



**UK-ST HELENA
HERITAGE
TRUST**

c/o St Helena Government
Alliance House
12 Caxton Street
London, SW1H 0QS
+44 (0)20 8187610
www.uk-sthelenaheritagetrust.org

PRESS RELEASE: London, Wednesday, 14 October 2026

UK-St Helena Heritage Trust announces £40,000 award from the Garfield Weston Foundation for the creation of a Trans-Atlantic Slavery Interpretation Centre in St Helena.

The UK-St Helena Heritage Trust (UKSHHT) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded £40,000 by the Garfield Weston Foundation to support the completion of the restoration and adaptation of the historic No. 1 Building in Rupert's Valley as a commemorative interpretation centre for the Liberated Africans of St Helena.

Michael Binyon OBE, UKSHHT Chairman, welcomed the generous support of the Garfield Weston Foundation and gratefully acknowledged the assistance of Katherine Prior, External Funding Coordinator to the St Helena Government, in enabling the Trust to secure the award. He praised the vision and readiness of the Weston family to support projects in the UK Overseas Territories, observing that:

UKOTs are the custodians of hugely important parts of British history and yet they are excluded from support by many funders of UK heritage. The Weston family's willingness to help preserve the built and cultural heritage of St Helena is greatly encouraging to all of us who understand and value the historic significance of our Overseas Territories.

The Garfield Weston Foundation's award will enable the No. 1 Building to be equipped as a modern exhibition space and interpretation centre. It supplements the £165,000 awarded to the St Helena National Trust (SHNT) for the project by the Commonwealth Heritage Forum (CHF) in March 2026, which is funding both the restoration of the historic fabric of the No. 1 Building and a flagship heritage skills training programme for construction workers in St Helena.

The Commonwealth Heritage Forum's award has been made under its Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Commonwealth Heritage Skills Training Programme, funded by The Vinehill Trust, which develops hands-on craft skills and the sustainable strategies needed to repair historic buildings at risk and manage change in the historic environment in the Commonwealth and UK Overseas Territories.

On learning that match-funding had been secured for the services, utilities and fitting out of the No. 1 Building, Philip Davies OBE, the Founder and Head of the CHF, said:

We are delighted that the Garfield Weston Foundation has stepped forward to fund the fitting out of this unique building as an exhibition and interpretation centre. It will highlight the crucial, but little-known, role played by St Helena and the Royal Navy in enforcing the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and provide a lasting memorial to the Liberated Africans of St Helena.

UK-St Helena Heritage Trust
Registered charity No. 1185992

Helena Bennett, director of the St Helena National Trust and Chairperson of the Liberated African Advisory Committee, also welcomed the Garfield Weston Foundation's support. She said:

The No. 1 Building stands at the heart of one of the most significant chapters in St Helena's history. Almost 27,000 liberated Africans were landed at Rupert's Valley after being rescued from slave ships, and thousands who did not survive are buried there. The restoration of this building and its transformation into an interpretation centre will create a permanent space for remembrance, learning and reflection. This generous support from the Garfield Weston Foundation brings us a significant step closer to realising this vision. We are grateful to the UK-St Helena Heritage Trust, especially Katherine Prior, for their continued commitment to the project and securing this funding.

BACKGROUND TO THE AWARD

No. 1 Building Project and the Liberated Africans of St Helena

The No. 1 Building Project is a community one, led by the Liberated African Advisory Committee of St Helena, and managed by the St Helena National Trust.

It centres on the No. 1 Building in Rupert's Valley, which is the only surviving structure from St Helena's role as a reception centre for slaving ships captured by the Royal Navy between 1840 and 1867. In these years, the Royal Navy disembarked some 27,000 enslaved and trafficked Africans in St Helena. Tragically, more than 8,000 men, women and children died there – chiefly from disease and trauma – shortly after their liberation. Most were interred in two burial grounds in the valley. These burial grounds are one of the world's most significant physical traces of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage.

St Helena's Liberated Africans were part of the enforced African diaspora that continued for decades after various slave-trading nations outlawed the trade. The Liberated Africans Database calculates that, between 1800 and 1920, over 700,000 Africans were rescued from slaving ships only to be transported onwards, mostly to the Americas and Caribbean, as indentured or bonded labourers. Many endured a lifetime of servitude, despite their 'liberation'.

This was the fate of most of the surviving Liberated Africans on St Helena. They were shipped to British colonies in the Caribbean or to South Africa, where they were required to work for years as indentured labourers to pay back the costs of their passage and upkeep. Abuses of the system were many and it has often been called a new system of slavery.

The No. 1 Building project seeks to promote awareness of the tragic history of Trans-Atlantic enslavement and St Helena's role in this global narrative. The restored building will serve as a fitting tribute to the thousands of trafficked Africans who died in St Helena. It will also recognise and honour the resilience of the many thousands who were sent on to labour in the Caribbean or South Africa and the few hundred who stayed and built new lives for themselves in St Helena. It will provide a means for people to understand the scale and gravity of the human suffering and international displacement that continued to occur in the decades after the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was outlawed.

Further information

For further information, or to donate to the project, please visit UKSHHT's website:

<https://www.uk-sthelenaheritage.org/liberatedafricanestablishment>

Contact: Dr Katherine Prior via katherine.prior@sthelenagov.com

St Helena National Trust: <https://www.trust.org.sh/>

Garfield Weston Foundation: <https://garfieldweston.org/>

Commonwealth Heritage Forum: <https://www.commonwealthheritage.org/>

Vinehill Trust: <https://vinehilltrust.uk/>

Liberated Africans Database: <https://liberatedafricans.org/public/>



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION



Commonwealth
Heritage Forum

Sharing Our Common Heritage

VINEHILL TRUST

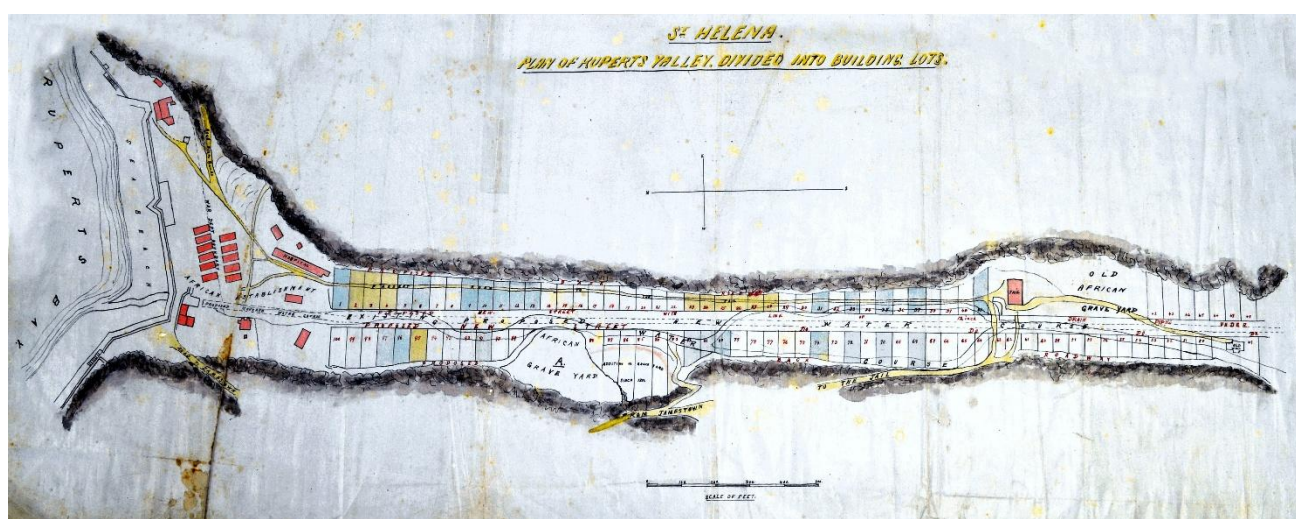


UK-St Helena Heritage Trust

Registered charity No. 1185992



The No. 1 Building in Rupert's Valley, St Helena. Credit: St Helena National Trust



Plan of Rupert's Valley showing the African Grave Yards from the Liberated African Establishment, drawn by John Melliss, Surveyor Engineer of St Helena, 1861. Credit: Museum of St Helena



Conservation Architect, Peregrine Bryant, and members of St Helena's Liberated African Advisory Committee discuss restoration works for the No. 1 Building. Credit: St Helena National Trust