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A closer look: Ismail (left) having a look at the plans with the department's deputy director (development) Mohd Taib Zin and University Putra Malaysia Design and Architecture faculty deputy dean Dr Osman Mohd Tahir (right).

Kiara park to retain a Malaysian identity

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Project expected to begin early next year and end in three years

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THE planned 188.93ha Bukit Kiara Public Park, which is equivalent to the size of 300 football fields, should begin groundwork by the first quarter of next year.

National Landscape Department director-general Datuk Ismail Ngah said that, in the meantime, feedback would be gathered from various parties such as experts, residents and non-governmental organisations, with its focus on the park's design.

"The park should take about three years to complete.

"We don't intend to rush it either as the site is very sensitive.

"The entire cost for the park will depend on its design, but the Cabinet has approved an initial sum of RM250million for this project," he said after launching the three-day Bukit Kiara Public Park Development Plan seminar at the Bangunan Bakti Siti Hasmah recently.

The area breakdown of the park is listed as Equestrian (25.32ha), Asia Broadcast Centre (42.62ha), DBKL Nursery (5.65ha), Botanical Garden/ Arboretum (99.16ha), and Kiara Valley Park (16.17ha).

In one of the seminar papers, it was also stated that the Kuala

Lumpur City Council's (DBKL) standards for the size of parks were as listed:

- Playgrounds catering to less than 5,000 people (0.4ha - 1ha)
- Neighbourhood park for 5,001 to 20,000 people (1.0ha - 10ha)
- Local park for 20,001 to 50,000 people (10ha - 30ha)
- City park for 50,001 to 500,000 people (40ha - 100ha)
- Federal park for more than 500,000 people (>100ha)

Ismail added that while other world famous parks such as London's Hyde Park, New York's Central Park and Australia's Kings Park would be used as reference for the Bukit Kiara park, it would still retain its Malaysian identity.

"Our climate is very different from theirs, so we need to make it uniquely Malaysian.

"We are going to design it along with nature.

"We won't be uprooting the trees and replanting as with many other parks," he said.

He added that the park would have many benefits for the people in the city - physically, emotionally and even economically.

Ismail also indicated that parks are value-added features for the prospective property buyers.