



UDRI

Urban Design Research Institute

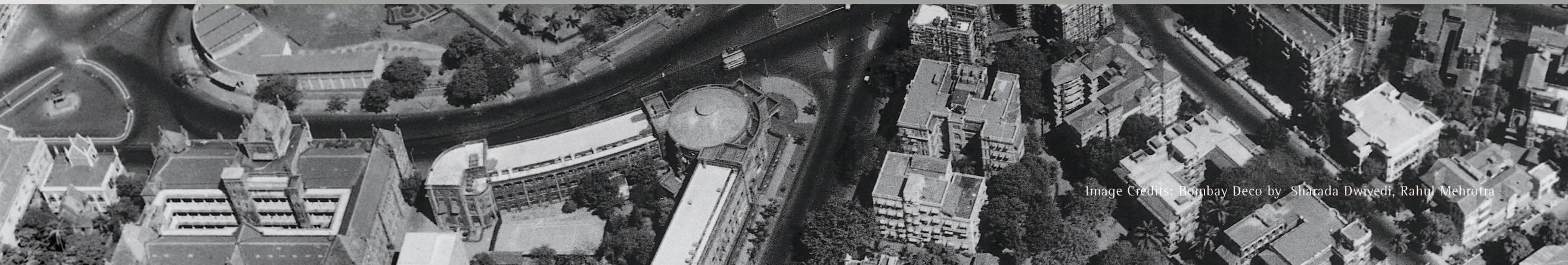


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Urban Design Research Institute and the creation of an Urban Center

The UDRI was originally started in 1984 with a group of concerned citizens as a teaching Institute. 1994 brought about the process of reformulating the trust with a revised agenda. This was when ideas to take on work related to policy that might improve the physical conditions of the city were conceived.

#### ADVOCACY:

Based on the findings through the various conferences and research projects, the UDRI actively lobbied with the Government on many fronts regarding policies pertaining to the physical form and improvements in the city.

In all its efforts the UDRI has been mindful of all economic groups and therefore focused on questions ranging from public spaces, the recycling and opening up of Urban Land, as well as Urban Conservation – all of which together are critical in creating an inclusive environment in the city. This trust has been taken to a new level in the last three or four years with a much more aggressive engagement with understanding regional development dynamics, the question of public space as well as preservation of historic environments in the city.

A question that often come up is how does this impact translate, and its effect on the urban poor. Clearly solutions to problems of urban housing for the poor and access to city, amenities cannot be looked at a micro scale. Thus the projects UDRI is engaged with address the questions of urban poor in imagining the larger regional urban scenario and in suggesting how land can be opened up in the

metropolitan region to address the question of affordable housing for the poor and a more equitable access to public space in the city.

In short, the most significant contribution that the UDRI has made for the city of Mumbai is that of creating an institutional forum to address the question of the physical form of the city in its broadest sense. In order to do this the UDRI has demonstrated the critical need to combine both research, as well as advocacy roles. It is the UDRI's intention that an entire generation of architects and other professionals concerned with the city be trained and supported to play the crucial role of managing the physical improvement of Mumbai.

The following are the most important advocacy achievements of the UDRI in the period 1994-2009

- Open Space Audit project followed by a presentation of finding in a public meeting resulted in public outcry forcing Government to put the Caretaker Policy of open spaces on hold
- The UDRI convened a presentation on Skywalks resulting in the rethinking of locations of four Skywalks in the Fort Area by the MMRDA
- SEZ Objection filed by the UDRI resulted in the government refusing extension to Land Acquisition time to the largest SEZ in Mumbai Metropolitan Region.
- Revised Heritage Listing submitted to MHCC which has been approved and forwarded to the Municipal Commissioner for notification.
- Worked with BEAG to lobby for the heritage notification to sites in Kalyan, Dombivili, Thane, Panvel, Vasai, Virar, Nashik, Satara, Sanghli, Kolhapur, Wai, Amravati, Aurangabad, Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani and Matheran.

- Suggested changes to 33 (9) policy whereby the State has amended the marginal open space between buildings to be increased from 1.5M to 3.6Ms
- Working with the BEAG to lobby for the inclusion of heritage precincts as part of the Heritage Regulation for greater Mumbai. This resulted in the inclusion of precincts in the listing
- Convincing the U.D. Department to form the Commission for the Textile Mill Lands in Mumbai in order to prepare a comprehensive plan for the Mill Lands
- Convincing the chief Secretary of the Maharashtra Government to institute a Task Force in the MMRDA to examine the Eastern Waterfront and the potential of recycling land in this area for the benefit of the city.
- Mumbai a city of 13.4 million will face its major change to the Development Plan by the year 2011. However the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai does not have the capacity and the time to take up such a massive task it has already published an EOI for the development plan. Most likely the process would be outsourced. The UDRI being a Non Governmental Organization is independent and impartial and we believe that we can inform the development planning process without any bias. We will be focusing on making the development plan Open, Equitable and efficient. Under these parameters we would be looking at the various aspects of the city for example the issues of are housing, health, education, environment, public space, water, energy, transportation, livelihood, urban form and governance.

## 1. RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTRE:

In 2003 UDRI established a centre, which would act as a place where citizens would have access to periodicals, books, technical manuals, monographs and reports on Housing, Urban Design, Planning and Conservation. The selection of periodicals and journals are restricted to those that are contemporary in nature and representative of ideas and current thinking in Urban Design, Architecture, Planning and Conservation. The Resource Centre has extended its collection to multi-media resources on the city with the addition of documentaries and films relating to Mumbai. The Research and Resource Centre is in the process of digitization of its database and acquisition of GIS information on the city. The focus is to create a reference centre for researchers in the field of Urban Design and Conservation as well as citizens of Mumbai at large.

## 2. PUBLIC FORUM:

**Public Debate:** It created for the city of Mumbai a vibrant forum outside the format of the Schools of Architecture. This took the form of a Lecture Series and in this period over a hundred lectures were organized involving speakers from all over India as well as abroad. This created an important forum for architects to meet as well as served as an educational program through the exposure it provided professional on a wide spectrum of contemporary issues concerning architecture, urban design, conservation and urbanism in general. Lectures were organized monthly with the intention of establishing a dialogue that improved co-operation by mutual exchange of ideas and experiences.

**Conferences and Workshops:** are consistently (on an annual basis) organized on issues that were relevant in the city at that point of time. Each conference was treated like a workshop where issues were picked up with a view to work them into policy. The Urban Conservation



Legislation, the Commission on the Textile Mill Lands and various discussions about public space all emanated from these workshops which acted as crucible for these ideas to germinate. The conferences had a very direct impact in terms of the policy and directions that some debates had regarding the future of the city.

Some of the conferences that were organized are as follows:

- Workshop on Eastern Waterfront Mumbai
- Conference on Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites: World Heritage Management – A Value Approach
- Eastern Waterfront Conference
- Conservation Conversation III
- The Conservation Of Colonial Cities
- Conservation After Legislation – Issues and Ideas for Bombay
- Conservation Conversations II
- Western Water Front Development & Citizens' Movement's In Mumbai
- F.S.I And Mumbai's Development
- Architecture for a Changing World
- Conservation Conversations
- Alternative Practices
- The Idea of New Towns: Looking at Navi Mumbai
- Public Places, Bombay
- Working And Living in Cities, Bombay

### 3. RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME:

The UDRI Research Fellowship Programme provides young scholars, researchers and independent practitioners the

opportunity to do research on contemporary urban issues and concerns in Mumbai to augment the current dialogue around these topics.

In 2006, UDRI inducted five research fellows who documented and evaluated two mega projects initiated by the State Government: the Infrastructure Projects (Mumbai Urban Transport Project and Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project) and the Special Economic Zone policy in Navi Mumbai. This study attempted to analyse the implications of these large-scale interventions and their causative transformations and restructuring within the city and its peripheries.

In 2007, UDRI inducted 3 research fellows and 7 students to document and evaluate the Fort Management Plan, Eastern Waterfront, and audit of Open Spaces in the city.

In 2009, the UDRI initiated Cycle 1 of the Research Fellowship Programme with two research positions documenting the pedestrian experience and a study of extralegal and informal provision of justice in slum rehabilitation sites.

### 4. PUBLICATIONS:

Seminars proceedings were published in the form of monographs on issues related to Urban Design and Architecture. The publications were all prepared with the view to inform the policy making process.

Some of the books published by UDRI between 1994 and 2009 were as follows:

- Research Monograph – Mumbai Reader
- Heritage and Environment – An Indian Diary (2008)
- Mapping Mumbai: University of Michigan Studios, Spring and Fall (2005)

- A Study of Eastern Waterfront of Mumbai - a situation analysis conducted between August 2000 and December 2001
- Conservation After Legislation - Issues and Ideas for Bombay
- Creating A Tourist District -The Gateway Of India Precinct
- Heritage Buildings & Precincts Mumbai - A Conservation Manual for Owners & Occupiers
- Charles Correa: Housing and Urbanization
- Restoring a Banking District
- Buildings in the Kala Ghoda Art District
- Ballard Estate: A Corporate District
- Through the Looking Glass - The Grade I Heritage of Mumbai
- Churchgate Revival
- 4 From The 50's

##### 5. RESEARCH PROJECTS:

To complement the debates that the public forum generated, the UDRI raised money and sponsorship for a gamut of Research Projects. These ranged from supporting the Commission on Textile Mills to mapping of the Eastern Water Front and other regional dynamics in the metropolitan area. A more detailed inventory on the Research Projects is as follows:

- Urban Management Proposal - Pedestrian Study
- Research Fellowship Program 2009 Cycle 1 Slums, Extralegal spaces and informal justice provision in South Central Mumbai
- Research Fellowship Program, 2009 Cycle 1, What Happened to my Street Life? Urban Management Proposal - FMP Survey (2009)

- Urban Management Proposal - Ecological Study of the Eastern Water front (2009)
- Urban Management Proposal - Solid Waste Management for FMP (2008)
- Urban Management Proposal - Traffic and Transport Study.(2008)
- Urban Management Proposal - Open Spaces (2008)
- Urban Management Proposal - Study of Designated Open Spaces (2008)
- Mumbai Development Plan (2008-2011)
- Urban Management proposal - Special Development Control Regulations for Fort Precinct.(2008)
- Urban Management Proposal - Audit of Public Open Spaces in Mumbai (2007)
- International Architecture Exhibition (2006)
- Research Fellowship Program Mega Infrastructure Projects in the City.(2006)
- Bombay Studio - Mapping Mumbai (2005)
- Conservation Solutions - Heritage Listings and Guidelines (2004)
- Urban Management Proposal - Fort Management Plan. (Since 2003)
- Conservation Solutions - Elphinstone College Mumbai (1999)
- Tourist District Plan: Churchgate Revival Plan
- 20th Century Architecture Society of India
- Eastern Waterfronts Study and Proposal
- Ballard Estate Conservation Plan: (1999)
- Status Report on Grade - I Heritage Structures: (1998)
- Kala Ghoda Conservation Plan: (1998-99)



- Restoration of the Horniman Circle and a Banking District for Bombay: (1998)
- Conservation Study for Esplanade Mansion: (1998-99)
- Master Plan for the Churchgate Area in Bombay: (1998-99)
- Master Plan for the Parel Mill Area: (1996-97)
- Conservation Proposal for Fort Precinct: (1995)

### 6. BOMBAY STUDIO

The Urban Design Research Institute Bombay Studio is an ongoing project on mapping, documentation and evolving a strategy for the emergent landscapes in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Through a series of fellowship programs and funded projects, the Studio engages young professional students and collaborations with Institutions across the world to focus on urban design planning and the policy for the city.

#### COLLABORATIONS:

- Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning (TCAUP), Michigan Technischen Universität, Berlin
- Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Architecture and Planning, Massachusetts
- Technical University of Munich, Munich
- Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Columbia University, New York

**PERSONAL MESSAGES**

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**What the SC ruling said**

On September 4, the SC, setting aside the restrictions imposed by the HC, greenlighted the pulling down of all pre-1940 tenanted buildings, including chawls, to make way for skyscrapers. The highlites would be constructed by the developers to replace over 16,000 old buildings, which are now eligible for being pulled down and redeveloped, irrespective of whether they are dilapidated or not. While upholding the validity of DCR 337—the regulation that governs the redevelopment of old buildings in the island city—the court found no fault with the state's policy. The SC order means tenants move from their tenements and occupy flats in modern buildings at no cost. However, in lieu of the free rehabilitation of tenants, the builder can make profits by exploiting a portion of the land to construct a tower which he can sell in the open market.

## At Nana Chowk, the contrast is stark

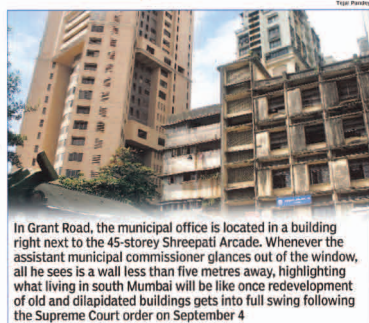
**Clara Lewis | TNS**

Mumbai: Chandrashekar Choro, assistant municipal commissioner, D-ward, occupies an air-conditioned office on the second floor of the local civic office—an old, rectangular, four-storey structure located in the congested Nana Chowk.

Choro may be in charge of Mumbai's finest addresses, but he is unable to witness the city's transition from his office. Whenever he glances out of the window, all that he sees is a wall less than five metres away. In close proximity at the other end of the rectangular structure, is the city's tallest building, the 45-storey Shreepati Arcade. To make up for the lack of greenery around, Choro has planted two bougainvillea near the window.

Choro's office is an example of what living in south Mumbai will be like once redevelopment of old and dilapidated buildings gets into full swing following last week's Supreme Court order. What worries Choro, however, is that the infrastructure—roads, sewage system and footpath—is not being upgraded to cope with the development. Even D.L. Shinde, chief engineer (roads), said the city would not benefit from the redevelopment of old and dilapidated buildings under section 33(7) of the DCR. "No new space is being created for widening of roads or footpath. We are simply improving the existing roads," he said.

The new towers coming up within 100 metres of the municipal building cater to the nouveaux riches. The first



In Grant Road, the municipal office is located in a building right next to the 45-storey Shreepati Arcade. Whenever the assistant municipal commissioner glances out of the window, all he sees is a wall less than five metres away, highlighting what living in south Mumbai will be like once redevelopment of old and dilapidated buildings gets into full swing following the Supreme Court order on September 4

five to 10 storeys are reserved for car parking, which means that on an average a family of five would own an equal, if not more, number of cars. "They will all come out on the existing roads whose capacity has not been increased. Traffic congestion is inevitable," said Shinde.

The thumb rule is that the open space around the building should be at least one-fourth the height of the building. However, while redeveloping

under section 33(7), all kinds of concessions are allowed. "The cessed buildings are surrounded by two-feet-wide house jallies on three sides and are generally two to four-storey structures. These are being replaced with 40-storey towers. If the developer were to keep the requisite open space there would be no space for a building," said a senior civic official.

The state, while introducing section 33(7) in the DCR, had allowed such

kind of concessions as an incentive to builders. But the implications have been adverse. Civic officials pointed out that on August 26 and 29, when the BMC announced a 25% water cut for certain repairs, the D-ward office received a call from the chief minister's official residence complaining of water shortage.

"Imagine, in the year 2011, the chief minister will have to sit on a dharna outside the ward. The residents of a daily water shortage at his official residence," said sources.

The tall buildings will have to rely on the old, narrow pipes to carry sewage to the Love Grove pumping station at Worli. During high tide, the drains are filled with sea water as several parts of D-ward are low-lying areas.

"Shreepati Arcade stands in place of Hart Niwas which had 368 tenants. Of these, only 70 now reside in the rehabilitation building," housing expert Chandrashekar Prabhu said. He added that now, the original residents could not even afford the items sold at the municipal market. "The new residents come in cars and simply roll down the windows to pee. The locals have been forced to move out," said Prabhu.

However, residents of the new towers may be plagued by severe problems owing to inadequate infrastructure. "Getting to Nana Chowk from Tardeo takes a long time at present. Water supply is inadequate, the drainage is not sufficient, the roads are not wide enough, and there are not enough schools and colleges for admissions," said Prabhu.

## Trash row: BMC promises action

**Nitin Yeshwantrao | TNS**

Thane: Residents from Kopti and Nanpada areas can now look forward to breathing air free of toxic smoke and stink arising from the Mulund dumping ground, with the BMC authorities, on Monday

ations on a daily basis," Rajeev told TOI.

The issue, however triggered a major political battle in Thane with the Shiv Sena, which is the ruling party in the 116-member Thane Municipal Corporation and its political partner—BJP, making

# Debate on redevpt takes ugly turn

**SC Nod For Demolition Of All Pre-1940 Bldgs To Make Way For Highrises Worries Experts, Govt**

**Meet called off following a spat between activists and men allegedly sent by builders**

**Naazer Bharucha | TNS**

Mumbai: A group of about 30-40 people, allegedly sent by some builders, disrupted a panel of eminent speakers at a public meeting held on Monday to discuss the serious implications of the recent Supreme Court order on the redevelopment of old, pre-1940 buildings in the island city.

Civic activists fear that the order will lead to urban chaos as the rampant construction of skyscrapers will put an unbearable strain on the already existing civic infrastructure in congested parts of the city.

The meeting held at the Max Mueller Bhavan was organised by the prestigious Urban Design Research Institute (URDI), which is supported by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust.

Renowned town planner and architect Charles Correa and former apex court judge B.N. Srikrishna were



continuously heckled by the mob, which demanded that the speakers converse only in Hindi and not in English. The group sat in the audience and immediately started raising objections when civic activist Cyrus Guzder finished giving a synopsis of the entire litigation that went from the Bombay High Court to the Supreme Court.

"We can choose to speak in any language we want," said an angry Justice Srikrishna, when the crowd failed to see any reason. URDI executive director Pankaj Joshi tried to calm down the mob—who claimed to be tenants of dilapidated buildings—and told them that the institute would hold another meeting in the local language.

When the situation got out of hand, the former judge adjourned the meeting and walked out. The mob then left in vans. "Do you have any doubts that they were sent by builders?" he retorted, when asked whom he suspected was behind the fracas. Advocate Gautam Patel later

toil TOI. "If there was any indication that Mumbai has slipped into the hands of the land mafia, it was proved today."

Housing activist Chandrashekar Prabhu, who was on the panel of speakers, said he could recognise several faces in the mob who were representatives of certain property redevelopers and landlords.

Guzder, one of the petitioners who had filed a PIL in the HC against DCR 33 (7)—which governs the redevelopment of old cessed buildings—said there is a general perception that the apex court's order was passed without application of mind. "The apex court was presented with facts of how buildings were coming up with less than two metres of each other. Despite these arguments, the supreme court said it did not want to interfere in a law passed by the state government," he said.

"We are not debating the quality of the supreme court judgment, but its implications on the quality of life in Mumbai. Is there any remedy now?" Guzder wondered.

Advocate Patel blasted the supreme court order for adopting different standards for Delhi and another for Mumbai. "For Delhi, the apex court has given several provisions which it says will be reverse when it comes to Mumbai," he said.

"In the 33 (7) case, seven out of the 10 buildings that were surveyed by us showed gross abuse of the policy where floor space index (FSI) was manipulated and virtually zero tenants rehabilitated," he added.

Patel, who fought the case on behalf of prominent citizens, said it was shocking that the apex court glossed over the safety aspect and did not spare time to read the HC order. "When the policy allows just five feet space between two skyscrapers, how do you expect a fire engine to access the building," he said. "When we pointed it out to the Supreme Court judges, they said this point was now 'hopelessly delayed,'" observed Patel. "What has Mumbai done to deserve this in the Supreme Court," he asked angrily.

## CM seeks parity in redevelopment rules

Mumbai: Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh on Monday asked the urban development department (UDD) to bring parity in rules pertaining to redevelopment of old individual buildings and those related to cluster redevelopment. The move, said sources, is to ensure that cluster development does not become unattractive as compared to redeveloping individual buildings recently allowed by the apex court.

"The state is worried that the SC judgment may cast a shadow over cluster development under section 33(9) and instead encourage builders to redevelop individual buildings, which are much simpler to acquire," said sources.

Government authorities favouring cluster development argue it would bring about holistic infrastructure development of the entire area instead of just providing a new lease of life to an individual building.

"Besides, redevelopment of old individual buildings under section 33 (7) would only add to the burden on existing civic facilities," an official said.

Against this backdrop, Deshmukh on Monday reviewed the incentives and mandatory clauses under both 33(7) and 33(9) of DCR. The BMC announced a 25% water cut from BMC, MMRDA, Mhada, housing and the UDD.

Pointing out the "loopholes" in section 33(7), sources said, "A developer using this section does not have to pay the infrastructure development charges of Rs 7,000 per sq mt mandatory under section 33(9). Moreover, a developer using 33 (7) can amalgamate four building plots and claim additional FSI as incentive. "The four plots put together may actually measure only 1,000 sq mt, but the developer gets to claim incentive FSI by showing that he is developing four individual plots," explained an official.

On the other hand, a developer trying for cluster redevelopment of an entire area has to start with a minimum of 4,000 sq mt to make a proposal. "A developer in this case gets incentive FSI only when he gets a big area measuring between 10,000 sq metres to 20,000 sq mt," explained the official.

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