

# Apple Tree House rehab kickoff today

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Better late than never.

Plans first slated the start for last August, but, now, the historic Apple Tree House will finally get its facelift.

The prominent Dutch Colonial-style structure on Academy Street hosts its renovation's official kickoff at noon today.

"It's finally a reality, the money is there," said Guy Catillo, a Jersey City planning aide. "At this point in time, I look back, and (the wait) was well worth it. It was done right."

For years, people called for the renovation of the house, likely built around 1750 and most famously noted as the spot of a supposed meeting between George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette. The restoration will return the building, also known as the Van

Wagenen House, to its 1860 condition.

Currently, the house has both city and state recognition as an historic site, and it's applying for designation by the National Register of Historic Places. Catillo said he hopes the site, which will be transformed into a museum, can be a great educational aid in the future, as its roots go back to the Dutch settlers of the 17th century.

The city has contracted the historic restoration firm of Schiltler & Plevy, which also fixed up the Old Bergen Church, to complete the exterior renovation within nine months. It will cost about \$900,000, but none of it will come from the city's coffers.

The founding of the Apple Tree Conservancy will also be announced at the groundbreaking.



**THE APPLE TREE HOUSE** on Academy Street in Jersey City.

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