

THE historic Fortuna property will get a \$1.5 million facelift.

Army Topographic Support Establishment general manager Brian McLachlan yesterday said the refurbishment of the main building and surrounding out-buildings would put new life into the 1870s building.

The works, which will transform all 40 rooms of the grand Fortuna Villa to their original grandeur, would certainly have pleased its famous owner and builder, the Bendigo "Quartz King" George Lansell — the man said to be chiefly responsible for Bendigo's deep-lead gold mining.

More than 40 people had spent at least two months on the works which include laying new carpets at the majestic entrance, painting, new lighting and rewiring.

The rehabilitation of a nearby area which once was used for stone crushing was part of the project.

Mr McLachlan said the fully restored three-level building, a Bendigo landmark, would be opened to the public on March 16.

George Lansell, who made millions from mining investments, had bought the property for £30,000. Its architects included W. C. Vahland and William Beebe.

By ASHOK VERMA

Fortuna has been home to the Army Survey Regiment for 54 years.

Army Topographic Support Establishment took over the building in July last year.

The last Army contingent departed the building in September last year, leaving it to departmental civilian staff.

Mr McLachlan said ATSE's production and administrative staff would move to Fortuna Villa after the completion of the works.

Discovery

Its printing operations would be located at the now rehabilitated old stone crushing site.

ATSE plans to install state-of-the-art computer equipment in the building.

Mr McLachlan said 20 beer bottles dating back to the 1940s were an unusual find in a ceiling of one room during the refurbishment.

He said ATSE would conduct public tours of the building every Sunday, starting on March 16.

The tours will cost \$8 per person and will include devonshire teas which will be served in the magnificent hall.