Photographic Evidence

Guidance Document

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Photographic Evidence

Introduction

Under the new Part L (2021) Regulations, Photographic evidence at as-built stage is now a mandatory requirement to prove compliance for every new home.

The new legislation requires developers and house builders to prove through photographic evidence that new and refurbished properties have met current building regulation standards.

Failure to comply can hinder the issuance of Energy Performance Certificates and Building Regulation England/Wales Part L Reports, which are mandatory for property sign off.

Photographs must be captured at significant stages of construction, documenting each detail before any closing works.

Where does this requirement apply?

The new photographic evidence rule applies to any dwelling which is being assessed under Approved Document L (2021) in England and Approved Document L (2022) in Wales.

What key dates do I need to know?

The need for photographic evidence covers all new developments which were registered with Building Control from June 15th 2022 in England and November 23rd in Wales.

For any sites registered before these dates, photographic evidence is not applicable.

Please note that any developments which have not been started within one year of the new regulations being introduced will need to be upgraded to comply with the new regulations, and photographic evidence will then be required. If unsure of the building regulation date, please consult the Building Control Body for guidance.

To confirm, at the time of publication, photographic evidence is not required on non-residential buildings, extensions, renovations or change of use projects.

Why has Photographic Evidence been introduced?

The introduction of this requirement comes due to concern over a performance gap between expected performance and how new build properties actually perform in terms of energy efficiency, CO2 emission rate and energy bills.

Three factors have been identified as affecting the performance gap: Build quality, limitations of energy models and occupant behaviour.

To address the build quality factor and increase the accuracy of energy calculations, the requirement of photographic evidence has been introduced.

By introducing the need to collate photos on all newly build schemes, it is hoped that EPCs will become more precise, as the assessor can check that the photos from site match their SAP model.

It is anticipated, that introducing this process will improve the energy performance of homes, as construction teams will be aware that their work is being documented and available to the building control office and home-owner or occupant.

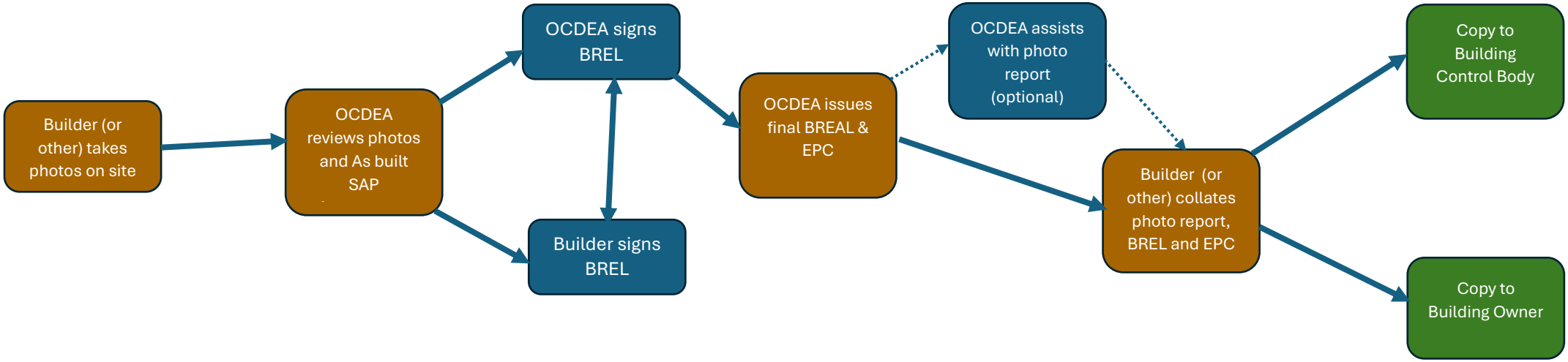
How to comply?

The building regulations state that;

- Photographs should be taken of typical details and should be unique for each property.
- Additional images, such as close-ups, may also need to be required for clarity.
- Photographs should be taken at appropriate construction stages, for example, an image of the ground floor needs to show the positioning of insulation before it is covered.
- Photographs should be digital and of sufficient quality to show details clearly.
- The image file should be geo-tagged to confirm the location and time that the photo was taken.
- Each image file should be named in line with a convention to make auditing and checking images easier.

Who will take the photographs?

The following diagram indicates typically how photographs will flow from site to OCDEA and eventually to the Building Control Body and the occupant of the new home. AD L: Volume 1 2021 does not specify who can take the photographs. It is the builders responsibility to organise who takes the photos and we believe in the vast majority of cases these will be taken by the builder themselves;



What Photographs are needed?

1. **Foundations / substructure and ground floor, to show the thermal continuity and quality of insulation in the following places;**
    a. *At ground floor perimeter edge insulation*
    b. *At external door threshold*
    c. *Below damp-proof course on external walls*

2. **External walls for each main wall type, to show thermal continuity and quality of insulation for the following;**
    a. *Ground floor to wall junction*
    b. *Structural penetrating elements.*

    Please note, for blown fill, photos should show clean cavities and clean brick ties with very limited mortar droppings.

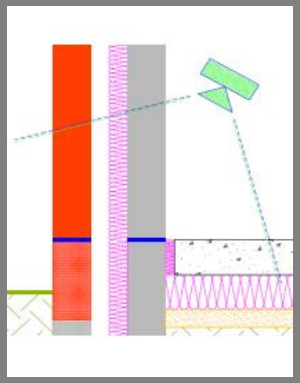
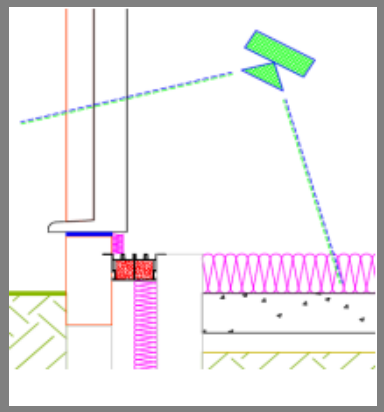
3. **Roof: for each main roof type, to show thermal continuity and quality of insulation at the following.**
    a. *Joist/rafter level.*
    b. *Eaves and gable edges.*

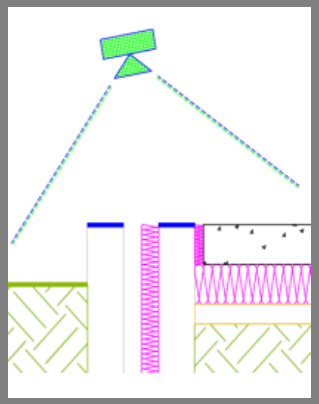
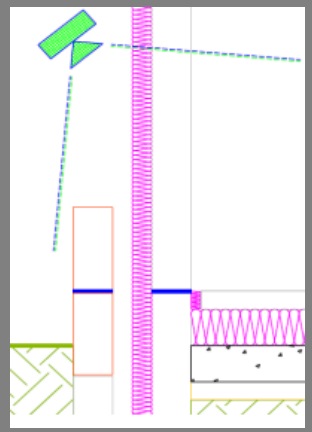
4. **Openings for each opening type (one image per wall or roof type is sufficient), to show thermal continuity and quality of insulation with photographs of the following.**
    a. *Window positioning in relation to cavity closer or insulation line.*
    b. *External doorset positioning in relation to cavity closer or insulation line.*

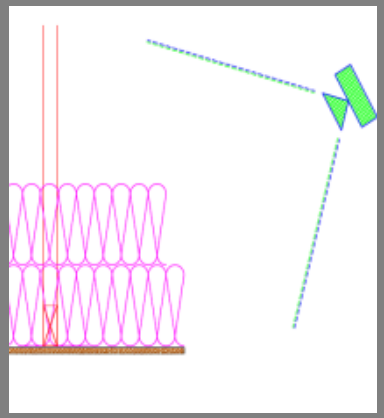
5. **Air tightness:additional photographs for all details 1-4 to show airtightness details (only if not included or viosible in continuity of insulation image).**

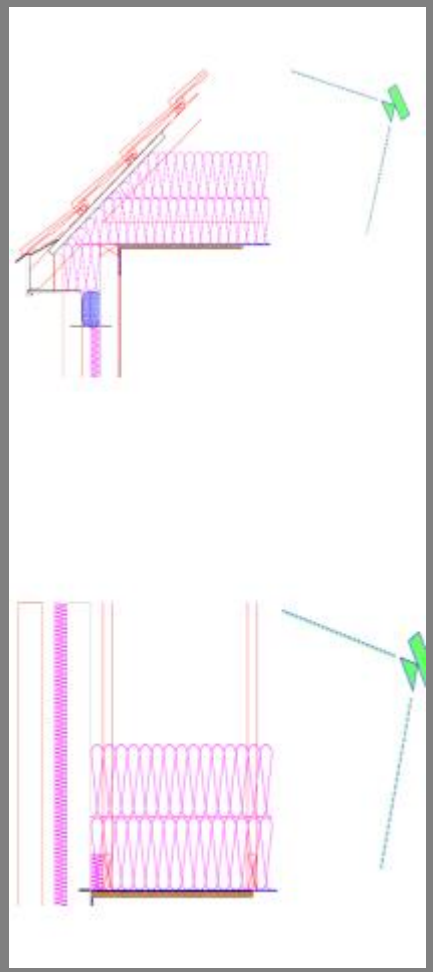
6. **Building services: for all plant associated with space heating, hot water, ventilation and low or zero carbon technology equipment within or on the building, show the following.**
    a. *Plant/equipment identification label(s), including make/model and serial number.*
    b. *Primary pipework continuity of insulation.*
    c. *Mechanical ventilation ductwork continuity of insulation (for duct sections outside the thermal envelope).*

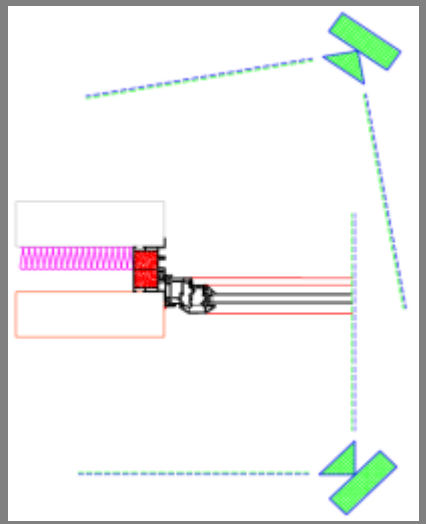
Photograph Guidance

AD L Photo Reference	Direction of Photograph	Typical Example	ADL Guidance
1) Before External Wall Construction – These photos are taken before work begins on building up the external walls.			
1a) GF Perimeter insulation *(SAP Junction reference E5)*			Image should show the perimeter wall of the ground floor. It should be taken before the screed is laid. The image should show floor insulation and perimeter insulation.
1b)Door threshold *(SAP junction reference E3)*			Image should show the wall cavity and perimeter insulation of an external door. This image must be taken before the door frame is installed.

AD L Photo Reference	Direction of Photograph	Typical Example	ADL Guidance
1c) Below DPC on external walls			Moisture resistant insulation should be fitted below damp proof course level and extend to the foundation block/ structure. Image should show the positioning of the damp proof course.
2) External Walls – These photos are taken as the external wall is constructed.			
2a) GF to Ext. wall junction *(SAP junction reference E5)*			Image shows the interaction between the ground floor and external wall, showing how the junction is insulated. This would be taken when the external wall is just one block high.

2b) Structural penetrating elements *(SAP junction reference E5)*			Image should show an example of a thermal break in the wall. This may show a window lintel or jamb. The image should be taken before the window frame is installed to show the cavity insulation within the wall.
3) Roof – These photos are taken during the construction of the roof			
3a) Joist and Rafter *(SAP junction reference E5)*			Insulation should be installed tight to the structure, without air gaps, and should extend to the wall insulation. Photo should show the roof insulation in position.

3) **Roof** – These photos are taken during the construction of the roof			
3b) Roof at eaves/gable edges *(SAP junction reference E10, E11, E12, E13)*			Eaves photograph should show loft insulation extending beyond the wall insulation to minimise cold bridging. Gable photograph should show insulation against the inner surface of the external/party walls to minimise cold bridging.

4) **Doors and Windows** – these photos are taken when doors and windows are installed.			
4 A/B) Window/door position to cavity closer/ insulation line. *(SAP junction reference E4)*			Photos show the window and door frames as installed. This is to show how the frame lines up with the wall insulation.

Please get in touch.....

We hope you have found this guidance document helpful, if you are still unsure of anything and would like further advice, please contact our team of specialists at your earliest opportunity and we will be more than happy to explain further and make the whole process as smooth as possible.