

BMC move will check tampering

Clara Lewis | TNN

Mumbai: Hailing the BMC's plans on e-option to verify builders' claims, housing activist Chandrashekhar Prabhhu said, "I have been demanding it for a long time. They must also ensure that those guilty of violations are punished severely."

As part of its e-governance project, the BMC is computerising its building proposal department using a software called Auto-DCR (automatic-development control rules). This will enable it to accept soft copies of building plans.

Parag Raut, assistant engineer in charge of the Auto-DCR project, says, "As per the DCR, it takes about 75 days to scrutinise a plan that could run into 270 pages with nearly 60 printed lines on each page. There could be slip-ups even though the scrutiny is done at three levels."

The computer will, however, complete the scrutiny in two hours. "It will even list deviations as well as the authority who can approve them," he added. Architects will have to submit a soft copy of their plans and give a hard copy along with the relevant cer-

tificates. This is necessary under the Indian Evidence Act.

The soft copy will have to mention the page number of the certificates. "The computer will scan this along with the plan and list the page numbers of the certificates. If the plans fall short of the DCR on any count the printout will mention this as well," he said. After all this is sorted, the plan will be electronically forwarded to the competent authority for any concessions (such as open spaces or elevations) to be granted.

This will also ensure that if a plan doesn't fit the DC rules, it will be rejected and the computer will print out a rejection letter. Each time corrections are made to a plan (this can be done by the architect), it will have to be re-submitted.

The final plan approved by the BMC will be a computer printout. "This will ensure that no corrections can be made. As soon as a plan is approved, it will be put up on the BMC website. We will also put up the list of the permissions granted," said Raut.

As the commencement certificate is issued in stages it will be updated regularly.

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Is your builder a cheat? Find out online

Clara Lewis | TNN

Mumbai: You buy a house after you've been enticed by the builder's beautiful brochure and his spacious sample flat, but later discover to your dismay that the promised balcony is missing from your dream home. Or, years later, when the builder hands over charge to the cooperative housing society, you find that the building never got an occupation certificate from the BMC. Sounds familiar?

In a break from stodgy tradition, the normally sluggish civic authorities are putting together an e-plan to stop consumers from being duped by unscrupulous builders and brokers. Soon, the entire plan of every approved building along with the various permissions granted to the builder concerned will be available online. Potential flat-owners merely have to log in to the civic website to check out the veracity of the promises made by builders.

On July 1, BMC commissioner Jairaj Phatak will get a demonstration of how the new software works. If he approves of it, a pilot project for the eastern suburbs will be under way. Many hapless apartment buyers have discovered after moving into their homes that not only do their buildings not have occupation certificates but that several floors in the building are unauthorised. When these unauthorised floors are sought to be regularised, it's the residents rather than the builder who are

KEEPING E-TABS

- The BMC is testing software that will allow it to load the entire plan of a building along with the various permissions it has got onto the civic website
- The move comes in the wake of numerous cases of flat-buyers being misled or cheated by builders and brokers



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penalised by the BMC. A resident of a building without an occupation certificate has to pay double the charge for water and electricity as penalty.

At present, potential flat-buyers have three options—they take the builder's word as truth, make innumerable trips to the BMC's building proposal department to verify the developer's claim, or apply under the Right to Information Act. "The e-option to verify facts and permissions is an excellent idea," says housing activist and former MHADA chairman Chandrashekhar Prabhu.

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