



Guidance for applicants undertaking general photographic surveys for planning purposes

Introduction

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) has established the principle of requesting photographic surveys, or photographic records, from applicants as part of the planning process in order to preserve by record the original form or specific character of our historic buildings.

It is important to understand that these photographic survey records serve as the only surviving documentation of buildings prior to alteration, restoration, conversion, or demolition. As such it is important that the below guidelines are followed in order to allow the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, and the National Monuments Record archive held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), to curate a unique record that will be publicly available for future study and reference.

Costs

Planning applicants are expected to pay for and complete the photographic survey.

Professional photographers or archaeologists may be appointed, especially where there is no access to suitable camera equipment, or if technical difficulties are encountered, but this may increase the cost of the survey.

Methods

Appropriate lighting conditions must be taken into account in order to produce a clear photograph. The use of a standard flash is recommended indoors to light the interior views, however off-camera flashes are considered to produce the best images, where available. Use of a tripod is recommended, especially in poor light conditions.

Digital Photography

A high resolution photograph should be taken, using a camera with a minimum of 10 megapixels. Image quality should be set as high as possible. Ideally cameras will take images as TIFF and the resulting files will be saved in tiff file format (uncompressed) for archival stability. If this is not possible then a high quality jpeg image will be acceptable. RAW files and/or PDFs must **not** be supplied. Phone cameras are not recommended. The depth of field required to satisfactorily create a building record image is not usually possible when using a phone camera due to the small lens.

Wet (traditional) Photography

Traditional photographs should be taken using 35mm format high quality colour print film. ASA 200 film is a good standard for most light conditions but ASA 400 should be used where light conditions are poor. Physical photographs, including those in the form of photobooks etc can be submitted additionally to the HER along with the digital photographs.



How to create a photographic record

Photographs

Photographs should be taken of all **exterior** and **interior** wall elevations, interior spaces, and detailed photographs of the roof interior.

The record should include general photographs to locate the building(s) within the site and relate the building or group of buildings to its grounds and associated buildings, where appropriate.

Features of particular interest (e.g. staircases, date stones, obvious differences in wall fabric, windows and doors whether blocked up or not, fireplaces, machinery and other fittings, timber framing, decorative details) should be fully photographed.

People should not be included in photographs.

If available, a scaled rod should be placed within any detailed shots, but this is not essential.

Annotated Plan

The photographs should be accompanied by at least one annotated scaled plan – if available, an architect's floor plan of the building as existing. Where many photographs are taken, or where extensive or multiple buildings are being recorded, it may be advisable to use more than one plan for clarity.

The plan(s) should be labelled with the name and address or grid reference of the site, the date that the photographs were taken and the planning application number. If more than one plan is produced, this should also be indicated (e.g. plan 1 of 3).

Ideally the plan(s) will also be supplied as a digital file.

Results

Photographs should be numbered for ease of reference, whether taken digitally or on film. These numbers should be used to locate the photographs on the plan(s). The plan(s) should indicate the points from which photographs are taken and the direction photographs are taken in. For digital images, reference numbers should form part of the file name with any additional descriptive information provided in a cross-referenced document. If you are also supplying prints, photograph reference numbers should be copied onto the backs of the prints together with brief descriptive details of the location. Poor quality or blurred images may result in the survey having to be redone.

Submitting photographs

Three copies of the photographic survey should be produced. These should be sent to:

- the **relevant Local Planning Authority** (Conwy, Eryri, Gwynedd, Ynys Mon).
- the **NMRW Archivist, National Monuments Record of Wales**, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments, Ffordd Penglais, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3BU (01970 621200) Email: helen.rowe@rcahmw.gov.uk*

- the **Development Control Archaeologist, Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS)**, Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT (07920264232) Email: planning@heneb.co.uk

The files, including accompanying plans and photograph/photographer information can be submitted in the following ways:

- CD
- DVD
- USB
- File Transfer (Wetransfer, Dropbox etc).
- High Quality Prints (Digital Photographs must still be supplied)

**The RCAHMMW would prefer to receive the record electronically. Please contact Helen Rowe directly to discuss this.*

Approved photographic records

GAPS will provide informal approval with the applicant that the record meets the required standards, however the condition will not be formally discharged until the applicant submits a discharge application to the relevant local planning authority and it is approved by them.

Deposition of records

Records received by GAPS will be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record (HER). When submitting a photographic record, the HER requests a covering letter be included containing appropriate conditions to allow future use and dissemination of the images. If no covering letter is supplied, the HER may contact the depositor to complete a Depositor Licence. An example cover letter can be found on Page 4 of this document.

Help

Please speak to GAPS if you have any questions or concerns. Some frequently asked questions can be found at the end of this document.

Checklist

PR1 – Relevant Local Authority	Photographs, Annotated scaled plan, Planning Reference	
PR2 – RCAHMMW	Photographs, Annotated scaled plan, Photograph/photographer details, NMR Covering letter, Planning Reference	
PR3 – GAPS	Photographs, Annotated scaled plan, Photograph/photographer details, GAPS/GAT HER Covering letter, Planning Reference	



Covering Letter Examples / Templates

Covering letter – GAPS/GAT HER:

Dear [GAPS Officer],

Planning Reference [application number]; GAPS reference [D-number]; [Planning Application Name]; [Planning Authority Name]

Please find enclosed the photographic record created to meet a condition attached to the above planning application. The photographs were taken by [Name] on [Date].

I wish to donate the items to the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Regional Historic Environment Record (HER). The items may be placed within the HER collections and be made available or copied to third parties for the purposes of private research and study. Copies of all items may be made available by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust for non-commercial purposes via the World Wide Web at the absolute discretion of the Trust. I wish to retain copyright.

[OPTIONAL: I wish to be contacted each time an enquirer wishes to use the item(s) other than for private research.]

I look forward to receiving your confirmation of receipt and acknowledgement of the acceptance of the record. I will assume that the condition has not been discharged until I hear that this is the case.

Yours faithfully,

[Applicant Name]



Covering letter – RCAHMW:

Dear NMRW,

Planning Reference [application number]; [Planning Application Name]; [Planning Authority Name]

Please find enclosed the photographic record created to meet a condition attached to the above planning application. The photographs were taken by [Name] on [Date].

I wish to donate the items to the National Monuments Record of Wales, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. The items may be placed within the public archive and be made available or copied to third parties for the purposes of private research and study. Copies of all items may be made available by RCAHMW for non-commercial purposes via the World Wide Web at the absolute discretion of the RCAHMW. I wish to retain copyright and be contacted each time an enquirer wishes to use the item(s) other than for private research.

I look forward to receiving your confirmation of receipt.

Yours faithfully,

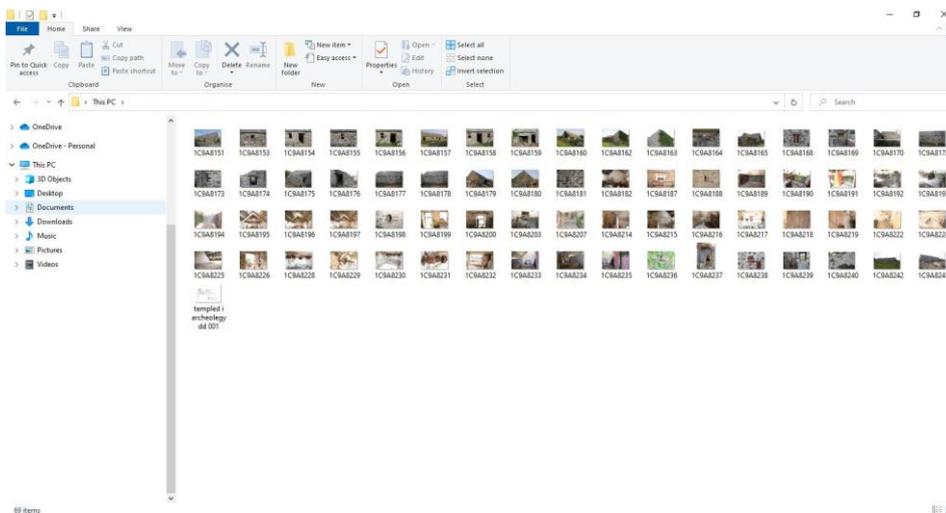
[Applicant Name]

Example Photographic Record

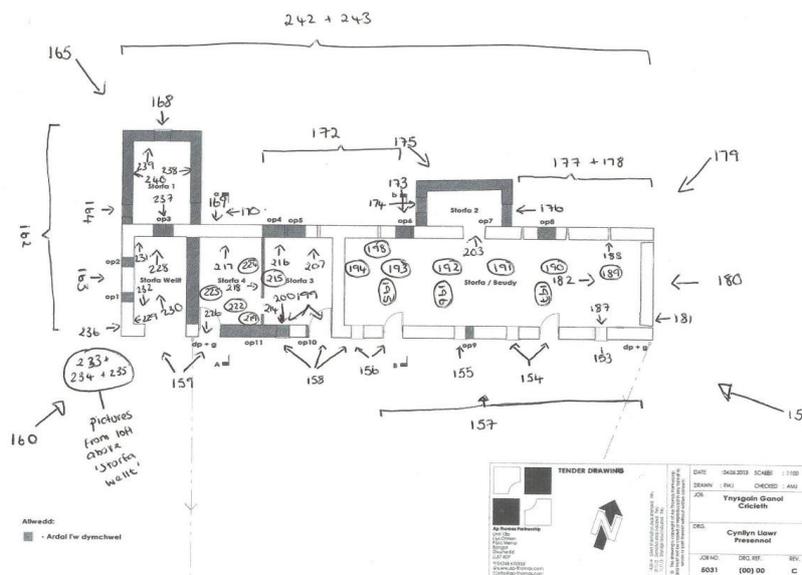
This document aims to guide applicants in providing a good photographic record and consists principally of advice and commentary. The essential components required by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service and the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record (HER) are simply the annotated plan and high-quality images.

The applicant and the photographer have given consent for this use of their record to produce this guidance.

Submitted photo record consisting of individual digital image files and annotated plan



Annotated Architect's plan showing the location of each photograph supplied



We welcome plans that show all images forming part of the photographic record, even those that are taken from a distance, as image 151 is shown in this plan. We are happy to receive plans that are labelled digitally or by hand.

A selection of the supplied photographs labelled with the numbers shown on the plan

Please note, the photographs displayed below are for guidance only. Submitted photo records must consist of individual image files and should not be submitted in a Word document or similar.



Image 1C9A8151



Image 1C9A8180



Image 1C9A8195



Image 1C9A8198



Image 1C9A8238



Image 1C9A8229



Frequently Asked Questions

Who do I send my completed photographic survey record to? Why?

- 1) You need to send one copy to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) dealing with your application. This will be held in their planning files. You will also need to submit a discharge of condition application to the LPA.
- 2) You need to send one copy to the [RCAHMW](#). They are the official archive repository for archaeological records in Wales.
- 3) You need to send one copy to Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service. They will review the record and let you know if any edits are required. They will pass a copy of the photographic record on to the Regional HER.

What will happen to my photographic record when I have submitted it?

- 1) The relevant LPA will deposit the record with the planning files and retain it in accordance with their policies. This can mean that records are kept in perpetuity (*i.e.* forever).
- 2) The RCAHMW will incorporate the information into the National Monuments Record for Wales and deposit the records supplied in the archives for future study and consultation.
- 3) The Regional Historic Environment Record will retain your photographic record and incorporate the information into the HER database and wider collections. The records will be available online to the public through *Archwilio* if you have indicated that this is acceptable.

Why is it important to create a photographic record?

It will form part of a unique archive for future generations. Although development proposals may result in the loss of original fabric, the information will not be lost if it is recorded and submitted as a photographic record.

Can I submit my photographic record as a photobook?

If you would like to submit the results of your photographic survey as a commercially-produced photobook, the HER would welcome this as it is an easy way to consult the records created. It should incorporate the plan(s) created to locate the images. You will still need to submit individual digital photographs.

How do I create a tiff?

Tiff/Tif (Tagged Image File Format) images can be created by at least 2 methods:

- 1) Your camera may allow you to take images in this file type – check the menu on your device.
- 2) You can use imaging software (proprietary software such as Adobe Photoshop, or other software supplied with your camera, or you can use freeware such as GIMP or Irfanview) to convert from RAW or JPEG.

How do I take a high quality jpeg?

Using the menu on your digital camera, check the “image quality” is set to the highest possible standard.

What is a wall elevation?

A wall elevation is simply the visible vertical extent of the wall from the ground/floor to the roof/ceiling.



Who retains copyright?

The photographer will retain copyright of the image. It is important that the name of the photographer and the date of the photograph are included with the photographic record.

Who should undertake the work?

You yourself, the applicant, can undertake the work in accordance with the guidelines in this document. If you would like a third party to undertake this work on your behalf (architect, professional archaeologist) you are welcome to do so as long as they adhere to the relevant guidelines.

Can I use the camera on my phone?

Phone cameras are not recommended. The depth of field required to satisfactorily create a building record image is not usually possible when using a phone camera due to the small lens.

Who are the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service?

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) is an autonomous section of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. GAPS officers deal with any development-related archaeological matters in north west Wales. They are the unitary authorities' advisors on archaeology, and monitor archaeological work being undertaken in the area (<http://www.heneb.co.uk/newplanning.html>).

Who are the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust?

The Trust was formed in 1974 as an educational charity to inform the public on archaeological matters, to respond to increasing threats to the archaeology of the area, and to educate in the broadest sense. It now offers a wide range of archaeological services and its staff have a depth of local knowledge about the archaeology and historic landscapes of north-west Wales (www.heneb.co.uk)

Who are the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales?

The Royal Commission is the investigation body and national archive for the historic environment of Wales. It has the lead role in ensuring that Wales's archaeological, built and maritime heritage is authoritatively recorded, and seeks to promote the understanding and appreciation of this heritage nationally and internationally (<https://rcahmw.gov.uk/>).

What is the Historic Environment Record?

The Historic Environment Record (HER) underpins any archaeological work in north west Wales. It holds information, principally in a computerised database linked to digital mapping, relating to all aspects of the historic environment from the earliest evidence of human activity to the present day. It is continually updated, and is available to consult either at the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust offices in Bangor or online via *Archwilio* (<https://archwilio.org.uk/wp/>).

What is Archwilio?

Archwilio is the website providing access to data from the four Welsh HERs. Web-based simple search tools can be used to investigate HER records for non-commercial research. The data shown represents a selection of fields recorded in the internal system (<https://archwilio.org.uk/>)

Do you have any further recommendations about taking photographs?

Consider the end use of the image when you take a photograph. It is of utmost importance to ensure that photographs are in focus and are neither too dark nor too over-exposed. Do not take photographs directly into the sun, this can result in lens 'flare' and may damage the



camera. Unless there is any specific structural or decorative detail on the walls, it is generally preferable (and easier) to take photographs of interior spaces rather than elevations.

Can I annotate the plans myself?

As long as the information is legible and clear it is acceptable for you to annotate the plans to show location of photographs. Plans should be provided as a digital file if the photographs are supplied digitally.

I want to supply printed photographs – how should I do this?

The Historic Environment Record (HER) is happy to receive printed photographs in addition to digital files. Print the images using good quality photographic paper with a minimum gsm of 250.

Where can I get more information about recording historic buildings?

English Heritage produced guidance in 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*, which can be downloaded from <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-historic-buildings/heag099-understanding-historic-buildings/>

Will anyone check the photographic record I have made prior to submission?

Staff at Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service will be happy to provide feedback on a draft copy prior to submission of the final record.