

**FOR MORE  
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Or via post:

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## DEFENCE SITE FORTUNA

## Defence Site Fortuna

The Defence Site Fortuna (Fortuna) is a 7.5 ha (approx) property located on the northern side of Chum Street at Golden

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/>

3/08/2009

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 website provides a general overview of the site, including a brief summary of its history and heritage values. It also outlines Defence preparations for the site's disposal.

## News & Events

### Due Diligence Complete

Defence has completed the due diligence investigations of the heritage values and the environment of Fortuna villa and grounds, to determine the characteristics of the property. The results of the investigations have been compiled into a series of studies.

[Read Full Article](#)

## Downloads

- [Site Map - GML 2007](#) Published 25/11/08
- [Site Brochure](#) Published 20/11/08
- [Open Day Tour Handout](#) Published 5/12/08
- [Environmental Site Assessment](#) Published March 09
- [Unexploded Ordnance \(UXO\) Area Risk Assessment](#)
- [Health Risk Assessment](#) June 09
- [Phase 1: Summary Report](#) June 09
- [Archaeological Assessment](#) January 09
- [Ecological Constraints Assessment](#) February 09

- Heritage Management Plan July 09
- Structural Inspection & Report August 08
- Hazardous Identification Audit July 08
- Geotechnical Assessment (Bush Block) July 08
  
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## CURRENT STATUS

## Current Status

Defence has completed the due diligence investigations of the heritage values and the environment of Fortuna villa and grounds to determine the characteristics of the property. The results of the investigations have been compiled into a series of studies.

An initial review of the studies suggests that overall the property is in good condition. While some remediation and infrastructure works are likely to be required before sale, there appear to be no major issues that would affect the disposal.

Once the findings of the studies have been fully reviewed, any necessary remediation and infrastructure works will be designed and undertaken.

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/current-status/>

3/08/2009

Defence has provided copies of the studies to the City of Greater Bendigo and the Victorian Government to assist them in deciding whether to make a 'priority sale' submission to purchase the property under the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy.

No decision about the disposal method or the timing of the sale has been made at this stage. The decision will be made by the Australian Government in accordance with the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy and following priority sale responses from Council and the Victorian Government.

Defence will continue to engage with key stakeholders, including Heritage Victoria, the City of Greater Bendigo, the Victorian Government and the community during the disposal of Fortuna.



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## SITE HISTORY

## 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. 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.

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/site-history/>

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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.



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## SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE VALUES **Significant Heritage Values**

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, 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.

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/heritage-values/>

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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, Australian 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.

See the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website ([www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au)) for more details.



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FORTUNA? **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

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/whats-happening/>

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there has been some impact on the grounds. Fortunately, no significant trees or shrubs have been lost.

## DISPOSAL

## 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 the City of Greater Bendigo 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.



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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. How has Defence assessed the heritage values?**

A. The heritage values of the site were assessed when it was entered in the Commonwealth Heritage List in 2004. Defence's heritage consultants have reviewed that assessment against the current Commonwealth and Victorian heritage criteria.

**Q. How will Fortuna's Heritage values be protected?**

A. Defence has commissioned a plan for the future management of the heritage values of the property. The plan takes account of the identified heritage values of the site, the results of heritage consultation, and the condition and conservation

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/faq/>

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requirements of the built and landscape elements of the site. The heritage management plan will be given to the new owner.

**Q. Will Fortuna be listed on the Victorian Heritage Register?**

A. Defence is considering the possibility of nominating Fortuna to the Victorian Heritage Register. Legally, the property cannot be listed until the property has left Commonwealth ownership. In consultation with Defence's heritage consultant and Heritage Victoria, Defence will ensure mechanisms are in place for ongoing protection of the heritage values after sale.

**Q. Has Defence ever sold a property this historically significant?**

A. Defence has sold other properties which have been entered in the Commonwealth Heritage List.

**Q. Is there any soil contamination as a result of the previous mining activity on the site?**

A. There may be some soil contamination as a result of the historic mining activities undertaken on site prior to Defence ownership. Defence will consider the results of the environmental investigations to determine whether this is the case and whether any remediation is required.

**Q. Is there any unexploded ordnance on the site?**

A. An investigation was carried out and no evidence of the existence of unexploded ordnance, explosive ordnance or explosive ordnance waste was found.

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/faq/>

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**Q. Are there any environmentally significant features on the site?**

A. An ecological assessment was undertaken to determine whether there are significant features. No protected flora or fauna species or ecological communities were found within the site.

**Q. Why are the grounds and lake not in the same condition as they are in photos?**

A. When carrying out grounds maintenance, Defence has ensured it adheres to water restrictions in Bendigo. This means that the lawns and garden, as well as the lake, are not in the same condition as they are in photos taken some years ago.

**Q. How and who will look after the site until it is sold?**

A. Defence will continue to look after the property until it is sold. Defence will undertake any necessary work and will continue existing security measures to make sure the site is secure until sold.

**Q. What are the results of the studies?**

A. Defence has not yet carried out a comprehensive review of the studies. However, an initial review suggests that overall the property is in good condition. While some remediation and infrastructure works are likely to be required before sale, there appear to be no major issues that would affect the disposal.

**Q. What is the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy?**

A. Disposal of Commonwealth land must follow the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy, which has been developed by

the Department of Finance and Deregulation. The Policy is available on the Department's website at [www.finance.gov.au](http://www.finance.gov.au). Generally, the Policy requires that all Commonwealth land is to be sold on the open market at full market value.

**Q. Will the Australian Government sell the property to the City of Greater Bendigo or the Victorian Government through a priority sale?**

A. The Policy currently allows priority sale to a State or local government, where the sale facilitates other Commonwealth or co-operative policy initiatives. Commonwealth policy initiatives include: increasing the supply of housing; improving the amenity of local suburbs; and creating new jobs. Any priority sale request should also demonstrate that the future use and operation is financially sustainable.

**Q. When should the Council make a priority sale submission?**

A. Defence has provided copies of the studies to the Victorian Government and the Council and asked that, should they seek to purchase Fortuna, a priority sale submission be submitted to Defence by the end of October 2009.

**Q. Has the property been valued? What is the value?**

A. A valuation of the property will be sought at an appropriate time to coincide with the disposal action. The valuation will be commercial-in-confidence.

**Q. Has a date for the sale been set?**

A. No decision about how or when the property will be sold has been made yet.

**Q. When will Defence make a decision about the disposal method and timing?**

A. The Australian Government will make a decision about the disposal method and timing once it has received and considered any priority sale submissions from the Victorian Government and Council, and the disposal strategy has been approved.

**Q. Will future development of the building and grounds be allowed? Will the property be subdivided by the future owner?**

A. Future town planning matters, including future development and subdivision, are matters for the City of Greater Bendigo Council, as the Responsible Planning Authority for the site, in discussion with the new owner.

**Q. Will Defence fully restore the place before selling it?**

A. The property will not be fully restored before sale, as this would require someone to make decisions about which era of occupation the place should represent, and the most appropriate future use. Defence has no role in determining options for future use. This will be the responsibility of the new owner in consultation with the City of Greater Bendigo Council.

**Q. What works will Defence be doing at Fortuna?**

A. The full extent of works at Fortuna will be determined after a comprehensive review of the studies.

**Q. Will Defence carry out works to the villa so that it meets current****buildings codes?**

A. Any works to bring the villa up to current building codes would require someone to decide on a future use for the villa. This decision is a matter for the future owner. Defence will be carrying out any necessary maintenance work to the villa, but will not be bringing it up to code.

**Q. What consultation will take place with the local community?**

A. Defence is continuing to consult key stakeholders, including the Council and community, during the disposal process.

**Q. Will there be another Public Open Day at Fortuna before it is sold?**

A. At this stage there are no further Public Open Days planned before Fortuna is sold. In the event it is decided to hold another Public Open Day, the community will be notified through local newspaper advertisements and via the website.

**Q. Will there be public access to Fortuna after it is sold?**

A. Public access to Fortuna after the time of disposal will be a matter for the future owner.

**Q. How can the community find out more about Fortuna Villa?**

A. A website and postal address is available for those who want information about Fortuna Villa. Local historical groups can provide information about the history of the property.

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## NEWS & EVENTS

# News & Events

## Due Diligence Complete

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Copies of the studies have been provided to the City of Greater Bendigo and the Victorian Government to assist them in deciding whether to make a 'priority sale' submission to purchase the property under the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy.

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/news-events/>

3/08/2009

Defence will continue to engage with key stakeholders, including Heritage Victoria, the City of Greater Bendigo, the Victorian Government and the community during the disposal of Fortuna.

## Defence Site Fortuna Public Open Day

On Saturday 6th December 2008 the Department of Defence held a Public Open Day at the Defence Site Fortuna.

Visitors were able to take a self-guided tour of the historic Villa and explore the grounds of the site. Highlights included the conservatory, the many stained glass windows throughout the Villa, and the Pompeii fountain.

It is estimated that around 4,700 people visited Fortuna during the Open Day. The Department of Defence would like to thank those who provided support and assisted in making the event a memorable experience for the Bendigo community.



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Members of the media should contact the Defence Media Room on Ph: (02) 6265 3343.

<http://www.fortunavilla.net.au/contact/>

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- |     |                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 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  | DIGO Offices                     |
| 16  | DIGO Offices                     |
| 16A | DIGO Offices                     |
| 16B | DIGO Offices                     |
| 17  | Former laundry                   |
| 18  | Villa                            |
| 19  | Sergeants' 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                           |
| 60  | Lake                             |
| 61  | Tunnel                           |

**Historical Development**  
 Indicating general construction periods

	1861 - 1942 The Villa
	1942 - 1960
	1960 - 1986
	1986 - present





- |     |                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------|
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