

# **Guidelines for Establishing a Photographic Permanent Archival Record**

Revised  
February 2020

## **INTRODUCTION**

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires that any undertaking that is federally funded, licensed or permitted take into account the effect it will have on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). If any undertaking has an adverse effect on a listed or eligible resource, alternatives that avoid or minimize the effect are considered and if these are not feasible, mitigation to resolve that effect is proposed. The following guidelines should be used for completion of mitigation stipulations, specifically photographic mitigation, as set forth in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the federal agency and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD)/State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

The aspects of the project that should be photo-documented for mitigation for a given undertaking is determined through consultation with the parties involved and under the guidance of the SHPO. There are several types of photo-documentation including 35 mm, medium format, large format photography, and Historic American Building Survey (HABS) and Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). HABS/HAER documentation is the national historical architectural and engineering documentation program of the National Park Service. The documentation is retained by the Library of Congress and consists of measured drawings, photographs, and written information. This level of documentation is the national standard.

In 2001, the National Park Service requested that only National Historic Landmarks, properties eligible for the NRHP at the national level of significance, and individually eligible properties significant at the State and Local levels be documented to HABS/HAER standards. In response to this request, the SHPO determined that most resources at the State or Local level of significance will be documented to the standards outlined in the following guidelines rather than to HABS/HAER standards, unless a resource merits a higher level of documentation. Eligible bridges are one exception to this rule and shall be documented to HAER standards. For projects where HABS/HAER is not required or warranted, the SHPO has determined that digital photography is the preferred medium for photo-documentation; therefore, the following guidelines describe the minimum extent and level of documentation required for a Permanent Archival Record (PAR) retained by the State of Georgia.

## **PURPOSE AND VALUE**

Photographic mitigation shall provide a visual record of a resource determined eligible for the NRHP that will be physically impacted by project implementation (i.e. taking of a resource, taking of part of a resource, or altering the setting of a resource). Photo-documentation of eligible resources is the “last resort” mitigation measure and should be done in conjunction with other mitigation components.

## **EXTENT AND LEVEL**

The extent of documentation refers to the content considerations determined necessary by the circumstances of a given project; the level of documentation refers to the technical considerations determined necessary by the circumstances of a given project. The extent and level of documentation are almost always dependent upon the circumstances of a project.

To determine the extent and level of documentation necessary for a project, the following two factors must be taken into account: the features which contribute to the eligibility of a resource and then of those features, which ones will be impacted by the proposed project. For example, if a resource will be demolished during implementation of the project, interior photographs of the resource will be required as well as exterior photographs; on the other hand, if only a small portion of the front yard of a resource will be impacted by the proposed project and if no other contributing features are located within that area, then the level of documentation may be limited to exterior elevation and setting photographs of the resource.

## **CONTENT**

The following represents the minimum level of supporting documentation that must accompany the digital photographs in the mitigation of a historic resource. This documentation is necessary for establishing a complete PAR of the resource:

- An introductory page providing the appropriate project number. This page should also include a brief description (no more than 3 or 4 sentences) of the resource (Ex: circa 1910 Hall-and-parlor house type) along with an explanation of why it is significant, utilizing the NRHP criteria and areas of significance.
- A page providing information on the geographic location of the resource. This information should consist of the name of the property (Ex: Smith House), street address, city, county, and UTM coordinates. Geographic information should be separate from text paragraphs and more general location information such as crossroad references should be included.
- A map documenting the resource's location in relation to its surrounding area. County maps should be used to provide this information. Additionally, a thumbnail state map showing the general location and a more detailed county or city map pinpointing the location should be included.
- A sketch map/site plan illustrating the resource(s) and its immediate surroundings. Plat books, insurance maps, bird's eye views, district highway maps, or hand-drawn maps are acceptable. Sketch maps need not be drawn to a precise scale. A number and vantage point of each accompanying photograph should be labeled on the sketch map.
- A photo log providing the following information:
  1. Name of resource
  2. Street address where property is located
  3. City and County where property is located
  4. Name of photographer
  5. Date of photographs (date photographs were taken, not processed)
  6. Location of digital image files (this will always be the SHPO)
  7. Photograph Number
  8. Description of view indicating the direction of the camera (Ex: View of façade, facing west)

- In cases where a resource has been shown to be exceptionally significant based on its historical importance or for possessing a high degree of architectural integrity, supplementary information may be required. This information should convey the significance of the resource through a detailed architectural description and/or a short summary of its historical importance.
- Photograph proof sheets of all digital photographs with six (6) photographs per page and project identification information in the header.
- All of the documentation must be printed on archival-stable paper, including all attachments, appendices, plans, photocopies, and other supplemental material.
- A PDF of all information noted above (narrative, photo log, and photo proof sheets, etc.).

### **TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

For digital photographic documentation, the minimum required is as follows:

- Use of a modern digital SLR camera.
- Use of perspective controlled (pc) lens is recommended.
- Take at least three (3) exposures of each view or angle and pick the best exposure.
- In order to capture details and allow for greater enlargement of the images, the photographs should be submitted in three formats:
  - RAW format (DNG preferred)
  - TIF format (minimum 360 ppi, 8-bit files – **16 bit files NOT accepted**)
  - JPEG format (minimum 1024x1024 and 360 ppi)
- Images should be saved to a media that is designed for long-term (over 100 years) storage of sensitive data, video, or music files. The media should be archivally labeled using a felt type and solvent free pen with no adhesive details.

### **PRODUCTION/PRESENTATION**

The following represents the minimum level of standards necessary for document retention at the SHPO.

- All paper and media included should be archivally stable. Reports should use headings to separate topics, include an index if applicable, and when and who prepared the report.
- All documentation shall be loose with no pins, paper clips, staples, rubber banks, or adhesive labels. If an archivally stable folder is available, it should have sides and a flap over the top to keep the documentation secure. Each resource recorded should be in its own separate folder with all supporting documentation.

- All documentation should be the size of an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper. If large plan sheets must be inserted, consider photographing or scanning the plans in order to provide for a smaller copy.
- All labeling should be done with archival and no ballpoint pen ink or felt-tip pens should be used on photographs, negatives, or paper.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- When mitigating larger historic resources such as agricultural properties, aerial photography of the landscape should be included as part of the PAR.
- When mitigating certain types of structures, SHPO may request that the engineering or construction drawings/blueprints for the structure accompany the required photo-documentation.
- In most cases, at least two sets of final documents must be prepared – one for deposit in the archives of SHPO and a second in a publicly accessible archive near the historic site recorded. The MOA will specify the second local repository for the documentation, usually a regional or branch library or historical society in the county of the proposed undertaking. Local repositories should be sent a digital and hardcopy of everything in the PAR.