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Shearer's birthplace in shambles!

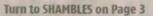
Renovation yet to begin despite approval of funds two years ago

3/N Shearer, High Lawson

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MARTHA BRAE, Trelawny

ORE than two years after the then Department of Local Government approved \$3 million to renovate the birthplace of the late Hugh Lawson Shearer, Jamaica's





Hugh Lawson Shearer



Shearer, High Lawson

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third prime minister, there is no clear indication when work will begin.

The three-bedroom house located in Martha Brae - less than two miles from the historic fencing; repairs to the roof, verandah, kitchen, bathroom, house could become an Heritage Trust (JNHT) about six facelift and is showing signs of the areas to be addressed. rapid deterioration.

served as the minister with responsibility for Local Government under the last administration, confirmed to that the funds was approved to renovate the house, following representation from then told the Observer West. chairman of the Trelawny Parish Council, Colin Gager.

Montague was however, unable to say, what had become Heritage Trust. of the allocation.

Efforts to contact Local Government and Community Development Minister Noel Arscott yesterday were unsuccessful.

And Chairman of the Trelawny Parish Council Garth Wilkinson, who succeeded any light on the matter.

"I am not aware of it (approval of funds). It wasn't brought to my attention," he said, promising to make checks with the ministry.

Observer West that almost three years ago, the Road and Works Department at the Trelawny Parish prepared estimates for the renovation of the former prime minister's birthplace.

million and the work included the erection of a perimeter

\$3.5 million to renovate former PM's home

declared a national monument replacing of doors, painting the three small bedrooms. by the Jamaica National and termite treatment," he said.

Robert Montague, who rehabilitation of the house was need for urgent repairs, she also want to go inside and look disclosing that she used to love to position it as a major tourist feels "very privileged" to be at it closely," she argued. attraction.

"What we were really looking tourists would want to come the Observer West on Tuesday there and see where Shearer was born and where he spent some of his youthful days," he lived," she remarked.

> that time was working closely with the Jamaica National renovated, noting that the

"The (Jamaica) Heritage Trust was very well involved. In fact, they sent persons to look at the building at least two times over the last few years, and their input was taken into consideration when the estimates were being done," he explained.

Executive Director of the Gager in March, could not shed JNHT Laleta Davis-Mattis told Observer West that the house was declared a national monument based on the its historic relevance.

"We are also looking at all the houses of our prime ministers... Earlier, Gager told the once they fall in a certain category they will be declared." she explained.

She, however, stressed that the JNHT is not in a position to fund the repairs at Shearer's birthplace.

Currently, the house which sits "The estimates came to \$3.5 on roughly half-an-acre of land. is occupied by a family of five.

It consists of a small

town of Falmouth — which was doors, window and flooring; and living area, in addition to excellent tourist attraction.

living at the historic building.

privileged to know that I am living where a man as great as attraction in Trelawny. Mr Shearer was born and have

He added that the council at authorities should move with with his grandmother Jestina He died on July 5, 2004 at his St alacrity to have the building Lindo and mother Esta Lindo.

"On several occasions when One of the occupants, Daniela we are here, we see tourists Electrical and plumbing Gordon, who along with her stopping in front of the house to months ago, is badly in need of a works, were also listed among mother and siblings have been take pictures of it. If the house is living at the house for almost fixed up, more would come to He explained that the three years, said despite the take photos and many would

Geraldine Steele, a 102-year- his playing cricket. "It's a wonderful experience old Martha Brae resident, Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) at was to fix up the house so that to be living here. I feel very agreed that the historic house labour leader with the could become an added tourist Bustamante Industrial Trade

> According to centenarian, the late prime Deputy Prime Minister in the She argued that the relevant minister had lived at the house JLP Government of the 1980s.

community at about the age of 11. after he was awarded a scholarship which allowed him to continue his schooling in Kingston.

The elderly Steele disclosed that she have fond memories of the former prime minister during their childhood days at Martha Brae.

"As a child he was very jovial. He played cricket using sour orange as the ball and a bat made out of coconut limb." Steele told the Observer West. to laugh at his jokes and watch

Shearer was an outstanding Union and served as Prime the Minister from 1967 to 1972 and Andrew home. He was 81 She said Shearer left the years old.