtured by the resident community.

ICOMOS considers the management system as well as the conservation and management plan adequate and its implementation measures with the revised visitor controls

effective once fully implemented starting from 15 June 2017. ICOMOS recommends that the monitoring of visitor controls and periodic revised studies on the limits of acceptable change with regard to visitation of the island be undertaken to confirm that the current cut off numbers are indeed sufficient for the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party provides assessment reports on the visitor controls to be implemented from June 2017 onwards to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies after a trial period of two years.

---

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate, but recommends that the now strengthened visitor controls are further assessed and periodically reviewed to ensure that these are already sufficient to address the challenges posed by large visitor numbers.

---

## 6 Monitoring

For the monitoring of the property, the two management structures are complemented by a special body devoted to heritage monitoring: the Kulangsu Heritage Monitoring Center. Its task is to develop, maintain, implement and review a monitoring system based on a precise indicator-driven assessments, including an alert system for recognition of risks which could have negative impacts on the property's Outstanding Universal Value. Key attributes monitored as part of the system are changes in the overall settlement patterns, including nature-culture interrelations, the uses and functions of historic structures, physical condition of all heritage elements, risks and their potential increase or decrease, social and environmental factors, visitor numbers and behaviour as well as policy development and its suspected impact on the property.

Previous monitoring exercises were archived, even if their scope may have varied in terms of themes, detail of indicators and completeness. The Kulangsu Heritage Monitoring Centre's archive does further hold reports on the Conservation Status of all heritage sites, previous conservation measures and statistic data on the environmental development of the island. ICOMOS considers the monitoring system is highly sophisticated and that the indicators are clearly linked to the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value and reflect the most pertinent threats to the property.

---

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring measures for the property are adequate.

---

## 7 Conclusions

The property covers the entire island of Kulangsu and its coastal waters as demarcated by the surrounding reefs, with an overall area of 1.88 square kilometre. Its main urban settlement faces the city of Xiamen across the 600-metre-



wide Lujiang Strait. In 1903, an international settlement was established on the island, which integrated the previously existing traditional settlements into a new multi-faceted new urban development of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which became a nucleus of cultural exchanges in South-East Asia at the time.

Kulangsu enjoys an intact environment, a distinctive urban fabric and close to one thousand historic buildings. It illustrates the ambitions of internationalization at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on an interchange of Chinese, South-East Asian and Western influences. Its built heritage represents different architectural styles including Traditional Southern Fujian Style, Veranda Colonial Style, Western Classical Revival Style, early Modernist Style and Art Deco, as well as their fusion in the unique Amoy Deco Style. In addition to its unique architecture, the island preserves its original settlement patterns, historic road and the relationships and proportions between built-up and natural environment, including important sight relations and natural sceneries.

ICOMOS considers that the property meets criteria (ii) and (iv) as a settlement which mirrors the various cultural influences settlers brought with them from their places of origin or previous residence in South East Asia and beyond as far as Europe and North America, which through these influences brought forth a new hybrid style – the so-called Amoy Deco Style.

Criterion (iv) also recognizes Kulangsu in relation to it being the origin and best representation of the Amoy Deco Style. This specific style illustrates the fusion of inspirations drawn from local building traditions, early western and in particular modernist influences as well as the southern Fujian migrant culture. Based on these, the Amoy Deco Style shows the transformation from traditional building typology towards new forms of architecture, which were later referenced throughout South-East Asia and became popular in the wider region.

The property demonstrates the qualifying conditions of authenticity and integrity, although the integrity could be affected by visitor numbers and behaviours, which require consistent controls. At present, the responsible authorities have committed to restrict access to the island at 50,000 people per day, which includes around 15,000 inhabitants and commuters and accordingly restricts the number of visitors to 35,000 per day including during the peak season.

Kulangsu Island is protected as a National Scenic Area and its historic buildings are registered at various levels, including national, provincial, county and municipal. It is managed by a dual management structure responsible for cultural heritage and other settlement concerns. The management is further guided by a conservation and management plan, which is implemented since 2014. A detailed monitoring system constantly reviews the condition of the property as well as the development of threats.

## 8 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Kulangsu: A historic international settlement, China, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (ii) and (iv)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### Brief synthesis

Kulangsu Island is located on the estuary of Chiu-lung River facing the city of Xiamen across the 600-meter-wide Lujiang Strait. With the opening of Xiamen as a commercial port in 1843, and Kulangsu as an international settlement in 1903, the island of the southern coastal areas of the Chinese empire suddenly became an important window for Sino-foreign exchanges. Its heritage reflects the composite nature of a modern settlement composed of 931 historical buildings of a variety of local and international architectural styles, natural sceneries, a historic network of roads and historic gardens.

Through the concerted endeavour of local Chinese, returned overseas Chinese, and foreign residents from many countries, Kulangsu developed into an international settlement with outstanding cultural diversity and modern living quality. It also became an ideal dwelling place for the overseas Chinese and elites who were active in East Asia and South-eastern Asia as well as an embodiment of modern habitat concepts of the period between mid-19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Kulangsu is an exceptional example of the cultural fusion, which emerged from these exchanges, which remain legible in an organic urban fabric formed over decades constantly integrating more diverse cultural references. Most exceptional testimony of the fusion of various stylistic influences is a genuinely new architectural movement the Amoy Deco Style, which emerged from the island.

**Criterion (ii):** Kulangsu Island exhibits in its architectural features and styles the interchange of Chinese, South East Asian and European architectural and cultural values and traditions produced in this variety by foreign residents or returned overseas Chinese who settled on the island. The settlement created did not only mirror the various influences settlers brought with them from their places of origin or previous residence but it synthesized a new hybrid style – the so-called Amoy Deco Style, which developed in Kulangsu and exerted influences over a far wider region in South-east Asian coastal areas and beyond. In this, the settlement illustrates the encounters, interactions and fusion of diverse values during an early Asian globalization stage.

**Criterion (iv):** Kulangsu is the origin and best representation of the Amoy Deco Style. Named after Xiamen's local Hokkien dialect name Amoy, Amoy Deco Style refers to an architectural style and typology, which

first occurred in Kulangsu and illustrates the fusion of inspirations drawn from local building traditions, early western and in particular modernist influences as well as the southern Fujian Migrant culture. Based on these the Amoy Deco Style shows a transformation of traditional building typology towards new forms, which were later referenced throughout South-East Asia and became popular in the wider region.

#### Integrity

The integrity of the historic landscape has been maintained, primarily as result of consistent conservation of historic architectural structures and effective development controls regarding height, volume and form of new buildings. The historic relationship of built up and green spaces also contributes to the overall landscape integrity which includes the preserved natural sceneries of cliffs and rocks and the historic gardens, both affiliated courtyard and independent private gardens.

The completeness of the property is demonstrated in the delimitation of the entire island including its surrounding coastal water until the edge of the reef, which underpins that the built structures and the natural setting of the island form one harmonious whole. The early recognition of the harmony has prevented extensive development in the waters surrounding the island, which can be witnesses on other islands or the nearby mainland. Essential for the recognition of the value of the island is that it was never connected to Xiamen via traffic infrastructure and remains solely accessible by ferry. Today, this restriction constitutes and essential element of visitor management processes ensuring the continued intactness of the island.

Tourism pressures are a concern that could affect the integrity of the island and hence require strict controls. A maximum number of 35,000 visitors per day will be allowed to access Kulangsu, a number that will require close monitoring to ensure it suffices to prevent negative impacts of large visitor flows.

#### Authenticity

Kulangsu Island has retained its authenticity in form and design, location and setting and in many elements of the island material and substance as well as – to a lower extent – use and function. Both the urban settlement patterns as well as the architectural structures have retain their characteristic layout and stylistic features. The latter remain credible representations of the various architectural styles the island unites as well as the Amoy Deco Style it created.

Kulangsu retains its original location and natural landscape setting and has preserved the atmospheric qualities of an ideal residential settlement with a wide range of public services, which continue to serve their original function. The urban structures retain protected by the original legal context, which was created for the establishment of the international settlement in 1903 and remains valid until present. The various spatial contexts of the island, both natural and built-up retain their original links and relations including road connections and sight relations.

#### Management and protection requirements

Kulangsu was recognized by the State Council as a National Scenic Area in 1988 under the National Scenic Area framework. Fifty-one representative historic buildings, gardens, structures and cultural sites are included in Heritage lists: nineteen as National Heritage Sites, eight as Provincial Heritage Sites, and twenty-four as County Heritage Sites. Moreover, all the provincial and county protected sites will be added to the 8<sup>th</sup> Tranche of the National Heritage List.

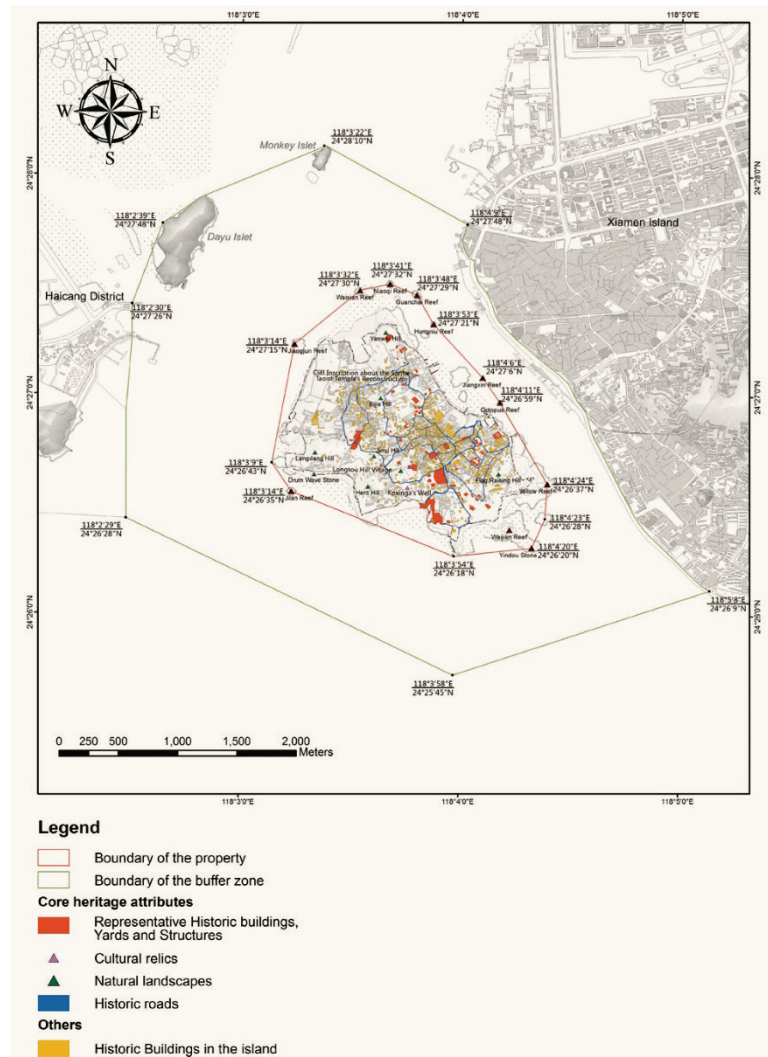
The Conservation and Management Plan for Kulangsu Cultural Heritage was officially adopted 2011 and is being implemented by the Government since 2014. The plan establishes management strategies and actions based on an extensive analysis of the property's conditions and threats. The strategic documents also integrate the provisions of all other plans and protective regulations into a comprehensive management system institutionalizing the cooperation between all concerned management stakeholders. Indicated by the plan as a necessity, the Conservation and Management Plan is supported by Guidelines on Control of Commercial Activities on Kulangsu, which have been adopted in 2014. These guide scale and quality assurance measures for commercial services on the island, in particular those in the tourism sector.

Following the 2017 Capacity Calculation Report of Kulangsu Scenic Zone, the optimum number of people on the island is set at 25,000 while the absolute maximum lies at 50,000 people per day. Since this number includes the residents and commuters to the island, the effective maximum number of visitors is now controlled at 35,000 visitors, including on peak days.

#### Additional recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Submitting an assessment report of the visitor controls to be implemented from June 2017 onwards to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies after a trial period of 2 years,
- b) Monitoring of visitor controls and periodic update of studies on the limits of acceptable change with regard to visitation of the island to confirm that the current cut off numbers are sufficient to ensure the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value,
- c) Developing and implementing a seismic retrofitting plan for brick and stone historic buildings,
- d) Extending the focus of conservation measures to also include the interior of buildings;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Aerial view of Kulangsu



Amoy Deco style mansion





Huang Cimin Villa



Shuzhuang Gardens