

More arcade pavements like those near CST proposed

Aesthetics Will Improve, But Could Be Hawker Trap

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Mumbai: The draft development plan for the city for the next 20 years has proposed arcade pavements as a concession to aesthetics and the urban architectural heritage of the city.

The Special Development Control Regulations, which is a part of the draft DP 2034, has been formulated keeping in mind areas and streets where the special character of the place needs to be maintained.

One of the best examples of arcade pavements is D N Road in Fort leading up to CST from Kalaghoda and then beyond it till the end of the CST administrative building. Parts of Colaba too have arcade pavements.

While proposing arcade pavements, the DP says they have been included with a view to "enhance walkability, incorporate inclusive zoning for street vendors, improve legibility of urban places, improve urban design and aesthetic value of places and provide safety, comfort and security on the street".

One of the key suggestions is arcade pavements on existing major pedestrian roads leading to railway stations. "These arcades will provide uniform, shaded and unrestricted walkways for pedestrians."

The DP specifies that roads above 30ft wide can have arcade pavements only on one side with a ceiling height of 9 metres. Roads above 40ft wide can have them on both sides, but the height has to be at least 12m while arcades on both sides of roads over 60ft wide must be 15m high.

"It is a good concept and will surely help change the look of the city. Every city has its own identity and this can be the Mumbai's identity," said Manoj Kotak, BJP leader in the BMC. Dr B R Ambedkar Road, LBS Marg, Linking Road or E Moses Road could have arcade pavements, felt sources.

But not everyone is convinced. "It would be difficult in the suburbs.

CONCESSION TO HERITAGE



THE CONCEPT

- An arched, covered pavement or street, usually with stalls hawking wares
- Burlington Arcade in London opened in 1891, the first shopping arcade
- Major arcade

THE BENEFITS

- These arcades will provide uniform, shaded walkways for pedestrians
- Could be very useful during the summer and monsoons
- Can help define look of the area or of the city

Defence of higher FSI

Reacting to criticism about the increased FSI, municipal commissioner Sitaram Kunte said they are trying to make built-up space more affordable. "Presently there is a demand-supply mismatch. In the 1991 DP, we limited the development rights and prices (of houses) went so high. Normal economics says if supply increases, demand would stabilize. We hope every family should get a home of 25 square metre. We have asked the BMC general body to bring this DP draft in public domain for people's suggestions and objections."

This arcade idea can be possible only in south Mumbai," said additional municipal commissioner SVR Srinivas. Activists are sure to raise ques-

tions about whether the move is aimed at helping pedestrians. Walking along Colaba Causeway and D N Road is often unpleasant thanks to the hawkers who force people on to the carriageways.

Expanding on streetscape, the draft DP says streets lend special character to areas in a city. "Greater Mumbai has several distinctive street typologies, including arcades along D N Road, buildings on street edge in the island city and areas which have a strong building line such as on Marine Drive. The arcades in the Fort area, which lend a special character to D N Road, provide welcome shade to both hawkers as well as pedestrian. Streets such as Ambedkar Road between Dadar and Sion, main streets in Dadar; Matunga, Sion, Marine Drive and Lady Jamshedji Road enhance walkability for the pedestrian."

Minister, corporators cry foul, will oppose devpt

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: With details of the BMC's plan of extensive development in Aarey land coming out, opposition to the takeover of one of the few lungs of the city gathered left and momentum.

Not only citizen-activists, but a state minister and corporators too have spoken out against development in Aarey. Ravindra Waikar, minister of state for housing who represents Aarey Colony in the assembly, said he will oppose the proposals. After TOI published the detailed plan (see box) on Friday, Waikar called a team of officials involved with the draft Development Plan DP 2034 to get exact details about the Aarey development plan. "Even being a part of government, I will strongly oppose the Aarey development. No construction should be allowed inside Aarey. It is a lung of the city and should be maintained as it is," Waikar of the Shiv Sena told TOI.

DON'T TOUCH AAREY

Opposition leader in the BMC Devendra Amberkar said the civic body is talking about cutting trees at Aarey, but there is no mention of replanting them. "Once these trees are cut, there would be no place to replant them in the city with construction everywhere. Aarey land is the only green area left and the BMC should not touch it," said Amberkar.

Reacting to the TOI report, municipal commissioner Sitaram Kunte said: "Land in Mumbai is very rigid and we cannot expand it. Therefore, we are proposing to put the existing land to the best possible use. Those who are against the proposal are free to object as urban planning is a very democratic process and the new economic hub on Aarey land is on-

DP PLANS FOR USE OF AAREY LAND

GREEN BELT

- Total area | 1,618.7 hectares
- Occupied area | 378 ha
- DP plans to use | 1,009 ha

DP PROPOSALS

- 586 ha for central city park, zoo & botanical garden, theme park, sports complex
- 212 ha for edu & health campus
- 211 ha for various amenities, BRTS, east-west road links, metro car shed
- Only 232 ha or 14% of Aarey to be left untouched

BMC's ambitious devpt plan set to cut Aarey to 14% its present size

TOI Report on February 20



Even being a part of government, I will strongly oppose the Aarey development. No construction should be allowed inside Aarey. It is a lung of the city and should be maintained as it is - Ravindra Waikar | MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOUSING & MLA FOR AAREY AREA

Byculla zoo not shifting, expansion plan at Aarey

The draft DP 2034 clearly states that Aarey Colony can accommodate the shifting zoo (Byculla), as directed by the forest department. Byculla zoo now stands on over 50 acres in the heart of the island city within a botanical garden that is a heritage precinct and is undergoing a Rs 350 crore refurbishment. Asked about the zoo shifting to Aarey, additional municipal commissioner SVR Srinivas said: "There is no plan of shifting Byculla zoo, but for extension of the existing zoo in Aarey. There could be a printing mistake or typo about the word 'shift'."

ly a proposal. We would be opening up the plan for suggestions and objections once the BMC allows us to do so."

Shocked activists are not willing to wait. Leena Prabhuo of Forum for Improving Quality of Life in Mumbai-Suburbs has sought an appointment with CM Devendra Fadnis. "I have sent an email to the CM but haven't received any reply from him. We will take up the issue of proposed Aarey development and Metro III car shed as well. Aarey should not be developmental," said Prabhuo, who also plans to meet revenue minister Eknath Khadse.

Minister Waikar also objected

to the proposed Metro III car shed inside Aarey. "There are 46 slum pockets that have come up inside Aarey Colony. The location of the car shed should be changed to save trees," he said.

According to the draft DP it has proposed that the Aarey land should be developed as emerging business hub on the lines of BKC. The city would lose the natural green lungs for the artificial Central Park, Theme Park, Botanical Garden and other activities including housing, retailing, Educational campuses and bus and elevated route connecting to Eastern and Western suburban that has been proposed.

DP will be a disaster for city, increase social disparities

P K Das

The new Development Plan for Mumbai ridicules sustainable growth principles and actively undermines the city's most important needs — affordable housing and public open spaces. With its proposal to increase floor space index (FSI), the plan focuses on quantity over quality and perpetuates the bluff that increasing volumes of construction will automatically solve the problems of the city — when in fact it will only further increase social disparities.

First let's look at affordable housing. The new draft DP is not only silent on this issue but actively under-

mines the sector. Many organizations have demanded that slum-occupied lands be reserved for affordable housing, which would enable the rehabilitation of existing slum-dwellers as well as create an equal number of affordable housing units. They have also demanded reservations for social amenities on this slum land. The new DP, on the other hand, perpetuates the current failed SRA policy of allowing slum lands to be taken over for commercial development. In fact, to please developers, the plan promises to do away with the reservations that allegedly are holding up slum redevelopment. We have all seen how this SRA policy of incentivizing the market to build affordable housing has

only led to more "slumification" of the city, producing vertical slums without amenities side by side with luxury high-rises. The past decade has shown us that affordable housing cannot be left to the market forces.

The DP authorities have skipped assessing the construction potential already

COMMENT

available through redevelopment policies. Programmes for slum redevelopment, redevelopment of cessed buildings, and cluster development, as well as the sale of mill lands have led to high volumes of construction potential which, given the capacity of the government and the private sector, won't

Mumbai's growth is a story of anarchy, driven by turnover and construction volumes without plans for supporting services and infrastructure — let alone planning for future environmental disasters... I hope the public raises its voice to check the 'build more' syndrome

be used up for decades. So why are we adding further to this volume through increased FSI? Who is all this extra construction for? Builders are not catering to the poor and the middle class, so we can safely assume that the extra construction will only result in add-

ing to the large volumes of unsold luxury flats. And developers will not build if flats don't sell, thereby rendering additional FSI useless.

Secondly, how does increased FSI and density help improve the open spaces ratio in the city — already among the lowest in the world? How will accessible open spaces be generated in high-rise, high-density transit corridor areas? Reserving land in the DP for more open spaces — and for affordable housing — ought to be top of the agenda. Instead, the new plan reduces open space standards of 6 square metres per person in the suburbs to 2 square metres, and proposes to put a business hub in one of the city's few large lungs — Aarey.

There needs to be an evaluation of the emerging built-form in the interests of cohesive urban design and planning for the future. Other cities around the world with high FSI are used to justify high FSI for Mumbai. But we are not told how these cities have evolved with urban design guidelines and strict construction regulations. Moreover, they have built their infrastructure first and then fixed the FSI. Cities like New York and Singapore have also been successful in providing social housing, along with high-quality infrastructure and environment. In New York, Hurricane Sandy has even led to integrated planning that considers the impact of future natural disasters. By

contrast, Mumbai's growth is a story of anarchy, driven by turnover and construction volumes without plans for supporting services and infrastructure — let alone planning for future environmental disasters. We need to learn from other cities in those areas too, not just imitate their skyline.

Many of us had made suggestions to the DP authorities. Have those suggestions been dumped in the municipal archives? I hope the government stops this plan and the public raises its voice to check the "build more" syndrome that is perpetuating an anarchic, unequal and unsustainable growth.

P K Das is an architect and housing activist

'Thackeray was on medication since 2007'

Mumbai: The late Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray had a bypass, an angiography and an angioplasty and in the end stages had "cellular failure and pancreatitis", said his long-time doctor Jaleel Parkar in the Bombay high court on Friday. Dr Parkar, who was the second signatory to Thackeray's will, was testifying before Justice Gautam Patel in a dispute over the will dated December 13, 2011.

Thackeray's sons Uddhav and the estranged Jaidev are locked in a battle over the will, which has left almost all the estate, including most of the landmark residential bungalow Matoshree, to political heir Uddhav and nothing to Jaidev.

Dr Parkar answered a few preliminary questions from Uddhav's lawyer about his signature on the will document and for establishing the date on the document as well as the signature of the lawyer. Jaidev's counsel Seema Sarmaik then sought to examine the other witness to the will. The witness will continue his deposition on March 16.

Dr Parkar said he had been treating Thackeray since 2007 and that the Sena supremo has been on medication since. Jaidev has contested the validity of the will and questioned his father's faculties while making the will. Uddhav's case is that his father was mentally fit when he made the will. —Swati Deshpande

Encroachers removed from Juhu, Khar plots

Mumbai: The BMC on Friday evicted encroachers from two open spaces in Juhu and Khar. The civic action came after persistent complaints from locals.

TOI had reported that the NGO Save Open Spaces (SOS) had written to the authorities about encroachment on an open plot beside the Nakshatra garden in Juhu. On Friday, the K west ward officials razed illegal structures on the open plot. Assistant municipal commissioner from the ward, Parag Masurkar, confirmed this.

Meanwhile, parishioners of St. Vincent De Paul church barged into the H west ward office, demanding that encroachers be removed from the open space of a plot on which 12 bungalows stand. The local ward officials then took action. Activist Daphne Warapen said, "Illegal activities were going on here since four months." TNN

Qissa mirrors our obsession with the male child

airtel

CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Qissa: The Tale Of A Lonely Ghost (Drama) ★★★

Cast: Irrfan, Tisca Chopra, Tillotama Shome, Rasika Dugal
Direction: Anup Singh
Duration: 1 hour 50 minutes
Language: Punjabi (with English subtitles) (U/A)
58888 code: qjs



Umber Singh longs for a son. So much so that when he has a daughter for the fourth time around, he takes destiny in his own hands and raises 'her' as a 'boy'.

The film begins in the Pakistani side of Punjab before Partition. Sepia tones and a melancholy mood effectively capture the anguish of uprooted Sikh families crossing the border and arriving in India. Like the rest of his tribe, Umber Singh (Irrfan) leaves the ghosts of his past behind and starts to rebuild his life and home.

While Umber is struggling to find a sense of belonging in the new land, his wife Mehar (Tisca Chopra), who has three daughters, is worried she will deliver a fourth girl. But Umber, who longs for a son, has already made up his mind to raise his fourth child as a boy—irrespective of its sex.

Surely enough, when his fourth child turns out to be a daughter, Umber raises her as a boy—in a move that is part-delusional, part self-resentment and part despair. Not only is Kanwar (Tillotama Shome) made to dress like a boy and adopt manly routines, she is

also married off by his father to a naive gypsy girl, Neeli (Rasika Dugal). When the truth unfolds on the wedding night, a cheated Neeli is placated by Umber who offers her his wealth just to keep his family secret intact.

Anup Singh's film, told in a languid

fashion (a bit too slow at times), narrates a story which immediately strikes a chord with Indian society that is obsessed with producing sons. It also boldly shows that the Partition may have affected people in a subliminal way, but its wounds run deep. Qissa has a disturbing effect and in that lies the film's strength. It is also shot beautifully across deserts, snow-capped mountains and a lush, green landscape.

Irrfan, Tisca and Tillotama give A-grade performances, making this film imminently watchable. If only the filmmaker had decided to buck the pace up for a bit, the points being made here would have hit home harder.

Direction: **3.5/5** | Dialogue: **3/5**
Story: **4/5** | Music: **3/5**
Visual Appeal: **4/5**
Our rating is not the average of the above

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Direction: **3.5/5** | Dialogue: **3/5**
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Our rating is not the average of the above

—Meena Iyer



READERS' VERDICT

ROY

READERS' RATING 1.9

CRITIC'S RATING ★★★1/2

Roy is stylish but too slow! It's plodding and confusing!

● Roy has a mixed-up plot and is needlessly stretched. Even the performances from lead actors lack punch. The music and scenic locales are the film's only plus points. A classic case of all style but no substance!

● SUMEET NADKARNI

● Roy is purported to be a romantic thriller—but it unfolds in such excruciatingly slow motion that the screenplay takes a backseat to the film's packaging. In the bargain, the film mutates into an overlong Malaysia tourism promotion video, given the beautiful backdrops that pop up on the screen so often.

● JHULAN CHATTERJEE

● It's a horrible movie and a total waste of time! Roy's makers tried to create something different but failed miserably. The song 'Tu hai nahi' is valid for the ending—we were craving for it to get over!

● AGRIM KATOCH

● After watching the entire film, one would wonder if there was any script or not! Except for a few songs, the movie has nothing to offer. I wish the director had listened to one of the film's dialogues and ended the film earlier because the story was not going anywhere.

● HARSHVARDHAN DABHI

Roy's trailers were better!

● After watching the trailers, I thought it would be a good thriller—but there was no such thing! It turned out to be a typical Bollywood movie. Roy's music was good but it's disappointing that Ranbir Kapoor didn't learn from his earlier box office mistakes.

● VIJAY PARMAR

● The movie is quite different from its trailers which were interesting and did create curiosity in the minds of fans. But the movie itself goes flat, making it monotonous viewing for cinemagoers. Watch Roy if you are a die-hard fan of Ranbir—but don't expect much entertainment.

● PRATEEK

Roy had its moments...

● Roy is a one-time entertainer: The performance of Ranbir Kapoor is quite good, as is Arjun Rampal in the film, though he could not pull off scenes where he had to perform action.

● ROHIT KUMAR

● Roy is an above-average movie. The concept did have some strong and stylish points but the story's execution lets these down.

● RAJESH SEQUEIRA

● It's a once-watch film, specially if you are a Ranbir fan. Even if you are a Ranbir fan, this movie is a decent watch for its love quotient and for those who like an interesting script but don't expect much thrill.

● K K TOLANI

● The songs are hummable, the storytelling style refreshingly free from Bollywood-type high drama and the director allows the actors to underplay their characters. Arjun Rampal, as the writer-filmmaker running short of inspiration, is earnest in his effort to live the part.

● HUSSAIN DAHOD

RATING SCALE

POOR ★

AVERAGE ★★

WATCHABLE ★★★

GOOD ★★★★

VERY GOOD ★★★★★

VERY GOOD +★★★★★

OUTSTANDING ★★★★★★