The U.S. Embassy in Sweden would like to thank the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Building Operations Office of Cultural Heritage and Kjell Åkerlund for their invaluable assistance in preparing this brochure. For information about the U.S. Embassy, please see our website.

Design and Layout: Keith P. Sousa

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U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE
VILLA ÅKERLUND
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

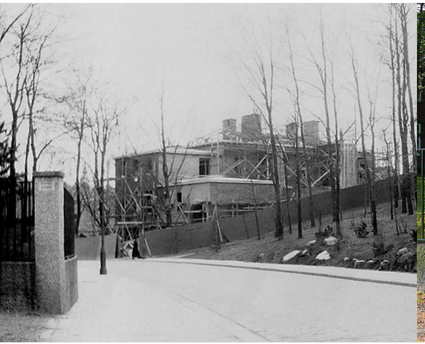
KENNETH A. HOWERY
U.S. AMBASSADOR

It is my honor as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden to welcome you to my home. This historical structure, however, is far more than an ambassadorial residence. It is the hub around which much of the work of the U.S. Embassy to Sweden revolves, regularly hosting Swedes from all walks of life as we seek to strengthen further the close ties between the United States and Sweden. It is also a place where the U.S. Embassy community comes to celebrate.

As you look over this brochure, I hope you will come to appreciate this beautiful house as much as I do.
Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Howery,
U.S. Ambassador
Stockholm August 31, 2020

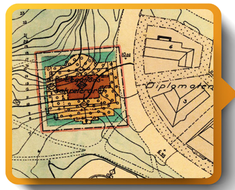
The U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Stockholm has been a part of the life of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Sweden for almost 90 years. Constructed in 1930-31 for the Swedish publisher and industrialist Erik Åkerlund by the Swedish architect Knut Perno, this magnificent villa in the Diplomatic Quarter is inspired by Italian architecture and is a fine example of Nordic Classicism. U.S. Minister Laurence Steinhardt rented Villa Åkerlund from the family beginning in September 1933 as his residence. In February 1940 U.S. Minister Frederick Sterling rented it as a residence and for offices. During World War II, the villa served as the Stockholm outpost of the U.S. Office of War Information. In December 1942, the U.S. government purchased the house. Since 1947, it has been the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to Sweden.



1931

2020

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE RESIDENCE



1927 - 28
LAND PURCHASED

Erik Åkerlund, a leading publisher, industrialist, and sportsman, purchases the half-acre lot in Nobel Park in Stockholm's "Diplomatic Quarter."

SUMMER 1931
BUILDING COMPLETED

Work is completed on Villa Åkerlund. Erik Åkerlund and his family move in.

SPRING 1934
(According to the family)

Erik Åkerlund and his family move out.

FEBRUARY 1940
FREDERICK A. STERLING U.S. MINISTER TO SWEDEN

U.S. Minister to Sweden Frederick A. Sterling rents Villa Åkerlund.

DECEMBER 1942
U.S. PURCHASES VILLA ÅKERLUND

The U.S. government purchases Villa Åkerlund for one million Swedish kronor (or $240,000).

1945
FREDERICK LARKIN CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN BUILDINGS OFFICE

Frederick Larkin, architect and chief of the Foreign Buildings Office (predecessor organization to OBO), personally inspects Villa Åkerlund, reports considerable repair work is needed to make it ready for the U.S. Minister.

MARCH 1930
BUILDING STARTS ON NOBELGATAN

Work begins on the impressive Italian-inspired private villa designed by Swedish architect Knut Perno according to the tenets of Nordic Classicism.

SEPTEMBER 1933
LAURENCE STEINHARDT U.S. MINISTER TO SWEDEN

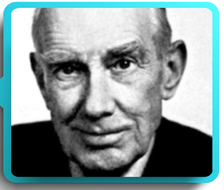
U.S. Minister to Sweden Laurence Steinhardt begins renting Villa Åkerlund.

MARCH 1936

Minister Steinhardt terminates his lease.

1942
U.S. WARTIME OFFICES

After the U.S. enters WWII, diplomatic and military personnel use the villa for offices, including the U.S. Office of War Information Stockholm, which counters Nazi propaganda.



BY 1946
REPAIRS UNDERWAY

Swedish architect Sven Ivar Lind supervises the project. The renovation is completed in December 1946.

1947
H. FREEMAN MATTHEWS U.S. AMBASSADOR

U.S. legation is elevated to embassy status, and H. Freeman Matthews takes up residence as the first U.S. Ambassador to Sweden.

1960
MORE RENOVATIONS

Prior solarium (pictured) renovated by Swedish architect Sten Ramel to feature a curved glass-and-metal roof; Ramel also extends the footprint of the patio beyond the south facade of the west wing.

OCTOBER 2019
KENNETH A. HOWERY U.S. AMBASSADOR

Kenneth A. Howery takes up residence as the 24th U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden.

1955
RENOVATIONS

Significant changes occur to the residence, when the portico outside the former "outdoor breakfast room" is enclosed and the fireplace along the east wall is removed to convert the salon into the principal guest room.

1983
STAIRCASE REMOVED

The monumental staircase leading from the south terrace to Nobel Park is demolished, and a new retaining wall is built and the iron railing is extended across the new length of wall. The original iron gates at the entrance drive are replaced with an overhead gate set in a steel frame affixed to granite piers.

ART

INTO THE WIDE WORLD
GUSTAF MAGNUSSON

The mural in the main hall was painted by Gustaf Magnusson. The mural is a copy of John Bauer's work "Into The Wide World."

UNTITLED
ISAAC GRÜNEWALD

In the Petit Salon there is a third mural above the fireplace "untitled" by Isaac Grünewald, a prominent early 20th century artist who studied with Matisse in Paris in 1908. He started the "Young Ones" movement in art in Stockholm.

PRINCESS TUVSTARR
GUSTAF MAGNUSSON

The mural in the Upstairs Dining Room was also painted by Gustaf Magnusson. The mural is a copy of John Bauer's work "Princess Tuvstarr Gazing Down Into The Dark Water."

STAIR PAINTING
CARL JUNGSTEDT

The ceiling painting in the stairway up to the second floor was painted by Carl Jungstedt. It creates the illusion of space above. At one point it was painted over and later restored.