

## **Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Photographic Documentation Requirements for Historic Structures**

The following guidelines identify the process and means by which historic buildings and sites should be documented prior to demolition or removal. Photographic documentation is one method of preserving important historic information and serves as a final and lasting record of a building or site after the resource itself is gone. The photographic documentation package must fully convey the significant features, context and history of the building or site. The federal Historic American Building Survey (HABS) and Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) programs offer excellent guidance on documenting historic buildings and structures. There are instances, however, when the level of detail and cost required to meet HABS/HAER guidelines is not feasible. These guidelines are based on HABS/HAER standards, but are modified to offer a cost effective alternative for projects in Vermont that may need documentation under 22 VSA 14 (Vermont Historic Preservation Act), Act 250, Public Service Board, or other jurisdictions.

Photographic documentation packages submitted to the Division must meet the guidelines described below. Incomplete packages will be returned for revision and re-submittal. The Division must be allowed up to thirty (30) days to review and accept the photographic documentation package, and demolition or removal cannot begin until the Division has formally accepted the photographic documentation package.

It is recommended that photographic documentation be undertaken by an architectural historian with substantial experience in photographing and researching historic buildings and sites. The history and significance of the resource should be studied prior to undertaking photographic documentation, in order to better understand the significance of the resource and its unique features.

For additional guidance on photographic documentation standards, please see:

- National Register Bulletin #23: *How to Improve the Quality of Photographs for National Register Nominations* [<http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/photobul/>]
- HABS/HAER photo guidelines [<http://www.nps.gov/history/hdp/standards/habsguidelines.htm>]
- National Register Photo Policy Expansion [<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm>]

## **The Documentation Package**

One complete Documentation Package should be provided to the Division. Additional copies should be deposited in an archival storage facility that can maintain the photographic prints and negatives (if applicable) in archival conditions. A facility located near the documented resource is generally preferred, and may be a library, historical society, school or other organization as appropriate, to ensure that the information is publicly available now and into the future. A complete photographic documentation package must contain the following material:

1. Cover Page: stating the project name, location, date, project sponsor and historian;
2. Project summary: one to three paragraphs describing the history of the project and the process by which demolition of the building was determined to be appropriate;
3. Architectural description: one to three paragraphs describing the architectural features, design and construction of the resource;
4. Statement of significance: one to three paragraphs describing the historic significance of the resource within a local, state and/or national context;
5. Location map: a copy of the appropriate Town Highway map or USGS topographic map, with the location of the property clearly indicated;
6. Sketch map: a site plan of the property, showing all structures and significant landscape features (keyed by number to photographs of the buildings and the Photograph Index);
7. Photograph Index: a numbered index to the sketch map and photographs;
8. Documentary photographs: see below for details on types of images, processing and labeling; and
9. Information on the location of original historic photographs or documents and resources for further information about the building (if applicable).

## **Photographs**

### Types of Images

- Present day views of the structure or site;
- Photographic copies or scanned digital images of historic photographs, drawings, and paintings (if available); and
- Photographic copies or scanned digital images of original drawings and architectural or engineering plans used to construct the building or structure (if available).

### Coverage

Photographs should be taken of the overall property and the exterior and interior (if historically important) of each building on the property, including old and new outbuildings. The number of interior and detail views will depend on the significance of those aspects of the building(s). The following photographs should be taken to document the property:

### Setting

- Views of the overall setting of the historic building(s), e.g. fields and forest surrounding a farm complex, a streetscape of buildings in a village, etc.;
- Views of the building in its immediate surroundings, showing the relationship of the building to neighboring buildings;

- Aerial views when easily obtainable (an adjacent hill or tall building may provide an aerial vantage point); and
- Views of significant landscape features, e.g. tree-lined approaches, stone walls, formal gardens, etc.

#### Exterior views

- Full views of each side of the building; and
- Views of important details, e.g. cupolas, steeples, porches, doors, decorative brickwork etc.

#### Interior views

- Overall views of important interior rooms, e.g. courtrooms, formal parlors, historic kitchens, etc.; and
- Views of important interior features, e.g. staircases, fireplaces, ceiling medallions, exposed structural framing, etc.
- Views of significant interior details, e.g. door hardware, light fixtures, industrial machinery, hand grained trim, etc.; and
- Views of the building in use, i.e. views that show people using the building.

### **Photographic Longevity**

A 75-year-permanence standard is intended to ensure the longevity of photographic documentation and applies to all forms of photographic documentation, including those types of photographs currently available and any introduced in the future. This standard can be met using either digital or film photography, as described below.

#### Digital Cameras, Images and Prints

- 35 mm digital camera with a non-distorting lens
- Filters that reduce glare and sharpen contrast are encouraged
- Digital Images
  - Save as .tiff files in RGB color format
  - Minimum pixel depth or dimension of 3000 x 2000
  - Minimum 300 dpi
- Digital Prints
  - Please refer to the *National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Survey Photo Policy Expansion* (March 2005) for a list of products that meet the 75-year-permanence standard. The policy is posted online at: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm#acceptable>
- Prints should measure at least 4 x 6 inches, preferably 5 x 7 or 8 x 10, depending on the anticipated use of the prints and the available budget
- Prints can be black and white or color
- A CD-R disc of .tiff image files must accompany digital prints

#### Film Cameras and Prints

- 35 mm camera with a non-distorting lens
- Filters that reduce glare and sharpen contrast are encouraged

- Prints should measure at least 4 x 6 inches, preferably 5 x 7 or 8 x 10, depending on the anticipated use of the prints and the available budget
- Prints must be black and white
- Print film images on silver-emulsion resin-coated (RC) papers or silver-emulsion fiber-based papers.
  - Images must be properly processed and thoroughly washed
  - Use double or medium weight paper having a glossy or satin finish

### **Labeling Photographs**

Each photograph should be labeled on the reverse, either handwritten in pencil or printed on an adhesive label with the following information:

1. Photograph number (corresponding to the Photograph Index)
2. Name of property
3. Street address, Town and State
4. Description of view
5. Direction of view (the compass direction the photographer was facing)
6. Date of photograph (month and year)
7. Name of photographer