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PRESS RELEASE

Singapore Management University Initiates Archaeological Trial-trenching at Bras Basah City Campus Site

In an effort to discover and preserve Singapore's rich history and heritage of the Bras Basah area, the Singapore Management University (SMU) has enlisted the help of the Singapore History Museum (SHM) to conduct an archaeological survey of SMU's future City Campus site from 15-19 August 2001, before site works for the City Campus begin in end 2001.

Many archaeological artifacts have been found at Fort Canning and other sites in the city, providing evidence of settlements by the island natives. In particular, the history of pre-colonial Singapore is of interest to the SHM as it unlocks many unanswered questions in Singapore's history books. In initiating the archaeological survey of its city campus site, SMU hopes that it would uncover more secrets to its rich past for the benefit and education of future generations of Singaporeans.

Led by local archaeologist, Assoc Prof John Miksic, the archaeological survey will be carried out using trial-trenching - a method of digging selected test pits of size 2m x 2m each. Fourteen test pits points at Bras Basah Park have been chosen based on what is presently known about the site, as observed from old maps, photographs, and documentary records. The plan will be kept dynamic and flexible to respond to discoveries made during the trial-trenching. Should a test-pit suggest that there might be interesting data at another location which was not marked initially, resources will be diverted to trial-trenching in that area.

Trial-trenching is estimated to between three to six working days. The excavation will mainly be done using a backhoe. Manual labour to excavate with greater care and in finer detail might be required, depending on the conditions in the test pits.