

Monday January 29, 2007

A'Famosa to be rebuilt

By EMILY MATHEWS, The Star

MALACCA: Portions of the buried ruins of Fortaleza D'Malacca or the mighty A'Famosa fortress built in 1512 will be brought to "life" for the world to see.

About 350m of the buried walls of the fortress will be reconstructed stone by stone to its original dimensions of 8m by 5m, said Commissioner of Heritage Prof Datuk Dr Siti Zuraina Abdul Majid.

She said the completed structure would encompass the city's 11.3ha heritage site in Bandar Hilir.

"When completed, the fort will be one of the nation's prominent historical structures and will completely transform Malaysia's historical landscape. Visitors will literally be able to journey to the past and relive history."

"It's a very exciting project for us to be able to reconstruct the wall. Once completed, the fort will be able to impart the historical importance of that era," she said.



Interesting find: This figurine head was found at the site.

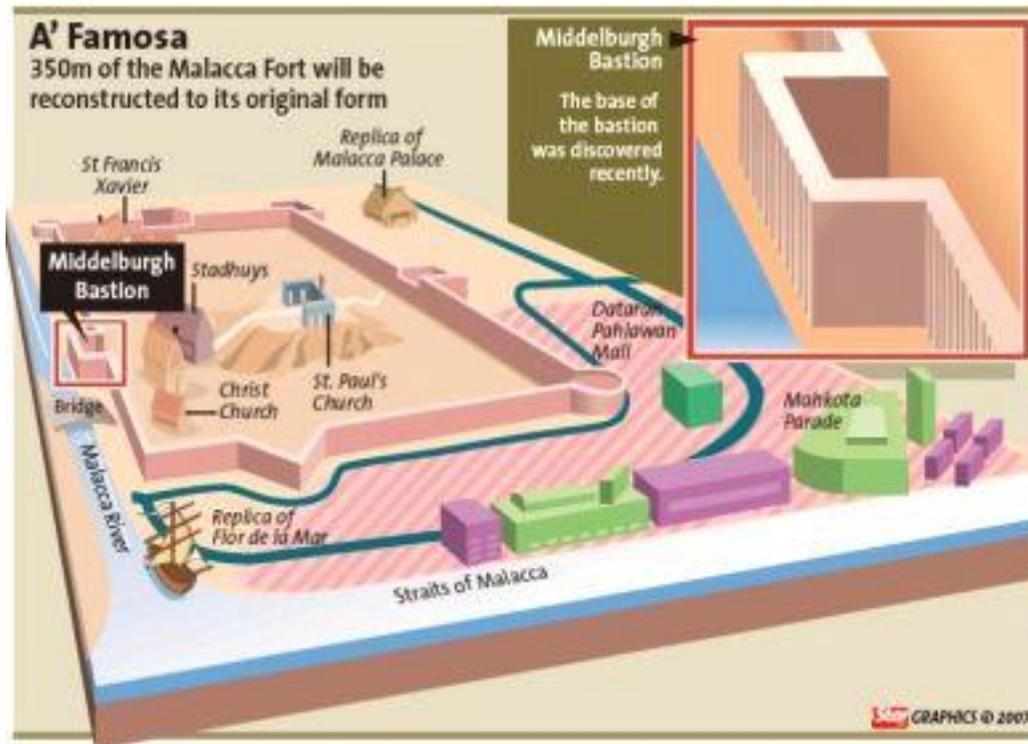


Unearthed: Part of the site revealing the ruins of the Middelburgh Bastion in Malacca.

Dr Siti Zuraina added that the Heritage Department, under the Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry, would implement the project in stages, beginning from the ancient wall site in Bandar Hilir, which has been confirmed as the Middelburgh Bastion.

"However, existing buildings and other structures will not be touched," she said.

“We will excavate and expose the southern side of the foundation of the fort’s walls and its six bastions before using laterite stones from Malacca’s Pulau Upeh to reconstruct the fort,” she added.



The department will also conserve and restore the 23 historical structures within the fort’s confines.

“We expect to complete reconstructing the fort by the end of the Ninth Malaysia Plan,” she said.

Dr Siti Zuraina said the department had requested a special budget allocation from the Cabinet as the project was expected to be costly.

Presently, the department is using documents and paintings of the fort dating back to 1512 to determine its dimensions and design, but may require further documents from overseas sources.

“We might study the Galle Fort, which is fully intact in Sri Lanka, as it is a good example of how the fort would look like because they both share a similar history,” she added.



Plumbing: Pipes believed to have originated during the Dutch era were dug out.