

WASHINGTON

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCERS use only  
received  
date entered

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Van Epps, William H., House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 212 S. Ottawa Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Dixon N/A vicinity of congressional district 16th

state Illinois code 012 county Lee code 103

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

4. Owner of Property

name John R. McLane & John R. McLane Jr.

street & number 212 S. Ottawa Avenue

city, town Dixon N/A vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lee County Courthouse, Records Office

street & number

city, town Dixon state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey has this property been determined eligible? :  yes  no

date December 1973  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation

city, town Springfield state Illinois

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wm. H. VanEpps home has many unique and unusual features and although it has undergone changes and adaptive reuse the front portion which is most visible and important has remained fundamentally unchanged. The few changes which have been made to the exterior front portion could easily be reversed if funds become available. The house was expanded to the rear in approximately 1900 and in 1926 it was converted into 4 apartments. The addition to the rear is not very noticeable from the street or the Court House square where the building is normally viewed. Today our architectural firm and an attorney occupy offices on the first floor and the second floor has two apartments. The third floor which was originally a Ballroom and Servants Quarters now is used as a recreation room and artist's studio space for two residents of the building.

The home is basically rectangular in plan with projecting bays. Most of the projecting bays are octagonal with the exception of one circular bay at the front. This circular bay is quite unusual (see item 8 and photos). The home is three stories high with a full basement. The first floor is approximately three feet above grade. The exterior walls are solid brick masonry sixteen inches thick, laid in a common bond. Window lintels (keystone type), sills and the foundation walls are stone. The roof is a modified hip with asphalt shingles on sloped surfaces and either sheet metal or built up roofing on flat surfaces. All gutters are built in.

The front (Entry) porch is accented by classical wood columns with Corinthian Capitals. The original front doors (a pair) were removed and replaced by another door when the building was converted into apartments. The original doors, however, are now in the vestibule and could be put back in their original place. Both of these doors have beautiful etched glass lites in excellent condition. Original wood windows are in place and in good condition. The previous owner, however, installed aluminum combination storms and screens to conserve energy. These however could be removed and replaced by wood storms which would match the character of the building. Chimneys above the roof were rebuilt by a previous owner and the original corbeling and decorative brick work were not restored but this could be done at some future date. Other interesting exterior features include the elaborate cornice with brackets, dentils etc.

The interior has been modified over the years but still contains many of its original features. The major rooms have hardwood floors with alternating strips of oak and maple and the large front room in our office has a parquet accent strip around the perimeter. There are four marble fireplaces, one in each front room. The two in the downstairs front rooms are imported and are quite elaborate (see slide #9 and #10). They were obtained from Mr. Potter Palmer of Chicago. All interior walls are plaster on wood lathe. The front rooms on each floor have a large plaster cornice which is quite unusual and large oval shape plaster ceiling medallions for chandeliers. The chandeliers are bronze and quite large and have been converted from gas to electric (see slide #11). Interior doors are paneled doors and the front windows have interior wood paneled shutters. Doors and window trim is quite elaborate.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Built 1855 Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Viewed today, the Wm.H. Van Epps house, built in circa 1855, is a unique and outstanding example of Italianate Architecture and is one of several surviving examples of the Italianate Style in Dixon and the surrounding area. Mr. VanEpps was one of Dixon's most highly regarded citizens and was known throughout the state. The house fit the man as it most certainly was one of the finest homes in the area when it was built. Because of its high visibility, enfronting the Court House Square and its close proximity to other buildings of recognized historical significance the VanEpps House is important to the character and the history of the neighborhood, the community and state. Although the house has undergone change over the years the front portion which is most visible and architecturally important has remained fundamentally unchanged. Any minor changes which have taken place in this highly visible exterior part of the house could be easily restored as described earlier in item 7.

The Italianate style seems to have symbolized an era of early growth and prosperity for Dixon. The Van Epps House displays numerous characteristic Italianate elements: projecting bays, mansard roof, bracketed cornice with dentil courses, keystone lintels, and Corinthian columns. However, it is in the organization of these elements that makes this house stand apart. Note the apparent contradiction in the order of the front facade, the pair of front three story bays symmetrically juxtaposed yet different - circular at the left and octagonal at the right. The building's grand scale and rich detail accented by its closeness to the street and pedestrian way then worked to create a sense of permanence and prosperity important to an emerging midwest community. The interior of the home also displays a definite uniqueness with its imported marble mantel-pieces obtained from Mr. Potter Palmer of Chicago and other outstanding detail as previously described.

The home was built by Wm. H. Van Epps an early settler prominent in agriculture, politics, railroads and merchandising. Mr. Van Epps held numerous local offices and was President of the State Agricultural Society and was nominated by the Democratic Party to the office of Lieutenant Governor. Mr. Van Epps moved to Dixon in 1854 and lived here until his death in 1877 at the age of 65.<sup>2</sup>

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Lanphier, Beatrice Old Homes of Dixon & Vicinity, 1940, Dixon, IL  
Beatrice Lanphier
2. Hon. Wm. H. Van Epps (Obit.), Dixon Telegraph, October 25, 1877, Dixon, IL  
Telegraph & Herald Co.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.34 acre  
 Quadrangle name Dixon Quadrangle scale 1: 62500

UMT References

A	<u>116</u>	<u>29A010</u>	<u>41635005</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification**  
 The Southerly one-half of Lot 3, all of Lot 6 and the Northerly 10 feet of Lot 7, all in Block 27 in the Town (now City) of Dixon, in LEE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.  
 Lot size 100' by 150'

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John R. McLane Jr., Owner  
 organization McLane & McLane Architects date October 16, 1980  
 street & number 212 S. Ottawa Avenue telephone 815/ 284 6056  
 city or town Dixon state Illinois

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:  
 national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *David K...*

title Director, Illinois Dept of Conservation date 1/2/81

For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	date
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

LE-4-7

201206

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

1. Name of Site:

Common      **House at 212 Ottawa**  
Historic

2. Location:

Street and Number                      Township                      Section  
**212 Ottawa**  
City or Town                      Zip Code                      Range                      ¼ Section  
**Dixon**  
County

3. Classification:

Category (check one)                      Integrity (check one)  
( ) District      (x) Building                      ( ) Altered      (x) Unaltered  
( ) Site              ( ) Structure                      ( ) Moved      (x) Original Site

4. Ownership:

(x) Private                      Status (check one)  
( ) Public                      (x) Occupied  
    ( ) Unoccupied  
    ( ) Preservation work in  
    progress

Access to Public

( ) Yes      ( ) Restricted      ( ) Unrestricted      (x) No

Present Use (check one or more)

( ) Agricultural      ( ) Industrial                      ( ) Religious  
( ) Commercial      ( ) Military                      ( ) Scientific  
( ) Educational      ( ) Museum                      ( ) Transportation  
( ) Entertainment      ( ) Park                      ( ) Other (specify)  
( ) Government      (x) Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name                      Phone Number  
Street and Number  
City or Town  
State                      County                      Zip Code

6. Description:

Condition:

( ) Excellent      ( ) Good      (x) Fair      (x) Deteriorated      ( ) Ruins  
( ) Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?      ( ) Yes      (x) No

ARCHITECTURE



7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence (1673-1780)
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People (give names & dates)

8. Specific Date: 1865-1875

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- Aboriginal (historic)
- Aboriginal (pre-historic)
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce
- Communication
- Conservation
- Education
- Engineering
- Industry
- Invention
- Landscape Architecture
- Literature
- Military
- Music
- Political
- Religion/Philosophy
- Science
- Sculpture
- Social/Humanitarian
- Theater
- \*Transportation
- Urban Planning
- Other (specify)

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)  
Use additional sheets if necessary.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ TH \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_  
City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.