A jatrā (traditional fair) in eighteenth century Maharashtra with all the petty shops and the accompanying crowd could perhaps be imagined as an extremely disorganised place. However, a letter from 1730 CE (Oturkar, 1950, p. 71) regarding the jatrā at Koṇḍhanpūr near Pune tells a different tale. In this letter, government official writes to the local Deśmukh and Deśpāṇde (the village administrative officers in charge of revenue collection and of ensuring law and order in the village) regarding the sequence of pāl (shops) that was to be followed by the participating shopkeepers. The writer mentions that in the previous year the pre-determined place of the tailors was not allotted to them due to some confusion. To avoid this the officials were directed to follow a sequence where the first row had five shops of Śivāpūrkar (from Śivāpūr) and five shops by Sāsvadkar (from Sāsvad) tailors, the second row to have five shops by Nasarāpurkar and five by Nārāyaṇpurkar and the third to have shops by Punekar and Nandedkar Tailors. The Deśmukh and Deśpāṇde were further warned to avoid such conflicts in future.

The letter shows the kind of minutiae that were considered in managing even the temporary built environment. It also indicates that the behaviour of agents in the field of built environment was guided by ideas of rights and duties which were well understood by everyone associated. In this chapter, I examine these practices as observed in the Peśvā region by looking at the agents along with their rights and duties and the various processes that were practised by them in the field.

The following discussion separates the agents and their practice for the convenience of the narrative. The discussion on agents acts as a common base for understanding the physical and symbolic management of the built environment. For understanding the role of various agents in traditional environments Triambak Narayan Atre’s book “Gavgada” (1915) remains a classic reference. Written as an aid to the colonial revenue administrator, it is still very helpful in understanding village organisation which remained fairly unchanged, at least from sixteenth century to mid-twentieth century. The overall Maratha administration was a subject of study of Mountstuart Elphinstone who was the first British administrator of the Peśvā Territories. Elphinstone’s report on Peśvā territories (1821) is a very good reference for Peśvā administration based as it is on a close familiarity with the subject. The most important work for understanding the larger administrative organisation of the eighteenth century is Sen’s ‘Administrative System of the Marathas’ (1923). The picture he paints is more qualitative in nature rather than based on numerical data and maps.
The tool used for the physical management of the built environment is that of codes. The volume edited by Marshall (2011) on Urban coding and planning, illustrates a diversity of practices and formats which range from abstract ordinances to illustrated examples. More relevant for the present study is Hakim’s work on historic urban building rules of the Mediterranean (2014). Of particular interest is the section dealing with Islamic societies; relevant for the present study of the Pešvā region which has a strong base of Islamic urban traditions. Urban codes have been little studied in the Indian context. A notable example is an article by Sachdev on the vāstuvidya codes (Sachdev, 2011). Sachdev interprets the traditional vāstu texts as codes for setting towns and cites the example of Jaipur, however, the text does not provide examples of codes as employed in this eighteenth-century town. Urban coding has been defined by Marshall as the “application of any kind of code in an urban context,” (2011, p. 6) such a wide definition enables examination of a range of instances that qualify as examples of urban codes.

The other aspect that this chapter focuses on is the economic management. The role that urban taxes and collection rights played in the management of the built environment is little studied. The studies on historic taxation come mostly from economic historians and are aimed at understanding revenue flows in order to understand the financial health of the rulers and also to unravel the purpose of various military campaigns and acquisitions. Micro-level studies of taxation and its effect on the city are seldom encountered especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth century India. Somewhat closer to understanding the economy and the built environment is Shireen Moosvi’s article on Building finance in the reign of Shahjahan (2008, pp. 199-212). Moosvi’s analysis is mainly concerned with understanding the annual variations in construction expenses relating it to political events and understanding the overall implications on the imperial treasury. Gavin Hambly in his article on Mughal cities has talked about settling new towns and the finances behind it (Hambly, 1982, p. 443) and also discusses the administrative structure and tax collection in Mughal Cities (Hambly, 1982, p. 449). Stephen Blake has given a detailed picture of the economy of Shahjahanabad in the seventeenth century in his “Urban Economy in Pre-modern Muslim India: Shahjahanabad, 1639-1739” (1987). The scope of Blake’s work is much wider and aims at understanding the city from an economic perspective.

The sole attempt to trace the urban history of Maharashtra is the book by T. T. Mahajan (1991). The book looks at urban growth from a regional perspective and as a function, primarily, of movement of goods and revenue farming. A much more detailed understanding of the urban economy is provided by Gadgil’s study of Pune (1945). Though based on data from colonial administration, the volume has introductory chapters that
examine the economic life of eighteenth century Pune. However urban taxation is not the focus of either of these studies. Along with physical management, this chapter will also examine urban taxation structure as related to the built environment.

8.1 Agents in management of the built environment

To identify the agents involved in the management of the built environment we need to first understand how the settlement functioned. I use the word settlement to include various categories from a small village (gāv) to a town (sahar) like Pune. The village was more dominated by agriculture while the town was dominated by commercial activities.

The village was the basic component of the Peśvā administration system. It was headed by the Pātil which was a hereditary position (passed from father to son). Under the Pātil village existed as a self-sufficient unit barely affected by the change in regime at the centre. This was the reason why the Peśvā nobles like Shinde and Holkar retained their ‘pātilki’ (the right of being a Pātil) in spite of rising to an important position in the Peśvā polity. Even the Peśvā rulers, while building residences in places other than Pune made sure to buy the ‘vatan’ (Administrative control) of the land from local title holders (Oak, 2014, p. 348). Elphinstone’s remark on the importance of Pātil in smooth functioning of the British rule further highlights the importance and independence that the village enjoyed (Elphinstone, 1821, p. 58). Above the village level, as noted by Elphinstone, the revenue divisions under the Peśvā rule became very scattered and mixed. Tax collection was farmed out to bidders who were called as Kamāvisdār and Māmlatdār. The contract was for a fixed period of time and could be terminated for malpractice or non-performance (Sathe, 2013, p. 319).

The need for various goods and services in a village was fulfilled by the balutedār (castes providing necessary services to the farmer such as the carpenter) and alutedār (castes providing non-essential services to the farmer such as the performers) (Atre, 1915)\(^\text{14}\). The payments that they received were in the form of grain. For other requirements (eg. the need for salt in the villages of Desh) the village depended on a nearby market. Settlements with significant trade activity (which generally happened to be on trade routes crisscrossing the country) had a pēth (market). The word ‘pēth’ literally means a long street of shops in a

\(^{14}\) The balutedār include tradesmen such as Potter, Ironmonger, Carpenter, Cobbler, Barber etc. while the alutedār include Tailor, Oil presser, Weavers etc. Traditionally they are supposed to be twelve and eighteen in number respectively however in reality the numbers as well as the categories change from village to village. A detailed discussion on the balutedār/- alutedār system can be found in “Gavgada” by Atre (1915)
However, the peth in the eighteenth century was not only commercial but residential as well. Many times the peth had a mix of residential and commercial activity. A peth like Kalyan peth in Junnar was more residential while Bhavani peth or Ganj peth in Pune were more dominated by trading activities. The smallest administrative unit of a town happened to be a ‘peth’.

The initiative for settling a peth or a neighbourhood frequently came from the elite families. These families applied to the Peśvā for granting the required land. The permission was granted based on the person’s loyalty and social status. The developer of the peth looked after the allotment of land, construction of temples and other infrastructure requirements (eg provision of water). Although the peth was a part of the larger town it retained its separate identity. Rāstā peth, for example, was originally named as ‘Śivapurī’. The layout of the neighbourhood is a grid plan with small lanes running at the back of the plots which were used for cleaning toilets from the rear. It had its separate water line which came from Koṅḍhvā near Pune. This line supplied water mainly to Rāste’s vādā and to three public water tanks. Many of the plots were allotted to various families associated with Rāste lands in Karnataka (Figure 8.1).

The plot sizes, the social composition of the occupants, tax structure, the level of hygiene, availability of infrastructure differed between peth. If we compare plans of Nihāl peth (1755) and Nārāyaṇ peth (1761) differences are evident even in the road layout and plot sizes (Figure 8.2). As part of the city, the peth was administered by the Kotvāl who judged all the crimes and was ultimately responsible for tax collection. Rules of social behaviour remained applicable all across the town. For example sale of liquor was banned, Gambling was permitted only with prior permission and movement after nightfall was banned in the town.

Kotvāl, as mentioned, was the administrative head as well as in charge of the law and order in the town. The post was by appointment. A document from Peśvā diaries (SSRPD, V7, Vad, 1908c, p. 233) gives a detailed list of his duties which include maintaining a census of the city, maintain records, police the streets, look after illumination as and when required etc. The duties of relevance that deal with the built fabric are as follows

The word peth has its origins in the Sanskrit word pattan, meaning ‘town’ or ‘city’. Variations of this word can be found in telgu, malyalam and kannada. In kannada, the word pettah menas a market town or a long street of shops in a town. The persistence of the word indicates continuation of pre-Islamic urban traditions.
Figure 8.1. Plan of Rāstā peṭh (Source - British survey from 1876 CE)

1. Providing and stamping the adgaj (It was a measure used for measuring size of a house or a plot and differed from town to town)
2. Sanctioning all the land deals.
3. Judge all conflicts related to the road, lane, and house ownership.

For performing these and other functions, the kotvāl was given a staff which included darogā (police officer), phadnis (in charge of the clerks), daftardār (record keeper), peṭh kārkūn (in charge of site measurements of properties), gastīs asāmī (night watchmen), pyāde
(lowest rank of armed person), bāje lok (a non-fighting member of army), divtyā asāmi (carrier of light torches) and harkāmi (all-purpose person).

Figure 8.2. Plans of Nārāyaṇ peth and Nihāl peth showing the differences in terms of extent and road layout. (Source – British survey from 1876 CE)
All of these were salaried employees of the state. The Kotvāl was given a fixed annual sum for the maintenance of this staff. Of relevance to the built environment was the peth kārkūn. He worked under the Kotvāl and was responsible for visiting the site for measurements and for confirming that the construction was as per the recorded document. Based the report of the peth kārkūn, the Kotvāl issued ‘kabāle patra’ (PNSV, V2Karve, 1942b, p. 101). It was a registered document that confirmed the property deal.

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Kamāvisdār was the tax farmer who collected taxes in one or many peth. Kamāvisdār was given on contract. Other than tax farming the Kamāvisdār had to regulate the market prices in the peth and also maintain a record of people staying in the peth which he reported to the Kotvāl. The various taxes that he collected included the ghar-pattī (residential property tax) and pāl-pattī (Tax on commercial properties).

Śete was the watandār (a post that was hereditary) of the peth, who collected various taxes. The śete enjoyed a number of rights in the peth or neighbourhood. Firstly he was exempted from tax on his property (generally house and shop). As a witness to agreements of land and houses, he charged 5% on the cost as ‘shelā’. For attesting maps of the property, he was allowed to charge 1% of the fees. (Probably showing the boundaries and the dimensions)

Apart from this official structure, there was also a social structure where members performed various duties in managing the built environment based on their caste and social position. The elites who initiated the settlement of a peth and also made the initial investment occupied the top position. They many times were not interested in the income that the peth generated. Rāste, for example, diverted the entire income of the peth to the upkeep of Lakṣmaṇeśvar temple that he had constructed in the neighbourhood (G. V. Apte, 1922, p. 11). The chief interest seems to be of enhancing the social capital. Brahmins by virtue of their perceived caste superiority enjoyed privileges. The norms of social behaviour were always in favour of the Brahmin. They were essential in any rituals such as the vāstuśānta (calming ceremony for the house) and grāmaśānta (calming ceremony for the village) ceremonies and for the ritualistic uddyāpan vidhī after any construction was complete. Members of the caste Rāmoshī was responsible for patrolling the neighbourhood in the night. Menial tasks such as that of cleaning roads and toilet were for the lower castes. Mahar worked as the harkāmyā (all-purpose servant). Māṅg managed the dead animals. In what seems like a contradiction, members of Māṅg caste also played an important role in the calming ceremonies of the town as explained in Chapter nine. These duties and rights seem to have originated in the balutedārī system that existed in villages of the region.
In conclusion, the entire town was seen as an administrative unit, however, the day to
day management seems to operate at the level of a neighbourhood or a *peth*. This meant that
regardless of the size of the town the administrative system remained essentially same. The
hierarchy of castes influenced the administrative hierarchy. The appointments to the
important posts were based on records of earlier service to the government or could be bought
on contract for a price (SRPD, V7, Vad, 1908c, p. 369). Through this mechanism, an
individual could convert his economic capital into social capital, however, his right to do so
was conditioned by his membership of a privileged caste group.

8.2 Physical Management

The examples of codes that I discuss here are related to providing access to urban
infrastructure and regulating the physical fabric. The evidence for these codes comes from
fragments of information that can be gleaned from various contemporary documents (letters,
agreements). The data mainly pertains to Pune and comes from the three volumes of Pune
Nagar Samshodhan Vrutta. Below is the translation of a *kharedi khat* (agreement of sale and
purchase of a property) from the eighteenth century. The observations that follow have been
drawn based on a number of similar documents.

Śrī

Agreement of sale and purchase; the year 1783 CE month of Jyeśṭha and thirteenth
day of the waxing moon, this agreement of purchase was given in writing to the buyer
Rajaśrī (A form of salutation) Govind Harī Joshī by the seller Bāḷājī Kākājī and
Gopāḷ Kākājī Bhaṅge that our house; including the plot, building and the well, which
was in the present *Kasbā* (Pune) in *kāḷe vāvar* (outside the old city limits) on the west
of Rajaśrī Sachivpant; was kept by our father Kākājī Bhaṅge as a collateral with you
for a sum of money. Recently our father expired and so to pay back the money that he
had borrowed, we sell this plot, building and the well to you by our free will and have
taken a sum of rupees fifteen hundred for the same. The details of length, width and
the four boundaries are as below

On the east a common gable wall with the house of Jagannāth Naṅk Dalāḷ; Clause 1

On the North gable of the *sopā* and further North is the land of a government
constable; Clause 1

Rainwater falls on the land on North

In the West is the gable of Gopāḷ Gaṅeś Prāṇī; it is a common wall; Clause 1
The length and width of the land given to you; measured with a hāt of fifteen tasū excluding the gables; width East – West approximately twenty-one hāt.

South North hāt excluding the walls; approximately fifty hāt; so width twenty hāt and length fifty; Clause 1

By writing these four clauses plot, building and well have been given to you. Hereinafter we have no connection with the house. If anyone from our family or otherwise tries to object with reference to the plot or the building; we will answer the objections. Given this on paper in writing;

Signed by Bāḷājī Kākājī and Gopāḷ Kākājī Bhaṅge

Witnessed by Dāmodar Dhoṅdev Prāṇi

Witnessed by Sadāśiv Sadānaṅd Bhāgāṅagar kar

(PNSV, V2, Karve, 1942b, p. 100)

8.2.1 Common walls and roof water disposal. The agreements of buying and selling of property (kharedī khat) make specific mention of shared gable walls with half the width shared by each adjacent owner (PNSV, V2, Karve, 1942b, p. 102). The sloping roofs of the houses meant that water flowing down the roof would fall somewhere. In cases where the water fell in other property, the kahredī khat made a specific mention of that. The documents mention all the neighbouring properties and their owners and the abutting roads with their widths.

8.2.2 Sewage, sullage Disposal. The kharedī khats particularly mention the location of latrines (śetkhānā) and the location from which excreta was removed (Karve, 1942b, p. 156). The waste water from the house had to be connected to the main line constructed by the Government (PNSV, V2, Karve, 1942b, p. 156) as per system (shirastā).

8.2.3 Encroachments onto public roads. The documents talk about two types of encroachments, those that were of a temporary nature (roofs along the road) were allowed after charging a certain amount of money. A sanad (a legal document granting rights of something to an individual) from 1780 for the Kotvālī specifically mentions that new platforms are not to be further allowed onto roads and the existing ones, if constructed without permission should be demolished (SSRPD, V8, Vad, 1908b, p. 351). The rule seems to have been very flexible and the decisions were taken on a case by case basis depending on the person violating and the seriousness of the violation. For example, in one instance a
construction by a *peṭhkarī* (*śete*) in 1796 CE which encroached onto the public road was allowed to remain (SSRPD, V5, Vad, 1908a, p. 279). The word ‘customary charge of rupees five to be waived’ indicate that such constructions were allowed to remain after the due payment. It was also instructed that he shall have to pay charges provided he rents out the place. On the other hand, an encroachment on a main road of the Peth was instructed to be removed without any consideration (Apate, 1920, p. 102). In this case, the intensity of traffic or the importance of the road would probably have governed the decisions.

### 8.2.4 Illegal construction

A solitary recorded instance of illegal construction indicates the way illegal constructions were dealt with. In 1770; a person built a house on another owner’s plot. The government asked the encroacher to vacate the premises and the lawful owner was asked to pay the price of construction to the encroacher (PNSV, V1, Karve, 1942a, p. 58). The construction in itself was not seen as a violation in the built environment but rather as a violation of ownership rights.

### 8.2.5 Use of Physical Infrastructure

The public sullage system was for all to connect to. The distribution of drinking water from aqueducts was more controlled. One could draw water from the public water tanks but for a private connection, an application had to be made (SSRPD, V5, Vad, 1908a, p. 105).

### 8.2.6 Rules related to religious places

The rules related to religious places are more elaborately stated. These documents are a combination of behavioural norms for people within and outside the temple, rights of various communities and physical maintenance. I have made use of two such documents, one for Tryṃbakeśvar (“Aītihasik Samkirna Sahitya,” 1946a, pp. 46-49) and the other for the temple at Paṇḍharpūr (SSRPD, V8, Vad, 1908b, p. 276).

The Paṇḍharpūr document mentions opening up a walled window for admitting light, adding a skylight in the roof and raising floor level of the sanctum in order to facilitate ease of movement from *sabhā mandap* to the sanctum. The other instructions relate to use of temple doors during the *yātrā* and prohibitions on certain castes from entering the temple. Such prohibitions are a part of the Tryṃbak document as well. In addition, the document talks about pinning the responsibility of maintaining the premise on the associated person and not the actual perpetrator. For example, a barber was to make sure that the cut hair did not end up in the *tīrtha* (the sacred water body). The house owners staying along a particular road were charged with the task of maintaining cleanliness on them. They were to pay salary to a sweeper for this purpose. It also says that if the river water near a house was found dirty the
house owner would have to face the consequences from the government officials. The responsibility of the act was of the property owner rather than the perpetrator.

**8.2.7 Maintaining and securing the built environment.** The central government undertook a number of activities which were aimed at making the life of the citizens more comfortable. These were as noted below

a. Plantation of trees along roadside

b. Providing *pānpoī* (place for drinking water) on travel routes

c. Maintaining the roads, occasionally by paving them with stone

d. Construction of city walls

e. Construction of rest houses, wells and water bodies at various places (especially religious places)

**8.3 Economic processes**

The purpose of this section is threefold first to understand the kind of taxes and fines that were collected as part of managing the built environment, secondly to identify the sources of income that were utilised to finance public and private projects, and thirdly to formulate some idea about the costs involved in a construction project.

**8.3.1 Promoting new development.** As I have noted in chapter five, settling of new towns, extending existing settlements or rehabilitating deserted neighbourhoods were managed through private initiative. While settling new towns was possible only for the elite, the other two could be undertaken by an enterprising person with some capital. Let’s take the example of a peth that was planned in Pune (For some reason the neighbourhood was never settled in reality).

*Sanad* in the name of Jivanrām Ghāširām, you had requested that you would settle Navāpurā *peth* to the East of Bhavāni *peth* if ordered (by the Peśvā). As per that request, you are ordered to settle the *peth* on the said plot of land

New *kuḷe* that will stay in the *peth* will not have to pay *mohatarfā* (tax paid by all shopkeepers and the skilled craftsmen such as masons and carpenters) and *vethbigār* (the right to get work done without payment) for seven years starting from this year. After the *kaul* is over; *mohatarfā*, *vethbigār* etc will be charged. Clause 1
The restrictions from Kotvāl office and those regarding batçhapāī will not be applicable till the kaul is over. Clause 1

Government buying and buying by the elites will not take place in the peṭh till kaul is over. Clause 1

If the kuḷ settling in the peṭh have some previous dues then recovery should be such that their sustenance is not compromised. Clause 1

The costs of keeping śibandi, pyāde and peṭh kārkān along with construction of peṭh chāvadi should be informed to the government. The same will be paid back after the kaul is over from the income of the peṭh. Clause 1

Total five articles are thus contracted and a sanad to that effect issued. You are to behave as written and settle the peṭh sanad 1

(SSRPD, V8, Vad, 1908b, p. 354)

This sanad is followed by another sanad to the Kamāvisdār of Pune city to allot some land for shops in the proposed neighbourhood and the third document is a kaul to the people who would settle in the new peṭh

vānī, udamī, vyāpāri and common people are given this kaul that beginning this year (year mentioned in Hijri calendar) a seven year kaul has been given to Jivanrām Ghāśīrām. He has been ordered to settle the peṭh, so you may settle in this peṭh and engage in commercial activities without any fear. Till the seven year kaul is over, you will not have to pay mohatarfā and veṭhbigār. After the kaul is over you would pay the said taxes as per the system followed in other peṭh.

(SSRPD, V8, Vad, 1908b, p. 355)

In the same year, the vatan of šete for this peṭh was awarded to Sakhārām bin Ghāśīrām after a payment of rupees five hundred. He was told that he may exercise the rights of šete after the seven-year kaul was over.

This and other such documents offer insight into a number of phenomena that can be described as below.

New developments were based on the individual initiative with the government role being limited to granting a tax holiday. The urban entrepreneur, after getting permission from the government, procured the land (owned, allotted or bought), invited merchants, craftsmen
and people to stay and looked after the neighbourhood for seven years without any economic return. The physical costs involved would be those of maintaining the roads, constructing cāvadi (administrative headquarters of a peth) building and appointing as well as paying the administrative staff. Few seem to have been able to afford such an investment into an enterprise of this scale and the activity remained limited to the elites of the eighteenth-century society.

The taxes of mohatarfā (tax paid by all shopkeepers and the skilled craftsmen such as masons and carpenters) and the right of vethbigār (the right to get work done without payment) seem to be the most important components of the income that the peth generated since they are the ones that were waived off and get mentioned so frequently. Besides these, the government also collected gharpattī and pālpattī. It is likely that these also were waived off during the seven-year tax holiday. These taxes took care of the payment to be made to the government and the various rights of šete (in charge of collecting the revenue and remitting it to the central treasury) ensured that they earned through their efforts. If this was the process followed for settling neighbourhoods; how then were large infrastructure projects such as building kusū (fortifications around the town), excavating lakes or laying water supply system managed in terms of the finance?

The construction of the lake at katraj was financed through three sources one was a tax on citizens called as the talepattī, contributions from nobles like Raste and from the government treasury (Chapekar, 1937, p. 45) of the total cost of 83, 268 rupees 25,000 (@30%) was collected through naharpattī, around 15000 (@18%) was spent by the government while the rest was through individual contributions by the prominent citizens. A similar tax was employed in the construction of town fortifications (SSRPD, V8, Vad, 1908b, p. 217). The amount raised through public taxes could go up to 100% of the total cost also.

8.3.2 Taxes and fines collected as part of managing the built environment. The taxation that applied in the neighbourhood can be understood as annual taxes and taxes applicable on property transactions. Here I will only consider taxes that are relevant to real estate. Besides this, there were a number of taxes that were applicable such as swāripattī (tax to pay for royal travels), pātdām (tax on second marriage), pālkhipattī (tax to pay for expenses for holy men) etc.

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16 A detail description of these can be found in Sens book (1923) on Maratha administration.
The three annual taxes that the residents paid were a. Gharpattī (the tax paid on a residential property), b. Pālpattī (tax paid for owning a shop either temporary or permanent, in a peth) and c. Mohatarfā which as explained earlier was a tax paid by all the craftsmen and skilled workers for practising their craft from the peth.

In property deals, there are references to three types of transaction taxes.

*Kabālyāchā ākār* – This was the tax levied by the government on the sale and purchase of property. It amounted to 10% of the transaction cost (PNSV, V2, Karve, 1942b, p. 101). Against this, the Kotvālī issued a ‘kabāle patra’ (occupancy letter) to the purchaser. The *kabāle patra* was the sanction letter from the government which formally completed the property transfer and made the purchaser a legal owner of the premises.

*_Śhelā of Śete* – This amount which was 5% on the transaction cost, was payable to the *Śete* of the *peth* for standing witness to the sale deed (SPD, V43, G. S. Sardesai, 1934, p. 41).

Charges for attesting – The *Śete* also charged 1% for attesting the property map. This amount was charged over and above the fees payable to the government (SPD, V43, G. S. Sardesai, 1934, p. 42).

The taxes could be waived off for people favoured by the government or those who had carried out important services for the Maratha kingdom. The documents show a long list of such beneficiaries.

### 8.3.3 Construction costs.

The construction costs can be classified into three categories. First the material costs, second labour costs and third the costs of maintenance of a building. The data for the first two comes from Chapekar’s (1937) study of Peśvā society.

1. **Material cost** – The cost of main construction material, the brick, was around two rupees per thousand bricks. The cost of excavating the stone was around three rupees per hundred stones (Chapekar, 1937, p. 273).

2. **Labour Cost** – The labour costs. The various trades people involved in the construction have already been mentioned in 7.2.2. The payment to a carpenter, brick mason and a stone mason varied from 12 to 15 rupees per month. The unskilled labourers got rupees five to seven per month as salary (Chapekar, 1937, p. 250).

3. **Maintenance cost** – These are seen only in large residences requiring large manpower for maintenance. The various maintenance activities involved lighting arrangements, regular maintenance of floors, preparing and laying *bichāyat* (mattresses and covers which were laid
on entire floors), maintaining and supplying the kitchen, firewood etc. These tasks were contracted out to various people on annual basis (SSRPD, V5, Vad, 1908a, p. 47).

The information as it exists in the published sources on construction costs is fragmented and available for different structures at different points of time. An analysis of building economics of Peśvā built environment has to await availability of comprehensive data on a building or buildings. Till then any observation will essentially remain limited in terms of its capacity to generalise.

Summary

That a code existed for physical management of the built environment is beyond doubt. However, a consolidated document has not come to light. It is possible that many of the rules existed as ‘restricted codes’ shared by the community implicitly. The documents analysed indicate that the rules existed as a combination of prescriptive (you shall not) and prescriptive (you shall). Certain principles seem to have governed this decision making as stated below.

Individual freedom – In all the cases mentioned above, the owner had a significant freedom of action not only within his own land but to a certain extent in the public space fronting the house as well. However, the rights of neighbours had to be recognised.

Interdependence between neighbours - The agreements of buying and selling made sure that the shared ownership (of common walls) and the rights of rainwater disposal in each other’s plots were spelt out in unambiguous terms.

Private Responsibility in the Public – The property owner was responsible for nuisance activities in the public areas immediate surrounding his plot. The rules prohibiting nuisance make the owner responsible rather than the perpetrator. Such interpretation of the nuisance law is contrary to contemporary legislations which focus on the perpetrator.

The owners contributed towards maintenance by way of taxes. Encroachments onto public roads of temporary or permanent nature could be regularised by payment of a fine. In cases where the encroachment was significant in the sense that it affected the conduct of public affairs, demolition was ordered. Illegal construction seems to have been treated on a case by case basis.

Caste and social position were the influencing factors in taking decisions regarding encroachments, access to drinking water from the water supply system and in defining norms of behaviour in religious places.
The data regarding the economic activities in the built environment is available mostly for Pune city. However, some documents that come from other areas (SPD, V43, G. S. Sardesai, 1934, p. 40) tell us that the processes were similar or same within the Peśvā lands. The taxation structure and the associated administrative hierarchy were well defined. The city provided security, controlled crime and, importantly, controlled the market rates among the neighbourhoods.

The picture of the city that comes out through this analysis is that of a loosely organised group of semi-autonomous neighbourhoods each with its own officials, patrons, infrastructure, and market and with different composition of population, trades and road layouts. The neighbourhoods, however, were same in terms of the taxation structure and the administrative processes that were applicable to activities in relation to the built environment.