

# Green panel clears Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment project

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IN a boost to one of the largest urban renewal projects in the country, the state environment panel has approved the redevelopment of Bhendi Bazaar after the promoter of the project agreed to lower the tenement density by reducing 120 units from the sale component.

“The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority

(SEIAA) was concerned that the quality of life could be adversely impacted due to a high tenement density, but we explained to them how the quality of life will in fact improve exponentially after this project. We have still conceded to their concerns and have tried to satisfy their requirement to the best of our abilities without compromising on the essence of the project,” said Abbas Master, chief execu-

tive, Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), which is implementing the project.

In its previous meeting, the SEIAA had expressed concern over the extremely high tenement density—over 1,000 per hectare—once the project is complete.

The Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment project proposes to transform the 200-year-old market, made up of commercial and residential buildings,

into a planned neighbourhood of high-rises. The redevelopment consists of eight clusters of buildings for 20,000-odd residents, and is expected to be complete in 2023.

In its letter to the SEIAA dated March 7, the SBUT had explained that the maximum density allowed under the Development Control Regulations for a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 1.33 is 600 per

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Bhendi Bazaar.

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hectare. Hence, for an FSI of 4, which is permissible as per the rules for cluster redevelopment, the maximum tenement density permissible should be 1,800 per hectare.

“Considering this, we are significantly under the limit for the maximum density allowed, but we still appreciate the authority’s concerns sur-

rounding a high tenement density,” Master said.

As per the earlier proposal, the Bhendi Bazaar cluster redevelopment project was to be spread across a plot area of 66,264.74 sq m with 3,514 tenements for rehabilitating residents. The number of tenements for sale was 1,759, of which the SBUT has to hand over 215

units free to the BMC or MHADA. In addition, the SBUT had proposed construction of 88 rooms, 1,379 redeveloped shops and five new shops, bringing the total tenement density to 1,004.6 per hectare, which the SEIAA said needed to be significantly reduced.

To allay these concerns, the SBUT has now agreed to

decrease the number of tenements forming its sale component by 120—nearly 7 per cent of the total number of tenements for sale—by reducing three floors in each of its four sale buildings.

The SBUT has also agreed to do away with the five new shops it had proposed other than redeveloped shops. This will reduce

the total construction area by 17,331 sq m. “While this will reduce the density and the construction only marginally, the difficulties pointed out by the project proponent in further reducing the number of sale flats have also to be taken into account,” the three-member SEIAA noted while appraising the project.