MARLBOROUGH — After a handful of delays, construction crews will begin work in the coming days to regrade the front yard of one of the city’s oldest homes to prevent damage to the more than 300-year-old property. The Marlborough Historical Society, which occupies the 1688 Peter Rice Homestead, received a $4,200 grant from the Marlborough Brigham Family Trust late last year to fund a portion of the work to fix the slope of the home’s front yard.

“(The contractor) thinks it’s only going to take a couple of days to do,” he said.

Crews will dig up the yard, regrade the land and construct a drain to direct water away from the house, said Kane.

Regrading the front yard is just one of a handful of improvements the society has overseen the past few years. Kane said a structural engineer reviewed the property several years ago and made a number of recommendations, including the yard upgrades and moving some of the historical artifacts out of the attic and into a shed. Some of the heavier relics, including a cast iron sewing machine, were causing structural problems in the attic, said Kane.

The society has also added columns and installed a dehumidifier in the basement, replaced a boiler and painted one side of the home in recently.

“There’s only so much we can do each year,” said Kane.

Located at 377 Elm St., the homestead housed six generations of the Rice family and was later converted into apartments for soldiers returning home from World War II. The building was sold to Honeywell Corp. and deeded to the Marlborough Historical Society in the 1960s.

The society’s signature event, the Festival of Trees was initially held at the homestead until the growing number of trees and attendees prompted the event to be moved.

The homestead also houses the society’s historical artifacts. Residents can schedule tours by calling 508-485-4763.

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