

Jamaica wants to buy, restore Marcus Garvey home

Jamaica's government is seeking permission to buy what it believes is the childhood home of civil rights leader Marcus Garvey in hopes of restoring it and converting it into a memorial or museum, officials said Tuesday.

The dilapidated home is currently being rented, and the government has not had any luck reaching the owner, who is believed to be living in the United States, said Laleta Davis-Mattis, a spokeswoman for the Jamaica National Heritage Trust.

The government has asked a judge for permission to buy the property, which is estimated to be worth \$38,000. The money would be set aside and given to the owner if she appears, Davis-Mattis said.

It is unclear how much the repairs would cost, but State Minister Robert Montague said in a statement issued Tuesday that the government pledged \$35,000 for the project.

A committee is trying to determine whether the structure is Garvey's original home, although officials are certain that Garvey grew up on the property where the home is located, Davis-Mattis said.

The trust also wants to identify other sites in the neighborhood that were significant in Garvey's life and create a walking tour, she said.

Garvey was born in 1887 in northern St. Ann Parish, Jamaica's largest district. He moved to the United States in 1916 and led one of the largest black organizations in history, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. He also survived an assassination attempt.

Garvey died in London in 1940 and was buried in Kingston, Jamaica. - AP