

## Guarding their garden: Mumbai residents oppose construction inside Priyadarshini Park

Locals oppose BMC's plan to construct fire station, commercial centre inside the 30-year-old park

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Residents attend a meeting on Saturday to discuss the campaign to protect the park. They plan to hold a signature campaign, aim to get at least 10,000 signatures. (HT Photo)

**f** For the second time this year, residents and activists have started a campaign to protect the 30-year-old Priyadarshini Park at Napean Sea Road from construction. The Malabar Hill Citizens' Forum (MHCFF), which maintains the corporation-owned park, has opposed the civic body's decision to reserve space for a fire station and commercial centre inside it.

**t** About 100 citizens met on Saturday to discuss a campaign to get 10,000 signatures. The park's caretakers said the draft Development Plan 2014-2034 shows a fire station and a government office inside the park and sports complex.



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“We will hold a signature campaign against the building of more infrastructure in the park. As many as 10,000 people visit PDP daily to play sports, walk and do yoga and gymnastics,” said B A Desai, president of MHCF.

“PDP is the only open space in the area. We plan to organise protests and create awareness regarding the issue,” said Kantilal Shah, president of Priyadarshani Parivar, an association of walkers.

In their letter to the chief minister, residents said the 2015 Planning Committee proposed that the fire station be next to Parsi Cemetery..

According to the standing fire advisory council guidelines, there should be one fire station every 10.36-sq-km area. Chief fire officer P S Rahangdale had told HT that Nepean Sea Road and Peddar Road did not have fire stations.

“The fire station can be constructed on an adjacent plot. I wrote to civic chief Ajoy Mehta, saying the corporation can have a commercial center, but it should not destroy the garden,” said Arvind Sawant, south Mumbai parliamentarian, who has been following up on issue.

The next meeting to discuss the campaign will be held on Monday, said residents.