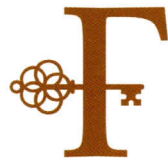
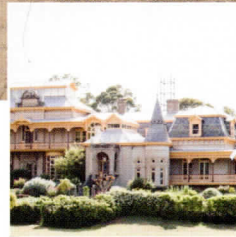
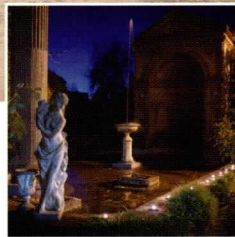
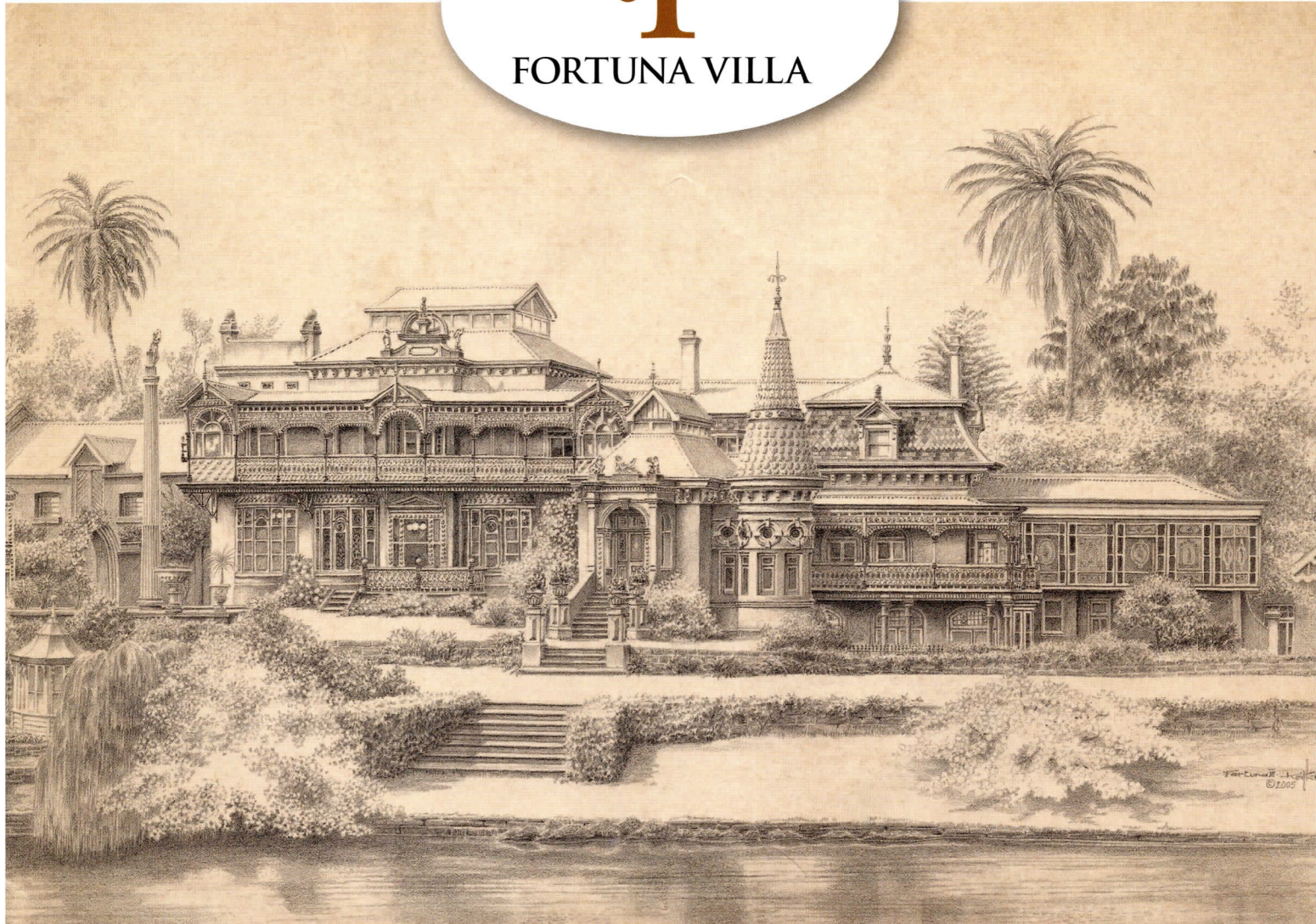


DISCOVER AND EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF THE MAGNIFICENT



FORTUNA VILLA



YOUR TOUR GUIDE TO THE HISTORY
OF FORTUNA VILLA

WELCOME TO FORTUNA VILLA

Welcome to our Fortuna, which is your Fortuna. This fine old residence today is a far cry from its balcyon days. Nevertheless George Lansell would approve of your attendance. He was a man of great vision and we hope today you can share ours. George was forward thinking and had a passion for all things grand and splendid. We enjoy all those qualities and hope you witness them today as you see first hand our work moving forward.

Fortuna Villa has to be for people to see, touch and feel. It is an iconic building that has been etched through hard work.

Enjoy the journey... it's a pleasure taking you on it.

Paul and Lisa Banks



“AT THE END OF THE DAY THEY JUST WANTED SOMEBODY TO LOVE IT. AND THAT’S WHAT WE’RE ALL ABOUT”

**PAUL BANKS
ABC 7:30 REPORT**



Fortuna was a substantial but relatively small two storied villa when George Lansell acquired it in 1871. It was purchased from Messrs T. Ballerstedt and Sons along with the 180 Mine for the sum of £30,000.

George Lansell, whom Australians called the Quartz King, was born in Margate, England in 1823. He arrived in Bendigo in 1853 with his brother William and together they opened a butchery, soap and candle factory and tallow chandlers business.

The partnership was dissolved after three years but while pursuing this venture Lansell became very interested in the mining activities, in particular deep reef mining, on which the future of the gold field depended as the early alluvial gold ran out. Lansell dabbled in share trading for a few years without much success but his fortunes changed for the better when he bought a large interest in the Old Advance Company on the Victoria Reef. The mine yielded well in the late 1860's and this together with a previous investment in the Cinderella Mine on the Johnsons Reef founded the Lansell fortune.

Lansell's purchase of the 180 Mine on the fabulously rich New Chum Reef established the Quartz King and went far towards making him a legend in his own time. This mine had already yielded great wealth to the Ballerstedt family and within weeks of the purchase Lansell had recouped his outlay and went on to make a profit of £180,000. The mine was thought to be deep at 450 feet, but by the late 1880's it had achieved a record depth of 3,179 feet. This was against the expressed opinion of the experts that gold did not exist below a much shallower depth. Rich deposits were found at various levels of the mine.

Fortuna Villa grew with the Lansell fortune. The mansion sits astride the New Chum Reef and its lower floor penetrates the reef thus giving three floors at the present rear of the building and two at the front. The grey green stone of the reef is visible at many points around the lower foundations of the mansion and in the tunnel which runs beneath the mine buildings, roadways and coach house. An outcrop of white quartz occurs on the hill above the mansion and it was such outcrops which led the early miners to the riches which lay below. The mansion is continuous with the main mine buildings, separated only by the stable from the thunderous roar from the stamper battery, the wheeze and throb of the mine machinery: all within yards of the Lansell bedrooms.

Lansell returned to England in 1880 following a somewhat macabre episode. It is said that on his usual early morning stroll one day he walked into the stableyard and found a coffin lying on the flagstones, apparently smuggled in overnight. Lansell saw this as evidence that because of his undoubted success he had enemies who wished to remind him of his own mortality. His wife Bedelia, who had been in ill health had died some time before and Lansell despite his wealth had lived a lonely life in social detachment. He left Bendigo and settled in London where he later was married to Miss Edith Bassford, a lady of English birth who

was educated in Sandhurst. They traveled widely on the continent and many of the ideas which were to be incorporated into Fortuna were probably conceived during these travels.

By 1887 Sandhurst had fallen into despondency with a downturn of fortune and a number of influential citizens believed that the great mans' presence was needed again to revive the economy. Lansell received an illuminated letter signed by 2,628 Bendigo men begging him to return. This he did and a few months later the Lansell family moved into Fortuna and the big house entered its greatest days in which no cost was spared to beautify the building and surrounding gardens in a manner 'befitting a prince.' Fortuna passed through many phases of construction, the most notable of which reversed the building by the addition of an imposing entrance hall and cupola stairwell at the rear of the house to make this into the front. The Italian water garden was constructed and four tier lakes, originally settling ponds from the mine operation, created. The original front entrance is now the rear entrance and the name 'Fortuna Villa' can be seen worked into the cast iron lace over the doorway. During this period many notable persons visited Sandhurst and were entertained royally by Lansell at Fortuna. These included Baron Sir Henry Loch, the Marquis of Normanby and the Earl of Hopetoun, all Governors of Victoria.

George Lansell remained hale and hearty into late life and died aged 82 years at Fortuna in 1906. He was a very wealthy man although the full extent of his personal fortune has never been assessed. One account puts the figure at £3,000,000 in 'debentures and bonds payable to bearer. 'At one time he solely owned seven mines and was a director of a further thirty four mines.

Fortuna remained with the Lansell family until 1934, the year after Edith Lansell died. It was sold then at the depression price of £2,400 and its lavish furnishings auctioned at a sale lasting five days.

In 1938 Fortuna was to have been sold by auction for demolition but was purchased complete, to become a reception house. During this time the buildings and grounds fell into considerable disrepair. Guided tours of the building took place from time to time and it is perhaps remarkable that so much of the beautiful



George Lansell



Edith Lansell

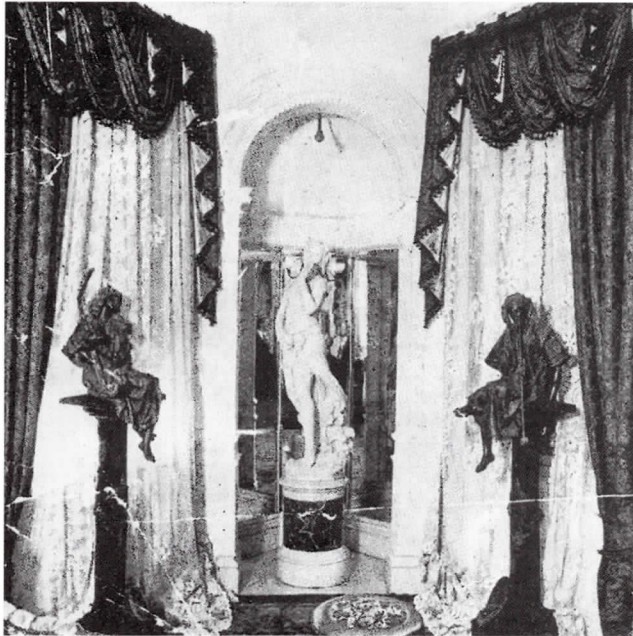
paneling, decorative ceilings, and stained and etched glass windows remain intact.

In 1942 the Army acquired a lease of the property for wartime mapping. Fortuna was occupied by the Land Headquarters Cartographic Company of the Australian Survey Corps and became the site of the base map plant of the Australian Army during the war years.

After numerous negotiations, the Fortuna site was purchased in 1951 by the Commonwealth Government and the military unit there evolved into the Army Survey

Regiment, the map-making base of the Australian Army and the largest map production facility in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Regiment's long custody of the property (held since the Second World War) came to an end in 1996 with the disbandment of the Royal Australian Survey Corps. Under the umbrella of the Australian Public Service, however, the site continued as a Defence mapping establishment until it was finally vacated for new premises in 2008.



The Reception Room



Reproduction of the Pompeii Fountain



The Billiard Room



The Entrance Hall

extensively remodeled in 1904, this bedroom was used by Vice-Regal guests when visiting Bendigo. Many State governors were hosted by the Lansell family over the years. The room features an interesting Art Nouveau keyhole window and parquette flooring. The bath/shower fitting in the ensuite invites comparison with the bath at Dame Nellie Melba's 'Coombe Cottage', Coldstream.

21. Billiard Room & Office. Lansell had an obsession with the game of billiards, this room being constructed as the first of three billiard rooms each grander and more impressive than the last. Following his death in 1906, his widow, Edith, transformed the room into an office. Possibly also used as a bedroom for Lansell family at some time, the room features a 9-ft well connecting to a tunnel which extended from Fortuna to his son Cyril's property on the former site of the St John of God hospital.

22. Pompeii Fountain. A scaled replica of the fountain in the House of the Great Fountain at Pompeii. Together with an accompanying pond it was constructed after Lansell's visit to the volcanic-ruined settlement in Italy, when he returned with lantern slides of the ruins. Likewise, the Corinthian Column is of ancient classical inspiration and modeled on Roman columns of victory. The Fountain's unusual design, claimed to be unique in Australia, provides a distinctive visual focal point in the garden.

23. Stables. The stables were probably built during the 1860s, after completion of the Ballerstedt's house in 1858. The building was used by Lansell to stall the horses required to draw his family coach.

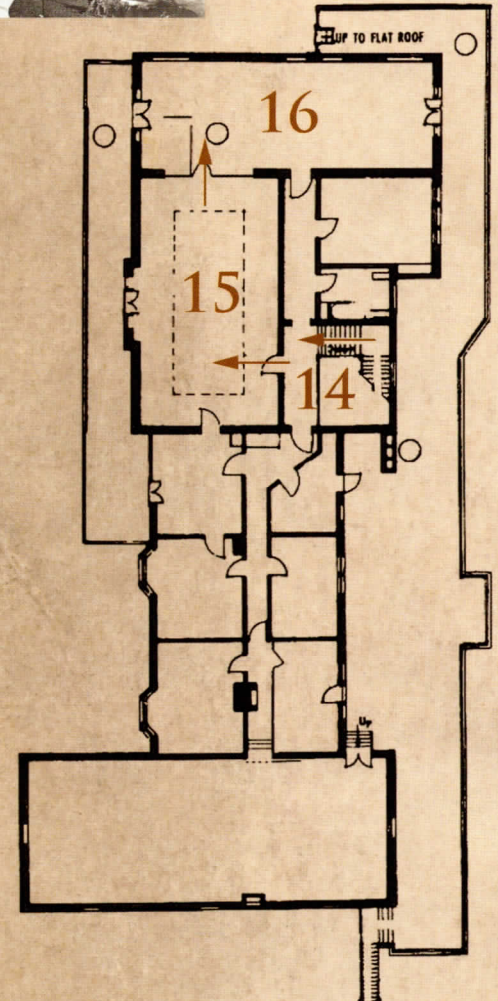
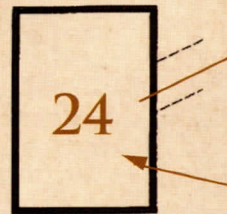
24. Coach House (1904). Actually a garage built to house Lansell's newly-acquired 10hp Benz Four-Seater motor car, the first such car on the Bendigo goldfields. Prior to this he and his family got around by horse and buggy. The family coach/trap, when not in use, was housed in a former coach house built in the 1880s located adjacent to the stables.

25. Tunnel. Constructed using a natural cleft in the rock outside the Coach House, the tunnel served to transport smelted gold bullion bricks from the foundry in the Crushing Works to the Bullion Strong Room deep in the bowels of the house, away from prying and envious eyes, and then later back out to armed coaches for movement to a bank in the centre of town.

26. Roman Bath. Remodeled from the former 1860s mine tailings treatment plant sometime after 1888, as with many of Fortuna's grand features, Lansell's open air enclosed Bath was also an uncommon feature for large villas of the time. With the benefit of steam pipes redirected from the central boiler, warm water swimming could be enjoyed by the family all year round.

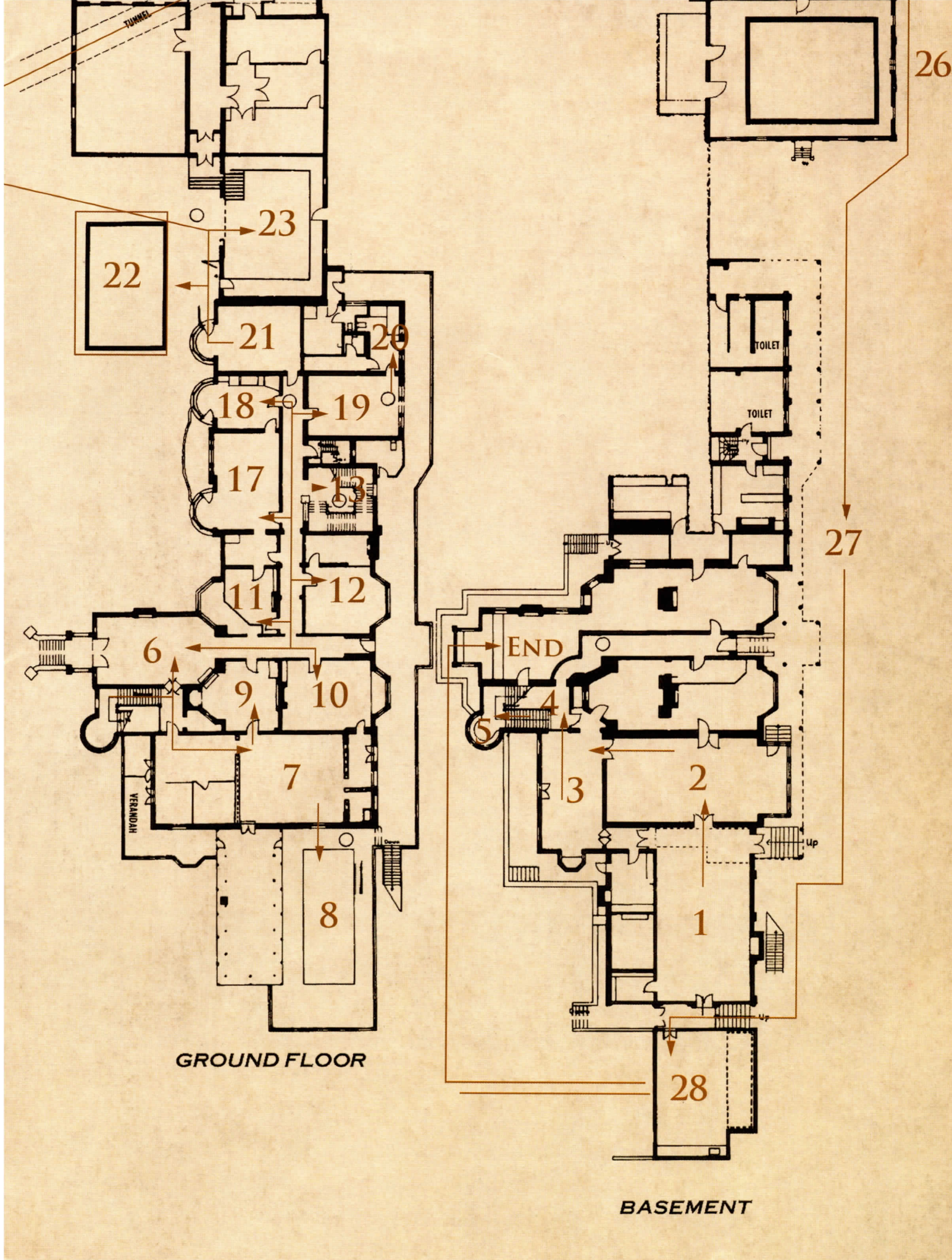
27. Ballerstedt Front Entrance (c.1855). The Ballerstedt residence was a two storey building without verandah containing eight rooms. Lansell used this original homestead as the centre of his intended Villa design and radiated his constructions out from it. The formal entrance to the property was changed to the opposite side of the building in 1876 when he returned from his overseas travels to find the main lake had been excavated in his absence and the extensive resultant tailings dumped across from his front door now obscured his commanding view of Sandhurst Town (Bendigo).

28. Glass House.



FIRST FLOOR



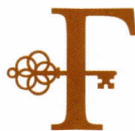


GROUND FLOOR

BASEMENT

FORTUNA VILLA CHRONOLOGY

- 1823 George Lansell born on 24th August Margate, Kent, England
- 1855 Crushing Works constructed
- 1856 Two storey eight room house constructed
- 1869 Ballroom/Dining area added
- 1871 Lansell purchases house for £30,000
- 1874 Crushing works with 30 Head Stamper started
- 1876 Alterations to Quartz Mill
- 1876 Main Lake construction
- 1879 Pompeii Fountain commenced
- 1883 George marries second wife Edith Bassford they have five sons and a daughter
- 1888 Third storey extension started
- 1890 Mansard Attic started
- 1893 Last Billiard Room added
- 1895 New Front Entrance completed
- 1900 Statuary, Cupola Stairway, Prince's room and extensions began
- 1906 George Lansell died aged 82 at Fortuna
- 1934 Edith Lansell died in March at Fortuna
- 1934 House and mining lease, auctioned and purchased by Bendigo Mines Ltd for £2,400
- 1937 The house and land purchased by Mrs Maude Nott for £2,000
- 1942 Compulsory lease by Commonwealth Government for wartime military use
- 1955 Fortuna Villa was purchased by the Commonwealth for military purposes
- 2013 Paul Banks purchases Fortuna Villa in the hope of sharing it with the public



FORTUNA VILLA

For tour bookings visit: www.bendigotourism.com

www.fortuna-villa.com



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