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Old TNHB flats make way for swanky apartments

CHENNAI: Lack of adequate open space for housing stock development in the city has led to builders increasingly turning to re-development of old apartments, promoted by the [Tamil Nadu Housing Board](#) (TNHB) in the last 50 years.

Many organised builders, including Landmark, Ramaniyam, Kgeyes, Nutech, [Harmony](#) and GRN, are already in this fast-growing field. It is estimated that in the past five years, about 10% of TNHB-promoted apartments and houses in sizes ranging from 300 sq ft to 1,500 sq ft have been re-developed.

Most of these buildings, owing to poor quality construction and lack of proper maintenance, have falling balconies, leaking toilets and walls with seepage. "Since old buildings do not have lifts, elderly people face difficulty in climbing steps," said S Sankararaman, who has entrusted the re-development of his apartment on LB Road in Tiruvanmiyur to a private builder. Most owners are aged above 60 years. A sizeable number of them are retired government servants too.

Builders are attracted to [TNHB](#) buildings because most of them have achieved hardly 1 FSI (Floor Space Index the ratio of land area to the built-up space) and as per the new development regulations of [Chennai](#)

Metropolitan Development Authority

(CMDA), 1.65 FSI is achievable. Wherever premium FSI is applicable, the builder can go up to 2.1 FSI. The flat owner gets a bigger apartment (1.5 times to two times the size of the original), some cash in hand and a rent-free apartment to stay till the project is completed. The builder manages a minimum profit of Rs 50 lakh when he re-develops a project with an undivided share of land (UDS) of one ground (2400 sq ft.)

As a thumb rule, the price difference between a TNHB flat and a private apartment in a particular locality is 60-100%.

"Builders show interest in re-developing TNHB apartments because most of them are in prime locations and abut roads that are at least 60 ft wide. They have the best of transport, drinking water, sewerage and drainage facilities. Secondly, these properties have clear title deeds and are free from litigation," said T Udaya Kumar, MD, [Landmark](#) Construction, which has completed re-development of two apartment complexes and is doing another 17 projects at present.

Since its inception in 1961 and up to the emergence of private builders in the mid-1980s, the TNHB played a key role in promoting layouts and apartments in Chennai. The city owes it fully to the TNHB for its expansion on the southern and western directions.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the TNHB developed several self-sustaining satellite townships like Anna Nagar, K K Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Besant Nagar, Adyar, Shastri Nagar,

Tiruvanmiyur and Tambaram. The development included apartments, row houses, duplexes, large group housing and also housing plots with big bungalows catering to low income groups (LIG), middle income groups (MIG) and high income groups (HIG). In the mid-segment, the Board developed housing colonies in Mogappair and Velachery. "Though once developed as neighbourhood projects, they form part and parcel of the modern city," said Udaya Kumar.