

PROPERTY REPORT

Property ID: -1705710456

Property Name: J.S. Sowerbutt **Ownership:** Private
Address: 28-36 Paterson ST **Apartment #:** **ZIP:** 07522

PROPERTY LOCATION(S):

County:	Municipality:	Local Place Name:	USGS Quad:	Block:	Lot:
PASSAIC	Paterson		Paterson	3117	5

Property Photo:



Old HSI Number: PAS1608-365 **NRIS Number:** **HABS/HAER Number:**

Description:

The J.S. Sowerbutt Mill consists of two reinforced-concrete tenant silk mills built in 1905-06. The smaller of the two mills is 3 stories and plainly finished but the larger is 4 stories and scored to appear like coursed ashlar. According to 1915 and 1931 Sanborn maps the larger mill was known as Mill No. 2 and the smaller as Mill No. 3. This numbering system likely reflects that the mills replaced a 2-story frame mill that burned on the same site in 1904.

Setting:

The mills are located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Paterson and Harrison Streets in a mixed-use urban setting characterized by many vacant lots and industrial buildings including the Manhattan Shirt Company complex one block to the north and the Hinchliffe Brewery one-half block to the east.

Registration and Status Dates: **National Historic Landmark?:**
National Register: **SHPO Opinion:**
New Jersey Register: **Local Designation:**
Determination of Eligibility: **Other Designation:**
Certification of Eligibility: **Other Designation Date:**

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Property ID:

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Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

(Primary Contact)

-1705710456

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Eligibility Worksheet included in present survey?

Is this Property an identifiable farm or former farm?

Location Map:

Site Map:



BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Author:	Title:	Year:	HPO Accession #: (if applicable)
Tilcon	"History." On-line at www.tilconny.com.	2012	
Bureau of Labor and Industries of N.J.	27th Annual Report.	1904	
(None Listed)	"Fires." The Hub, Vol. 37 (Mar. 1, 1896), p. 300.	1896	
Department of Community Development	City of Paterson Survey	1987	
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	1931	
Sanborn Map Company	Insurance Maps of Paterson, New Jersey	1899	
Sanborn Map Company	Insurance Maps of Paterson, New Jersey	1915	

Additional Information:

More Research Needed? (checked=Yes)

INTENSIVE-LEVEL USE ONLY:

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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 industrial archaeology (interior and mill yard)

Conversion Problem? ConversionNote: 11

Date form completed: 9/7/2012

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INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Common Name: 28-36 Paterson Street

Historic Name: J. S. Sowerbutt Mills - Mill No. 2

Present Use: Industrial, light industrial

Historic Industry: Textiles

ConstructionDate: 1906 **Source:** Inscription

Construction Start Date: **Construction End Date:** Building ID: 2

Style: Vernacular?

Exterior Finish Materials: Concrete

Physical Condition: Good

Foundation Materials: Modern Concrete

Remaining Historic Fabric: High

Roof Finish Materials:

Length: 125 **Stories:** 4

Structural System:

Width: 55 **Bays:** 16

Roof System:

Equipment/Machinery:

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

Exterior Description:

Mill No. 2 is a 4-story, 16-bay, cast-in-place reinforced concrete, side-gabled mill with a rectangular plan of 55 x 125 ft. The mill's distinguishing feature is its concrete finish with beveled scoring to appear like coursed ashlar. The mill is scored on its east elevation, facing Paterson Street, and on its ends but not on its rear west elevation where the aesthetic treatment was not considered necessary due to the low visibility. The mill has a corbelled cornice and segmentally arched windows and doors. Window frames and double-hung 16/16 sash remain in a few windows but most sash have been removed and the windows boarded over from the inside. The building has multiple doorways include several garage doors. The gable ends have hoists and center bay double mill doors at all floors. Some of the paneled wood mill doors appear to be original. Between the 3rd and 4th floors is a date plaque inscribed with "J.S. Sowerbutt 1906".

Interior Description:

The interior was not available for inspection. According to the 1915 Sanborn map, the mill housed a wagon works on the first floor. At the south end of the building were an elevator shaft and an electric generating room. The 2nd through 4th floors were tenant silk weavers. By 1931, the wagon works had vacated the building and all floors were occupied by tenant silk weavers.

Alteration Dates:

Alteration(s): **Circa Date:** **Date Range:** **Source:**
_____ to _____

Architect/Designer:

Type: **Name:** **Person/Firm Description:**
Other James S. Sowerbutt Manufacturer

Date form completed: 10/1/2012

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Property ID:

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Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

(Primary Contact)

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Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Common Name: 28-36 Paterson Street

Historic Name: J. S. Sowerbutt Mill - Mill No. 3

Present Use: Industrial, light industrial

Historic Industry: Textiles

ConstructionDate: 1905 **Source:** Inscription

Construction Start Date: **Construction End Date:** Building ID: 3

Style: Vernacular?

Exterior Finish Materials: Concrete

Physical Condition: Good

Foundation Materials: Modern Concrete

Remaining Historic Fabric: High

Roof Finish Materials:

Length: 125 **Stories:** 3

Structural System:

Width: 40 **Bays:** 3

Roof System:

Equipment/Machinery:

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

Exterior Description:

Mill No. 3 is a 3-story, 3-bay, front-gabled, cast-in-place reinforced concrete factory building with a rectangular plan of 40 x 125 ft. The exterior walls are plainly finished with the wood-board formwork visible in the concrete, indicating little effort was made to rub smooth or tool the concrete after the forms were removed. The exception is the 1st floor of the north gable end, which is scored to appear like ashlar, similar to Mill No. 3. The mill has a molded cornice in the gable ends only, an oculus in the gable peaks, and segmentally arched windows and doors. Original 16/16 double-hung wood sash remain in some windows. The gable ends have hoists and mill doors at each floor, but original wood doors have been removed and replaced with panels. The date "1905" is inscribed in the north gable end. A square brick smokestack rises above the roofline at the mill's southwest corner. This smokestack corresponds with the location of a boiler room shown on a 1915 Sanborn map.

Interior Description:

The interior was not available for inspection. According to the 1915 Sanborn map, the mill housed a wagon works on the first floor. At the south end of the building was a boiler room with two boilers. The 2nd through 3rd floors were tenant silk weavers. By 1931, the wagon works had vacated the building and all floors were occupied by tenant silk weavers.

Alteration Dates:

Architect/Designer:

Type:	Name:	Person/Firm Description:
Other	James S. Sowerbutt	Manufacturer

Date form completed: 10/1/2012

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Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger (Primary Contact)

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ELIGIBILITY WORKSHEET - Properties

Property ID -1705710456

History:

James S. Sowerbutt established a wagon works near the corner of Paterson and Harrison Streets in the early 1890s, possibly expanding on an earlier blacksmith and woodshop. In 1895, this 2-story frame wagon works was destroyed by fire. Sowerbutt rebuilt. The 1899 Sanborn map shows a 2-story wagon factory divided into rooms for woodwork, painting, a boiler room, a blacksmith shop and a "repository," a name used by wagon makers for a showroom. In 1904, the wagon shop was once again heavily damaged by fire.

In 1905-06, Sowerbutt rebuilt, but this time rather than rebuilding a conventional wagon works, he built two side-by-side reinforced-concrete mill buildings that were designed not only to accommodate his wagon works on the first floor but tenant silk weavers in the upper floors. This approach no doubt made good economic sense since the tenants would guarantee additional income. Sowerbutt may also have recognized the declining demand for wagons in the early automobile age and thus realized that he needed to find other ways to generate income from the property.

Sowerbutt's choice of building with reinforced concrete is noteworthy and may be a singular instance in the history of mill construction in Paterson. In the mid-1900s, reinforced concrete was still a relatively new building material, having first been used in tentative and relatively limited fashion for structural applications in the mid-1880s to 1890s. By the early 20th century, the material's moldable qualities, strength capacity and fire retardant qualities were becoming increasingly recognized. Interestingly, Sowerbutt made no changes to the basic textile mill form but he did take advantage of the moldable qualities of the material, even making the effort to score the concrete to look like stone. It also appears from notations on Sanborn maps that Sowerbutt did not extend the use of reinforced-concrete framing to the upper stories of the mills, instead using conventional timber mill framing, perhaps not trusting the concrete's ability to support its own weight. These mills are worthy of further investigation since they represent an important usage of reinforced concrete during a formative and transitional period in the technology's development.

There is other evidence that Sowerbutt was expanding and diversifying his business opportunities in the early years of the 20th century. In 1901, he was involved in the opening of the Prospect Park Quarry in Prospect Park, N.J. Between 1901 and his death in 1916, Sowerbutt was a frequent bidder on public works contracts to grade and pave roads, including some early concrete roadbeds. It seems entirely probable that Sowerbutt's quarry business influenced his decision to build reinforced-concrete mills.

In 1915, the Sowerbutt Mill Nos. 2 and 3 housed Sowerbutt's wagon works on the 1st floor. Upper story silk mill tenants included M. B. Watson (warping and winding), Newark Silk Co. (broad silks), Prudential Silk Co. (broad silks), and McCollom & Post Co. (broad silks). Sowerbutt supplied light and power to his tenants with a steam plant at the east end of Mill No. 3 and electric generators at the east end of Mill No. 2. A 1-story coalhouse was located in the alley between the two mills. By 1931, the tenant mills were owned by Bessie S. Harper.

Statement of Significance:

The J.S. Sowerbutt Mills are architecturally significant examples of reinforced-concrete industrial buildings, dating from the early period of development and innovation in structural uses of the material. They have excellent integrity of design and materials, and save for replacement or lost window frames and sash have no major history of alterations. They are rare and possibly unique examples of their type in Paterson and the state. The mills are historically associated with the development of silk tenant mills in Paterson with the story of Sowerbutt's adaptation of a wagon works to accommodate tenant silk weavers adding materially to an understanding of the economic and work conditions of the period.

Eligibility for New Jersey and National Registers: Yes No

National Register Criteria: A B C D

Level of Significance: Local State National

Justification of Eligibility/Ineligibility:

The J.S. Sowerbutt Mills are early and remarkably complete examples of reinforced-concrete textile mill construction in Paterson and in New Jersey, dating to the early period of experimentation and refinement in structural concrete design. Mill No. 2 is further enhanced by its aesthetic character where the builder took advantage of the moldable qualities of concrete to add architectural detail. The mill is also eligible under Criterion A for its association with Paterson's silk industry and the pattern of work in tenant mills.

Total Number of Attachments: 2

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Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

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Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

List of Element Names: Mill No. 2
Mill No. 3

Narrative Boundary Description:

The property boundary is block 3117, lot 5 as shown on the 2006 Paterson tax map accompanying this form.

Date Form Completed: 10/1/2012

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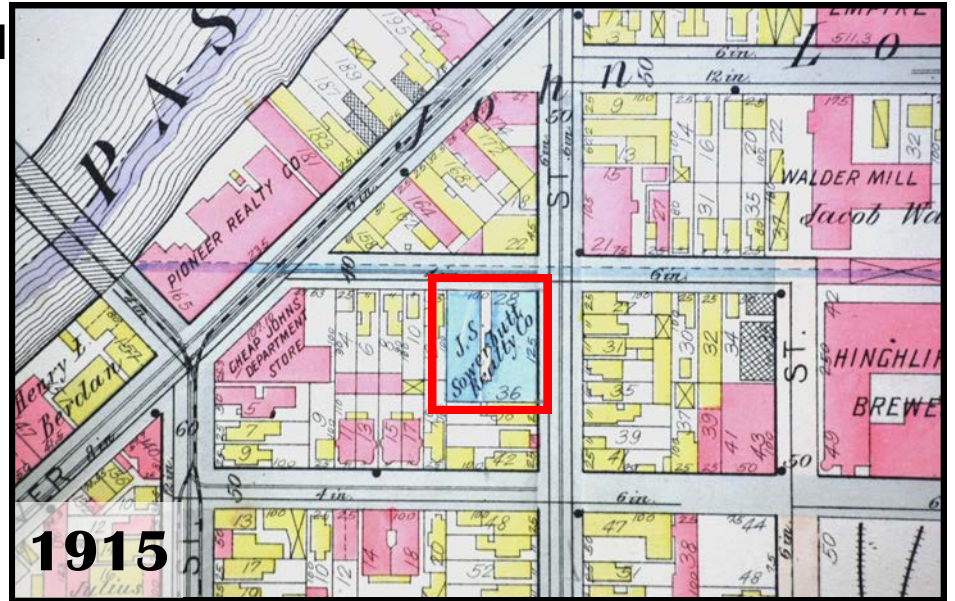
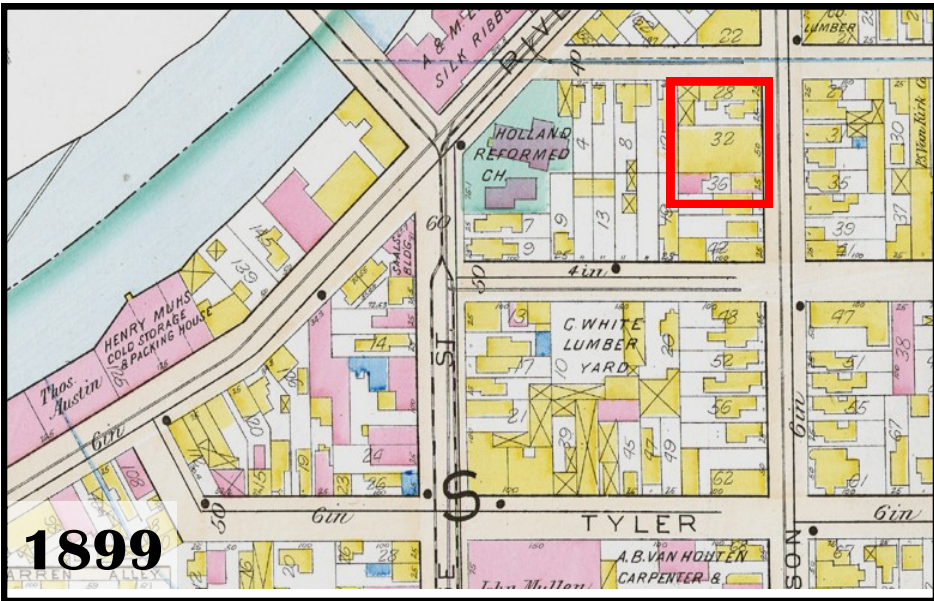
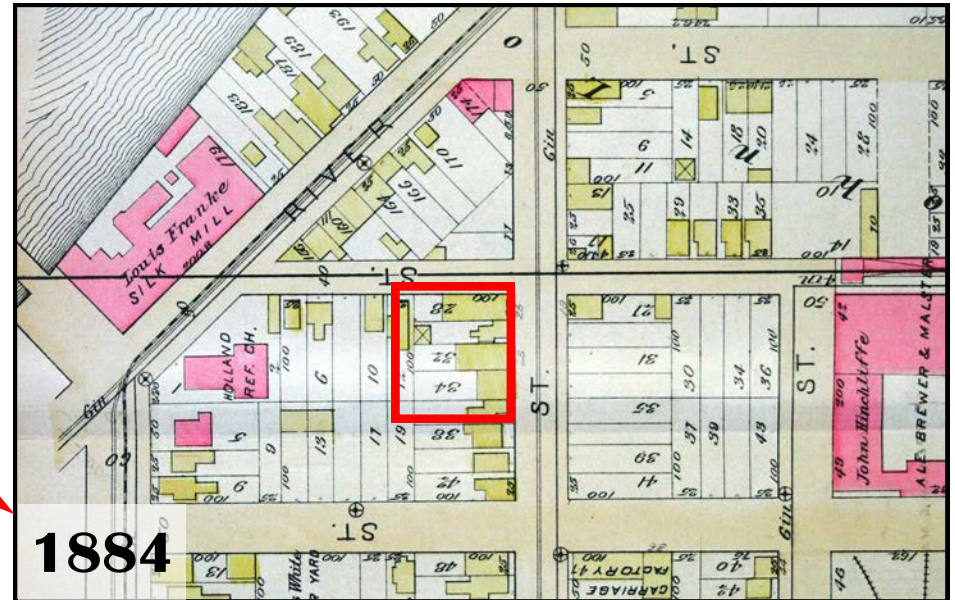
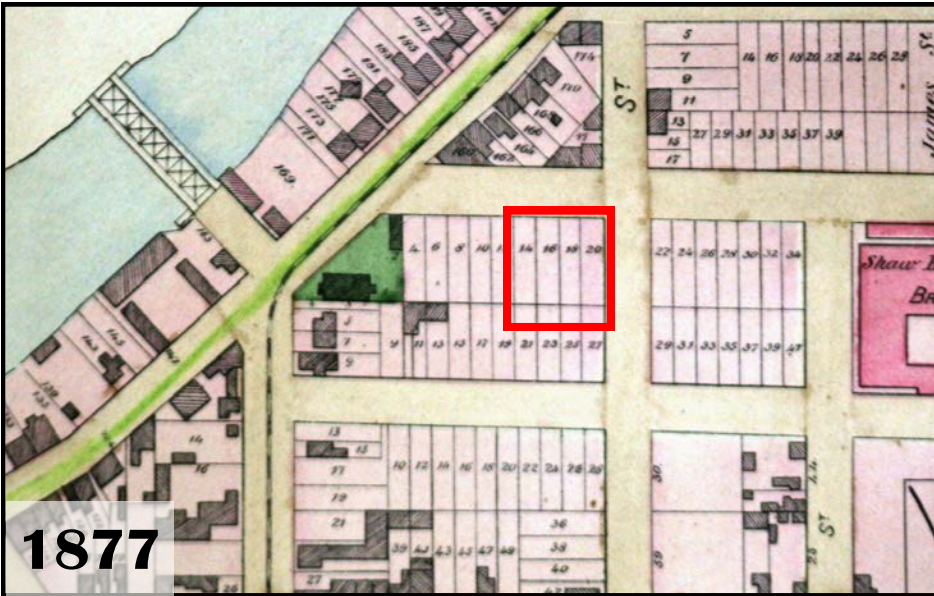
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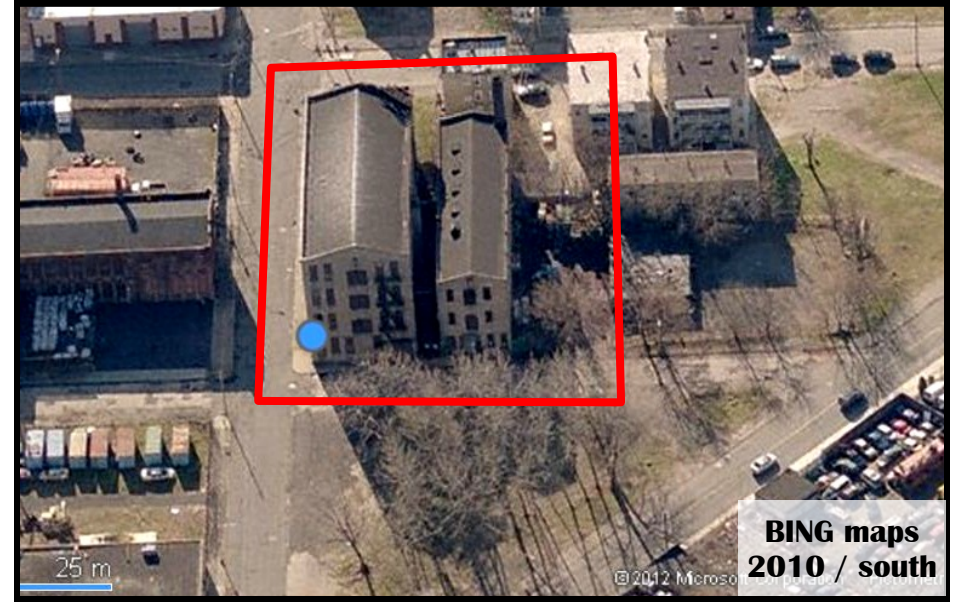
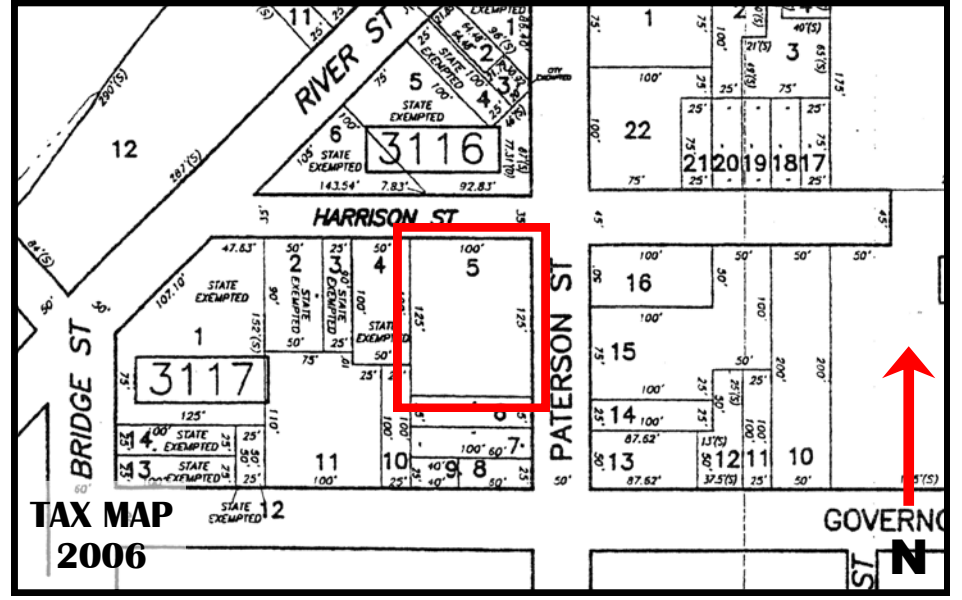
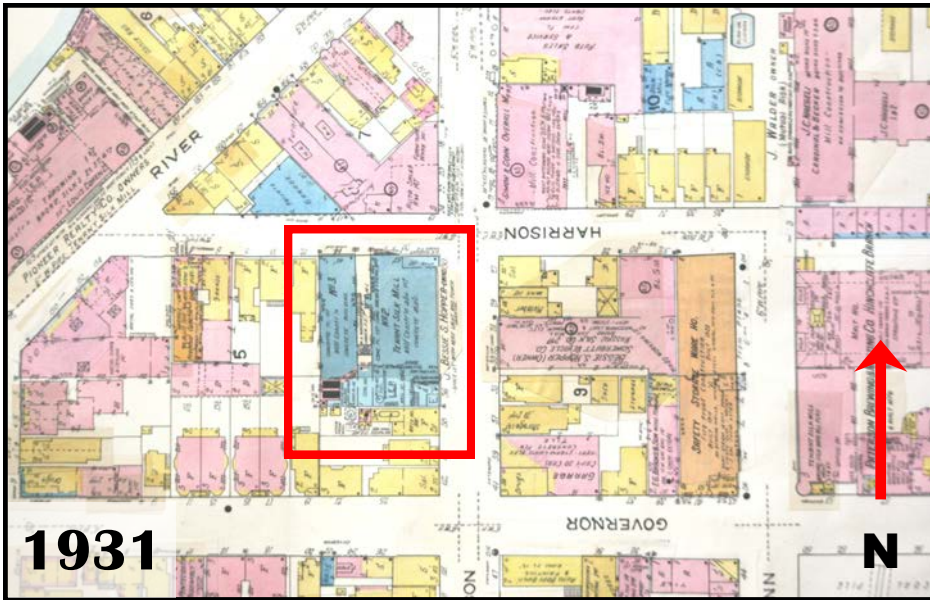
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(Primary Contact)

J.S. SOWERBUTT SILK MILL
 28-36 Paterson St., Paterson, NJ B 3117 L 05
 Site Development Maps 1877, 1884, 1899, 1915



J.S. SOWERBUTT SILK MILL
 28-36 Paterson St., Paterson, NJ B 3117 L 05
 Site Development Maps, 1931, 2006, 2010



J.S. SOWERBUTT SILK MILL
28-36 Paterson St., Paterson, NJ B 3117 L 05
Photographs, historic / contemporary



SOWERBUTT 1: oblique overview of west side of 1906 mill, looking southwest from across Paterson St. showing part of both gable ends and full west elevation.



SOWERBUTT 2: oblique overview of north gable ends of both mills, looking southwest from across Paterson St. toward corner of Harrison and Paterson St.



SOWERBUTT 3: view of north gable end of 1905 mill, looking southwest from across Harrison St.

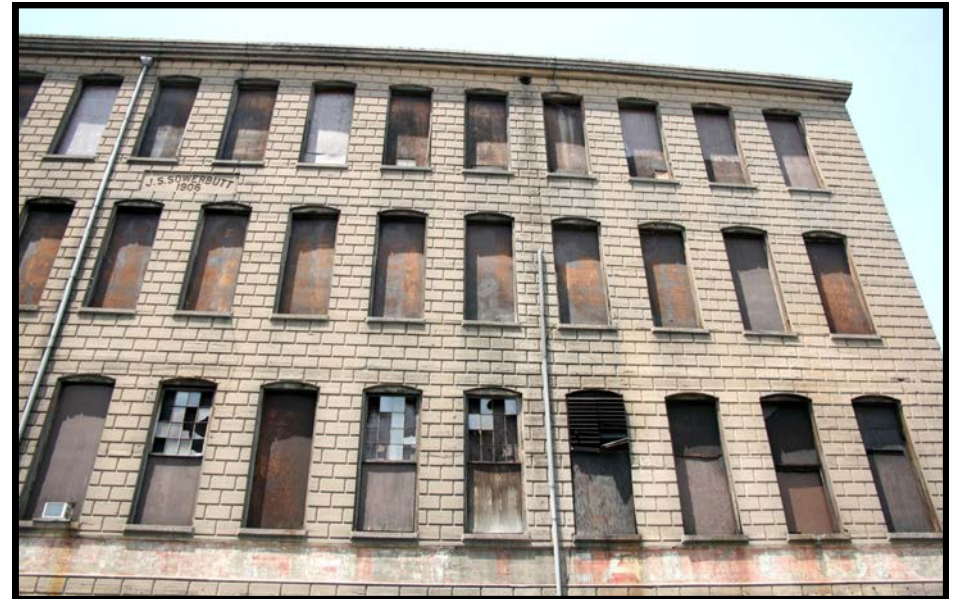


SOWERBUTT 4: oblique overview of north gable ends of both mills, looking south from Harrison St.

J.S. SOWERBUTT SILK MILL
28-36 Paterson St., Paterson, NJ B 3117 L 05
Photographs, historic / contemporary



SOWERBUTT 5: oblique overview of south gable end and east elevation of 1906 mill, looking northwest from across Paterson St.



SOWERBUTT 6: view of east elevation, looking east, showing application of unique poured concrete treatment that simulates a stone ashlar rustication effect.



SOWERBUTT 7: Detail view of cast concrete name panel between the third and fourth stories of the east side indicating "J.S. Sowerbutt 1906" ownership and construction date.



SOWERBUTT 8: Detail view of top of the square smokestack, looking northwest. Note the "S" iron detail attached, representing Sowerbutt ownership.