January 30, 2006

Dr. Christina Rieth  
Director, Cultural Resources Survey Program  
New York State Museum  
Cultural Education Center Rm. 3122  
Albany, New York 12230

RE: NYSDOT CULTURAL RESOURCE EVALUATION PROGRAM  
USE OF DIGITAL PHOTOS FOR CRS REPORTS

Dear Christina:

Since the development of the New York State Education Department Work Scope Specifications for Cultural Resource Investigations on NYSDOT Projects (March 2004) in 1979, numerous revisions have contributed to the high quality of NYSDOT survey reports by incorporating changes in professional and technical standards. Continual improvements in digital photography over the past few years offer an opportunity to adopt an imaging technology that will update report format, advance information sharing, and expand levels of photodocumentation in a cost-effective manner. The use of digital photography is also consistent with new policies recently adopted by the National Park Service and New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Digital photography presents advantages over standard 35 mm photography by allowing multiple images to be recorded in the field without incurring extra cost for developing and printing. We therefore encourage “extra” photographs beyond minimum documentation standards for the purpose of analysis, consultation, or selective use in survey reports to enhance the identification and evaluation of historic properties. Digitized images will also facilitate existing and anticipated needs to produce Cultural Resource Survey Reports in electronic format as well as online publications to promote public outreach.

Please modify existing procedures regarding photographic documentation for Cultural Resource Survey Reports for NYSDOT projects to include the following:

- Digital photography will be accepted as documentation to record existing field conditions, archaeological testing and excavation, and architectural properties.
- Color prints of digital images will be incorporated in Cultural Resource Survey Reports.
- Additional photographs may include multiple views of inventoried buildings / structures, setting and landscape features, broad streetscape views and individual streetscape elements, or views depicting the relationship between historic properties and other features within the Area of Potential Effects (APE).
Electronic image files will be archived by the consultant as supporting documentation, and for future use. These procedures will have no effect on existing photographic standards for HABS/HAER recordation.

Please enact these changes for the 2006-2007 program year, with the exception of surveys already in progress. Feel free to contact me at dhitt@dot.state.ny.us or (518) 457-4054 if you have any questions regarding these new procedures.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

DANIEL P. HITT, RLA
Manager, Cultural Resources/Process Section
Environmental Analysis Bureau

cc: Ruth Pierpont, OPRHP
Regional Cultural Resource Coordinators, Regions 1-11