

Cluster revamp project at Lalbaug clears final hurdle

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MUMBAI: The city's first cluster redevelopment project is all set to come up at Lalbaug, with the state's apex green panel giving it the go ahead recently.

The project, One Avighna Park by Nish Developers, is spread across seven acres of prime land at the New Islam Mill compound and will rehabilitate 837 existing tenements, apart from offering another 394 flats for sale in a cluster of four highrises.

The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) last month cleared the project, making it the first cluster revamp project in Mumbai to reach the finish line.

Of the five cluster redevelopment projects cleared in the city, including a major one at Bhandi Bazaar, this is the only one which is nearing completion.

SEIAA is a three-member panel set up under Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), which scrutinises major construction projects in the state.

Around 9,952 people are expected benefit from the project, including residential and commercial tenants, once it is completed, according to the developer's project plan.

So far, 543 residential tenants and 22 shops have been shifted into the new building.

The project had received a clearance from the MoEF in 2008, but had to be scaled down, with changes made to its layout and design, as developers were unable to get the mandatory consent from all tenants.

By the time the developer redrew the plan, the MoEF had set up a two-tiered environment clearance project, under which it had to first approach the State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC), an advisory panel, for revised environmental clearance.

ABOUT CLUSTER REDEVELOPMENT

It's a redevelopment scheme

meant for projects that cover a minimum area of one acre

Unlike individual revamp projects,

cluster scheme offers more benefits to existing residents in terms of amenities and better quality of life, through upgraded infrastructure and more open spaces.

To boost the response to the

cluster revamp scheme, which had found few takers, the state government, in 2013, amended its policy and diluted some terms and conditions

The policy, which was earlier

restricted to the island city, was extended to cover the suburbs.

The size of the cluster to be

redeveloped is a minimum of 10,000 sq m in the suburbs, and 4,000 sq m in the island city

To give an incentive to builders,

cluster revamp projects are allotted a higher FSI.

However, in May 2013, the SEAC recommended action against the project for alleged violation of the Environment Protection Act. The panel observed that the developer had modified the project, including changes to land use and design, without clearances.

A month later, the show cause notice was withdrawn by the SEIAA, the second tier of the clearance procedure. The SEIAA held that the construction carried out by the developer up till that point was in compliance with the earlier approval from MoEF.

After the show cause notice was withdrawn, the project was appraised again by the SEAC and recommended for approval to the SEIAA, which endorsed the clearance on January 24.

The built-up area of the total construction on the project has been scaled down from around 3.75 lakh sq m to 99,000 sq m.