FEMA Region 3 EHP Photo Guide

Updated June, 2020

In the case of most of the properties in Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) applications, these photographs will be the only and final record of the properties. The National Park Service oversees historic preservation at large in the country has guidelines and expectations on the quality of photographs and documentation as it relates to historic resources. The following information considers those guidelines to ensure that all photographs the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) submits to State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) are adequate. If you are unclear if a photo is acceptable, refer to this guidance and/or consult Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) staff via your HMA Project Manager. Proper photographs following these guidelines will be required in order to complete EHP review and to issue Records of Environmental Consideration (REC). If they are not supplied, there could be a delay in the review.

Photo Composition and Quality DOs and DON'Ts

DOs

General Instructions:

- **DO** make sure each application has review-quality **DIGITAL COLOR** photographs of every property. If possible, please name the photographs appropriately with the address and side of the building using cardinal directions (North, East, South, West).
- **DO** orient photos in LANDSCAPE (horizontal) display if possible. This orientation provides more space for content in photographs.
- **DO** provide JPGs/TIFFs files of photographs. Scans of photographs from appraisal documents or application pages and Google Street View screenshots will not suffice for SHPO review. This can be achieved by submitting the original photographic files directly from the camera/phone.

For Building Related Projects:

- **DO** take photos of all four sides (in their entirety) of the subject buildings in application. Be sure to include outbuildings such as garages, barns, sheds, etc.
- **DO** make sure there is adequate lighting in photos to ensure features of buildings are legible.
- **DO** take photos at an angle which gives a clear representation of the building.
- **DO** include photographs of the surrounding streetscape for each property. This provides context.
- **DO** verify that each subject property in the project is represented in photographs and that the supplied photographs are of the correct building (use Google Street View and/or Google Earth to verify).

For Infrastructure Projects:

- **DO** provide photos of limits of disturbance/project area and surrounding areas. If multiple sites are in an application, make sure you have accounted for all sites.
- **DO** provide photos of the ground if ground disturbance is involved. These photos should provide context and show surroundings.

DON'Ts

- **DON'T** have people in the photographs. This includes both owners/bystanders on porches and on the property and OEM staff in foreground.
- **DON'T** have obstructed views of buildings if possible. This includes tree coverage, car windows and things on the street such a storage containers and dumpsters. Taking photos from multiple viewpoints may be necessary.
- **DON'T** supply scanned photographs. Scanned photographs mean the quality of the photos is lost not only once (through the printing) but twice (through the scan). This leads to the photos being grainy, too blown out/too dark.
- **DON'T** digitally alter the photographs in any way (cropping, resizing, obscuring people).

Examples of Dos and Don'ts

Note the pixilation and grainy qualities of the left photo compared to the right photo.

DON'T

DO

The façade is not visible in the left photograph due to distance, tree coverage and automobiles. Thus, taking the photograph from another angle (right photograph) was necessary.

Photos Do and Don'ts

The right photograph was taken at a crooked angle; thus portions of the façade was not visible. Thus, the right photograph was necessary.
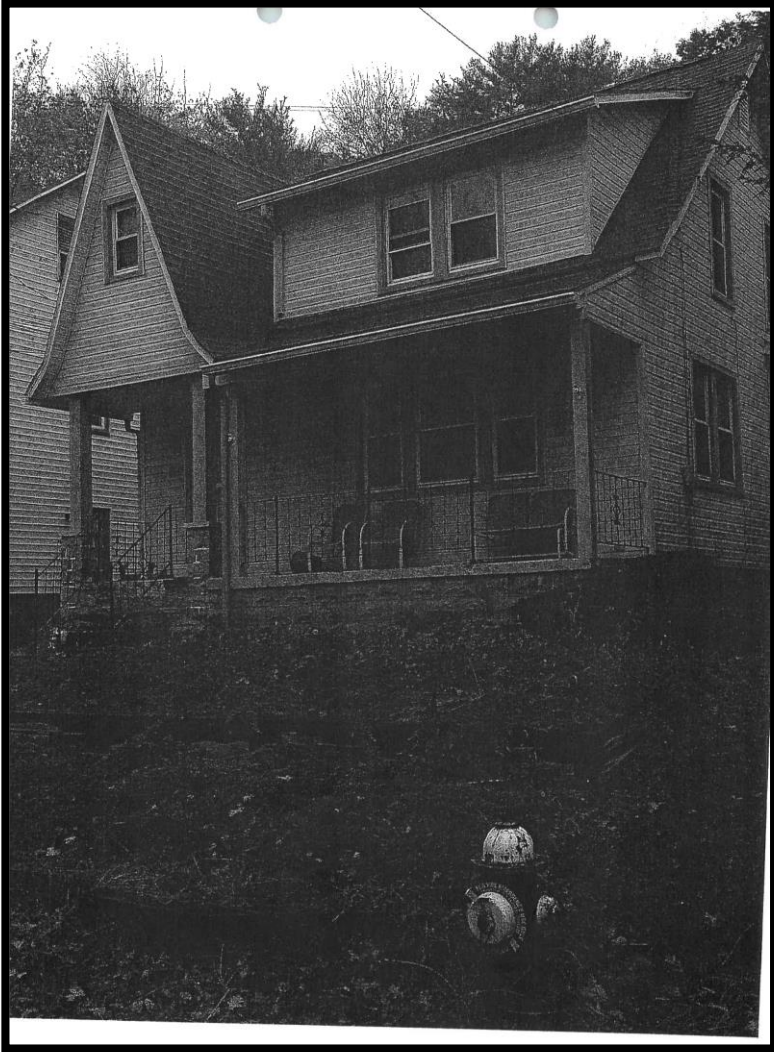

DON'T

DO

Tree coverage in the left photograph made it difficult to discern features of this house. Thus, an unobstructed view (right photograph) was necessary.
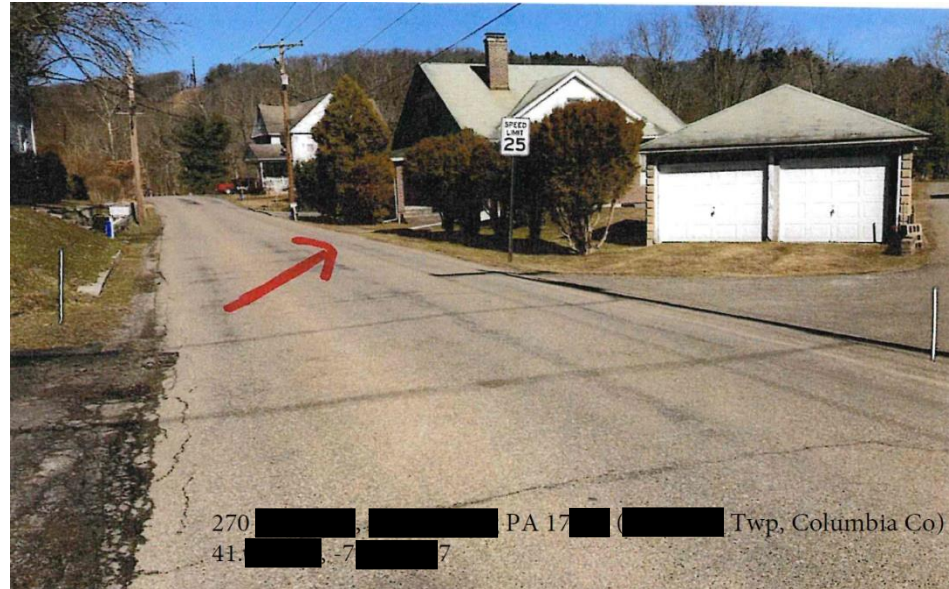
General Photo Don'ts

Black and White Photographs

Photos taken from automobiles with the automobile still visible.

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41.███-7███7

Scans with pen markings and text.