

Francine Gilfedder & Associates

Landscape Architect & Horticulturist

15 Dover Street

Richmond Victoria 3121

03 427 7447

Range Control
Department of Defence
PO Box 21
MILPO
PUCKAPUNYAL VIC 3662

Attention: Mr Andrew Walker

Dear Mr Walker

**RE: REFERENCE S023/94
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN, FORTUNA VILLA,
BENDIGO**

Please find enclosed a draft report of the Garden Conservation Management Plan for Fortuna. You should note that a number of items have not yet been included, specifically the set of eight (8) base plans with trees located, nor the tree management information nor the architectural assessment of garden elements.

Also until the conservation analysis is more complete, the management recommendations (sections 6.0, 7.0) will remain in a draft form. The areas identified with '??' are generally where information is still needed or needs to be clarified.

Will you forward a copy to relevant parties for comment eg. garden staff and others at Fortuna and those you consider appropriate, requesting comments, preferably in writing, to be sent direct to me ASAP but within the next two weeks.

Yours faithfully



FRANCINE GILFEDDER
15 May 1995

TONY

FOR YOUR COMMENTS AND OTHER RELEVANT
PEOPLE AT FORTUNA I HAVE ALSO
SENT A COPY TO NOEL COULTARD.



*FORTUNA GARDEN CONSERVATION PLAN
DRAFT 15/05/95*

FORTUNA GARDEN CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to produce a garden conservation management plan for the garden and surrounds at Fortuna Villa, Bendigo. The study is commissioned by the Department of Defence. Previous conservation and management studies of Fortuna Villa are *Fortuna Bendigo Conservation Management Plan, Part 1 Conservation Analysis* (draft) prepared by John & Thurley O'Connor Pty Ltd for the Department of Administrative Services Construction Group, 1987, and an unpublished report 'Discussion Paper on Improvement of Grounds and Gardens at Fortuna' by Karl Liffman and Ian Huxley for the Army Survey Regiment, c1987.

1.2 Heritage listings

A number of organisations concerned with the protection of historic buildings, gardens and trees have listed or nominated Fortuna for inclusion in various registers. These are:

Historic Buildings Council Register: Not listed

Register of the National Estate:

Building - listed

Garden - nominated ?

National Trust of Australia (Victoria):

Classified

City of Bendigo: (? check recent Heritage study)

Victorian Gardens Study (Peter Watts):

Category 4 - "of interest".

1.3 Method

This study has been undertaken following a submission by the authors to the Army Survey Regiment. It has been completed in accordance with the Australian chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter. This Charter provides guidelines for the 'conservation of places of cultural significance' which is defined in the Charter as places with 'aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations'. The process which this should be

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completed is detailed in *The Illustrated Burra Charter* published by Australia ICOMOS with the assistance of the Australian Heritage Commission. Specific terms are defined in the Burra Charter and a logical to the procedure for development of conservation guidelines is provided. Three broad stages are essential to the guidelines and these are firstly assessment of cultural significance, secondly development of conservation strategy and finally implementation of the conservation strategy.

A key component of the assessment of cultural significance is the Statement of Cultural Significance, which is a succinct statement as to the value of the place in helping our understanding of the past or how the place enriches the present, and how it will be of value to future generations. This assessment is based on a number of specific criteria, developed by the Australian Heritage Commission, which are included in Appendix 4?

1.4 Acknowledgements

The consultant gratefully acknowledges the willing help and assistance of:

- garden staff at Fortuna
- Serco GM
- Ivar Nelson and Terry Sawyer, Australian Construction Services (formerly - Department of Housing and Construction)
- State Library of Victoria, in particular staff of the Manuscripts and Pictures Collections.

2.0 GARDEN HISTORY

2.1 Introduction

Bendigo is situated on the original Ravenswood or Mt Alexander No 2 squatting run of 118,900 acres, the licence for which was taken out by Charles Sherratt in 1840 (Billis & Kenyon, 1974, p247). In 1851, gold was officially discovered on the run on the Bendigo Creek at Golden Square and a government camp was established there. In 1852 the camp was moved to Camp Hill, now Rosalind Park. The government surveyor, R Larritt prepared a Sandhurst (now Bendigo) township plan in 1854, with land sales following in the next year (O'Connor, 1987, p4).

Establishment of a garden (discussion)

16 yrs Ballerstedt's (1855-1871)

64 yrs Lansell (1871-1935)

60 yrs Army Survey Regiment, Department of Defence (1935-1995)

2.2 General history of the site

2.2.1 Site and owners during major ownership periods of Ballerstedt, Lansell and Commonwealth of Australia

A more detailed history of the Lansell family is given in publications such as O'Connor 1987, *others?* More extensive information is included in the Chronology (Appendix 3) and the Rate Book extracts (Appendix 8). Although a number of owners were involved in the development of the Fortuna property, other than the Lansell family, little is known of their involvement in terms of the garden other than the approximate age of the physical and documentary evidence.

The property Fortuna Villa is part of a once very large mining claim, established by the Russian born German JCT Christopher Ballerstedt in 1855 (see Figure 4). Figure 5 shows the location of the property today in relation to the adjoining township of Bendigo.

Gold was discovered in Bendigo in 1851 and in 1854 on the New Chum or Victoria Reef, which was on Victoria Hill to the northwest of Sandhurst town above New Chum Gully. This was the first reef worked in the Bendigo area and one of two principal lines of reef on the Bendigo gold fields.

Ballerstedt

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JCT Christopher Ballerstedt and his son, Theodore, are recognised as Australia's first mining magnates. Ballerstedt arrived in Bendigo in the early 1850's and by 1857 had purchased from the Crown the site of Fortuna (Allotment 1 of Section 33B). He had already established a substantial house as well as a small crushing mill, detached kitchen and storehouse, where he housed his wife and four surviving children. Between 1855 and 1861 Ballerstedt and his son, Theodore, made enormous profits from mining and became Australia's first mining magnates. In 1857, Ballerstedt's hosted a dinner for the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, during his visit to Sandhurst.

Lansell

George Lansell, accompanied by his brother William, arrived in Australia from England in 1853. Eventually he arrived in Bendigo and, with brother Wooten, they established a soap and tallow business at View Point, in the centre of Bendigo. Over a number of years, George Lansell moved in and out of various partnerships, purchasing in various companies and parties, eventually with a large interest in the Advance Company on the Victoria Reef, and the Cinderella mine on Johnsons line of reef, both of which returned good profits. By the early 1860's, Lansell had been appointed director on the boards of over thirty four mines and his influence over the development of quartz reef mining in Bendigo was considerable. He became known as the 'Quartz King of Bendigo' and was sought after in mining matters.

1870's-1880's:

On 06 May 1871, Theodore Ballerstedt sold Fortuna Villa to George Lansell for £20,000. Excavation of a dam at the Fortuna Crushing works in 1871. Construction of the Pompeii fountain began in 1879, fashioned after one in the House of the Great Fountain in Pompeii. Coach houses were constructed adjoining the stables and the main access drive to the villa changed to a wide avenue opening from Chum Street to the south. Lansell also converted the tailings treatment plant into an outdoor swimming baths. Four dams were constructed and landscaping of the area outside the walled garden surrounding the house began. Two Sequoia's were planted either side of the axis to the front of the house, the driveway from Chum Street fenced and planted with an avenue of eucalypt trees. Trees were planted supposedly to screen the poppet heads of Lansells 222 and Fortuna mines near the Chum Street entrance as well as the elevated tramway from the 222 to the quartz mill.

[ASR brochure, c1970, p14]

1887-c1910:

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In this period, a vast building program was undertaken to the house and grounds and many architects. Some of the activities that relate to development of the garden include:

- 1890 overhead flume to pyrites works removed; rose garden established on tailing dump to the south of the main lake; lookout tower atop the conservatory relocated to the rose garden; numerous statues positioned around the garden.
- 1904 shadehouse erected beside the fountain (Pompeii fountain)
- 1907 new shadehouse erected at south end of billiard room; timber garage, summerhouse and detached laundry also built at this time.

Summary

By 1908-1910 Fortuna villa works complete and extensive landscaping included thirteen acres of spacious grounds containing five lakes, gazebos, boat shed and jetties, tennis court and pavilion, garden seats, a small fountain adjacent to the new conservatory, new entrance gates and gravel paths and drives. The original garden wall had been reduced in height at the front of the house and finished with an iron palisade.

Army Survey Regiment

(description required re photos)

2.2.2 Architects associated with Fortuna Villa

A number of architects are known to have worked on the house, garden components and outbuildings at various stages. Existence of plans and current locations are not known.??? It is not known if any of these architects were responsible for the garden layout but none are known to have been garden designers. (check G Lawler thesis)

ARCHITECT	DATE	EXTENT OF WORK
Vahland & Getzschmann	01.03.1869	tender, 2 storey addition to house
Vahland & Getzschmann	1875	new principal entrance, verandah, classical facades, statues positioned on parapets & in garden
-	1879	Pompeii fountain
-	c1879	tailings treatment plant converted into outdoor swimming baths
?Vahland & Getzschmann	c1888	3 storey addition to north side of house

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Emil Maurmann	1890	mansard attic bedroom addition, rose garden established on tailings dump to the south of the main lake, lookout tower atop conservatory relocated to rose garden, numerous statues positioned around garden
William Beebe	1893	billiard room in south of house
-	1893-95	new entrance hall, other additions
-	c1900	shadehouse erected beside fountain
-	1907+	new shadehouse erected at south end of billiard room; timber garage, summerhouse and detached laundry built. Extensive landscaping of grounds

2.3 Development phases

2.3.1 Analysis of photographic material

A large collection of photographs is held by the Army Survey Regiment historic group. However the date of many of these is not known nor is the source of the original photograph. The following discussion is based on a chronological arrangement of photographs.

The earliest photographic evidence of a garden is the c1870 view (plate 1) which shows mature planting around the house enclosed by the extant brick wall on a freestone base. Outside of this enclosed house garden is an orchard and vegetable garden enclosed by a timber picket fence. In the foreground a dam has been excavated.

Subsequent illustrations show the major changes to the property throughout the period 1870-1908 when we see the development of the mansion as the centrepiece of a grand garden with the accompanying gradual reduction of the mining infrastructure.

Key illustrations of this period are:

- 1880 House and garden viewed from the west (plate 2). By this time four dams had been constructed and the garden extended down to the lakes edge, west of the house. The two redwoods are already visible on either

2.5 Summary

Fortuna is situated in an area of the Sandhurst District that was originally part of the Ravenswood or Mt Alexnader No 2 run, first settled by Charles Sherratt in 1840. The very large gold mine on which Fortuna was built, which was over the years reduced to become the mansion Fortuna, originally comprised 13+ acres and was purchased as Lot 7 from the Crown by 7 in 187. There followed a series of about 7 owners with various subdivisions and the property has been in the ownership of the Commonwealth of Australia since 1942. At this time the land totalled of 7 acres but by 1995, it had been reduced to 7 acres.

Between 1871 and 1907 George and Edith Lansell employed a number of important architectural firms of Bendigo to build the Second Empire style house along with stables and various outbuildings. The original house, a component of the extant present building after many additions and extensions is an important element of the original Ballerstedt ownership. Fortuna is a significant villa estate of Bendigo and the 77 buildings are classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). The garden, designed by 7, is listed as Category 4, of local significance, by Peter Watts and listed along with the house and outbuildings by the Australian Heritage Commission, Register of the National Estate.

The approximately 277 acre garden was laid out presumably by gardeners under the direction and possibly with the help of George Lansell, from 1871 until 1907 and is a fine and rare example of a city mansion garden design. There are a number of similarities in the style of the garden with other city mansion gardens such as Ripponlea, Elsternwick, Stonnington, Malvern, Kamesburgh, Brighton, Como, South Yarra, Raheen, Kew, and Government House, South Yarra, although the layout and planting of these gardens are quite different.

The garden at Fortuna contains a number of plants of botanic, horticultural or scientific interest. These include *Sequoiadendron gigantea* and others rare and unusual. The garden layout has undergone some changes since it was laid out in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Much of the extended garden area has been built over by the Commonwealth of Australia and some alterations have occurred in the detailed planting and as a result of the decline and removal of a number of large trees, particularly on the west and southern boundaries. The period of greatest change has been during the Commonwealth of Australia years between 1942-95,

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although alterations in the house precinct have largely been sympathetic to the design intent.

Architecturally, the house is of interest as it was the work of many notable Bendigo architectural firms. Socially the property is important as the home of the Ballerstedt and Lansell families at the peak of their achievements as gold magnates. Historically the house and garden is of considerable interest as it was owned for a considerable period by the Lansell family, one of Australia's important mining families, who ??? Since 1934/42 the property has been associated with the Commonwealth of Australia.

3.0 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

3.1 Existing conditions survey

The 'garden' considered for this report is the approximately ? acres/? hectares surrounding the mansion and defined by the plan in Figure ?2. It should be noted that there are plantings and landscape features within this area for which the significance has not yet been determined. Various reasons apply such as a result of the limitations of the budget or incomplete documentary information (lack of knowledge of Army elements/too soon significance of impact of army on garden). It has not been possible to thoroughly assess and analyse the Commonwealth of Australia component of the main garden within the constraints of the allocated budget. This necessitated a detailed analysis on the immediate remnant mansion garden, and the area defined of visual and landscape significance by Department of Housing and Construction, which has meant that features such as the more recent plantings around peripheral Army buildings, these being parts of the larger property, have not been examined in sufficient detail for an assessment of their significance, nor policies for their conservation, to be made.

Detail engineering survey plans of the site (sheets 1-8), prepared in 1985 by the H Q Army Survey Regiment, were made available. The garden was resurveyed, in particular noting built elements and identification of significant plants. A revised features plan has been prepared to provide an updated layout plan which identifies garden beds, planting and garden elements for the purpose of this report. The plans are indicative only and all measurements should be checked on site for construction purposes.

No drainage plans were located.

A survey of existing plants (except bulbs, annuals, perennials, and some recent plantings) was undertaken in April 1995. A number of the plants seen in the collection of historic photographs (see Illustrations) still survive in the garden. These include plants such *Sequidendron gigantea*, *Tecoma stans*, *Plumbago auriculata* and ??? others.

Photographs were taken to record the garden's condition and to establish a visual record of the site and recent developments. Generally only those photographs which

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show changes from earlier photographs and recent developments have been included in this report. A full set of negatives of the garden have been retained by the Consultant.

The survey and photographs showed that the planting has undergone certain changes over the past 120 or so years (??1870s) since Ballerstedt and the Lansell family, followed by the Commonwealth of Australia, developed the existing garden to its present form. The layout of c1908 is largely intact and retains much of its original form, particularly on the northern and western sides with the rock edged garden beds and sweeping drive entering from the south east. Although there are a few mature trees in what may have been an original orchard, the history of these plantings is not known.

The gradual change that is evident is to be expected in a garden of this age and is due to changing garden staff and fashions, staff levels; and natural plant decline, removals, and replacements but particularly for a garden that is no longer under private ownership. The most obvious changes are the loss of :

??? mature trees such as a redwood, pines and cypress (as a result of alterations as much as natural senescence) and the decline of the detailed planting, particularly as the basic structural planting has matured resulting in shading and dryness of garden beds. With the sale of the property from the Lansell family, many of the distinctive garden elements, such as the statuary, conservatories and rose garden, were sold or removed, although many remain in gardens throughout the Bendigo vicinity.

The alteration of the garden area east and west of the house to provide for Army occupation and later ownership is particularly evident. Many facilities have been provided such as extensive buildings, parade grounds, car parks, basketball, tennis, and bbq areas. Recent additions include a kitchen garden around the ?coach house (bldg 7) to the west of the main house, a number of reconstructed garden beds such as those immediately west of the mansion building, plantings of new garden beds such as around bldg 17 south of the house, and the relatively recent plantings adjacent to the lake and the car park within the main entry. Of most immediate concern is the recent loss due to unknown causes of many mature trees on the embankments around buildings 19 and 20, formerly the mine tailings dump.

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Structural changes which have occurred in the garden at Fortuna include:

- construction of the tennis court (c194?) and basketball court (19??) north west of the house;
- the construction of the asphalted parade ground south of the lake (194?) and the subsequent loss of the rose garden and other plantings in this area;
- the loss of the possibly ?two other lakes of unknown age on the western side of the house (north of the extant lake);
- the removal of one of the *Sequoiadendron* ?? on the main drive west of the house in 199?4;
- ?reconstruction of the pavilion adjacent to the pond (?1994);
- ? alteration of entrance gate posts ;
- loss of substantial part of walled garden surrounds on western side of mansion;
- replacement of the vegetable garden and associated planting and timber picket fencing.

In a wider context, there have not been any significant impacts or developments which have had a significant effect on the garden or its view shed, other than construction of the television towers on the hill north east of the property in 19??.

The condition of the garden at Fortuna is good in the general garden surrounds to the house. However, the remnant mature trees and some of the shrubberies have become neglected or depleted due to shading or other changes, especially those further away from the house (Beds ???). A number of the large trees are stressed and contain deadwood. There has been minimal invasion of the garden beds with weeds, only ?? and *Vinca major* of any concern. However much of the garden's problems are due to maturity and senescence of trees and shading of shrubs rather than neglect. Willow suckers and palm seedlings occur throughout much of the garden particularly along the lake edges. Prunus seedlings are a problem in places also. In many of the beds the soil is compacted and lacking organic matter. The plantings are overgrown or senescent due to natural decline and there has not been any planned replacement program. This is particularly evident with the larger tree species. Similarly, the shrubberies have become overgrown and require replanting and/or pruning to restore their shape. Some reconstructed garden beds and other areas such as car parks require more sympathetic planting, while other facilities require screen planting to minimise the visual impact of inappropriate but necessary structures.

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It should be noted that the following list is indicative only and does not include items planted or moved since the survey was undertaken or annuals, perennials and bulbs. Identification to cultivar level has only been possible where flowers and vegetative material was available. It is suggested that as unidentified cultivated varieties (and other unknown plants) flower, a specimen be sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, for accurate identification.

Most plants have been identified by reference to the garden plan (see Figure?, Illustrations).

Plant list here or as an Appendix??? (approx. 8 pages)

A tree assessment and management report has been prepared for Fortuna as a requirement of the brief but it is recommended that a qualified arborist be employed to work on the trees identified of individual significance and others to achieve a good level of health and public safety. This report should assist future budgeting for the garden as it identifies costs and timelines for essential tree work. Many of the plants only require the removal of deadwood, stubs, and broken limbs, etc., while other plants require more extensive treatment. All plantings would benefit from a mulching, watering, and fertilising program. The trees, as the longest living of the original plantings, form the backbone of the Lansell garden at Fortuna and form the most important link with the mining era. Most other planting is smaller and therefore has less impact and it also usually has a much shorter life span.

The main drive is in good condition as is the asphalted path along the lake. The paths ? where and other outbuildings is in poor condition and requires regrading and resurfacing. The paths around the house and shrubberies are in good condition.

A number of garden structures have been retained at Fortuna, although many were sold at auction in 1934 . There is however considerable deterioration occurring to the gates and fencing and various iron arbours which will require further treatment to restore them to a sound condition. The iron arbour is in a state of collapse and requires urgent restoration, as does the Pompeii fountain and many of the urns and other decorative elements. The lake, pavilion and ?? *other garden buildings* are in good condition. The gardener's shed (bldg 17) is well maintained and requires attention as does the section of fencing along the drive on the west of the house, and the brick and stone wall to the east of the house .

Winds

North westerly winds are bad as are winds from the south, south westerly and south easterly. The general area of the garden is protected and receives almost no frosts.

Soil

The soil is generally ??, much of it a silty loam from the lake.

3.2 Plant survey

4.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Discussion

The garden at Fortuna, Bendigo, is an important private garden in Victoria which is largely intact and in parts conforms to its original layout, contains remnant early planting, (lacks any documentation of its design by ?) and development by the Lansell family. The original garden of possibly as early as (1858 Ballerstedt) Lansell 1871-1907 laid out around the 1858 homestead built for the first Australian mining magnates Christopher and Theodore Ballerstedt, and with later significant extensions and alterations for George Lansell, one of Australia's most successful 19th C gold mine owners and speculators, has been altered and only some original plantings, such as conifers, may have endured to the present day. The present garden was largely laid out in the period of the Lansell family, 1871-1934, with alterations since then by the major owners, the Commonwealth of Australia. The garden survives partially intact, dating from possibly as early as 1871 and certainly from at least 1880. The key period of significance as depicted in the existing documentary evidence is 1890-1907. Historically, the garden is important as it provides the substantially intact landscape setting for an important nineteenth century picturesque Second Empire style villa.

George Lansell had extensive influence in mining and land speculation fields as well as being prominent in the social life of Bendigo, and Fortuna epitomises his position in the community. Other later owners of Fortuna include ??? 1934-37 Bendigo Mines Ltd., 1938-?42 and from 1942 the Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Defence, Army Survey Regiment) commenced their long term ownership of the property.

A number of buildings at Fortuna Villa, ?? list which ones, are classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Registered on the National Estate Register and designated building no. 26 on the City of Bendigo Planning Scheme but these early assessments were largely based on the architectural value of the site. A thorough assessment was made of some the key early buildings by the O'Connor's in 1987 and a Statement of Significance was prepared although an overall level of significance of the place was not identified.

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As considerable information has been revealed in the course of this report regarding social and historical aspects, it is recommended that a re-assessment be made of all buildings on the property, and particularly to include the Army buildings, to determine their contemporary cultural significance.

The surviving documentary material for the garden at Fortuna is of considerable interest. The photographic records held at Fortuna contain the most detailed collection of material which relates to the garden. The significance of this documentary material is that it not only substantiates the authenticity of many components, but it identifies the degree of intactness of the garden to the layout and provides essential information for the continued conservation of the garden.

No plans or plant lists survive which document the design. The only extant ?? *private* garden which can be considered comparable to Fortuna is Rippon Lea whose designer is not known but thought to have been the firm of nurserymen Taylor & Sangster in the 1880s, making it approximately the same age, which has also undergone a degree of change, and a number of changes in ownership. Features shared by Fortuna and Rippon Lea are the curving driveway, arabesque beds, rockery and rock-edged lakes, and garden buildings such as conservatories and shadehouses, not all of which are extant

The most significant losses to the intactness of the garden at Fortuna have been the losses as a result of change of ownership from the Lansell family in 1934, the loss of the small conservatory and other items as a result of auction in 1934???

other alterations, deteriorations - list ???

The garden is substantially intact in its present form although the detailed planting, as evidenced by the photographs, has diminished to a minor extent.

The garden at Fortuna is considered to be a most outstanding mansion garden, particularly for a private garden, the only other garden of similar quality being Rippon Lea, which is ???less intact and has had a greater succession of owners resulting in changes to the elements.

4.2 Criteria for Assessment of Significance

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The criteria which have been adopted for this report for the assessment of significance are the standard criteria developed by the Australian Heritage Commission in the AHC publication *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees* by J. Ramsay and included as Appendix 3.

4.3 Statement of Significance

The garden at the property Fortuna, is of State, and possibly National, significance:

- for its association with, and context provided by, the mining setting which dates back to when it was first taken up as a mining claim by Christopher and Theodore Ballerstedt in 1855 to 1871 (Criterion A 4, C 2, D 2);
- for its long and continued association with the Lansell family, 1871-1934, for whom the garden was laid out and developed (Criterion G1, H1, D 2);
- as the setting for a residence of considerable architectural and historical significance and representing some of the best domestic work by the influential Bendigo architects WC Vahland, E Mauermann and W Beebe, which is among a number of documented designs by the firms in Victoria (Criterion C 2, E 1 F 1);
- for the notable garden setting of the house with extant attributes of the garden including the *main drive, the entrance gate posts and gates, informal garden beds and shrubberies contrasted with open lawn areas, tennis court, arbours and ornamental lake* (Criterion E 1, F 1, G1, H1);
- historically, for its relationship with the important Ballerstedt and Lansell families, Australia's earliest mining magnates and later for a period of some 60 years Commonwealth of Australia (Criterion G 1, H 1);
- for its combination of house and garden which form an ensemble typifying a mansion property representative of the extremely wealthy upper middle classes in Victoria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Criterion B 2, D 2);
- as the focus of sustained public interest, as demonstrated by many tours undertaken of the property by individuals, architectural and horticultural students and representatives of State-wide organisations (Criterion G 1)