

Kamala Mills rises from ashes but violations persist

BMC's ongoing audit of buildings in the Kamala Mills complex, Lower Parel, has found gross violations in use of floor space index (FSI) as well as several instances of balconies and refuge areas being merged into habitable spaces. The mills — classified as an IT Park with commensurate FDSI perks — was the site of one of the worst fire accidents in Mumbai when on December 29, 2017, a blaze in an illegal extension of a restaurant killed 14 people.

Eleven months later in November, the BMC, along with the state government's industries department officers, started an audit of the mill premises and is in the process of drafting details for its report. While permissions were given to develop IT-related industry in the premises, many structures are operating for other purpose. Over the last month, the investigation team collected details of each office in the premises and cross-checked with documents to establish whether it falls under IT activity category.

A civic official said the inspection teams were tabulating the violations. Apart from FSI violations, one of the most recurrent violations was common areas in many of the wings being merged into habitable areas. Also, balconies, fire escapes and passages had been covered up as well. The team also found "change of user" from IT to non-IT uses.