POMPEII FOUNTAIN
&
ADJACENT STRUCTURES

AT
"FORTUNA"

CHUM STREET, GOLDEN SQUARE, VICTORIA

SECTION 30 REFERRAL
AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION ACT, 1975

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1. THE PROPERTY

1.1 DEFINITION

"Fortuna", Chum Street, Golden Square, Victoria, 3555, is a mansion complex which was built in stages on the site of a gold mine, and which currently includes the mine quartz battery. The Pompeii Fountain is located west of the house, (and within the garden wall boundaries enclosing the former residence), and east of the lake.

The AHC registered items comprise the Fortuna Villa, coach house, green house, lake and gardens.

AHC Database Information

Database No:	004305
File No:	2/06/200/0016
Local Authority	City of Greater Bendigo, Victoria

1.2 HERITAGE LISTINGS

- The Fortuna Complex is Registered pursuant to the Australian Heritage Commission Act, 1975.
  (date of registration 26/3/1985).

- Fortuna is classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). This listing carries no statutory obligations.

- Fortuna is listed for demolition protection in the City of Bendigo Planning Scheme, pursuant to the Victorian Planning and Environment Act, 1987.

1.3 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Official Statement of Significance adopted by the AHC for the complex reads:-

> Fortuna Villa is significant as one of Australia's best examples of a Victorian / Edwardian era mansion associated with the gold rush period (Criterion 3.2). It is one of the few such residences to be closely associated with a workplace, industrial site, and significant for its location on the site of the 180 mine (Criterion 2.2). It is significant for its associations with millionaire George Lansell also known as the quartz king, who lived there and transformed the original villa cottage into a mansion (Criterion 4.1). It is significant in an aesthetic and creative sense for its architecture, decorative treatments and its situation in a Victorian garden of considerable interest. (Criteria 5.1 and 5.2)

The "Pompeii" Fountain, the specific subject of this referral, is a scaled replica of the fountain in the House of the Great Fountain in Pompeii. The structure may have been erected c. 1879 (see tenders advertised for cement and plaster work at Fortuna Villa, in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 5 September 1879), after George Lansell's visit to Italy in 1875, from where he brought lantern slides of Pompeii. The fountain design is unique in Australia.

2. THE PROJECT

2.1 THE REQUIREMENT

The Pompeii fountain complex elements are suffering a number of problems, including the serious rusting of the steel column shaft, the gradual deterioration of the rendered surfaces on the column, the pavilion and within the pool itself, as well as the erosion of stone in the marble font. Conservation of these structures is urgently required. The deteriorated state of the base of the column which is some 8.7 m high is of particular concern.

The adjoining garden wall and several staircases are also failing and need remedial work. (See attached report for full details).

2.2 THE PROPOSAL

An initial investigation of problems at and around the Fortuna fountain has been completed, and a prioritised schedule of works has been prepared to deal with the urgent and essential matters, as well as the desirable restoration work. (See attached report for full details.)

The current proposal involves measures to slow and minimise the rusting of the steel shaft of the fountain's "triumphal" column, the carrying out of further investigations into the column's anchorage system, the repairing of the deteriorated render and eroded marble font and the waterproofing of the fountain pool. The rebuilding of walls and piers to one of the retaining wall staircases, adjoining the fountain, as well as the repointing of failed mortar joints and the reinstatement of a missing fence to a light well are also recommended. The documentation aims at maximising the conservation component (as against replacement)of the work.

It is proposed that all work be in accordance with the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter), that all the tradespeople involved in the project have proven expertise in the conservation of culturally significant structures, and that the work be supervised by a conservation architect.

2.3 THE ALTERNATIVES

Following the initial investigation, it was found that was originally thought to be a cast iron column shaft (and therefore not likely to be subject to serious rusting problems) is in fact badly corroded steel, which can potentially become unstable . The condition of the render, on the other hand was found to be better than anticipated, in that although it is cracked and weathered, relatively little of it is delaminated and drummy.

There appear to be three basic approaches to the problems of the Pompeii fountain and its adjacent structures. Leaving the complex be, proceeding more or less in accordance with the attached schedule of works, or carrying out major excavation, possibly stabilisation and replacement work. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

- **No repairs option**

  The original fabric, and the evidence of early repairs would be retained. The deterioration would continue, with gradual loss of detail and probable eventual collapse of the column.

- **Works as documented**

  Some loss of original fabric and evidence of early repairs. The deterioration process slowed down due to improved exclusion of moisture from the structure and protection measures to metal. (Some additional stabilisation work may still be necessary following detailed inspection of the column shaft interior.)

- **Major stabilisation of structure and replacement of weathered and cracked render**

  Loss of large areas of original fabric. Structure likely to be in excellent physical condition after work completed.

It is recommended that the "works as documented" option be adopted.

3. THE IMPACT

3.1 ADVERSE IMPACTS

The proposed course of action will result in the partial loss of the original render , where its surface condition is past patching. Additional damage may also be inflicted by possibly necessary, and yet undocumented stabilisation works to the column shaft and its anchorage system. The pumping of the lime/sand slurry into the base of the column shaft to provide an alkaline, and corrosion inhibitive environment for the interior surface of the steel is irreversible.

3.2 BENEFICIAL IMPACTS

Replacement of weathered and badly cracked render will reduce the amount of moisture entering the structure, and therefore contribute to the extension of the life span of the original building fabric. The pumping of the lime/sand slurry into the base of the column shaft will assist in the slowing of the corrosion of the steel, and will add some rigidity to the structure.

3.3 ACTION TO MINIMISE ADVERSE IMPACTS

The schedule of works has been designed to minimise any adverse impact the work may have on the fountain complex and its adjacent structures. It is recommended that traditional methods be used to repair the render, and only tradespeople who are specialist in their field and experienced in work on culturally significant structures be used on this project. It is also recommended that the work be supervised by a conservation architect.