

# Fortuna Villa

Villa Fortuna Action Group  
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[www.villafortuna.org.au](http://www.villafortuna.org.au)

# Fortuna Villa



*The period of ownership of 'Fortuna Villa', by the Ballerstedts from 1856 through to the death of George Lansell in 1906, encompasses the 50 most prosperous years of gold-mining in Bendigo.*

Colour photographs courtesy of Julian Prowd  
Designed by Geoff Hacking  
Printed by Bart-N-Print



**Fortuna Villa** is located on Chum Street in Golden Square, 2km west from the Alexandra Fountain in the heart of Bendigo.



*More than any other historic building in Bendigo, 'Fortuna Villa' embodies our city's golden past.*

*A Golden Opportunity*

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# Fortuna Villa

## A Golden Opportunity

### Villa Fortuna Action Group

The Villa Fortuna Action Group is a community organisation, based in Bendigo, which is committed to the continued public ownership of 'Fortuna Villa'. It proposes that the City of Greater Bendigo take up the option of acquiring this magnificent historic property, in accordance with the Commonwealth Government's 'Priority Sale at Concessional Rates' guidelines, and that, under Council ownership, Fortuna be developed for community use as an Arts/Cultural/Heritage Centre, modelled on successful projects established in similar historic properties elsewhere.

# Culture Commerce Community



Located on the New Chum Reef at Victoria Hill, 'Fortuna Villa' was built in 1856 by German mining magnate, Christopher Ballerstedt and his son, Theodore. Along with its attached '180' gold mine, the property was purchased in 1871 by George Lansell, a successful mining investor, who had arrived in Sandhurst from England in 1853.

During the 1870s, Lansell embarked on a program of extensions and modifications to the house and its grounds, which continued until his death. Further alterations were made by his widow, Edith. Over a period of approximately 40 years, 'Fortuna Villa' was transformed, from a handsome two-storey Georgian-style villa, to a unique and exuberant expression, on a grand scale, of several different architectural styles.

The blend of styles—Classical, Italianate, French Second Empire—reflected not only the wealth and whim of the building's owner, but also the European origins of its architects, William Beebe, Vahland & Getzschmann, Emil Maumann, and the characteristic extravagance of the late Victorian, or 'Boom' period.

There is no other house quite like it.

Since 1942, 'Fortuna Villa' has been owned and occupied by the Commonwealth Department of Defence. For more than half a century, the cartographic unit stationed at Fortuna has played a vital role in Australia's defence. During Commonwealth custodianship of Fortuna several important restoration and maintenance projects have been undertaken, and, although the building is in sound condition, further work will be carried out before the 'disposal' process is completed.

Villa Fortuna Action Group is currently developing a Business Concept for the Fortuna site, which aims to demonstrate the financial viability of its vision of Fortuna as a vibrant community resource, and as a unique and exciting attraction for visitors.

The Villa and its grounds have the potential to be used for a wide range of cultural, commercial, and community enterprises and activities such as:

- Corporate Events and Training
- Quality Retail Outlets
- Museum facilities
- Heritage displays
- Artist's studios and workshops
- Art Galleries
- Reception Venue for Weddings and Conferences
- Food & Wine
- Lectures, Master Classes
- Travelling Exhibitions
- Music Recitals
- Festivals, Antique Fairs
- Outdoor Theatre
- Education Programs
- On-site Accommodation

With the departure of the Department of Defence from the site, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure for Bendigo a property which, more than any other, reflects and symbolises the golden past of the city. Developed appropriately, Fortuna could be a 'gold mine' all over again, attracting thousands of visitors to Bendigo, raising our national and international profile, and stimulating our local economy.

We cannot afford to let this opportunity pass.

We encourage all who are interested in retaining Fortuna in public ownership, and who share our vision for its future to join Villa Fortuna Action Group, and help us raise community awareness of this unique opportunity.

For further information and regular updates, visit [www.villafortuna.org.au](http://www.villafortuna.org.au)

Membership Form

**VILLA FORTUNA ACTION GROUP INC**

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

postcode \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/money order for \$20, being joining fee (\$10) and Annual Membership Fee (\$10)

MAIL to: The Secretary, Villa Fortuna Action Group Inc, PO Box 2392 Bendigo, 3554