

Smt. Nirmala Devi
48 Bromton Square
London

dt. 5th April 1986

My Dear Mr Magdum,

This is in refeence of your letter saying that there is more than half an acre land absolutely stony and useless for agriculture. It does not matter as I am in the process of buying 7 acres of adjacent land, so we will have altogether 11 ares of land for farming.

I have confirmed the following points again as given by you;

1. The farm house does not need collector's permission. (The copy of the letter written by the collector to Mr Malhotra is with me).
2. The farm house has no specific dimensions. Mr Dhumal sent a registered letter to the collectorate, however no reply has been received for over two months.
3. The permission has been granted by the Gram Panchayat. (confirmed by Gram Panchayat that only they are authorised to grant the permission).
4. This area is a green belt and has to be used for agriculture only.

The farm house can be used by us and also for the agriculture storage etc. We have got permission from the planning Dept.

Now as my husband is going to retire very soon , I wish to plan the house as per requirements for my family and my daughters' families. Both my daughters are married in the 'Shetkari' families. Specially the younger son-in-law who is the grandson of our late President Rajendra Prasad, belongs to a very well known farmer's family of Bihar and himself is a farmer. Both the son-in-laws will be staying with us and take to farming. I am also negotiating for farmhouses very near Paud which is a few miles from our farm house. All our agriculture activities are going to be operated from this farm house. So to beginwith in our plan please include the following suggest.ons made by my son-in-law.

1. Large garages for modern agriculture equipments like tractor etc, 5 numbe

2. Godowns, 6 numbers atleast measuring 11 x 22 '
3. Cow sheds altogether measuring atleast 44 x 22'.
4. Large court yards and verandahs for cleaning and drying.

We have a very large house in Lucknow but is occupied by Govt. (Indian Oil Co.) and they are not willing to release though they are paying a nominal rent and are settled nicely even when the contract is completed long time back. (Thanks to my husband's policy of patronising the Govt.) We cannot buy a flat as my husband has no black money.

So now we have to settle in the farm house in Pune. Whatever money we have we will spend in farming lands, in this farm house and in buying modern equipments.

You have seen our London house and you know our life style. Though I am 'shetkari' and a sadhu baba, I can live in a hut; However my family has to be comfortable. My husband who has worked for Indian Govt. for 40 years should retire in a comfortable place. For your information we have never lived in a very small house. We would not like to live in the city anymore but would help us to live near our farms in our old age. Please note that though there are no restrictions about the farm house still do not go beyond any stony area as farming is the main object of our stay in the farm house. Please plan spacious bedrooms for ten persons; my husband and myself, two daughters, two son-in-laws and four grand children. Also a common large hall for sitting and dinning, one large in-door room for children to play. There should be atleast two guest rooms of large sizes. My husband's guests are all high international officials, so we do not cut a sorry figure.

The facade of the house should be Indian Art and interiors should be Rajput style (as you know we are decendants of the 'Shalivahanas' - who ruled in Paithan (Pratishthan) for thousands of years. They were Rajput kings who migrated from Rajasthan.

We give a very poor image of our 'shetkari' to the outside people. But whatever farmhouse I have visited sofar have

been enormous for example my father-in-law in Khairabad, my son-in-law's farm houses, Mr Dhumal's farmhouse in Veer, Raja Patil's farmhouse near Ichalkaranji, Usha Patel's farmhouse in Dandeli, Raul Bai's in Dhule Dist. Yogi Mahajan's farmhouse in Pathankot & Dharamsala- all of them are one bigger than the other. You may visit one of them, most of them are 4 to 5 stories. Ofcourse you should never treat that as a model but better visit them to find out what is the capacity. I cannot give you any particular idea. Still the house should be as big or as small as you think proper.

Our farmhouse should be placed on the edge of the cliff and as it is the stoney area according to your letter. It may cost more money but it will serve two purposes. Firstly, you will save good agricultural land and secondly we can watch the agricultural activity in the valley (which land I am definitely purchasing.) Furthermore, you may have any number of stories as there is no definition , I think two stories may be sufficient.

As you say that it is absolutely legal to have a farmhouse without any restrictions still I would request you to use only stoney area. If the stoney area is more than your requirement we can increase the court -yards or you may add a storey if stoney area is inadequate.

Also please make the structure facade as I would like to spend more on the interior and the exterior. Pune is full of ugly flats and heavy decor. I would like to bring some delicate jali work from Jaipur to create a new dimension in farmhouse building. So some people atleast will spend to make some beautiful houses. Also it should give a sense of dignity to my other shetkari friends to spend on beautifying Maharashtra instead of wasting money on drinking and dancing in the clubs with other urban wasters. So that they can leave something for the progeny instead of pseudo-modern culture. Also if our farmhouses are made interesting the young people would not run to the city and become clerks instead of becoming dignified shetkari's children.

This kind of ~~xxx~~ farm house indeed would be expensive but

much less than a horrid Bombay flat. I hope every farmhouse could be decorated differently with handicraft as you find them in the remote villages. This is my dream for the villagers who have nothing to look forward or to hope for.

My father who was the member of the constituent Assembly had a dream that the villages must develop first, there should be a 'wada' for a farmhouse for every shetkari, very well decorated and interesting so the children should not run to the city but should become shetkari like their father. I hope this happens one day, though this has happened already in China which I have visited and seen how the Chinese adopted Gandhiji's methods to improve their villages.

I hope you do not mind this very long letter from me. I am sorry I could not talk to you on the phone at this length, but I had to explain as there is no information written down about a farmhouse. You know I have very different attitude towards my property than many people. We could have had a very modern house which may be very comfortable but I always think that these houses are without any feelings. They do not represent our deep culture of dignity and art. I have already asked Mr Patankar to study the Rajput art and get me sketches of their arches and trellis work. I wish you get some books on this subjects. Whatever money I would spend on this house I want to create a feeling of Indian home rather than a mundane boring London house. I hope you understand my way of looking at things in these aspects specially.

With all my blessing to self and to your family,

Yours affectionately

Matangi Nimaladevi -