

Appropriate Photo-Documentation for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties using Historic Preservation Federal and State Tax Incentives

Photo-documentation of a historic property is one of the most important aspects of applying to the Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Programs. Photographs, in association with the rehabilitation work descriptions are the primary resources used to evaluate a project to determine if it qualifies for the tax incentives. Pre-rehabilitation photographs are used to put the project within the context of the entire historic property and for comparison with the finished work. Therefore, sufficient photo-documentation is necessary, also including areas not directly connected to the proposed rehab work in order to document that circumstance at project completion. As such, without adequate photographs documenting the pre-rehabilitation existing conditions, a project may lack enough essential information to even meet minimal requirements for the review process. Any application with unclear, deficient, or not enough photographs of pre-rehabilitation conditions may be returned because of insufficient documentation to evaluate the project adequately. Finished project photo-documentation, though equally important, is typically less a problem because the opportunity to provide supplemental photographs, if necessary, is still available.

Guidance on correct procedures to adequately photo-document rehabilitation projects can be found in the instructions for the Tax Incentives applications.

POINTS ON PHOTOGRAPHY:

1. **Although 35 mm color prints are preferred**, other photographic formats can be acceptable, including 35 mm black & white and digital. Polaroid photographs are not acceptable for Federal applications and rarely provide enough level of detail and clarity to be acceptable for State Applications. However, ANY photographs submitted with an application **MUST** provide obvious and comprehensible information. They must clearly show the areas or features being documented. Photographs that are out-of-focus, blurry, fuzzy, too dark, over-exposed (too light), photocopied, or low-resolution digital photographs are unacceptable as adequate documentation. Photographs should be examined prior to submission to determine that they adequately provide the view that is intended. If digital photography is used to document the project, a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots-per-inch) needs to be used. This photographic format also needs to be printed on glossy or photo stock.
2. Photographs must be taken in sufficient quantity and clarity to adequately document the pre-rehabilitation existing conditions and subsequently, the finished project. Enough photographs of all spaces, building elevations, and specific features must be provided as the visual description of the project's scope-of-work. **At a minimum**, typically, this would include photos of all exposed building elevations, 2 photos per room, which should be oriented corner-to-corner from opposite corners, and additional photos of features and finishes being impacted by the rehabilitation work. Features and finishes may include, but are not limited to: masonry, plaster, windows, doors, trim and other millwork, stairs, ceilings, and fireplaces. If areas are too large or at a difficult angle, multiple photos need to be taken to insure full and clear coverage of the entire area.
3. Photo-documentation of large projects with multiple, near identical spaces may not need photos of every room. In such cases, interior photographs of significant areas along with representative photos of the typical spaces may be acceptable.
4. Photographs must be keyed to a floor plan of the rehabilitation project. The position of the photographer, the direction toward which the picture was taken, and the photo number must be labeled on the drawing (a number within a circle with a directional arrow). The photographs themselves must be correspondingly identified with the same information on the back.

Any application with insufficient, inadequate, or otherwise unacceptable photo-documentation will be put on hold, concurrent with a Request For Information (RFI) to the applicant, until the necessary photography is furnished. Should the information not be forthcoming in a reasonable period of time, the application will be returned without review.

Required Photo Label Information

Project Street Address

City, County, Georgia

Date _____

Photo # _____

Drawing Reference or Detail Description (if applicable)

Sample Photo and Label



(Label on Back of Photograph)

123 North Main St.

Middleville, Smith County, Georgia

Date: March 3, 2003

Photo # 1

Front Elevation