



international council on monuments and sites

## **Heritage Alert: Immediate threat to the urban forest of Jingu Gaien, Tokyo, Japan 3.5 ha parkland and approximately 3,000 heritage trees lost to redevelopment**

Press Release  
7 September 2023

ICOMOS, together with its Japanese National Committee and International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes, is issuing a Heritage Alert calling for the withdrawal of the Jingu Gaien redevelopment project – including the plan to cut down over 3,000 trees - scheduled to begin in September 2023. This is vital to ensure the preservation and continuity of the core of the Tokyo Garden City Park System, in existence since the 17th century.

The planned construction of three high-rise buildings as well as the replacement and relocation of the existing baseball and rugby stadiums with new stadiums, will lead to the complete destruction of the urban forest that has been formed and nurtured over the past 100 years.

The project proponents are Mitsui Fudosan Co. Ltd., Meiji Jingu Shrine, the Japan Sports Council, and Itochu Co. Ltd. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government has approved the redevelopment plan in the absence of proper dialogue with local citizens and other stakeholders.

Urban parks are places for people's recreation and also contribute to maintaining rich biodiversity. They mitigate the heat island effect in cities and provide shelter in case of natural disasters such as major earthquakes. Jingu Gaien, created through donations and voluntary work of citizens, represents an outstanding cultural heritage, unparalleled in the history of urban parks world-wide.

In light of the above, ICOMOS is issuing this Heritage Alert and calls upon:

1. The project proponents - Mitsui Fudosan Co. Ltd., Meiji Jingu Shrine, Japan Sports Council, and Itochu Co. Ltd. – to immediately withdraw the redevelopment project of Jingu Gaien, fulfilling their social and ethical responsibilities as an international corporation, a religious association, and a fair and honest promoter of sports;
2. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government to review the relevant city planning decisions, recognizing that its decision to remove this urban park in favor of the construction of skyscrapers' will permanently deprive citizens of their right to use the park and that the environmental impact assessment carried out for the redevelopment project has fundamental flaws and needs to be re-examined on the basis of best practice methodology;
3. The Meiji Jingu Shrine to immediately withdraw from the project, considering that Jingu Gaien was created thanks to the donations and voluntary labor provided by citizens, on the understanding that the promise to "maintain it as a beautiful park for eternity" would be fulfilled;
4. The Minato, Shinjuku, and Shibuya Wards to work on ensuring that Jingu Gaien is designated as a Place of Scenic Beauty, in the interest of future generations.
5. The national government of Japan to intervene, and not consider this a problem of Tokyo only.

ICOMOS Japan has presented an alternative plan that does not involve the cutting down of numerous trees and prevents the carbon emissions that would result from the present plans. ICOMOS calls for the creation of a forum where diverse stakeholders can contribute to discussion on the future of the park.

Read the full letter sent by ICOMOS [\[link\]](#)

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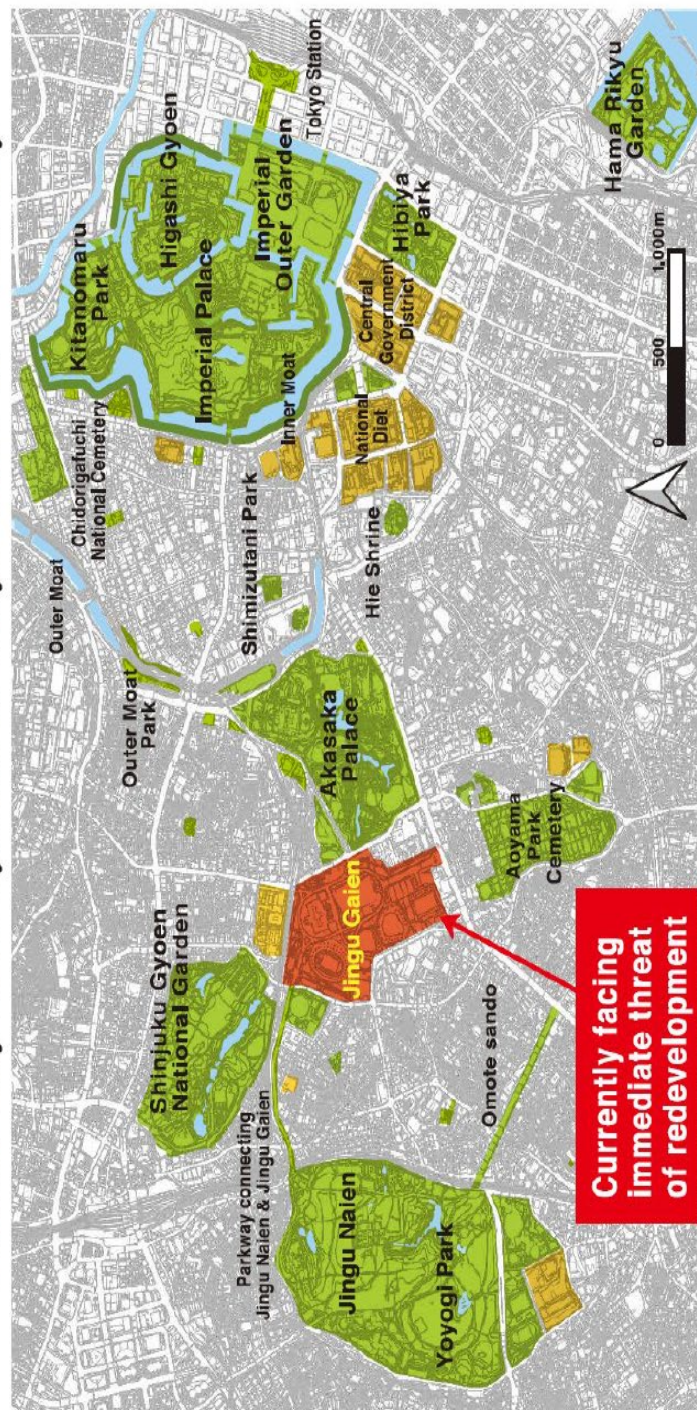
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ICOMOS Japan, the National Committee of ICOMOS in Japan, has almost 500 members.

[www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)

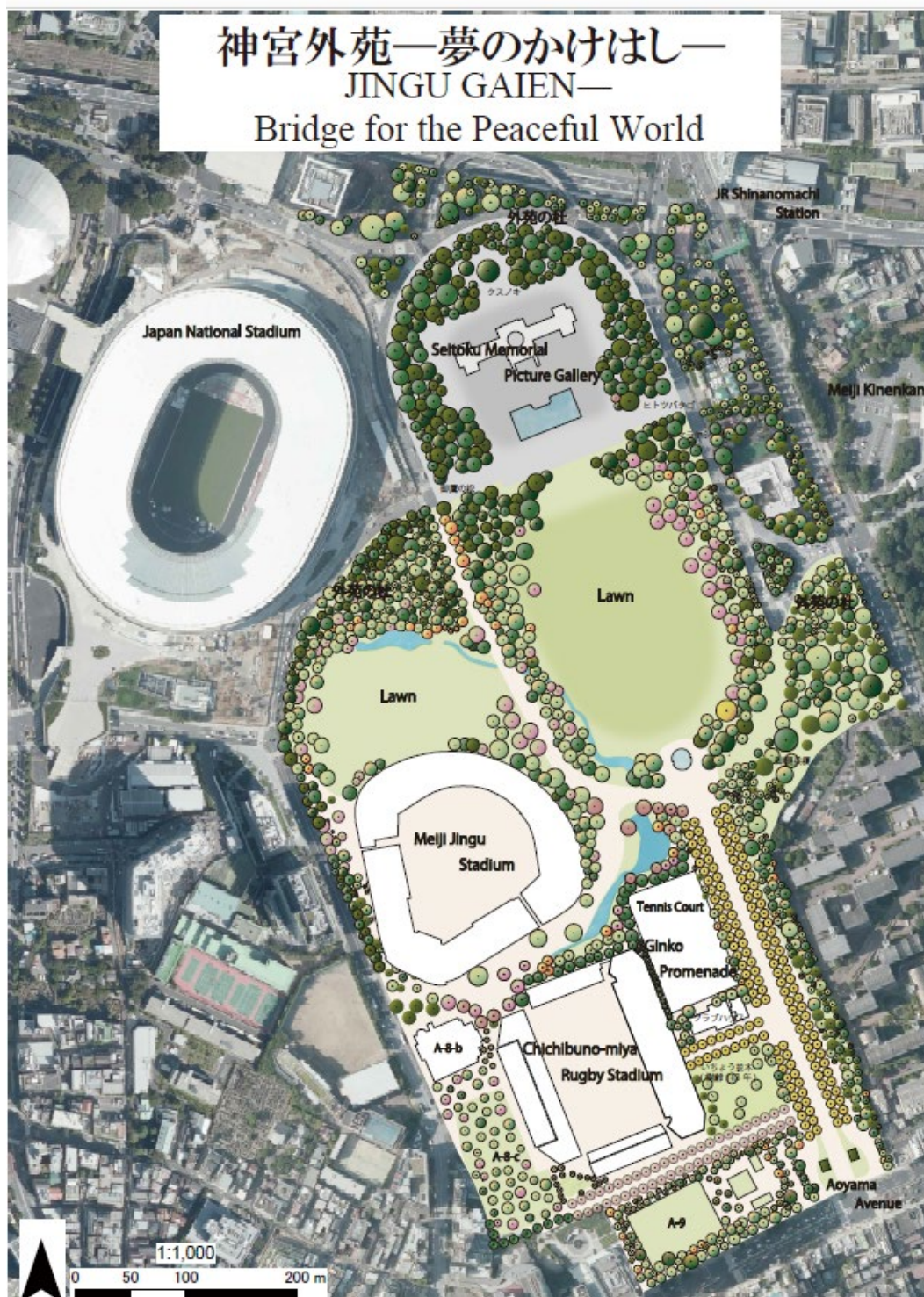
## Immutable Infrastructure Supporting Urban Vitality Garden City Park System in Tokyo since 17<sup>th</sup> Century



**Fig.1 - Jingu Gaien, the core of the Garden City Park System, facing immediate threat by urban redevelopment**

Created by Laboratory of Green Infrastructure in Research and Development Initiative, Chuo University. Graphics by graphic designers Noriko & Isao Tsunoi.





**Fig. 2 – Alternative Proposal by ICOMOS Japan: Jingu Gaien--A bridge for the Peaceful World**  
Created by Laboratory of Green Infrastructure in Research and Development Initiative, Chuo University.



**Fig. 3 - Comparison of Number of Trees (Preserved/Moved/Felled) between Developer's Plan and ICOMOS Plan**