



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

*Living with History*

**HPC meeting date: 4/20/2015**

**Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3**

**Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala**

**PTS #102046**

**Property**

2134 N. TERRACE AV. North Point South Historic District

**Owner/Applicant**

MICHAEL WHITE  
C/O RITE-HITE HOLDING CORP  
PO BOX 245020  
MILWAUKEE WI 53224

Pedone Construction LTD  
W290 N3297 Hillcrest Drive  
Pewaukee, WI 53072  
Phone: (262) 695-6147

**Proposal**

This house has been undergoing major rehabilitation. A staff COA was issued to rebuild the old dry laid stone retaining wall and install a brick patio area. The stone wall had been installed before the area had become a historic district and a low shrub hedge was planted on top of the wall. A board fence had been installed on top of the wall toward the east end of the property in later years. The stone wall extended along the south property line on Back Bay Road and turned the corner onto Terrace Avenue where it died into the slope of the front lawn. The current proposal is to install an ornamental iron fence above the stone retaining wall.

The new iron fence is designed by Eric Moebius of Moebius Ironworks. It will feature ornamental corner posts and as well as runs/panels between the posts. The gates will match the design. The new fence will extend along the south property line and turn to extend along the Terrace Avenue side of the property.

## Staff comments

This proposal is the result of the owner wanting a secured enclosure for the property so that her young children don't wander away from the yard. The fence is to extend along the south property line (Back Bay) and North Terrace Avenue. It will terminate at the north property line. There will be a gate along the Back Bay side and one at the front walk on Terrace Avenue. There will also be a gate across the driveway.

Eric Moebius' design for the fence with its curvilinear features is an appropriate style for the Mediterranean style house designed for William Wehr by Brust & Philipp in 1923. The use of iron will allow for visibility through the fence and no views of the house will be blocked.

Fencing has always been a sensitive issue in the North Point North and North Point South historic districts. Part of the character of the neighborhood has been the open sweep of green lawn, uninterrupted by hedges and fencing. It was remarked upon that this park like setting is what made this neighborhood different from others in the city. The preservation guidelines to the district state "The traditional landscape treatment of the building lots and the period streetlights contribute to the maintenance of the district's traditional residential character" and "Use traditional landscaping, fencing, signage and street lighting that is compatible with the character and period of the district. Avoid introducing landscape features, fencing, street lighting or signage that are inappropriate to the character of the district."

However, there have been exceptions to this character, with some fencing and enclosures constructed at the time the houses were built and long before the historic district was created:

Villa Terrace 2220 North Terrace Avenue built in 1924

Sawyer-Vogel House at 2221 North Terrace Avenue built in 1905

Slocum House 2675 N. Terrace Avenue built in 1931

Other fences have been allowed as exceptions by the HPC such as at Hathaway-Brumder House at 2105 East Lafayette Place built 1887 (a salvaged 19<sup>th</sup> century fence was installed)

Albert F. Gallun House at 2014 East Lafayette Place built 1897 (a wall with short fencing was installed across the front of the house)

Jackson Bloodgood Kemper House at 2006 East Lafayette Place built 1895, (approved by the HPC but never installed)

Paul's staff report for 2006 East Lafayette Place reads: "Typically front yard fences are discouraged in the North Point South historic district, although in this case the neighboring two properties to the east already have front yard fences, which is a rarity in the district. Approval of this fence must not be considered a general approval for front yard fences in the rest of the district."

The HPC did not consider approval of the above fences to be a blanket approval for all front yard fences that are proposed in the North Point North and North Point South Historic Districts. The factors to consider included:

Was there an existing fence on the property

Were there fences on the adjacent properties

Was this a corner location

Was there a special need by the owner that required the fencing

Was the design of the fence appropriate to the house and district

Could landscape design (hedge/shrubs) serve as a suitable substitute

In this instance, the property meets a number of the above factors.

## Recommendation

Staff recommends approval

**Conditions**

All work must be done as shown.

A plainer fence will likely be installed at the rear (east side) and the north side of the property.

This approval does not constitute approval of all proposals for front fences in the North Point North and North Point South historic districts.

**Previous HPC action****Previous Council action**