historic	Bureau of Animal Industry Building				
other	Norwood Local Park Recreation Building				
2. Location					
street and number	4715 Norwood Drive		-	not for publication	
city, town	Bethesda		-	vicinity	
county	Maryland				
B. Owner of	Property (give names and mailing addresses of all Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, N			Department of Parks	
				Department of Parks 301.495.2595	
name	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, N	Aontgo	mery County I	-	
street and number city, town	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, N 9500 Brunett Avenue	Aontgo	mery County I telephone	301.495.2595	
name street and number city, town 4. Location	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, M 9500 Brunett Avenue Silver Spring state	Aontgo	mery County I telephone	301.495.2595 20901	

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

Contributing Resource in National Register District
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Recorded by HABS/HAER
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
 Other:______

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Co	ount
district Xbuilding(s) structure site object	<u>X</u> public private both	agriculture commerce/trade defense domestic domestic domestic funerary government health care industry	landscape X recreation/culture religion social transportation work in progress unknown vacant/not in use other:		Noncontributing buildings sites structure objects Total ntributing Resources ted in the Inventory

7. Description

excellent <u>X</u> good fair	deteriorated ruins altered					
------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

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

Summary:

The former Bureau of Animal Industry headquarters is a handsome Renaissance Revival structure located in what is now Norwood Local Park in Bethesda, Maryland. Built in two stages from 1906-1909, its interior space still reflects its original use as the laboratory and the administrative offices of the United States Department of Agriculture's foremost animal experiment farm. he Bureau of Animal Industry farm moved to the Bethesda site in 1897 from Washington, D.C. and was there until 1937. A frame structure preceded the current building, but was torn down and replaced with the larger, fire-proof structure that still exists today. It is the only structure associated with the fifty–acre farm that is still standing. The surrounding pens, barns, and stables, once totaling approximately eighty structures, have all been replaced by park land. Today the building is used as the park's recreation center.

Description:

The two and one-half story classical brick structure is situated near the entrance to Norwood Park at the end of a short asphalt drive. It is surrounded by open park land, a few smaller park buildings, and a playground. The former laboratory has a square form interrupted by a turret on the corner of the eastern (front) and northern elevations. The main body of the structure has a low, hipped roof with slate shingles while the turret has a low, conical roof capped with a copper pinnacle. The structure sits on a full, raised concrete basement which is separated from the brick first story by a raised concrete bandcourse.

The front, or eastern, elevation is five bays wide, and the turret has three bays. Windows in the outer bays are grouped closely together in pairs. Windows of the first and second story are one-overone, double-hung, with concrete sills. Above the windows are patterned brick caps, with elaborate brick keystones over the first-floor windows. The brick work of the first story has several recessed rows, creating a rusticated pattern. The entrance to the building is up a flight of five concrete steps to a small stoop surrounded on two sides by a low brick walls with concrete caps. A metal handrail, a later addition, bisects the stairs. The stoop is covered by a low, hipped copper roof resting on a white cornice, which is supported by two square brick columns with white Tuscan capitals. The wood panel double doors have large windows in their upper half, and a single-pane glass transom rests above the door. The plainer second story, completed three years after the first story, is separated from it by a concrete bandcourse. A raised brick stringcourse runs above the second-story windows, separating it from the attic half-story. Set in the attic story are small metal vents above each second-story window, and this pattern continues around the building. The large copper cornice has dentil molding and a gutter. The square-shingled roof is interrupted by an off-center square brick chimney, slightly south of the roof ridge. Two turbine vents are centered on the roof ridge. A copper downspout reaches from the roof to the ground, following the vertical line of the turret intersecting with the front wall.

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The north elevation (like all of the elevations of the building) follows the same rusticated brick pattern as the front elevation, but the window placement is more irregular. Retaining the symmetry of the east elevation, the first story entrance is flanked by single windows . On the second story, two windows are grouped together in a pair next to the turret on the eastern side of the wall, while towards the rear elevation one narrow double-hung window is placed. The entrance on this side of the building is the same as the front entrance in terms of the materials and construction, but it is a bit larger. A low brick walls wrap around slightly to the front of the stoop, and two separate paneled doors with windows provide entrance into the building. The stoop has columns, a cornice, and a roof just like the stoop of the front elevation. Glazing on the door towards the rear of the building is missing, and has been replaced by plywood. Another copper downspout again goes from roof to ground along the edge of the turret.

Sloped topography allows a ground-level basement entrance on the western elevation. This entrance, set in a concrete bay projecting from the building, is a wooden door with a single-pane glass transom above it. A stone retaining wall curves away from the basement entrance to the south. Above the entrance to the basement is another first-story entrance into the building, which is reached by steps that rise along the northern side of the basement entrance, then turn south and proceed above the basement entrance bay. This leads to a stoop with a low brick wall, similar to the other stoops' walls, on its western edge. Again, the stoop has columns, a cornice, and a roof similar to the stoop of the front elevation. The door into the building is paneled wood. The rear elevation is five bays wide, but the vertical placement of the windows is irregular. A second-story central-bay window is placed directly above the roof of the stoop, rather than above the concrete bandcourse, and the second-story second window from the left is actually a door to the fire escape. Probably added later, the fire escape door is wooden with a single-pane glass transom above it, and a set of metal stairs with a railing lead from the fire escape door to the ground. Another copper downspout goes from the gutters to the ground just to the west of the corner of the northern and western walls.

The southern elevation is four bays wide, with the windows grouped in pairs (figure 4). There is another basement entrance set in the concrete foundation, which is a wooden door with a single-pane transom window above. To the right of the door, towards the eastern elevation, are a six-over-six double-hung window and a smaller, square single-pane window set into the foundation.

When one enters the building from the front entrance, one steps into a central passageway that extends towards the rear exit. A closed string stairway leads to the second floor. To the right is a large open room extending the length of the building. It has wood floors, plaster walls, and ceilings with exposed, painted beams. There is a built-in bench around the turret wall. There may have been an interior wall between the two doors on the north elevation that has been removed to create the one large room. Befitting a former laboratory, there is no interior decoration. To the left upon entering the

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building is a room that extends about half of the length of the house. Further back the central passage to the left is a hallway which leads to two small restrooms and a modern kitchen.

Upstairs, there is a central carpeted hallway that runs the width of the house, with access to eight rooms off of it. These would likely have served as the Bureau of Animal Industry's administrative offices. Today, there are six rooms, one bathroom, and a kitchen. Some of the rooms have wood floors, while other rooms, including the bathroom and the kitchen, have vinyl or linoleum tiles. There is molding around the doorways, and some baseboards. Located in the hall are two closets with paneled doors and a ladder for access to the attic through a ceiling door. The current upstairs arrangement reflects the usage of the space as an apartment in the recent past.

The exterior of the building seems little altered since its construction. Earlier photos of the eastern and northern elevations show little change aside from the doors. No definite photos or drawings of the interior seem to still exist, so the extent of its change is unknown. The large rooms on the first story and smaller rooms on the second do seem to reflect its known usage as a laboratory and administrative offices during the era of the Bureau of Animal Industry headquarters.

8. Signific	ance			Inventory No. 35-119
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and ju	stify below	
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 X 1900-1999 2000-	 <u>X</u> agriculture archeology architecture art commerce communications community planning conservation 	 economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement 	Xhealth/medicine industry invention landscape archit law literature maritime history military	 performing arts philosophy politics/government ecture religion science social history transportation other:
Specific dates	1906-1936		Architect/Builder	Unknown
Construction d	ates 1906-1909			
Evaluation for:				
<u> </u>	National Register	<u> </u>	aryland Register	not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Summary:

The former Bureau of Animal Industry building in Bethesda, Maryland's Norwood Park is the sole surviving structure from the federal government's foremost agricultural experiment farm in the latenineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. During a time when the nation was still significantly rural and agrarian, the experiments conducted at the farm had a direct impact on millions of Americans whose livelihoods depended on agriculture. In the building and its surrounding pastures, government scientists conducted research into animal diseases and breeding, and made discoveries that improved the nation's animal stock. Since the building is little altered and the landscape around the building still remains largely undeveloped park land, the site retains its original bucolic character. The B.A.I. building therefore meets the following criteria (Montgomery County Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-3):

• 1(a) has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation

• 1(d) exemplified the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities

• 2(e) represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

This resource meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for being a site: The Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland replaced the Bethesda farm when development started encroaching on its land. This inheritor of the Bureau of Animal Industry farm's operations has been determined significant under National Register Criterion A for its similar agricultural work.

Narrative History:

The history of the building began when the Department of Agriculture chartered the Bureau of Animal Industry by an act of Congress on May 29, 1884. The new bureau's purpose was initially to control the spread of disease in the nation's cattle trade, and to research methods to eradicate contagious

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diseases such as pleuropneumonia in domesticated livestock.¹ Prior to the establishment of the B.A.I., the Department of Agriculture's veterinary research farm was located on about seven acres near 18th Street and Benning Road, in what was then the northeastern Washington, D.C. suburbs. After 1884 that farm was incorporated into the new B.A.I. As the capital grew, the B.A.I. looked for a new location for its farm, and in 1897 it leased from Henry Bradley Davidson eighteen acres of land "on which a frame dwelling was located" in Bethesda with a three-year purchase option. The farm moved to its new Montgomery County location on July 1, 1897.² An 1898 record showed that the U.S.D.A. renewed the lease on June 30 for another year, at the cost of fifty dollars per month.³ In July of 1899, Davidson and his wife, Mary S.P. Davidson, sold the land with an adjacent 2 acres to the U.S.D.A. for \$20,000. In 1902, the U.S.D.A. purchased 30 more adjoining acres for \$10,000, bringing the total acreage of the farm to 50 acres.⁴

In 1901 the Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson suggested to the chief of the B.A.I., Dr. P.E. Salmon, that an animal husbandman should be appointed to the bureau to do research in livestock breeding. The bureau hired George Rommel, educated in animal husbandry in Iowa, and he started his new job on July 1, 1901. Congress granted its first money specifically for the animal husbandry division of the B.A.I. in an agricultural appropriations act for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1904. The division received \$25,000 and used at least part of it to import a herd of Barbados sheep to the Bethesda farm for research. On July 1, 1910, the Division of Animal Husbandry Division," a position he held until 1921.⁵ The new Division of Animal Husbandry founded more experimental farms throughout the nation, including a Morgan Horse farm in Vermont and an experimental sheep farm in Idaho, and it entered into cooperation with state experimental farms in West Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, Kansas, and Arkansas.

Back in Bethesda, work at the farm expanded rapidly. The most interesting experiment done at the station involved breeding zebras with horses and mules to see if more disease-resistant animals could be produced for agricultural work in certain parts of the South. King Menelik, the Emperor of Abyssinia, gave the Zebra, named Dan, to President Theodore Roosevelt. Dan originally lived at the National Zoological Park. Rommel brought Dan to the Bethesda farm in the fall of 1906 where he planned to breed Dan with six different mares, noted one of his annual reports. The report also stated that Dan was a Grévy zebra, a

¹ United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry Orders Nos. 143-6, *Regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture Governing the Inspection, etc. of Live Stock which is the Subject of Interstate Commerce.* (Washington, D.C.: U.S.D.A., 1907, 49)

² Ulysses Grant Houck, *The Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture; Its Establishment, Achievements, and Current Activities.* (Washington D.C.: Hayworth Printing Company, 1924, 48-9.)

³ "Secretary of the Department of Agriculture Record of Contracts, Leases and Agreements." (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 16: Records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, Records of Contracts, Leases and Agreements, P-191, Entry 38, 1898, 50.)

⁴ Houck, *Bureau*, 49.

⁵ Houck, *Bureau*, 219-20.

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particularly hardy species standing over thirteen hands high, and declared the necessity of obtaining females of the same species for further breeding experiments. Rommel's plan was to purchase the additional specimens from Abyssinia with the assistance of the Department of State.⁶ By some means the station procured more zebras, including at least one female and another male named Jerry, and soon hybrid zeb-horses and zeb-donkeys were grazing in the farm's pastures. Public interest in the project was apparently rather high. In 1912, a staff member from the Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary Company wrote the chief of the B.A.I. asking for details of the project so that the new hybrid animal could be included in its forthcoming dictionary. The letter read:

Will you be good enough to let us know if any name has been definitely decided upon for the new breed obtained from a grevy sire and a burro dam, news of which appeared in 1910 and 1911 under the tentative name of 'zebrass' and 'zebroid' respectively?...Also, if you can let us have any photographs we shall gladly pay the cost of same.⁷

American Breeder's Magazine also featured a story on the creatures in a 1913 issue. Ultimately, though, the project failed to accomplish its original goals, and it was terminated on June 30, 1913. The zebra Jerry and a mare hybrid named Juno were turned over to the National Zoo and the others were sold to circuses.⁸

Meanwhile, other experiments continued apace. Research work on genetics began on July 1, 1906. Rommel and his superintendent established twenty-three separate guinea pig families, and the offspring of each family were mated with each other to determine the effects on inbreeding on genes. One guinea pig family reached its twenty-fifth inbred generation. Another experiment took place with guinea pigs in which the animals were selectively bred for the specific trait of long ears. Similar selective breeding experiments were conducted with rats and bull terrier dogs.⁹

These experiments may all have taken place within the new laboratory building, the basement and first story of which was completed in 1906. The fire-proof brick structure took the place of a small wood frame laboratory that had stood there before. e second story, attic, and roof were not completed until

⁶ *Report of Animal Husbandman for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1905* (NARA, Record Group 17: Records of the Bureau of Animal Industry Central Office, General Correspondence of the Division of Animal Husbandry 1901-1914, Entry 16, Box 1, 1905, 8-9.)

⁷ Letter dated April 1, 1912 from Funk and Wagnalls to the Chief of the B.A.I. (NARA, Record Group 17: Records of the Bureau of Animal Industry Central Office, General Correspondence of the Division of Animal Husbandry 1901-1914, Box 9, File 9 " Zebra Hybrids", 1912.)

⁸ Houck, *Bureau*, 234

⁹ From the file "Close Breeding and Selection of Animals (Bethesda Station) October 1905- June 30, 1907" (NARA, Record Group 17: Records of the Bureau of Animal Industry Central Office, General Correspondence of the Division of Animal Husbandry 1901-1914, Box 3, File 13 " Close Breeding...", 1905-7.)

Bureau of Animal Industry Building **Continuation Sheet**

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three years after the first story due to budget constraints. Administrative offices were also located in this building, and it became known as the headquarters of the B.A.I. and its Division of Animal Husbandry.¹⁰

The outbuildings of the farm continued to house the experiments with the larger animals. On March 16, 1907, Rommel wrote the chief of the B.A.I. requesting money for improvements to begin hog and poultry feeding experiments, specifically asking for funds for a steel tank to improve the farm's water supply.¹¹ This tank might be the one seen in a 1929 photograph of the outbuildings. On September 16, 1907, a herd of hogs moved to Bethesda from the B.A.I.'s quarantine farm in Halethorpe, Maryland (for animals imported through the port of Baltimore) for feeding experiments using meal made from cottonseeds. On October 15, 1907 a flock of White Plymouth Rock chickens joined the hogs for experiments with a similar feed. Things were getting so crowded that in 1907 the experiment station leased an adjacent farm of 60 acres, and in 1909 Congress authorized \$25,000 to purchase either that farm or other suitable land. Land prices in Bethesda being so high, the Department of Agriculture ultimately bought 475 acres near Beltsville, in Prince George's County, to establish its new farm.¹²

The new farm at Beltsville signaled a chenge for the Bethesda farm. The last large animals to come to Bethesda were a small flock of milk goats native to the "hills of Alabama" and "other southern states" in 1909.¹³ From July to October of 1910, horses, donkeys, zebras, and zebra hybrids were transferred from Bethesda to Beltsville. A bill dated October 22, 1910 charged the U.S.D.A. fifty dollars for transporting zebras from Bethesda to Beltsville.¹⁴ In April of 1911, the sheep, goats, hogs, and some poultry equipment followed.¹⁵ The Bethesda farm was then able to refocus its efforts on veterinary diseases, which it seems to have done well into the 1930s. To better protect the public milk supply, bovine tuberculosis research was conducted using the farm's cows.¹⁶ Scientists also researched cures for diseases like swine plague, hog cholera, Texas cattle fever, glanders, anthrax, blackleg, sheep scab, and various poultry illnesses.¹⁷ Photographs taken in 1929 show various outbuildings, primarily identified as stables and chicken coops, still in use throughout the Bethesda property. A map from that same year shows that the farm still

¹⁰ Houck, *Bureau*, 49-50. This is the only source for the dates, no primary documents having yet been found. Houck does not give his source for these dates.

¹¹ Letter from George Rommel to the Chief of the B.A.I. (NARA, Record Group 17: Records of the Bureau of Animal Industry Central Office, General Correspondence of the Division of Animal Husbandry 1901-1914, Box 3, File 15 "Poultry Breeding at Halethorpe and Bethesda Stations", 1907.)

¹² Houck, *Bureau*, 50, 220.

¹³ Houck, *Bureau*, 244.

¹⁴ Bill from The George W. Knox Express, Co. (NARA, Record Group 17: Records of the Bureau of Animal Industry Central Office, General Correspondence of the Division of Animal Husbandry 1901-1914, Box 11, File "Zebra Hybrids", 1910.) ¹⁵ Houck, Bureau, 253.

¹⁶ Fred Wilbur Powell, *The Bureau of Animal Industry, Its History Activities and Organization*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1927, 32.), and Houck, Bureau, 61.

¹⁷William Offutt. Bethesda: A Social History of the Area Through World War Two. (Bethesda, Maryland: The Innovation Game, 1996, 256.)

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owned fifty acres and leased an adjoining sixty-five with about eighty buildings whose primary purpose seems to be veterinary.

Throughout the 1920s, however, rapid suburban development in Bethesda came into conflict with the B.A.I. farm. Neighbors of the farm began to complain about the smells, and in 1930 some of the town's civic groups, led by the Chevy Chase Terrace Community Association, asked the Federal government to consider removing the animals and turning the site into a public park. Maryland Senator Millard Tydings introduced a bill in Congress to give the land to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The bill passed in 1936 and by 1937 the U.S.D.A. had completely vacated the property.¹⁸ On April 26, 1937 the Secretary of Agriculture issued a revocable permit for the use of 32.12 acres of the former farm to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the condition that it remain a public park or it would revert back to the U.S. government.¹⁹ On December 26, 1951, the Secretary of Agriculture signed a formal deed turning the land over to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at the cost of one dollar, with the previous condition of the land's use still applicable.²⁰

The land became Norwood Park, named for its location near St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish, on the nearby corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Lane. Since 1937, the former laboratory building has served as the park's recreation center, used primarily by the neighborhood communities. The top floor was once rented as an apartment, but has not been used as such for at least the past ten years. The main floor is available for hourly rental for recreation activities.

¹⁸ Offutt, *Bethesda*, 257.

¹⁹ Revocable Permit granted by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, 26 April 1937. Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, liber 678, folio 85.

²⁰ Deed between the Secretary of Agriculture and the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, 26 December 1951. Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, liber 1614, folio 569-73.

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M-NCPPC , 7-2009

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Aerial photograph, 2008 showing parcel lines, M-NCPPC

#30-119 Bureau of Animal Industry Bldg

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Caldwell map, 1915

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CHEVY CHASE CHEVY

Klinge Real Estate Atlas, 1931 #35-119, Bureau of Animal Industry Building Inventory No. 35-119

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#35-119, Bureau of Animal Industry Building East (Front) Façade, 10-9-2007

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#35-119, Bureau of Animal Industry Building North (Side) Façade, 10-9-2007

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#35-119, Bureau of Animal Industry Building West (Rear) Façade, 10-9-2007

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#35-119, Bureau of Animal Industry Building South (Side) Façade, 10-9-2007

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Champion Lincoln Ram, 9-3-1936, Bureau of Animal Industry Records



Male zebra-ass hybrid, Bethesda, 1909

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	17.101	
Acreage of historical setting		
Quadrangle name		Quadrangle scale:

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Alden K. Watts		
organization	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Com	date 9-2008	
street & number	8787 Georgia Avenue telephone		301-495-2595
city or town	Silver Spring	state	Maryland

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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 Maryland Department of Planning 100 Community Place Crownsville, MD 21032-2023 410-514-7600 Inventory No. 35-119

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Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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