Guide to photo monitoring of Heritage Projects

Before	After

Photo credits

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This guide will assist you to establish and maintain photo monitoring processes for Heritage projects funded through the NSW Heritage Incentives Strategy provided by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to photo monitoring. However, establishing a consistent approach and providing clear expectations will result in efficiencies for both grantees and technical assessment officers. This guideline includes the following:

- Guidance on how to establish and maintain photo monitoring points for effective before and after photos;
- Examples of what grantees are expected to submit including comparable photographs;
- A link to a downloadable blank version of the photo monitoring template; and
- An explanation of the various fields contained in the blank photo monitoring template.

What is photo monitoring?

Photo monitoring is a quick and easy way of measuring change. You don't need any special skills or equipment, and it is a great way to get others involved in your project, such as:

- youth who are skilled at taking photos on their smart phones,
- people who may not have the skills for hands-on restoration works
- anyone else who wants to be involved in the project but has limited time or abilities

You could do simple before and after shots, or a series of photos with the aim of visually showing improvement and the community members, skills or trades involved.

Why is photo monitoring important?

Photo monitoring is important for several reasons:

- It allows you to assess the impact your project has in a consistent way
- It provides OEH and technical assessors with a visual appraisal of what your project is achieving, especially when we can't visit the site
- Before and after photos help others to recognise and celebrate your success
- It helps to build a visual record of the commitment and investment in conserving heritage for the future
- If you give OEH permission to use and share the photo monitoring, the visual record can be disseminated to the wider community. This can spread the message of the effectiveness of approaches to heritage conservation, activation and restoration works
- It highlights the skills and trades supported through the Heritage Incentives Strategy, supporting jobs in often regional and rural areas of the state.

Ultimately monitoring will give you evidence of progressive change that then allows you to evaluate how well you have done, what effect your project has had and the quality of the outcomes you have generated.

This then provides you with clear and meaningful information to include in your reporting to OEH and celebration with the wider community. Good before and after photos can also be used for promotion and media, particularly websites, news articles or publications.

Step-by-step guide to photo monitoring

Step 1: Choose your "photo-point" location

A photo-point sets the "frame" of what your photo will look like and will stay the same for the duration of your project. Select how many photo-points you need and their fixed locations. If you need more than one photo-point, choose the locations which clearly demonstrate your project activities.

There is no minimum or maximum number of points required, however generally speaking, the more complicated your project is and the larger your site is, the more you should provide. Most projects will only have one or two photo points.

For example, if the front of a house is being restored, standing by the letter-box is a good location for your photo-point. However, if the whole exterior of the house is being restored you may choose to stand at each corner and photograph to your left to capture the sides of the house. Or, if the works on the sides and back are the same, you may wish to just show the front and one side.

Location Tips and Safety Precautions

It is very important to consider your safety when selecting photo-points. Proximity to railway tracks or roads and water bodies may mean a photo-point is unsuitable.

If you need a high vantage point to frame your visual, consider asking neighbours for access to a high window on their second story, use a selfie-stick or tripod. If elevating your camera be sure to look out for overhead obstructions and wiring.
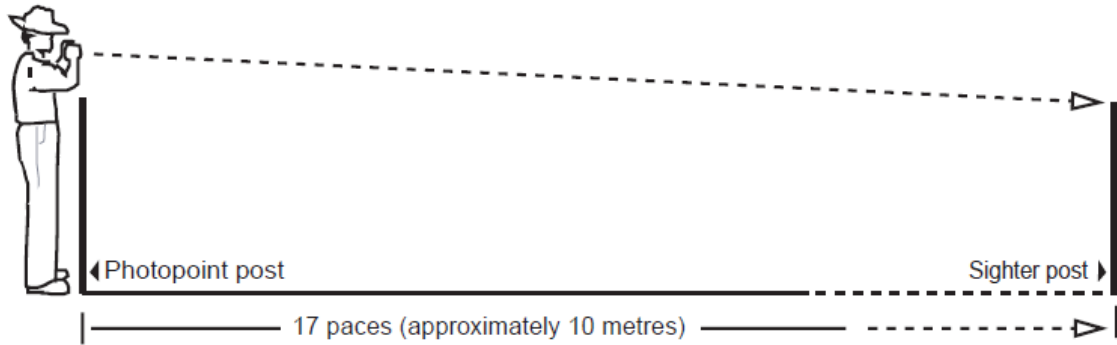
Consider potential vegetation growth that may obscure the clarity of future photos taken from the same location, such as shrubs, trees and hedges.

Step 2: Mark the location and the focus point

Install a physical marker (e.g. star-picket, tomato stake, garden gnome etc.) or use an existing one (e.g. a letterbox, a doorway, a clothesline) to mark the point from which a photo will be taken. Then add a sighter post at a set distance (see diagram below) or use an existing reference point (such as a front door, a particular window or a plant) to set the point for the photographer to focus on. For example, if the photographer stands at the letterbox and brings the front door into the centre of the frame, it will result in closely-aligned before and after shots.

If the photographer is sitting, make a note so that the angle of the shot can be replicated.

Capturing a GPS point using a handheld GPS or smart phone is also a handy method of retracing the approximate location of a photo-point.

Step 3: Take the photo

While standing, or sitting, at your marker post, take a few shots so that you can select the best/clearest shot later.

Tips for a great photo

Include your focus point or fixed reference object such as a distinctive tree, doorway, fence-post etc. in the photo, and try to be consistent in future photos. For example, if the doorway is in the centre of the before photo, try to get it in the centre of the after photo.

Take copies of the before photos for reference when returning to the photo-points to help match the field of view contents. If the same photographer is returning, they may have these handy on their smartphone or digital camera.

Light cloudy days are ideal when sunlight is weaker and shadows are less pronounced.

Avoid taking photos during mist, rain, or when dark clouds are passing over.

If there are lots of different works involved, don't be afraid to include photos of works in progress, such as carpenters, painters, gardeners or if you have a "working bee" day.

Including people in the photo provides scale and demonstrates the number and type of people involved in making the project a success. An important part of heritage is the stories of people, and including people in your photo shows who was involved, how they were involved and indicates their experience.

Step 4: Record notes

Recording notes when you take each photo which will later help to explain what is being shown in the photo. For examples tradespeople hard at work restoring a verandah, or a dozen people of all ages and backgrounds planting a garden, or an Aboriginal cultural event.

The photo monitoring template in Appendix 1 provides space for any relevant information.
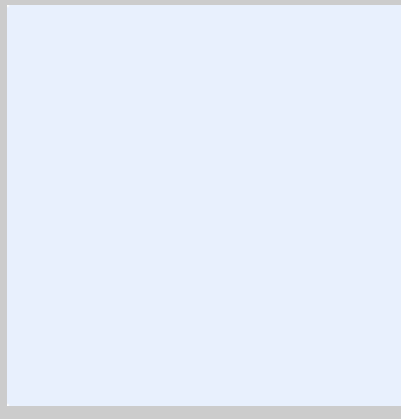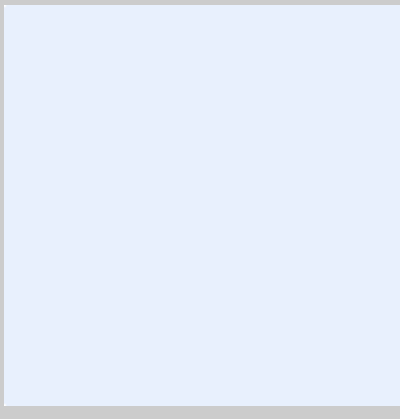
Step 5: Repeat

Photo monitoring is most effective when you capture the "before" (baseline) and then the "after" to show the changes you have achieved.
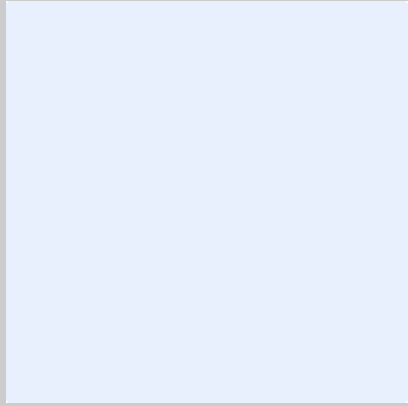
You can choose to take additional photographs during the works, but these are not essential.

Appendix 1 Photo monitoring examples using the template

Photographs courtesy of Bourke Catholic Parish. Non-representative generic text has been used in this example.

Project reference: WRK2000123	Site Name: St Ignatius Convent and Church		Photo Point: East View
Baseline (before)	**During (if applicable)**	**During (if applicable)**	**Final (after)**
Date: 30/01/2017	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	Date: 30/06/2017
Description: Prior to works commencing	**Description:** Click or tap here to enter text.	**Description:** Click or tap here to enter text.	**Description:** The completed restoration
Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.	**Comments:** Click or tap here to enter text.	**Comments:** Click or tap here to enter text.	**Comments:** Click or tap here to enter text.

Photographs courtesy of Diane Kinloch and Ben Gambrill. Non-representative generic text has been used in this example.

Project reference: WRK2000456	**Site Name: Coutts Sailors Home Newcastle**		**Photo Point:** Across the Road.
Baseline (before)	**During (if applicable)**	**During (if applicable)**	**Final (after)**
Date: 30/06/2014	**Date:** 28/12/2014	**Date:** Click or tap to enter a date.	**Date:** 15/12/2015
Description: Existing Condition	**Description:** Half-way point	**Description:** Click or tap here to enter text.	**Description:** Completion
Comments: We used old photographs to guide the design to reinstate the outdoor verandah	**Comments:** We received a lot of congratulatory feedback of the public, as they walk past they stopped to admire and comment	**Comments:** Click or tap here to enter text.	**Comments:** The project has also provided an outdoor space

Photographs courtesy of Dr Justin Sinfield. Non-representative generic text has been used in this example.

Project reference: WRK2000789	Site Name: Albion Hotel 3 shops and Stables Braidwood		Photo Point: Across the Street
Baseline (before)	**During (if applicable)**	**During (if applicable)**	**Final (after)**
Date: 30/01/2018	Date: 28/02/2018	Date: 30/04/2018	Date: 15/06/2018
Description: Original	**Description:** During	**Description:** During	**Description:** Restored
Comments: Extensive wood features of building are rotting and unsafe. Increase safety features and character of buildings.	**Comments:** Site preparation works	**Comments:** Specialist trades and equipment had to be brought in	**Comments:** New roof, guttering, painting, electrics, rotting wood removed, plumbing upgraded. Accessibility options considered included economic and heritage considerations.

Photographs courtesy of Hector Abrahams Architects. Non-representative generic text has been used in this example.

Project reference: WRK2000101	**Site Name:** Garrison Anglican Church Precinct, Millers Point		**Photo Point:** no fixed point due to height of church.
Baseline (before)	**During (if applicable)**	**During (if applicable)**	**Final (after)**
Date: 30/01/2018	**Date:** 28/02/2018	**Date:** 30/04/2018	**Date:** 15/06/2018
Description: Condition of roof prior to restoration works commencing.	**Description:** Builders replacing the slate roofing	**Description:** The dormer has also been restored	**Description:** The completed restoration
Comments: The interior fabric of the church is at risk due to significant water leaks during rain.	**Comments:** Contractors faced poor weather conditions	**Comments:** Preparation works had to be planned as slate tiles were individually laid	**Comments:** Leaks have stopped occuring

Download blank template

A blank version of this document can be downloaded and edited from the OEH website

Explanation of template fields

Field		Description
1.	Project reference:	Your grant reference number (e.g.WRK2000123)
2.	Photo Point #:	Each of your photo points are to be given an identification number (e.g. PP1, PP2 etc)
3.	Site Name:	Name of property or item
4.	Baseline (before)	This photo should capture pre-work condition of the item. Your baseline photo should be taken during your projects site assessment and planning activities before any works have commenced.
5.	During (if applicable)	Photos to show works underway if you wish to include these, otherwise leave blank.
6.	Final (after)	This photo should be taken at the end of your project and after all works are completed.
7.	Date	Enter the exact date the monitoring photo was taken.
8.	Description	For each photograph, describe the scene. Include useful information to describe what is happening in the photo.
9.	Comments	**This is optional.** Where relevant, provide additional higher level detail for each photo (e.g. unexpected response to works by community, problems encountered, etc.)