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Cover: Houses along Tyrgatan. Östermalm IV. Byggnadsinventering. Stockholm City Museum SSM, 1984

Graphic sheet by Vive Tolli

Design: Enno Piir

ISBN 978-9949-21-565-2

Estonian Embassy in Stockholm

Tallinn 2010

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A HOUSE IN LÄRKSTADEN MAJA LÕOKESE LINNAJAOS

THE ESTONIAN EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM - A REVIEW



PREFACE

small nation is always dependent on relations with its neighbours and must continuously seek out friends and sympathisers – such is the Estonian diplomatic workday.

No less important in this line of work are the embassy buildings, which serve as a symbol of the state. Through the years the embassies of the Republic of Estonia have promoted political, business and cultural activities by organising exhibitions, concerts and seminars, thereby presenting the Estonia of today to the local community. The Estonian diplomatic representation in Stockholm has had to change its location several times before finally getting settled in a beautiful town villa. Both the house and its surroundings make up a part of Stockholm's cultural heritage, which deserves a closer look.

The release of this book coincides with the 90th anniversary of the Kingdom of Sweden's *de jure* recognition of the Republic of Estonia on 5 February 1921.

Alar Streimann Ambassador



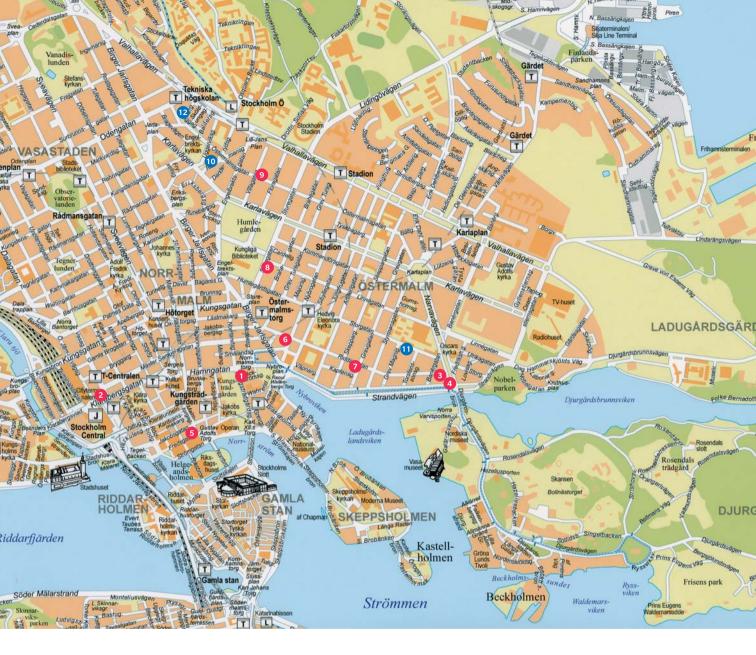
INTRODUCTION

The main entrance to the embassy is from the higher street level.

The entrance to the consulate is on the souterrain floor.

he Republic of Estonia has had a diplomatic representation in Stockholm since the end of World War I. Until the interruption of diplomatic relations in 1940, the Estonian legation was located in rented flats in the district of Östermalm in central Stockholm. Steps were taken in the 1930s to purchase a suitable property in the same area, but these endeavours were cut short in 1940 when diplomatic ties were severed by the Soviet Union's occupation of Estonia.

After Estonia regained independence in August 1991, diplomatic contacts between Estonia and Sweden were resumed. In 1997 an appropriate building for the embassy was purchased at Tyrgatan 3 by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The embassy opened its doors on 17 June 1998 after extensive reconstruction.



ESTONIAN REPRESENTATION IN STOCKHOLM 1918-1940

- 1 Kungsträdgårdsgatan 18
- Vasagatan 5
- 3 Riddargatan 76
- 4 Strandvägen 47
- 5 Fredsgatan 2
- _
- 6 Nybrogatan 9
- Grevgatan 9
- 8 Sturegatan 16
- Östermalmsgatan 43

ESTONIAN EMBASSY 1991-2010

- Rådmansgatan 18
- 11 Storgatan 38
- 12 Tyrgatan 3

ESTONIAN REPRESENTATION IN STOCKHOLM 1918-1940

uring World War I, the possibility of establishing new nation states emerged. Estonian politicians realised this and used the opportunity to work towards national autonomy for Estonia by building up a network of contacts in neighbouring countries. An important step was taken as early as 1917, when the Foreign Delegation was established by Jaan Tõnisson. Its members travelled to several countries, and office rooms were opened in capitals such as Copenhagen and Stockholm.

The Republic of Estonia was proclaimed on 24 February 1918. Sweden acknowledged Estonia *de facto* on 9 September and *de jure* on 5 February 1921. Diplomatic contacts were formalised with the establishment of a consulate in January 1919 and relations were strengthened with the opening of the legation in May 1921. During the interwar period the Estonian representation was located in rented flats at several addresses. Diplomatic relations between Estonia and Sweden were ended in August 1940 with the annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union. The Estonian envoy, Heinrich Laretei, was forced by Swedish and Soviet authorities to close the legation and hand over the keys to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which on the same day forwarded the keys to the Embassy of the Soviet Union.

"This flag belonged to the Estonian Honorary Consulate in Kalmar, Sweden. In 1940 director Gunnar-Eberhard Berggren, the honorary consul, presented the flag and the stamps to the first secretary of the Estonian legation in Stockholm, since he refused to give them to the Soviet Union Embassy. Thus the flag and stamps remain."



ESTONIAN CONSULATE AND LEGATION ADDRESSES 1918-1940



KUNGSTRÄDGÅRDSGATAN 18



RIDDARGATAN 76



STRANDVÄGEN 47

KUNGSTRÄDGÅRDSGATAN 18.

The consulate opened in 1919, in the office of AS Estonia.

VASAGATAN 5.

From August 1919 to October 1920. The original building has been torn down and replaced.

RIDDARGATAN 76.

Starting in October 1920, rooms were rented here for the consulate. In June 1921 the new legation moved in.

STRANDVÄGEN 47.

From May 1920 to October 1921 a flat was rented as the legation and residence. In October 1923 the legation returned to this address.





FREDSGATAN 2

NYBROGATAN 9

FREDSGATAN 2.

In September 1925 rooms were rented next to Gustav $\label{eq:Gustav} \mbox{Adolfs torg}.$

NYBROGATAN 9.

From October 1925 to October 1927 a flat was rented on the second floor.

GREVGATAN 9.

Between October 1927 and October 1928 the legation rented here.

STUREGATAN 16.

This flat served as the legation from October 1928 to April 1939.

ÖSTERMALMSGATAN 43.

The legation's last flat until 16 September 1940.



GREVGATAN 9



STUREGATAN 16



ÖSTERMALMSGATAN 43

ESTONIAN DIPLOMATIC ENVOYS 1918-1940



Arnold Posti (1892–1941) Consul in Stockholm 1919

Posti represented the Estonian company Volta in Sweden from 1914. He became the first consul to Sweden. Posti was arrested in 1941 and died in a Siberian prison camp.



Karl Menning (1874–1941) Chargé d'affaires in Stockholm 1920–1921

Menning studied humanities and theology at Tartu University. In Berlin he studied stage management and set design at M. Reinhardt's studio. He was the leader and director of the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu from 1906 to 1914.

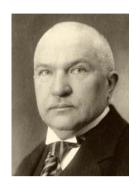
In 1918 he became a member of the Foreign Delegation and in January 1920 he was appointed chargé d'affaires to Scandinavia. He continued his career as a diplomat on the continent. Menning remained in the foreign service until he retired.



Eduard Virgo (1878–1938) Consul and chargé d'affaires in Stockholm 1921–1928.

Virgo was trained as a marine officer and later studied social sciences at Sorbonne in Paris.

After a varied life, he became a member of the Foreign Delegation in 1918, working mainly in Finland and Italy. After his years as a consul and chargé d'affaires in Scandinavia, he continued his diplomatic work in Latvia. Virgo worked as a foreign trade office manager until his death.



Friedrich Karl Akel (1871–1941) Envoy in Stockholm 1928–1933

Akel studied medicine at Tartu University and specialised as an ophthalmologist. Interested and active in politics, he was called into service as the envoy to Finland in 1922. Akel was the minister of foreign affairs in several governments. Between 1928 and 1933 he served as envoy for the Scandinavian countries, residing in Stockholm. He was appointed minister of foreign affairs from 1936 to 1938. In the autumn of 1940 he was arrested by the Soviet Union's occupation army and was executed in Tallinn in July 1941.



Karl Robert Pusta (1883–1964) Envoy in Stockholm 1935

Pusta studied social sciences in Paris and Bern. In 1918 he became a member of the Foreign Delegation, based in Paris. He represented Estonia at the peace negotiations in Paris in 1918. Pusta served as a diplomat in several countries, alternating those posts with assignments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During 1935 he was the envoy in Stockholm.

Pusta remained an Estonian diplomatic representative in Spain, France and Belgium until his death.



Heinrich Laretei (1892–1973) Envoy in Stockholm 1935–1940

Laretei studied economics at Tartu University. He participated in World War I and in the Estonian War of Independence. He served as a minister in several governments.

He was the envoy to the Soviet Union from 1926–1928 and to Lithuania until 1931. As the envoy in Scandinavia, based in Stockholm, he was forced to break off diplomatic relations by closing the legation in Stockholm in August 1940. He stayed in Sweden until his death.



The first Swedish envoy to Estonia, U.T. Undén, presented his credentials on 4 February 1922. From the left: U.T. Undén, Estonian Head of State K. Päts, and Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Piip.



Estonian Head of State Jaan Tõnisson's official visit to Stockholm in September 1928, when King Gustav V was celebrating his 70th birthday. King Gustav V on his official visit to Estonia in June 1929. Estonian Head of State August Rei to the left and Jaan Lattik, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the right.



Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Richard Sandler upon his arrival in Tallinn on 11 June 1937. From the left: Estonian envoy to Stockholm Laretei, Swedish envoy to Estonia Baron Koskull, Foreign Minister Sandler, Estonian Foreign Minister Rei, and Social Minister Kask.





ESTONIAN EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM FROM 1991

rom the Western perspective, Estonia disappeared behind the Iron Curtain after being occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Baltic countries did not return to the Swedish consciousness until some political changes took place in the mid 1980s. The political developments accelerated at the end of the decade and the possibility of the Baltic states regaining independence began to look realistic. Estonians in exile as well as in the homeland intensified their efforts to tell the world about what was happening on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea.

In Sweden, the Swedish-Estonian Friendship Association applied for financial

support from SIDA, the Swedish International Development Board, in order to

Mere tee – Sea route. 1999 Elna Kaasik

tapestry

support was granted, and together with the Latvians some rooms were rented to create an information office at Rådmansgatan 18. There was an intense need for information, and all possible channels were used: radio, television, and newspapers. Meetings and lectures were held in many locations all over Sweden. The information office's activities continued for some time even after the

increase awareness about the situation in Estonia. In the autumn of 1990

opening of the Estonian Embassy in Stockholm.

Support for the Baltic states among Swedes and Baltic peoples living in exile was demonstrated during the "Monday meetings" held at Norrmalmstorg, a square in central Stockholm. For 79 consecutive Mondays, starting on 19 March 1990, people gathered at the square to listen to the latest news from the Baltic countries. Speeches were made by Baltic people in exile, Swedish politicians, and representatives from the Baltic Soviet republics. The last meeting was held shortly after the re-recognition of Estonian independence on 20 August 1991. That Monday the square was overcrowded, with approximately 5 000 participants in attendance. Most Monday meetings had consisted of about 300 to 400 people.





RÅDMANSGATAN 18

Rooms were rented for the Estonian Information Bureau in the beginning of 1991.

From October 1991 the Estonian Embassy shared the small rooms with the bureau.

STORGATAN 38

Starting in the spring of 1992 the embassy rented a flat on the first floor.

After the events of 20 August, diplomatic relations with the world could be resumed. Just a few days later, on 27 August 1991, Sweden and Estonia restored their diplomatic relations. Sweden was the first country to open its embassy in Tallinn – the representation was opened on 29 August 1991 with Lars Arne Grundberg as ambassador.

The first Estonian ambassador to Sweden was Margus Laidre in October 1991. In the spring of 1992 the embassy moved to a rented flat at Storgatan 38 in the district of Östermalm. With the purchase of the building at Tyrgatan 3, the Republic of Estonia at last had a house of its own in Stockholm.

Embassy addresses 1991-2010

1991–1992 Rådmansgatan 18 1992–1998 Storgatan 38 1998–2010 Tyrgatan 3

Ambassadors 1991-2010

1991–1996 Margus Laidre 1996–2000 Andres Unga 2000–2004 Toomas Tiivel 2004–2006 Jüri Kahn 2006–2010 Alar Streimann



TYRGATAN 3

In the spring of 1998 the embassy moved to its own house on Tyrgatan.

Swedish Ambassador to Estonia Lars Arne Grundberg presenting his credentials to Arnold Rüütel, Estonian Head of State. Between them is Lennart Meri, Minister of Foreign Affairs.



The King and Queen of Sweden visited Estonia in April 1992. King Carl XVI Gustaf is on the right next to Estonian Head of State Arnold Rüütel, Queen Silvia, and Mrs. Ingrid Rüütel.



The King and Queen in Tartu at the unveiling of the statue of Gustav II Adolf in 1992. The original was unveiled in June 1928 by the Swedish archbishop Nathan Söderblom on the 10th anniversary of Estonian independence. The original statue was a gift from the Swedish-Estonian Association.





President Lennart Meri on a state visit to Sweden in 1995.



Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson welcomes Lennart Meri. Between them is Swedish Ambassador to Estonia Lars Arne Grundberg.



LÄRKSTADEN

View from the tower of Engelbrekt Church towards Lärkstaden. Only a few houses at Tyrgatan are completed. Photo 1912. Photo SSM bildarkiv. he Estonian Embassy is situated in the north-western corner of the district of Östermalm in a quarter named Tofslärkan – Crested lark. The area is called Lärkstaden, Larktown, as its four quarters are all named after lark species. Several embassies and residences are located in these quarters.

The architect and town planner of Stockholm, Per Olof Hallman, was commissioned in 1906 to prepare a plan for the rocky and unsettled area.



These four quarters were planned as an exclusive district with single-family homes for the upper middle class. It was here that Hallman, inspired by English garden towns, could implement the new planning ideals he was interested in. Hallman's plan was based on the principles of variation. The houses should vary in design, the streets should be adapted to the terrain, and each house should have a garden.

In the mid-19th century, many cities on the continent were remodelled after Paris, which was built according to the city plan of Haussman. Medieval streets were replaced with straight streets and monotonous tightly-built

Tyrgatan. Winter 1963.

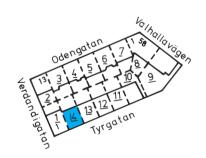
Photo Siv Rahm, SSM bildarkiv.



Winter 2010.

The Tofslärkan quarter is surrounded by streets with names from the Nordic pantheon.

TOFSLÄRKAN



rectangular blocks. In Stockholm, most of the Södermalm district and parts of central Östermalm followed the French pattern. Houses with entrances from the street were planned for middle class families, while the buildings in the backyards were for the working class. Only some rocky areas were preserved and made into parks and greens. Lärkstaden was something new in Stockholm, a contrast to the common large blocks in a grid of straight streets.

Planning and levelling out the rocky area for Lärkstaden started in 1908. A park was planned on the remaining steep slope next to the present Estonian Embassy. A narrow ridge of rock where the exposed granite bedrock is visible still remains. As the plots were small, their full width was used for the buildings, which were built together as terraced houses, each with a small garden. Characteristic for Lärkstaden is its mixture of styles. The early 20th century was a golden epoch for architecture, and the architects tried to express the wishes of every owner. The style in favour was Art Nouveau with its smooth plastered façades, although the new architectural movement of National Romanticism, with dark brick or stone walls and many small paned windows, was becoming increasingly popular. Within the area one can find details inspired by the Middle Ages, Roman influences, and Renaissance, Baroque and neo-Gothic styles.



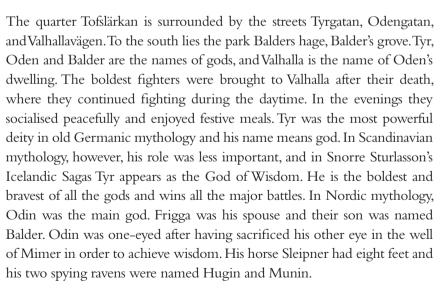
Irregular floor plans with projecting bay windows and balconies give the area a picturesque look.

In Lärkstaden, the exteriors of the buildings remain as they were while the interiors have changed from single-family homes to offices, embassies and residences. The rocky slope next to the embassy is named Balders hage.

STREETS NAMED AFTER THE NORDIC GODS

The Old Norse heathen myths and beliefs have been of great importance for Nordic culture. When Lärkstaden was being planned in the beginning of the last century, there was considerable interest in Nordic mythology as well as ancient history, especially the Viking period. Therefore when the streets were named in 1909, they were given the names of Nordic gods.





The influence of Old Norse mythology can still be seen in contemporary Nordic culture. For example, the weekdays are still named after the Nordic gods – Tuesday (tisdag) is named after Tyr, Wedensday (onsdag) after Odin, Thursday (torsdag) after Thor, and Friday (fredag) is named after Frej.



Nordic gods on Swedish stamps from 1981: Freyja, Heimdall, Thor, Freyr, Odin.





Tyrgatan in 1911. The house to the left is the embassy.

Photo SSM bildarkiv.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

ärkstaden was planned in 1908 and the city plan stated that single-family town villas were to be built there. As soon as the area had been divided into plots, all of them were quickly sold to prospective buyers. The builders hired renowned architects to design the houses. Due to the strict building regulations applied to the area, the main challenge for the architects was to draw as spacious of houses as possible. There were also special regulations concerning the design of the balconies, bay windows, and towers. Neither shops nor offices were allowed in the houses and only one kitchen was permitted in each villa, as they were intended for one family only. Occasionally a small kitchen for the house-keeper or driver was allowed.

The city plan also regulated the relationship between the street width and the height of the buildings. In Lärkstaden the streets were to be 12 meters wide and the houses could not exceed 13.5 meters in height. All the houses represented high-quality handcrafted workmanship with authentic materials such as natural stone and brick. All 51 plots in Lärkstaden were built up in 1914. A study from 1924 shows that out of the 37 houses there, 21 were inhabited by wealthy bourgeois families with children and servants. Two of the houses were mostly empty and only used when the owners visited Stockholm, although servants lived in the houses all year round.

The building contractor Albert Andersson bought the property Tofslär-kan 14 in order to build a town house for his family. He hired the architect Nils Lovén, who had the drawings ready in April 1910, and the planning permission was granted in July. Mr. Andersson himself served as both developer and builder. In 1912 his family moved in and they lived in the house until 1917.





Drawing from 1910.

The facade from the street. Notice the dormer windows.

Drawing, view from the garden 1910. Notice the balcony on the first floor.

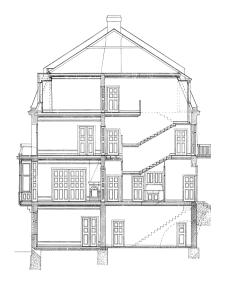
The façade of the building followed contemporary style ideals with a high socle of natural stone and plastered walls. The wall of the souterrain floor was built of grey and reddish stone. The high roof was covered with sheet metal. All the windows, including those in the attic, were partially paned. Above the bay window facing the street was a balcony and a second balcony on the same floor faced the yard. A small garden with flower beds was hidden behind the house. The plot covered 275 square meters. According to the charter, buildings were allowed a maximum of three and a half stories. As the house was situated on a slope, it was planned with a souterrain floor with a private entrance and two floors above street level. From the very beginning the house was equipped with electricity, central heating, bathrooms, toilets, and a laundry. This was common in Lärkstaden but unusual in other parts of Stockholm.

The main entrance, with double doors, was on the higher street level. As English home decor was in fashion, the big hall contained a cosy fireplace. Sliding doors opened into the lounge and further into the dining room. From the dining room one could walk into the garden. The kitchen was situated next to the dining room in the far corner towards the garden. A staircase in the centre of the house led to the upper floors. On the first floor there were four bedrooms, a bathroom, and several closets. Three of the bedrooms faced the park and Engelbrekt Church. The middle bedroom had

Cross section from 1910.

Notice the fireplace on the main floor and the design of the doors.

In 1938 more windows were added. Their Modernistic style differs from the original design.

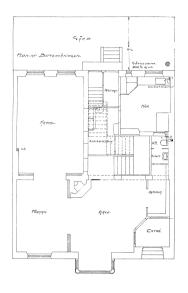


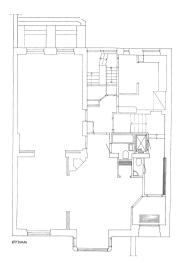


a balcony. On the second floor there were three additional bedrooms and a laundry. On top there was an attic. The souterrain floor was rented by a bachelor from the very beginning. His flat included a toilet, but no kitchen.

The property had several owners and tenants over the years, but no major changes were undertaken until Mrs. Sonja Borgenhard bought the house in 1937. Then an extensive renovation was done under the direction of architect Gunnar Forszén. The building was divided into three flats, which was against regulations. The souterrain flat became equipped with a kitchenette and the main floor made up the second flat. The largest flat, which was found on the first floor and attic, consisted of ten rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom.

Only one year later the property was sold to director Gustaf Winqvist. His family included four almost-adult children, and changes had to be made in the house to adapt it to the family's needs. The architects Rolf Hagstrand and Birger Lindberg were hired. As every member of the family wanted a separate bedroom, the attic was rebuilt into two additional bedrooms and a bathroom. There were two maids who shared a small room upstairs. New dormer windows were built in the roof, but their style did not match the rest of the house. The souterrain rooms and the main floor continued to be let.





Drawing from 1910.

The main entrance is from the corner to the right.
The hall, lounge and dining room are on this floor.

The same floor after reconstruction in 1938. From the dining room there are doors to the garden.

The Winqvist family's flat consisted of ten rooms, two bathrooms, two separate toilets, and one kitchen. The renovation of the house meant a huge rise in standards. An elevator for three people was installed from the main floor to the attic. Novelties like a local telephone and door telephone were installed and the garden was redesigned. Mr. Winqvist had a keen interest in art; the walls were filled with paintings and the interior was modern with many pieces of furniture designed by Carl Malmsten. Some years later, in 1944, a staircase was built from the balcony down to the garden. The garden was partly paved with cobblestones, and there was also a small pond and some flower beds.

In 1955 the engineering company Kjessler & Mannersståhle rented the souterrain floor as their drawing office. The rent tribunal approved the change from a private home to an office area because several of the nearby buildings had already been converted into offices. Approximately three hundred people were working in Lärkstaden in the mid 1950s. Kjessler & Mannersståhle was interested in buying the whole building, but the owner refused to sell. Only after the death of Gustaf Winqvist in 1972 was the property sold to Walter Lindqvist, who immediately rented the building to the Albanian Embassy.

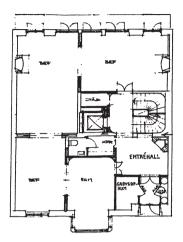
Due to mismanagement, the embassy was dismissed when Sten Rundin, president and CEO of Fastighets AB Nexor, bought the house in 1989.

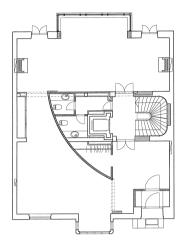
Drawing from 1990.

The staircase has been moved and an elevator has been installed. There are two new fireplaces in the large room facing the garden and none in the hall.

Drawing from 1997.

The present main floor with the curved inner wall leading into the room with the fireplaces.





A major rebuilding plan was launched. Permission was granted for a residential space combined with a smaller office. Unfortunately the renovation, which included the installation of a new elevator, re-plastering the façade, and the addition of a new copper roof, exceeded the owner's financial resources and the company went bankrupt in 1996. The house was sold and the new owner planned for three co-operative flats. This project also failed and the premises were once again put on the market. The Estonian Embassy had been looking for a suitable house in this area and the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to purchase the object because of the location, size, and potential for rebuilding the interior according to the embassy's needs. The contract of purchase was signed on 8 January 1997.



FROM TOWNHOUSE TO EMBASSY

The house at Tyrgatan 3 had kept its original floor plan despite being transformed into apartments and offices. A radically new approach was undertaken when the Estonian state bought the poorly maintained building in 1997. As the building was almost an empty shell, the architect was free to get creative, at least in the public spaces. New inner walls in different colours lead the visitors to the reception hall and the conference rooms. The Estonian and Swedish national colours were utilised and Estonian art and handicrafts adorn the walls.

Blue and yellow.

The Swedish national colours have inspired the indoor design.





Blue, black and white.

The Estonian national colours on the main floor.

RECONSTRUCTION

The building had deteriorated during the years between 1972 and 1989. Parts of the walls were destroyed by moisture and mould. A total renovation was planned, which kicked off in 1990. Costly investments were made. The building's façades were smooth plastered and new windows

The staircase through all five floors.









The bay window on the main floor.

were installed. The copper roof and the balcony facing Tyrgatan were reconstructed according to the original architect's drawings. Indoors, a new elevator connecting all five floors was installed and a new staircase came under construction. As the building has historical value, it was very important to keep its exterior as close to the original from 1912 as possible. Interior changes were allowed as there was not much left of the original inner walls.

After the purchase of the building in 1997 by the Estonian state, the architect firm AS Arkitektbüroo Kalle Rõõmus was contracted to rebuild the house. Their architect Kristiina Renter made the drawings. AS Fansa Ehitus, an Estonian construction company, was hired for the renovation. For both the architect and the construction company it was their first assignment abroad. The renovation work started in 1997 and was completed by March 1998. Reet Otsepp, an interior designer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was responsible for the interior.

INTERIOR



The entrance hall.

Kask – Birch.

1991

Piret Rahusaar

oil



The fireplace room.

ART

Kadriorg – Kadriorg. 1995 Marje Üksine lithography



Vaikus – Tranquillity. 1991 Kristiina Kaasik oil





EPILOGUE

he present Estonian Embassy building in Lärkstaden is close in age to the Republic of Estonia itself. Both the building and the embassy have had varied histories, as is shown in this book. The path that led to their meeting at the end of the 20th century involved much innovation and problem-solving – over the years the politicians and the house owners both made use of current trends in politics and architecture.

Tiiu Valmet