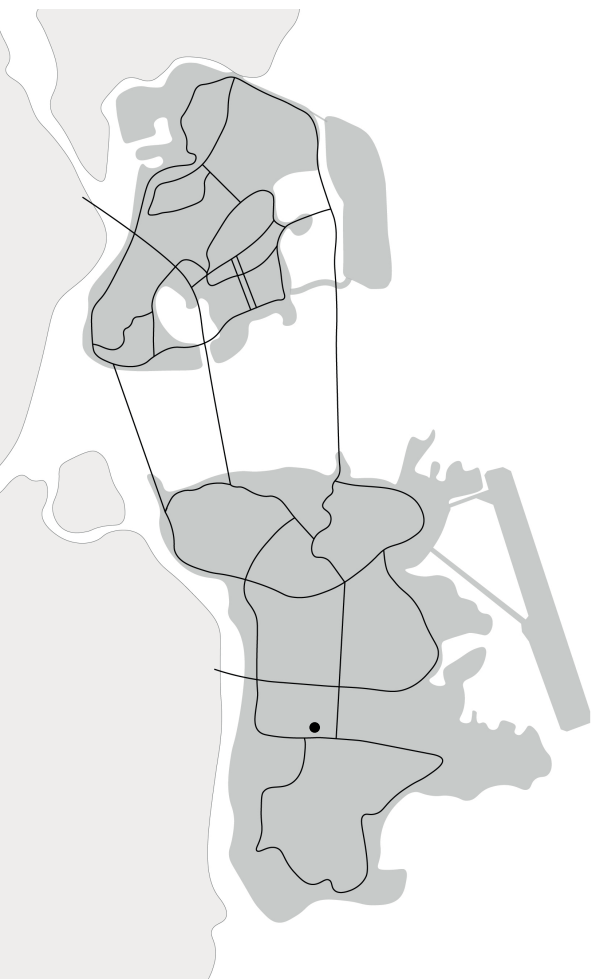
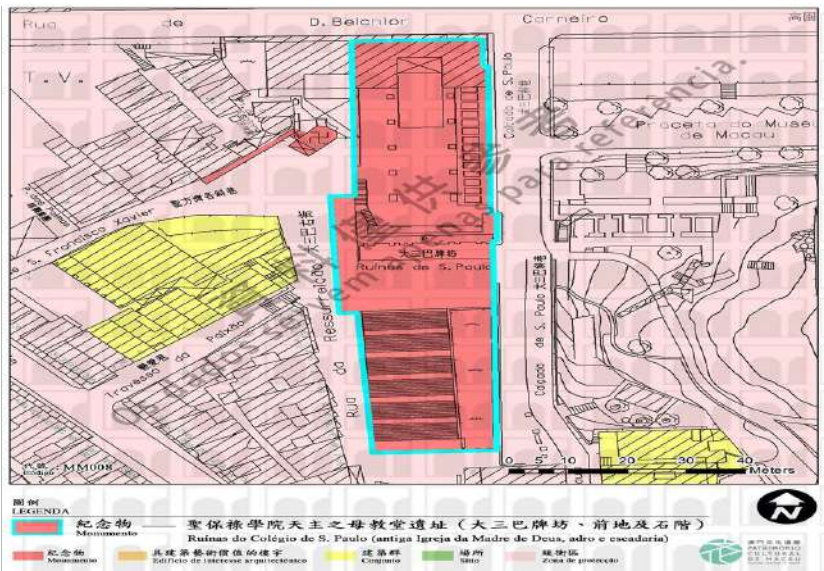
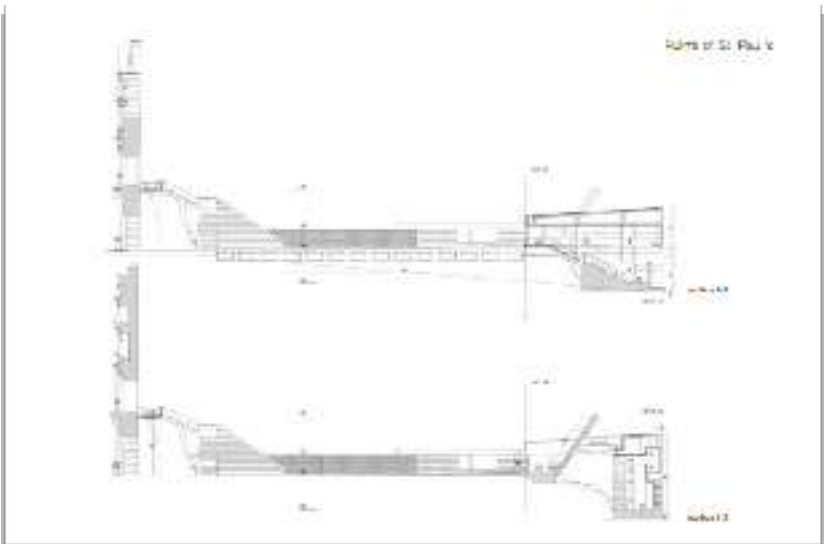


How construction technologies, materials and labour made macanese architecture?

# RUÍNAS DE SÃO PAULO [Ruins of St Paul's]



## BUILDING

Author: Charles Spinola  
Date:1602-1640  
Location: Rua da Restauração  
Promoter / Owner: Cultural Institute of the Macau Government  
Contractor:  
Funding / Cost: 9,9 MILLIONS

Function: Monument  
Area: 84 ft  
Current state: Degrading

## CONSTRUCTION

### MATERIALS & SYSTEMS

The façade of the São Paulo Ruins measures 23 meters wide and 25.5 meters high, organized into five levels. Following the classical idea of divine ascension, the architectural orders progress from the base to the top, starting with Ionic, then Corinthian, and finally Composite. The two upper floors taper gradually to support a triangular pediment, symbolizing the Holy Spirit—the peak of divine ascension.

This Mannerist façade features decorative elements inspired by Eastern motifs. Sculptures depict biblical themes, mythological images, Chinese characters, chrysanthemums, a Portuguese boat, maritime symbols, Chinese lions, and bronze statues of Jesuit saints, reflecting European, Chinese, and other Asian influences. Overall, it represents a blend of global, regional, and local styles. Today, the façade of S. Paulo is a symbolic emblem of Macau. Its Baroque/Mannerist design made of granite, clay and wood materials is unparalleled in China, as noted in the UNESCO-published \*Atlas Mundial de la Arquitectura Barroca\*. The Ruins of S. Paulo are among Macau's most significant examples of universal cultural value.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Ruins of São Paulo located in Macau correspond to the remains of the old Church of Mother of God and the College of São Paulo which had the purpose of training people from various religions, including Europe and Japan to convert people into cristianism. In 1835 the complex was destroyed by a fire. Both the Church of Mother of God and the College of São Paulo, as well as the Monte Fortress, were buildings constructed by the Jesuits, and this ensemble is often referred to as the "Acrópole of Macau." What remains of Macau's largest and most splendid church is the imposing granite façade and the monumental staircase with 68 steps. On the other hand, little remains of the College.

The Ruins of São Paulo, together with the Monte Fortress, are part of the list of historic monuments of Macau's Historic Center, which is also included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This imposing building can be considered the greatest symbol of Western Christian culture in Macau. It also became a beautiful and grand basilica. At that time, it was the largest Catholic church in the Far East and was often referred to as the "Vatican of the East."

Nearby, the archaeological remains of the old College of S. Paulo reveal the site of the first Western-style university in the Far East. It offered courses in Theology, Mathematics, Geography, Chinese, Portuguese, Latin, Astronomy, and more. The college trained many missionaries who spread Catholicism in China, Japan, and the region. The Jesuits' missionary work was crucial in promoting Catholicism and fostering exchanges in science, art, and culture.

## WORKERS & SKILLS

At the ruins of São Paulo in Maca the workers at the time had a diverse group that included Chinese and Japanese craftsmen which were cristian and some local workers.

For the preservation numerous experts are engaged in the efforts to safeguard, upkeep, and highlight the location. Tour guides and security personnel greet guests, sharing insights about its past while maintaining safety. Professionals in conservation and restoration are responsible for cleaning, fixing issues, and ensuring the site is preserved. Additionally, there are teams focused on security, upkeep, administration, and education that play a role in overseeing the area. A large number of these employees are members of the local community, emphasizing the cultural





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[Ruins of St Paul's]

