

Long Hill Mansion Contract Is Signed

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MIDDLETOWN — A \$3.1 million contract was signed Tuesday between the city and Kronenberger & Sons Restorations to renovate the historic Long Hill estate.

Kronenberger, a city-based company, is scheduled to begin the 18-month project in January. A three-month clean-out of the gutted and heavily vandalized mansion is the first step, said Joyce Kirkpatrick, chairwoman of the Long Hill building committee.

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Kirkpatrick, long active in the fight to save the imposing Beaux Arts mansion, said the contract signing is important because it means years of planning are about to pay off.

Restoring the home of Col. Clarence S. Wadsworth, a noted turn-of-the-century philanthropist and environmentalist, has been a goal for many city residents for nearly a decade.

In 1994, the city bought the mansion and more than 100 surrounding acres for \$1.29 million with a goal of using the grounds for passive recreation. Residents voted in a 1996 referendum to spend \$3.8 million to restore the mansion as a banquet and conference center with a suite of offices on the second floor.

On Jan. 1, New Year's Day, the public will get a chance to try out the new "perimeter" trail developed by City Forester Bruce Spaman, with help from crews from the Alternative Incarceration Center and more than 70 Wesleyan University freshmen. The walk, sponsored by the Friends of Long Hill organization, is scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m.

Participants should meet at the estate's Wadsworth Street entrance.

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