

Chapter 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONDITION ASSESSMENTS AND THREATS TO PRESERVATION

The 30 mills in this survey were found to be frequently underutilized with perhaps a third being vacant or partially vacant and available for lease. While this was not unanticipated, what was surprising was how many are in use, often as storage or distribution warehouses, as well as some which are engaged in light manufacturing. While it was not the purpose of the survey to collect quantifiable data on current real estate trends or available/vacant square footage, the general impression was that mills were contributing to the local economy and that viable alternative uses were available. That said, during July and August 2012, two of the mills on the original list of 30 – the John Royle & Sons mill at 10 Essex Street and the Empire Piece Dyeing Works at 102-124 Madison Avenue – were razed, clearly demonstrating the ever-looming threat to these properties. The loss of historic industrial properties is a national trend – actually one that has been on-going for decades – that has usually only received passing attention from the preservation community at large. This trend may be changing since, in the past few years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other national organizations like the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA) have made efforts to promote the cause of industrial heritage as evidenced by several co-sponsored paper sessions at the 2011 National Trust annual conference in Buffalo, New York, and a 2010 workshop sponsored by the National Trust, the SIA and the Kaplan Foundation to discuss opportunities for preservationists to advocate for historic mills and other types of industrial resources.

Aside from the threat of demolition, the mills in Paterson were found to be in varying conditions, with some, like the Barbour Flax Works on Grand Street, showing signs of recent rehabilitation and good maintenance practices, while others, like the Sipp Machine Works on Warren Street, showing signs of a high degree of deferred maintenance and neglect. While some mills are in much better condition than others, many owners clearly struggle with maintenance. The highly significant William Strange Mills on Grand Street, for instance, appear to have irreparable damage to historic fabric that will make it very costly to preserve even the structural envelope. A full assessment would need to be made by a preservation architect and engineer.

In order to bring immediate recognition to threatened mills, it is recommended that the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission (PHPC) and the City of Paterson move forward with plans to designate buildings to the list of city landmarks that meet the city's *Criteria and Procedures* for listing. Consideration should be given to providing PHPC staff with the resources to educate owners on appropriate maintenance and preservation treatments that will preserve mills that anchor Paterson's neighborhoods and provide the city with a remarkable sense of place and heritage. Mills identified as significant by this survey should also be considered for targeted assistance through the city's Division of Economic Development and Division of Planning & Zoning. This assistance may take the form of helping owners to identify potential rehabilitation or re-use solutions.

B. LISTING IN THE NEW JERSEY AND NATIONAL REGISTERS – MULTIPLE PROPERTY APPROACH

The eligible mills in this survey are well-suited to listing in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places using the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). The MPDF is a cover document that serves as a basis for evaluating eligibility and it provides a thematic alternative to nominating properties as a group or individually over time. The MPDF can greatly simplify the process of completing and reviewing individual nomination forms. Information on this approach is contained in *National Register Bulletin 16B, How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (1991, Revised 1999). The “30 mills” survey and the data and forms generated for this report provide a foundation for starting the MPDF and will significantly reduce preparation costs. An important advantage of the MPDF approach is that mills listed or determined eligible will become qualified for federal preservation tax credits, which are an incentive for rehabilitation.

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This survey has demonstrated that the mills outside of the Great Falls district have a rich and multi-faceted history. The report has identified the following topics that would be fruitful areas for further research:

1). It is recommended that further research take place to develop the labor, ethnic heritage and social history associations of individual mills through analysis of demographic source materials, such as the U.S. Census manuscripts, combined with other evidence that can be gathered on working conditions through newspapers and other primary sources. The goal of this research would be take the broad outlines of this history, which are known, and bring them to a local,

mill-specific level that makes the reality of working conditions and their impact on immigrant communities interpretable within the actual spaces where these events occurred, thereby adding valuable texture to the obvious external significance of the mill’s architecture and place within the urban industrial landscape.

2). It is recommended that further research take place in the area of industrial archaeology. This research would focus on identifying mills that are good candidates for providing physical evidence of the processes that occurred within them. This research should consider a variety of settings including silk throwing mills, silk weaving mills (broad silk and ribbon), silk dyeing shops, silk printing shops, machine shops, erecting shops and powerhouses. Researchers should use the tools of industrial archaeology including documentation and analysis of interior workspaces to develop interpretive materials including photographs, drawings, process flow charts and the like, supported by primary source materials including historic photographs and information from period trade journals.

3). It is recommended that additional survey take place to identify mills that did not fit the criteria that were developed for inclusion in this survey. Under-represented or not represented in this survey are small to moderate-sized mills and shops that were especially characteristic of the silk industry of the 1920s and 1930s. These family shops are an important component of the story and there is evidence of them in many locations in Paterson. A systematic review of Sanborn maps should also take place to determine if there are additional mills or industrial sectors that should be surveyed. A cursory review of these materials and an informal windshield survey suggests that there are additional mills that may be of historical interest. Also unrepresented in the current survey are at least two industrial sectors – paper and chemicals. The chemical sector appears to have had a close relationship historically with the silk dyeing sector, growing alongside it to provide the basic ingredients for the dyes.

The data generated by the above research activities should be geared toward producing accessible materials that can be used to educate and increase awareness among the citizens of Paterson and visitors to the city. All research plans should include a public education component and a task for making the materials accessible through local community centers (libraries, schools and the like), as well as through official channels like city websites and the Great Falls National Historical Park.

and its visitor center. This tour would draw visitors into other parts of the city to explore its industrial architecture and aspects of its post-1850 industrial development beyond the waterpower. This tour could be combined with opportunities to experience sites that were associated with the Strike of 1913, as well as neighborhoods with historic and modern ethnic associations. The tour should not only have history but it should offer opportunities to experience the city's living culture, including food, music and art offered in neighborhoods with an industrial past.

D. OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Industrial heritage tourism is a growing business in the United States and Europe. While this type of thematic tourism is not large compared to some other types of tourism, it has a devoted clientele who will pay for tours and guided experiences that bring them into contact with industrial buildings and factories. These tours also often involve visiting active factories on what are called "process tours," not necessarily in historic buildings. Paterson has a number of interesting and active industrial firms, like the Watson Machine Company, which would be very attractive to this affinity group. The industrial heritage tourism business is more highly developed in Europe than in the United States, but it is catching on here. A website with information on the Europe Route of Industrial Heritage can be found at www.erih.org, which provides links to specific countries and cities that participate in the route. A resource and test market for industrial heritage tourism in the United States is the Society for Industrial Archeology and its Roebling Chapter in the New York Metropolitan area (www.sia-web.org).

More specifically, it is recommended that Paterson consider the development of an industrial heritage guided tour that links industrial sites throughout the city with the Great Falls National Historical Park