

## **SPACES Update August 2016**

The Kohler Foundation and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center fought this battle privately and quietly, outside of public input and press coverage, but after a flood damaged the heating and electrical systems in 2010, Kohler decided not to repair the house. And, with the neighbors intransigent to all proposals, they came up with a plan is to dismantle and re-assemble the house in Sheboygan County, along with the exterior sculptures, an effort to be partially funded by the sale of the lakeside property. However, when extensive research confirmed that moving the environment would jeopardize the art to an "irreversible degree," in March 2015 the Board of Directors of the JMKAC changed its mind and confirmed its intention to preserve the Nohl home and artwork at its current Fox Point location, restoring it so it may exist within applicable zoning regulations.

Phase One of the project restoration, estimated to cost nearly \$1 million, is nearing completion. It began in September 2015 and involved the reconstruction of much of the infrastructure, stabilizing the structure and installing a foundation in the rear of the house, and moving the mechanical systems from the basement to the ground floor. A generator will be installed as backup, and engineers have been redesigning the landscape to channel water away from the structure. Wood rot and carpenter ant infestation damage has also been addressed, and the trees nearest the house have been trimmed. Many of the outdoor sculptures have been undergoing restoration at the Art Center.

Phase Two is a longer-term project in which the interior objects and furniture will be restored at the Arts Center and then returned to the house. It is as yet unclear what the costs will be for this phase of the project, but fundraising is underway. The intent is that, when completed, the Mary Nohl House, both inside and out, will look like it did when the artist herself was living and working there.

While conservation and stabilization efforts are underway, the site is not open to the public. JMKAC is hoping to obtain an occupancy permit by the end of 2016.