

Yunnan Garden at NTU refreshed with tech, green features



1 of 2 The redeveloped garden includes the Nanyang University Memorial and Nanyang Lake (above). PHOTO: LIANHE ZAobao

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The historic Yunnan Garden at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has been refreshed with technology and green measures to ensure that it remains relevant today and for future generations to come.

New features at the garden, built in the 1950s, include an interactive trail that uses augmented reality which will be available for a limited time following the garden's official opening next Thursday.

Green features include a sustainable water filtration system for Nanyang Lake.

The redeveloped garden, in NTU's Jurong campus, is home to national monuments such as the library and administration building of the former Nanyang University, or Nantah.

"Yunnan Garden is an icon that harks back to the days of Nanyang University. While we embrace our heritage, the campus cannot stand still and be frozen in time," said Mr Koh Boon Hwee, chairman of NTU's Board of Trustees.

Efforts have been made to transform the garden into an inclusive and useful recreational space that is relevant to the students and the public alike, said Mr Koh.

In a 20-month-long project that began in 2018, the garden was integrated with the Chinese Heritage Centre, a research centre, and Nanyang Lake as part of the Campus Master Plan. The result is a 9ha heritage precinct - an area greater than 12 soccer fields - expanded from the original 4ha garden.

To create this integrated space, a stretch of road that used to be Nanyang Drive has been diverted. In its place is a 900m boardwalk to enhance accessibility for visitors. Additional features such as Wi-Fi connectivity, improved lighting and outdoor fitness stations have been included to make the space more conducive for social gatherings.

Mr Bryan Chiew, the NTU Students' Union president, hopes the revamped garden will provide "an invigorating break away from the classroom".

As part of NTU's commitment to environmental sustainability, more than 1,000 trees comprising over 80 species were planted to rejuvenate the garden.

Different plant types have also been curated into themed mini gardens for their research and educational value.

New water and landscape features have been included such as a 5.6m man-made waterfall and artificial wetlands that filter the water going into Nanyang Lake, removing pollutants in the process.

These features were designed to be part of a stormwater management system, which purifies rainwater before it is released into larger ponds and reservoirs for drinking water supply.

Professor Ling San, NTU deputy president and provost, said that "being a heritage precinct is very important, so we engaged all stakeholders - such as alumni, students and the National Parks Board - who have given us precious inputs, which we incorporated into our design".

He added this was important in ensuring that the heritage elements of the garden are well preserved, while adding in sustainability and educational aspects to it.