

NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

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Building 209B: Walnut Grange Smokehouse, BARC

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Building 209B, the Walnut Grange Smokehouse, is located in the Walnut Grange/Director's Residence cluster, adjacent to the Animal Husbandry area of USDA ARS BARC's Central Farm (Figures 3-6). The square building faces south towards Animal Husbandry and Powder Mill Roads. The building is oriented on an east-west axis, with the entrance on the west elevation, facing the historic plantation house. The Smokehouse is one bay wide and one bay in length. The one-story brick building is capped with a shallowed stepped brick cornice and pyramidal roof (Photo 1). The west elevation features a central vertical plank wood door with a small rectangular window in the top third (Photo 2). The north and south elevations each feature a central square window with an overlapping wood lintel. These windows feature wood framing and are glazed with single pieces of glass, and were added since the building was evaluated in May 1990 (Pearl 1990) (Photos 3 and 4). The roof has been reclad with a plywood underlayment and composite shingles. The interior of the smokehouse features an earthen floor and a concrete threshold. The exterior of the smokehouse is painted white, and may have previously been limewashed. The interior brick is unpainted and appears to be leaching efflorescence. The building has been vacant since 1997. Overall the building is in good condition.

History of Property

History of the Walnut Grange Smokehouse, 209B

Building 209, Walnut Grange (also referred to as the Superintendent's House and Director's Residence), was built in 1805 as the plantation homestead for Mary Snowden and her Virginian husband, John Carlyle Herbert, on 1,200 acres of farmland. The smokehouse and other attendant buildings were likely constructed around 1850, during a reconstruction phase following a significant fire in the house. The fire and subsequent reconstruction occurred between John Herbert's passing in 1846 and Mary (Snowden) Herbert's death in 1857. The advertisement for sale of the property in 1859 referenced 700 acres of land and "recently built" outbuildings, including the smokehouse, placing its construction in the decade between the Herberts' deaths (1846-1857).

Sale of Walnut Grange and 375 acres to the Hall family in 1859 (deeded in 1863) conveyed the property to the Hall family, who held it until its sale to the government in 1910. The Walnut Grange tract, including its full acreage, was the first purchase for the establishment of the USDA's BARC (Pearl 1990).

The homestead was used as the residence for the Superintendent of the Experiment Farm during the earliest years of BARC, in the area later known as Central Farm. The building was subsequently used as offices, and was proposed for reconfiguration as a residence in 1934. The house underwent several subsequent alterations, and later became the Office of Operations for BARC. Building 209B is the only remaining outbuilding and appears to have been used as a shed or other storage building.

Central Farm

Building 209B is located on the 2,980-acre Central Farm, the largest and oldest of all of BARC farms. The USDA acquired the Central Farm in stages between 1910 and 1939, and most the buildings and landscape were constructed and

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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 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 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 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 (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,

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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 209B, originally a smokehouse, was used as a shed and outbuilding by the BAI, the largest bureau at the agricultural research facility, and later the Office of Operations. 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 (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 Civilian Conservation Corps (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 department's agricultural research program that continued through the 1970s (Office of Technology Assessment [OTA] 1981). The decentralization had long-lasting consequences for BARC. The USDA'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).

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Over the years, the 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).

NRHP Evaluation

Building 209B 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 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 the building to be eligible with Building 209 for listing in the NRHP as a contributing property within BARC. This evaluation concurs that while Building 209B is not individually significant, it contributes to the overall significance of BARC. The building is significant to the development and occupation of Walnut Grange (Building 209; PG: 62-13), which predates BARC in construction, and was the first building and land purchase toward the development of the agricultural facility. The subsequent history and development of BARC also reflects New Deal policies and programs, and contains notable landscape architecture, Georgian Revival architecture, and experimental agricultural architecture.

Under Criterion A, Building 209B 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, and Building 209B directly contributed to the housing and office functions of these programs. 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. BARC scientists and researchers made valuable scientific contributions, both in foundational and applicable science. Building 209B was specifically used as an outbuilding and supply shed for the BAI, the largest bureau at the agricultural research facility, as was supplemental to Building 209's occupation by the Office of Operations for the entire complex.

BARC and Building 209B have not been determined significant under Criterion B for their association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Under Criterion C, Building 209B 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. While Building 209B predates the architectural design and construction phases of BARC's development, the Smokehouse and its parent building, Walnut

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Grange (Building 209) were deliberately integrated into the site planning and landscape design of Central Farm. Building 209 served as the Superintendent’s House as the first farms of BARC (Animal Husbandry and Dairy) were developed in its proximity. BARC’s larger 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 209B, in conjunction with Building 209, functioned as a fixed point around which the rest of the master planning and landscape were developed.

The agricultural research facility was not evaluated under Criterion D for its yielding, or likelihood to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Building 209B retains its original location and has the same setting within an agricultural research complex, and presentation in a formerly residential context. It is specifically linked to the operations of BARC, 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 features two modern window additions (postdating 1990) and a reconstructed roof, but retains its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The building has been vacant since 1997.

Although Building 209B does not reach the level of significance necessary for individual listing in the NRHP, it maintains its significance within BARC under Criteria A and C.

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Eligibility Recommended: X **Eligibility Not Recommended:**

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

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**Maryland Historical Trust
Determination of Eligibility Form**

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