

FORTUNA was built in early 1856 as an eight-room double-fronted two-storey red brick house by J.T.C. Ballerstedt.

The building was beside the New Chum line of reef.

The house was extended in about 1869 with a three-room gabled wing extension to the south.

Fortuna was surrounded by a masonry and brick wall with an arched gateway leading to the main entrance and overlooked the mining operations of the goldfields.

George Lansell bought the villa on May 6, 1871 for 20,000 pounds.

Lansell carried out many additions and modifications to Fortuna over the years.

Outside of the hedges were mine workings, but the gardens within were ornate and lavish. Lansell died in 1906.

By 1938 Fortuna had fallen into disrepair, but was saved from demolition.

In January 1942, General Rowell, deputy chief of the general staff, directed a Major Sarl "to secure, north of the Great Dividing Range, a location for the printing and storing of maps for the Australian Military Forces".

In March 1942, the Com-



■ GRAND SCALE: The Long Room at Fortuna.

monwealth of Australia compulsorily acquired a lease on the deserted and overgrown Fortuna surrounds.

Army tradesmen carried out alterations and additions to the building and Major Sarl and 150 men of Land Headquarters Cartographic Company arrived at the site on June 11, 1942.

The Australian Survey Corps and the Australian Women's Army Corps produced highly classified documents and mapping during World War 2.

Fortuna was bought by the Commonwealth Government in 1951.

The Royal Australian Survey Corps was disbanded in 1996.

The Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) was established in November 2000 in Canberra and Bendigo.

Its purpose is to provide geospatial intelligence for Australia's defence.

After reviewing DIGO at Fortuna in 2004, the former Minister for Defence announced the operation would stay in Bendigo, but would move.

The Department of Defence will vacate Fortuna, but its future is not yet determined.