

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 24

Item number 7

Page 25

NAME: Rumford Chemical Works and Mill Houses *Hist. Dist.*

LOCATION: Newman and Greenwood Avenues and North Broadway

OWNER: Multiple; see owners' list

## DESCRIPTION:

The buildings of the former Rumford Chemical Works are grouped around the intersection of Newman and Greenwood Avenues and North Broadway. The core of the complex, east of the intersection, originally extended to the shore of a pond that separated it from Newman Cemetery. The pond has been filled in and the eastern portion of the property has been set off, cleared of industrial buildings, and built up with two high-rise towers containing apartments for the elderly. An 8.38-acre tract west of these towers contains the remaining Chemical Works structures. Among them are three one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, wood-frame buildings which may well date from the first decade after the establishment of the works on this site in 1857. The handsomest structure is a large, three-story, flat-roofed brick building with a fine corbelled cornice, constructed in 1895 and used for production of monocalcium phosphate. Most prominent is a five-story flat-roofed brick building erected in 1928 for use as a packaging plant and warehouse. Amid these structures stand four or five small, one- and two-story, brick or wooden buildings. Across Newman Avenue from the main complex is a two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, wood-frame office building. On North Broadway, at numbers 57-59, 61-63, 66-68, 69-71, 78-80, 79-81, 90-92, and 93-95 are eight double houses built by the company to house employees, all now privately owned. The first two--one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed brick dwellings--were erected ca. 1910; the others are one-and-one-half-story, Queen Anne style, wood-frame dwellings of differing design built ca. 1882.

DATES: ca. 1857, 1895, 1882, ca. 1910, 1928

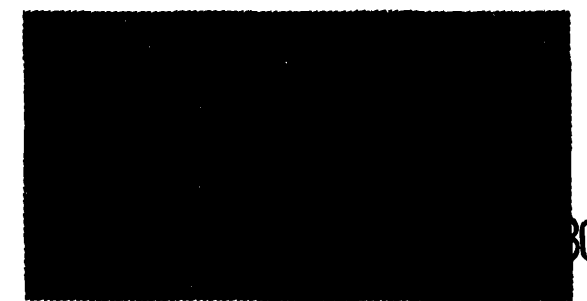
## SIGNIFICANCE:

The Rumford Chemical Works is significant as an important local industry that produced nationally known products. The firm was founded by George F. Wilson and Professor Eben Horsford to produce chemical food additives designed to increase the nutritive value of foodstuffs. It was named for Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford (1753-1814), an American-born British scientist and inventor who had established a fellowship at Harvard that had funded some of Horsford's studies in nutrition and chemistry. First located in Providence, the company moved to East Providence in 1857, purchasing land that had been part of the Ring of the Green. The works gave its name to the surrounding neighborhood, and for over a century it was a mainstay of the local economy. The firm's chief product was Rumford Baking Powder, a substance invented by Professor Horsford that added essential minerals to baked goods while also serving as a leavening agent. Rumford Baking Powder was marketed nationwide and became a well known item across the country. Today it is produced at a

(See Continuation Sheet #25).

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 25

Item number 7

Page 26

plant in Terre Haute, Indiana, where company operations were consolidated in 1966. Though no longer located in East Providence, the Rumford Company played an important role in the economic and industrial development of the community. Its original works memorialize that contribution to the city.

ACREAGE: about 10.9 acres

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Assessor's Plat 32, Lots 1, 2, and 3; Assessor's Plat 33, Lots 19, 89, 90, and 131; and Assessor's Plat 34, Lots 195, 196, and 197.

UTM:

A)	19:	304550:	4634780
B)	19:	304190:	4634190
C)	19:	304780:	4634260

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State

(See Continuation Sheet #26).