

**CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Property Name: William Shea House Building 216 Survey Number: P.G. #67-1

Property Address: Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)

Project: Section 110 Agency: F/USDA

Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

District Name: BARC Historic District Survey Number: PG

Listed  Eligible \_\_\_\_\_ Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 None

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

Location  Design  Setting  Materials

Workmanship  Feeling  Association

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

This Greek Revival style dwelling was constructed in the 1850s by Edward Herbert. The USDA purchased the property and house in 1939 after William Shea and his descendants farmed the land between 1870-1930s. Like many properties, USDA used this frame dwelling for employee housing in area dedicated to sheep research. The T-shaped residence rises two stories tall and is capped by a hipped roof. Greek Revival details can be found in the dentilled door surround, fenestration, mantel and staircase. Although alterations have occurred the William Shea House is a good example of a small scale building with Greek Revival influence in form and detailing. The building was determined individually eligible under Criterion C. In addition, the Shea House contributes to the BARC Historic District.

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

Prepared by: Robinson & Associates

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

NR program concurrence:  yes  no  not applicable

B. Kuntz 2/29/00  
Reviewer, NR program Date

*hmg*

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
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- 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:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- 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 project, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) initiated procedures to comply with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). In August 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 eligibility for one of the residences in the second phase of evaluation.

Building 216, the William Shea House, is one of the oldest properties on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. The land was originally part of the Black Walnut Levels tract owned by the prominent Maryland family of the Snowdens, upon which Walnut Grange was erected at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Shea House, built for Edward Herbert and his family in the 1850s, was subsequently owned by William Shea and his descendants, who farmed the property until it was acquired by the U.S. Government. The residence appears to meet the standards of Criteria B and C as established by the National Register. (See "Evaluation of Individual Eligibility," which follows.) With classic elements of Greek Revival design, especially on its interior, the house is a fine example of the type as exemplified in rural farmhouses in Prince George's County.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Soon after the initiation of the residential Determination of Eligibility project, a windshield survey of 18 residences at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, including Buildings 216, was conducted. A subsequent site visit to Building 216 enabled closer investigation of both the interiors and exteriors of this residence; photographs were taken at this time.

Historical research on Building 216 and its owners was gleaned from secondary sources on historic properties in Prince George's County, as well as from previous research conducted by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis and the Prince George's County Courthouse in Upper Marlboro. Research regarding the Department of Agriculture's ownership and use of the house and property was conducted at the National Archives, College Park Facility. Previous work by Robinson & Associates on the history of BARC (Robinson & Associates, Inc., *Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Phase III Report*, December 1995; *Preliminary Historic Context Statement, North Farm, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center*, November 1994) provided information on the acquisition and development of the property.

A Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, based on the requirements specified in the *Guidelines for Completing the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form*, was prepared for the residence in 1985. This form was revised and augmented by Robinson & Associates, Inc.

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## **EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY**

Building 216 (the William Shea House) was evaluated 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 William Shea House (Building 216), one of the oldest properties on the BARC site, appears to meet the Criteria B and C. The house, built in the 1850s for the son of Mary Herbert, a member of Maryland's prestigious Snowden family, is eligible both for its associations with this prominent family and for its Greek Revival Style design. Its period of significance appears to end with the acquisition of the house by the U.S. Government in 1939.

### *Criterion A*

The William Shea House (Building 216), built in the 1850's for Edward Herbert, does not appear to meet Criterion A. Owned for less than a decade by Herbert, the house was used by William Shea and his descendants, who farmed the property from the 1870s to 1939. The house itself does not appear to have played an important role in Prince George's County events or in BARC's development. Since its acquisition by the U.S. Government in 1939, it has been used by BARC as a staff residence. In both periods of use (ca. 1857-1939, and 1939 to the present), the house does not seem to be "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." The development of the area into an experimental farm with pastures and breeding barns, which enabled the Animal Husbandry Division to conduct its breeding experiments on a variety of sheep, began prior to 1939, in the mid-1930s with funds provided by the Public Works Administration.

### *Criterion B*

The William Shea House was constructed around the 1850s for Edward Herbert, who received the property as a gift from his mother, Mary Snowden Herbert. The property had originally been part of the parcel called Black Walnut Levels, upon which Walnut Grange had been erected at the start of the

nineteenth century. The Herberts lived in Building 216 for only one decade, and Edward Herbert is not known to have made any outstanding contributions to county or national history. While he is related to the Snowden family, there are more outstanding examples of this prominent family's impact in Prince George's County. The Snowdens dominated the Prince George's County economy from the late 1600s on through much of the 19th century; they owned a number of impressive residences, including Snow Hill, Oaklands, and Montpelier, by which they are well-represented in the history of the county. Montpelier, the grandest of these family plantations, is designated a National Historic Landmark.<sup>1</sup> At the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Walnut Grange (Building 209), the oldest property at the BARC site and one with a far greater historical connection to the Snowden family, has been determined ineligible for listing on the National Register for reasons of integrity. Since the acquisition of the William Shea House by the government in 1939, the house has been occupied by various BARC employees; no specific contributions to county or national history by individuals residing in the house have been documented. The Shea House does not appear to be eligible under Criterion B.

*Criterion C*

The William Shea House (Building 216) appears to meet Criterion C by its skillful exhibition of characteristics of the Greek Revival style, i.e. its low-pitched hipped roof, the wide cornice band, the large window bays, and the elegant central entrance door. The house continues to exhibit this architectural character despite certain alterations. The cornice, at the time of the last survey, in 1985, was boxed and dentilled. In recent years, however, this large distinctive dentilling has been removed, along with some other external features of the building. The original windows, with their counterweight and pulley system, have been replaced with one-over-one sash demarcated with plastic mullions to imitate the original six-over-six configuration. The building has been covered in aluminum siding. The single most evocative remaining original feature of the house is the central entrance composition. Framed by a rectangular line of transom lights and narrow sidelights, the entrance is contained within a large, single-story, nearly full-width porch. The elaborate door surround features a dentilled lintel, reminiscent of the dentilled cornice that once encircled the entire main block of the house.

The Greek Revival style was popular in the United States from approximately 1830 to 1850. It remained a dominant style in rural areas, when the Gothic Revival began in 1840s. In Prince George's County, there are a number of other examples of Greek Revival-style residences. According to the *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites*, many of these buildings are noted for their Greek Revival-style interior detailing. Interior details of a Greek Revival-style house include curved staircases, wide cornice trims and door and window surrounds with simple key frets, or egg and dart moldings. Decorative wallpapers and/or carpets were used as highlights to the more austere wall trim. Fireplace surrounds were also often simple and lacked excessive ornamentation. The William Shea House (Building 216) is distinguished especially by its internal arrangement: the large window bays, the Greek Revival-style circular stair, and the period fireplace surrounds.

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<sup>1</sup>Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, *Landmarks of Prince George's County*, p. 56.

**DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY REPORT**  
**The William Shea House (Building 216), P.G. #67-1**  
**Beltsville Agricultural Research Center**

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The William Shea house, while compromised somewhat by the alterations of the last dozen years, still conveys important aspects of the Greek Revival style, particularly as evidenced in the elaborate central entrance door. It is a good, small-scale example of the lasting influence the Greek Revival style held in rural areas. It is on this basis, as embodying distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction, that the building appears to qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Criterion D*

Building 216 was not evaluated for archeological significance.

**PG: 67-1**

**The William Shea House -- Building 216**

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center -- Beltsville, MD

Location: Beltsville, MD (Prince George's County)

Date of Construction: ca. 1857

Access: Public (Restricted)

The Greek Revival-style William Shea House (Building 216) was erected in the 1850s by Edward Herbert, on land that was given to him by his mother Mary Herbert, a member of the prominent Prince George's County Snowden family. The house gained its name from the Irish farmer William Shea and his descendants, who farmed the land from the 1870s to the 1930s. The property was acquired by the Department of Agriculture in 1939 as part of an extensive expansion program for the growing Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. The area around the Shea House was devoted to research on sheep, and the house served as an employee residence, a purpose to which it is still dedicated today. While the farmhouse has been slightly altered in recent years, the building remains an important small-scale example of the Greek Revival style.

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

Survey No. P.G. #67-1

Magi No.

DOE \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

**1. Name**

Historic Name William Shea House

Common Name and Building Number Building 216

**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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	___ Museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	___ Private	___ Unoccupied	___ Commercial	___ Park
___ Structure	___ Both	___ Work in Progress	___ Educational	___ Private Residence
___ Site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ Entertainment	___ Religious
___ Object	___ In Process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: Restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	___ Scientific
	___ Being Considered	___ Yes: Unrestricted	___ Industrial	___ Transportation
	___ Not Applicable	___ No	___ Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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# 562 Folio# 22

Street & Number Main Street

City, Town Upper Marlboro

State and Zip Code MD 20772

**6. Representation in Existing Historic Survey**

Yes \_\_\_ No

Title P.G. County Inventory of Historic Sites, MHT State Historic Site Inventory Form, #67-1

Date 1974, 1985

\_\_\_ Federal \_\_\_ State  County \_\_\_ Local

Depository for Survey Records Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

City, Town Riverdale

State and Zip MD 20737

## 7. Description

Survey No. P.G. #67-1

### Condition

Excellent       Deteriorated       Unaltered       Original Site  
 Good             Ruins                     Altered             Moved  
 Fair                 Unexposed

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

## 8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. # 67-1

### Period

Prehistoric  
 1400-1499  
 1500-1599  
 1600-1699  
 1700-1799  
 1800-1899  
 1900

### Areas of Significance

Archeology-Prehistoric  
 Archeology-Historic  
 Agriculture  
 Architecture  
 Art  
 Commerce  
 Communications

Community Planning  
 Conservation  
 Economics  
 Education  
 Engineering  
 Exploration/Settlement  
 Industry  
 Invention

Landscape Architecture  
 Law  
 Literature  
 Military  
 Music  
 Philosophy  
 Politics/Government

Religion  
 Science  
 Sculpture  
 Social/Humanit  
 Theater  
 Transportation  
 Other (specify)

### 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

**Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form**  
**Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data**  
**The William Shea House -- Building 216 -- MHT # P.G.: 67-1**  
**Beltsville Agricultural Research Center**  
**Prince George's County, Maryland**

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## **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

### **MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA**

Geographical Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Periods: Agricultural-Industrial Transition

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Agriculture

Resource Type:

Category: building

Historic Environment: rural

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

Known Design Source: none

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Overview

The William Shea House (Building 216) is located in the Central Farm section of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. It was probably erected in the 1850s by Edward Herbert, son of Mary Snowden Herbert; Mary Herbert was the owner of Walnut Grange and the large tract of land called Black Walnut Levels, of which 220 acres (south of Walnut Grange) was deeded to Edward. The house gained its name -- the William Shea House -- because of William Shea and his descendents, who farmed the land from the 1870s through the 1930s. The Department of Agriculture acquired the Shea property in 1939, as part of an extensive expansion program for the growing Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

Architectural Description

The William Shea House is a wood-frame farmhouse built in the 1850s. It exhibits characteristics of the Greek Revival Style popularized throughout the United States beginning in the 1830s. The residence is T-shaped, with the main block of the building forming the top of the T, and the rear kitchen wing comprising the leg of the T. The entire building is sheathed in white aluminum siding and rests on an exposed brick foundation. The roof is covered with asphalt shingle.

The main block is two stories high and three bays wide, with a hipped roof, typical of Greek Revival houses. A one-story, hipped-roof porch, supported by four simple posts, runs the length of the primary facade; the underside of this porch is stuccoed. Centered on each of the north and south facades, there is a large exterior brick chimney. The windows comprise one of the most distinctive elements of the house. Those of the main block are tall, double-hung, wood-frame sash. On the first story, the windows that flank the central entrance have large, wood lintels. The original windows, with their elaborate pulley and counterweight systems, have been replaced; the new windows are one-over-one windows with plastic mullions demarcating panes in a six-over-six pattern similar to the original nineteenth-century windows. Original windows remain only in the three-pane sidelights and six-pane transom of the distinctive main entrance. Located in the central bay, the main entrance is a double door surmounted by an elegant dentilled entablature, which is supported by console corner brackets. This dentilled door surround once echoed the no-longer-extant dentilled cornice that encircled the main block of the building. It is one of the most distinctive Greek Revival-style features of the residence still remaining.

Extending to the east, perpendicular to the main block is a two-story, gabled-roof kitchen wing. The entrance, located in the second bay of the south facade, is enclosed by a one-story, hipped-roof screen porch. This secondary entrance has now become the primary means by which the house is accessed, since the access road to the house has changed over this century. There is an interior chimney at the ridge at the rear or east gable end, and no windows on this rear facade. On the north side of this rear extension, connected to the main block of the house, is a small semi-hexagonal, one-story projection containing the dining room alcove. The shed roof over this alcove has been replaced with asphalt shingles; it was originally composed of a thick sheath of copper, which, according to the current

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occupant of the house, is still extant under the replacement shingles.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the windows mentioned above, there have been alterations to the exterior of this building within the last several years. The original copper gutters and downspouts have been replaced. The original clapboard siding has been replaced with aluminum siding. Although the aluminum siding existed when the house was surveyed in 1985, within the last few years the cornice of the main block, which was boxed and dentilled, was also removed.<sup>2</sup>

The interior plan of the main block consists of a central stairhall, with an elegant curved Greek Revival-style staircase running along the rear wall, and a parlor on each side of the central hall. The north parlor features a Greek Revival-style mantel with dentilled entablature. The mantel in the south parlor exhibits an urn and classical fluted elements, similar to those found on the architraves of the doors from the central hall. The door that leads into the kitchen wing at the rear has a lintel similar to those of the first story windows on the west facade. In the kitchen, there is a small exposed stone fireplace. The pantry off of the kitchen is connected to the center hall by a small window-sized opening; the pantry room itself is dominated by the curved plaster wall created by the stairway. The upstairs is accessed only by the central stairway. Over the stair is a plaster medallion with a stylized laurel leaf motif.

The extensive molding still extant in the building, the dramatic effect of natural light from the oversized windows, and the unusual circular staircase create an impressive interior that successfully conveys the historical feeling of the house.

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<sup>1</sup>Site visit, May 15, 1996.

<sup>2</sup>The boxed and dentilled cornice was described on *Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form*, P.G. #67-1, completed by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1985.

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Overview

The William Shea House (Building 216) is located in the Central Farm section of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. It is a Greek Revival-style farmhouse that was constructed in the 1850s by descendants of the prominent Maryland family, the Snowdens. In 1939, when the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center expanded to include the property on which the farmhouse rested, Building 216 became a residence for employees of the station. It remains in that use today.

History of the Property

The William Shea House is located on part of a tract that was once originally part of a colonial grant to the Snowden family.<sup>1</sup> Known as Black Walnut Levels, it was the home of the Herbert family. John C. Herbert was married to Mary Snowden of Montpelier in 1805, and they built the house that came to be known as Walnut Grange (Building 209) on this same tract. Their son, Edward Herbert, received a gift of about 220 acres located to the south of Walnut Grange, from his mother, Mary Herbert, in 1854.<sup>2</sup> He is presumed to have erected the Greek Revival-style building that later came to be called the William Shea House (Building 216) around this time; he had recently married and the new home would have been his family residence.

He owned the property for just over a decade. In 1866, Edward Herbert sold the farm to Colonel William Dulaney of Alexandria, for \$12,000. Dulaney lived only two years, and the trustee appointed to sell Dulaney's real estate sold the property in 1872 to William Shea. Shea was an Irish farmer who had immigrated to the United States in 1854. In 1872, Shea served on the committee for the Beltsville School. He died in 1896, after which time his widow and sons continued to farm the property until the government acquired the property by eminent domain in 1939.

The William Shea House subsequently became a residence for employees at the Beltsville Agricultural

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<sup>1</sup>See Susie Beall, "Birmingham Manor - The Snowden Grant," undated and unpublished manuscript. The Snowdens had numerous family plantations in the Laurel area, their estate at one time totalling 27,000 acres. A prominent Quaker family, the Snowdens operated iron works and textile mills; see *Landmarks of Prince George's County*, pp. 54-57, 138. The oldest building at BARC today is the "Walnut Grange" (Building 209), built ca. 1805. It was constructed by Mary Herbert, daughter of Major Thomas Snowden of Montpelier, and the mother of Edward Herbert. The house and its surrounding 100-acre parcel were purchased in 1859 by Richard D. Hall. The site then remained in the Hall family until the federal government purchased the property in 1910. The government purchased two plats of land from Hall, one approximately 100-acre plat and another, which contained Walnut Grange, of approximately 375 acres.

<sup>2</sup>ON #2:98, 4 April 1854. Mary Herbert to [son] Edward Herbert for \$3,330, 220 acres of Black Walnut Levels, also right-of-way from northwest corner of said tract to public road to Beltsville. Chain of Title for William Shea House, P.G. 67-1, MHT Form, 1985.

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Research Center.

#### The Shea Property Under BARC Ownership

The area that encompasses Building 216 was developed by the government during the massive expansion of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in the 1930s. The government had first established activities on the Black Walnut Levels land in 1910, with the purchase of the Walnut Grange property from the Hall family. The next significant era of growth occurred in the 1930s. Monies from the Public Works Administration, first allotted in 1933, had an enormous impact on the entire Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, affecting the physical development of the property as well as the concentration of departmental activities on the site. New land was acquired and contiguous farm parcels added. Much of the land was dedicated to pastures and pens for the experimental animals.

The focus of the area around the Shea House was the specific branch of animal husbandry research concerning investigations into farm sheep and fur sheep. Breeding experiments, devoted to developing superior types of Southdown, Shropshire, Hampshire and Corriedale sheep, had been initiated in 1911 with the establishment of the Beltsville station. With the influx of public monies in the 1930s, these experiments continued in the area devoted specifically to sheep, the acreage encompassing the Shea House, Building 216. Research included selective breeding experiments on fur (Karakul) sheep to produce high quality lambskins. Since further importation of the Karakul was prohibited, at Beltsville these breeding experiments were conducted together with sheep commonly raised in the United States. The quality of lambskins resulting from this crossbreeding was then studied for its potential.<sup>3</sup> Other experiments involved fleece samples from farm and range sheep, which were analyzed in a laboratory established for the purpose; "the primary objects [were] to determine the factors which influence the quantity and quality of the wool produced, and to develop practical methods by which sheep breeders can judge the various important qualities in the fleeces of their sheep."<sup>4</sup>

The first government building constructed in the Shea House area was a sheep-breeding barn (Building 215). On a statement of expenditures through July 31, 1935, the Sheep Barn is listed as being allotted \$8,250 for construction, which required all but \$150 of that sum.<sup>5</sup> The Shea House itself provided a residence for employees, a purpose to which it is still dedicated today.

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<sup>3</sup>"United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry," Memorandum, December 2, 1939. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), RG 16, Entry 16, Box 2936 (1939).

<sup>4</sup>USDA, "The National Agricultural Research Center of the Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland," 1939. p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>"Beltsville Research Center, Beltsville, MD, Statement of Expenditures Through July 31, 1935." NARA, RG 54, Entry 151A, Box 1; "Proposed Reallotments Covering Public Works Projects at Beltsville, Maryland," September 18, 1934. NARA, RG 17, Entry 16, Box 1933 (1934).

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Survey No. P.G. #67-1

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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**10. Geographical Data**

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The site is bounded on the east by the road that leads down from Beaver Dam Road to the Sheep Area. On the south, the driveway leading to the house provides the site boundary. On the west and on the north, the property is bounded by a fence located about 100 feet from the perimeter of the house.

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**11. Form Prepared by**

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Name/Title Heather Ewing, Judith Robinson

Organization Robinson &amp; Associates, Inc.

Date August 13, 1997

Street &amp; Number 1909 Q St., NW #300

Telephone (202) 234-2333

City or Town Washington, D.C.

State 20009

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Concurrence of State Preservation Officer

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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

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Maps

- 1861 G.M. Landownership Maps, No. 302. Prince George's County, 1861.  
1878 G.M. Hopkins, Washington, D.C., "Fifteen Miles Around, Including Prince George's County," 1878.  
1890 "Prince George's County," United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, Henry Gannett, Chief Topographer, Surveyed in 1890. Edition of 1892.  
1903 U.S.G.S., Vansville District.  
1904-6 "Laurel," U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, H.M. Wilson, Geographer in Charge, Surveyed in 1904-06. Edition of August 1907.  
1913-15 "Laurel, M.D.," and "Washington and Vicinity," U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Edition of 1926.  
1914 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.  
1927 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, "Map of Prince George's County, Showing Topography and Election Districts."  
1936 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey  
1949 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, "Laurel, MD."  
1955 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographical Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Periods: Agricultural-Industrial Transition

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Agriculture, Architecture

Resource Type:

Category: buildings

Historic Environment: rural

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

Known Design Source: none

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #67-1 Building Date: 1850's  
Building Name: William Shea USDA Building  
Location: Beaver Dam Road west of Research Road, Beltsville, MD

Public/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The William Shea House (U.S.D.A Building #216) is located in the midst of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. The main block is two-story hip-roofed, three bays by two bays. Entrance is in the central bay of the three-bay west facade, through a double door with six-pane transom and three-pane sidelights. The door is surmounted by a dentilled frieze supported by console corner brackets; the two windows which flank the doorway have pedimented lintels. The cornice of the main block is boxed and dentilled all the way around. There is a large exterior brick chimney centered on each of the north and south facades. The interior plan of the main block consists of central stairhall, with curved Greek Revival style staircase at the rear, and a parlor on each side. The north parlor has a Greek Revival style mantel with dentilled entablature and that in the south parlor features classical fluted elements. Extending to the east at right angles to the main block is a two-story gable-roofed kitchen wing. The entire building is sheathed with white aluminum siding, and rests on brick foundations.

Significance

The William Shea House is a large and handsome farmhouse distinguished by elements of the Greek Revival style. It stands on part of a tract known as Black Walnut Levels, on a farm which is now part of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Station. Black Walnut Levels was the home of the Herbert family (who built Walnut Grange there circa 1805). In the early 1850's, Mary Herbert deeded to her son Edward 220 acres of Black Walnut Levels, south of Walnut Grange. It was probably soon after this that the handsome Greek Revival dwelling was built for Edward Herbert and his bride. In 1872, this farm was sold to William Shea, an Irish farmer who had immigrated to the United States in 1854. William Shea farmed the land, and brought up his family in the house. In 1910, the U.S. Government began purchasing property in the Beltsville area for the establishment of the Department of Agriculture Research Center. Parts of Black Walnut Levels, including Walnut Grange and the Shea farm were soon purchased. Today the farmland around the house is used for sheep research, and the house itself, renovated in recent years, is a staff residence. The house is hidden from view in a grove of trees, but its entrance treatment and dentilled cornice make it an interesting and unusual feature of the Agricultural Research Center.

Acreage: 500.36 acres

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. P.G. #67-1

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic William Shea House

and/or common U.S.D.A. Building #216

## 2. Location

street & number Beaverdam Road west of Research Road

not for publication

city, town Beltsville

vicinity of

congressional district 5

state Maryland

county

Prince George's

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name United States of America

street & number 18th and F Streets

telephone no.:

city, town Washington, D. C.

state and zip code 20405

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse

liber 562

street & number Main Street

folio 22

city, town Upper Marlboro,

state Maryland 20772

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Prince George's County Inventory of Historic Sites

date 1974

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records History Division, M-NCPPC

city, town Riverdale,

state Md. 20737

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The William Shea House (U.S.D.A Building #216) is located in open farmland in the midst of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. This is a handsome frame farmhouse with a rear kitchen wing which gives it a T-shape. The main block is two-story hip-roofed, three bays by two bays. Entrance is in the central bay of the three-bay (main) west facade, through a double door with six-pane transom and three-pane sidelights. The door is surmounted by a dentilled frieze supported by console corner brackets. Windows are large 6/6 double hung sash; the two windows which flank the doorway have pedimented lintels. Across the west facade is a one-story hip-roofed porch with plain square posts. The cornice of the main block is boxed and dentilled all the way around. There is a large exterior brick chimney centered on each of the north and south facades.

The interior plan of the main block consists of central stairhall, with curved Greek Revival style staircase at the rear, and a parlor on each side. The north parlor has a Greek Revival style mantel with dentilled entablature. The mantel in the south parlor features classical fluted elements, as do the architraves of the doors from the central passage. The door which leads into the kitchen wing has a pedimented lintel similar to those of the first story windows on the west facade.

Extending to the east at right angles to the main block is a two-story gable-roofed kitchen wing. Entrance is in the second bay of the south facade, and is sheltered by a one-story hip-roofed screened-in porch. There is an interior chimney at the ridge at the east gable end.

The entire building is sheathed with white aluminum siding, and rests on brick foundations. The roof is covered with asphalt shingle.

# 8. Significance

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History

**Specific dates**    1850's                      **Builder/Architect**

---

check: Applicable Criteria:     A     B     C     D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception:     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Level of Significance:     national     state     local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The William Shea House is a large and handsome farmhouse distinguished by elements of the Greek Revival style. It stands on part of a tract known as Black Walnut Levels, on a farm which is now part of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Station. Black Walnut Levels was the home of the Herbert family (Mary Snowden of Montpelier married John C. Herbert in 1805, and they built the unusual "butterfly-shape" Federal home on this tract; the house came to be known as Walnut Grange, cf. #62-12). In the early 1850's, Mary Herbert deeded to her son Edward 220 acres of Black Walnut Levels, south of Walnut Grange. It was probably soon after this that the handsome Greek Revival dwelling was built for Edward Herbert and his bride.

In 1866, Edward Herbert sold his house and farm to Colonel William Dulaney, but Dulaney died within two years, and a trustee was appointed by the Court of Equity to sell Dulaney's real estate.<sup>1</sup> In 1872 trustee C.C. Magruder sold Edward Herbert's 220-acre farm to William Shea, an Irish farmer who had immigrated to the United States in 1854. William Shea farmed the land, brought up his family in the house, and in 1872 served on the committee for the Beltsville school. After his death in 1896, Shea's widow continued to farm the land with the help of her sons.<sup>2</sup>

In 1910, the U.S. Government began purchasing property in the Beltsville area for the establishment of the Department of Agriculture Research Center. The first sections purchased in that year were parts of Black Walnut Levels, including Walnut Grange.<sup>3</sup> The Shea farm was purchased soon afterwards. Today the farmland around the house is used for sheep research, and the house itself, renovated in recent years, is a staff residence. The house is somewhat hidden from view in a grove of trees, but its entrance treatment and dentilled cornice make it an interesting and unusual feature of the Agricultural Research Center.



#8 Continued

Notes

1 Prince George's County Land Records FS #4:31; Equity #685 (papers not found).

2 Prince George's County Land Records HB #5:392; Prince George's County Census, 1880, 1900, 1910. Prince George's County Estate File #1613.

3 A History of Beltsville, 1976.

1136  
1700564604

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM  
for the  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>				
COMMON: USDA Farmhouse #1				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
<b>2. LOCATION</b>				
STREET AND NUMBER: 7400 Beaver Dam Road				
CITY OR TOWN: Beltsville				
STATE Md.		COUNTY: Prince George's		
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
				ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
				<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>				
OWNER'S NAME: US Department of Agriculture Research Center				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Beltsville			STATE: Maryland	
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Prince George's County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Upper Marlboro			STATE: Maryland	
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):				
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>				
TITLE OF SURVEY: None				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house is a 2-story frame structure with external end chimneys and a hipped-roof. Across the main (west) facade is a one-story porch. The prominent mutulae of the cornice are the notable decorative features.

To the rear is a two story wing with a chimney on the east end. The windows of the wing are smaller than the very generous windows of the main block.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century
- 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric<br><input type="checkbox"/> Historic<br><input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Architecture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commerce<br><input type="checkbox"/> Communications<br><input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Education<br><input type="checkbox"/> Engineering<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industry<br><input type="checkbox"/> Invention<br><input type="checkbox"/> Landscape<br><input type="checkbox"/> Architecture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Literature<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Political<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy<br><input type="checkbox"/> Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian<br><input type="checkbox"/> Theater<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br><hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
|--|--|---|--|

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NE	° ' "	° ' "	°	'	"	
SE	° ' "	° ' "	°	'	"	
SW	° ' "	° ' "	°	'	"	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	COUNTY:

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: M-NCPPC

DATE: 1/31/73

STREET AND NUMBER: 8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring

STATE: Maryland

**12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)**

Significance of this property is:

National  State  Local

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

O-S

POWDER

MILL

ROAD

A. R. C. FA  
199-664  
P 142

BEEF

R-R

A. R. C. FARM

113-62A  
P. 139

CATTLE

IONAL

S E A R C H C E N T E R

ROAD

BEAVERDAM

PG: 67-1

R-R

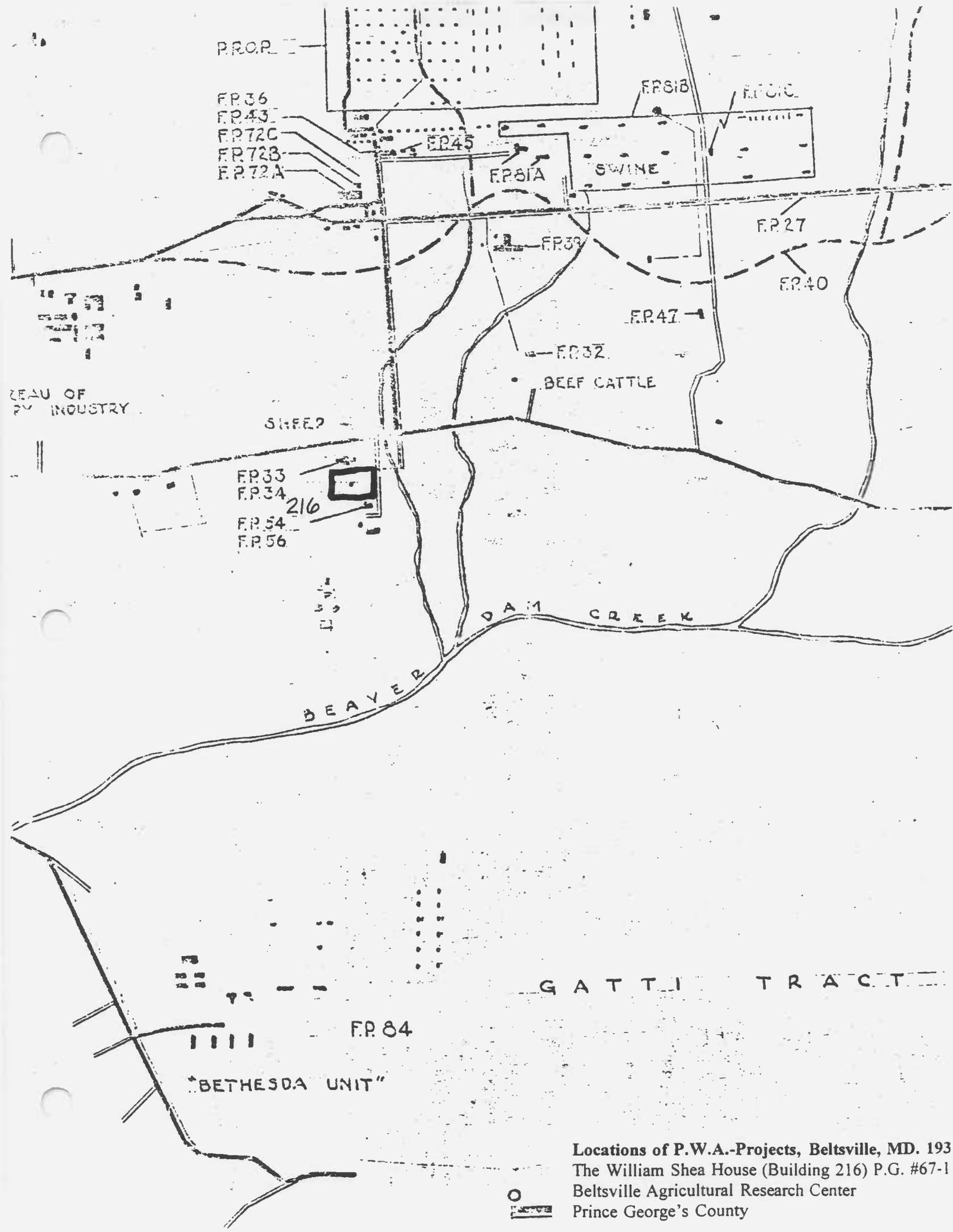
RESEARCH ROAD

RM



G&M Landownership Maps #302, Prince George's County. 1.  
The William Shea House (Building 216) P.G. #67-1  
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center  
Prince George's County





PROP.

FR36  
FR43  
FR72C  
FR72B  
FR72A

FR81B

FR81C

ER45

FR81A

SWINE

FR27

FR39

ER40

ER47

ER32

BEEF CATTLE

SHEEP

FR33  
FR34  
FR54  
FR56

216

BEAVER DAM CREEK

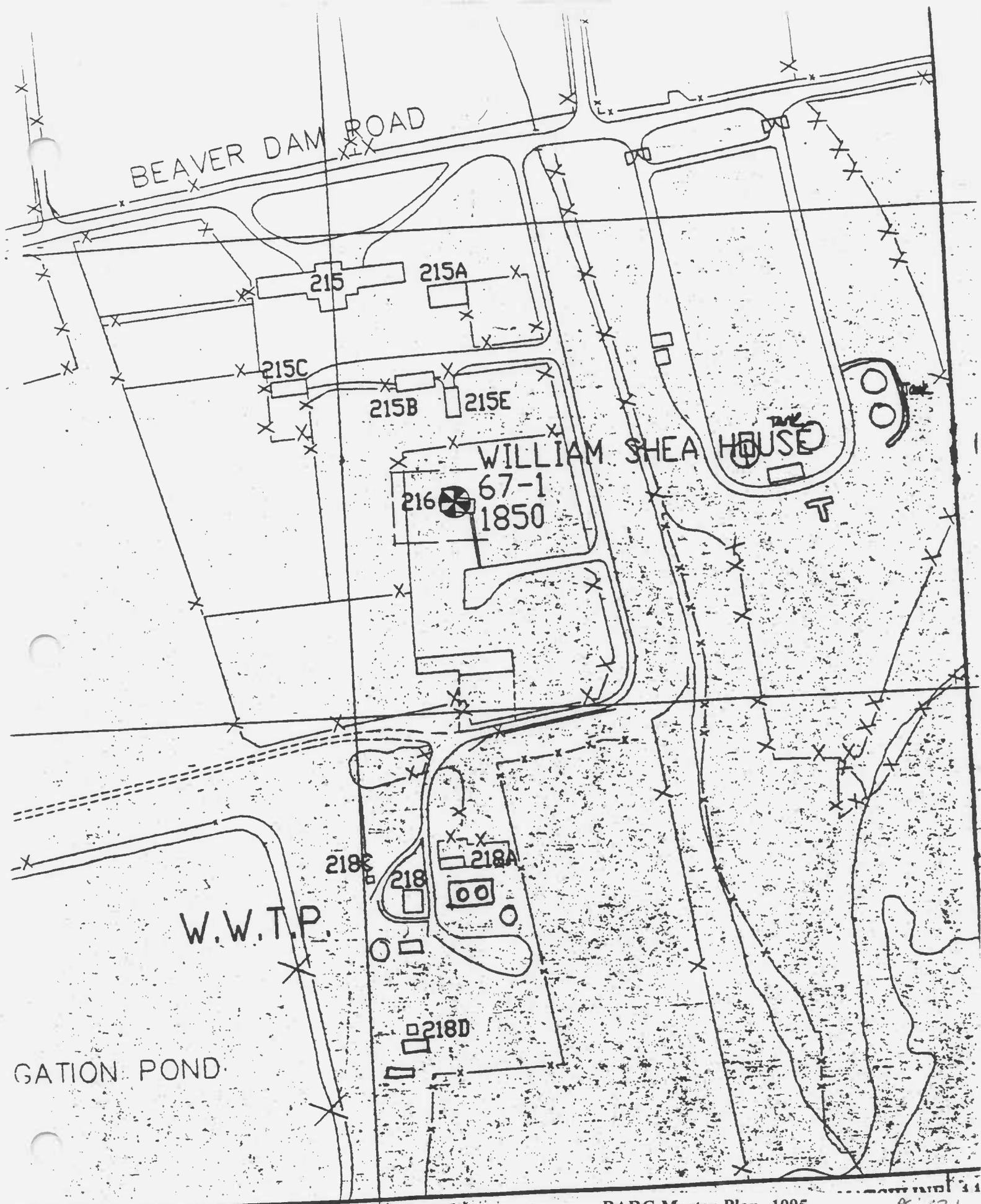
GATTI TRACT

FR84

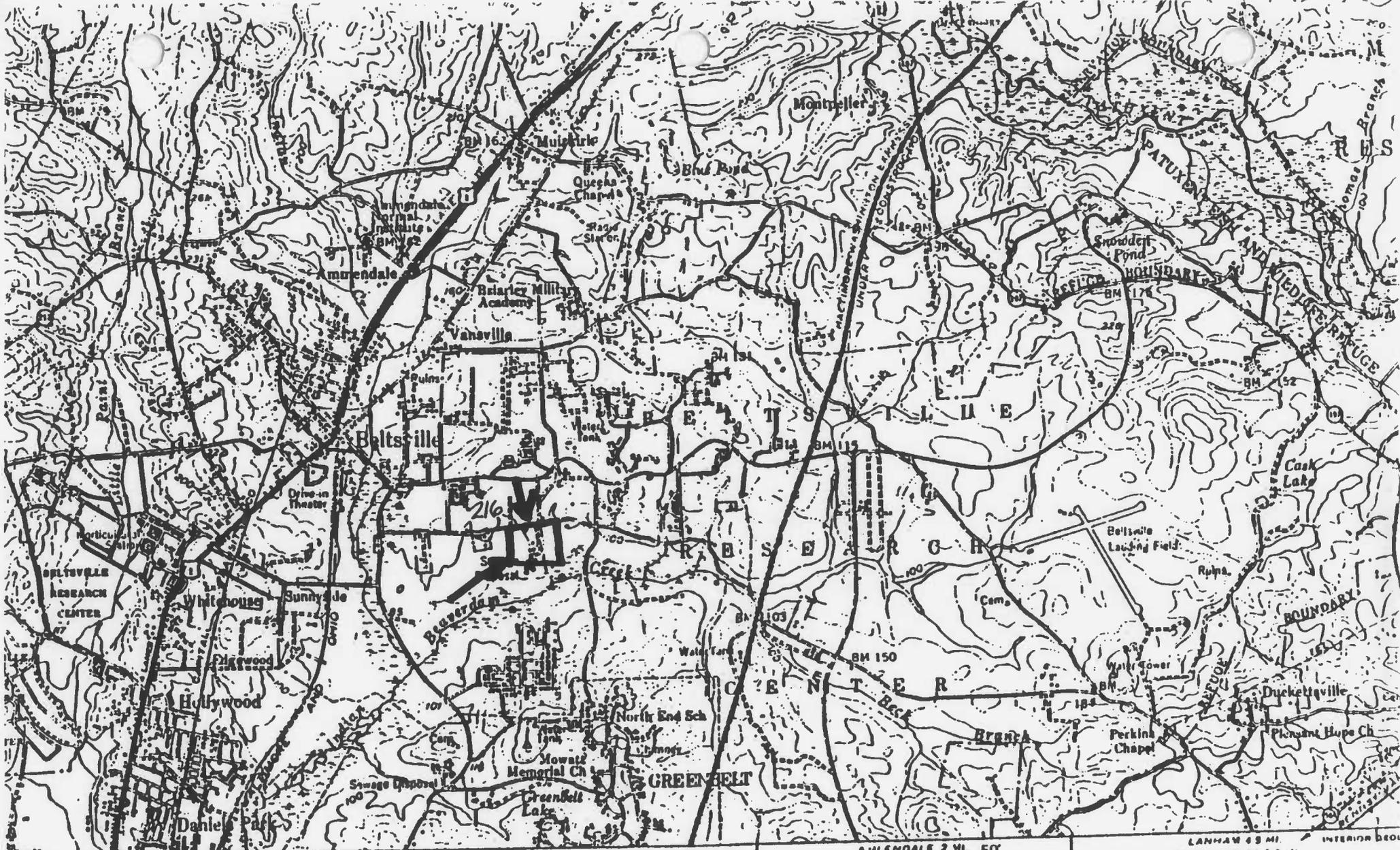
"BETHESDA UNIT"

Locations of P.W.A.-Projects, Beltsville, MD. 193  
The William Shea House (Building 216) P.G. #67-1  
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center  
Prince George's County





**F**



WYATTSVILLE 3 MI. WASHINGTON, D C 11 MI. 55  
 48 MI. TO U.S. 50 (UPPER MARLBORO)  
 SCALE 1:62500  
 50  
 LANHAM 43 MI. INTERIOR DEPT.  
 BLADENSHURGH 88 MI.



7°  
 TRUE NORTH  
 MAGNETIC NCP



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

P.G. 67-1

U.S. Geological Survey, Laurel MD. 1949  
 The William Shea House (Building 216) P.G. #67-1  
 Beltsville Agricultural Research Center



The William Shea House (Building 216)

PG # 67-1

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center  
Beltsville, MD

Photo by Heather Ewing, May 1996

Negative at MD SHPO

West Facade, looking east

1 of 5



The William Shea House (Building 216)

PG # 67-1

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

Beltsville, MD

Photo by Heather Ewing, May 1996

Negative at MD SHPO

North and West Facades, looking southeast

2 of 5



The William Shea House (Building 216)

PG # 67-1

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

Beltsville, MD

Photo by Heather Ewing, May 1996

Negative at MD SHPO

South and East Facades, looking north

3 of 5



The William Shea House (Building 216)

PG # 67-1

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

Beltsville, MD

Photo by Heather Ewing, May 1996

Negative at MD SHPO

East and North Facades, looking southwest

4 of 5



The William Shea House (Building 216)

PG # 67-1

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

Beltsville, MD

Photo by Heather Ewing, May 1996

Negative at MD SHPO

Interior of Central Hall, looking east

S of S



P.G. #67-1

William Shea House (U.S.D.A.)

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

South elevation

Neg: MD. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G.#67-1

William Shea House (U.S.D.A.)

Prince George's County, MD.

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

Southeast 3/4 elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



P.G.#67-1

William Shea House (U.S.D.A.)

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

Northeast 3/4 elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



P.G.#67-1

William Shea House (U.S.D.A.)

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

North elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G.#67-1

William Shea House (U.S.D.A.)

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

West elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



NAME U.S.D.A. FARMHOUSE #1 #67-1  
LOCATION BEAVERDAM Rd BELTSVILLE, MD (USDA - AG RESEARCH CTR)  
FACADE SW  
PHOTO TAKEN 1/30/73 MDWYER



P.G.#67-1

William Shea House (U.S.D.A.)

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

West entrance

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD