INTRODUCTION

This note is intended to be an easy-to-understand overview of zoning restrictions and the building permit process within the City of Jeddah (City).

ZONING

Definition

Zoning is best defined as the division of a city into districts for the purpose of properly regulating land use. Normally, these districts are established by regulations as part of a local city plan and shown on a zoning map.

Jeddah Local Plan

In 1/5/1428H (March 2007), the Secretariat-General of the Governorate of Jeddah (SGGJ) issued the Jeddah Local Plan (JLP), and this was approved by the Ministry of Municipal & Rural Affairs (MMRA). The purpose of the JLP is to:

1. separate commercial and industrial uses from residential uses;
2. to encourage the most appropriate use of land, and;
3. promote the development, health and safety of the community.

The JLP contains comprehensive building regulations and codes (BRC) and a zoning map for the City.

SGGJ have also produced a Guide for Building Regulations and Conditions (GBRC) which contains detailed construction, technical, environmental and electrical standards to be applied by project owners when developing commercial, residential and other buildings.

Both JLP and GBRC can be found on the SGGJ website (www.jeddah.gov.sa).

Zoning Districts

JLP has divided the City into eight various zones depending on the use, development and control of the City. It defines the confines and the geographical location of each district and sets out the criteria which SGGJ will apply in considering whether to issue initial and/or final approvals for a project. The eight districts are as follows:

1. **Business and Versatile Use Zones (BVUZ)**

   This district holds versatile uses and overlaps with the residential zones. BVUZ may take the form of housing compounds, residential facilities and other services attached together with department stores, restaurants, trade centers, office buildings, schools, hospitals, outpatient clinics, service stations, health clubs, pharmacies, municipal facilities, hotels, colleges consulates, embassies, furnished accommodations, tourist centers and recreation and sports clubs.

   BVUZ is broken down into five coded parts: Central Zones (CZ), Business Pivots (BP), Business Streets (BS), Marines Zones (MZ) and Utility Centers (UC).
2. Residential Zones (RZ)

This district is to be utilised for residential purposes such as villas, buildings, compounds or homes. RZ are broken down into four coded parts: Villa Zones (VZ) for private villas with direct entrances to public roads, Block Zones (BZ) for buildings with shared entrances, Approved Housing Zones (AHZ) for blocks and villas or mix, and Unplanned Zones (UZ).

3. Industrial Zones (IZ)

These are dedicated to industrial uses (whether light, intermediate or heavy) and assemblage, electronic, or supplementary industries. IZ zones have four categories:
- Warehouses (IZ/1),
- Light Industries and Workshops (IZ/2),
- Industrial Zones (IZ/3),
- Petrochemical Industries (IZ/4).

4. Regional and Semi-regional Zones (RSZ)

These zones are for open areas, educational, health, managerial, security, and entertainment centers.

5. Special Development Zones (SDZ)

These are approved by the SGGJ for integral projects such as transportation, traffic, pathways, parking lots, infrastructure, architectural mass, urban vacuums and skylines.

6. Distinguished Project Zones (DPZ)

This district is marked by the SGGJ for special projects for development at the same controls and criteria adopted for SDZ. SGGJ usually offers incentives to develop such zones in terms of variation of use and allowance.

7. Historical Zones (HZ)

These zones are dedicated for areas with historical heritage.

8. Integrated Villages Zones (IVZ)

These zones are approved as one integral urban society where the developer is permitted to build facilities and utilities such as mosques, social service centers, civil defense centers together with water, power, sewage, phone lines and lighting facilities combined with security, educational and health services, and other components of infrastructure.

The geographical boundaries of each district are defined in the JLP (www.jeddah.gov.sa/Atlas).

Accordingly, a project developer should consult the JLP to identify the zoning district of the property he intends to develop and seek the assistance of an architect approved by SGGJ with respect to zoning requirements. A list of approved architects is available on www.jeddah.gov.sa/office.

Different criteria are applied to building permit application depending upon the proposed use and the applicable zone. Set out below, by way of an example, are the assessment criteria that would be applied to an application for a commercial center:

Commercial Centers

1. There should be full compliance with BRC, and no exceptions will be permitted unless by MMRA resolutions with recommendations from SGGJ.

2. The Center should comply with zoning regulations and codes, as set out in the next section, and located on major streets or within investment municipal areas.

3. The Center should be away from gas stations, gas shops or any dangerous facilities. A street (25 meters wide) should separate the Center from these facilities.

4. The main entrances should face the major streets.

5. The minimum area dedicated for the Center should exceed 3000 sq. meters.
6. Enough flexibility should be given to the engineering and architectural design and plans of the Center to accommodate people with special needs.

7. Sufficient parking should be provided for the customers (one space for every 50 sq. meters) and employees.

8. Special areas should be built for electrical meters, ventilation, medical emergency sections, emergency exits, elevators, supply of goods, security, control rooms, maintenance and cleanliness.

9. All areas overlooking public facilities like green belts, superfluous planning parts, streets, sewage areas shall be modulated to the same street or the Centers.

**BUILDING PERMITS**

A building permit is a license, issued by the Central Department for Building Permits (CDBP) at SGGJ, granting legal permission to construct, repair, alter or renovate building structures. In addition, the building permit provides the means to enforce the requirements of the building codes, zoning laws and other standards to ensure compliance during construction as well as the safety of the building.

By reviewing plans before any work is done, SGGJ ensures that building structures comply with JLP, GBRC and other health and safety regulations.

**Building Permit Procedure**

The building permit process involves a number of steps that are necessary to ensure compliance with a variety of building codes and regulations. It is very important to understand the applicable regulations in advance of designing construction plans for a new project.


According to GPIBP, the process for issuing a building permit is as follows:

1. A building site evaluation is conducted by a licensed engineering office (Architect) for all proposed new buildings, additions, renovations, demolitions, and so on.

2. The Architect prepares the site specifications (Krooki), which includes, among other items, the location and proposed use of the building structure in accordance with the City’s zoning requirements under JLP.

3. The Architect prepares the site plans, drawings along with a feasibility study for the proposed building, addition, renovation or demolition according to the requirements of BRC, GBRC and other building laws.

4. The Architect submits an application (paper and/or electronic depending on the type of project) for a building permit to CDBP along with all site plans, drawings, structural details, elevations, engineering calculations and other geotechnical reports.

5. A permit staff from the Public Relations Department at CDBP reviews the application and the building plans to verify that the submittal package is complete. If the submittal package is complete, the building permit application will be processed. Otherwise, the Architect will be advised in writing of any necessary corrections that need to be made. It is very important that the Architect respond promptly to any notice of corrections so that the building plan review process is not delayed.
6. The permit staff registers the application and gives a receipt to the Architect. He then refers the application to the Support Unit which enters the information into an electronic registry thereby creating an electronic file. In some case, during the course of the initial application process, a CDBP inspector from the Support Unit may conduct a site evaluation of the property.

7. After the building site evaluation (if conducted) has been completed, a relevant CDBP engineer (Engineer) from the Engineering Section at the Projects Department begins the building plan review process to confirm that the proposed work complies with the BRC, GBRC, JLP and other MMRA circulars along with legal and technical evaluation.

8. If there are no technical errors, the Engineer submits a report to the Head of the Projects Department endorsing the application for approval.

9. Once approved, the Head submits it to an Evaluation Committee which issues its initial approval, and the Head of CDBR issues the building permit.

The time required for issuing a building permit varies depending on the project type and its complexity. Normally, it takes between one week and one month to obtain a permit. However, it may take longer if SGGJ sends a notice of corrections to the Architect.

Demolition, Renovation or Change of Building Use

Demolition permits are required if there is a plan to demolish all or part of a building or structure. Demolition permits can be also obtained from the CDBP. Therefore, before a project owner takes down all or part of a building, he will have to apply to SGGJ for a demolition permit. The process is much the same as for a building permit, but with minor modifications.

If a developer wishes to renovate, or change the way he uses all or part of a building, he will need a renovation or change of use permit. This is the case even if no building works are planned. A building evaluation may have to be completed to ensure that the existing building can support the proposed new use. Different uses have different code requirements.

Other Approvals

In addition to the building codes and zoning law requirements, other permits and approvals may be required in particular circumstances. For example, building an industrial establishment would require prior approvals from the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Oil and Gas or the Ministry of Water and Electricity. All other applicable laws should be met prior to a building permit being issued.

Building Permit Fees

A building permit fee is payable in full at the time of processing the application. The permit fee is estimated by and paid at the Financial Counter at the CDBP in accordance with the current fee regulations, and it is based on the classification and specification of each project. For example, a building permit fee to construct a residential structure ranges from 800 to 1000 SR, and the fee for a commercial center can reach up to 2000 SR or more.

BPS Contact Details

If a developer wishes to enquire about the status of an application, he should call the Building Permit Section at CDBP and speak to a Permit Administrator. The contact details are as follow:

- Main Switchboard: (+966) 02-614999,
- Report complaints and municipal observations by dialing ext. 940,
- Fax number: (+966) 02-6149292,
- Postal Address: P.O. BOX: 7687, Postal Code: 21146, or
- Main e-mail: info@jeddah.gov.sa.
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