

Please find my submission in relation to the proposed hotel development at 25 Gilruth Ave Darwin.

It cannot be overestimated the importance the open space area at Little Mindil has for many people and for this to be lost would be devastating.

Knowledge of the importance of this land to people both past and present cannot be overstated.

An area of significant sacred, cultural and historic heritage deserves to be remembered and respected.

As society races toward the future and reach out to the stars, literally, we are leaving behind all those things that have brought us to this very time – Our forefathers and mothers and the great and small things they did, we should be remembering and honouring as part of who we are today.

With this said let us take a journey back to visit a little beach and creek at the base of the Myilly Escarpment, Little Mindil Beach.

It's very name is from the local aboriginal language which refers to a plant that was widely eaten and enjoyed.

What else are we missing about this very special and well loved place.

Mindil Beach was a place where Larrakia and Tiwi people would meet for ceremony, fight for land or honour and bury their dead. This is a special place to be remembered and celebrated for where we came from and who brought us along this long evolving road.

Even when white settlement became a part of this great Larrakia land Mindil Beach was a place to go to, to meet and enjoy nature.

Although the back section was marshy the beach area was a favourite place to picnic, socialise and fish. For many people it was the place they called home and at times this was disturbed by the white authorities who tried to remove any Aboriginal people that stayed there.

In the late 1800's Chinese immigrants arrived in Darwin to work on roads, construction and mines. At one time there were more Chinese living in the NT than white people.

Once again today there is little of this early settlement remaining although we still have a strong thriving Chinese community.

Little Mindil was an area where they had vegetable gardens, they used night soils for fertilising and there were also water wells, though now there is no sign of those early wells. There may very well be some remains just waiting to be found.

The saddest part of living here in Darwin is the loss of our history. Yes the loss of our history - there is so much more to our history than the bombing.

The memory of native stories and special places has become vague and it is important that no more of this history is degraded or lost.

There is a special women's place under the escarpment at the side of Little Mindil.

We must remember, without the past to guide us how do we go forward.

Much of the signs of early settlement have been removed either by cyclones, war or the overpowering desire to remove anything old and replace it with a bright new building no matter how inappropriate.

The sadness of the war, those that found and buried the bodies of people killed during the war and washed up on Little Mindil. Some may still be there we do not know for sure.

How do you build over such selfless giving of a person's life for our future safety.

There is Nurses Walk a well know historical walk up the side of the Escarpment.

Little Mindil is history that must be remembered and honoured and the land returned to the people of Darwin.

If we can stop it before it happens, we are protecting the memory of our past and become intrinsic in protecting the future of our land for our children.

This land has too much history to be built over and forgotten.

Today Darwin and indeed the Northern Territory population is a kaleidoscopic unique community of around 100 different ethnic backgrounds blending together.

The Dry Season hosts a number of cultural celebrations which are embraced by all. These functions remind everyone that no matter where we or our ancestors were born we are now all Territorians.

To keep these memories not just alive in mind and books but to have that tactile moment with the land that holds so much of the past is extremely important. To be there on the land where so much happened brings alive vividly the events of the past. It is not just words in a book.

We have lost far too much of our history and now it is time to say No More and Reclaim Our History.

This proposal would take away forever public access to the park land at Little Mindil and remembrance of our history at this special place lost forever.

It totally removes this loved parcel of land from not only the people but our heritage forever.

Thank you