

The Examiner

Tasmanian Planning Commission considers 19 Aboriginal sites at Cambria Green

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The Cambria Green homestead sits on the property near Meredith River, near 15 significant Aboriginal sites.

A number of significant Tasmanian Aboriginal artefacts and shell middens are located at Cambria Green, the site of a \$140 million proposal by Chinese-connected developers.

The long-standing Cambria Green legal planning battle is being considered by the Tasmanian Planning Commission, which is looking at whether an application to rezone the land should be approved.

As part of the hearing on Wednesday, the Commission discussed whether the current planning stage was the best time to investigate Aboriginal heritage sensitivities.

Evidence presented by the East Coast Alliance found 31 known Aboriginal sites within a 2km radius of the proposed development, including artefact scatters, stone artefacts and shell middens.

The sites are listed on the Aboriginal Heritage Register, which is a database of heritage places and objects of significance to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Cultural Heritage Management Australia founding director and consultant archaeologist Stuart Huys said that 19 of these are within the proposed development, and 15 are close to the main Cambria Homestead and listed as "high sensitivity".

Mr Huys recommended that preliminary planning for the Cambria development footprint should take care to avoid any impact on the 19 sites, should avoid areas of elevated sensitivity, and the developers should contact Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania to seek advice.

When asked by the Commission how the planning scheme can have proper regard to Aboriginal cultural values, Mr Huys said it was a difficult question to answer.

"In planning schemes such as this, I don't know how cultural values are affected. I know how the tangible Aboriginal cultural values are protected - it is clearly stated that all Aboriginal relics are protected under the law.

"With the more intangible cultural values, I don't know what protection is afforded and I don't know how this is captured in the scheme."

When asked whether the site could be considered unsuitable for development, Mr Huys said there would be sites where any impact would not be acceptable.

"It is too significant from a scientific perspective."