Technical Bulletin

OCDEA

Assessors Guide to Reviewing Photographic Evidence

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Assessors Guide to Reviewing Photographic Evidence

Overview

- Provide guidance on what OCDEAs should review in photographic evidence supplied for Appendix B of Approved Document L 2021.

Introduction

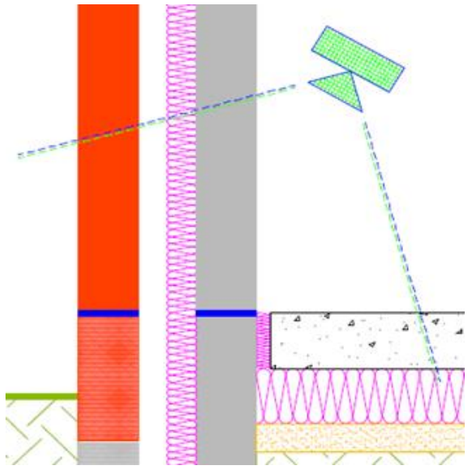
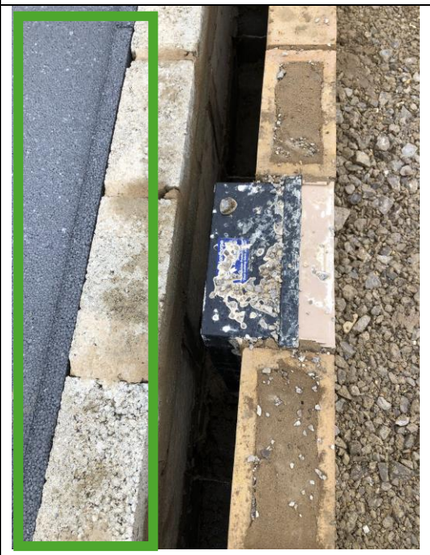
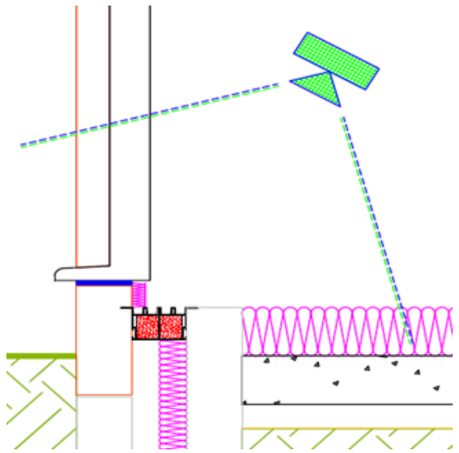
This document is a guide to what OCDEAs should identify when reviewing photographic evidence in line with Appendix B of Approved Document (AD) L. Elmhurst believes OCDEAs should be checking photographs for areas that directly affect the corresponding SAP assessment (e.g. generic insulation type, heating system model) but should not be checking for quality of workmanship unless they have the competency to do so. The Building Safety Act (2022) states the requirement for delivering a compliant home rests with the Client, Designer and Contractor here.

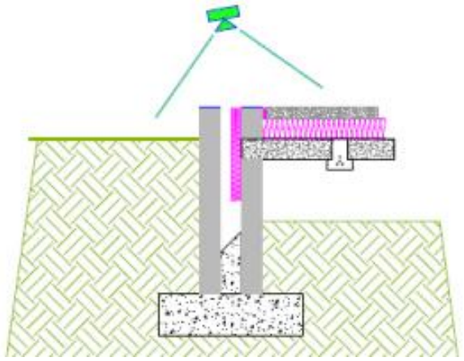
Elmhurst believes all OCDEAs should be checking photographic evidence to at least this level of detail in order to sign the assessor declaration section of the BREL/BRWL reports used to determine Building Regulations compliance. All photos should be geotagged and date/time stamped as per paragraph B8 of AD L: Volume 1.

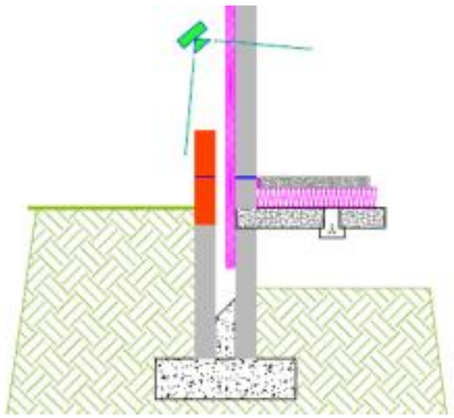
Any photographic evidence supplied to an OCDEA must be stored as part of the evidence used to issue BREL/BRWL compliance reports and EPCs. This must also be provided as part of the evidence supplied for QA audits.

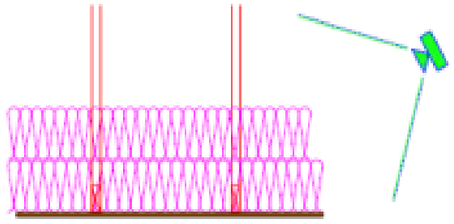
This guide must be read in conjunction with Technical Bulletin 157 A Guide to Photographic Evidence for New Homes which gives more information on the background and process of this area of Building Regulations.

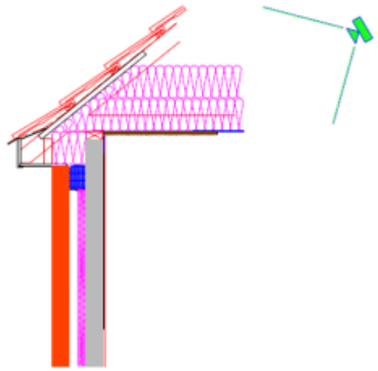
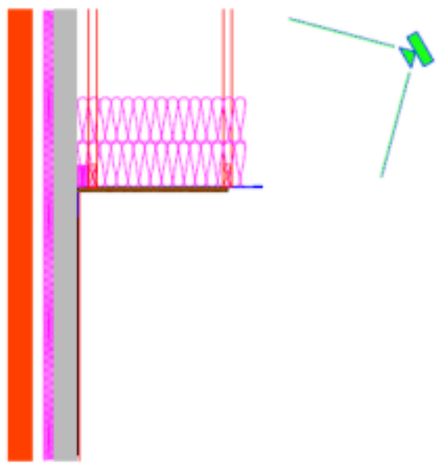
Elmhurst would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this document with feedback and example photographs. This includes Abbey Consultants, AES Sustainability Consultants and Sadler Energy and Environmental Services.

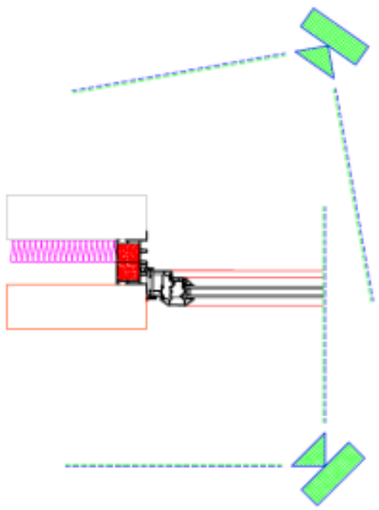
AD L Photo Reference	Example direction of Photograph	Example Photographs	What should the OCDEA check from the photographs?	What if the photograph shows a difference to the assessment?
1A – GF perimeter insulation (SAP junction reference E5)			☑ Photographs should show a strip of insulation in contact with the external walls around the perimeter of the ground floor prior to floor screed.	☒ If the perimeter insulation is not visible/present or photographs are missing inform the builder. It is likely that the psi value for the E5 junction would be based on perimeter strip insulation being present so therefore this would need to be changed to either a psi value model that doesn't contain perimeter strip insulation or the SAP default psi value.
1B – Door threshold (SAP junction reference E3)			☑ Photographs should show perimeter insulation or insulated cavity closers in the threshold zone for each door type.	☒ If the perimeter insulation/cavity closer is not visible/present or photograph is missing inform the builder. It is likely that the psi value for the E3 junction underneath external doors would be based on strip insulation so therefore this would need to be changed to the SAP default psi value.

1C - Below damp-proof course on external walls (SAP junction reference E5)		 	☑ Photographs should show the generic insulation type* (e.g. mineral wool, PIR) installed below the DPC and should match what has been used in the psi value models. **Where blown insulation is used there will be no insulation visible in these photographs.*	☒ If the generic insulation type* differs from what is used in the psi value model or photograph is missing inform the builder. It is likely that the psi value for the E5 junction would be based on insulation running below DPC so therefore this would need to be changed to either a psi value model that based on the insulation type used or the SAP default psi value. **Where blown insulation is used there will be no insulation visible in these photographs.*

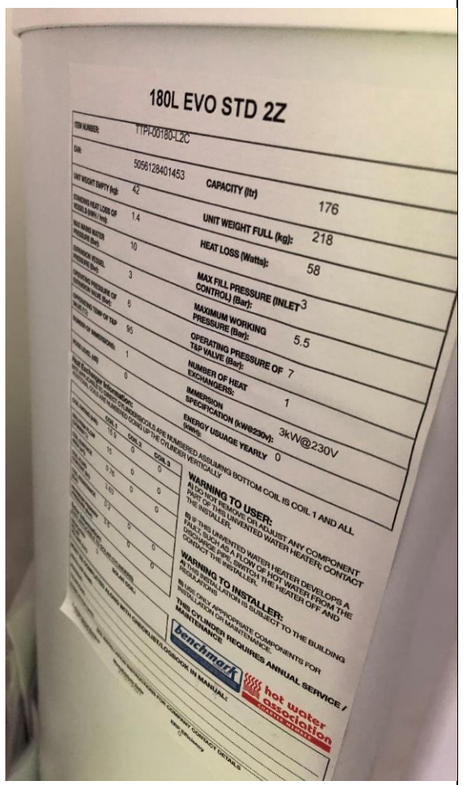
AD L Photo Reference	Example direction of Photograph	Example Photographs	What should the OCDEA check from the photographs?	What if the photograph shows a difference to the assessment?
2A - Ground floor to wall junction. (SAP junction reference E5)			☑ Photographs should show insulation running above the DPC up the external wall.* ☑ The generic insulation type* (e.g. PIR, mineral wool slab) should match what has been used in u-value calculations and psi value models. **Where blown insulation is used there will be no insulation visible in these photographs.*	☒ If the generic insulation type* differs from the u-value calculations and/or psi value models or photograph is missing inform the builder to determine what specific type of insulation was used. The u-value calculations for the external walls should be changed to reflect the specific insulation type used. It is likely that the psi values for any external wall junctions (E1-E25) would need to be changed to either a psi value model based on the type of insulation used or the SAP default psi value. **Where blown insulation is used there will be no insulation visible in these photographs.*
2B - Structural penetrating elements (SAP junction reference E1, E2, E23)	 		☑ Photographs should show structural elements that penetrate wall insulation. Typically this includes lintels or balconies with penetrating supports. One photograph per element type, e.g. lintel type, is sufficient. The photograph should be used to demonstrate the type of lintel, this could be achieved by taking a photograph of the sticker stating the manufacturer and model of lintel. For example, where different lintels are used a photograph would be required for each type including openings in dormers.	☒ If the lintel is different to the one used in the SAP assessment or photograph is missing inform the builder. The psi value for the E1/2 junctions should to be changed to the psi value for the relevent type of lintel used or the SAP default psi value in this scenario.

AD L Photo Reference	Example direction of Photograph	Example Photographs	What should the OCDEA check from the photographs?	What if the photograph shows a difference to the assessment?
3A - Joist/rafter level		 	☑ Photographs should show the generic type (e.g. mineral wool, PIR) of insulation installed.	☒ If the generic insulation type shown differs from the type in the u-value calculations used in the SAP assessment or photograph is missing inform the builder and determine what specific type of insulation was used. The u-value calculations should be updated to reflect the insulation that has been installed.

3B - Eaves edges (SAP junction reference E10, E11)			☑ Photographs should show insulation is present in the eaves to minimize cold bridging.	☒ If the insulation is not present in the eaves or photographs are missing inform the builder. It is likely that the psi value for the E10/E11 junction would be based on roof insulation being present in the eaves so therefore these junctions would either a psi value model based on insulation not being present in the eaves, or need to be changed to the SAP default psi value in this scenario.
3B - Gable edges (SAP junction reference E12, E13)		 	☑ Photographs should show insulation between the final joist/rafter and gable walls to minimize cold bridging.	☒ If the insulation is not present between the final joist/rafter and gable walls or photographs are missing inform the builder. It is likely that the psi value for the E12/E13 junctions would be based on insulation abutting gable walls therefore these junctions would need to be changed to either a psi value model based on insulation not abutting gable walls or the SAP default psi value in this scenario.

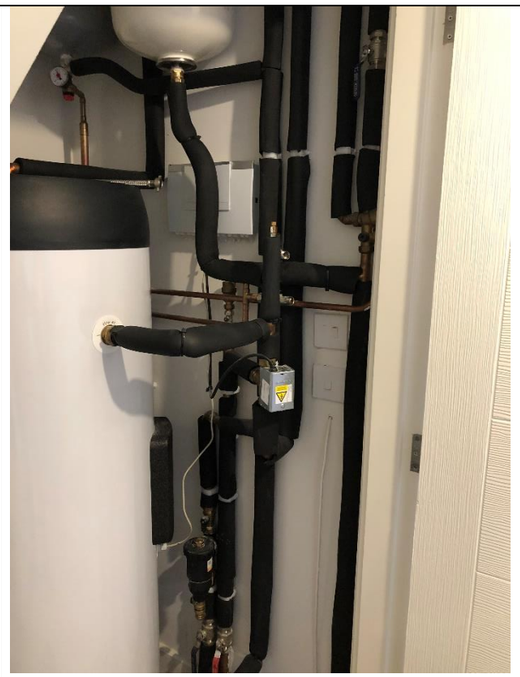
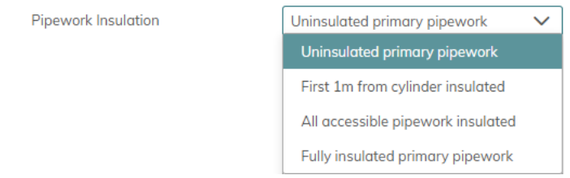
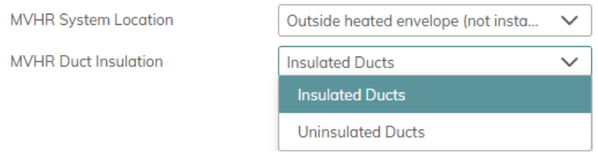
AD L Photo Reference	Example direction of Photograph	Example Photographs	What should the OCDEA check from the photographs?	What if the photograph shows a difference to the assessment?
4A/B – Window/Door positioning in relation to cavity closer or insulation line (SAP junction reference E4)			☑ Photographs should show the window/door closer is in line with the cavity closer/insulation. One photograph per window/door type is required. **However OCDEAs do not need to comment on or review these photographs unless there is something that directly influences an area of the SAP assessment.**	N/A

AD L Photo Reference	Example Photographs	What should the OCDEA check from the photographs?
5 - Airtightness		☑ Photographs should show any area where detailing has been completed for airtightness purposes e.g. Grommets or flexible collars sealed around incoming services. **However, OCDEAs do not need to comment on or review these photographs unless there is something that directly influences an area of the SAP assessment.** OCDEAs will obtain the airtightness test certificate and feed the score into the SAP assessment to account for the airtightness of the home. Elmhurst does not believe a photograph of the airtightness test certificate, or the airtightness test being undertaken is required for this section.

AD L Photo Reference	Example Photographs	What should the OCDEA check from the photographs?	What if the photograph shows a difference to the assessment?
6A – Building services – Space and water heating systems	  	☑ Photographs should clearly identify the manufacturer and model of space and water heating systems including the heat generator (boiler, heat pump etc.) and hot water cylinder if applicable. The systems shown in the photographs should be cross referenced against the SAP assessment to ensure the correct systems are accounted for within it.	☒ If a different heating system is shown in the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the system shown. ☒ If a different hot water cylinder is shown in the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the hot water cylinder shown.

6A – Building services – Space heating controls	 	☑ Photographs should clearly identify the controls used for space heating. One photograph per control type (programmer, TRVs) is sufficient. The controls shown on the photographs should be cross referenced against the SAP assessment to ensure the correct controls are accounted for within it.	☒ If different controls are shown on the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the controls shown.
6A – Building services – Ventilation systems	 	☑ Photographs should clearly identify the manufacturer and model ventilation systems present. The systems shown in the photographs should be cross referenced against the SAP assessment to ensure the correct systems are accounted for within it.	☒ If a different ventilation system is shown in the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the system shown.

6A – Building services – Low or zero carbon technologies	   	☑ Photographs should clearly identify the technology present. Elmhurst believes this should include the following technologies; • Photovoltaic panels • Battery storage • PV diverters • Solar hot water panels • Wind turbines • Waste water heat recovery systems (WWHRS) • Flue gas heat recovery systems (FGHRS) For Battery storage, PV diverters, WWHRS and FGHRS a photograph of the data label/sticker rather than the entire system is appropriate. The systems shown in the photographs should be cross referenced against the SAP assessment to ensure the correct systems are accounted for within it.	☒ If a different system is shown or no system is present in the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the system shown or if no system is present.

6B – Building Services – Primary pipework		☑ Primary pipework is defined as the pipework running from the heat source (boiler, heat pump etc.) to the hot water storage (hot water cylinder, thermal store, HIU etc.) Photographs should show primary pipework is insulated*. The level of insulation shown on the photographs should be cross referenced against the SAP assessment to ensure the correct primary pipework insulation option is selected in the Hot Water Cylinder section;  **Photographs are not required for this section where the heat generator and water storage are packaged together e.g. a combi boiler or packaged heat pump/cylinder is present.*	☒ If a different insulation level is shown in the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the insulation level shown.
6C – Building Services – Mechanical ventilation ductwork (where outside the thermal envelope)	 	☑ Photographs should show that mechanical ventilation ductwork in unheated spaces e.g. cold roof spaces is insulated. The presence of insulation shown in the photographs should be cross referenced against the SAP assessment to ensure the correct ductwork insulation option is selected in the Mechanical Ventilation section; 	☒ If a different insulation level is shown in the photographs or a photograph is missing inform the builder. The SAP assessment should be updated to reflect the ductwork insulation level shown.

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