

Submission by George Roussos, Roussos Legal Advisory

**Consultation on Kahlin Compound and Old Hospital Site
and Flagstaff Park Concept Plan**

**A Park, Domain or Common for Darwin
a Regional Global City**

To: Penny Baxter penny@michelswarrenmunday.com.au
From: George Roussos george@roussoslegaladvisory.com
Date: 11 June 2014

Dear Penny,

1. I refer to the invitation to make a written submission.

Summary

2. In relation to the Old Darwin Hospital Site and Flagstaff Park (**Myilly Point**), the plan proposes “a rough 60 – 40 split between residential development and open space¹.” The proposal is to develop 60 per cent of the area “as residential to ensure the project is commercially viable².” It is contended that a “premier residential area” be created³.”
3. Befitting and commensurate with “the important regional and global city which Darwin has become⁴”, Darwin deserves a Park, Domain or Common, as provides a signature of a significant City, the likes of Hyde Park (Sydney); the Domain (Melbourne); Boston Common (Boston); and Central Park (New York).
4. Further to a Park or Common of stature, you can envisage a significant boulevard that Mitchell Street might become, with State Square on one end and Myilly Point on the other, of significance similar to what the Champs Elysees is the Paris and the National Mall to Washington DC.
5. Whilst the commercial aspects of the proposal are understood, the proposal does not sufficiently take into account the dignity and exceptional quality and standing of Myilly Point to the image and portrayal of the City of Darwin.
6. Our submission is that the entire area should be devoted to a nationally significant Park, Domain or Common for the City of Darwin.

¹ www.ntnews.com.au/news/northern-territory/development-worth-millions-proposed-for-myilly-point-and-old-darwin-hospital-site/story-fnk0b1zt-1226902349378

² www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0014/40217/Question-and-Answer-Sheet2.pdf

³ www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au/old-hospital

⁴ Federal Parliament Hansard, 3 November 2011, Mr Albanese

Discussion

7. As a result of Cyclone Tracy; and the acquisition by the government of the lots on Myilly Point in 1987⁵, we are now fortunate, particularly at this stage of the development and growth of Darwin, to have available us a royal piece of land for turning into our own Hyde Park, Central Park, Boston Common or Domain.
8. Developing this sort of signature land is not new. Former Administrator John Gilruth “decided [Myilly Point] would be used for 16 residences to house public servants and that’s when the controversy began⁶.” In Sydney, in the “1830s Governor Darling proposed to sell off [Hyde Park] for houses, but his successor Governor Bourke decided against this plan and re-affirmed its status as a park⁷.”
9. As early as 1913, the media referred to Myilly Point as Darwin’s “chief park and absolutely the best area within the boundary of the council for a people’s park⁸.”
10. In the case of New York, the “advocates of creating [Central Park] – primarily wealthy merchants and land owners—admired the public grounds of London and Paris and urged that New York needed a comparable facility to establish its international reputation⁹.”
11. We can learn from cities around the World where very significant sized pieces of prized land have been accorded their deserved stature. The land area of Myilly Point is a combined 15.4 hectares (8.7 hectare Old Darwin Hospital site; 6.7 hectare Flagstaff Park)¹⁰. Hyde Park in Sydney comprises of 16.2 hectares¹¹, Kings Domain in Melbourne “was established in 1854, extending the Domain Parklands further north-west, [and] it covers an area of 36 hectares¹².” Hyde Park in London covers 142 hectares¹³; Central Park in New York, 341 hectares¹⁴.
12. Our Myilly Point could contain:
 - 12.1 civic monuments;
 - 12.2 paths and plantings;
 - 12.3 a fountain;
 - 12.4 Anzac memorial;
 - 12.5 giant chess board;
 - 12.6 Chinese Gardens;
 - 12.7 statutes of our leaders and important citizens;

⁵ www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/placenames/view.jsp?id=16062

⁶ <http://planinc.org.au/index.php/Blog-Opinion/flagstaff-park-history.html>

⁷ www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/sydneys-history/people-and-places/park-histories/hyde-park

⁸ <http://planinc.org.au/index.php/Blog-Opinion/flagstaff-park-history.html>

⁹ www.centralpark.com/guide/history.html

¹⁰ www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/40137/Fact-Sheet-WEB2.pdf

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyde_Park,_Sydney

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings_Domain

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyde_Park,_London

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Park

- 12.8 facilities such as the Sidney Myer Music Bowl;
 - 12.9 house significant natural and cultural resources; and
- be used for:
- 12.10 processions and official gatherings;
 - 12.11 expressions of remembrance, observance and celebration;
 - 12.12 a focal point for Northern Territory heritage (including communications; transport);
 - 12.13 park exhibits; and
 - 12.14 panoramic views.
13. As noted above, it is understood that residential is proposed “to ensure the project is commercially viable.” There are other ways to source funds:
- 13.1 New York’s Central Park is 75 per cent funded by the “Central Park Conservancy, a private, not-for-profit organization ... formed in 1980 by a group of concerned citizens determined to improve Central Park¹⁵.”
 - 13.2 In Boston, the “Friends of the Public Gardens”, formed in 1970, provides support to Boston Common¹⁶.
 - 13.3 The Myer Foundation funded the music bowl in Melbourne’s Domain¹⁷.
 - 13.4 Corporate sponsorship is common throughout Australia and internationally.
14. As mentioned above, linked to Myilly Point would be the Mall of the Territory – extending from Parliament House at one end to the Park at the other end of Mitchell Street.

Submission

15. Our City deserves a substantial and nationally significant Park to serve as a public park for all to use. One hundred per cent of Myilly Point should be devoted for that purpose.

Regards,



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Partner

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¹⁵ www.centralparknyc.org/about/about-cpc/

¹⁶ <http://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/about-the-friends/history/>

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Myer_Music_Bowl