

The Mercury

Cambria Green mega resort plans could win chance to be sent back to commission for planning approval

Cambria Green has argued in Tasmania's Supreme Court that it should be given another shot to win planning approval for a Chinese-backed, mega resort development near Swansea.

Amber Wilson, Mercury
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A DECISION will be handed down within days that could give the proponents behind Cambria Green – a massive Chinese-backed resort planned near Swansea – another shot at winning planning approval.

On Monday, Supreme Court judge Stephen Estcourt said he would soon announce whether the controversial \$138 million, 3000ha Cambria Green development would be returned to the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

In November last year, the commission said it couldn't consider a planning scheme amendment application because it wasn't satisfied landowners had given consent.

That refusal effectively roadblocked the development, which can only proceed once the commission signs off on changes to the Glamorgan Spring Bay interim planning scheme.

It came after the council had previously voted in 2018 to amend planning rules in order to green-light the project.

The Cambria Green plans include a luxury hotel, 200 villas, a golf course, a conference centre, plus retirement facilities with a crematorium.

On Monday, Shaun McElwaine – lawyer for Cambria Green proponent Ronald Hu – said the commission had made an error by determining it had no jurisdiction to hear the application after finding difficulty with Mr Hu's oral evidence.

At the time, the commission described Mr Hu's evidence as "defensive" and "evasive".

When asked why his clients couldn't instead begin again with a fresh application, Mr McElwaine said they were "racing against the clock" before changes were implemented to the state's planning scheme, which would present a "completely different ball game".

He said if the matter was returned before the commission, it would need to be reconstituted with different members.

Meanwhile, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) has referred the project to the Foreign Investment Review Board over concerns about ownership and previous sales of land.

The TCT is fearful that Major Projects legislation will be used to fast-track projects like Cambria Green, but Planning Minister Roger Jaensch previously said the laws would not be used for planning scheme amendments.

Justice Estcourt said on Monday he would deliver his decision within days.