

Great bravery is now required for villa

FORTUNA favours the brave.

It has undoubted charm, high unprecedented local historical significance and delightfully whimsical architecture, but Fortuna Villa will still need a brave visionary to save it from private hands, writes *Nino Bucci*.

A visionary so brave they can suspend disbelief at the sheer

wonder of the building and realise what needs to be done, what it will cost, and how they can do it.

Indeed, the only real question Fortuna leaves unanswered is whether it is worth saving.

With money and time no object, George Lansell's darling would soon become the jewel in Ben-

digo's hardly fetching tourism crown.

Local wines quaffed on picnic blanket-friendly lawns, function rooms booked for weeks, and ghost tours turning mining myth into contemporary creepy.

But it is not a question of saving the property. It is a question of

what sacrifice needs to be made by the saviour.

The Villa Fortuna Action Group are to be commended for playing their hand and developing a plan for the site.

There are sure to be others, and the Department of Defence yesterday gave no real indication of urgency for disposal.

They too are bound by caution. Any diligent owner must know exactly what they intend to sell.

Tomorrow's public opening must prove the catalyst for change.

Because regardless of the cost, Bendigo cannot afford to lose Fortuna Villa.