

Tuesday December 18, 2007

2 KM DUTCH HERITAGE TRAIL OPENS IN MALACCA

Place of worship: Christ church was built by the Dutch in 1753 to commemorate the first centenary of the Dutch presence in Malacca.

A 2km Dutch heritage trail to showcase the remnants of old Dutch buildings and its influences over Malacca is the latest tourist attraction in this historical city.

The walk starts from a Malacca tree in front of A'Famosa, the old Portuguese fort, in Jalan Bandar Hilir. It then leads to the fort that was used by the Dutch as their main fortress after they conquered Malacca in 1641.

THE STADTHUYS



Historical: The Stadthuys, now a museum, was built between 1641 and 1656 and is the oldest VOC building in Asia. It was used as the Dutch Governor's residence.

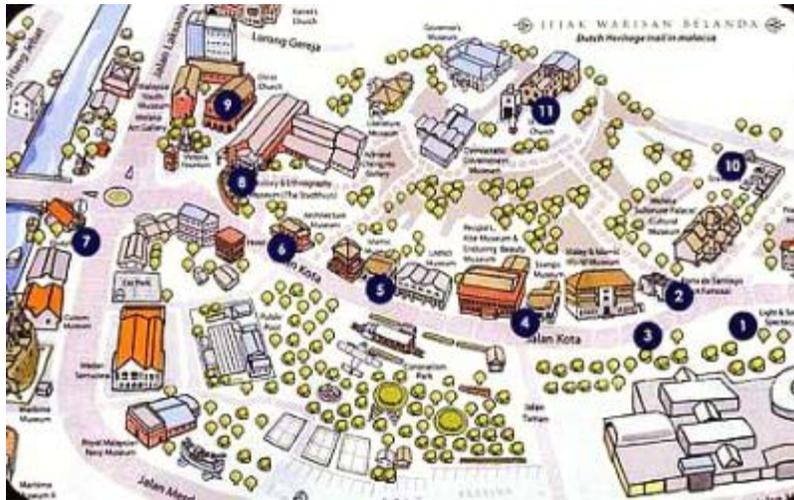
Next on the trail is the excavation of fortifications in front of Bastion House in Jalan Kota.

The walk then leads to the old Malacca Museum, now housing the Stamp Museum, that was once occupied by the Westerhout family.

What is interesting about this building is that it was occupied by the same family for about 300 years until 1930. The house was subsequently turned into the state's first museum after Merdeka.

It is also interesting to note that the current Museum and Antiquities Department building was built by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to house its officials in the golden Malacca era.

THE DUTCH HERITAGE TRAIL



Trail map: 1. Malacca trees. 2. Porta de Santiago (A'Famosa Fort). 3. Excavation of fortifications. 4. Old museum. 5. Museums and Antiquities Department building. 6. Architecture Museum. 7. Excavation of Middlesburg. 8. Stadthuys. 9. Chirst Church. 10. Dutch graveyard and 11. St Paul's church.

Not far from it is the Architecture Museum, which has typical Dutch architectural influences, opposite the old Malacca police headquarters in Jalan Kota, which was the residence of senior VOC officials. The building was built in the 18th century.

The Middlesburg excavation, near the Malacca riverbank, was once a Dutch watchtower used to protect the old quay.

The tower was built in 1660,

Next on the trail is the famous red Stadthuys building that was once the official Dutch governor's residence.

THE CHRIST CHURCH



Place of worship: Christ church was built by the Dutch in 1753 to commemorate the first centenary of the Dutch presence in Malacca.

The trail also leads to Christ Church and subsequently the Dutch graveyard where gravestones with Dutch names as Koek, Theodorus Hebbers and Hendrick Evertsen can be found.

The final destination is the ruins of St Paul's church. Although the church was built by the Portuguese as a place of worship, the Dutch used this building at the top of the hill for other purposes after they occupied Malacca.

The Dutch heritage trail is part of an effort by the Historic Malacca Municipal Council, the Chief Minister's Department, the State Museum Corporation and the Dutch embassy to showcase Dutch influences in the golden era of Malacca.

The project was embarked upon after the embassy and state agencies successfully held the *Holland Days in Malacca* event last September.

PORTA DE SANTIAGO



Significant: The gateway of Porta de Santiago, popularly known as the A'Famosa Fort, is the only remnant of the old fort built by the Portuguese after they conquered Malacca in 1511.

Dutch ambassador to Malaysia Lody Embrechts said he was impressed by the preservation of old Dutch buildings in the city.

He said that, apart from the buildings, the shipwrecks, gravestones, excavations and artefacts were a reminder of the Dutch presence in Malacca.

He said this at the trail's official launch in Malacca recently. With state Tourism, Culture and Heritage Committee chairman Datuk Ab Rahaman Ab Karim, he later went on a tour of some heritage buildings.

Ab Rahaman hoped the trail would woo tourists and more guided tours would be organised by local tour companies to boost the trail project.