Capsule Summary PG:62-79

Building 200 – Main Laboratory USDA Bureau of Engraving and Printing EIS Beltsville, Prince George's County, Maryland 1935

Building 200 was constructed in 1935 and used as a Main Laboratory on the Central Farm within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). It was built in an area used by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI). Building 200 is a rectangular plan (east-west axis), three-story, Georgian Revival-style building. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation that supports masonry walls clad in rusticated stone facing about the first story and Flemish bond brick on the upper stories. The gable-on-hip roof is clad in slate shingles and has eight vented arch dormers with a decorative fanlight on the north slope; there are six dormers of the same type on the south slope. The east and west roof slopes each have a single vented arch dormer. The roof also has two center ridge, double-flue chimneys and a centered ridge cupola bell tower. Other roof elements include miscellaneous ventilators and snow guards. Fenestration throughout is replacement unless otherwise noted. The building is also distinguished by elevation bays that exhibit a typical type. A typical elevation bay, unless otherwise noted, has replacement paired two-over-two, single-hung metal sash windows on all stories; the top sash on the first and third stories is taller than the lower operable sash.

Building 200 is located on BARC's 2,980-acre Central Farm, the largest and oldest of all of BARC's farms. The USDA acquired the Central Farm in stages between 1910 and 1939; most of the buildings and landscape of the Central Farm were developed between 1911 and 1944. During the 1920s, the BAI's Animal Husbandry Division led the continued development of the site and was the largest section (i.e., in terms of both areas occupied and staff) at BARC. The division's research initially focused on the breeding of all domestic animals, except dairy (Robinson and Associates 1998). The BAI transferred other divisions to BARC during the late 1920s and early 1930s using New Deal funding sources at the Central and East Farms; the Swine Research unit was relocated from the Central Farm to the East Farm during the period between 1938 and 1942 (Robinson and Associates 1998). Over the years, the BAI's Animal Husbandry Division undertook critical poultry and swine research that improved the size and health of the farm animals; the BAI's researchers conducted important research at BARC that led to major improvements in eradicating and treating contagious diseases in farm animals, reducing parasite infestations, and improving nutrition.

In 1997, BARC determined eligible for individual listing in the National Register for Historic Places (NRHP) as the largest national research facility for the USDA and for its role as the most diversified agricultural research complex in the world. The evaluation finds that while Building 200 is not individually significant, it contributes to the overall significance of BARC. Building 200 is a contributing property within BARC under Criterion A at the national level for its historical association with agricultural experimentation and under Criterion C as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of experimental agricultural architecture.

# MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes

Building 200: Main Laboratory Building Property Name: Inventory Number: PG:62-79 Address: 10300 Baltimore Avenue Building 200, Central Farm, Bel Historic district: X yes no Building 192G: Scale House, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center Beltsville Zip Code: 20705 Prince Georges City: County: USGS Quadrangle(s): Beltsville U.S.A. - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Tax Account ID Number: Property Owner: 01-0070151 0019 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 0143 Tax Map Number: Agency: USACE-Baltimore District Project: Bureau of Engraving and Printing EIS Agency Prepared By: **AECOM** Rebecca McGovern 7/15/2020 Preparer's Name: Date Prepared: Documentation is presented in: MIHP Form, PG:62-14 Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended Considerations: Criteria: X A X C  $\mathbf{C}$ Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property: Name of the District/Property: Beltsville Agricultural Research Center PG:62-14 Eligible: X yes Listed: Inventory Number: Site visit by MHT Staff Name: Date: yes no Description of Property and Justification: (Please attach map and photo) The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) was one of the largest agricultural research facilities in the United States (Figures 1 and 2). Owned by the USDA, the facility was established in Beltsville in 1910 and significantly expanded in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1960s, the USDA's research program began evolving from an internationally recognized research center to a decentralized model. In 1984, BARC was re-designated as a regional center. BARC's period of significance ranges from its inception in 1910 to its reclassification as a regional center in 1984. **BUILDING LOCATION** BARC identifies the address of Building 200 as 10300 Baltimore Avenue, Building 200, Central Farm. Building 200 is located 65' east of Animal Husbandry Road and 585' north of Powder Mill Road. MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended B C В D **Considerations:** A C Criteria: **MHT Comments: Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services** Date

Date

Reviewer, National Register Program

#### BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Located in the USDA ARS BARC's Central Farm (Figures 3 through 6), Building 200 (Photos 1-4) was built as a main laboratory building. Building 200 is a rectangular plan (east-west axis), three-story, Georgian Revival-style building. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation that supports masonry walls clad in rusticated stone facing about the first story and Flemish bond brick on the upper stories. The gable-on-hip roof is clad in slate shingles and has eight vented arch dormers with a decorative fanlight on the north slope; there are six dormers of the same type on the south slope. The east and west roof slopes each have a single vented arch dormer. The roof also has two center ridge, double-flue chimneys and a centered ridge cupola bell tower (Photo 4). Other roof elements include miscellaneous ventilators and snow guards. Fenestration throughout is replacement unless otherwise noted. The building is also distinguished by elevation bays that exhibit a typical type. A typical elevation bay, unless otherwise noted, has replacement paired two-over-two, single-hung metal sash windows on all stories; the top sash on the first and third stories is taller than the lower operable sash. Lighter colored brick at the building corners and about the window and door openings indicate repairs throughout the entire building to address water infiltration issues.

The primary (south) elevation features nineteen bays that have a 3-5-3-5-3 rhythm. All but the three center bays are typical. A stepped, brick pilaster between the third and fourth bays from the corners articulate the elevation and create the 3-5 rhythm change. The centered, front-gabled section outlines the three atypical bays. The atypical bays have a segmented arch surround on the first story. A double-height arched surround topped by a circular brick motif extends above the stone band that defines the first story. Typical fenestration only exists on the second story although there is no center window. Other features of the atypical bay include a semi-circular fanlight in the front gabled roof. Exterior ornamentation on the south elevation includes frieze boards, brick and stone window sills and splayed stone and brick lintels. Other auxiliary features include air-conditioning units in some of the and landscaped beds with maturing trees.

The west elevation is defined by five typical bays with a prominent second-story entrance in the center bay accessed by stone steps with a metal railing (Photo 1). The entrance has front-gabled surround with Doric column pilasters. Exterior ornamentation on the west elevation includes frieze boards, brick and stone window sills and splayed stone and brick lintels. Other auxiliary features include air-conditioning units in some the windows and landscaped beds with maturing trees about the entrance.

Nineteen bays that have a 1-3-11-3-1 rhythm define the secondary (north) elevation (Photo 2). A stepped, brick pilaster between the first and second and the third and fourth bays from the corners articulate the elevation and create the rhythm change. All but the third bays from the corners are typical. The atypical bays correspond to interior stairwells. Atypical bays have a secondary entrance located within a segmented arch opening on the first story that has a pair of hollow-metal doors with a single rectangular lite. Above the secondary entrance are: i) two, one-pane fixed windows at the level of the stair landing between the first and second story; and ii) an eighteen-pane Diocletian window with two, six-pane awning windows that illuminate the stairwell between the second and third stories. There appears to be one original two-pane wooden casement window on the second story of the eleventh bay from the east. Exterior ornamentation on the north elevation includes frieze boards, brick and stone window sills, and splayed stone and brick lintels. Other auxiliary features include air-conditioning units in some of the upper-story windows, air-conditioning units along the ground floor, and landscaped beds with maturing trees.

The east elevation is defined by five typical bays with a prominent second-story entrance in the center bay accessed by stone steps with a metal railing (Photo 3). The entrance has front-gabled surround with Doric column pilasters. Exterior ornamentation on the east elevation includes frieze boards, brick and stone window sills and splayed stone and brick lintels. Other auxiliary features include air-conditioning units in some of the first-story windows, other HVAC equipment about the ground floor and landscaped

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beds with maturing trees. Building 200, which is still in use, is in good condition.

Historic plans of the Building 200 depict a diverse interior program to include storage, machinery, laboratories and administrative offices related to animal husbandry (Figures 7 through 10).

### HISTORY OF PROPERTY

### Central Farm

Building 200, constructed in 1934, is located on the 2,980-acre Central Farm. The largest and oldest of all of BARC's farms, the USDA acquired the Central Farm in stages between 1910 and 1939; most of the buildings and landscape of the Central Farm were developed between 1911 and 1944. The Central Farm is located at the center of BARC and is adjacent to BARC's Linkage Farm to the west, single-family homes along Odell Road to the north, facilities associated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and U.S. Department of State (DOS) to the northeast, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway to the east, and the City of Greenbelt to the south. The Central Farm has approximately 12 clusters of buildings situated on approximately 336 acres (of the 2,980-acre total), as well as pastures, wetlands, and forested areas used for animal husbandry, production crops, animal and plant research, and wildlife management. The USDA's Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) has historically been the Central Farm's main user (Robinson and Associates 1998).

The USDA acquired the first portion of the Central Farm in 1910 when it purchased 475 acres of the Hall Farm for the Farm Dairy and Animal Husbandry Divisions of the BAI to establish an experimental farm. To accommodate the experimental farm's many research tasks during BARC's early period (i.e., 1910-1933), the USDA constructed laboratories, farm buildings, pastures, and staff housing. In addition, the BAI added laboratories for its Pathology and Zoological Divisions.

In the 1920s, the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) began to operate at BARC on approximately 425 acres of leased land that was subsequently purchased with Public Works Administration (PWA) funds in the 1930s, expanding the Central Farm (Wiser and Rasmussen 1966; USDA c. 1937). In 1924, the Farm Dairy and Animal Husbandry Divisions separated into the Bureau of Dairy Industry (BDI) and the BAI. The BDI used 190 acres for continued experiments on dairy cattle breeding, forage crop, silage, and milk research, and the BAI kept 285 acres for its animal research. By 1925, the USDA owned 1,062 acres of the Central Farm and leased about 1,000 more acres (Wiser and Rasmussen 1966). By 1933, four land purchases totaling an additional 1,381 acres further increased the Central Farm's size (USDA c. 1937, Robinson and Associates 1998).

The majority of the Central Farm was acquired under New Deal policies and funding of the 1930s, when the USDA transformed BARC into a model experiment station. A series of land acquisitions during the 1930s grew BARC to more than 12,000 acres. With this expansion, many of the Bureaus either established, enlarged, or constructed new research facilities on the Central Farm. These included the BAI's pathology, zoology, and insecticide divisions, the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, the Bureau of Cultural and Industrial Chemistry, and the Food and Drug Administration (Robinson and Associates 1998).

The expansion of BARC required major infrastructure improvements that were undertaken with PWA funding and oversight, and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) assistance and labor. A CCC camp was established on the north end of the Central Farm in 1933; eventually, four CCC camps were established at BARC, although their exact locations are not known. The CCC workers cleared and drained land, built fences and roads, and constructed small sheds and structures. The overall design of the Central Farm in the 1930s was guided by a master plan that was the work of A.D. Taylor and Delos Smith; H.F. Seahorn of the Public

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Buildings Administration; Robert T. Walker, CCC landscape architect; and Hugh H. Bennet of the Soil Conservation Service (Robinson and Associates 1998). The Central Farm's character-defining landscape features include:

- Topographical and anthropogenically altered features, such as major paved roads, minor service and field roads, drainage systems, Beaver Dam Creek, and graded fields;
- Vegetation features, such as field and research crops, pastures, Beltsville Seasonal Ponds, Beltsville Bottomland Forest, and meadows;
- Circulation features, such as Dairy Farm, Powder Mill, Entomology, Research, BioControl, Poultry, and Beaver Dam Roads, as well as secondary and service roads;
- Five main clusters of development, including the 100 Area Cluster (BDI), 200 Area Cluster (BAI Animal Husbandry and Poultry Research Divisions), 300 Area Cluster (BAI Parasitological Laboratory of the Zoological Division), 400 Area Cluster (Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine [BEPQ] Entomology Research Division), and 1000 Area Cluster (Animal Disease Station); and
- Small-scale features, such as fencing, culverts, an amphitheater, and a cemetery (Robinson and Associates 1998).

### Bureau of Animal Industry

The USDA's BAI, the earliest of the USDA's research bureaus at BARC, came to the Central Farm in 1910 when its Dairy and Animal Husbandry Divisions established an experimental farm within BARC's initial 475 acres. When the USDA reorganized the Dairy Division into a separate BDI, the BAI retained 285 acres of the Central Farm for its Animal Husbandry Division. During the 1920s, the BAI's Animal Husbandry Division led the continued development of the site and was the largest section (i.e., in terms of both areas occupied and staff) at BARC. The division's research initially focused on the breeding of all domestic animals, except dairy (Robinson and Associates 1998).

By the early 1930s, the BAI's Animal Husbandry Division's needs far exceeded its facilities. To address these needs, the PWA allotted over \$1 million for a major construction program at BARC that included laboratories, an abattoir (slaughterhouse), and animal buildings. These facilities were constructed at BARC with the assistance of CCC workers, with funding and oversight provided by the PWA and the Civil Works Administration. A new Main Laboratory (i.e., Building 200), constructed under this program, was the showpiece of the new animal husbandry area.

As a result of the expansion, by the mid-1930s, the BAI's Animal Husbandry Division was the largest experimental farm in the country and the center of nation's research on animal husbandry (Robinson and Associates 1998). In addition to animal husbandry, the BAI transferred other divisions to BARC during the late 1920s and early 1930s using New Deal funding sources at the Central and East Farms. The BAI's Zoological Division moved its experimental headquarters to, and the BAI's Animal Disease Station was established at BARC's Central Farm in 1929 and expanded in 1935 (Robinson and Associates 1998).

In 1953, the USDA undertook a major reorganization and decentralization of the USDA's agricultural research program that continued through the 1970s (Office of Technology Assessment [OTA] 1981). The decentralization had long-lasting consequences for BARC. The department's scientific bureaus, including the BAI, were discontinued and the department's research functions were centralized under the new Agricultural Research Administration (now the ARS) (OTA 1981). The USDA again reorganized in 1972 with administrative decentralization as its goal (OTA 1981). Through this process, operating responsibility was delegated to four regions, which were then subdivided into research area centers. BARC's scientists and facilities thus became a regional research facility, rather than a national one (OTA 1981). By 1980, the USDA's research program

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was highly decentralized, with research undertaken at 148 locations, including the much diminished 450-scientist facility at BARC (OTA 1981).

Over the years, the BAI's researchers conducted important research at BARC that has led to major improvements in eradicating and treating contagious diseases in farm animals, reducing parasite infestations, and improving nutrition. The BAI's Animal Husbandry Division undertook critical poultry and swine research that improved the size and health of the farm animals. The BAI's Zoology Division's parasite research brought innovative new approaches to treating infestations. The BAI's Animal Disease Station developed vaccines to prevent Bang's disease and developed sterilization methods for contaminated hides (Robinson and Associates 1998).

History of the Main Laboratory Building, Building 200

The Main Laboratory (Building 200), also known as the Animal Husbandry and Research Library, was completed by the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture at a total cost of \$1,712,270. The project also included a small animal building, a boiler house, water system, power lines, bridges, and some minor buildings. The laboratory buildings provide facilities for genetic, chemical, nutritional, physiological, histological, physical, and other forms of biological research that are involved in the studies of breeding and feeding of livestock. The main laboratory is three stories in height and features 108 rooms which are used for offices, general laboratory work, and research. All of the laboratory work of this division of the Bureau, except the work in poultry investigation, is carried on here (USDA 1935, The Living New Deal n.d.).

The Main Laboratory (Building 200) served as a showpiece of the new Animal Husbandry area. Designed by architect Delos H. Smith, the three-story laboratory building was identified as the principal structure in the new plan for the center. It was the first major laboratory building on the site, forming the southern perimeter of an impressive planned quadrangle. As the first monumental building for the new area, the building set a stylistic precedent of brick construction with Georgian Revival-style characteristics. Smith described the building to be void of a central portico as its purpose was to house a refrigerator at the center, leaving the wings for laboratory uses. He also wanted to keep the front of the building quiet and free from traffic for it to be a cloister of the "monks of science" (Robinson and Associates 1998).

Original design drawings, dated March 1935, exists for Building 200 (Figures 7 through 10). They were drawn by the USDA Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, Division of Plans and Service. The timeline and construction methodology for Building 200 is consistent with the New Deal development of BARC, prioritizing simple utilitarian design elements with Georgian Revival-style characteristics including symmetry, strong central entrances, concrete, stone and brick construction, and balancing fireproof materials and construction techniques with the buildings' individual designs and programs. The construction and design elements of Building 200 were conscious and informed decisions by the architects for the purposes of aesthetic consistency as well as the promotion of fire safety among livestock and experimental/laboratory buildings (Robinson and Associates 1998).

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION

Building 200 was evaluated in 1997 to determine the building's individual significance or status as a contributing or non-contributing property at BARC, a 6,582-acre federal agricultural research facility. BARC was determined eligible in its entirety for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as the largest national research facility for the USDA and for its role as the most diversified agricultural research complex in the world. That evaluation determined Building 200 to be eligible for listing in the NRHP as a contributing property within BARC. This evaluation concurs that while Building 200 is not individually

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significant, it contributes to the overall significance of BARC. The history and development of the agricultural research facility also reflects New Deal policies and programs, and contains notable landscape architecture, Georgian Revival architecture, and experimental agricultural architecture. The criteria applied to evaluate properties for the NRHP are presented below.

Under Criterion A, Building 200 is a contributing property within BARC, which is significant at the national level for its association with events that have made significant contributions to the broad pattern of our history with agricultural experimentation. Many aspects of twentieth century living for the farmer and consumer were influenced by the scientific research conducted at BARC. BARC is a prominent example of the federal role in agricultural research, scientific agricultural research in general, and New Deal policies and programs, such as the 1930s agricultural policies and funding, the PWA, and the CCC, which all played important roles in shaping the experimental farm. BARC's scientists and researchers have made major contributions toward scientific knowledge that have resulted in incredible advances in crop production, plant and animal disease control, and pest control. Building 200 was specifically designed and operated as a Main Laboratory Building within the BAI's 200 Area Cluster – Animal Husbandry Division. BARC scientists and researchers made valuable scientific contributions, both in foundational and applicable science.

BARC and Building 200 have not been determined significant under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Under Criterion C, Building 200 is a contributing property within BARC, as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The physical appearance of BARC was strongly influenced in the 1930s by the planning team of A.D. Taylor, landscape architect, and Delos Smith, architect. The majority of BARC's buildings share a Georgian Revival style and/or display the characteristics of experimental agricultural architecture. BARC's landscape includes major paved roads, minor service roads, field and research crops, pasture lands, seasonal ponds, forests, sustainable meadows, and other landscape features and buildings. Building 200, while relatively modest in design, represents an example of the experimental and purpose-driven agricultural architecture trends for which BARC is significant, and contributes to the overall landscape.

Neither BARC nor Building 200 specifically has been evaluated under Criterion D for its yielding, or likelihood to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Building 200 retains its original location and setting within an agricultural research complex. Building 200 is specifically linked in its design and operation as a Main Laboratory and its ties to the BAI's 200 Area Cluster (Animal Husbandry Division) research buildings. The feeling of, and association with, an agricultural research center is intact. Building 200 maintains key elements of its original design including massing, fenestration, roofing pattern, cladding, and internal layouts. Building 200 retains its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Building 200, which is still in use, is in good condition.

Although Building 200 does not reach the level of significance necessary for individual listing on the NRHP, it maintains its significance within BARC under Criteria A and C.

#### REFERENCES

The Living New Deal

n.d. "HENRY A. WALLACE BELTSVILLE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER - BELTSVILLE MD." https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/henry-a-wallace-beltsville-agricultural-research-center-beltsville-md/ (accessed June 2020).

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Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), U.S. Food and Agricultural Research Advisory Panel

1981 An Assessment of the United States Food and Agricultural Research System. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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### Robinson and Associates

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United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

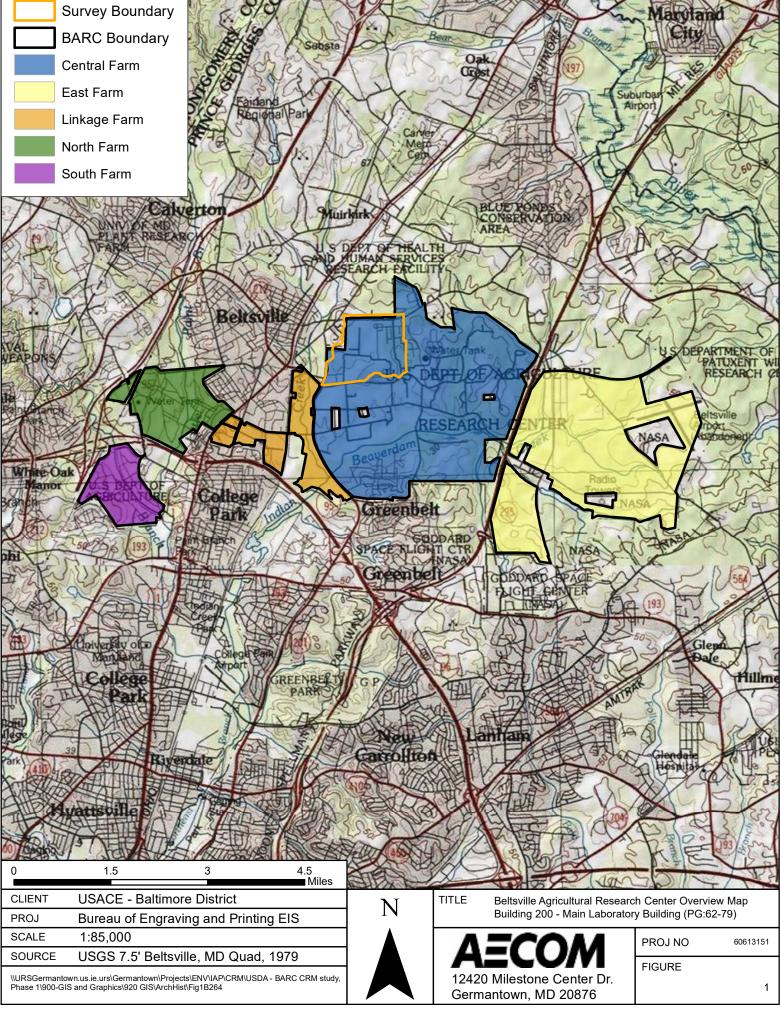
Main Laboratory, F.P. 72, Beltsville, MD. Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, Division of Plans and Service. On file, Architectural Drawings Collection, Facilities and Engineering Branch, Building 261, BARC.

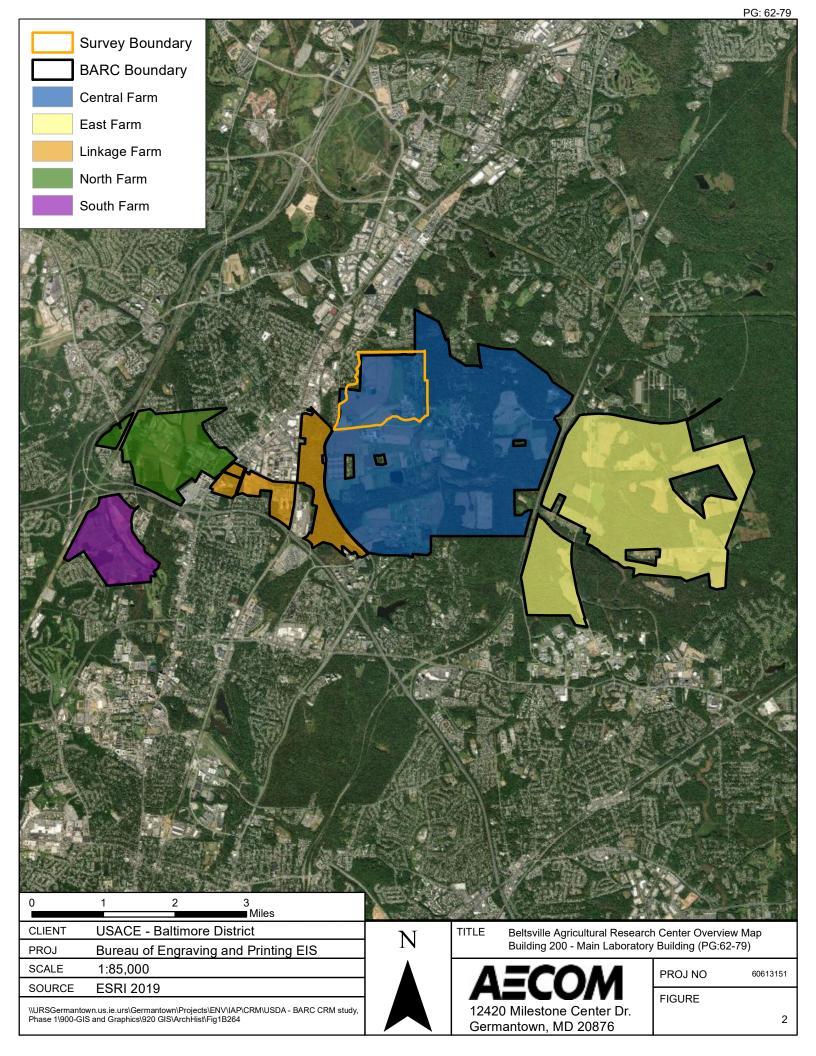
c. 1937 The National Agricultural Research Center of the Department of Agriculture. USDA Library, Special Collections 360.

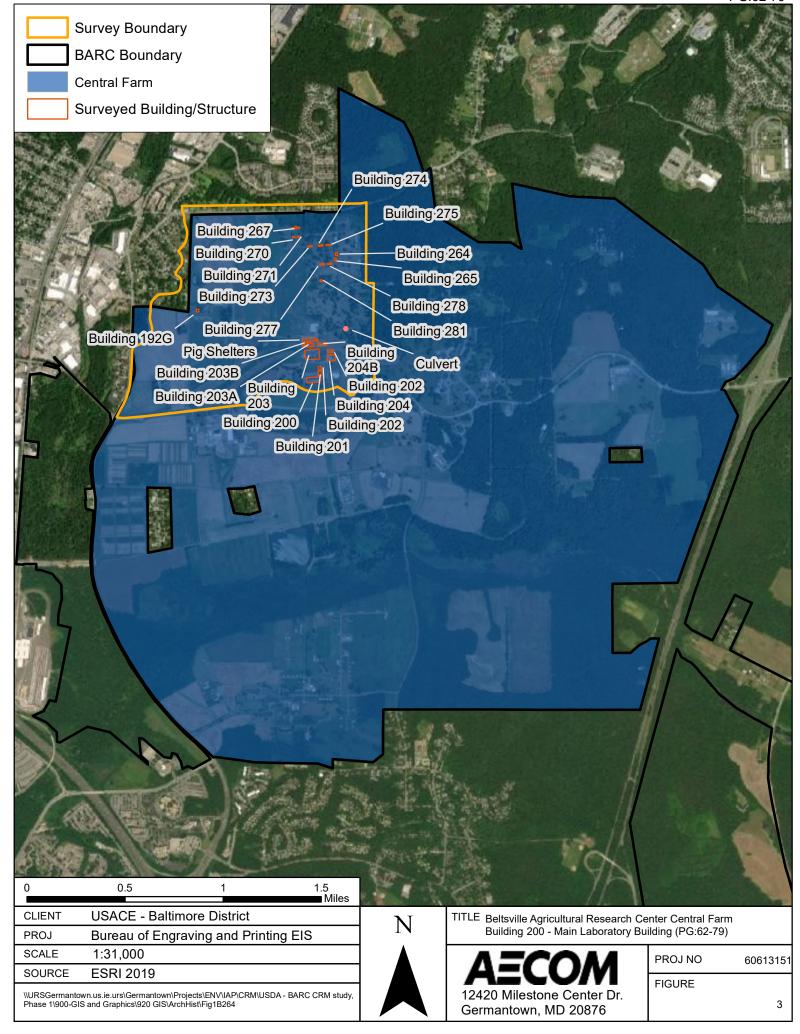
Wiser, Vivian and Wayne D. Rasmussen

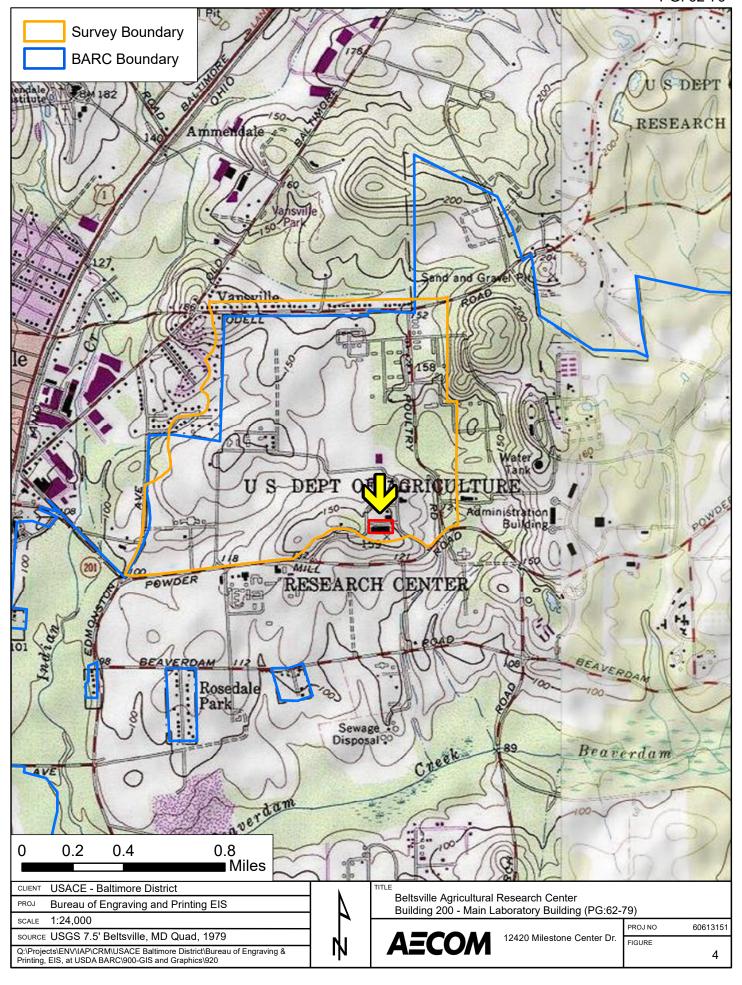
1966 "Background for Plenty: A National Center for Agricultural Research." Maryland Historical Magazine 61:4, December 1966.

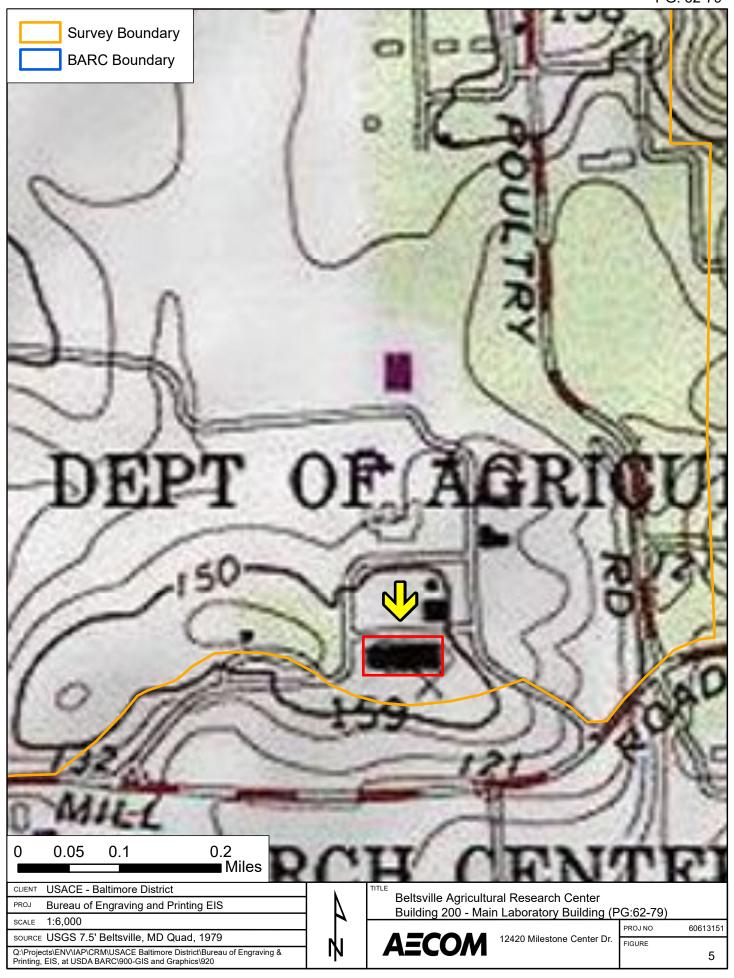
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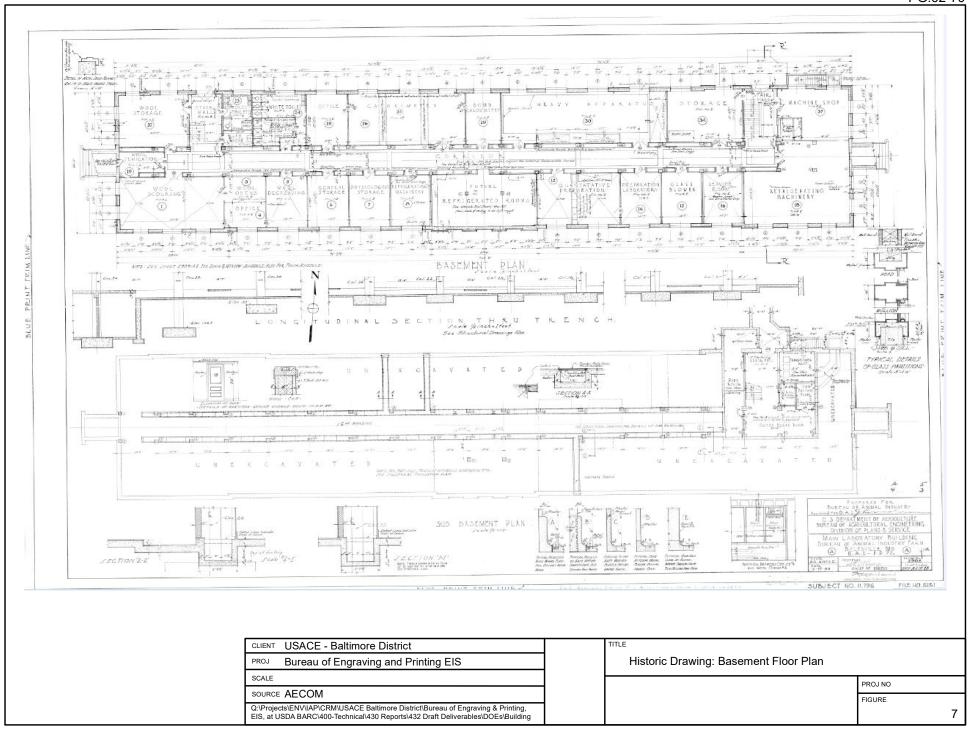
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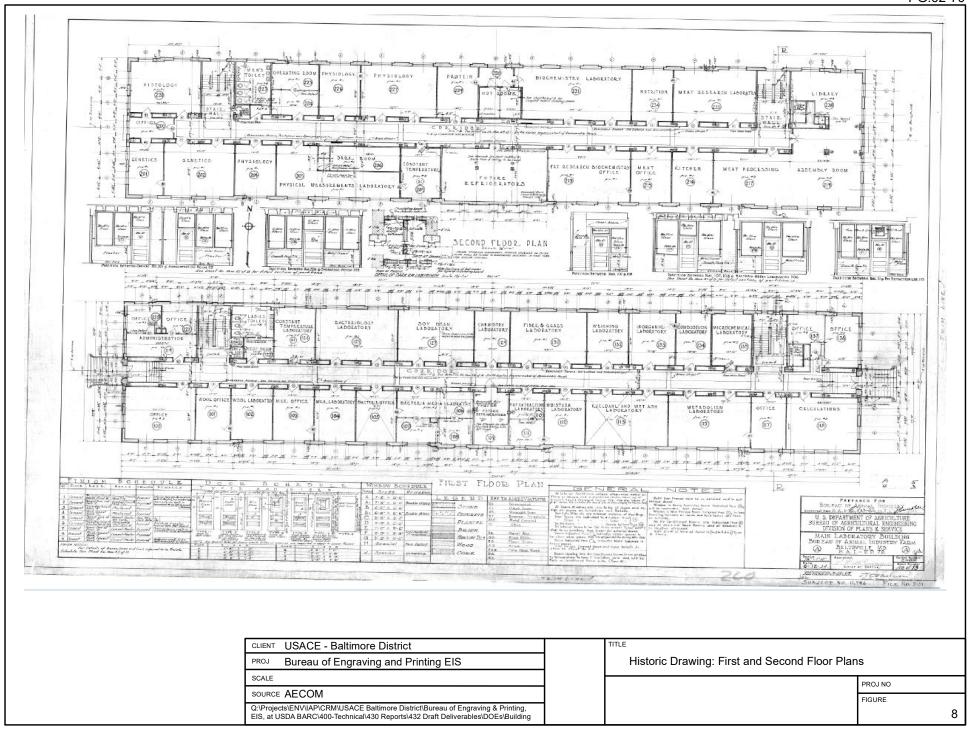
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Building 200 - Main Laboratory Building (PG:62-79)

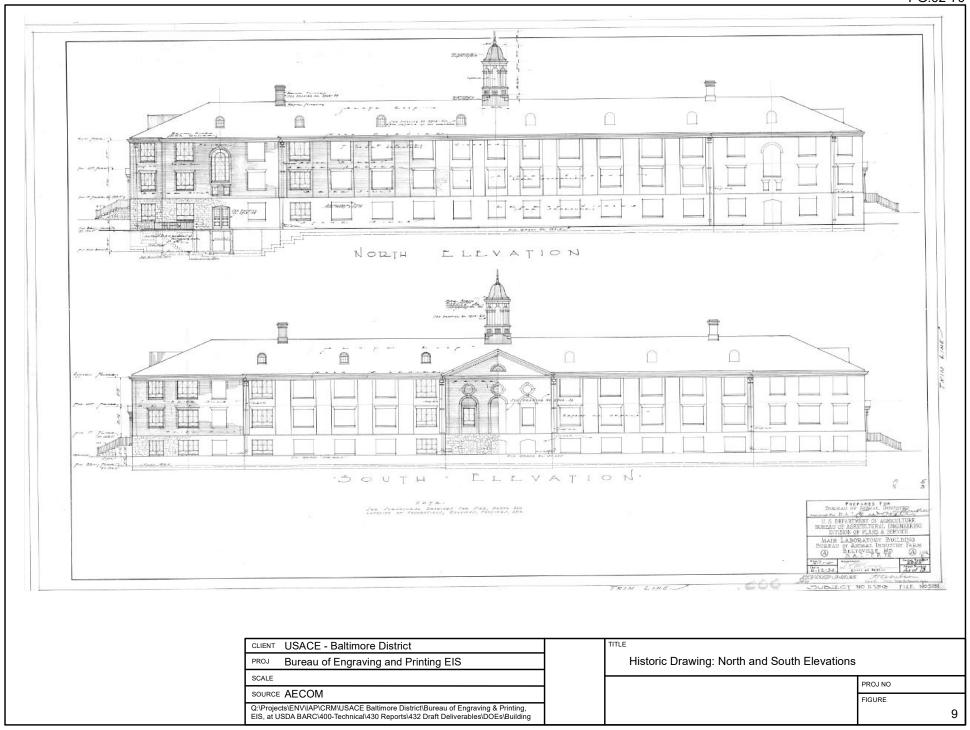
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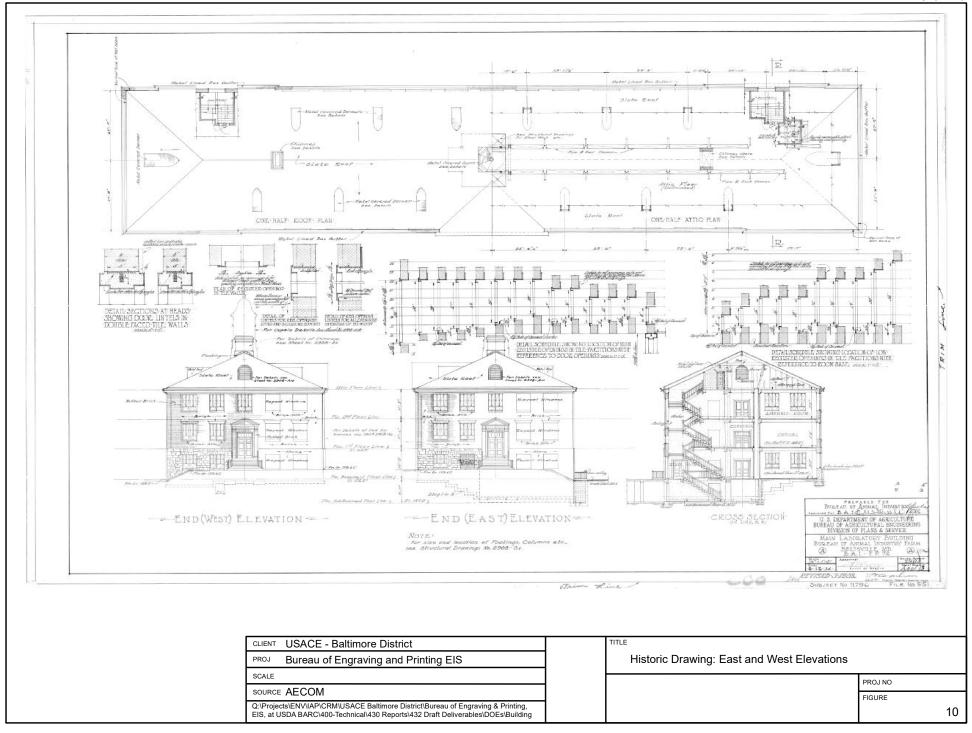
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Photograph Log PG:62-79

# **USDA**

**Bureau of Engraving and Printing EIS** 

**Building 200: Main Laboratory** 

10300 Baltimore Avenue, Central Farm

Prince George's County, MD

Photographer: Christina Sabol, Architectural Historian

June 2, 2020 MD SHPO

Archival Black and White Photographs and Digital Photographs for the Maryland Historical Trust.

- 1. PG:62-79\_2020\_06\_02\_01.tif, Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of Northwest Oblique, Looking Southeast
- 2. PG:62-79\_2020\_06\_02\_02.tif, Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of North Elevation, Looking South
- 3. PG:62-79\_2020\_06\_02\_03.tif, Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of Northeast Oblique, Looking Southwest
- 4. PG:62-79\_2020\_06\_02\_04.tif, Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of Cupola Detail, Looking Southeast



Photo 1 - Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of Northwest Oblique, Looking Southeast



Photo 2 - Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of North Elevation, Looking South

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Building 200: Main Laboratory Building

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FIGURE



Photo 3 - Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of Northeast Oblique, Looking Southwest



Photo 4 - Building 200, Main Laboratory, Central Farm, View of Cupola Detail, Looking Southeast

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