

PROPERTY REPORT

Property ID: 702542178

Property Name: Riverside Silk Mill
Address: 781-821 River ST
Apartment #:
Ownership: Private
ZIP: 07524

PROPERTY LOCATION(S):

County:	Municipality:	Local Place Name:	USGS Quad:	Block:	Lot:
PASSAIC	Paterson	Bunker Hill	Paterson	2204	7

Property Photo:



Old HSI Number: PAS1608-383
NRIS Number:
HABS/HAER Number:

Description:

The Riverside Silk Mill is an industrial complex situated on 3.4 acres. It is comprised of a ca. 1889, 450-ft. brick mill, formerly used for the manufacture of silk ribbons and broad silks. Several non-contributing frame and masonry structures are located to the rear of the mill.

Setting:

The Riverside Silk Mill fronts River Street and is situated on a somewhat rectangular lot in the middle of a long, narrow city block between 4th Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. The Passaic River forms the western boundary of the lot. The setting is a mixed-use urban neighborhood comprised of 20th century residences, recreational facilities, and industrial complexes. The tracks of the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad form the southwestern boundary of the city block on which this mill is located.

Registration and Status

National Historic Landmark?: ☐

National Register:

New Jersey Register:

Determination of Eligibility:

Certification of Eligibility:

SHPO Opinion:

Local Designation:

Other Designation:

Other Designation Date:

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Property ID:

☒ (Primary Contact)

702542178

☒ 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)
Department of Community Development	City of Paterson Survey	1987	
Archimede, 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 fo 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	Fire Insurance Maps of Paterson, New Jersey	1915	
Sanborn Map Company	Fire Insurance Maps of the City of Paterson, New Jersey	1931	
Trumbull, L R	A History of Industrial Paterson	1882	
The Paterson Daily and Weekly Guardian	History and Institutions: City of Paterson, N.J.	1895	
Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC	Historic Aerials of Paterson, New Jersey	2011	

Additional Information:

More Research Needed? ☒ (checked=Yes)

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Property ID:

☒ (Primary Contact)

702542178

Page 2

INTENSIVE-LEVEL USE ONLY:

Attachments Included:

0 Building
0 Structure
0 Object

0 Bridge
0 Landscape
1 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: 17

Date form completed: 9/7/2012

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Property ID:

☒ (Primary Contact)

702542178

Page 3

INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Common Name: 781 River Street

Historic Name: Riverside Silk Mill

Present Use: Industrial, light industrial

Historic Industry: Textiles

Construction Date: 1889 **Source:** Historic maps

**Construction
Start Date:**

**Construction
End Date:**

Building ID:

Style: ☐ Vernacular?

Exterior Finish Materials: Brick, Common Bond

Physical Condition: Good

Foundation Materials:

Remaining Historic Fabric: Medium

Roof Finish Materials: Asphalt Shingle

Length: 450 **Stories:** 3

Structural System:

Width: 55 **Bays:** 51

Roof System:

Equipment/Machinery:

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

Exterior Description:

The Riverside Mill is a 3-story, 51-bay, rectangular plan brick industrial building constructed ca. 1889 for Johson, Cowdin, & Co. Silk Manufacturers. The mill has a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Below the roofline is an aluminum-clad and dented-brick cornice. A stepped brick string course divides each story. Projecting brick pilasters divide each of the bays. Window openings have arched brick lintels and stone sills, though most openings have been infilled with concrete. The central 4 bays along River Street project from the east façade, distinguishing the entrance from the otherwise uniform façade. This projecting section has a stepped parapet wall with a central oculus under which the name "Riverside Silk Mill" is featured in stone. Excepting the centermost bay, window openings on this projecting section are paired and have quoined sandstone surrounds. Above the arched entryway is a metal awning. The doublewide metal front doors are replacements. One first story window opening just north of the main entrance has been enlarged to accommodate a secondary entry. Middle openings on the 5-bay south elevation of the mill are located below an iron hoist and are larger than other openings, suggesting materials entered the upper levels of the mill via an exterior hoisting system. Located behind the mill in line with the central entry is the squared brick smokestack rising from the 1-story brick boiler room.

Two additional wings were constructed tightly parallel and behind the original front wing sections, giving an H-style massing configuration. The southernmost of these two additions is brick appears on historic maps by 1915. Though this addition was spaced just 15 ft. behind the original building, the gap between the two buildings was infilled with a 1-story concrete structure during the mid-20th century. The northern addition was constructed between 1966 and 1970 and infilled the space between the original mill and a 3-story, gabled, brick building dating to 1898.

Attached to the north end of the original mill is a 3-story, flat roof brick addition constructed circa 1975. Its walls are relatively blind, with only a few small, fixed metal windows interrupting the brick façade along River Street.

Interior Description:

The interior of this building was not accessible at the time of this survey. Sanborn maps dating to 1915 indicate that the wings of the original mill were lofted, as were the remaining brick buildings behind the mill. The 1-story brick attachments behind the central entry are identified on historic maps as the boiler room and packing room.

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Property ID:

Page 4

**Principal
Investigator:** Patrick Harshbarger

☒ (Primary Contact)

702542178

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

Alteration Dates:

Alteration(s):	Circa Date:	Date Range:	Source:
Physical alteration	1990	to	Window openings infilled; replacement doors
Physical alteration	1975	to	Historic aerials

Architect/Designer:

Date form completed: 9/25/2012

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Historic Preservation Office

ELIGIBILITY WORKSHEET - Properties

Property ID 702542178

History:

The Riverside Silk Mill was constructed ca. 1889 by Johnson, Cowdin & Co. for the production of silk ribbons and broad silks during the great boom of Paterson's Silk City period. By the 1920s, the firm was incorporated as Johnson, Cowdin, Emmerich, Inc. This firm, in addition to the Riverside Mill, owned and operated mills in other states: the Tremont Mills in New York City (Bronx); Progress Mills in Glendale, New York (Long Island); and the Lady Fair Mills in Norwalk, CT. The firm was primarily involved in thin silk ribbon production in each of these mills, with an overall total of 702 looms. Riverside was the largest of its mills, with a massive scale of 450 feet long by 55 feet wide, typical of textile mill architecture of this period. These proportions were intended to accommodate the scale of production and mechanization present during this period. As one of the few remaining mills of this scale in Paterson, it is a significant testament to the success and prowess of Paterson in what perhaps was its greatest period of wealth and production. The mill's location along the river at the northern point of the city is also unique in that few silk manufacturing mills were located in this area. This marked Riverside specifically as a conglomerate mill, a large capital investment by Paterson "outsiders," far from the central silk mill district along the Erie Railroad corridor, a place where Paterson's traditional family-named mills were developed. The district surrounding Riverside developed rapidly as Paterson's expansive silk and rayon dyeing and finishing district in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Statement of Significance:

The mill building, linear in form, lends itself to efficient functionality as it allows for the use of line shafts to distribute power from a central source to the various machines within the mill. Its architecture is characteristic of late 19th century Paterson textile mills. The siting of this mill along the Passaic in north Paterson encouraged the establishment of other mills away from the downtown area. The north side of Paterson would eventually become characterized by the dyeing and finishing mills that punctuated its streets.

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 Riverside Silk Mill is recommended eligible under Criterion C as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of late-19th-century silk mills with an emphasis on functionality.

Total Number of Attachments: 1

List of Element Names: Riverside Silk Mill

Narrative Boundary Description:

Date Form Completed: 9/25/2012

Survey Name: Intensive-Level Survey of Paterson Industrial Mills

Principal Investigator: Patrick Harshbarger

Organization: Hunter Research, Inc.

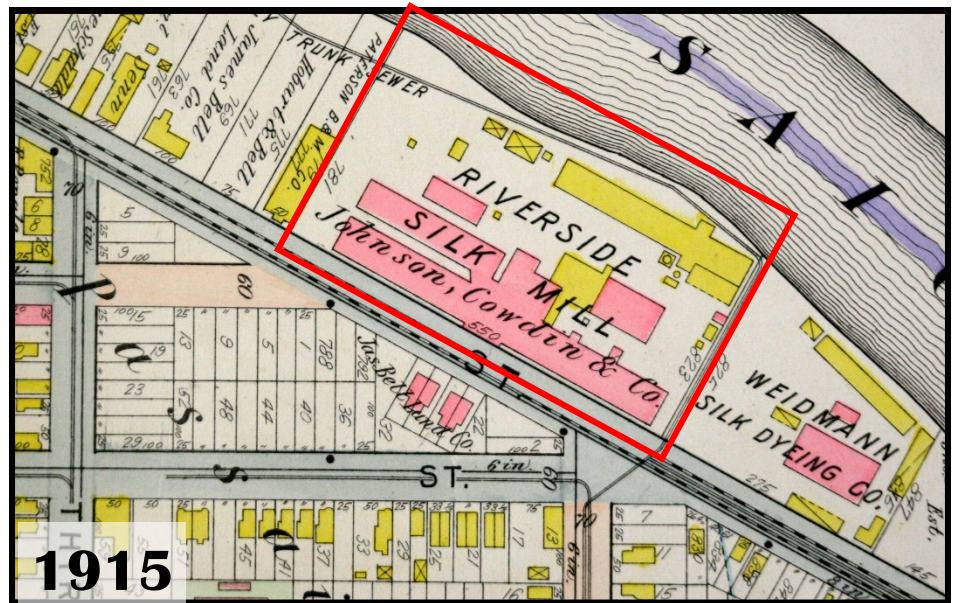
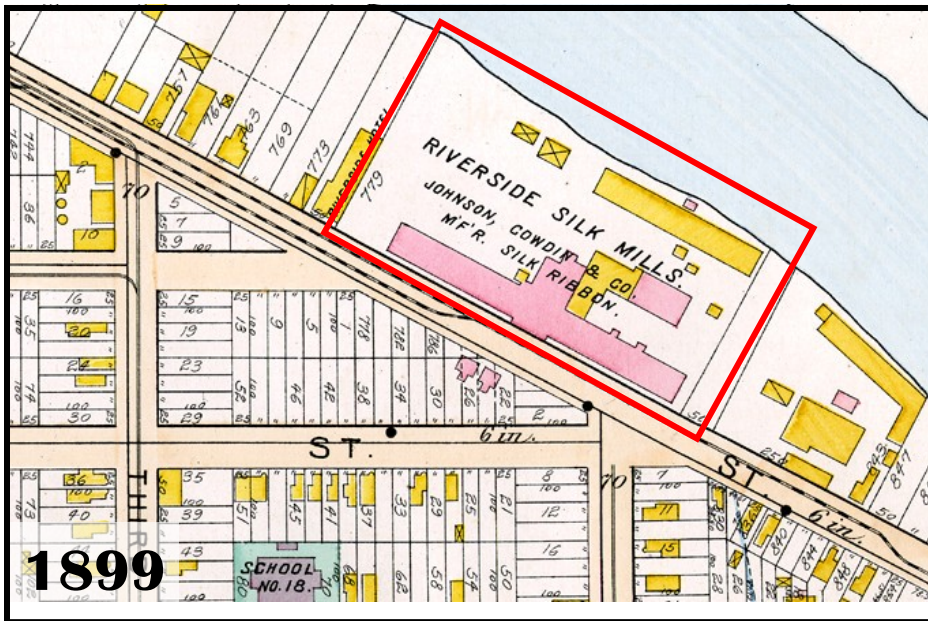
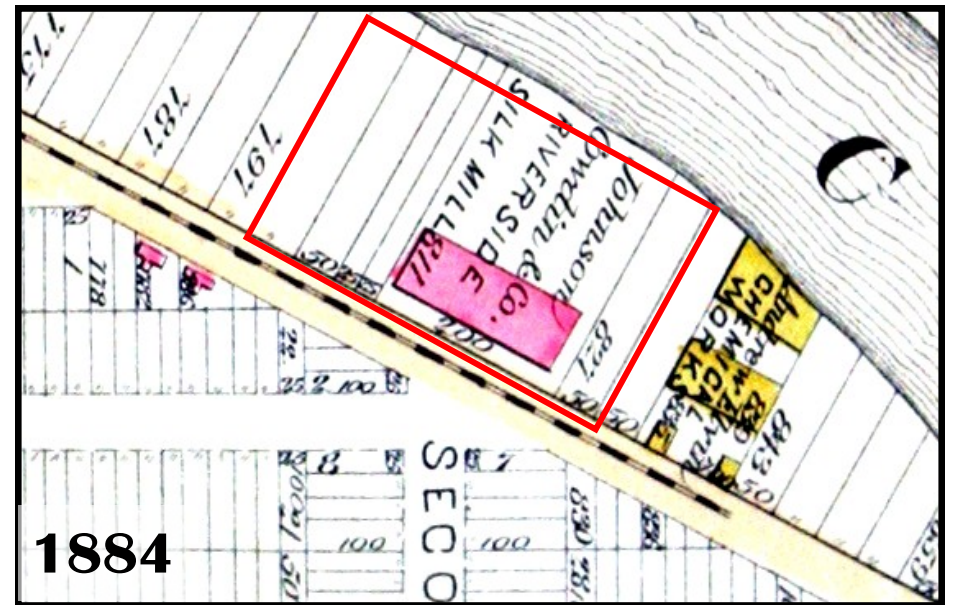
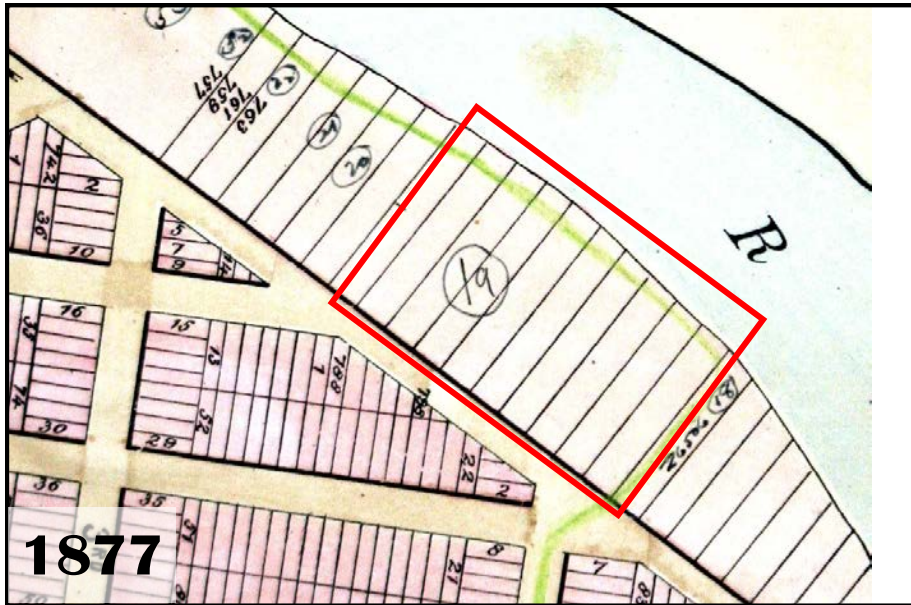
Property ID:

☒ (Primary Contact)

702542178

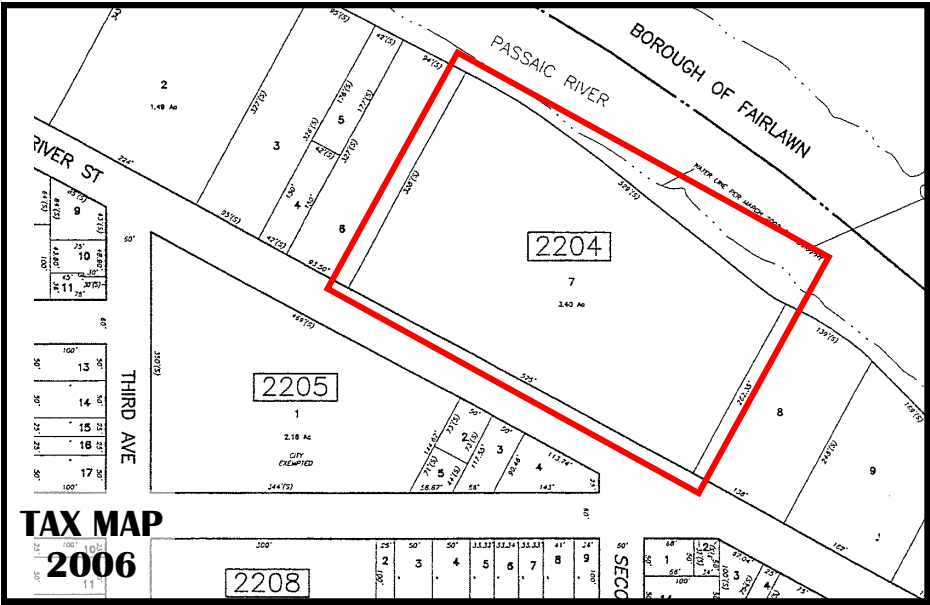
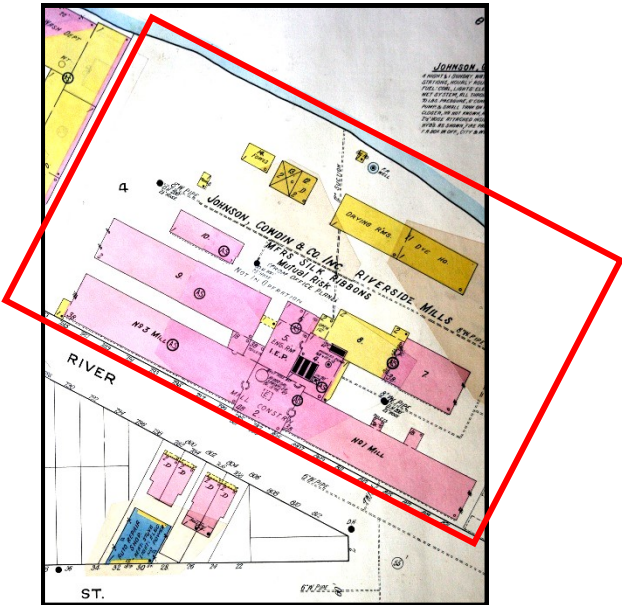
Page 5

RIVERSIDE SILK MILL / JOHNSON, CODIN & CO. INC.
781 River Street, Paterson, NJ B 2204 L 07
Site Development Maps 1877, 1884, 1899, 1915



RIVERSIDE SILK MILL / JOHNSON, CODIN & CO. INC.
781 River Street, Paterson, NJ B 2204 L 07
Site Development Maps, 1931, 2006, 2010

1931



RIVERSIDE SILK MILL / JOHNSON, CODIN & CO. INC.
781 River Street, Paterson, NJ B 2204 L 07
Photographs, contemporary



RIVER 1: oblique overview of South façade fronting River St., looking E. Center entrance bay is to far right.



RIVER 2: oblique view of central entrance bay of S façade fronting River St.



RIVER 3: detail view of central entrance bay of S façade looking N from River St. classicizing embellishments are present, such as the cast stone surrounds and quoining effects on windows, central oculus, faux pilaster columns, and string courses.



RIVER 4: detail view of central entrance bay of S façade looking N from River St. showing full arched double wide main entrance with marquee.

RIVERSIDE SILK MILL / JOHNSON, CODIN & CO. INC.
781 River Street, Paterson, NJ B 2204 L 07
Photographs, contemporary



RIVER 5: oblique overview of S façade fronting River St. on the east side of the main entrance. Note the concrete block non-contributing addition.



RIVER 6: overview looking NE from River St. of the non-contributing, concrete block addition to the east end of the main building .



RIVER 7: detail view looking S of the rear of the non-contributing concrete block addition. Note there are eight loading bays and a dock.



RIVER 8: oblique overview looking SW of a small brick, three story mill building is extant behind the main buildings. Its use is not known.

RIVERSIDE SILK MILL / JOHNSON, CODIN & CO. INC.
781 River Street, Paterson, NJ B 2204 L 07
Photographs, contemporary



RIVER 9: oblique overview looking SW from rear of complex showing ancillary buildings in foreground and 1900s two story west wing addition in distance.



RIVER 10: detail view looking S from rear of complex showing smokestack, boiler house, ancillary buildings and rear of the central section of the main mill.



RIVER 11: oblique detail view looking SW from rear of complex showing 1900s addition of a two story west wing behind the 1890s main building.



RIVER 12: view looking N from rear of complex of several non contributing ancillary structures along the river bank that defines the rear boundary of the complex.