

# Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment project given green clearance

Yogesh.Sadhvani  
@timesgroup.com

**T**he State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority has given the nod for the Bhendi Bazaar cluster redevelopment project after the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust agreed to scale down the number of tenements in the Rs 3,000-crore project that aims to rehabilitate 3,500 families and 1,400 shopkeepers.

The density of construction was a major reason that delayed the environmental clearance for the eight-cluster project. The environmental body was concerned that "the tenement density in the plot would become extremely high, adversely affecting the quality of life."

The SEIAA, which gave its nod on March 8, has also asked the trust to make the roads wider than it had initially proposed in the layout. According to minutes of the meeting, the trust had planned 3,514 redeveloped tenements and 1,759 sale tenements in an area of 66,264.74 square metres. The trust had also planned 88 rooms, 1,379 redeveloped shops and five new shops for sale.

"The redeveloped tenement density would have been 530.4 per hectare; including the sale flats, the tenements density would have been 795.7 per hectare," said the minutes.

"Including the shops, the density becomes 1004.6 per hectare. It was noted that it was necessary to reduce the density significantly. It was recognised that the only way to reduce this would be to significantly reduce the sale component – both the number of flats and the total construction area, which is at present about twice the area of the plot."

## WIDER ROADS

The SEIAA committee also agreed that the trust has "used most efficient designs to reduce construction areas to the minimum." However, the authorities suggested that some roads be further widened keeping in mind growing traffic and also the presence of schools, shops and religious structures. They also asked the trust to increase parking space near religious places.

The trust submitted that the redevelopment project would certainly enhance the quality of life of the occupants as 70 per cent of existing residents were staying in tenements smaller than 300 sq feet.

It added that out of the 1,759 sale tenements, 215 tenements were to be handed free to government agencies. It also reasoned that the "sale towers are essential to execute the redevelopment of one of the oldest and degenerated areas of Mumbai".

Finally, the trust agreed to reduce the number of sale tenements by 120 (by reducing three floors each in the four sale buildings) and do away with the proposed five new shops.

This will reduce the construction area by 17,331 square metre, said the authority members. While this will reduce the density and construction only marginally, the difficulties pointed out by the trust also have to be taken into account, the minutes said.