

# INTRODUCING THE DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA



Australian Government  
Department of Defence



FORTUNA VILLA



DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA, BENDIGO VICTORIA

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.

# INTRODUCING THE DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA

In 1858, Ballerstedt made improvements including a small mill and house. In 1869, he tendered for a two-storey addition to Fortuna. Around the same period, the stables, billiard room, a lookout tower and Roman baths were constructed. In 1871 Ballerstedt sold the house, mine and associated works to George Lansell.

At the peak of the mining era Fortuna was owned by 'The Quartz King', George Lansell. During his time at Fortuna, Lansell owned 13 mines and directed a further 73 mines.

The wealth Lansell generated from the mines funded the continuous expansion of the mansion and grounds. The mansion was built in a number of architectural styles, namely Victorian Italianate and Victorian Free Classical, with Federation influences. The landscape featured up to seven ornamental lakes in the early 1870s, including the larger lake which remains today.

It is understood that the lakes were originally used as disposal points for tailings produced in the gold processing activities at the site. A rose garden and (scale replica) Pompeii fountain were also added to the grounds at this time.

From 1942 to 1986 the Army occupied the site. During this period, additional buildings were constructed and existing buildings were modified for re-use. One of the more notable changes to the landscape included the filling of six of the seven ornamental lakes to create recreational areas.

DIGO occupied the site from 1986, using it for various photographic processing and printing purposes, including the storage and use of photographic chemicals. The Army accommodation buildings and reproduction buildings (to the west) have remained inactive for most of this period.



Source: Godden Mackay Logan (2008)



set



- |     |                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| No. | Building element                 |
| 1   | Records store                    |
| 2   | Tennis hut                       |
| 3   | Records store                    |
| 4   | Records store                    |
| 5   | Storage shed                     |
| 6   | Rotunda                          |
| 7   | Coach house                      |
| 8a  | Former stables                   |
| 8b  | Former coach house               |
| 8c  | Roman bath                       |
| 8d  | Former retort building           |
| 8e  | Former (quartz crushing) battery |
| 8f  | Photo printing facility          |
| 8g  | Printing annexe and extension    |
| 10  | Records store                    |
| 12  | Q Expense store                  |
| 14  | Q store/TPT (PI Type hut)        |
| 15  | Vehicle/transport bay            |
| 16  | DIGO Offices                     |
| 16A | DIGO Offices                     |
| 16B | DIGO Offices                     |
| 17  | Former laundry                   |
| 18  | Villa                            |
| 19  | Sergeant's quarters              |
| 20  | Kitchen mess                     |
| 21  | Rations store                    |
| 22  | Officers' quarters               |
| 23  | Officers' quarters               |
| 24  | Open BBQ shelter                 |
| 28  | Water tanks                      |
| 30  | Wayzgoose hall                   |
| 50  | Security                         |
| 51  | WCs                              |
| 52  | Memorial cairn                   |
| 53  | Entrance gates                   |
| 54  | Driveway                         |
| 56  | Garden walls                     |
| 57  | Pompeii fountain                 |
| 58  | Arbour                           |
| 59  | Rockery                          |
| 60  | Lake                             |
| 61  | Tunnel                           |

**Historical Development**  
 Indicating general construction periods

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	1861 - 1942 The Villa
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span>	1942 - 1960
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:blue; border:1px solid black;"></span>	1960 - 1986
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:green; border:1px solid black;"></span>	1986 - present



# INTRODUCING THE DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA



## 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, Australiana 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](http://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@burnsbridgesweett.com](mailto:fortuna.villa@burnsbridgesweett.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](http://www.fortunavilla.net.au) for more information. All media enquiries should be directed to the Defence Media Room on ph: (02) 6265 3343.