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Owners can't alter layouts: HC

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Hyderabad July 30: The Andhra Pradesh High Court has held that once a piece of land was earmarked as open space in an approved layout, the land owner cannot subsequently divide the open land into plots.

Justice R. Subhash Reddy of the High Court gave the above ruling while dealing with a petition filed by Vijaya Sree Nagar Welfare Association at Vanasthali-puram in the city.

The judge directed the commissioner of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to protect the nine open spaces in Vijaya Sree Nagar (Judges Colony) in Masoorabad. The judge also directed the GHMC commissioner to develop these lands as per the approved layout.

On an earlier occasion the judge had directed the GHMC to submit a status report on open spaces. Based on the direction the assistant city planner visited the layout and submitted a report stating that out of nine open spaces, four have been surrounded by compound walls and the remaining were still open.

According to the report no constructions were built on any of the open spaces except on one where a government school building was

constructed long ago.

The petitioner association told the court that these spaces were earmarked for common purposes like developing a park, school, community hall, playground, primary health centre, temple or library. The petitioner complained that the developers of the layout converted these open spaces into 17 plots and took steps to alienate the others.

The court observed that the owners have no right to meddle with open spaces in an approved layout belonging to the GHMC and it has to develop the open spaces for common use.