

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

PASEO DEL PRADO AND BUEN RETIRO, A LANDSCAPE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (SPAIN)

IUCN has considered this cultural landscape nomination based on a desk review of the nomination dossier and the comments of one (1) external reviewer.

The area, nominated under criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi) covers 199.59 ha. It does not include a buffer zone. IUCN observes that much of the natural values of the landscape have been extensively transformed and little remains of the original vegetation across the nominated property.

Whilst the nominated property does not overlap with any protected area of recognised international importance, IUCN supports the premise that contact with nature in urban areas, nature, and parks fosters social connections, which are vital to community cohesion and significantly contributes to social well-being.

Through a rapid analysis, IUCN notes that the Royal Botanic Garden (RBG), one of the two main areas of the nominated property with natural elements, includes a collection of over 7,000 plant species. Among its *ex-situ* collection, at least one species, *Zelkova carpinifolia*, is classified as internationally Vulnerable (VU) (with a decreasing trend) and another, *Gyrocaryum oppositifolium*, as Critically Endangered (CR). The importance of the RBG from a conservation and capacity-building stance is notable, not only to exhibit plants, but also to teach botany, support field expeditions for new plant species discovery and classification, and to develop botanical research, focused mainly on Spanish and American flora.

IUCN also observes that the Tree Management Plan of the Buen Retiro promotes the improvement of fauna biodiversity within the nominated property. The area is also managed under the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Plan of Madrid, which considers the need for an increasing degree of connection between the green areas located inside and outside the city, with important climate change implications as well as water retention and biological improvement of the soil. IUCN recommends ICOMOS to discuss with the State Party the possibility of strengthening the connectivity of the nominated property with other nearby natural areas (urban parks and natural areas) to allow for species movements as well as increase the areas' capacity to provide regulating services.