

## Conservation/Restoration of a Place Listed in the Register of the National Estate

### 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 Conservatory is located on the southern side of the house ( and within the garden wall boundaries enclosing the former residence) and east side 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

### 2. Heritage Listing

- 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.

### 3. Purpose of Project

The purpose of this project is the repair, fashioning and stabilising of the Venetian Glass windows of the conservatory of the "Fortuna Villa". The work will involve the removal of the large panes and the repair to the cracked panes. The plain ruby glass will be rescribed to match the patterns of the remaining original glass panels. Where necessary the window frames will be repaired.

#### 4. Relationship to the National Estate.

The "Fortuna Villa" is listed in the Register of the National Estate and is historically significant for the record it provides from 1855 to 1871 of Christopher and Theodore Ballerstedt, Australia's first mining magnates and from 1871 to 1935 of the Lansell family, George Lansell (The Quartz King) being one of Australia's most successful and adventurous nineteenth century gold mine owners and speculators. The villa was in a constant state of extension during the period from 1871 to 1906 and its size and luxury parallels the success of Victorian Gold Mining. The Villa of 40 rooms has been preserved by the continued occupancy of the Army since 1942. The occupancy has been complemented by an enthusiastic voluntary committee of staff who have contributed significantly to the maintenance of the ambience of the period by the provision of soft furnishings and other appropriate fittings.

Fortuna is significant as a reasonably intact and extensive nineteenth century villa estate equivalent at its peak to "Ripponlea" at Elsternwick but unusual for having been attached to a quartz mill (crushing battery). The house which evolved from 1858 over a period of 50 years is a rare example of a rambling picturesque version of the Second Empire Style and represents some of the best domestic work of the prominent Bendigo architects W.E.Vahland, E.Maurrmann and W. Beebe. The swimming bath appears to be the earliest and only surviving private facility of its type from the nineteenth century in Australia, while the Pompeii fountain is certainly without parallel in Australia.

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) "

#### 5. Project Description

The conservatory with its etched glass and Italian theme dates from 1876, following a trip to Europe by the Lansells. The acid etched glass is considered to be a particularly fine and extensive example of the art originating in Venice. The designs depict heraldic symbols of England, interspersed with Australiana and mining scenes. One depicts an early attempt of the Australian coat of arms.

For many years the conservatory was used by the Army as a map library and some of the glass has been damaged (cracked) but not beyond repair. Much of the patterned ruby glass was broken and replaced by plain glass. The voluntary committee replaced this with ruby glass several years ago. The replaced glass is suitable for scribing. The conservatory is one of the highlights of the public tours

conducted each Sunday, with much of the restoration already carried out by the efforts of the committee and a donation from the estate company handling the Lansell estate.

#### 6. Project Plan.

**Initial payment.** \$5000 on acceptance of offer.

**Stage 1 Preparation of Contract Documents.** Consultants will prepare contract documents, lodge documents with Defence Estate and organise tenders.

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.

**Personnel:** Consultant in consultation with Defence Estate.

**Completion Date:** 1st October 1998

**Progress report:** A first progress report including a copy of contract documentation will be submitted to the Australian Heritage Commission by 15 October 1998.

**Progress Payment:** \$30,000 on acceptance of report by the Commission.

Stage 2 Restoration Works undertaken

- a. Stabilise panes of glass
- b. Remove glass panes and make weather proof
- c. Repair window frames
- d. Repair cracked windows
- e. Scribe ruby glass
- f. Replace window panes
- g. Paint window frames

**Personnel;** Selected tender in consultation with Defence Estate

**Completion date:** 15 December 1998

#### **Stage 3 Final Report**

The final report will be submitted to the Australian Heritage Commission by 1st February 1999. A draft report will be provided to the Commission by 31 January 1999. The final report will include engineering drawings and catalogue of material used, photographs depicting both before and after the restoration work and a statement by the consultant that the best known conservation practices were employed.

### **How the project relates to other recent projects.**

The Army as a caring tenant of the building has until recently only maintained the essentials of the site but over the last twelve months has made a considerable contribution to the building. The whole of the villa has had the electrical wiring replaced, the telephone and computer cabling concealed and presented in a non intrusive manner, and contracts have been called for the restoration of the Pompeii fountain, the old coach house and some of the wrought iron. The extensive parquet floors have been restored, the building has been recarpeted and the garden has received much attention. The building is now in a very fine state of repair with day to day maintenance costs now expected to be minimal for many years. The present tenant, "Army Topographic Support Establishment" appreciate the building and have taken action to preserve the building, yet at the same time, continue to use it as an efficient office.

#### 7. Project Personnel

Defence Estate have a very good record in the restoration of Defence historical sites and have a panel of consultants to advise and direct projects of this type. It is outside the authority of this submission to nominate the consultant from this panel.

#### 8. Project Budget

Consultancy Fees	\$5000	
Conservation Contract		
Glass restoration	\$20000	
Timber Restoration	\$5000	
Make good and weather proofing during works	\$5000	
Inkind - Project Management		
Defence Estate	\$5000	
Glass provided		\$3000
Carpet	\$3000	
Light Fittings	\$4000	

#### 9. Option for Part Funding

This project could be carried out in a staged restoration but would be difficult to manage and would incur additional costs and continued disruption to the operation of the tenant which may not be acceptable.

#### 10. Previous Funding

There has been no National Estate Grants Program funding for any works carried out

at "Fortuna".

11. Ownership

The site is owned by Defence Estate.

12. Monitoring and review.

The project will be managed by Defence Estate and subject to all of the controls of the Department.

