Main entrance to stay as tourist attraction

THE former Pudu jail will be redeveloped as a 7.85 ha mixed development project dubbed Bukit Bintang City Centre (BBCC) is to take place but the prison's iconic main entrance built in 1895 will not be demolished.

Uda Holdings Bhd chairman Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani said the Pudu jail facade would be incorporated into the building as part of heritage preservation.

“We have plans to include the history of Pudu jail in the development and make it into a tourist attraction. "Currently, we are finalising the consortium agreement with Eco World Development Group Bhd and the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), who will be part of the project. "We will apply for a development order from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), which will take about six months. If everything goes smoothly, we can start work beginning next year," he said during a project briefing at Menara Bukit Bintang Plaza, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, recently.

Comprising seven commercial and residential blocks, BBCC will include office towers, a hotel, a retail mall, a food street, a multipurpose hall and an entertainment hub.

BBCC is projected to have more than 5mil sq ft of nett leasable space.

Johari said the project, which includes the Malaysian Grand Bazaar, would benefit locals, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

“We want to create a one-stop area of small retail lots for communities and enterprises who wish to do business in the highly populated area. "It is like combining Central Market, Petaling Street in Kuala Lumpur and Jonker Street in Malacca in one place. Traders will be exposed to the opportunity of doing business here while locals and tourists will enjoy shopping with a taste of Malaysian culture," he said.

BBCC will be accessible via the Hang Tuah LRT and MRT stations.

Commenting on the project site in a saturated area, Johari said the company had carried out comprehensive traffic impact studies.

“Proper traffic flow is the key to addressing congestion and we will incorporate effective traffic dispersal systems to get in and out of the area. "We project that public rail transportation will also ease the traffic by 20% to 30%. "The whole development will also have 8,000 to 10,000 parking spots to cater to the demand," he said.