

# Building bye-laws simplified, more focus on safety, art

New rules will be rationalised and will have provisions for green construction norms, aesthetics, disaster mitigation and better structural safety codes

Sunil Tyagi

htestates@hindustantimes.com

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**LEGAL REMEDIES**

The Delhi Building Bye-Laws, 1983 (now called building bye-laws) deal with and govern construction and usage of buildings in Delhi. These lay down rules for crucial aspects such as floor area ratio (FAR), number of floors, open spaces, height of buildings, parking space, etc.

Current building bye-laws have a long drawn procedure for obtaining sanction of building plans, irrespective of the size of the plot, and detailed site plans, floor plans, etc. are required to be submitted.

The process is time-consuming and involves detailed compliances. The building bye-laws also do not specifically provide for heritage buildings or buildings which are in proximity to monuments or protected structures. The green construction or rainwater harvesting norms are also not covered. It does not have structural guidelines for public buildings that cater to the

special needs of the differently-abled, elderly and children. Also, though the fire-safety mechanism is present, there are no provisions for mitigation of other disasters.

Seeking to end the difficulties faced by those wanting to obtain building plan approvals in Delhi, the ministry of urban development has directed the Delhi Development Authority to notify simplified, rationalised and updated building bye-laws.

Some of the important changes and additions that are proposed in the draft building bye-laws are:

- The process of obtaining sanctions for building plans has been tweaked and classified depending on the size of the plot:
  1. Small residential plots of up to 100 square metre are now exempted from procedures required for



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obtaining sanctions. Those building on the plots will only have to furnish the requisite information in a simplified one-page undertaking that they will abide by the building bye-laws along with enclosures and pay appropriate building permit fee to the concerned authority and go ahead with the construction. The validity of this submission will be three years and if required, a fresh submission may be made thereafter.

2. For plots measuring between 100 square metre to 20,000 square metre, specific time schedules have been stipulated within

which various concerned agencies have to accord approvals.

3. For plots measuring more than 20,000 square metre, a single window clearance mechanism has been introduced. Applications now received will be scrutinised by a high-level committee comprising of representatives of all concerned agencies for according sanctions.
- Clarity has been imparted in respect of the appropriate agency like Heritage Conservation Committee, Archaeological Survey of India, National Monument Authority, etc to be approached for sanctions

required for undertaking construction in heritage buildings or for those buildings which are in the vicinity of monuments etc.

- Competency norms have been clearly stipulated for various professionals like structural engineers, landscape architects, urban designers, town planners, etc.
- Green construction norms have been provided for - specific to the size of the plot. Also, rainwater harvesting and waste water recycling norms for certain buildings have been factored in.
- Setting up of consumer grievances redressal committees in urban local bodies for time-bound resolution of disputes

has been proposed.

- Structural design guidelines facilitating differently-abled persons, children and senior citizens have been provided for buildings and facilities used by the public such as educational, institutional, assembly commercial, business, mercantile buildings constructed on plots of more than 2,000 square metres.
- Provisions for disaster mitigation and structural and fire safety codes have been specified in detail.
- Attention will be paid to art elements like paintings, frescos, statues etc., to be installed in public buildings for better aesthetic environment.

These new changes, once notified, may help the general public and make the process of obtaining sanctioned building plans easy and less time consuming. Further, measures for safety in terms of provisions for structural design, earthquake and other disaster mitigation, differently-abled persons, children and the elderly may make the bye-laws all inclusive. Also, provisions for green construction, water conservation, etc., as proposed may make Delhi more sustainable and environment friendly.

*The author is senior partner at Zeus Law, a corporate commercial law firm. One of its areas of specialisations is real estate transactional and litigation work. If you have any queries, email us at ht@zeus.firm.in*