

Fortuna assessment still to be finalised

By NINO BUCCI

FORTUNA Villa will not be for sale until late this year, after the Department of Defence conceded it was taking longer than expected to assess the iconic property.

Despite initial hopes that all assessments on the mansion would be completed by December last year, a Defence spokesman said a completion date of August had now been set.

Shortly before leading media through the property on December 4 last year, Department of Defence director of property disposals David French talked about the process being undertaken to prepare the villa for sale.

"There are a number of assessments to be done to understand the characteristics of the site... hopefully they will be finished by late December, but more than likely in the new year," Mr French said.

"They do take a long time to do and we want to make sure they are done properly.

"We anticipate the vast majority of them will be done in their first draft by Christmas."

A Defence spokesman has confirmed the first draft



BEHIND: Completion of the Fortuna Villa sale process has been delayed until later this year. Picture: JULIAN PROWD

of assessments is yet to be completed.

The spokesman said the property also had to be valued.

Villa Fortuna Action Group president Merle Hall said she was not surprised at delays in the disposal process.

"We know the Defence Department has to move carefully with these things, but we look very much forward to reading the results

of the audit assessment," she said.

The Villa Fortuna Action Group plan to further lobby the City of Greater Bendigo regarding their proposal for the use of the Golden Square property in coming weeks.

"We're looking forward to council meeting with us to see a more detailed submission of our proposal," Mrs Hall said.