

INTRODUCING THE DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA



Australian Government
Department of Defence



FORTUNA VILLA

THE DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA (FORTUNA) IS A 7.5 HA (APPROX) PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF CHUM STREET AT GOLDEN SQUARE, BENDIGO. THE PRIMARY BUILDING ON THE SITE IS THE FORTUNA VILLA. THERE ARE ALSO A NUMBER OF OTHER BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES, INCLUDING TWO ACCOMMODATION BUILDINGS, A FORMER MESS BUILDING, STORAGE BUILDINGS, AND A PARADE GROUND.

THIS BROCHURE PROVIDES A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE SITE, INCLUDING A BRIEF SUMMARY OF ITS HISTORY AND HERITAGE VALUES.

CURRENT STATUS

The property is owned by the Department of Defence and was most recently occupied by the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO). DIGO moved from Fortuna to its new facility at Junortoun in Bendigo at the end of October 2008.

Having identified the property as surplus to requirements, Defence is currently undertaking a series of investigations of the heritage values and the environment of Fortuna Villa and grounds to determine the characteristics of the property. The information from the investigations will help to develop the timing and process for the disposal of the property.

SITE HISTORY

Fortuna was once central to the deep alluvial gold mining operations of Bendigo.

Theodore Ballerstedt and his father, Christopher, arrived in Sandhurst (Bendigo) in 1853 from the goldfields of California and purchased the site from the Crown in 1857.



DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA, BENDIGO VICTORIA

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SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE VALUES OF FORTUNA

Fortuna was entered in the Commonwealth Heritage List in 2004 for its historic heritage values.

Fortuna Villa originally began as a modest single storey home in 1861, and was transformed gradually over the next 65 years into a sprawling mansion. Fortuna is indelibly linked with the history of gold mining in Bendigo, being the home of George Lansell. Lansell continuously added to and expanded the villa, decorating it extravagantly with fine artworks and materials. The attached mine and crushing works, one of the richest mines in Bendigo at the time, also contribute to the property's historical significance.

Fortuna is also significant for its association with the Survey Corp, now the Survey Regiment, of the Australian Army. The site was acquired as a base for mapping activities during World War II.

Fortuna contains several important and rare features such as the Pompeii Fountain. Constructed in 1879, it is believed to be unique in Australia.

The conservatory features glass workmanship of the highest quality, regarded as among the most important examples of its type in Australia. The glass panels contain a variety of artistic designs including mining scenes, Australian and heraldic symbols.

Fortuna is also important as a good example of a 19th Century villa estate. It combines a number of architectural styles, orchestrated over a considerable period of time.

Please see the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website for more details (www.environment.gov.au).

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FORTUNA?

Defence is consulting Heritage Victoria about ongoing heritage management and protection measures that should be put in place for when the property transfers from Commonwealth ownership.

Until the disposal is finalised, Defence will continue to ensure the property is secured and the heritage elements of the site are protected.

Defence has carried out some maintenance work on the buildings and grounds during its occupation of the property. Further maintenance work will be carried out prior to disposal.

The drought has caused some changes in Fortuna's landscape. As a result, the man-made lake has not been refilled and there has been some impact on the grounds. Fortunately, no significant trees or shrubs have been lost.

DISPOSAL

The Department of Defence has no role in determining possible options for the future use of the land. The future use of Fortuna, following disposal, is a matter for Council, as the local planning authority, to determine, in discussion with the new owner.

The disposal of Commonwealth land must follow the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy. Generally, the Policy requires that all Commonwealth land is to be sold on the open market at full market value; however, it does allow for priority sale to a State or Local Government, where the sale facilitates other Commonwealth or co-operative policy initiatives. An example might be where a Council sought to purchase a site to improve or provide for community facilities (such as a library or school).

There has been no decision yet about when or how Fortuna will be sold.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For general information or queries about the property please send an email to: fortuna.villa@burnsbridgesweet.com; or write to the Fortuna Project Manager at PO Box 12652 A'Beckett Street, Victoria 8006.

Please visit the Fortuna website at www.fortunavilla.net.au for more information. All media enquiries should be directed to the Defence Media Room on ph: (02) 6265 3343.