

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes   
no

Property Name: Building 261: Boiler House  
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Inventory Number: PG:62-57  
 10300 Baltimore Avenue, Building 261  
 Address: 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: DOEs of 69 Buildings at BARC Agency: USDA  
 Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is the property located within a historic district?  yes  no

*If the property is within a district* District Inventory Number: PG:62-14  
 NR-listed district  yes Eligible district  yes District Name: Beltsville Agricultural Research Center  
 Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource  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:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None  
 Documentation on the property/district is presented in: MIHP Form, PG:62-14

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and 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 261 as 10300 Baltimore Avenue, Building 261, Central Farm. Building 261 is located 34' west of Poultry Road; 494' south of the intersection of Odell and Poultry Roads.

Building Description

Located in the USDA ARS BARC's Central Farm (Figures 3 through 6), Building 261 (Photo 1) was built as a boiler house. Building 261 is a rectangular building and faces west towards an unnamed access road on its west side that parallels Poultry Road to its east. The single-story building is oriented on a north-south axis. Building 261 is 29'4" long and 39'4" wide, and is

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Eligibility recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility not recommended <input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments: _____	
<u>[Signature]</u> Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	<u>5/14/2018</u> Date
<u>[Signature]</u> Reviewer, NR Program	<u>7/9/18</u> Date

20180102

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Continuation Sheet No. 1

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constructed of concrete blocks and poured concrete. The exterior has a projecting brick water table with brick window sills, with a 3/4" stucco finish above the brick (Photo 2). The west side has a central ribbon of windows filled with six-light, steel awning sashes flanked by single-leaf entrances with nine-light wood doors (Photo 3). The windows and doors of Building 261 feature multiple-light transoms. The north side has a central entrance with double-leaf, nine-light, wood doors. The entrance is flanked by windows. The east side has a central ribbon of windows, flanked by paired windows. The south side has two sets of paired windows. A metal chimney projects upward from the south side of the building, and is attached to the building between the two windows. The flat, built-up roof is surrounded on all four sides by a short parapet wall surmounted by terra cotta coping with a simple brick cornice. The interior of Building 261 is open with two large metal boilers in the center of the room (Photo 4). The interior is mostly all one level, but the south end of the interior contains pipe trenches and a rectangular section in the southwest corner several feet below the poured-concrete floor, surrounded by metal railings.

Building 261, vacant since 2012, is in fair condition.

History of Property

*Central Farm*

Building 261, 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 circa 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 circa 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 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 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:

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- 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 – Poultry Research Division), 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 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).

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*History of the Boiler House, Building 261*

One set of original design drawings, dated March 1934, exists for Building 261. The design drawings were drafted by the USDA Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, Division of Plans and Service. The timeline and construction methodology for Building 261 is consistent with the New Deal development of BARC, prioritizing simple utilitarian design elements including symmetry, strong central entrances, concrete and brick construction, and balancing fireproof materials and construction techniques with the buildings' individual designs and programs. The construction and simple design elements of Building 261 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). A large brick chimney was indicated for Building 261 but it is unknown if that chimney was built; a smaller metal chimney currently projects upwards from the south side of the building.

Another set of design drawings for Building 261 dated June 1963, shows the renovation of the interior for the installation of two new boilers. Principle alterations to Building 261 include the new boilers on the interior, and the removal of the original brick chimney, if it was in fact constructed as indicated in the 1934 plans.

Building 261 has been vacant since 2012 and is in fair condition.

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation

Building 261 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 261 to be eligible for listing in the NRHP as a contributing property within BARC. This evaluation concurs that while Building 261 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. The criteria applied to evaluate properties for the NRHP are presented below.

Under Criterion A, Building 261 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 261 was specifically designed and operated as a boiler house within the BAI's 200 Area Cluster - Poultry Research Division. BARC scientists and researchers made valuable scientific contributions, both in foundational and applicable science.

BARC and Building 261 have not been determined significant under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Under Criterion C, Building 261 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 majorities 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 261, 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.

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Neither BARC nor Building 261 specifically has been evaluated under Criterion D for its yielding, or likelihood to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Building 261 retains its original location and setting within an agricultural research complex. Building 261 is specifically linked in its design and operation as a boiler house and its ties to the BIA's 200 Area Cluster (Poultry Research Division) research buildings. The feeling of, and association with, an agricultural research center is intact. Building 261 maintains key elements of its original design including massing, fenestration, roofing pattern, cladding, and internal layouts, despite the small changes made for the installation of new boilers in 1963. Building 261 retains its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Building 261 has been vacant since 2012 and is in fair condition.

Although Building 261 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

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.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0Muy9v0PQckC&lpg=PA29&dq=The%20Role%20and%20Development%20of%20Public%20Agricultural%20Research&pg=PA29#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed December 21, 2016).

Robinson and Associates

1998 *Historic Site Survey, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland*. On file at the Maryland Historical Trust.

United States Department of Agriculture

1934 *Boiler House, F.P. 74-75, Beltsville, MD*. Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, Division of Plans and Service. On file, Architectural Drawings Collection, Facilities and Engineering Branch, Building 261, BARC.

Circa

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

1963 *Boilers and Slab Layout for Bldg. 261*. On file, Architectural Drawings Collection, Facilities and Engineering Branch, Building 426, BARC.

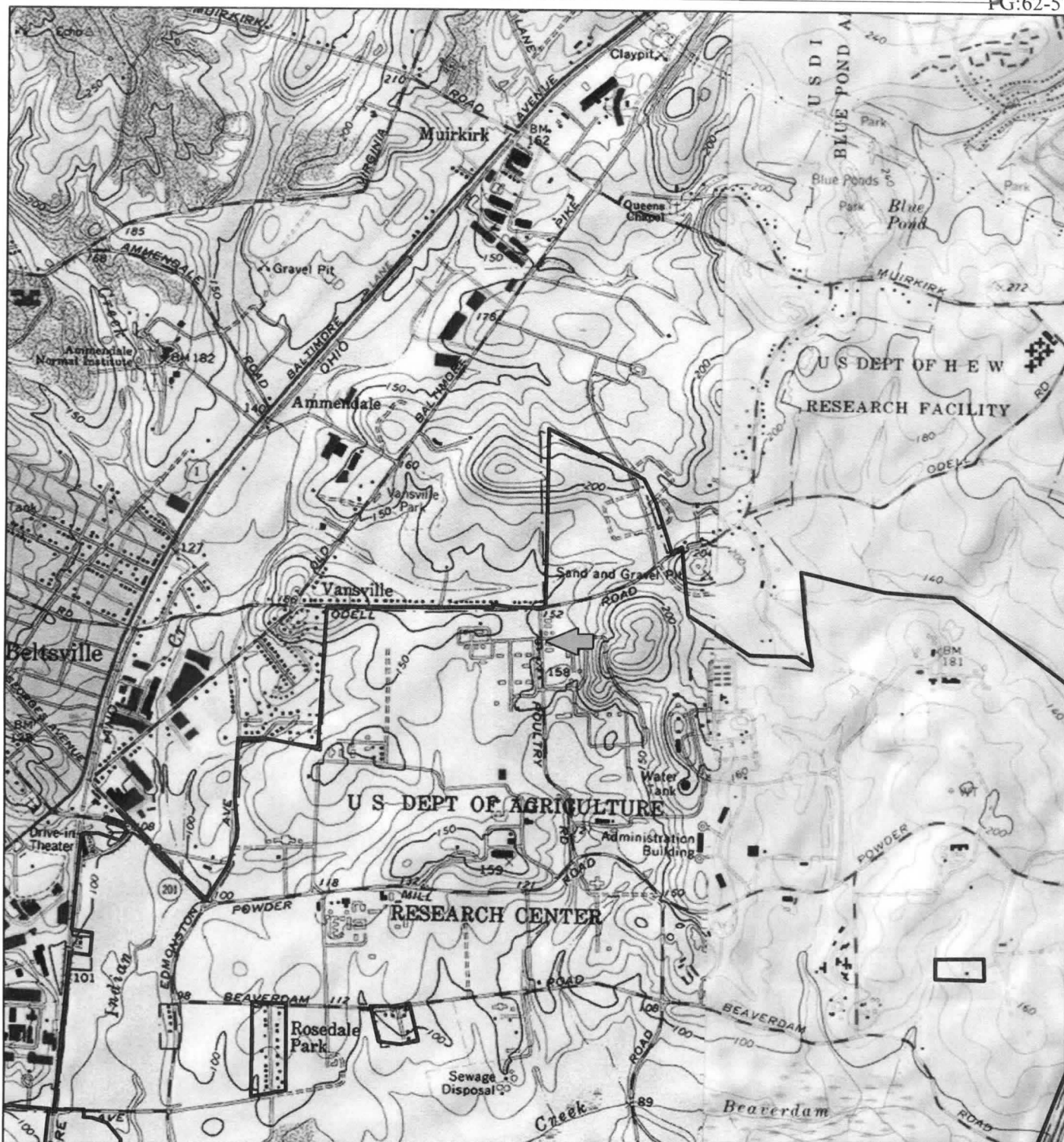
Wiser, Vivian and Wayne D. Rasmussen

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

Prepared by: Patrick Thompson, MHP (AECOM)

Date Prepared: March 29, 2018



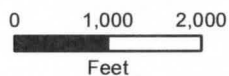


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**Boiler House, Building 261**

Beltsville, Prince George's County

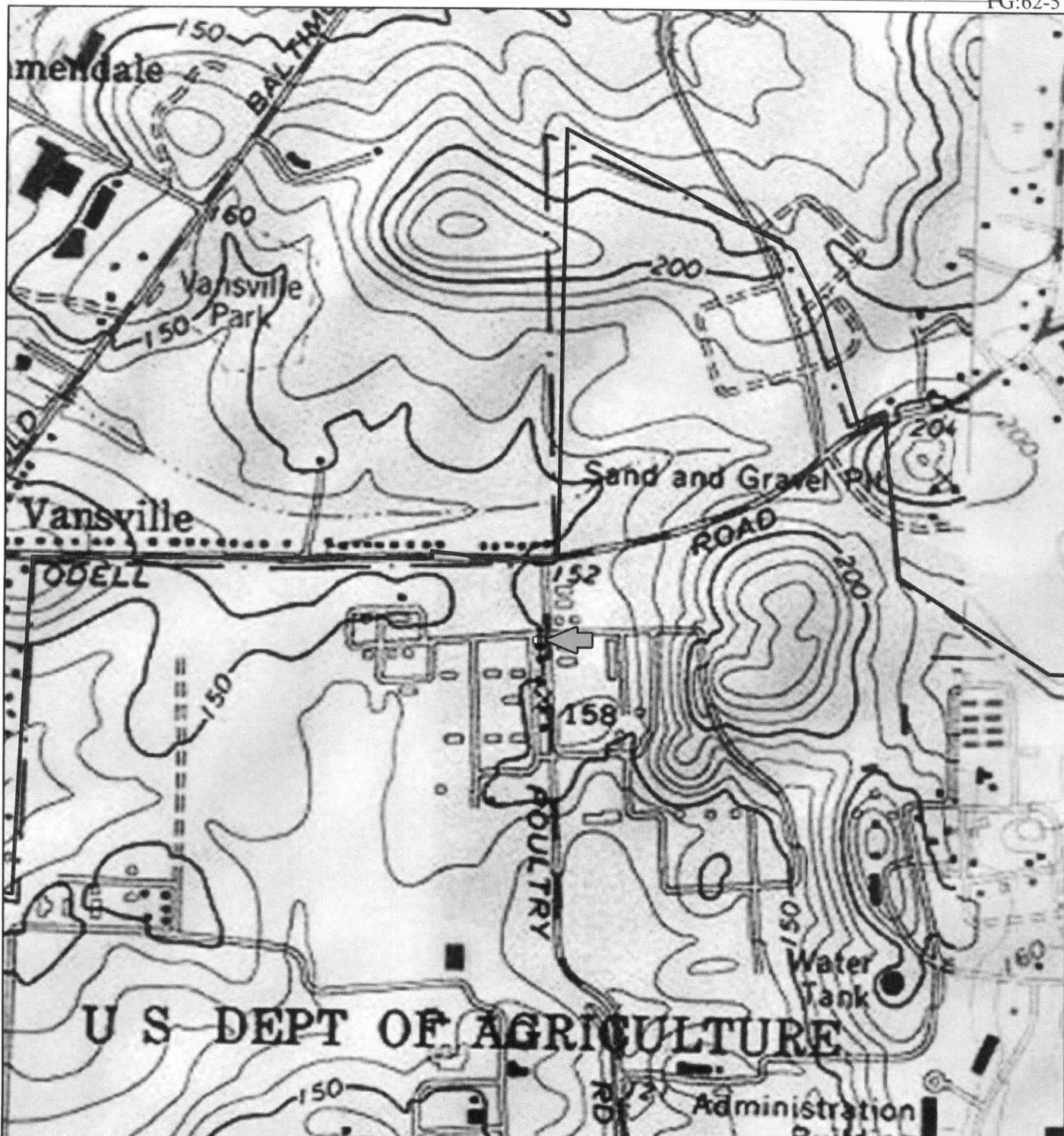
USGS 7.5-minute Topographic Quadrangle, Beltsville, MD, 1964, photorevised 1979



CLIENT	USDA
PROJ	DOEs for 69 Buildings at BARC
SCALE	1:24,000
SOURCE	ESRI 2017
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TITLE	Central Farm, Building 261
<b>AECOM</b>	12420 Milestone Center Dr. Germantown, MD 20876
PROJ NO	60551541
FIGURE	4

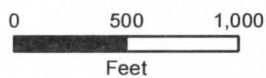


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Boiler House, Building 261

Beltsville, Prince George's County

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



CLIENT	USDA
PROJ	DOEs for 69 Buildings at BARC
SCALE	1:10,000
SOURCE	ESRI 2017
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TITLE	Central Farm, Building 261
	12420 Milestone Center Dr. Germantown, MD 20876
	PROJ NO 60551541 FIGURE 5

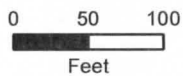


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**Boiler House, Building 261**

Beltsville, Prince George's County

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



CLIENT	USDA
PROJ	DOEs for 69 Buildings at BARC
SCALE	1:1,500
SOURCE	ESRI 2017
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TITLE		Central Farm, Building 261	
<b>AECOM</b>	12420 Milestone Center Dr. Germantown, MD 20876	PROJ NO	60551541
		FIGURE	6



**USDA**

**DOEs for 69 Buildings at BARC**

**Building 261: Boiler House**

**10300 Baltimore Avenue, Central Farm**

**Prince George's County, MD**

**Photographer: Brian Clevon, Architectural Historian**

**September 22 and December 7, 2017**

**MD SHPO**

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

1. PG;62-57\_2017\_12\_07\_01.tif, Building 261, Boiler House, Central Farm, View of East Elevation, Looking West
2. PG; 62-57\_2017\_12\_07\_02.tif, Building 261, Boiler House, Central Farm, View of North Elevation, Looking South
3. PG; 62-57\_2017\_12\_07\_03.tif, Building 261, Boiler House, Central Farm, View of the West and South Elevations, Looking Northeast
4. PG; 62-57\_2017\_09\_22\_04.tif, Building 261, Boiler House, Central Farm, Overview of the Interior, Looking Northeast



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MD - Prince George's County - Boiler House - 2001

R. Claven, 12/07/2017

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PG: 62-57

MD - Prince George's County - Boiler House - 0002

B. Chen, 12/07/2017

#2 of 4

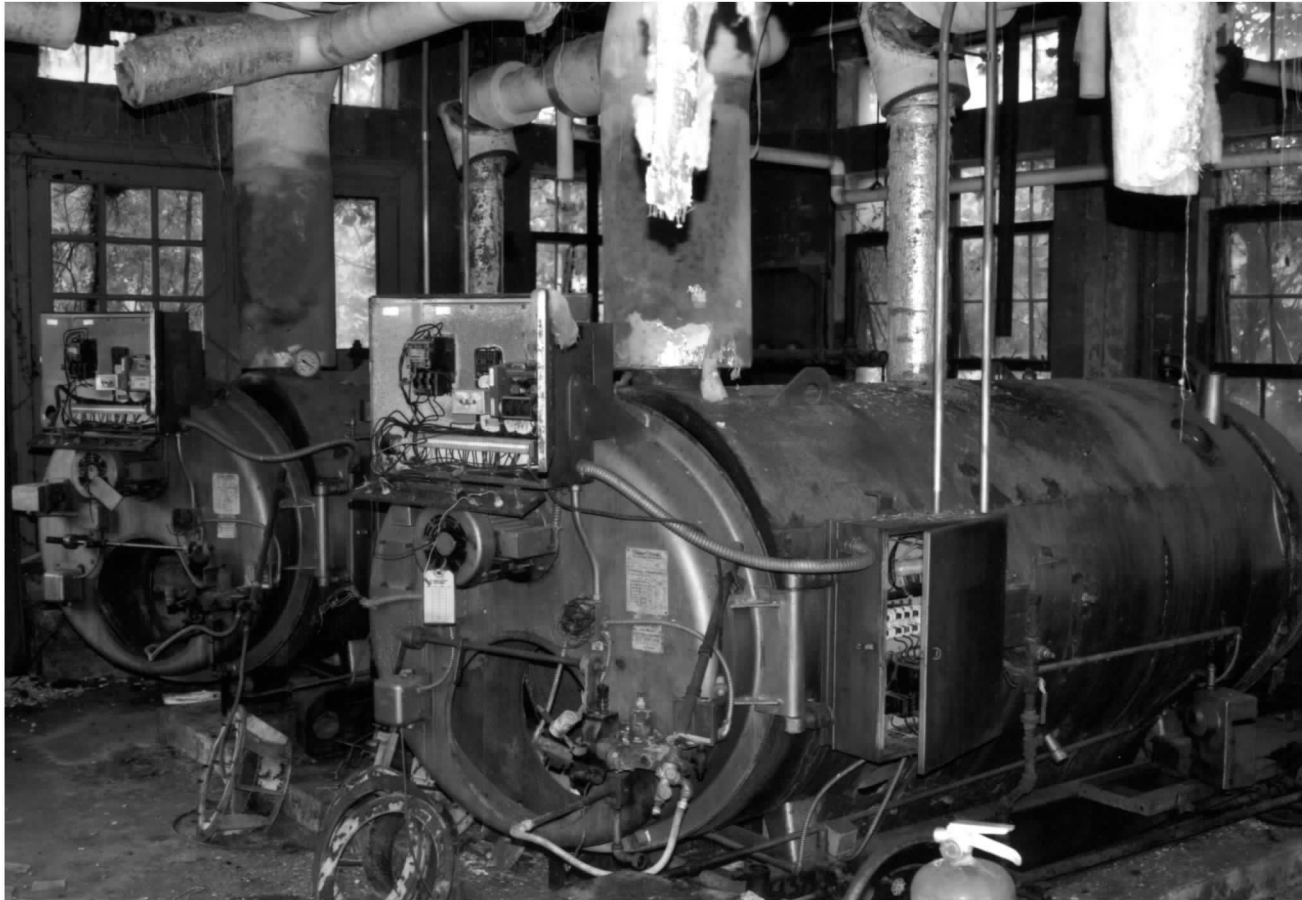


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MD - Prince George's County - Boiler House - 0003

B. Clevin, 12/07/2017

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MD - Prince George's County - Boiler House - 6004

B. Claven, 9/22/2017

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