

PROPERTY REPORT

Property ID: **-1318393871**

Property Name: Miesch Silk Manufacturing Co. Courtland Street Works
Address: 52 Courtland ST

Ownership: Private
Apartment #: **ZIP:** 07503

PROPERTY LOCATION(S):

County:	Municipality:	Local Place Name:	USGS Quad:	Block:	Lot:
PASSAIC	Paterson	Paterson		5607	1

Property Photo:



Old HSI Number: PAS1608-064

NRIS Number:

HABS/HAER Number:

Description:

The Miesch Silk Manufacturing Co. Courtland Works is an industrial complex situated on 1.22-acres. The site contains a ca. 1890 brick mill with a ca. 1910 extension, a ca. 1890 tenant mill, also with ca. 1910 extensions, and various mid-20th-century infill structures. The complex comprises all but the southwest corner of the rectangular city block upon which it is located.

Setting:

The Miesch Silk Manufacturing Co. Courtland Works is sited on rectangular lot in a predominantly residential neighborhood within South Paterson. The Erie-Lackawanna Railway corridor is located one block south of the mill site.

**Registration
and Status
Dates:**

National Historic Landmark?: ☐

National Register:

New Jersey Register:

Determination of Eligibility:

Certification of Eligibility:

SHPO Opinion: 10/16/1997

Local Designation:

Other Designation:

Other Designation Date:

☒ **Eligibility Worksheet included in present survey?**

☐ **Is this Property an identifiable farm or former farm?**

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Property ID:

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**Principal
Investigator:** Patrick Harshbarger

☒ (Primary Contact)

-1318393871

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Location Map**Site Map:****BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Author:	Title:	Year:	HPO Accession #: (if applicable)
Guzzo, Dorothy O	Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company (52 Courtland St.) SHPO Opinion	1997	J97-35
Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates	Main Line Second Track Environmental Evaluation	1997	
Department of Community Development	City of Paterson Survey	1987	
Achimede, Gianfranco	Paterson Historic Mills Group Municipal Historic Site Designations Staff Opinion of Eligibility	2012	
Hyde, E B	Atlas of Passaic County, New Jersey	1877	
Robinson, E	Atlas of the City of Paterson, New Jersey	1884	
Robinson, E	Atlas of the City of Paterson and Haledon, New Jersey	1899	
Mueller, A H	Atlas of the City of Paterson, New Jersey	1915	
Sanborn Map Company	Insurance Maps of Paterson, New Jersey	1915	
Sanborn Map Company	Insurance Maps of Paterson, New Jersey	1931	

Additional Information:

HPO Inventory ID#: 3427

More Research Needed? ☒ (checked=Yes)**INTENSIVE-LEVEL USE ONLY:****Survey Name:** Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills**Principal Investigator:** Patrick Harshbarger**Organization:** Hunter Research, Inc.☒ (Primary Contact)**Property ID:****-1318393871**

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Attachments Included:

0	Building	0	Bridge
0	Structure	0	Landscape
0	Object	2	Industry

Historic District ? ☐

District Name: not applicable

Status:

Associated Archeological Site/Deposits? ☒

(known or potential sites. If Yes, please describe briefly)

Potential for industrial archaeology (interior and courtyard)

Conversion Problem? ☐ ConversionNote: 3

Date form completed: 9/7/2012

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INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Common Name: 52 Courtland Street

Historic Name: Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company Mill

Present Use: Industrial, light industrial

Historic Industry:

Construction Date: 1890 **Source:** Historic Maps

**Construction
Start Date:**

**Construction
End Date:**

Building ID:

Style: ☐ Vernacular?

Exterior Finish Materials: Brick, Common Bond

Physical Condition: Good

Foundation Materials: Stone, Ashlar

Remaining Historic Fabric: Medium

Roof Finish Materials: Rolled Asphalt

Length: 200 **Stories:** 3

Structural System:

Width: 200 **Bays:** 26

Roof System:

Equipment/Machinery:

Transportation Links: ☐ airstrip ☐ loading dock ☐ slip
(checked if applicable) ☐ dock ☐ rail siding ☐ other

Exterior Description:

The original Miesch Silk Mill is a 3-story, 26-bay brick industrial building constructed ca. 1890. It has a side-gabled roof covered with rolled asphalt. Below the roofline is a stepped brick cornice. The gable ends stretch 5 bays, the center of which contains elongated openings at each story below a hoist. On each elevation, the bays are divided by projecting brick pilasters, with the windows paired between pilasters on the north elevation. Windows are metal 9/9 double hung sash set in arched openings with arched brick lintels and stone sills. To accommodate for the reduction in grade along Leslie Street, the easternmost bays on the north elevation have full-length, basement-level windows set in a painted stone foundation below a stone water table. Attached to the rear (south) elevation are a 110-ft. rectangular brick chimney and a 1-story brick boiler house with a frame, 5-ft. raised monitor roof.

Around 1910, a 3-story, 140 ft. ell was extended along Camden Street from the south elevation of the original mill. This addition has a flat roof with a bracketed wooden cornice. Its design mimics the original mill with projecting brick pilasters dividing paired windows. Windows are 9/9 double hung sash, although many of the window openings have been infilled with concrete block. Basement level windows have been infilled and stuccoed. At the southwest corner of the ell along Camden Street is an entrance with a metal rolling gate. The 6-bay south elevation has a middle bay of elongated openings below a hoisting mechanism. On the east elevation of the ell are projecting brick towers.

Interior Description:

The interior of this building was not accessible at the time of this survey. Sanborn maps from 1915 indicate the processes taking place within each section of the mill. The following descriptions are based upon the Sanborn Map Company identifying the building as having 3 stories with a basement. The east half of the original mill contained a machine shop and storage space in the basement; finishing, packing, and shipping processes took place on the first floor; and weaving was carried out on the second and third floors. The west half of the original mill had silk throwing operations on the first floor, winding and weaving on the second, and weaving on the third. The ell addition contained storage space at the basement level, silk winding processes on the first, and weaving operations on the second and third floors.

Alteration Dates:

Alteration(s):	Circa Date:	Date Range:	Source:
Physical alteration	1910	to	Historic maps (addition of ell)

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Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Physical alteration 1990 to Window infill

Architect/Designer:

Date form completed: 9/26/2012

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INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Common Name: 52 Courtland Street

Historic Name: Tenant Mill at the Miesch Silk Manufacturing Co.

Present Use: Industrial, light industrial

Historic Industry:

Construction Date: 1890

Source: Historic Maps

**Construction
Start Date:**

**Construction
End Date:**

Building ID:

Style:

☐ Vernacular?

Exterior Finish Materials: Brick, Common Bond

Physical Condition: Good

Foundation Materials: Stone, Ashlar

Remaining Historic Fabric: Medium

Roof Finish Materials:

Length: 115 **Stories:** 2

Structural System:

Width: 85 **Bays:** 13

Roof System:

Equipment/Machinery:

Transportation Links: ☐ airstrip

☐ loading dock

☐ slip

(checked if applicable)

☐ dock

☐ rail siding

☐ other

Exterior Description:

The tenant mill at the Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company Courtland Street Works was constructed ca. 1890 for the Miesch Company for the purpose of broad silk weaving. It would eventually become a tenant mill, with the World Bestos Corporation, manufacturers of brake lining, occupying the building by 1931. The original portion of the mill, built ca. 1890, is the brick, 1-story, northernmost section. This section has a sawtooth roof and a north wing with a parapet wall and monitor roof. At the roofline is metal coping. Like the main Miesch Mill, bays on this original section are divided by projecting brick pilasters. Window openings have been infilled and stuccoed. As early as 1890, this tenant mill has been connected to the main Miesch Mill by an enclosed, 1-story frame passage. A frame loading dock once attached to the south elevation of the original tenant mill was replaced with the extant 2-story portion of the building, added ca. 1910. This 2-story, 5-bay, brick addition has a front-gabled roof covered with rolled asphalt. The arched window openings have brick lintels and stone sills. All of the windows have either been boarded or resized and replaced. On the east elevation, the end bays have boarded entrances. Attached to the south elevation of the 2-story addition is a 1-story, 3-bay brick loading garage added ca. 1940.

Interior Description:

The interior of the tenant mill was not accessible at the time of this survey. Sanborn maps from 1915 indicate that all sections of this building at the time were used for broad silk weaving.

Alteration Dates:

Alteration(s):	Circa Date:	Date Range:	Source:
Physical alteration	1910	to	Historic maps (2-story addition)
Physical alteration	1940	to	Historic maps and aerials (loading garage addition)
Physical alteration	1990	to	Window infill materials

Architect/Designer:

Date form completed: 9/26/2012

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ELIGIBILITY WORKSHEET - Properties

Property ID **-1318393871**

History:

While only ephemeral evidence was available under the scope of this research, the Miesch Mfg. Co. may be associated with Kaspar Miesch, a surname of likely Austrian or Bavarian origin. Miesch started ca. 1886 as a tenant in the Dale Silk Mill on Railroad Ave. Later, the incorporation of the Miesch Mfg. Co. in 1889, capitalization of shareholders from Philadelphia and elsewhere, allowed him to erect of a small, 60x200 handsome mill to "manufacture on an extensive scale all kinds of fine ribbons and silk goods that are used in the millinery trade [hats], making a specialty of manufacturing only the finest class of goods." This mill, located on Courtland Street in South Paterson was expanded prior to 1915. Around that time the John C. Welwood Corp purchased the Miesch Company and a new works was constructed on Totowa Avenue, ca. 1909. Historic records are unclear as to whether Welwood purchased the Miesch Company before or after its expansion to Totowa Avenue, but historic maps clearly label John C. Welwood as owner of the Totowa site by 1915.

The association with John C. Welwood Corp. is significant in that it represents a significant shift in the silk industry at the turn of the century to the proliferation of conglomerate businesses. These entities, like the J.C. Welwood Corp. based in New York City, had capitalist motivations of accumulating specifically smaller entities often built by nineteenth-century families or the previous generation of "trade expert" owners, so as to capture ever smaller market shares of the times due to extreme competition, technological change, and increased specialization. This and other complexities developed and contributed to the shrinking and eventual demise of the traditional silk industry in Paterson by mid century. As reported by Grace Hutchins in her book *Labor and Silk* (1929), a study about the Paterson Silk Strikes of 1925-26:

"The Miesch Manufacturing Company, owned by the John C. Welwood Company, has just been merged with the Buser Silk Company. The two merging concerns run eleven plants in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, and have now become a \$3,000,000 corporation, the Miesch Manufacturing Company employing 2,000 workers. The best of the looms in the Buser mill have been moved to the Miesch plant and the old looms are discarded. The company states that all workers in the Buser factory have been taken into the Miesch mill."

Advertisements for the Miesch Co. in Paterson touted association with J.C. Welwood as "sole Selling Agents" and by the mid-1920s, the Welwood Co. as "largest silk ribbon manufacturer in the world." Miesch Mfg. Co. touted its Trade Marked brand of "Olive Branch Ribbons" and mills established in Paterson, Allentown, PA, Piermont, NY, and Hallstead, PA. All were "represented" by J.C. Welwood, who may have had an ownership interest through merger, or owned Miesch outright. This is also clarified by Hutchins in *Labor and Silk* (1929):

"The non-union ribbon mills of the Miesch Mfg. Company are owned now by the John C. Welwood Corporation. The company has recently grown by a merger described in a later section. Its capitalization was increased from an original \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 in 1920. John C. Welwood, president of the corporation, lives on upper Fifth Avenue, overlooking Central Park. He is the largest stockholder in his company. Assets of over \$3,000,000 of the concern are in ratio of about three to one of liabilities. It claims "the largest ribbon business in the world." Broad silk mills at Hawley, Honesdale, and White Mills, Pa., also help largely in building up the profits of the John C. Welwood Corporation."

It is unknown when the Welwood Corp. and the Miesch Co. left the silk ribbon business, but records demonstrate that the Totowa Avenue works was operational under the Miesch name until the mid-1930s. It is also documented in *Silk and Labor* that the Miesch mill workers were involved with the Paterson Silk Strike of 1925, and the appearance of Miesch and Welwood in this book demonstrated the eventual demise of the traditional American silk industry caused by the many complexities of capitalist markets and labor conflicts.

Statement of Significance:

The ca. 1890 Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company Courtland Street Works were integral in making silk manufacturing one of the primary industries of mid-19th- through early-20th-century Paterson. They are an excellent and intact example of a late 19th century silk mill complex in Paterson.

Eligibility for New Jersey and National Registers: ☒ Yes ☐ No

National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Level of Significance: ☒ Local ☐ State ☐ National

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Justification of Eligibility/Ineligibility:

The Miesch Silk Manufacturing Co. Courtland Street Works are recommended eligible under Criterion A for their association with the patterns of development of the silk industry in Paterson including their association with the working conditions and the Strike of 1925. They are recommended eligible under Criterion C as a significant intact example of a late-19th-century silk mill that was built as an integrated throwing and weaving shop that added a tenant mill.

Total Number of Attachments: 2

List of Element Names: Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company Mill
Tenant Mill at the Miesch Silk Manufacturing Co.

Narrative Boundary Description:

Date Form Completed: 9/26/2012

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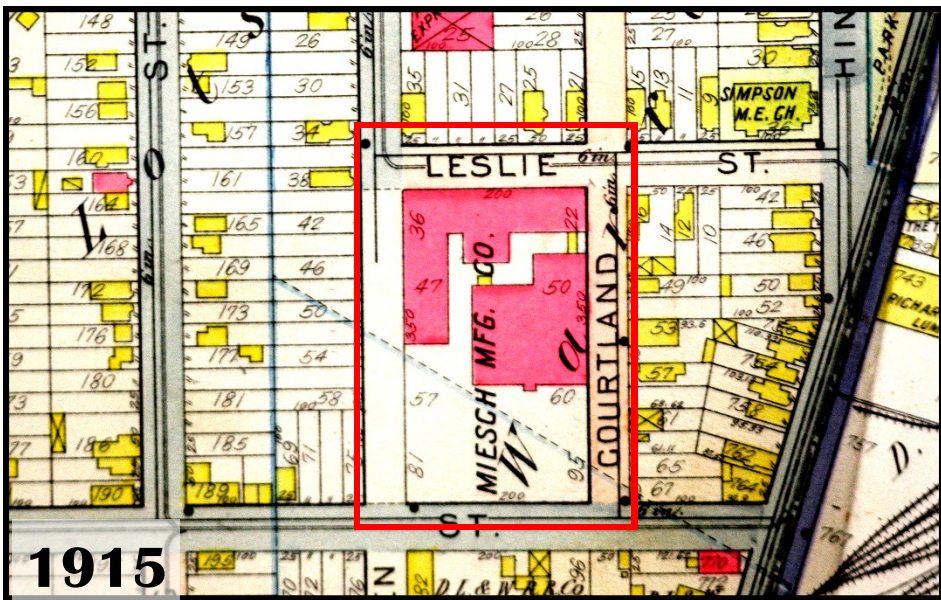
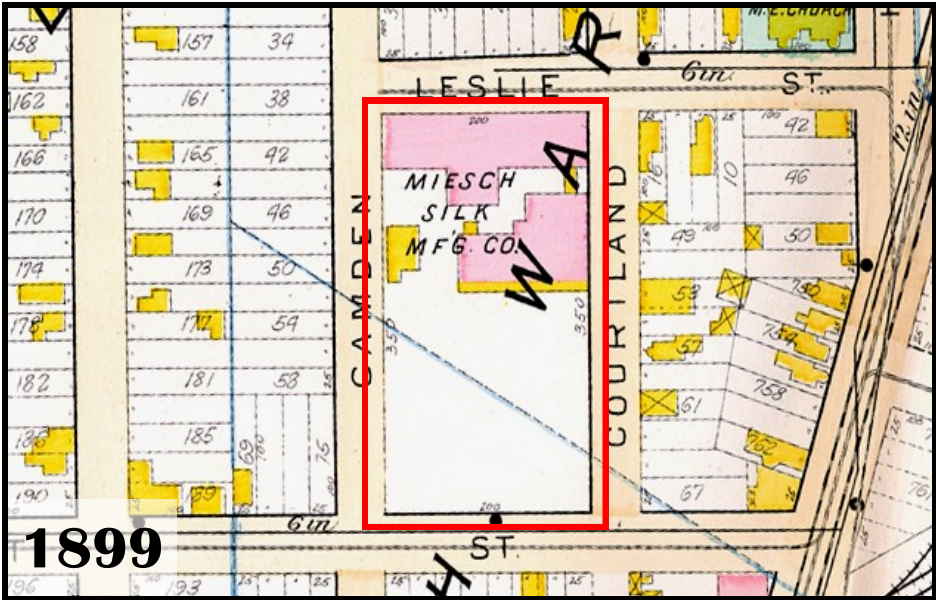
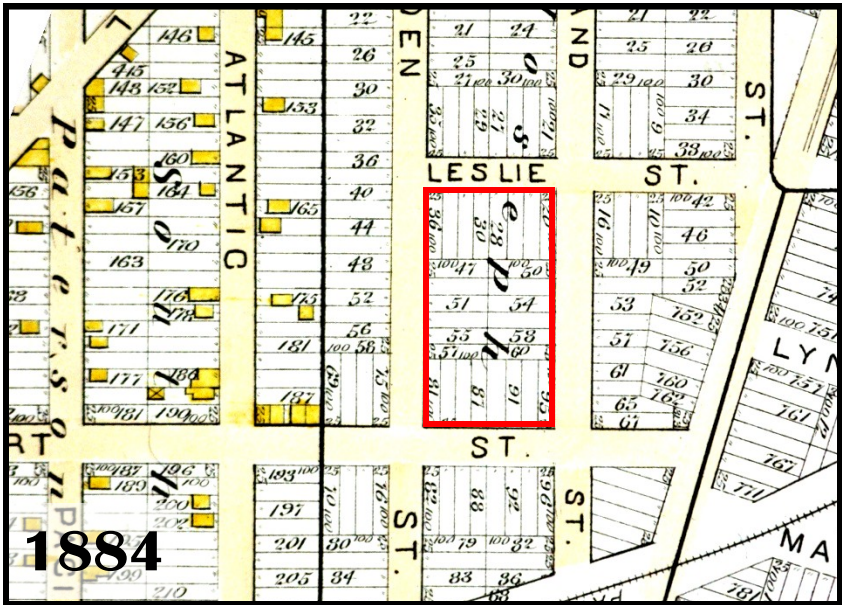
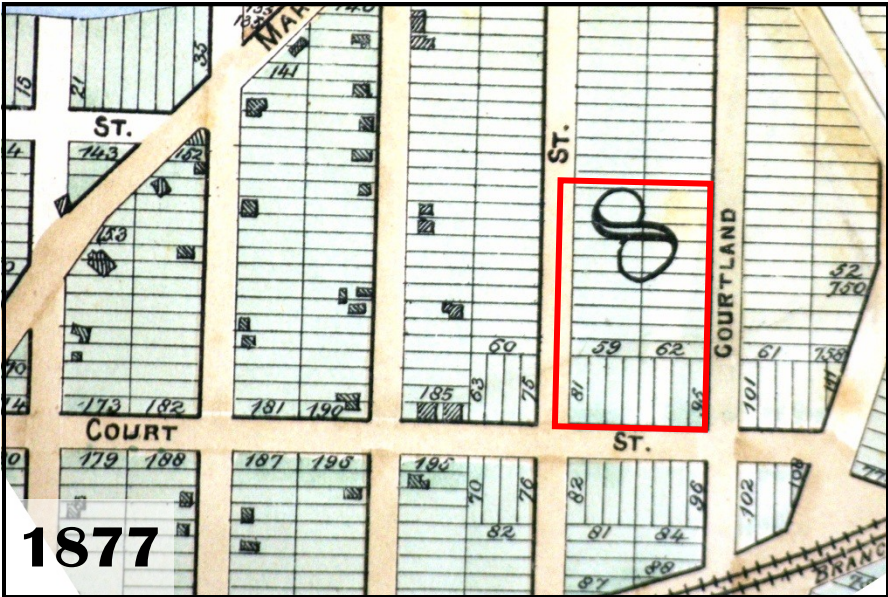
☒ (Primary Contact)

Property ID:

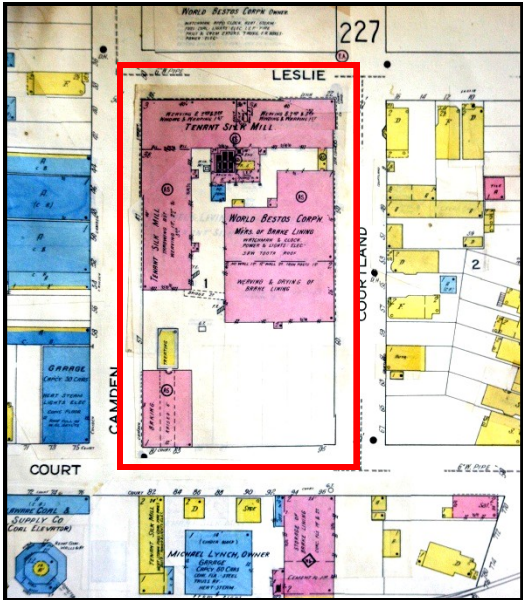
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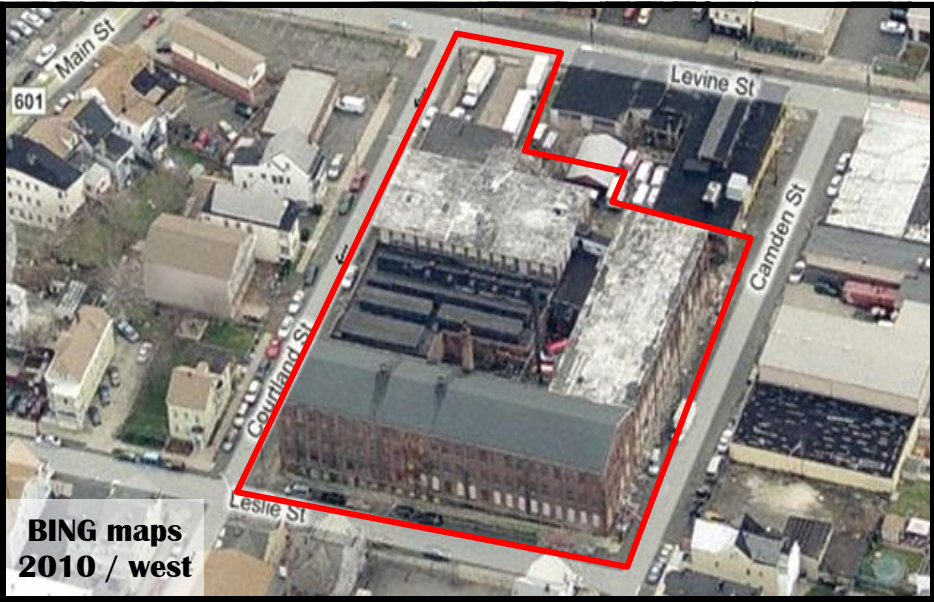
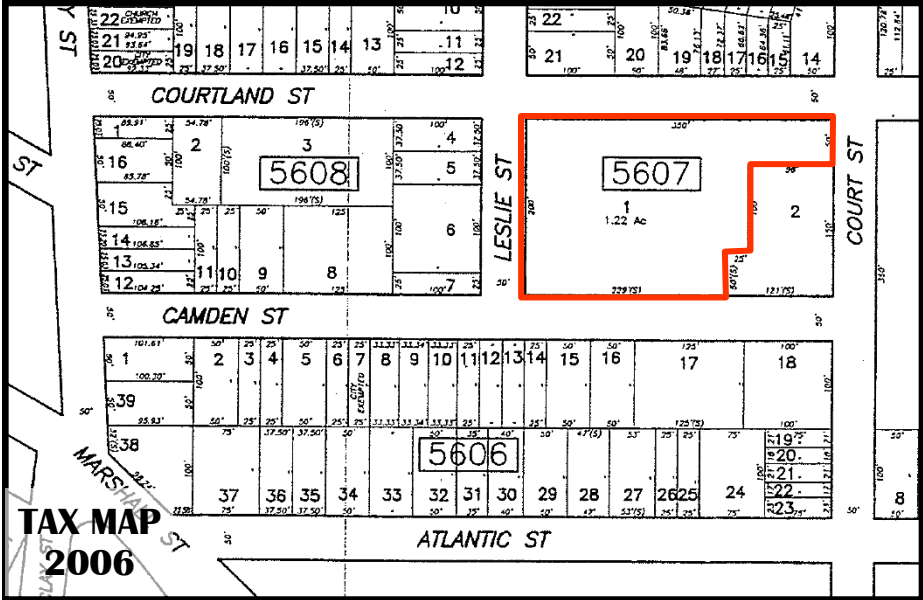
MIESCH SILK RIBBON MFG. CO. Courtland St. works
52 Courtland Street, Paterson, NJ B 5607 L 01
Site Development Maps 1877, 1884, 1899, 1915



MIESCH SILK RIBBON MFG. CO. Courtland St. works
52 Courtland Street, Paterson, NJ B 5607 L 01
Site Development Maps, 1931, 2006, 2010



1931

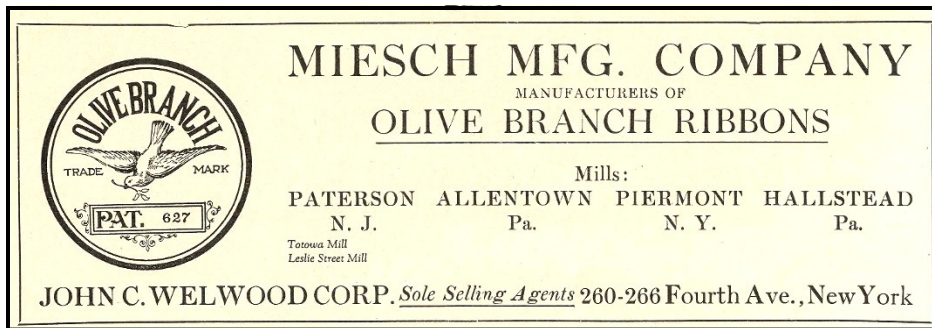


BING maps
2010 / west



BING maps
2010 / east

MIESCH SILK RIBBON MFG. CO. Courtland St. works
 52 Courtland Street, Paterson, NJ B 5607 L 01
 Photographs, historic / contemporary



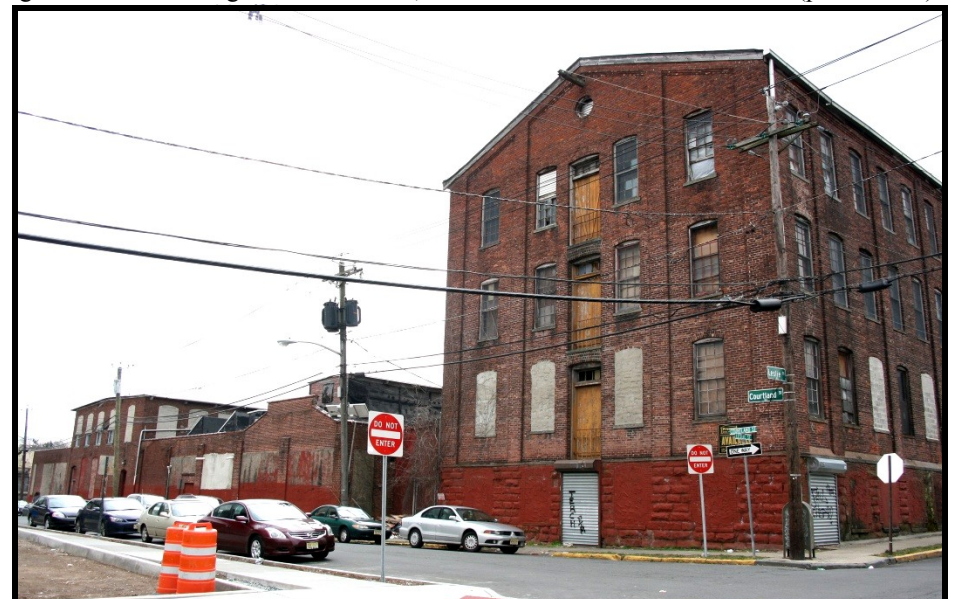
MIESCH 1: Advertisements from 1924 trade journals for the Miesch Olive Branch trade name ribbon products used primarily in the millinery trade [hats].



MIESCH 2: oblique overview looking NW at corner of Courtland and Leslie St. The gable end of the original Miesch mill, c1890. Note brownstone first floor (painted red)



MIESCH 3: Detail of 1890 mill Courtland St. façade looking N. Note the number of intact double hung windows, central loading doors, central oculus window, stepped corbel detailing and pilaster articulation as character defining features.



MIESCH 4: oblique overview looking NW at corner of Courtland and Leslie St. The two-story brick building at left is part of the 1910 expansion, while others to the right were built later. The gable end of the 1890 mill is at right.

MIESCH SILK RIBBON MFG. CO. Courtland St. works
52 Courtland Street, Paterson, NJ B 5607 L 01
Photographs, historic / contemporary



MIESCH 5: detail of Leslie St. side, showing two by two fenestration, intact windows, and similar detailing as described in previous photos.



MIESCH 6: oblique overview looking SE of corner of Camden and Leslie Streets, showing the c1910 addition along Leslie street.



MIESCH 7: detail view looking SW, showing two by two fenestration, open ended eaves and general conditions of the Camden St. addition.



MIESCH 8: oblique overview looking SE, showing gable end and Camden St. side of the c1910 addition. The gable end of the original mill is visible at the far end of the street.

MIESCH SILK RIBBON MFG. CO. Courtland St. works
52 Courtland Street, Paterson, NJ B 5607 L 01
Photographs, historic / contemporary



MIESCH 9: Oblique view looking SW, showing non contributing concrete block shed on Lot 2, at corner of Camden and Court Streets. This and other structures along Court Street are not included in the boundary of the Miesch mill designation, and are on a separate tax parcel altogether.