Maryland Historical Trust
Determination of Eligibility Form

Property Name: Building 205: Meat Laboratory Holding Shelter BARC **Inventory Number:** PG:62-44

Address: 10300 Baltimore Avenue - Building 205, Central Farm **Historic District:** ___ Yes X No

City: Beltsville **Zip Code:** 20705 **County:** Prince Georges

USGS Quadrangle(s): Beltsville

Property Owner: U.S.A. - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) **Tax Account ID Number:** 01-0070151

Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 0143 **Tax Map Number:** 0019

Project: DOEs of 69 Buildings at BARC **Agency:** USDA

Agency Prepared By: AECOM

Preparer's Name: Kelly Whitton **Date Prepared:** 2017-12-01

Documentation Is Presented In: MIHP Form, PG:62-14; Robinson and Associates 1998 report, Historic Site Survey, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland. On file at MHT.

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X **Eligibility Recommended** ___ **Eligibility Not Recommended**

Criteria: X **A** ___ **B** X **C** ___ **D** **Considerations:** ___ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D** ___ **E** ___ **F** ___ **G**

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

Inventory Number: PG:62-14 **Eligible:** X **Yes** **Listed:** ___ **Yes**

Site Visit by MHT Staff: ___ **Yes** X **No** **Name:** ___ **Date:** ___

Description of Property and Justification: ***(Please attach map and photo)***

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (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 Building 205's address as 10300 Baltimore Avenue - Building 205, Central Farm. Building 205 is located 1027' north of Powder Mill Road, 891' northwest of the intersection of Powder Mill Road and Animal Husbandry Road, and 799' northwest of the intersection of Powder Mill Road and Poultry Road.

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MHT Comments:

Natalie Loukianoff — 2018-03-22

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services — **Date**

Peter Kurtze — 2018-04-19

Reviewer, National Register Program — **Date**

Building Description

Building 205, a meat laboratory holding shelter or a sheep barn, is located at the Animal Husbandry area in USDA ARS BARC's Central Farm (Figures 3-6). The rectangular building faces east towards Poultry Road. The building is oriented on an east-west axis, and is two bays in depth and is approximately nine bays in width (Photo 1). The one-story building is constructed of a combination of concrete block and wood-frame on a concrete foundation. The building has a medium-pitch, side-gable roof. The gable roof is covered by composition shingles with shallow overhangs on the east and west elevations. The exterior walls are clad with stucco; the east elevation is open, allowing for access to animal pens, and is supported by squared wooden columns with diagonal braces (Photo 2). The west elevation features four widely and evenly spaced Dutch doors. The building has a one bay north addition, constructed of concrete block with wood rafters. The bay features a six-light metal sash window and wood panel door on the east elevation, and an interior wood panel door on the connecting wall between the addition and the barn, and an exterior wood panel door on the west elevation. The north and south elevations of the building feature flat walls with no fenestration. The building has been vacant since 2009. Vines have overgrown portions of the building, the roof has partially collapsed over the north bay, and there is some deterioration visible on the south end of the roof and fascia (Photo 3). The interior of the building features a line of animal pens along the west wall, and transitioning to the north wall (Photo 4). Overall, the building is in poor condition.

History of Property

Central Farm

Building 205, constructed in 1945, is located on the 2,980-acre Central Farm, the largest and oldest of all of BARC's farms. The USDA acquired Central Farm in stages between 1910 and 1939, and most the buildings and landscape were constructed and established between 1911 and 1944. The farm is located at the center of the facility and is adjacent to BARC's Linkage Farm on the west, single-family homes along Odell Road on the north, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of State on the northeast, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway on the east, and the City of Greenbelt on the south. It has approximately a dozen clusters of buildings situated on 336 acres, as well as pasture, wetland, and forested areas used for animal husbandry, production crops, and animal and plant research, and a wildlife management area. The USDA's Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) has historically been the Central Farm's main user (Robinson and Associates 1998).

The USDA attained jurisdiction over the first portion of the Central Farm in 1910 when the Department 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 (1910-1933), the staff constructed laboratories, farm buildings, pastures, and staff housing. In addition, the BAI added laboratories for its pathology and zoological divisions, and the Bureau of Plant Industry (BDI) began to operate at BARC on approximately 425 acres of leased land (subsequently purchased with Public Works Administration (PWA) funds in the 1930s) during those first few decades (Wiser and Rasmussen 1966; USDA c. 1937). In 1924, the Farm Dairy and Animal Husbandry Divisions separated into the

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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 (Wiser and Rasmussen 1966). By 1933, four land purchases aggregating 1,381 acres further increased the farm's size (USDA c. 1937, Robinson and Associates 1998).

The majority of the Central Farm land 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 the BARC into more than 12,000 acres. With the expansion, the BAI's pathology, zoology, and insecticide divisions, and the Bureaus of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Human Nutrition and Home Economics, Agricultural Engineering, and Cultural and Industrial Chemistry established, enlarged, or constructed new research facilities at the Central Farm. The Food and Drug Administration also came to the Central Farm in 1934 (Robinson and Associates 1998).

The expansion of the BARC facility required major infrastructure improvements that were undertaken through the PWA and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) funding and oversight. A CCC camp was established on the north end of the Central Farm in 1933 (eventually four camps would be established at BARC, though 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. Sehorn of the Public 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 grading features such as major paved roads, some minor service and field roads, drainage systems, Beaver Dam Creek, and some field grading; vegetation features such as field and research crops, pastures, Beltsville Seasonal Ponds, Beltsville Bottomland Forest, and sustainable meadows; circulation features such as Dairy Farm, Powder Mill, Entomology, Research, BioControl, Poultry, and Beaver Dam Roads, as well as some secondary cluster and service roads; five main cluster arrangements including the 100 Area Cluster (BDI), 200 Area Cluster (BAI), 300 Area Cluster (BAI-Parasitological Laboratory of the Zoological Division), 400 Area Cluster (Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine- Entomology Research Division) and 1000 Area Cluster (Animal Disease Station); and small-scale features such as some fencing, some culvert heads, an amphitheater, and a cemetery (Robinson and Associates 1998).

Bureau of Animal Industry

Building 205 was a barn used by the Division of Animal Husbandry, in the BAI, the largest bureau at the agricultural research facility. The BAI, the earliest of the USDA's research bureaus at the BARC, came to Central Farm in 1910 when its Dairy and Animal Husbandry Divisions established an experiment 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, which led the continued development of the site in the 1920s. The BAI's Animal Husbandry Division was the largest section (in both area occupied and staff) at BARC. The BAI's research initially focused on the breeding of domestic animals

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(all except dairy) (Robinson and Associates 1998).

By the early 1930s, the BAI's Animal Husbandry Division's needs far exceeded its facilities. To address this need, the PWA allotted over $1 million for a major construction program that included laboratories, an abattoir, and animal buildings that were constructed with the assistance of CCC workers and PWA and Civil Works Administration funding and oversight. A new Main Laboratory (Building 200) 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 and developed facilities using New Deal funding sources at the Central and East Farms. The Zoological Division moved its experimental headquarters to, and the Animal Disease Station was established, at BARC's Central Farm in 1929 and in 1935, respectively (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). 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 was highly decentralized, with research undertaken at 148 locations, including the much diminished 450-scientist facility at BARC (OTA 1981).

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

History of the Meat Laboratory Holding Shelter, Building 205

Building 205 is located on one of the five major clusters arranged on the Central Farm known as the 200 Area Cluster (Robinson and Associates 1998). The 200 Area Cluster is one of four clusters that date to the New Deal era expansion. The Animal Husbandry Central Laboratory area included buildings 200 to 208 and associated sub-buildings. The 200 Area Cluster partially follows a 1934 design by A.D. Taylor and Delos Smith that features park-like conditions with trees and clipped lawns.

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The Meat Laboratory Holding Shelter, later referred to as the Sheep Barn, was designed on May 26, 1938 by H.F. Sehorn, a landscape architect in the Public Buildings Administration (Robinson and Associates 1998). It is recorded as being constructed in 1945 for the same purpose. The north addition is not dated, but appears to have been constructed early in the building's history, as it appears on aerial photography from 1957 (NETR 2017). The original design drawing indicated an eight bay building divided into four linear quadrants (two bays each) divided internally by cedar posts and plank fence partitions, with wood gates lining the east elevation. The northernmost quadrant was designated for a platform scale. It is unclear whether these original partitions were built as designed. Additionally, the building's concrete-block construction and stucco cladding were conscious and informed decisions by the architects to promote fire safety among livestock and experimental/laboratory buildings (Robinson and Associates 1998).

NRHP Evaluation

Building 205 was evaluated in 1997 to determine its individual significance or status as contributing or non-contributing property within BARC, a 6,582-acre federal agricultural research facility. BARC was previously determined eligible in its entirety for listing in the 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 the building to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a contributing property within BARC. This evaluation concurs that while Building 205 is not individually 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.

Under Criterion A, Building 205 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, PWA, and 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 205 was specifically used as a meat laboratory holding shelter or sheep barn for the BAI, the largest bureau at the agricultural research facility, and its Division of Animal Husbandry. BARC scientists and researchers made valuable scientific contributions, both in foundational and applicable science.

BARC and Building 205 have not been determined significant under Criterion B for their association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Under Criterion C, Building 205 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 the facility's buildings share

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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 205, while relatively modest in design, represents an example of the experimental, and purpose-driven agricultural architecture and fire-safe construction trends for which BARC is significant, and contributes to the overall landscape.

The agricultural research facility was not evaluated under Criterion D for its yielding, or likelihood to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
Building 205 retains its original location and has the same setting within an agricultural research complex. It is specifically linked to its research functions and ties to the Animal Husbandry Division laboratory and research buildings in the 200 Area Cluster. The feeling of, and association with, an agricultural research center is intact. The building has an early north addition, which is more than 50 years old, and retains its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The building has been vacant since 2009. There is vegetation overgrowth around the north end of the building and extending south along both the east and west elevations, and the north addition roof has partially collapsed.

Although Building 205 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

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Robinson and Associates

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