

Design Requirements for Permitted Additional Residences in the ALR Guidelines

June 19, 2025

This document provides guidance for the construction of permitted additional residences in the Agricultural Land Reserve ("ALR"), including additional residences permitted under the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation ("ALR Use Regulation"), and additional residences being considered by the Agricultural Land Commission ("ALC") as part of a Notice of Intent ("NOI") for the placement of fill for a structure.

1. Additional Residences in the ALR

[Section 34.3 of the ALR Use Regulation](#) permits the construction of one additional residence per parcel in the ALR, subject to specific conditions and requirements relating to parcel size and the total floor area.

An additional residence may be constructed in the following forms:

- a detached residence;
- a detached residence constructed above a garage ("carriage house"); or,
- a manufactured home.

2. Size and Total Floor Area Requirements

Understanding Total Floor Area

Section 34.3 of the ALR Use Regulation specifies the maximum allowable total floor area of an additional residence based on the size of the ALR parcel:

- An additional residence with a maximum total floor area of 90 m² (969 ft²) is permitted if the parcel is 40 ha or less
- An additional residence with a maximum total floor area of 186 m² (2,002 ft²) is permitted if the parcel is greater than 40 ha

The maximum total floor area for an additional residence means the total area of all floors measured to the inner surface of the exterior walls to account for prefabricated construction methods, including:

- All living areas on all floor levels
- Stairways and hallways
- Attached garages and carports (except as part of a carriage house – see below)

- Enclosed porches and sunrooms
- Interior storage areas
- Basements with a vertical height of more than 1.8 metres
- Mechanical rooms within the building envelope

The total floor area calculation does not include:

- Open decks and patios
- Exterior stairs
- Crawl spaces (height less than 1.8 metres)

See Glossary section of [ALC Information Bulletin 05 - Residential Uses in the ALR](#).

The design of a mixed-use building (i.e., residential and farm use or residential and other accessory residential use) where only a portion of the structure is proposed for use as a residence does not avoid the need to comply with the residential requirements in the Agricultural Land Commission Act ("ALCA") and its regulations. [Section 5\(1\)\(a\) of the ALR Use Regulation](#) states that a structure designated for farm use is distinct from a residence, and the ALCA defines a 'residential structure' as any structure utilized, either wholly or partially, for some or all of the year, as a residence. Consequently, when a residential use is combined with a farm or accessory use, the total floor area of the entire structure is included in the calculation of total floor area for the additional residence. This applies regardless of separation by firewalls or floors. A proposed 'combined' residential and other use structure requires approval of the Commission through a Non-Adhering Residential Use (NARU) application. Refer to the [Housing in the ALR](#) section of the ALC website for more information about application considerations (specifically Information Bulletin 05 and Policy L-26).

Carriage Houses

Where a detached additional residence occupies the second storey above a one storey garage (i.e., a "carriage house"), the garage is not counted towards the total floor area of the additional residence if that garage is for the principal residence. Key requirements for a carriage house include:

- the garage is for the storage/parking of motor vehicles for the principal residence;
- the total floor area of the garage on the first storey is no greater than the maximum allowable total floor area of the additional residence on the second storey (i.e., 90 m² for parcels 40 ha or less or 186 m² for parcels greater than 40 ha);
- the garage is one large space accessed by garage doors;
- there is no internal connection between the garage and the additional residence (i.e., the garage must not be intended for the additional residence); and,
- the carriage house must be clustered close to the principal residence.

Carriage House Example:



For more information on carriage houses, refer to [ALC Information Bulletin 05 – Residences in the ALR](#).

3. Design and Siting Considerations

Additional residential structures in the ALR should be designed with consideration to:

- Minimizing impacts on agricultural land and farming operations
- Clustering residential structures together
- Utilizing existing driveways and access points
- Maintaining agricultural connectivity of the parcel
- Preserving arable land for farming purposes

If these design considerations are not taken into account when designing and siting the additional residence, it may result in a refusal of the NOI.

4. Fill Requirements

The placement of fill (including structural aggregate) for an additional residence requires authorization from the ALC through an NOI regardless of the volume.

5. Local Government Requirements

A local government should not issue a building permit for an additional residence without an approved NOI for the fill related to that use.

Local governments also retain the authority to:

- Prohibit additional residences in the ALR (refer to [Housing in the ALR](#))
- Impose more restrictive size or siting requirements
- Require specific permits or approvals
- Regulate the form and character of additional residences

A decision on an NOI does not circumvent local government authority, and in no way compels the local government to issue a building permit.