



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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**HPC meeting date: 5/9/2022**  
**Ald. Milele Coggs District: 6**  
**Staff reviewer: Jacqueline Drayer**  
**PTS CCF 212013**

**Property** 419 West Vliet Street

**Owner/Applicant** American Telehealthcare Inc,  
2819 W Highland Boulevard  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

**Proposal** Certified Local Government Review of the McCullough and Dixon Steam Laundry and Soap Company

**Staff comments** Staff concurs with the summary statement of significance written by Preserve, LLC: The McCullough and Dixon Steam Laundry and Soap Company is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a rare, excellent example of the Second Empire style applied to an industrial building. This building is one of very few documented intact industrial buildings in Wisconsin in the Second Empire style, as well as the oldest remaining steam laundry in Milwaukee. Very few other Second Empire buildings are extant in Milwaukee most others are commercial or residential.

The exterior of the McCullough and Dixon Steam Laundry retains a high degree of integrity with character-defining Second Empire style features such as its ornamental entry hood with art glass window, brick detailing, pilasters and multiple openings with exterior passage and dock doors. Its massing clearly portrays the essence of the Second Empire style with its height, steeply sloped mansard roof and segmentally arched doors and windows. Brickwork above the tall, narrow windows creates a hood molding typical of the style. Windows, with the exception of the historic south elevation windows on the back of the building, are original, as are the exterior doors.

While nine of ten dormers are missing, there is clear evidence of where they were located and their sizes, including the height above the interior floor due to the tongue and groove wall finish and extant framing around the dormer openings. The elevator appears to date to the period of construction. The front entrance and foyer with lobby are excellent examples of Late Victorian design, including elements of Italianate and simplified Eastlake Styles in addition to elements used in commercial buildings of the Second Empire Style. The projecting carved Italianate hood with its carved buttons and scrollwork and cast-iron lintel with studded rosettes exemplify the type of ornamentation typical of an eclectic Second Empire mix of Italianate, picturesque, and Eastlake details.

The building's interior lobby includes the historic paneling, radiators, and layout. Throughout the interior, the open industrial loft layout remains, as do the ventilation flues and elevator. In the basement, purpose-built features related to its use as a laundry are extant, such as drain troughs and a freestanding hearth for heating water. The building's core industrial loft form is intact.

As a purpose-built steam laundry and example of the Second Empire style as applied to industrial buildings, the McCullough and Dixon Steam Laundry is unmatched in the city of Milwaukee and perhaps the state. It represents a period of time in which commercial steam laundries were experiencing growth as a "new" industry in the city simultaneous to the waning days of the Second Empire style. This led to a one-of-a-kind industrial building in Milwaukee that is remarkably intact over 130 years later.

**Recommendation**

Recommend HPC support the nomination

**Conditions**

**Previous HPC action**

**Previous Council action**