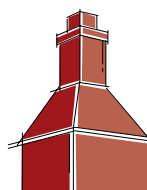




# Your Own Historic Home IN 10 STEPS



**Monumentsfund**  
A R U B A

# Introduction

In Aruba we have more than three hundred cunucu (historic) houses on different parts of the island. Some are in good condition, some are inhabited, some are abandoned and some have disappeared.

As a foundation we want to contribute and stimulate owners to fix and restore their cunucu houses but also inspire those looking for a house to choose a historic house. By acquiring a historic house you are not only saving a historic house but also contributing to preserve Aruba's cultural heritage.

we are often approached by people who are interested in buying a historic house. For this reason we created this guide to help everyone interested in acquiring a historic house to obtain the needed information.





# 1. Make a list of your needs

If you are looking to purchase a traditional house or historic building, it is important to know how much space you will need. Creating a list with all the spaces you wish the house to have, so you can live in it with your whole family, is very important. Questions like; how many rooms do I need? Do I need a space to work from home? Do I need a large kitchen? Keep in mind that historic houses vary in sizes and are usually smaller than non-historic houses. One of the benefits is that often these historic houses are built on a spacious land/property that gives the possibility to build new sections.

Take into account that if you wish to build additional spaces, these must be done according to the rules. For example, the new section must be built in a more modern architecture that is in harmony with the historic/ original architecture. (consult the monument's handbook for more information) See nr. 8.



# 2. Financial inventory

Before starting to look for your ideal house, it is important to know what your financial possibilities are. It's also important to keep in mind that most historic houses have been empty or abandoned for a long time and some even for years and therefore an investment in restoration will be necessary. Thus, it's important to take the restoration costs into account. For advice on prices of material or restoration costs for historic houses, you can always contact Monuments Fund Aruba. The costs may vary on whether you are just restoring the main building or also building additional spaces. Monuments Fund Aruba can help make an estimate of the costs.



# 3. Does Monuments Fund Aruba finance the purchase of a historic house?

Monuments Fund Aruba is currently working on a revolving fund. Once the government of Aruba starts to protect private monuments, Monuments Fund Aruba will be able to give low interest loans to these owners to restore and maintain their property. The revolving fund is still in development, but you can always apply for a mortgage at any of the local banks. Owners of historic houses also receive tax benefits. The information of the property can be filled out on the income tax form.



## 4. Searching for the ideal house

If you already have your mind set on a historic house that you are interested in, but are looking for the owners, you can go to 'Kadaster' (land registers) or 'Hypotheekkantoor' (mortgage registers) to gather information about the owners of the property. If you don't have a specific house in mind yet, but you would like to have a historic house, you can contact the Monuments Fund Aruba for advice and they will be able to provide you with the contact information of different owners of historic houses. Another option is to approach the different realtors on the island to see if they have any historic properties on their listings. In this case, it's important to know in which area you are looking for a house, whether you prefer a property in Oranjestad or in the rural areas.

## 5. What steps to take when the house has different owners.

In many cases, historic houses are abandoned for years and are in a bad state because family members cannot come to an agreement to sell or maintain the house after the passing of the original owners. Monuments Fund Aruba can help someone who is looking for a house and encounters this problem. They will then take the position as a mediator to talk to the family members and discuss the possibilities and benefits of reaching an agreement to avoid losing the house and its stories. The most important step in this case is to look for legal advice with a lawyer or notary who can indicate the process in that specific case.

## 6. Does the house have monumental value?

To know if the house has monumental value, you can contact the Monuments Bureau. They are the government's department in charge of protecting the monuments. Aruba has 37 protected monuments which are all property of the government of Aruba or Monuments Fund Aruba. The information about the monumental value of a house is important to take into consideration when planning the restoration or maintenance of the house.

If, after restoration, you wish to get the seal of protection for your house, you can approach Monuments Bureau for a petition for protection of private houses. Monuments' Bureau shall then indicate if the house can get its seal of protection. When a house with a monumental value receives its protection, it remains the property of the owner and does not become property of the government.

For more information about classification of category A and B monuments, you can always contact the Monuments Bureau at 583 5938 or their Facebook page: Monumentenbureau.

## 7. Purchase agreement

When an agreement has been reached with the original owners, you can sign a purchase agreement. After the agreement, you must sign the notary act which will be registered in the national registers and only then will you be the owner of your own historic house. Before you come to an agreement, it's very important to have a preliminary design and a costs estimate to be eligible for a mortgage.

## 8. Ready for restoration and expansion

Now that you own the house and want to fix it to live in, you can contact Monuments Fund Aruba for advice on the correct and ideal way to restore this monument. You can use the Monument's handbook as a guide. The handbook is for sale at the Monuments' Bureau. In this handbook you will find rules and information about the restoration of historic buildings and houses. In this phase, you will need the final design to execute the restoration/expansion project. An important part to consider when restoring historic buildings is the use of air conditioning. Historic houses, due to their thick walls have a lower temperature inside and are very easy to isolate. But by installing air conditioners it will create condensation. For this reason, it is very important to know which air conditioning is suitable for historic buildings and houses.

In the case of installing an air conditioning, it's also very important to use lime instead of cement and to isolate the ceiling to minimize condensation and humidity. In the case of a protected monument, you must apply for a monuments' permit before restoration. If needed, Monuments Fund Aruba can guide this process.

## 9. Where can I find an experienced contractor?

There are various contractors in Aruba with restoration experience and there is also a group, certified by the Monuments Fund Aruba, with experience in lime mortar application. For contact information and references you can contact us.

# 10. Maintenance

A very important part of dealing with historic buildings and houses is the maintenance after restoration. It is important to make a maintenance plan. Monuments Fund can help create a plan. This way the owner will know when and what parts of the house will need maintenance and will also have an estimate of the costs. It is very important during maintenance to use original material to avoid deterioration of the existing material. If the house is protected, then a monuments' permit must be requested for every time the house undergoes maintenance. This, however, is unnecessary when painting the building in its original color.

## Contact

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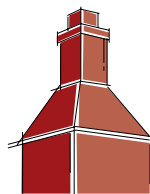
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