CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property Name: Ramsburg House/Bldg 016 Survey Number: P.G. #61-33

Property Address: Building 016 at Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) on Second Street

Project: Section 110 Agency: F/USDA

Site visit by MHT Staff: ___ no ___ yes Name _____ Date _____

District Name: BARC Historic District Survey Number: PG

_____ Listed X Eligible _____ Comment

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

The resource X contributes/____ does not contribute to the historic significance of this historic district in:

X Location X Design X Setting X Materials

X Workmanship X Feeling X Association

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The Ramsburg House is a residential structure which was existing when the USDA purchased the Sellman tract of land for the expansion of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). The two story frame dwelling appears to date from 1920s-1930s. When the building was originally surveyed in 1997, it was not assessed for its potential as a contributing resource to a historic district. USDA has now completed its survey of BARC. Their consultant determined that the entire 6582 acres is eligible. The Trust concurred with this determination. Building 016 is a contributing resource.

Documentation on the property is presented in: documentation report PR 229 in MHT library

Prepared by: Robinson & Associates

Lauren Bowlin 2/00
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

NR program concurrence: X yes ___ no ___ not applicable

B Kintz 2/29/00
Reviewer, NR program Date

Survey No. PG-61-33

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

____ Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
____ Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
____ Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
____ Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

____ Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
____ Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
____ Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
____ Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
____ Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
____ Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
____ Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
____ Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
____ Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
____ Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
__X__ Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
__X__ Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
____ Unknown Period (___ prehistoric ____ historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

____ Subsistence
____ Settlement
____ Political
____ Demographic
____ Religion
____ Technology
____ Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

__X__ Agriculture
__X__ Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
____ Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
__X__ Government/Law
____ Military
____ Religion
____ Social/Educational/Cultural
____ Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): domestic/ dwelling

Known Design Source: _____

ADMINISTRATIVE/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In connection with the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Master Plan, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) initiated procedures to comply with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). In October 1995, Robinson & Associates, Inc., an architectural history and historic preservation consulting firm, was retained as consultants to conduct a survey of residences on the BARC property. A total of 18 residential buildings were identified by ARS for inclusion in the survey, which is being completed in phases. This report presents an assessment of the National Register eligibility of one of the buildings in the fourth phase of evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

Soon after the initiation of the project, a windshield survey of 18 residences at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, including Building 016 was conducted. A subsequent site visit to Building 016 enabled closer investigation of both the interiors and exteriors of this residence; photographs were taken at this time.

Research regarding **Building 016** during the Department of Agriculture's ownership and use of the house and property was conducted at the National Archives, College Park Facility; and the Library of Congress. Previous work by Robinson & Associates on the history of BARC (Robinson & Associates, Inc., *Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Phase III Report,* December 1995) provided general information regarding the development of BARC.

Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Forms were prepared for each residence, based on the requirements specified in the *Guidelines for Completing the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form.*

EVALUATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY

Following is an evaluation of Building 016 (the Ramsburg House), which was considered under Criteria A, B, and C at the local and national levels of significance. The relevant National Register criteria, as listed in the *National Register Bulletin 16* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division), read as follows:

> The quality of **significance** in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:
>
> **A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or**
>
> **B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or**
>
> **C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or**

> **method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; . . .**

The Ramsburg House - Building 016

Criterion A
Given current sources of information concerning settlement and agriculture patterns in Prince George's County, there does not appear to be anything outstanding or unusual about the history of the house and the property. It does not meet Criterion A. It seems a fairly typical example of an early twentieth century bungalow, at which no significant events are known to have occurred. Used as a residence for the government staff at BARC as a practical measure, the Ramsburg House was one of a large number of properties used in a similar fashion throughout the Department of Agriculture's operations.

Criterion B

Building 016 does not appear to have significance under Criterion B. There is no evidence that any residents occupying Building 016 were associated with any significant contributions to local history. There is also no evidence that people significant to the history of BARC lived in the house.

Criterion C
Building 016 appears to be a typical example of a bungalow from the early decades of the twentieth century. The style is common in the United States, and in Prince George's County, in particular. The house does not appear to be altered and retains much of its original integrity. However, it does not meet Criterion C.

Criterion D
Building 016 was not evaluated for archeological significance.

EVALUATION AS PART OF A DISTRICT

Based on documentation previously submitted by ARS, the MHT has agreed that there is a historic district at the North Farm, which encompasses the administration, laboratory, and greenhouse buildings on the east half of the North Farm. The boundaries have not been ultimately determined - they are pending future evaluation of the North Farm buildings. Building 016 would be included in this survey.

PG:61-33
The Ramsburg House (Building 016) --Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

Location: Beltsville, MD (Prince Georges County)
Date of Construction: 1920s-30s
Access: Public

The Ramsburg House is sited on the former Sellman tract which was acquired by the Department of Agriculture in 1933. Although a firm construction date for the building cannot be determined, Building 016 appears to date from the 1920s or 1930s. The house was named for one of its early occupants, Morris Ramsburg, a Bureau of Plant Industry employee who occupied the house in the mid-1930s.

Survey No. P.G. #61-33
Magi No.
DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

1. Name

Historic Name Ramsburg House

Common Name and Building Number Building 016

2. Location

Street and Number Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

City, Town Beltsville

Congressional District

State and Zip Code MD 20705

County Prince George's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present use	
__ District	X Public	__ Occupied	X Agriculture	__ Museum
X Building(s)	__ Private	X Unoccupied	__ Commercial	__ Park
__ Structure	__ Both	__ Work in Progress	__ Educational	__ Private Residence
__ Site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	__ Entertainment	__ Religious
__ Dbject	__ In Process	_ Yes: Restricted	X Government	__ Scientific
	__ Being Considered	X Yes: Unrestricted	__ Industrial	__ Transportation
	__ Not Applicable	__ No	__ Military	X Other: Housing

4. Owner of Property

Name U.S. Department of Agriculture

Street & Number 10300 Baltimore Avenue

Telephone No.: (301) 504-5187

City, Town Beltsville

State and Zip Code MD 20705

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse Liber# 390 Folio# 160

Street & Number Main Street

City, Town Upper Marlboro

State and Zip Code MD

6. Representation in Existing Historic Survey

__ Yes X No

Title

Date

__ Federal __ State __ County __ Local

Depository for Survey Records

City, Town

State and Zip

7. Description

Survey No. P.G. #61-33

Condition

__ Excellent	__ Deteriorated	X_ Unaltered	_ Original Site
X_ Good	__ Ruins	__ Altered	X_ Moved
__ Fair	__ Unexposed		

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

Overview

Located at the North Farm of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, the Ramsburg House (Building 016) is sited on the former Sellman tract which was acquired by the Department of Agriculture in 1933. Although a firm construction date for the building cannot be determined, Building 016 appears to date from the 1920s or 1930s. The house was named for one of its occupants, Morris Ramsburg, a Department of Agriculture employee who lived in the house in the mid-1930s.

Exterior Description

The Ramsburg House, Building 016, is a two-story, wood-frame house with clapboard siding and a raised concrete-block foundation. The asphalt shingle roof is cross gabled. Storm windows have been added to the original six-over-one double hung windows. All windows have distinctive vertical board shutters.

The east facade (which faces Second Street) features the secondary cross gable, which resembles an oversized dormer. There is a screened, wood-frame, shed-roofed porch, which extends nearly halfway across the elevation. The door to the porch is off center and has two concrete stairs leading to it. The porch is supported by concrete corner blocks, and the crawl space beneath the porch has been closed off with wooden lattice. There is a single, one-over-one, double-hung window on the first story and two, evenly spaced, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the second level.

The west facade (which faces Little Paint Branch) features the secondary cross gable. There is a screened in porch with a smaller gable roof covering the first level of the house. Several concrete stairs lead to the screen porch door, which is off center. The roofing material is consistent with the core building and a gutter system is present. A crawl space beneath the porch has been enclosed by wooden lattice. There are two six-over-one double hung windows on the second level.

The south elevation contains the primary gable. There is a small, frame, entrance porch with a flight of six concrete stairs leading up to it. Three one-over-one double-hung windows are evenly spaced on the first story, and a single one-over-one double-hung window is centered on the second story. A centered stair in the concrete block foundation leads to the basement; it is flanked on each side by a small square window.

The north elevation contains the primary gable. There are two six-over-one double hung windows on the first level and one on the second level. The concrete block foundation forms a raised basement which contains several small rectangular windows.

Interior Description

This large, two-story house is accessed by doors both at the east and west facades. This house follows

a simple four room plan, with a square floor plan on the interior. What appears to be the original front entrance, on the west facade, opens into two formal rooms, probably originally a living room and dining room. Accessing the house thourgh the entrance on the east facade, there is a parlor to the left and a kitchen to the right. One set of stairs, centrally located in the house, leads to the second floor. Upstairs, bedrooms are located off a central hall with one full bath located also on this level. The house has a full basement.

Landscape

The Ramsburg House is located on Second Street, west of Route 1. It is located directly across the street from Buildings 017 and 018. The home site is set down in a knoll at a lower grade from the access road. The site is heavily wooded with miscellaneous shrubbery partially obscuring some facades.

8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. #61-33

Period	Areas of Significance			
__ Prehistoric	__ Archeology-Prehistoric	__ Community Planning	__ Landscape Architecture	__ Religion
__ 1400-1499	__ Archeology-Historic	__ Conservation	__ Law	__ Science
__ 1500-1599	X Agriculture	__ Economics	__ Literature	__ Sculpture
__ 1600-1699	__ Architecture	__ Education	__ Military	X Social/Humanit
__ 1700-1799	__ Art	__ Engineering	__ Music	__ Theater
__ 1800-1899	__ Commerce	__ Exploration/Settlement	__ Philosophy	__ Transportation
X 1900-	__ Communications	__ Industry	__ Politics/Govemment	__ Other (specify)
		__ Invention		

Specific Dates	Architect	Builder	Area
Applicable Criteria:	A __B __C __D		
Applicable Exception	__A __B __C __D __E __F __G		
Level of Significance	__ National __ State	__ Local	

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

Overview

The Ramsburg House is a wood-frame house which appears to have been constructed in the 1920s or 1930s. It is located on the Sellman tract which was acquired by the Bureau of Plant Industry in 1933. No documentation of its early history has been located. It was occupied in the mid-1930s by Morris Ramsburg, a Department of Agriculture employee.

The Bureau of Plant Industry[1]

The Bureau of Plant Industry was created on July 1, 1901, and organized plant science in the federal government is often traced to that date.[2] The Bureau's work, spanning over 50 years, brought agricultural research from science based largely on observation into the world of modern science. The Bureau's research over this period was voluminous and much of it represented important stepping stones for agriculture and/or scientific research in general. During the New Deal boom of the early 1930s, federal funds were appropriated by the Department of Agriculture for an expansion of BARC. Some of these funds went to develop the adminstrative core at North Farm for the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Building 016

Faced with the potential loss of their Arlington Farms facility, the Bureau of Plant Industry began looking for a new site for their experiments. A study was made of land areas in the suburban Washington area and two adjacent farms in the Beltsville area came out as the top choices. Soil type was a major criteria for picking the sites. According to a 1932 memorandum:

> These two farms lie together as a unit approximately one to two miles west of Beltsville, Md., back from the Baltimore Boulevard but with one small area fronting on the Boulevard for about 800 feet. The land has been selected particularly for the conduct of horticultural research. Of the Sellman tact [on which Building 016 was located], something over 100 acres is strong river bottom land, admirably suited for truck crop experiments. Approximately 100 acres is equally good land but slightly higher, and the balance is rolling land with good air drainage and particularly suited for experimental work with fruit crops.[3]

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[1]An extensive description of the Bureau of Plant Industry is contained in *Phase III Submission, Cultural Resources Report, Historic Overview, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center*, Robinson & Associates (December 1995).

[2]See "Plant Science After Fifty Years." *Science*, 113:Sup. 3 (June 29, 1951).

[3]Memorandum from William A. Taylor, Chief of the Bureau of Plant Industry, to the Secretary of Agriculture, January 18, 1932. (NARA RG. 17. Entry 19 (1943) Box 1933)

The two original plots identified in the 1930 survey of possible sites were owned by Irvine L. Miller and Theodore Alexander Sellman and Robert Lee Sellman. Working through a middleman, the Division secured options for the lease and purchase of the farms. The lease of the 300-acre Sellman farm was executed December 18, 1931 (effective February 1, 1932) with rent of $2,740 per year and an option to purchase the land at $150 per acre. According to one document, extant on the Sellman farm at the time it was acquired were:

1 dwelling house (14 rooms and basement, hot water heating system, water and bath, telephone, and Delco electric plant) [Building 023]
1 barn 45 x 72 ft., about 50 ft. high, with granary, basement and electric lights.
1 wagon shed about 35 x 50 with upstairs storage space.
2 implement sheds (fertilizer room in one, corn crib in the other).
1 2000 bushel corn crib.
1 potato cellar (about 20 x 30 x 8) with upstairs storage room.
1 five-room tenant house.
1 three-room tenant house.
1 four-room tenant house.
1 garage (16 x 20).
1 woodshed and pumphouse.
2 wells and three springs all working.
2 chicken houses.[4]

The fact that this list does not include the eight-room Ramsburg house may suggest that it was constructed after the land was acquired. However, it is also possible that the house was simply inadvertantly not included because it is located quite a distance from the rest of the Sellman buildings. The latter possibility seems more likely given the building's location, and the fact that other documents suggest that it was not built by the Bureau.[5] Without question, however, the building was on its current site in 1935. A June 14, 1935 description of residences on the North Farm describes a "[f]rame house with eight small rooms and bath and unpaved cellar, no furnace; approximate value $2500. Located on Canary Road 'along the southeast side of the Station land, and about 500 feet east of Little Paint Branch Creek."' The same document states that the house was occupied by, "Morris M. Ramsburg, Foreman laborer, at [a salary of] $135 per month." Little additional information has been located about Ramsburg, and within a few years he moved to a different house on the North Farm. Subsequent to his occupancy of Building 016, the house has been occupied by a number of employees of the USDA and most recently occupied by BARC security personnel. The building is currently unoccupied.

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[4]Lease between Theodore Alexander Sellman and Robert Lee Sellman and the United States of America, December 18, 1931. National Archives Records Administration, Record Group 54, "Deed & Title Records."

[5]For instance, a circa 1937 document lists only one dwelling (Building 018) as among the buildings constructed on the site by the Bureau of Plant Industry. (See List of Buildings and Funding Sources, NARA, Record Group 54, Entry 151A Box 1.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the site follows 2nd Street to the east, Canary Road to the south, and on the north, and west, the boundary is defined as extending 50 feet beyond the perimeter of the house itself.

11. Form Prepared by

Name/Title Regina Arlotto, Heather Ewing, Judith Robinson, Architectural Historians

Organization Robinson & Associates; Inc. Date November 30, 1996

Street & Number 1909 Q St., NW #300 Telephone (202) 234-2333

City or Town Washington, D.C. State 20009

Concurrence of State Preservation Officer

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

Return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCP/DHCD
100 Community Place
Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023
(410) 514-7600

Bibliography

Gowan, Alan. *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites.* July 1993.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

National Archives Records Administration, Record Group 16, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, Entry 17. Washington, D.C.

Phillips, Steven J. *Old House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture, 1600 to 1940.* Lakewood, CO: American Source Books, 1989.

Robinson & Associates, Inc. *Phase III Submission: Cultural Resources Report Historic Overview, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland.* Prepared for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service, December 1995.

Robinson & Associates, Inc. *Preliminary Historic Context Statement, North Farm, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland.* Prepared for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service, November 1994.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographical Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Periods: Industrial/Urban Dominance

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Agriculture

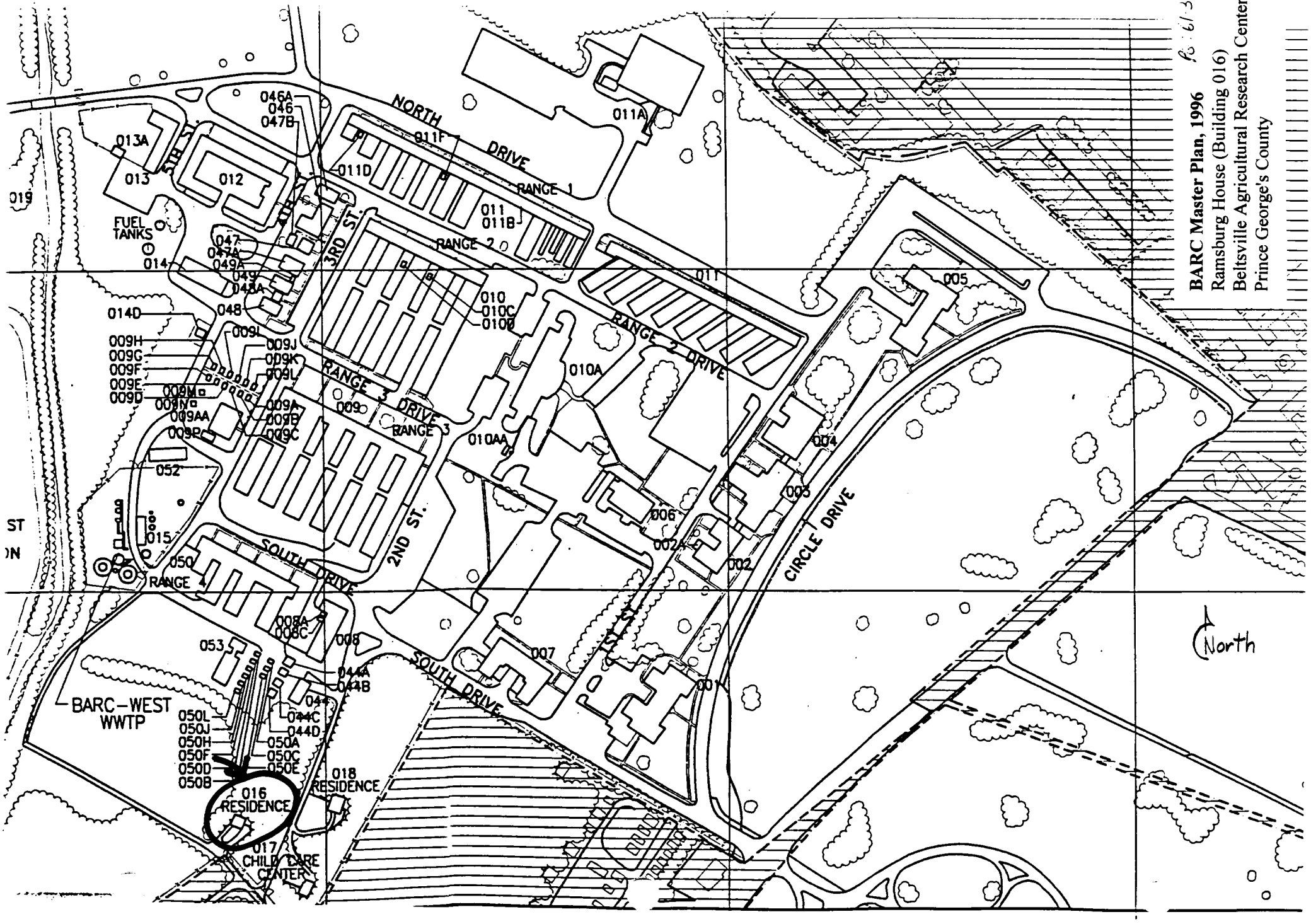
Resource Type:

Category: buildings

Historic Environment: rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): domestic

Known Design Source: none



BARC Master Plan, 1996
Ramsburg House (Building 016)
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
Prince George's County

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MARYLAND
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

PG: 61-33

NAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

U.S. Geological Survey, Beltsville, MD 1979
Ramsburg House (Building 016)
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
Prince George's County

PG. #61-33
Ramsburg House (Bldg. 016)
Prince Georges Co., MD
Robinson + Assoc., Inc.
MD. SHPO
East Facade looking West
July 1996
#1 of 4

PG #61-33
Ransburg House (Building 016)/BARC
Prince Georges Co., MD

MD SHPO

South Facade Looking north
July 1996
#2 of 4

PG. #61-33
Ramsburg House (Building 016)
BARC
Prince Georges Co, MD
Photo by: Robinson + Assocs., Inc
Negs at MD SHPO
Interior, view of Living room
July 1996
3 of 4

PG # 61-33
Ramsburg House (Building 016)
BARC
Prince Georges Co., MD
Photo by: Robinson & Assoc., Inc.
Negs at MD SHPO
Interior, view of Kitchen
July 1996
4 of 4