

Jasbir Singh Banwait  
1444 Clearbrook Road  
Abbotsford, BC  
V2T 5X3

File: PRJ24-156

**Re: Response to First Review Comments Dated January 31, 2025**

Dear Respected Council, Advisory Committee members and City of Abbotsford Staff,

This letter is in response to the first review letter I received from City staff in reference to the two bedroom extension located at my home located at 1444 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford BC V2T 5X3.

Our family home construction was completed in 2010. The home is 909.9m<sup>2</sup> (~9794 sf) as per the staff letter from the City of Abbotsford. The extension that is the subject of this application has a total area of 52.98m<sup>2</sup> (570 sf).

Since 2010, my entire family has lived together in the same home. Over the last 15 years, our family has grown. Currently my wife and I, our three children, two daughter in laws and our four grandchildren live at our home. Our grandchildren are 13,11,4, and 2 years old. This is a total of 11 family members living together. I built the extension due to my younger son moving back home from California after completing his residency. While he was in California, my daughter in law and son became parents to two daughters (now 4 and 2 years old). When they moved back, my granddaughters did not have bedrooms on the upper floor. One of my granddaughters stayed in my sons room, the other was sleeping in a crib in my sons walk in closet. I did read the suggestion from the Ministry of Agriculture representative that we should accommodate bedrooms for our grandchildren and family in other parts of our home - we do not feel that is appropriate for our joint farming family. In fact the extension is a positive influence on farming as my entire family contributes to this farm and all the others we commercially farm in BC. We work together to make our farming business work.

The following summarizes what I feel is the most important information specifically related to the extension construction/location and why it has no negative effect on farming.

- 1) The extension was only completed on the upper floor as my intention was to give my grand daughters bedroom space of their own.

2) The extension encroaches into only previously landscaped/backyard areas of my property. These areas never have or could have been farmed and represents no loss to farming land or existing farm production.

3) The extension area does not extend past the previous eastern boundary of the existing home.

4) Only two pad footings were dug and added into the backyard landscaped area to minimize excavation.

5) I wanted to outline the prior historical rationale for locating the entire residential footprint of my home on land that was previously never used for farming, poorest soil/ farming area, and was unsuitable for farming.

6) The hill areas on my farm that I have developed into farmable land has cost me more money than the land is actually worth. But I am a farmer and have always done what actual farmers do - maximize the farming activity on their farms.

Since I immigrated to Canada in 1976, I have been a Canadian farmer. Mainly in land based farming in the Fraser Valley. I would also note that in addition to the subject property, my family's total farm operation includes 10 properties, totalling 329 acres of farmland primarily in or being prepared for blueberry production. 231 acres of full production blueberry on three properties in Deroche, BC, 88 acres developing farm on 6 properties in Abbotsford BC and the subject property which is 10 acres (7 acres of Blueberry) in Abbotsford BC. The following summarizes from a farm planning perspective my experience and strategy since purchasing the subject farm and developing it into a productive farm property over the last 20 years.

1) The subject farm has been continually farmed with Blueberries since 2006 (I purchased the property in 2005), prior to that the property was not used for farming by the previous owners.

2) In addition to planting the usable flat areas, I also spent considerable resources grading, levelling and irrigating the hillside areas to the East and South side of my home in order to turn those areas into farmable and farmed areas. The hill areas on my farm that I have developed into farmable land has cost me more money than the land is actually worth. But I am a farmer and have always done what actual farmers do - maximize the farming activity on their farms.

3) There is a covenant on the subject property by the Agricultural Land Commission restricting residential uses to the hill area in order to protect the best farming lands for agriculture. This covenant was registered when the previous owner did a homesite severance for this property through the ALC. The covenant restrictions also matched my desire to build my home on the hill in order to ensure that the best farmable areas on the west and south west sides of our farm were used for farming. Additionally the areas directly to the east of my home were a part of the “hillside area” allowed to be used for residential uses but I spent considerable resources grading those areas to allow for farming there as well.

4) An important consideration for this application is that I currently own and have owned multiple ALR properties over the past 40 plus years and have only ever built one residence for my family.

5) We acknowledge that the existing farm residential footprint is greater than the maximum recommended by the Ministry’s Guide, however, we would like to note that this application does not propose to increase that footprint in any manner, and if approved would permit 3 generations of our family (11 people in total and anticipated to grow) to maintain their quality of life, some semblance of privacy between families at key times of the day/night, and have no adverse impact on the farming operation or productivity of the property.

6) The home and outbuildings are over the current allowed residence size for ALR properties but was conforming at the time of construction in 2010.

7) There are no other additional farm residences for family or workers or anyone else on this farm or any of our other farms.

8) We acknowledge/understand that a building permit will eventually be required for the work completed to ensure alignment with BC Building Code requirements. Permit application with all deficiencies addressed has been submitted to the City.

9) We confirm that the subject property currently has farm status, and 70% of the land is actively producing blueberries.

10) External Agency Referrals – Thank you for this additional detailed information related to BC Hydro and electrical aspects/requirements. Our electrician and other building consultants/engineers have all signed off on the construction.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for spending time on this application. Please refer the application with your support to the Agricultural Land Commission. You all understand that the only way farming is going to prosper in our province is if farmers and farming families are supported. If actual farmers are not given any freedom or flexibility on their own farms and properties we will lose even more young people to other industries and careers.

At times it is easier to make blanket rules and regulations for an entire group of people. In this case - farm owners. This approach ends up hurting farmers and farming in our province. Adding an extension onto my home of 570 sf, in an area that would never have been farmed should be supported. There is no encroachment into any farming areas and no encroachment outside of the home footprint area (extension does not extend in any direction outside of the existing house N/S/E/W borders).

Respectfully, I feel my contributions to farming in BC for almost 50 years should be respected. I would like to provide my children, who have farmed with me since they were young children, and their families adequate housing. In my opinion this should be supported and championed as a method to keep farming alive and prosperous in BC.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Jasbir Singh Banwait