

**National Register of Historic Places
and
National Historic Landmarks Program**

**Consolidated and Updated
Photograph Policy
2024**



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INTRODUCTION

This guidance supplements the photograph policies in *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form (Form Bulletin)* and *National Register Bulletin: How to Improve the Quality of Photographs for National Register Nominations (Photographs Bulletin)* to add information for digital photographs.

The National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Program generally follows National Register of Historic Places photograph guidance; however, some practices differ and those are noted.

This 2023 photo policy presents information for use in preparing a National Register nomination.

- 1) It reiterates existing photograph guidance.
- 2) It addresses technical requirements for digital photographs.
- 3) It describes how to submit the photographs using the Cultural Resources Submission Portal (CRSP).¹

This guidance replaces:

- May 6, 2013 “Guidance on How to Submit a Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on Disk”
- May 13, 2013 “National Register Photo Policy Factsheet”
- April 10, 2020 “National Register of Historic Places Electronic-Only Submission Instructions”

Previous guidance that discussed types of cameras, film, and photographic paper is not relevant for digital images and is not discussed here.

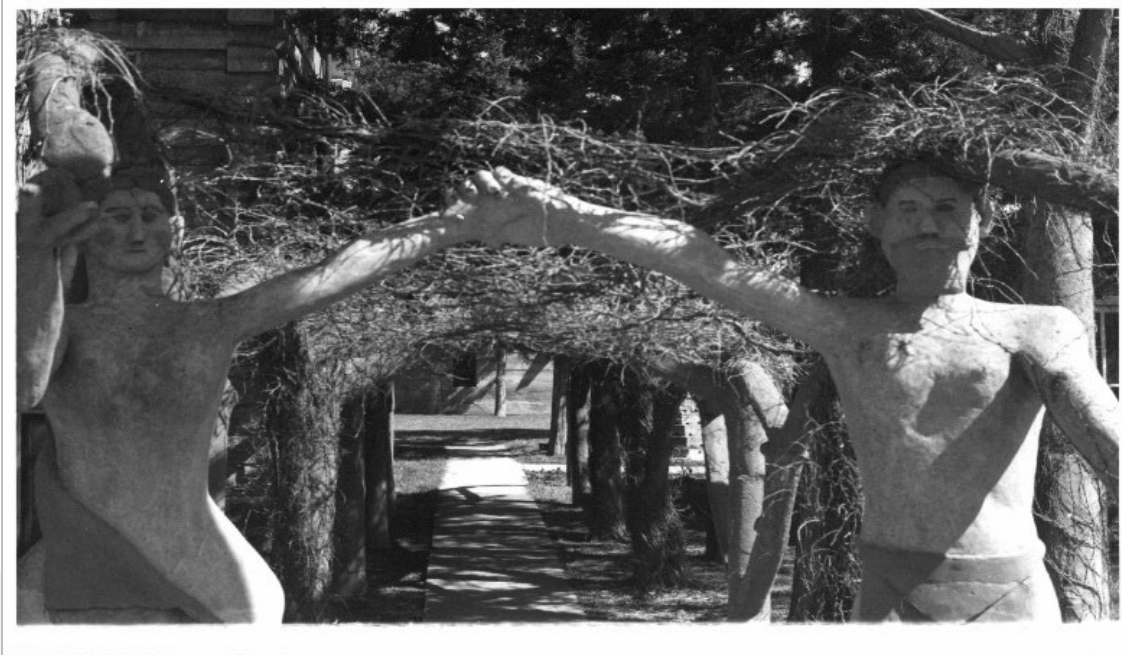
I. GENERAL GUIDANCE

Use of National Register Photographs²

By allowing a photograph to be submitted to the National Park Service with a National Register of Historic Places registration form, photographers grant permission to the National Park Service to use the photograph for publication and other purposes, including duplication, display, distribution, study, publicity, and audio-visual presentations.

¹ Photographs for NHL nominations are not uploaded through CRSP.

² *Form Bulletin*, p. 65.



77000595 The Garden of Eden, Russell County, Kansas. This image is an excellent example of portraying artwork and demonstrating the property's integrity of location.

Please only submit images that conform to the content and copyright information at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/national-register-content-and-copyright.htm>

Please keep in mind that the nomination form and photographs will be posted online.

Photographs for the National Register of Historic Places

This information summarizes the photograph guidance relevant to listing resources in the National Register of Places, as found in the Form Bulletin and the Photographs Bulletin.

Submit clear and descriptive photographs with each registration form. Images should give an authentic visual representation of the historic integrity and significant features of the property. They should reflect the qualities discussed in the Narrative Description and Statement of Significance sections. The number of photographs will increase with the size or the complexity of the property.³ (See College Hill Historic District example on the following pages.)

³ *Form Bulletin*, p. 63.

Guidelines For Photographic Coverage

The number of photographic views depends on the size and complexity of the property. Submit as many photographs as needed to depict the current condition and significant aspects of the property. Include representative views of both contributing and noncontributing resources. Historic images may supplement documentation and may be particularly useful in describing the historic integrity of properties that have undergone many alterations or changes.⁴

Buildings, Structures, and Objects

- Submit one or more views to show the principal sides and the setting in which the property is located.
- Show additions, alterations, intrusions, and dependencies.
- Include views of interiors, outbuildings, landscaping, or unusual details as needed to reflect the significance and integrity of the property.

Historic and Archeological Sites

- Submit one or more photographs to depict the condition of the site and any above-ground and surface features and disturbances.
- If relevant to the evaluation of significance, include drawings or photographs that illustrate artifacts that have been removed from the site.
- At least one photograph should show the site's general physical environment and configuration of the land.

Architectural and Historic Districts

- Submit photographs representing the major building types and styles, key buildings and structures, representative non-contributing resources, and any important topographical or spatial elements defining the character of the district.
- Streetscapes, landscapes, or aerial views are recommended.
- Views of each individual building are not necessary if streetscapes and other views clearly capture the significant historical and architectural qualities of the district.
- Key all photographs to a map of the district.

⁴ *Form Bulletin*, p. 64.

Archeological Districts

- Submit photographs of the principal sites and site types within the district, following the guidelines above for archeological sites.⁵

Maps and Photographs

Maps should include street addresses or be cross-referenced by resource number or name to the list of contributing or non-contributing resources in the nomination’s narrative description at Section 7.³



100008341 West Harlem Historic District, New York County, New York, photo key sketch map.

Photographs should illustrate the character of principal streetscapes, representative dwelling types, and significant aspects of landscape design. For a single resource, fewer is often better; for example, if the resource is a simple resource—such as a house—the recommended photographs include the primary façade; exterior side view (which also may establish setting); one to three interior views; and details of character-defining features.

⁵ *Form Bulletin*, p. 64.

General Checklist and Examples

- ✓ Show principal sides of a building or structure.
- ✓ Capture location (the larger environment), setting (the immediate environment), design, materials, and workmanship.
- ✓ Capture feeling and association through long views or character-defining features.
- ✓ Include alterations, intrusions, and dependencies if they potentially impact eligibility.
- ✓ Include images of interiors, outbuildings, and landscaping to document the character-defining features of the resource(s).



100009040 Campbell Dome House, Montgomery County, Kansas. This photograph is an example of exterior image showing primary facade, setting, materials, and design.



100009040 Campbell Dome House, Montgomery County, Kansas. This photograph is an example of interior image showing multiple character-defining features.

Historic District Checklist

It is not necessary to provide an image of every resource in a historic district.⁶

- ✓ Show principal streetscapes.
- ✓ Show representative building types.
- ✓ Show significant aspects of landscape.

100009040 College Hill Historic District, Montgomery County, Ohio. The house at 1837 Litchfield Drive is specifically identified in the nomination’s narrative description at Section 7.



00009040 College Hill Historic District, Montgomery County, Ohio, streetscape view. Many historic districts may be successfully documented with no more than 20 photographs. For example, the College Hill Historic District in Ohio is a very large district with 1,349 contributing resources documented with only 35 images by focusing on long views that capture several buildings—as well as the landscape—in a single image.



⁶ See, e.g., *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs*, Appendix III. Note, however, that nominating authorities may require additional photographic coverage pursuant to their specific program requirements.



100009040 College Hill Historic District, Montgomery County, Ohio, view looking north at 2819 Forest Grove Avenue. This photograph successfully captures a typical dwelling type.



100009040 College Hill Historic District, Montgomery County, Ohio, view looking southeast at 1662 and 1670 Tennyson Avenue. This photograph captures significant aspects of the district's landscape, such as site grading above street level, a sidewalk abutted by a planting strip with street trees, and infrastructure including curb and gutter materials, street paving, and utilities.

Photo Logs

- A photo log is part of the National Register form and is required. The log comes before the photographic images.
- Photograph numbers on the log should be carefully checked to ensure they match the appropriate photograph.
- For complex properties, photograph numbers should be marked on the sketch map or, if there are many photographs, a separate photographs key map. The numbers on the photograph key map must correspond to the number on the photograph log.
- The name of the photographer and photo date may be listed once on the photograph log (typically noted at the top of the log). If the photographs are more than two or three years old, include a statement that the photographs still accurately depict the property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0016

Cypress Street Schoolhouse
Name of Property

Orange County, CA
County and State

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Cypress Street Schoolhouse

City or Vicinity: Orange

County: Orange County State: CA

Photographer: Molly Iker

Date Photographed: April 3, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0001)
View of east façade, facing west.

2 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0002)
View of south and east facades, facing northwest.

3 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0003)
View of south façade, facing north.

4 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0004)
View of south and west facades, facing northeast.

5 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0005)
View of terra cotta roof/wall detail on north façade, facing southeast.

6 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0006)
View of loading dock and doors on north façade, facing south.

7 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0007)
View of built-in bench on west wall of entryway, facing west.

Sections 10-end page 20

This page from the registration form for the Cyprus Street Schoolhouse in Orange, California (15000380) shows a portion of the nomination's photo log.

II. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Focus on Results, Not Equipment

With ever-evolving advances in digital technology constantly improving image quality, use of cell phones and digital cameras to take photographs is acceptable.

Pixel Dimensions

Preferred: 2000 x 3000 pixels

Acceptable: 1200 x 1600 pixels

File Formats

Acceptable file formats:

- JPEG
- TIF
- PDF where the image can be extracted to a JPEG or TIF of acceptable pixel size.
 - Note: The NHL Program does not accept PDFs for NHL nominations.

Other file formats are not acceptable.

Megapixels

The minimum number of megapixels for a digital camera should be no less than 2 megapixels. (The vast majority of current market smart phones and digital cameras far surpass this minimum.)

Maximum Sizes

The National Register has not established a maximum file/pixel size, but reserves the right to reduce either the file size or pixel size as needed. This may be necessary when the file size is very large and could cause issues with saving and preserving the record. For example, an image of 2000 X 3000 pixels is effective for conveying an image of the resource, so if an image that is 10,000 X 15,000 pixels is provided, the National Register will reduce the size. Similarly, if an image is provided at half a gigabyte or larger, the National Register will reduce the size to conserve space on its servers.

Newer Imaging Technologies: Aerials, Drones, and Future Technology Changes

Images must adequately document the property by meeting National Register guidance as described in this photograph policy update. The image—not the technology to create that image—is the important element. Images must be in JPEG, TIF, or PDF format only. At this time, the National Register does not have the capacity for storing or presenting newer technologies, such as video, 3-D images, laser scanning, audio, or other file formats.

Images must accurately present the physical environment. Any image presenting a distortion of the environment should be the exception and should be accompanied by an explanation as to what the distortion is and why the distorted image is necessary to the nomination. For example, a panoramic view may show a large physical area, but it creates distortions along the edges. However, such an image may be included to show the district as a whole or to illustrate a specific point.

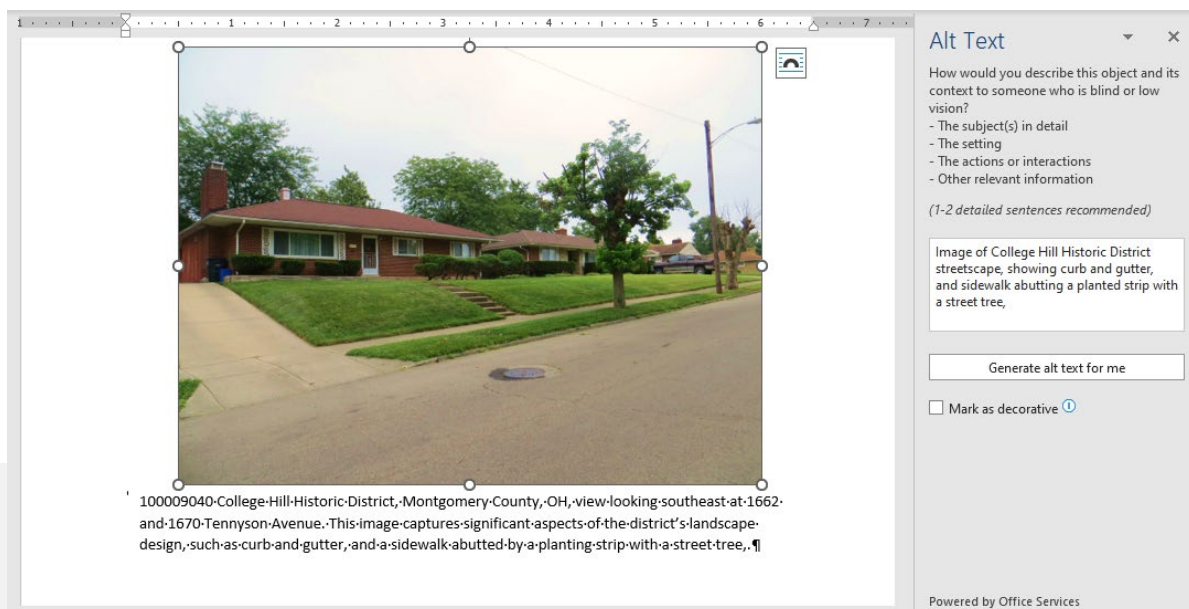
100008144 Shrawder-Sittig House, Monroe County, Pennsylvania. These two images, captured by drone, were submitted with a nomination, along with more conventional photographs.



Accessibility Requirements

Federal law requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology—such as PDFs of nominations and JPEGs, TIFs, or PDFs of images—that this technology is accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities.⁷ This is referred to as “508 compliance” after the section of the law that describes this requirement. Descriptive text—referred to as “alternative text” or “alt text”—is required for images. Alt text describes the appearance or function of an image on a page and should not simply repeat the information in the caption. In other words, it provides a text alternative of an image for those who are unable to see or interpret it on their own. Alt text may be embedded in a PDF and in JPEG files.

The National Register does not require alt text for images in a nomination—whether embedded in the text or included as resource documentary images—but it is appreciated. However, please note that the NHL Program does require alt text for all images. For questions or additional information, please contact National Register Archivist Jeff Joeckel at jeff_joeckel@nps.gov



Screen capture of Microsoft Word alt text function.

⁷ Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794d.

III. HOW TO SUBMIT PHOTOGRAPHS

All National Register materials from nominating authorities should be submitted through the Cultural Resources Submission Portal (CRSP).

<https://apps.cr.nps.gov/crsp/>

Note that NHL materials should not be submitted via CRSP. Submission should be coordinated with NHL Program staff.

Photographs submitted to the National Register may be submitted as

- Individual files (JPEG or TIF)
- Individual files (JPEG or TIF) combined in a ZIP file. (This method is preferred because it reduces the overall file size, and it is just one upload as opposed to each individual photograph.)
- A PDF of the photographs created from the original images
- A PDF of the entire nomination: form, continuation sheet, plus the photographs

For more guidance on using CRSP, please see

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/crsp.htm>

Note: The National Register will always accept the paper form, printed photographs, and paper USGS maps, but CRSP is now the standard method for nominating authorities submitting nominations.

The National Register prefers photographs be submitted in a ZIP file as JPEGs. ZIP files are smaller and thus more readily uploaded.

PDFs

A PDF may be created from images if the original images meet the pixel dimension requirements, allowing the National Register to extract or save the images from the PDF in a format that meets the requirements discussed above.

PDF Example 1

In this example, a PDF is created from each photograph; the photograph is the only thing on the page. The National Register recommends this method when submitting photographs in PDF format because it is easier for National Register staff to work with: the photograph is the only thing on the page, making it easier to extract the image and check the photograph for pixel dimensions or to use in other ways, *e.g.*, posting the photograph to a website or using it in a publication.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 1090-2000 OMB No. 10240-018

York Auditorium York County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

Photo Log
Name of Property York Auditorium
City or Vicinity York County York State Nebraska
Photographer Patrick Haynes Date Photographed 24 September 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

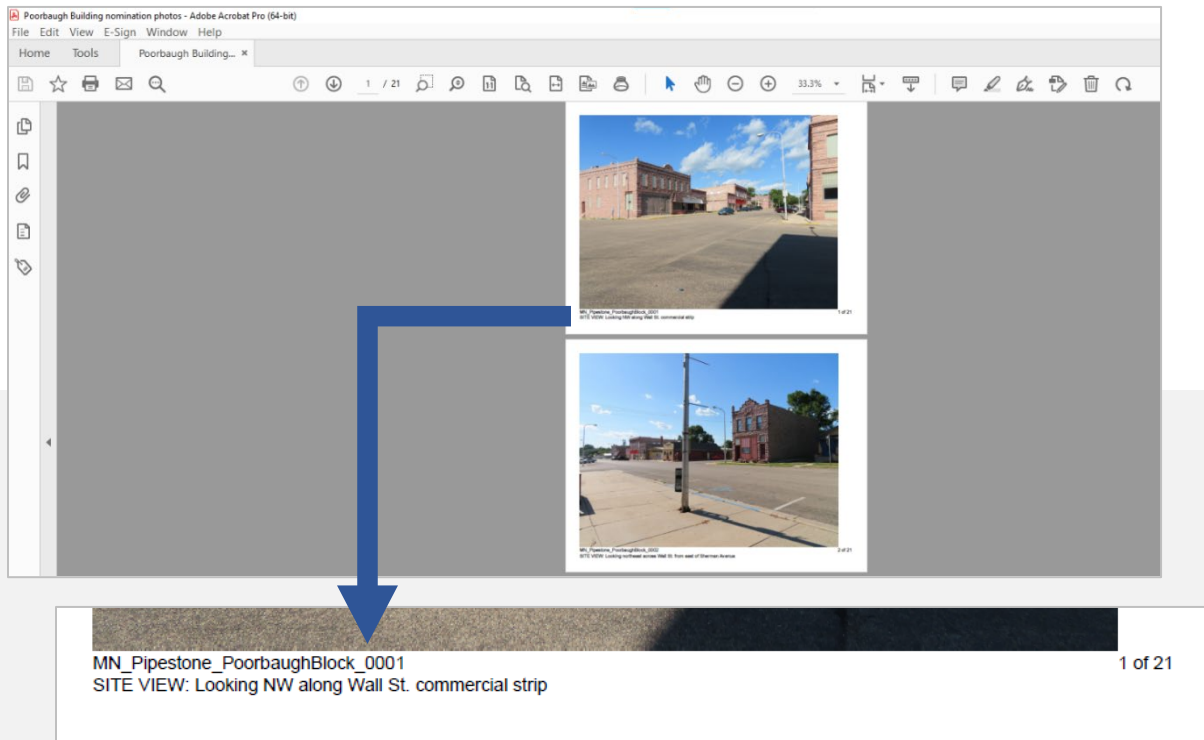
1. Front west facade, facing NE.
2. Front west facade, facing E.
3. West and north facades, facing SE.
4. East and south facades, facing NW.
5. Entry vestibule with ticket booth and historic door, facing SE.
6. Interior main corridor, facing N.
7. Hallway along Children's Museum looking to main corridor, facing W.
8. Dining Hall, facing E.
9. Kitchen and pass through to auditorium, facing SE.
10. Main auditorium, floor, seating, and stage, facing E.
11. Historic auditorium seating, facing N.
12. View from stage, auditorium seating, facing N.
13. Dressing room and shower, facing E.
14. Southwest bathroom, doors to stairwell up and down to basement, facing SW.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 130 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 2849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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PDF Example 2

In this example, each PDF page includes a photograph *and* the photograph label directly beneath it.



Top, screen shot of photographs formatted as PDFs; bottom, close-up of label under photograph.

Some things to keep in mind:

- White space around the image: There should not be a large white border around the image. (Rule of thumb: The image should take up approximately 85% or more of the page; if there is too much white space, the National Register will ask for the original photos as separate files.)
- Labels *under* the image are acceptable, but ensure that no label information covers any part of the image.

PDF Labeling Examples

Acceptable: label is not covering part of the image.



MN_Pipestone_PoorbaughBlock_0001
SITE VIEW: Looking NW along Wall St. commercial strip

1 of 21

Unacceptable: label is covering a portion of the image. (Note that this image has been altered for this example.)

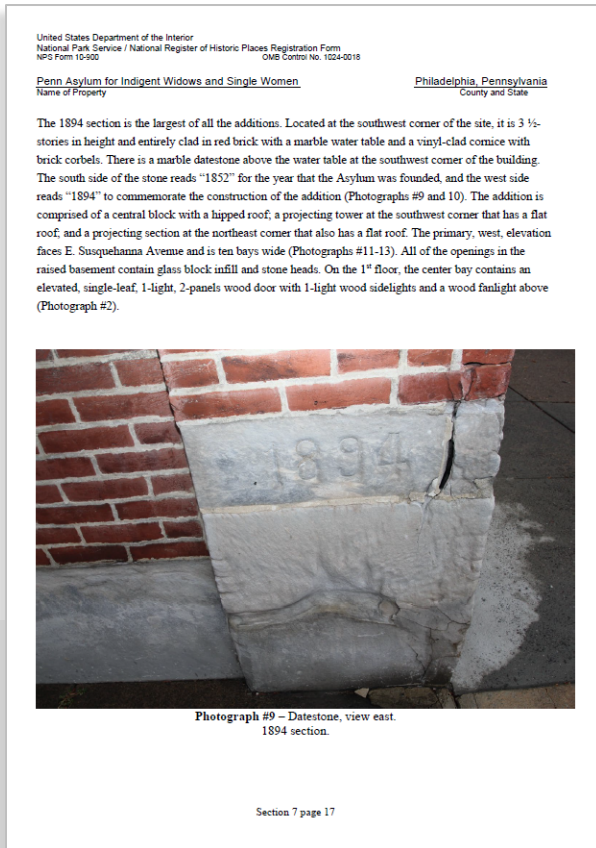


MN_Pipestone_PoorbaughBlock_0001
SITE VIEW: Looking NW along Wall St. commercial strip

1 of 21

Embedded Photos

Documentary photographs—those that show the state of the resource—may be embedded within the National Register registration form if it is helpful to the narrative; however, these images should also be provided individually as photographs, as well. Embedded *historic* photographs should not be submitted individually. Contact the NHL Program for guidance on including images in a National Historic Landmark nomination form.



This image, left, from the nomination for the Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women (100008541) in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, is embedded in the narrative description at Section 7 of the nomination, to aid the reader. However, it was also submitted “on its own” as a TIF image, right.

Multiple Photographs on Single Page

Multiple resource images may be embedded on a single page; however, those resource images still must be individually submitted as photographs. Some nomination proponents use this method to create a visual photo log but, again, resource photographs must be submitted “on their own,” either as individual JPEGs, TIFs, or PDF files. If submitted as a PDF file, there should be only one photograph per page and the photograph should take up at least 85% or more of the page.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900

OMB Control No. 1024-0018

James Osbourn Farm
Name of Property

Jefferson, WV
County and State




Photo 3. WV_Jefferson_County_James Osbourn Farm_0003
James Osbourn house, north façade. View northwest to southeast. Photo shows the north wall of the 1848 original house and the addition added in 1856, not heavily modified by an enclosed porch on the first story and an enclosed half-porch on the second story.




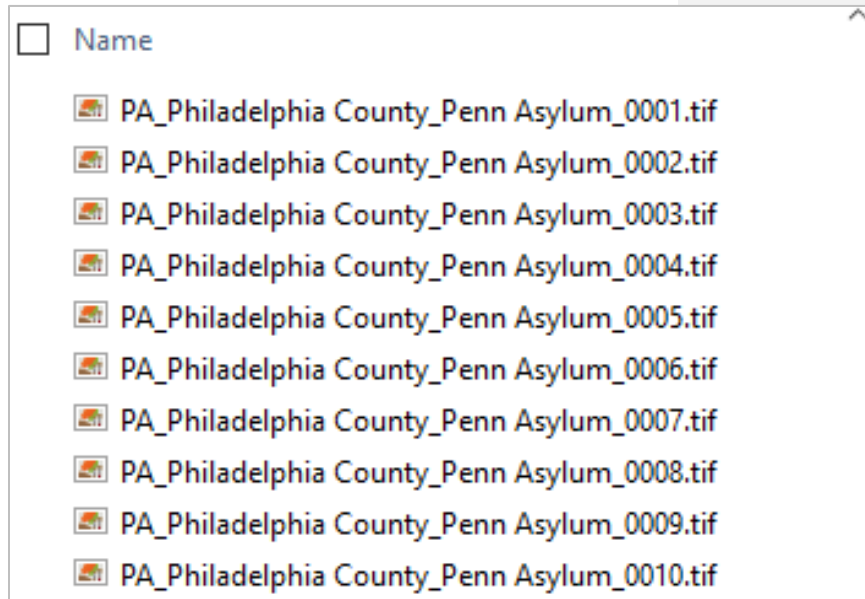
Photo 4. WV_Jefferson_County_James Osbourn Farm_0004.
James Osbourn house, west façade. View west to east. He photo shows the original 1848 house to the left and the west façade of the 1856 addition. The picture window on the first story is modern as are walls and second-floor railing at the center of the image. Historically the addition would have been open on both stories.

Sections 9-12 page 33

This page, from the James Osbourn Farm nomination (100008820)(West Virginia) shows two images placed on a single page to create a visual photo log.

ZIP File

Documents and images may be bundled and uploaded as a single ZIP file.



List of TIF images for 100008541 Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. These photographs were submitted as TIF files in a ZIP file, along with the nomination form and transmittal letter. The ZIP file was uploaded as a single file through CRSP. (Note that this method is acceptable if the images were JPEGs.)

Photographs and Resubmissions

If a nomination was returned, it is not necessary to resubmit the photographs if there have been no changes to the photographs and photo log, and if the photographs still reflect current conditions. If, however, the resource has changed, all photographs should be resubmitted. For example, if the original submission had 10 photographs but the resubmission includes 2 additional photographs, all 12 photographs with updated photo log should be included with the resubmission.

PHOTOGRAPH TIPS

13000832 Jean and Inez Bregant House, Pottawattamie County, IA. This property meets Criterion B at the local level of significance as the home of "Council Bluffs' well known little couple" (Section 8, p. 4). This small-scale bathtub is a character-defining feature for this particular house and including a photograph of it makes good sense for this nomination.



- A single building may be adequately documented with 5 to 10 photographs.
- Most historic districts may be adequately documented with 20 photographs, including streetscapes. National Register nominations, including the photographs, will be posted online and property owners should be made aware of this.
- Organize the photographs in a logical manner.
- Do not have the bathroom as the first photograph
- Historic photographs may be useful, but are not required (and, depending upon the resource, may not be necessary). If historic images are used in a nomination, they should be identified as "figures," not photographs.

Questions?

Technical requirement questions may be directed to Jeff Joeckel at jeff_joeckel@nps.gov.