

Helpful Background Information

Summary of potential activities of a Business Enterprise at Fortuna

Principles - How might the Fortuna site be used?

A wide range of income-generating commercial activities would be undertaken with the goal of having a viable not-for-profit Business Enterprise at Fortuna. This would be based on:

- Core commercial operations - galleries, facilities rental, tenancies such as restaurant, coffee shop
- Tourist facility management - tours, gift shop, car parking, entry fees
- Educational activities - school visits, camps, education activities
- Entrepreneurial activities - as a base for festivals and events organized by entrepreneurs
- Business Partnerships - e.g. catering services provider

The possible developments would be staged, according to a carefully devised and responsible growth plan. Start-up funding would be required to launch the first phase, but subsequent phases would only be commenced on the achievement of financial targets. This strategy has proven to be a successful approach elsewhere, such as at the Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne.

Utilization of the whole site

The Villa and Gardens: The optimal use would be one which maximizes public access and a multiplicity of uses, so it would include :

Tours - the conduct of regular guided tours focusing on the unique fabric and contents of the Villa and its surrounding garden areas. The eventual restoration of the historic period gardens including the Pompeii Fountain to their original glory would constitute a draw-card for garden lovers from across the country as well as from overseas.

Museum display - the potential for a regional Bendigo museum on site, possibly in new state-of-the-art purpose-built facility or offering scope within the existing villa complex.

Galleries - a variety of small to medium commercial gallery spaces

Restaurant, coffee Shop and gift shop - provided as expected visitor facilities

Meeting Rooms - for community groups and corporate use such as seminars, conferences

The Lake and its Surrounds: Buildings here include the Coach House and the Summer house. The uses here would be those which make it a sought after visiting spot for the public - relaxation on the lawn areas, an outdoor amphitheatre, a sculpture garden, restored heritage gardens, picnic areas, outdoor dining areas etc.

The 'Industrial' Complex: These are buildings of both the Lansell and Defence eras which housed the 'heavy' industries on the site, e.g. the 'Print Hall, being Lansell's stamping batteries. The buildings here have the largest rooms so the optimal use would be for those activities which need the most space, such as functions and special events. Archive facilities for historical collections of Bendigo and region. Given that the Defence mapping facility has been on-site for some 65 years, one possibility which should be considered is the idea of a Museum of Mapping, Charting and Cartography for the national and international tourist.

Smaller rooms here could be used for a variety of purposes, such as retail, office space, studios, meeting rooms.

The 'Mapping Complex': These were the buildings used by the Defence/DIGO mapping production facility: These could be used for meeting rooms (large and small), arts work-shop spaces, class-rooms and office space.

The Accommodation Complex: These are the non-heritage buildings used to accommodate the live-in Defence personnel. This could be redeveloped into a modern accommodation precinct under a long-term leasing arrangement with an accommodation provider or the buildings could be used for the purposes for which they were built - accommodation, dining and kitchen as modern 'budget' style accommodation.

The Sports Stores Complex: In the short term, these facilities could be used to house artist studios and offices.

The Main Car-park and 'Bush Block': The Bush Block could be used for re-vegetation or re-development, either as part of the Villa Fortuna complex or as a separate sale for re-development purposes. Another consideration could be the siting of a paying car-park on the Bush Block, drawing custom from visitors to the neighbouring medical facilities.

Business and Community Partnerships

Business Partnerships. An example of a mutually beneficial Business Partnership could be in the area of accommodation. There is a large area of the *Fortuna Villa* property which currently houses the old Army Barracks which could be leased, long term, to an accommodation provider for renovation or complete redevelopment. The benefit to an Enterprise at Fortuna would be twofold – firstly in terms of the annual rental such a lease would yield and secondly, through the availability of on-site accommodation for activities such as festivals, and events at Fortuna. The benefit to the accommodation provider would be the business generated by being in close proximity to a major draw-card.

There is an existing and immediate demand for a wide range of commercially-oriented community services such as wedding ceremonies and wedding photography at Fortuna - a continuation of past tradition. Another avenue of income of similar venues is for film-set location which can earn income in the order of \$2000 per day. This, along with the ability to manage corporate functions is an on-going and large income producer for venues that offer such facilities.

Community Partnerships. The Fortuna Villa site could potentially house a large outdoor amphitheatre, a smaller indoor theatre and other spaces for rehearsal and performance in a number of disciplines, such as music, drama and dance. There could be a partnership with The Capital theatre for the running of large outdoor productions e.g. presenting Bell Shakespeare Company performing 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream' in the outdoor amphitheatre. Smaller amateur drama companies could base themselves at Fortuna and utilise the facilities for rehearsals before launching their full productions at The Capital.

It is well known that there are, among the wide range of volunteer Bendigo community clubs and organizations, many who would value the prospect of having a low-cost 'base' for their monthly meetings and special occasions such as Annual General Meetings or prize-givings.

External tourist linking

Particularly with today's quest of people and tourists for authenticity, the opportunity to link Lansell's Fortuna to established attractions such as Victoria Hill, the heritage 'Goldmines Hotel and Bar', the residential precinct historically known as Belgravia and the Central Deborah mine is a compelling one.

While not part of any present proposal, a longer term vision of the tourist tram service extended from Central Deborah up to Fortuna as a 'must do' excursion raises an exciting possibility.

Helpful Background Information

1. Villa Fortuna Action Group's 2009 'Business Concept' submission to COGB This is still relevant as a description of a viable Business Enterprise model:
www.villafortuna.org.au . Go to 'Proposal' on top menu.
2. Federal government information including extensive detailed 'Due Diligence' ssite investigations conducted in relation to the sale of the property:
www.fortunavilla.net.au
3. Villa Fortuna Action Group Inc. website to illustrate the various activities of this group:
www.villafortuna.org.au
4. [Not publicly available – but currently being sought through FOI – a Feasibility Study conducted by the Victorian State government (Department of Regional Development), 2010].