The State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) requires the use of digital photography for all grant-funded projects and prefers the use of digital photography for all survey and National Register projects, regardless of the funding source.

This document contains the following sections:

  I.   Expectations for Consultants, Surveyors, and National Register Authors
  II. Digital Images for Historic Property Surveys
  III. Digital Images for National Register Nominations

I. Photography Expectations for Consultants, Surveyors, and National Register Authors

Consultants are expected to:

1. Know that photographs are our best source of architectural documentation, and the photographs you take may be the only or last photos of any given resource. The HPO requires photographic documentation that exceeds National Register technical standards to fulfill our mission to document the state's historic resources.

2. Be prepared to interact with owners and tenants. Survey work requires good photos, which usually entails speaking with a resource's occupant or neighbor. If you cannot get permission to be on a property, you may take photos from the public right-of-way, but in all cases, make good images. Survey photos should not be edited (see Section II), so please be mindful of overall image composition as well as errant side-view car mirrors in your camera's field of vision.

3. Review Section 5, Photography, in [Practical Advice for Recording Historic Resources, available here](#).

4. Use a good quality digital camera.
    a. Cameras should have at least three megapixels and good optics with at least 3x optical zoom, preferably higher.
    b. The HPO strongly prefers a six-megapixel or greater digital SLR camera to maximize the clarity of documentation in perpetuity.
    c. Photos made with phones are acceptable, but photos must be taken in jpeg format. Camera phones also have a limited depth of field control, and the zoom function often degrades the image quality.

5. Know and meet file format and image size standards.
    a. Most digital cameras create jpeg (.jpg) images, which are acceptable for architectural survey work. National Register work requires photos in TIF format, which can be created from jpeg images, and is further discussed in Section III.
    b. The minimum acceptable image dimensions for architectural survey work are 1350x1950. The HPO strongly encourages submission of images that are 3000x2000, which is the standard product of a six-megapixel or greater camera.

      c. Federal National Register requirements differ from the HPO's architectural survey requirements and are discussed in Section III.

6. Learn to copy, organize, rename, selectively delete, back up, and otherwise manage image files and save them to thumb drives or CDs.

7. Acquire and learn the basics of photo editing software for use in presentations or reports, as well as a presentation program, such as PowerPoint.

8. Understand that architectural survey photographs and National Register photographs are not the same, but they do overlap.
      a. Survey photographs are numerous and thoroughly document the resource. Survey files include a written description and notes about the resources, but the photographs are the primary description of the resource.
      b. National Register photographs are a _subset_ of survey photographs that supplement the nomination's description and give an overall impression of the nominated resource.

II. Digital Images for Historic Property Surveys

Review Section 5, Photography, in Practical Advice for Recording Historic Resources, available here.

Select Survey Photographs thoughtfully. Do not include duplicates or poor-quality images. Survey photos should capture the resource, ideally recording all exterior elevations, interior views, architectural details, outbuildings, and landscape features.

Name Survey Photographs using the following naming convention for all survey photographs:

      SSN_911Address_month-year_photographerinitials-01.jpg

      AX0041_29WMainSt_08-21_aet-01.jpg

If an address does not have an 911 address, use the resource's name, which may be proper or generic, e.g., "bridge," "tobacco barn," etc.:

      SSN_ResourceName_month-year_photographerinitials-01.jpg

      BF1285_Bridge_01-12_eck-01.jpg

For streetscapes:

      SSN_TownorCity_DistrictNeighborhoodAreaName_month-year_photographerinitials-01.jpg

WR0703_Warrenton_Hazelwood_04-19_swd-01.jpg

Do not edit Survey Photographs. Do not change the original pixel dimensions. Color images are acceptable. Do *not* convert color images to grayscale images. Images may be edited and modified for use in presentations or reports, but images being submitted to the HPO for long-term storage should not be edited.

Organize Survey Photos and Proof Sheets for Submission.
Photos are delivered to the HPO in a digital format and in a printed hard copy.

Photos
1. Organize photos by survey site numbers. Create folders identified by the property's survey site number and put photos for each resource in the appropriate folder.

Proof Sheets
1. Create proof sheets with no more than 9 images per 8.5"x11" sheet, with no image smaller than 3" on its longest side. Landscape orientation is preferred, but portrait orientation is acceptable.
2. Print proof sheets on premium-quality, bright white, 24# weight or higher paper (this is heavier than standard copy paper). Ensure that images are crisp and legible.
3. For any additional guidance, please consult Section 5 in [Practical Advice for Recording Historic Resources](#).

Deliver digital photos and proof sheets to the HPO:
1. Burn digital photos to a new, unused thumb drive or CD for transfer to the HPO. Please contact the HPO for consideration of other delivery methods.
2. Do not use separate CDs or thumb drives for each resource.
3. Deliver thumb drives in an envelope labeled with the county, project name, photographer, and date. If using CDs, label the CD with county, project name, photographer, and date. Protect CDs in a plastic case or heavy paper sleeve.
4. Deliver printed proof sheets in survey files for previously unsurveyed resources. Proof sheets for previously surveyed resources can be loose.

III. Digital Images for National Register Nominations

Please find the [National Park Service's National Register photo guidance here](#). Please note: The National Park Service no longer requires print photographs, although the guidance document continues to reference prints. However, **the HPO by policy does require prints with National Register nominations, and those prints must be labeled to HPO standards (not NPS standards).** HPO labeling standards are discussed below.

National Register nomination digital photographs are a *subset* of architectural survey photos of a resource. National Register photos for submittal to the National Park Service should be included among those named and proofed as described above in Section II. Even if a nomination preparer made photographs separate from an architectural survey or independent of the HPO's architectural survey program, the preparer must create survey photos as described in

Section II and then extract National Register photos. National Register photographs are ***copies*** of survey photographs that are given new names and other special treatment to be included with the nomination.

The National Register requires a minimum resolution of 1200x1600 pixels; however, the HPO's architectural survey program requires a higher quality image. Because National Register photos are a subset of architectural survey photos, National Register images from North Carolina will exceed the National Register standards.

Selecting, Copying, and Naming Photos for the Nomination: Preparers should work with HPO staff to select nomination photos. Copy and rename the selected survey photos to meet National Register conventions in which the word county is spelled out and the image number is always four digits:

State_County_ResourceName_0001.jpg

NC_ChathamCounty_JohnsonFarm_0001.jpg

Or, for a historic district:

State_County_HistoricDistrict_0001.jpg

NC_NewHanoverCounty_SunsetParkHD_0025.jpg

Editing NR Photographs: The preparer may make minor edits to photographs but must maintain the resolution created by the camera. ***Do not convert the images to grayscale***. Except for any minor cropping that may be needed, *do not reduce the pixel dimensions of photographs as created by the camera*.

Image format: NPS requires that digital photographs be submitted on a CD in TIF format. There are two options for converting images to TIF format:
1. The HPO will convert the jpeg pictures to TIF format and burn them to a properly labeled CD to submit to NPS for a fee.
   a. Deliver properly labeled photos to HPO staff. ***Limit nomination photographs to a single nomination thumb drive or CD, even if the preparer is submitting two or more nominations at the same time.*** Identify the CD or drive with county, property or district name, date created, and the photographer's name.
   b. The File Room Manager will send an invoice to the preparer for the conversion and CD.
   c. **The nomination cannot be submitted to the NPS until the invoice for the conversion and CD has been paid.**

Or

2. The National Register preparer may convert jpegs to TIFs and burn the National Register CD themselves.

HPO's Nomination Prints: The HPO requires one set of printed copies of the National Register photographs. Photos will be 5x7 printed at a minimum resolution of 300 ppi. Color prints or true black and white prints are acceptable. Because the National Register program's minimum acceptable standard for photographs is 1200x1600, prints may be made from an image this size. However, the HPO survey program requires photos that are 1350x1950 in size, and National Register photos are a subset of survey photos. Therefore, nomination prints should be meeting the survey standard of 1350x1950. Both the National Park Service and this office prefer images that are 2000x3000 pixels in size or greater.

Authors provide these prints as part of their National Register submission. Preparers may order them during the National Register process with assistance from HPO nomination review staff. The File Room Manager will send the author an invoice for the printing and will complete the printing once payment is received. The HPO will label the back of these photographs; prints are not sent to the preparers, but remain at the HPO for archiving.

[Click here for the complete HPO photography services fee schedule](). The nomination cannot be archived and considered complete by the HPO until the File Room Manager had received payment for printing

The author may decide to print these 5x7 photos themselves. The HPO will only accept crisp, legible prints.

If the author prints their own photos, the author is responsible for:
1. Meeting the minimum standards listed above.
2. Using archival inks and paper and reporting the brand and type of ink and paper. If the author uses a photo lab to print the images, also include the name of the lab.
3. Labeling the backs of the photographs with an archival photo pen or pencil using the digital file name required for the National Register.
    o   This labeling convention differs from the NPS's guidance for labeling prints, but the NPS no longer requires **prints and print labeling shall follow HPO instructions**
        ▪   labeling on the back, with archival pen or pencil, using the digital file name required by the National Register:
        State_County_ResourceName_0001.jpg or
        State_County_HistoricDistrict_0001.jpg.

Although the NPS no longer requires printed photographs with National Register submissions, the HPO archives a hard copy of the nomination and 5x7 photographs. This hard copy fulfills the HPO's charge to make our state's history available to the public.

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