Capsule Summary

PG:62-37
Building 255A, Experimental Poultry Breeder House
United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
Beltsville, Prince George's County, Maryland
1962

Built in 1962, Building 255A was used as an Experimental Poultry Breeder House located within the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). Building 255A is a large rectangular, one-story wood-frame building that is clad with an engineered pressed board siding, rests on a concrete block foundation with poured concrete slab, and has a metal gable roof with an elastomeric covering and two ridgeline vents. The building features two metal doors and three louvered vents on the west elevation, a wood door on the south elevation, a door opening on the north elevation, and three ventilators on the east elevation. In 1998, the building was altered, including the infilling of some exterior doors and interior trenches, and the installation of steel doors and changes to the interior layout. In 2008, Building 255A was vacated. Currently, the building is in poor condition.

Located on BARC's Central Farm, Building 255A was an Experimental Poultry Breeder House for the Animal Husbandry Research Division. The Central Farm is the largest of the farms at BARC and contains the original acreage that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchased in 1910. Building 255A is located within the 200 Area Cluster at BARC that date to the New Deal era expansion. The poultry area included buildings 236 through 281. The poultry area's design had two formal and ornamental planting areas, and trees were planted on a relaxed grid to provide shade to the poultry houses. Building 255A's building plans were drafted from January to September of 1962. The building was constructed off of Poultry Road across from other facilities that supported poultry research at BARC.

Building 255A has not previously been evaluated to determine its individual significance or status as a contributing or non-contributing resource within BARC. This evaluation concludes that while Building 255A is not individually significant, it is a contributing resource within BARC, a 6,582-acre federal agricultural research facility, which was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in its entirety as the largest national research facility for the USDA and for its role as the most diversified agricultural research complex in the world. BARC's period of significance ranges from its inception in 1910 to its reclassification as a regional center in 1984. Under Criterion A, Building 255A is a contributing element 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. Under Criterion C, Building 255A is also a contributing element within BARC, which is significant for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Though Building 255A is a later addition to the BARC landscape and a relatively modest design, it represents a good example of the experimental agricultural architecture for which BARC is significant, and contributes to BARC's overall landscape. Although Building 255A does not reach the level of significance necessary for individual listing on the NRHP, it maintains its significance with BARC under Criteria A and C.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ___ no ___

Property Name: Building 255A: Experimental Poultry Breeder House Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Inventory Number: PG:62-37

Address: 10300 Baltimore Avenue, Building 255A, Central Farm City: Beltsville Zip Code: 20705

County: Prince George's County USGS Topographic Map: Beltsville 7.5-Minute

Owner: U.S.A. - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Is the property being evaluated a district? ___yes

Tax Parcel Number: 0143 Tax Map Number: 0019 Tax Account ID Number: 01-0070151

Project: NEPA Predesign and Hazmat Services Project for BARC Agency: USDA

Site visit by MHT Staff: X no ___yes Name: _____ Date: _____

Is the property located within a historic district? X yes ___no

If the property is within a district District Inventory Number: PG:62-14

NR-listed district ___yes Eligible district X yes District Name: Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource X yes ___no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ___

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)

Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ___yes ___no

Criteria: X A ___B X C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Addendum to MIHP Form for PG:62-14

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

The Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) was one of the largest agricultural research facilities in the United States (Figures 1 and 2). Owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the facility was established in Beltsville in 1910 and significantly expanded in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1960s, USDA's research program began evolving from an internationally recognized research center to a decentralized model. In 1984, it was reclassified as a regional center. BARC's period of significance is from its inception in 1910 to its reclassification as a regional center in 1984.

Building Location

BARC identifies Building 255A's address as 10300 Baltimore Avenue - Building 255A, Central Farm. Building 255A is 690 feet southeast of the intersection of Poultry Road and Odell Road.

Building Description

Located at the Poultry Complex in the Central Farm of the USDA's BARC, the Experimental Poultry Breeder House is a large rectangular building (Figures 3-5). The front of the rectangular building faces south towards a dirt road (Photos 1 and 2). The 1-story wood-frame building is clad with ¼" "Weatherall" siding, which is an engineered pressed board. The building rests on a concrete block foundation with poured concrete slab. The metal gable roof has an elastomeric covering and two ridgeline

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended X **Eligibility not recommended** ___

Criteria: X **A** ___**B** X **C** ___**D** **Considerations:** ___**A** ___**B** ___**C** ___**D** ___**E** ___**F** ___**G** ___**None**

Comments:

Nathan Lindsey — 05/23/2017
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services **Date**

B Cantz — 6/8/17
Reviewer, NR Program **Date**

Revised Oct 25, 2014

vents. The building features two metal doors and three louvered vents on the west elevation, a wood door on the south elevation, a door opening on the north elevation, and three ventilators on the east elevation (Photos 1-4). A second single door on the north elevation and a single door and a center overhead door on the south elevation were likely infilled circa 1998 when the steel doors on the west elevation and two interior corridors were installed, four interior trenches for removing manure were infilled, and the wood and chicken wire coops were replaced with fenced pens and wood feed boxes. The building was vacated in 2008.

History of Property

Building 255A was constructed in 1962 as an Experimental Poultry Breeding House for the Animal Husbandry Research Division. The 2,800 square-foot building, commonly referenced as a Chicken House, was located on the 2,980-acre Central Farm, the largest of the farms at BARC. The Central Farm contains the original acreage USDA purchased in 1910 and historically was used by the Bureaus of Dairy Industry and Animal Industry, and their successor units for several decades. The designed farm landscape of Central Farm contained most of the buildings at BARC, with research and support being their primary land uses (P.A.C. Spero 1998, Robinson and Associates 1998). Building 255A 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 poultry area included buildings 236 through 281. 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. The poultry area's design had two formal and ornamental planting areas, and trees were planted on a relaxed grid to provide shade to the poultry houses.

In 1953, the USDA had a major reorganization that abolished the bureaus as organizational units, which resulted in BARC becoming part of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) (Wiser and Rasmussen 1966; Matthews 1953). In 1959, research at ARS was undertaken by divisions and departments, with the Animal Husbandry Research Division and Animal Disease and Parasite Research Division conducting poultry research (USDA 1959). During that same year, there were at least 700 small animal and poultry houses. By January 1962, Building 255A's building plans were drafted showing its layout, wall construction, ventilation needs, and roof design. Throughout the year, other aspects of the building were planned, such as the building's grading in April 1962, the interior layout of the poultry compartments by May 1962, and the lighting and plumbing in September 1962. Dr. C. W. Hess is referenced as the building's designer in the May 1962 plans and is again referenced in the general notes of the September 1962 building plans for lighting and plumbing.

The 2,800 square-foot building was constructed off of Poultry Road and across from Poultry Lab Building 262 and Poultry Physiological Lab Building 263, which were both constructed in 1934 (Master Plan 1996). By the time Building 255A was constructed, BARC was starting to decline in significance as funding was being directed to experimental stations elsewhere in the country (Sinclair 1988). By 1988, BARC had diminished to 7,000 acres and by 1990 there were approximately 800 buildings still being used as research laboratories, greenhouses, barns, poultry houses, shops, and offices. Poultry research was still being conducted during this time period (USDA ca. 1990).

NRHP Evaluation

Building 255A has not previously been evaluated to determine its individual significance or status as contributing or non-contributing to BARC. This evaluation concludes that while Building 255A is not individually significant, it is a contributing building of BARC, a 6,582-acre federal agricultural research facility, which was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in its entirety as the largest national research facility for the USDA and for its role as the most diversified agricultural research complex in the world. 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 255A is contributing to 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 and pest control. Building

255A was specifically used as an Experimental Poultry Breeding House for the Animal Husbandry Research Division. BARC scientists and researchers made valuable scientific contributions, both in foundational and applicable science.

BARC and Building 255A have not been determined significant under Criterion B for their association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Under Criterion C, Building 255A is contributing to BARC, which is significant for embodying 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 have 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. Though Building 255A is a later addition to the BARC landscape and a relatively modest design, it represents a good example of the experimental agricultural architecture 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 likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Building 255A 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 surrounding buildings, such as Buildings 262 and 263, which were both poultry laboratory buildings constructed in 1934. The feeling of, and association with, an agricultural research center is intact. Building 255A has seen little alteration and retains its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The building has been vacant since 2008 and is in poor condition. There is considerable overgrowth on the building and some of the exterior doors have been removed.. Although Building 255A does not reach the level of significance necessary for individual listing on the NRHP, it maintains its significance with BARC under Criteria A and C.

Prepared by: Lorin Farris, MA (AECOM) Date Prepared: March 17, 2017

PG: 62-37

USGS 7.5-minute Topographic Quadrangle, Beltsville, MD, 1964, photorevised 1979

CLIENT	U.S. Department of Agriculture
PROJ	USDA ARS Beltsville
SCALE	1:24,000
SOURCE	ESRI 2017
	Q:\Projects\ENV\IAP\CRM\USDA - BARC CRM study\900-GIS and Graphics\920 GIS\BARC_Bldg_255A_topo.mxd

N

TITLE: Central Farm, Building 255A

AECOM
12420 Milestone Center Dr.
Germantown, MD 20876

PROJ NO 60521079

FIGURE 4

PG: 62-37

CLIENT	U.S. Department of Agriculture
PROJ	USDA ARS Beltsville
SCALE	1:1,500
SOURCE	ESRI 2017
	Q:\Projects\ENV\IAP\CRM\USDA - BARC CRM study\900-GIS and Graphics\920 GIS\BARC_Bldg_255A_aerial.mxd

N

TITLE

Central Farm, Building 255A

AECOM 12420 Milestone Center Dr. Germantown, MD 20876

PROJ NO	60521079
FIGURE	5

Photograph Log

PG:62-37
NEPA Predesign and Hazmat Services Project for
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
Building 255A: Experimental Poultry Breeder House
10300 Baltimore Avenue, Central Farm
Prince George's County, MD
Brian Cleven, Architectural Historian/Photographer
12/2/2016
MD SHPO

1. PG;62-37_2016-12-2_01.tif, Building 255A, Experimental Poultry Breeder House, View of South and West Elevations, Looking Northeast
2. PG;62-37_2016-12-2_02.tif, Building 255A, Experimental Poultry Breeder House, View of South and West Elevations, Looking Northeast
3. PG;62-37_2016-12-2_03.tif, Building 255A, Experimental Poultry Breeder House, View of West and North Elevations, Looking Southeast
4. PG;62-37_2016-12-2_04.tif, Building 255A, Experimental Poultry Breeder House, View of North and East Elevations, Looking Southwest

PG:62-37

MD_Prince George's County_Experimental Poultry Breeder House_0001

B. Cleven, 12/2/2016

#1 of 4

PG: 62-37

MD_Prince George's County_Experimental Poultry Breeder House
_0002

B. Cleven, 12/2/2016

#2 of 4

PG: 62-37

MD_ Prince George's County_Experimental Poultry Breeder House

_0003

B. Cleven, 12/2/2016

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PG: 62-37

MD_Prince George's County_Experimental Poultry Breeder House

_0004

B. Cleven, 12/2/2016

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