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## Sítio Roberto Burle Marx (Brazil) No 1620

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### Official name as proposed by the State Party

Sítio Roberto Burle Marx

### Location

District of Barra de Guaratiba  
City of Rio de Janeiro  
State of Rio de Janeiro  
Brazil

### Brief description

Sítio Roberto Burle Marx, located in the west zone of the City of Rio de Janeiro, comprises extensive landscape gardens and buildings set between mangroves and native Atlantic forest in a mountainous area of the district of Barra de Guaratiba.

The property was a 'landscape laboratory' for landscape architect and artist Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994). Over a period of more than forty years, he experimented fusing artistic Modernist ideas with native tropical plants to create garden designs as living works of art.

The Sítio reflects Burle Marx's experimentation but also the key characteristics that came to define his landscape gardens, such as sinuous forms, exuberant mass planting, architectural arrangements of plants, dramatic colour contrasts, use of tropical plants, and the incorporation of elements of traditional Portuguese-Brazilian folk culture, all of which influenced the development of the modern tropical garden.

### 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*.

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (July 2019) paragraph 47, it is a *cultural landscape*.

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

30 January 2015

### Background

This is a new nomination.

At the request of the State Party, an ICOMOS Advisory Process was carried out in January 2018. The outcomes of this process and ICOMOS recommendations have

been taken into account by the State Party and incorporated in the nomination dossier.

### Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 8 to 13 September 2019.

Comments on the natural attributes of this property, and their conservation and management were received from IUCN on 19 November 2019 and have been incorporated into relevant sections of this report.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 10 September 2019 requesting further information about landscape plans, the identification and inventory of potential attributes, the art collections, justification for inscription, comparative analysis, boundaries, buffer zone, state of conservation, protection and management system/plan.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2019 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: landscape principles, evidence of experimentation, documentation about the development of the property, the development of modernist landscapes, comparative analysis, legal protection and disaster risk management planning.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 4 November 2019, and 28 February 2020, and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2020

## 2 Description of the property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

### Description and history

Sítio Burle Marx is an extensive landscape garden developed over forty years by Burle Marx as a laboratory for his design ideas. What Burle Marx was trying to achieve was an integration of artistic expressions into landscape design so that parks and gardens became living works of art, not static but emerging from growth. The successful experiments in the Sítio were replicated in the parks and gardens Burle Marx designed, and also

came to influence the development of modern tropical gardens of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sítio Roberto Burle Marx is located on Estrada Roberto Burle Marx in the district of Barra de Guaratiba in the west zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, some 50 kilometres from the city centre. It is on the west slope of Serra Geral de Guaratiba, on the hill of Santo Antônio da Bica. The portion of the nominated property above 100 metres in elevation is part of the Pedra Branca State Park, a dense ombrophilous forest that is part of the Atlantic Forest. The nominated property covers over 40 hectares and comprises extensive landscape gardens, clustered on the sloping land and above native forest. About 40 percent of the property has been transformed into landscape gardens.

By the time he purchased this land in 1949, Burle Marx had already carried out large-scale public and private landscaping projects. He had visited Europe in 1928 to study the Modern Movement in Art which had begun in the early 1900s. There, he was influenced by artists such as Picasso, Matisse and Kandinsky. When he returned to Brazil in 1930 and started his landscape career, he used his own European inspired abstract paintings as a basis for the design of his commissions.

Burle Marx was also an important collector of native tropical plants, which he gained from special expeditions. These ornamental plants needed to be acclimatised, tested to understand their habits, and experimented to see how they might be used to create landscape artworks. This was the rationale for the acquisition of the property, which became a kind of laboratory of landscape experimentation that was essential to the aesthetic and botanical development of Burle Marx's designs.

In the development of the Sítio, Burle Marx distributed species on the ground, applying their volumes, colours and textures in arrangements, based on modern aesthetic principles and architectural ideas, tempered by the specific characteristics of the flora and his own extensive botanical knowledge.

Accordingly, the Sítio gardens were developed organically, without following a previously elaborated design. The gardens materialize both the landscape principles present in the work of Burle Marx and the processes of analysis, cultivation, and experimentation.

The nominated property includes eight modern and traditional buildings (Administration Building, Stone House, Main House, Loggia, Chapel, Stone Kitchen, Laundry and Atelier) and seven lakes, all permeated and integrated by the landscape gardens.

The Sítio today houses one of the most extensive and rare botanical collections of ornamental plants coming from Brazil and the tropical and subtropical regions. The property also includes a number of plant nurseries,

including covered nurseries for plants that require special environmental conditions.

The 1949 purchase was the first of three acquisitions of land that now forms the nominated property. The second was in 1952 and the third in 1960, both of which reflected the need for more space to develop the botanical-landscape collection.

By the end of the 1960s, the nominated property housed the most representative collection of Brazilian plants, as well as rare species from the tropics in general. The collection of living plants became one of the most important in the world, whether considered by the number of individuals or by the diversity of the preserved species. The 3,500 cultivated species, with an emphasis on tropical and subtropical flora, live in harmony with the native vegetation of the region, which includes species belonging to the mangrove swamp, *restinga* (a distinct type of coastal tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forest) and Atlantic Forest.

Work on the built components of the nominated property began in the early 1950s, when Burle Marx began transforming the simple but deteriorated existing Main House on the property. The last works on this building occurred in the 1990s.

Listing of "Sítio Santo Antônio da Bica" as state heritage began in 1983 and was completed in 1988; listing of the property as national historic and artistic heritage commenced in 1985. Burle Marx donated the property to the Federal Government in 1985, and it was renamed Sítio Roberto Burle Marx in compliance with the deed of donation. Burle Marx continued to live on the property and became its first director. The commercial activities of Sítio Roberto Burle Marx were transferred to a neighbouring farm in 1987.

The 1990s saw the construction of the Atelier, intended for the production of visual arts and as a space for exhibitions, classes and other activities. This period also saw the inauguration of the Administration Building.

Burle Marx died in 1994, and public visitation to the property began in 1995. Sítio Roberto Burle Marx is today a public property, a special unit of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Culture.

In the first decade after Burle Marx's death the management of the property was directed at trying to sustain the idea of experimentation, following what were considered to be his principles. This approach has now been reversed and the landscape gardens are managed to perpetuate Burle Marx's own experimentation and what that achieved. The outcomes define the key landscape characteristics that he used in designs for over two thousand gardens and landscapes, and they were also influential in the wider development of modern tropical gardens of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Boundaries**

The nominated property has an area of 40.53 ha, and a buffer zone of 575 ha.

The property boundaries incorporate all the potential attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The boundaries of the nominated property correspond to the estate formerly owned by the landscape architect and artist Roberto Burle Marx.

The boundaries of the buffer zone follow the local geomorphology on the southeast and northwest, the lines of three streets to the northeast, and a small hill to the southwest.

In its letter dated 10 September 2019, ICOMOS requested information on the reasons why there is no buffer zone to the south-eastern boundary of the nominated property. The State Party replied that this is because this is a ridgeline with a protected area beyond.

## **State of conservation**

In general, the state of conservation of the nominated property is good.

In the absence, though, of a detailed survey and inventory of the designed areas of the garden as they are today, and without available comparisons with archive material, it is difficult to assess completely satisfactorily how far conservation has succeeded in sustaining Burle Marx's designs.

The botanical collection (and nurseries) is generally in very good condition, and benefits from conservation measures and regular maintenance by skilled staff.

Some of the nursery buildings are in fair condition. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission noted that the strategic plan includes actions to improve the condition of the nurseries, and work was already under way. Ongoing work follows the original pattern of nurseries and their locations.

The lakes are in good to very good condition, and work is being undertaken to improve them as part of the annual action program. The ICOMOS mission noted that leaks that were noted in the nomination dossier have been repaired, and there is otherwise regular maintenance.

While the nomination dossier identifies a number of buildings in bad or fair condition, the State Party has since improved the state of conservation in these cases, and this was confirmed during the ICOMOS mission. The buildings are now generally in very good condition. In the case of the gardeners' work shed, the condition is fair. As the nomination dossier notes, five buildings (Main House, Loggia, Chapel of Santo Antônio da Bica, Stone Kitchen and Atelier) are subject to a higher standard of conservation.

As for the museological and bibliographic collections, the latest assessment of their state of conservation (2012-2013) indicated that some elements were in fair condition. These are being restored as part of the annual Action Plan.

In the additional information provided in response to the Interim Report, the State Party provided an update about the state of conservation of various potential attributes including buildings and collections, and brief details about the service block.

## **Factors affecting the property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main external factors affecting the property are fires, reliable water supply, urban expansion, and real estate speculation, while the main internal factor is the lack of a clearly defined rationale for conservation interventions in the aesthetic elements of the gardens.

Urban expansion and real estate speculation pressures in the vicinity of the property are significant factors affecting the visual integrity of the property. There is an urgent need to better regulate urban growth and speculation in the buffer zone, and to revise the existing urban plans covering the buffer zone in order to take into account in their guidelines the attributes and values of the site.

Understanding of the cultural value of the property should be improved, and a shared vision that underpins the conservation and protection of the property should be developed. This should also address the access road and urban fabric in the vicinity.

Providing an adequate water supply for the property has also been an ongoing issue. However, the installation of two artesian wells is expected to provide a long-term solution and guarantee the water supply for the foreseeable future.

Forest fires and uncontrolled burning are significant issues that are identified by the State Party in the nomination dossier, and observed during the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission. The State Party advises that the boundaries of the nominated property are cleared to prevent or slow the spread of fire from outside the property. There are also warning and communication systems, and firefighting capacity in the property.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested information about options envisaged to strengthen preventive measures, including potential plans to consider or adopt such measures. The State Party indicated that a risk preparedness plan is included in the management plan. There has been some further consideration of risk management in relation to fire protection, in particular a comprehensive analysis of the property, and a project has been prepared although this is not specifically

aimed at fighting forest fires. A partnership with the State Environmental Institute will also be formalised. Further work to strengthen risk preparedness within and in the setting of the property is urgently needed.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

#### Proposed justification

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

- The property is globally an outstanding example of an important interchange of human values developed through study and landscaping experimentation with tropical flora. The property was crucial to the development of a new language of landscape design which has largely influenced the shaping of parks and gardens since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Brazil and throughout the world. Sítio Roberto Burle Marx was a laboratory for the modern tropical garden, a place for fostering landscaping, artistic and botanical knowledge, and for the development of an ecological approach that articulates preservation and vitality, and nature and culture. It provides a unique experience, in both educational and aesthetic terms, of tropical flora and of Brazilian and Latin American culture, with important messages about the environment and cultural heritage.
- Sítio Roberto Burle Marx reached its final configuration through an experimental process, revealing an ecological conception of form as a process including social collaboration which is at the basis of the struggle for environmental and cultural preservation. The property was a lively gathering place for scholars and artists from a wide variety of fields and origins. Understood as a landscaping laboratory, it was shaped out of a productive dialogue with different strands of Brazilian, Latin American and international modernity practice and thought. It is the unique result of the convergence of these different perspectives: the modern abstract form, the exuberance of tropical flora, local and international landscape traditions, the traditional Portuguese-Brazilian constructive typology, and various European and Latin American classical and popular art expressions. Drawing from all these sources, Sítio Roberto Burle Marx became the place for testing and developing the modern tropical garden, an important expression of the Modern Movement in the field of landscape design.

#### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is structured into five parts: cultural landscapes; botanical gardens; World Heritage properties with integrated historical gardens and parks; landscape design and 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage; and the existing representation of Burle Marx-designed properties on the World Heritage List.

The analysis considers existing cultural landscapes on the World Heritage List, in particular those created intentionally, and the different schools, traditions and models they reflect. The analysis notes a number of points of convergence and difference with the nominated property and these examples.

Despite identifying specific similarities with other properties, the analysis argues that the unique qualities of the nominated property underpin the claim for Outstanding Universal Value. These include the nature of its botanical collection and formal features, the use of volume and colour of vegetation, the play of light, and other qualities. Importantly, none of the existing World Heritage cultural landscapes represent a synthesis of tropical or modern landscape, as can be found at the nominated property. This arises from its function and purpose. The other landscapes were undertaken as expressions of power and wealth, as well as aesthetic sensibilities.

The two botanical gardens on the World Heritage List reflect different moments and styles of landscape, associated with botanical studies and the economic use of plants from different ecosystems. The analysis argues that landscaping plays an important but supplementary role in these examples. In the case of the nominated property, landscaping is not just a way of organising the collection, it is the reason for developing the collection and determining its display.

The World Heritage List also includes gardens and parks of different historical eras and cultural traditions, almost always integrated with landmark buildings, groups of buildings or historical urban centres. These properties represent the main global trends in the history of landscape design but none was developed as a landscape laboratory, nor are any considered a modern tropical garden or express tropical characteristics.

The analysis of twentieth-century properties on the World Heritage List notes that these have core elements in common that link them to the discourse on modernity related to the nominated property. While in some cases the underlying landscape principles are similar, the analysis notes differences such as the nominated property's innovative ecological perspective for configuring cultural landscapes, as well as its fundamental role as a laboratory.

The analysis also considers examples of the Modern Movement inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, in none of these examples does a garden play a key role in the justification for inscription.

The final part of the analysis considers other examples of the work of Burle Marx in properties already on the World Heritage List, such as Brasilia. Burle Marx was prolific and many of his designs are considered to be works of art as modern tropical landscapes. However, one fundamental difference between these examples and the nominated property is that the nominated

property is a departure point for these other designs, a laboratory for research and experimentation.

In conclusion, the analysis finds that the nominated property is the laboratory for research and experimentation where the principles of the modern tropical garden matured. It enabled the application of these principles in many landscape projects elsewhere.

ICOMOS considers the comparative analysis successfully demonstrates that there are no properties currently on the World Heritage List which demonstrates the same value and attributes as the nominated property.

The analysis is weak, though, in relation to considering comparison with properties not on the World Heritage list.

This concern was shared with the State Party in the ICOMOS letter of September 2019 and in the Interim Report. The State Party provided a brief additional appreciation of a range of potentially comparable properties related to modern landscapes from the period. It argued that no other sites include all the attributes of the property.

Given the wealth of documentation on the development of Modern gardens, ICOMOS expected a more thorough analysis that could have positioned more accurately the Sítio in its regional and global context. Such a wider analysis could not only have strengthened the justification for inscription but added to a better understanding of precisely what should be sustained in the property.

The Modernist Arts movement that developed in Europe in the 1900s quickly spread to other disciplines with Modernist ideas in architecture soon being echoed in the landscapes that surrounded the buildings. But this spread to landscapes had a strong geographical dimension with South America being a key focus, and within that region, Burle Marx was a key proponent. How Burle Marx's ideas were developed and how widely they were spread deserved more attention.

Although influenced by Europe, Burle Marx's landscape creations were distinctly Brazilian and in turn influenced Brazilian architecture. He also directly influenced individual designers such as Raymond Jungles from Florida. But it was the sheer size and scope of his output – some 2,000 public and private projects in 20 countries around the world – that ultimately had the greatest influence as his work found favour not only amongst designer and private owners but, most importantly, amongst the general public – for whom he said he designed parks 'to provide dignity for the masses'. Burle Marx could be said to have launched a popular revolution in garden design with the Sítio being where the seeds of that revolution were developed.

ICOMOS considers that while the comparative analysis should have been more extensive, it is none the less sufficient to justify consideration of the property for the World Heritage List.

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

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#### **Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) 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;*

The State Party considers the nominated property is globally an outstanding example of an important interchange of human values developed through study and landscaping experimentation with tropical flora. The property was crucial to the development of a new language of landscape design which has largely influenced the shaping of parks and gardens since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Brazil and throughout the world. Sítio Roberto Burle Marx was a laboratory for the modern tropical garden, a place for fostering landscaping, artistic and botanical knowledge, and for the development of an ecological approach that articulates preservation and vitality, nature and culture. It provides a unique experience, in both educational and aesthetic terms, of tropical flora and of Brazilian and Latin American culture with important messages about the environment and cultural heritage.

In its first request for additional information, ICOMOS requested the State Party augment the justification to reinforce the claims of influence, demonstrating its importance and providing examples beyond the work of Burle Marx. The Interim Report also sought further information about the history of the development of modern tropical landscapes, and other gardens that could reflect Burle Marx's landscape principles. In response, the State Party listed the important qualities of the nominated property including general indications of influence. A range of references were also provided supporting the importance and influence of Burle Marx.

ICOMOS considers the property demonstrates an important interchange of ideas on landscape design related to the importation of ideas of the Modernist art movement from Europe, the shaping and adaptation of these to landscape forms based on the use of native tropical flora, and the way these new forms made manifest in over two thousand parks and gardens around the world, which have had a profound impact on the development of Modernist Tropical garden design around the world.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has 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;*

The State Party consider that Sítio Roberto Burle Marx reached its final configuration through an experimental process, revealing an ecological conception of form as a process including social collaboration which is at the basis of the struggle for environmental and cultural preservation. The nominated property was a lively gathering place for scholars and artists from a wide variety of fields and origins. Understood as a landscaping laboratory, it was shaped out of a productive dialogue with different strands of Brazilian, Latin American and international modernity practice and thought. It is the unique result of the convergence of these different perspectives: the modern abstract form, the exuberance of the tropical flora, local and international landscape traditions, the traditional Portuguese-Brazilian constructive typology, and various European and Latin American classical and popular art expressions. Drawing from all these sources, Sítio Roberto Burle Marx became the place for testing and developing the modern tropical garden, an important expression of the Modern Movement in the field of landscape design.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a landscape that demonstrates the development of a new type of landscape design that fused creative ideas of the Modern art movement with local typologies and tropical plants to create a style that ultimately became known as the modern tropical garden.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iv) have been demonstrated.

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### **Integrity and authenticity**

#### **Integrity**

The nominated property contains all the potential attributes that are central to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. It corresponds to all the land acquired by Roberto Burle Marx for his landscaping activities, and it is of an adequate size.

#### **Authenticity**

The authenticity of the nominated property is related to its form, design, and materials, including living plant materials, the interaction between all of these to create artistic works, and the ideas that they convey.

Although ICOMOS considers these attributes adequately convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, their documentation needs to be greatly improved to guide conservation in order to ensure there is no gradual erosion over time.

The historical role of the gardens as a laboratory for the development of the modern tropical garden has ended and it is therefore essential that there is a clearer understanding of the full scope of the attributes and how they will be sustained.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, although the attributes are vulnerable to incremental change over time.

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### **Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

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

ICOMOS supports the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value. It considers, though, that what needs to be stressed is the aesthetic conception of the gardens rather than an ecological conception. Although Burle Marx campaigned to save natural areas, and introduced a large number of new species to garden cultivation, his designs were outstanding for the way they reflected abstract paintings, where every detail mattered and where nothing was left to chance. They were certainly a fusion of art and nature but this cannot be said to be exceptional for the way they reflect *“ecological conception of form as a process including social collaboration which is at the basis of the struggle for environmental and cultural preservation.”* Burle Marx introduced the aesthetics of painting to landscape design: the Sítio is where he worked out how to achieve this. His designs were primarily artistic conceptions rather than primarily ecological conceptions.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iv) have been demonstrated and the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

### **Attributes**

Key attributes of the Sítio are the artistic compositions of the various part of the gardens and how plants have been arranged as living paintings in terms of colour, shape, volume or statuesque form. The attributes include Burle Marx's key characteristics, such as sinuous forms, exuberant mass planting, architectural arrangements of plants, dramatic colour contrasts, use of tropical plants, and the incorporation of elements of traditional Portuguese-Brazilian folk culture and pacifically how the various parts of the garden reflects different permutations of these.

A much more detailed articulation of these key attributes is needed.

The State Party proposed that the art collections at the nominated property should also be considered as an attribute. These movable collections are similar to museum collections and archives and need to be considered as supportive material rather than as part of Outstanding Universal Value as attributes. Artworks that are specifically related to the design of the gardens are

clearly of key importance in understanding the creative processes and in defining attributes.

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ICOMOS considers that the attributes have been broadly defined and a more detailed articulation of these attributes is needed. The art collection should not be considered as an attribute, but as a supportive material to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

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## 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

### Conservation measures

The nominated property has been under the care and responsibility of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) for over 30 years. The primary management objective has been conservation, which is undertaken by staff in accordance with annual Action Plans and in the context of a strategic plan. This has involved continuing preservation and conservation of the planted and constructed features of the property.

The one area that needs strengthening is the conservation and maintenance of the designed form of the gardens in terms of the way plants were laid out. Currently there appears to be more of a focus on the conservation of plant collections – which are nevertheless extremely important - than on the way those plants were assembled as components of living paintings. Both are important, but it is the artistic creations that are the focus of this nomination and their symbiotic relationship with the massive variety of native tropical plants collected, cultivated and nurtured by Burle Marx.

Conservation of the designed landscape is a major challenge as plants grow and compete with each other. Artistic creations using massing and specific positioning of plants become chaotic without maintenance that respects the underlying intentions of the designer. What needs to be set out much more clearly are the guiding principles that Burle Marx used, the intentions behind his experimentation and the clear outcomes as a basis for current maintenance and conservation and, where appropriate, reinstatement.

The gardens are no longer experimental as has been confirmed by the State Party. As time goes by the links with Burle Marx will become weaker. It is thus essential that as much as possible information is gathered on his design and experimentation processes to establish a firm basis for the justification of interventions. Without such evidence, the gardens could very quickly metamorphose into something completely different from Burle Marx's intentions.

Currently there is inadequate documentation to allow precise consideration as to how the gardens today relate to their form in Burle Marx's lifetime. A much more detailed inventory of the aesthetic and plastic aspects of

the gardens is needed to set out what existed in Burle Marx's lifetime compared to and what exists now.

Once such a clear baseline has been established, this should form the basis for the development of a Conservation Plan that sets out how the conservation of Burle Marx's designs will be approached.

The gardens' living plant collections are subject to daily conservation and management actions involving maintenance of the limits of flowerbeds and of the species arranged in them, phytosanitary treatment, quarantine of species, propagation, pruning, cleaning, soil preparation, nutrition, irrigation and planting. A large team of experienced gardeners is involved in this work.

The seven lakes within the gardens are also subject to ongoing maintenance, both in terms of conservation and handling of water-plant species and fish, as well as their physical form. In recent years, electrical systems, plumbing and waterproofing have all been renewed or repaired.

The collection of buildings is also subject to ongoing conservation and maintenance. Work in recent years has included restoration of the roof of the Administration Building, conservation of floors, painting and roof maintenance of the Stone House, repairs and general painting of the Main House, maintenance of the lime plaster and whitewash of the Chapel, and demolition and reconstruction of the concrete roof slab of the Stone Kitchen.

Fire prevention and firefighting are also important activities at the property.

### Monitoring

There are two programs planned for the assessment and monitoring of the property's state of conservation. One program will be overseen by a management committee, and the other will be undertaken at an institutional level.

Although a detailed schedule of key indicators has been developed and includes a timetable for monitoring and list of who is responsible for undertaking the monitoring, this is not yet clearly related to baseline plans that show precisely what aspects of the garden are being preserved.

Before effective monitoring can be undertaken, there needs to be a detailed analysis of the form of the gardens at the end of Burle Marx's life, the precise rationale behind his creative ideas for each of the different areas of the gardens, what now survives and where interventions are needed.

ICOMOS considers that until such a baseline is in place, it is difficult to define a clear rationale for monitoring.

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ICOMOS considers the conservation measures should be reinforced by the development of a Conservation Plan that sets out how the conservation of Burle Marx's designs will be approached. In the case of monitoring, detailed analysis is required to provide a suitable baseline.

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## 5 Protection and management

### Documentation

While the nominated property has been extensively studied over time, there are no original plans due to its evolutionary and experimental history. Likewise, there is no current detailed landscape plan for the nominated property (although one is in preparation), nor any mapping of the key landscape characteristics of the property to assist with its understanding, conservation and management. A geo-referenced inventory of the botanical-landscape collection is being prepared. In addition, a detailed study prepared in 2015 focuses on the garden of the Main House.

None of this documentation is adequate for detailed conservation purposes.

There is a need to document in detail the historical development and phases of the property, including comprehensive documentation on the experimentation with the plants within nurseries. Important views from the property into the surrounding landscape also need to be documented, with a goal to achieve their protection.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested a range of additional documentation or information related to the mapping of the key Burle Marx landscape principles, details about the proposed plant inventory including a sample of the data collected, records of oral sources about the development of the property or planned research into this, and evidence of experimentation, its correlation to the property's form and plantings, and a sample of such documentation. In response, the State Party provided considerable detail about the development of the inventory and mapping. In the case of oral histories, these have been undertaken and recording further testimonies is proposed. However, no details about the evidence of experimentation are provided, apart from an overview of the experimental work undertaken. The State Party did provide documentation regarding important internal and external views.

ICOMOS considers that it is a priority to delineate in detail, on the basis of a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach, the attributes of the property and their degree of intactness on the basis of an analysis of the maps, surveys and illustrative materials related to the property at the time of Burle Marx's death and at the present time. Further research should also be undertaken with analysis on the archives and the art collection.

### Legal protection

The nominated property is legally protected at all available levels. At the national level it is protected by the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN). At the state level it has protection under the State Institute of Cultural Heritage (INEPAC). At the local level the property and buffer zone are integrated into the Rio de Janeiro State Conservation Strategy. There is also a municipal law regarding urban development, and a draft bill regulating a Neighbourhood Impact Study, which is planned for finalisation in 2020. The latter would address urban pressure around the property.

In its first letter seeking additional information, ICOMOS requested details about the coordination of the various existing and proposed protection measures, progress with the finalisation and implementation of municipal laws regarding urban development, the impact of a program related to environmental standards, a proposed ordinance and its timeframe, the role, relationship and timeframe of a draft bill regulating the neighbourhood impact study and the Guaratiba structuring plan, and the status of the freeze on urban expansion. No information has been provided by the State Party in response.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested information on the timetable for the finalisation and implementation of this draft bill. The State Party has provided an update on the development of protective measures. However, no clear timetable for completion is provided, and this may be complicated by elections to be undertaken and the replacement of the legislative and executive branches.

### Management system

There are effective management structures and processes in place for the property and buffer zone at the three levels of government, with offices and personnel experienced with heritage properties and urban planning. A proposed new management plan will update and improve the existing Strategic Plan (2012-2018), which is operationalised through annual Action Plans. The new plan, scheduled for completion in 2020, is intended to embody World Heritage principles and concepts. What is essential is that this management plan is based on a clear understanding of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value – which remains to be clearly defined.

In its first letter seeking additional information, ICOMOS sought details about the status and timeframe of the management, and information about the global architectural masterplan and any potential impacts. The State Party provided details about the management plan, including its scheduled completion date of May 2020. However, no information was provided regarding the masterplan.



The State Party proposes to create a management committee involving IPHAN and a range of relevant institutions for the property and buffer zone, including those from the non-governmental sector, civil society and external experts. This will consolidate the current coordination, and create a formal mechanism to improve monitoring and decision-making. This will be a decision-making committee for the property, in coordination with other parties.

The objective of the proposed management system is to articulate different initiatives and actions in the property, involving other institutions, so that planning allows for greater synergy, integration and responsibility-sharing for effective management. It will also relate to the establishment of monitoring indicators for the plan.

The nominated property is adequately resourced, including with appropriate staff.

### **Visitor management**

The nominated property is the only cultural tourist attraction in the area, and visitors come mainly from Rio de Janeiro. The current visitation rates are well below the property's carrying capacity.

While the current presentation of the nominated property includes some aspects of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, more can be done to provide information about its role as a laboratory for the development of modern tropical landscapes.

Visitor management issues to be addressed include improvements to the visitor reception area, and better parking for both cars and buses.

### **Community involvement**

There appears to be general community support for the property. One aspect of community involvement is the strong connection between the property and nursery businesses in the vicinity.

### **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the protection and management of nominated property**

While there is documentation about the property, one particular gap is the availability of detailed landscape plans for the property – although the State Party advises that these are now being prepared – and the mapping of landscape principles. There is also a need to better document the history of development and evidence of experimentation.

Although the property is legally protected at national and state levels, and its buffer zone is integrated into the Rio de Janeiro State Conservation Strategy, there remain concerns about the effectiveness of these measures in relation to urban expansion, given the current freeze. Proposals for municipal laws on urban development and the Guaratiba structure plan need to be progressed to ensure more effective protection for the setting of the property and its views.

The management system for the property is adequate, with appropriate structures and processes for the property and buffer zone. Proposed updates and changes to the system will enhance management. The property has adequate funding and staff.

Visitor management is satisfactory, although visitor amenities could be improved, and the property is currently operating well below its carrying capacity. Improvements could be made to the presentation of the property in order that there can be a much better understanding of Burle Marx's principles in relation to the characteristics of the gardens.

Community involvement with the property and support appear satisfactory.

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ICOMOS considers that although the property is protected at national and state levels, and its buffer zone is integrated into the Rio de Janeiro State Conservation Strategy, proposals for municipal laws the Guaratiba structure plan need to be progressed to ensure more effective protection for the setting of the property and its views.

A major concern is the lack of clearly defined attributes and an adequate baseline data to inform a conservation approach for the property and its presentation. When both are in place they need to form the basis of a Conservation Plan.

The management system is generally adequate although the proposed revisions of the management plan need to be based on clearly defined attributes.

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## **6 Conclusion**

The Sítio is a remarkable survival as a landscape laboratory that illuminates the way one of the great landscape designers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century developed his influential designs. Sustaining it, though, is a complex challenge.

Burle Marx can be said to have introduced the aesthetics of painting to landscape design. Drawing inspiration from the key founders of the Modern Art movement, he created abstract paintings that included modernist images based on abstractions of Portuguese/ Brazilian folk culture, and used these as a basis of garden designs in which plants became components of three dimensional living works of art. As he himself said: *"A garden is a complex of aesthetic and plastic intentions; and the plant is, to a landscape artist, not only a plant – rare, unusual, ordinary or doomed to disappearance – but it is also a color, a shape, a volume or an arabesque in itself"*.

Burle Marx can also be said to have popularised the use of native tropical plants, many of which he collected and cultivated.

The Sítio is thus important as a physical manifestation of Burle Marx's approaches, his principles, and his plant collections and for the way it allows an understanding of the key designs that characterised his work that were used again and again in his creations, such as sinuous forms, exuberant mass planting, architectural arrangements of plants, dramatic colour contrasts, a focus on tropical plants, and the incorporation of elements of traditional Portuguese-Brazilian folk culture. Movement is also an important element of how his landscapes should be experienced.

While ICOMOS considers that the Sítio does manifest all of these approaches, principles and characteristics, it is of concern that currently they are not sufficiently well articulated, conserved and presented. The primary focus of the garden's conservation and documentation is the plant collections rather than the way those collections were used by Burle Marx in an experimental way to create art forms.

Although ICOMOS has requested details from the State Party on these aspects, they have not been forthcoming in any meaningful way. Compiling a detailed analysis of what existed at the end of Burle Marx's life and from that developing a schematic, detailed, three dimensional survey of what exists now, and where interventions are needed to take the property forward, cannot be undertaken quickly. And the starting point for such analysis and documentation should be a clear understanding of the key attributes of Outstanding Universal Value which is also currently lacking.

ICOMOS considers that it is important as a way forward to allow the State Party to develop this material with, if necessary, advice from ICOMOS. Defining attributes for a landscape that conveys layers of meaning, combines several art forms, is based on living parts, and needs to be experienced through motion is challenging. The exercise needs a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach. Such an exercise should also provide a firm base for the development of a Conservation Plan that sets out approaches to the conservation of the designed landscape, and for the revision of the Management Plan to ensure that the cultural design aspects of the property are given at least equal weight to plant collections. It should also help to deepen understanding of the property and inform the way it is presented to visitors.

## 7 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Sítio Roberto Burle Marx, Brazil, be inscribed on the World Heritage List, as a cultural landscape, on the basis of **criteria (ii) and (iv)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### Brief synthesis

Sítio Roberto Burle Marx, located in the west zone of the City of Rio de Janeiro, comprises extensive landscape gardens and buildings set between mangroves and native Atlantic forest in a mountainous area of the district of Barra de Guaratiba.

The property was a 'landscape laboratory' for landscape architect and artist Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994). Over a period of more than forty years, he experimented with fusing artistic Modernist ideas and native tropical plants to create garden designs as living works of art.

Burle Marx introduced the aesthetics of painting to landscape design. Drawing inspiration from the key founders of the Modern Art movement, he created abstract paintings that included modernist images based on abstractions of Portuguese/ Brazilian folk culture, and used these as a basis of garden designs in which plants became components of three dimensional living works of art. Burle Marx popularised the use of native tropical plants, many of which he collected and cultivated.

The Sítio is thus important as a physical manifestation of Burle Marx's approaches, his principles and his plants, as well as for the way it allows an understanding of the key design characteristics that he used again and again in his designs such as sinuous forms, exuberant mass planting, architectural arrangements of plants, dramatic colour contrasts, a focus on tropical plants, and the incorporation of elements of traditional Portuguese-Brazilian folk culture.

The Sítio is a remarkable survival as a landscape laboratory that illuminates the way one of the great landscape designers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century evolved his influential designs. That led to the development of what became known as the Modern tropical garden, an important expression of the Modern Movement in the field of landscape design and one that has largely influenced the shaping of parks and gardens since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Brazil and throughout the world.

**Criterion (ii):** Sítio Roberto Burle Marx demonstrates an important interchange of ideas on landscape design related to the importation of ideas of the Modernist art movement from Europe, their shaping and adaptation through experimentation to a landscape form based on the use of native tropical flora, and their use in a huge number of parks and gardens around the world, which together have had a profound impact on the development of what is now known as Modernist Tropical garden design.

**Criterion (iv):** Sítio Roberto Burle Marx is an outstanding example of a landscape that demonstrates the development of a new type of landscape design that fused creative ideas of the Modern art movement with local typologies and tropical plants to create a style that ultimately became known as the modern tropical garden.

#### Integrity

The property contains all the attributes that are central to the Outstanding Universal Value. The boundaries enclose all the land acquired by Roberto Burle Marx for his landscaping activities, and the property is of an adequate size.

Although none of the attributes are under threat, they are vulnerable to incremental change in the absence of Conservation Plan, based on clear documentation of the property and on a detailed delineation of the attributes.

#### Authenticity

The authenticity of the property is related to its form, design, and materials, including living plant materials, the interaction between all of these to create artistic works, and the ideas that they convey.

The documentation related to the attributes needs to be greatly improved to guide conservation to ensure there is no gradual erosion over time.

The historical role the property had as a laboratory for the development of design ideas has ended and it is therefore essential that there is a clearer understanding of full scope of the attributes and how they will be sustained.

#### Protection and management requirements

The property is legally protected at all available levels. At the national level it is protected by the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN). At the state level it has protection under the State Institute of Cultural Heritage (INEPAC). At the local level the property and buffer zone are integrated into the Rio de Janeiro State Conservation Strategy. These protective measures will be supplemented by a municipal law on urban development, and regulations to address urban pressure around the property.

There are effective management structures and processes in place for the property and buffer zone at the three levels of government, with offices and personnel experienced with heritage properties and urban planning.

A proposed new management plan will update and improve the existing Strategic Plan (2012-2018), which is operationalised through annual Action Plans. The new plan, scheduled for completion in 2020, is intended to embody World Heritage principles and concepts.

It is proposed to create a management committee involving IPHAN (National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage) and a range of relevant institutions for the property and buffer zone, including those from the non-governmental sector, civil society and external experts.

The property is adequately resourced, including with appropriate staff.

To address the vulnerability of the attributes to incremental change over time, there is a need to develop a Conservation Plan.

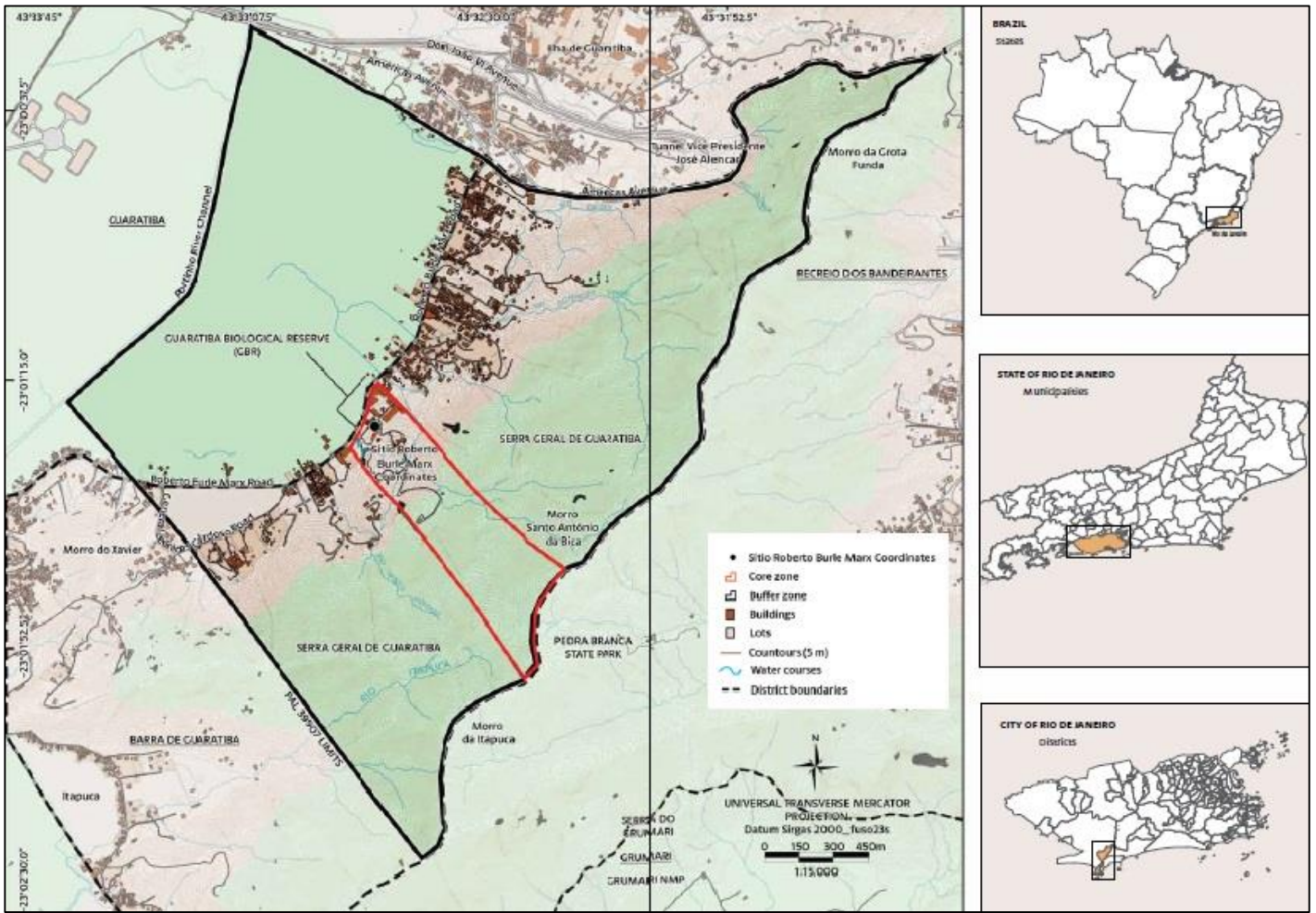
#### Additional recommendations

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

- a) Delineating in detail, through a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach, the attributes of the property and their degree of intactness on the basis of an analysis of:
  - Maps, surveys and illustrative materials relating to the property at the time of Burle Marx's death,
  - Maps, surveys and photographic documentation of the property at the present time,
  - Research and analysis of archives and art collections,
- b) On the basis of completed definition of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, producing a Conservation Plan for the designed landscapes of the property,
- c) Strengthening the Management Plan to reflect the defined attributes and to ensure that the cultural design aspects of the garden are taken into consideration in the management of the property,
- d) Strengthening risk preparedness within the property, and in the setting of the property, especially in relation to fire prevention,
- e) Strengthening protection for the buffer zone and the immediate setting of the property to control urban development pressures and to ensure protection of views from the property into the surrounding landscape,
- f) Ensuring that Heritage Impact Assessments are undertaken for any proposals that might have the potential to impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review in line with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party be requested to submit a report outlining progress with the above to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2023, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47<sup>th</sup> session in 2024.

ICOMOS would be ready to offer advice on the above measures, if requested by the State Party.



Maps showing the boundaries of the nominated property