



# Houses with a History

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## Söderköping

The glory days of Söderköping were in the Middle Ages. It was then one of Sweden's principal ports and here were held coronations and important political events. In the 17th century the harbour was no longer usable and Söderköping lost its standing. The building of Göta Canal and the establishment of a spa during the first half of the 19th century gave the town a new energy, but it was no longer a major town.

The street system has retained its medieval structure, while the buildings have a predominantly small-town character from the turn of the 20th century. Two of the four medieval churches can still be seen above ground.

## RÅDHUSTORGET - MUNKBROGATAN

The Town Hall Square has always been the hub of the town. From here the main streets led to the three parts of town, which were separated by the rivers.

**1. The Town Hall.** The first Town Hall was built in the first half of the 13th century. A tower was added during the 15th century and after the war fires in 1567 it was rebuilt in Renaissance style. In 1773 it was so dilapidated that it was demolished. The present Town Hall was completed in 1777 at the same location with the medieval cellars still intact. The main hall and the antechamber are now used for weddings and assemblies. The rest of the house contains art studios and galleries. Listed building. **The stone bridge** beside the Hall is from the middle of the 19th century.

**2. Blomquist's House** The house was built in 1857-59 and the tradesman C.A. Blomquist bought it in 1862. With its magnificent exterior it was the town's finest privately owned house. The cellar with 12 cross-vaults was used for storage by Rehnberg's Liquor Store which also had licensed premises in a building next door. Listed building together with no 3 below.

**Munkbrogatan (Friar's Bridge Street)** ran during the Middle Ages from the Town Hall, the square and the harbour to the convent grounds. Today's buildings are mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries and the bridge is from 1912.

**3. The Store House** was built in 1850s and rebuilt in 1906 after plans by V. Northun. Listed building together with the store house in Källargränd and no 2 above.

**4. Brask's House** has a late-medieval ground floor with an upper floor built in the 18th century. According to the legend, the bishop Hans Brask had a printing shop here. He owned both Little and Great Bishop's Yard in Munkbrogatan. One of those could have been this house. Listed building. (Pict. on cover.)

**5. The house in Munkbrogatan 10** is from the 18th century and here was a stable yard, where you could park your horse and carriage while shopping. It was a trading house until the 20th century.



## DROTHERM

The area has a long and interesting history, characterized by mendicant friars and the poor inhabitants of the hospice. Here were a convent, two churches and nearby were bishop's yards and craftsmen's yards.

**Linköpingsgatan** was the northern boundary of the convent grounds.

**6. At the corner of Hospitalsgatan** is a house from the 19th century with a high base made of granite and late-medieval cellars. The house may have been moved here from the area around the canal. The folly is from 1885.

**Trångsundsgränd** Approx. in the middle of the alley is the chancel of the abbey. The alley originally ran all the way down to the river.

**7.** The building at the corner rests on the wall of the chancel. The house is from the 18th century and may have been moved here from the area where Göta Canal was built in the beginning of the 19th century.

**8.** The building further down the alley also rests on parts of the chancel and is a half timbered building





from the 18th century. The timbered outbuilding is from the 19th century.

**9.** On the other side of Trångsundsgränd are two cottages. The larger one is from 18-19th century and the smaller one is a century older. The older building is so low that the door cuts into the eaves. Other old fixtures are the ridged roof, the place of the chimney and the fact that half of the house served as a shed. The house shows what the almshouses may have looked like, but without the cladding and with smaller windows.

**10.** The building at the end of the alley rests on a medieval cellar. It is a timber house from the 18th century, possibly slightly earlier. There has been a gate in the eastern part of the house, where the alley ran down to the river. In the yard there are several underground walls from the 13th century. (Pict. on the back cover.)

**Skvallertorget** is the smallest square of the town and is situated on top of parts of the convent and a later burial ground. Here the archaeologists have found hundreds of graves.





**11.** The town has had a flour mill industry since the 13th century and one mill was situated where there still is one today, on the other side of the river in a building with parts from the 16th century.

### **Hospitalsgränd**

**12.** The house on the other side of Skvallertorget sits in a yard that was part of the burial grounds. It is a timbered building, built in the beginning of the 19th century, with an upper store added on later.

**13.** The house next door, closest to the church, is a timbered building from the first part of the 19th century, also built on burial grounds. Older walls exist underneath the house.

**Broder Everts gränd** (Friar Evert's Alley) has been named after the principal of the hospice. He became a local saint in the 16th century, but the Reformation prevented him from being properly canonized. The hospice had poor inhabitants such as Blind Jöns, Karin Clubfoot and Bengt the Mute. In the alley the archaeologists have found the walls from the abbey, fragments of medieval tombstones and coins from the 14th century.

**12, 13**





**Hospitalsgatan** was called Friar's street and Convent street during the Middle Ages.

**14.** The plastered house at the corner of Hospitalsgränd/Hospitalsgatan was built in 1873. It stands right on top of the abbey walls. Several fragments from medieval grave covers have been found, among those a cross slab grave cover from the 11th century. The house next door was built in 1992-1993 on the base of the abbey. The outhouse alongside Hospitalsgränd also has medieval walls and cellars.

### **The Convent**

The Franciscan Order, the Greyfriars, was an order of mendicant friars who lived off gifts and what they could beg. Mendicant orders established fairly open cloisters, so called convents, in big towns, and in the 13th century Söderköping was an important town. The convent here was the first one on the Swedish mainland, established in 1235, only 12 years after the order was founded.

The convent grounds consisted of the abbey, dormitories, a refectory and halls for work and study as well as outbuildings, a herb garden, jetties and



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16, 17



18, 17





sheds. A wall marked the ground off from the rest of the town. The convent was probably built in the same fashion as in the rest of Europe, with a large and high abbey, made of bricks with a base of granite. The chancel was octagonal in Gothic style. In the crypt, which probably still exists beneath the chancel, the Princess Magdalena Knutsdotter (1445-1495) was buried. She was the daughter of King Karl Knutsson Bonde.

During excavations in the area the abbey has been measured to 40-45 metres and the finds include walls, floors of brick and grave covers. There has probably been a church here before the convent.

After the Reformation in the 1530s the convent was demolished and the grounds were given to the hospice on the other side of the river. The convent grounds were used mainly as burial grounds for the poor. The hospice closed in 1786 and the area was rebuilt with small, simple cottages.

**Drothemsgatan** and its church is named after Drotten or Drotin, which means the Lord.

**15. The church of Drothem** with belltower was the church for the countryside. There was a church here already in the 11th century. Parts of rune stones, cross slab grave covers and a pendant – a crucifix – in a young girl's grave, have been found here. Today's church is from the latter part of the 13th century and there are some medieval fixtures here. The belltower is from the 18th century and replaced the old roof turret with its bells.

**16. Kalle mä pipas cottage** (Rydebergsstugan) is a double fronted cottage from the 17th or 18th century. The model is medieval and has also been found elsewhere during excavations in the town. The bellringer and stonemason Kalle mä pipa (Charlie with the pipe) lived here at the turn of the 20th century. The house has been a dwelling until 1966.

**17. "Johansson's house"** is a red two storied timbered house with double gates into a yard. The oldest part, towards the street, rests on the walls of the convent grounds. During the latter part of the 18th century an upper storey was added and here was also an inn. Before the house was renovated in the 1990s, there were two flats and a single room with an iron stove. The yard is 1/26 of an acre. Ivar Johansson, the wrestler who won several olympic gold medals, lived here.

**18. "Lottagården" or "Knäckegummans gård"** consists of three smaller houses from around the turn of the 18th century. They may have been moved here from the area around the canal. An old woman made and sold sweets ("knäck") here during the 1920s. Private house.



## THE CHURCH GROUNDS

**19. S:t Laurentii Church and Belltower.** The church dates from the end of the 13th century and was then a three-naved basilica. During the 15th century the church was rebuilt into a hall church in red brick Gothic style. A fourth nave was added in the 16th century, when the chapels between the church porch and the vestry was integrated. The church is named after the martyr S:t Lars or Laurentius, who is depicted in a fresco on the gable of the vestry. The church has unique medieval fixtures. The 50 metres high wooden bell tower was built in 1583 by "Anders Stapelmakare". Four tonnes of bells are hanging here.

**20. Klockaregården** This was the bell-ringer's residence from the beginning of the 19th century. In 1865 it became an isolation hospital. The house is built of timber with a modern cladding but has kept its oldfashioned corners.

**21. Mulach's house.** Doctor CG Mulach, who practised medicine 1784-1827 willed funds for this house to be used by the old and the infirm. Today there are art studios here.

## 20, 21





**22. Gamla Gymnastiken** (The Old Gym) was built in 1809 and used as a school until 1861. After that the house was redesigned for physical education. It is built as a half timbered house.

**23. The old Grammar school** is Söderköping's oldest school building, with its ground floor from the early 16th century. The upper stories are from 1781. The school started in the Middle Ages and was then housed in three rooms in the ground floor. It was used as a school until 1861. The house is today used by the local history society, S:t Ragnhild's Guild, as a town museum.

**24. The Old Deanery** by Prästgatan was built in the 18th century and was used as a vicarage until 1912. Before it was redesigned as a private house it was used as a library, a bakery and a café.

**25. Bossgård.** This is a plastered timbered building dating from the 18th century. Its predecessor was the royal demesne Bossgård, which is mentioned in medieval documents with owners such as Gustav Vasa. The almshouse Helgeandshuset and later the hospice was situated in the grounds of Bossgård.





# SÖDERKÖPING TOWN CENTRE





## STORGATAN

Storgatan (High Street) was the main street in this part of town and has always had this layout.

**26. The Cellar House and the Tannery** The cellars are from the 16th century and the upper floor from the 18th century. The cellar walls are 1.5 metres thick. It is a listed building and so is the Tannery, next door, dating from ca 1800 and rebuilt in 1898, and the folly from the 1890s. There was a tannery here until the 1950s.

**27. King Johan's House.** Tradition links this house to king Johan III, who recommended the burghers of the town to build houses of stone after the war fires in 1567. The cellar is from the 15th century and the rest of the house from the end of the 16th century. Traces of stepped gables can be seen in the attics. The shoe shop was established in 1910. The building and its yard are listed. The house facing the street next door is from the 18th century and the other buildings in the yard are from the 19th century. It was the town inn and also a stable yard 1825-1855.

**28. Hjalmar Svensson's shop** was built in 1922-23





and the shop existed until 1980. It belonged to the yard next door, where meats and delicatessen were manufactured in a back building. The main house made of plastered timber and the back buildings were built at the turn of the 20th century.

**29. Åpromenaden 1.** In the same block, facing the river, are buildings from the beginning of the 19th century. A late medieval building is incorporated in the house: 6 by 12 metres with walls 0.7 metres thick and cellars with barrel vaults with one metre thick walls. The newspaper Söderköpingsposten was situated here around 1900.

**30. Bookstore.** The house was built in 1815 and the upper floor was the home of the mayor Cedergren. King Carl XIV Johan visited him here when Göta Canal was opened in 1832. The ground floor housed then – as now – the book store.

**31. Storgatan 4, "Högbergska gården"** is a trading house with buildings from the 18th century facing the street. They have been modernised in the 19th century. The yard runs the length of the block in the medieval fashion and the sheds have been replaced with residential houses.



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**SKÖNBERGAGATAN** was the road to the church and to the place for court sessions in Skönberga and further on to Småland and Tjust. The square **Hagatorget** was constructed in the middle of the 19th century as well as the park towards the river.

**32.** The buildings in the **northern part** of Skönbergagatan, towards the river, are mainly from the 19th century. **No 1**, the bank house was built in 1820-1830, **no 3** 1840-1860, **no 5** 1850-1870. The row is broken by **no 7** which was destroyed in a fire and replaced with a new building. The back building in the yard "Schubert's yard" is from the 1850s. **No 9** 1870-80, **no 11A** 1820-50, **no 11B** is a large timbered building from 1869-70, **no 13** from the middle of the 19th century, **no 15** a frame from the 18th century, rebuilt during the 19th and 20th centuries. **No 17** was a craftsman's yard with a saddlery and a shoemaker, built around 1800 (pict. of the yard) and **no 19** "Grefberg's yard" a plastered timbered house, former stables and store house from 1844. **No 21** consists of two joined timbered houses from the 18th century and **no 23** "Wessman's yard" is from 1860-80 with later wings.

**33. The Chapelhouse Hyddan** was built in 1895 and the house next door was built as an orphanage in 1902. There is a public herb garden by Hyddan.

**34. Erixon's yard.** The lovely plastered house in half-timber was built in 1850 and the ground floor was for rent. You could walk straight through the house to the English garden, which occupied the whole yard.

**35. The Coppersmith's yard.** Craftsman's yard from the 18th century. The coppersmith Hedström bought the yard from a brewer in 1848 and built the back-buildings. A wellpreserved example of a craftsman's yard with the dwelling house, shop and store rooms in the small house facing the street, workshop with rooms for the apprentices in the attic, brewery, woodshed and stables in the yard.

**35**





**36. Söderköping's Spa.** The oldest parts of the hotel building are from the 1770s, rebuilt in 1851. On the other side of Skönbergagatan is the doctor's house, rebuilt in 1820-30, now an annexe to the hotel. The red **spa lounge** is from 1819. In the park on the other side of the river is the **spa church** from 1898, built in a nationalistic style, and the spa hospital which was in use 1893-1976.

The three guest houses with 12 rooms each, situated in the park, are now demolished as well as the large bathing house, the café porch and the bowling alley.

The business started in 1719. The water from the well of S:t Ragnhild was considered salubrious. It developed into a spa 1842 with baths and water cures. During the early part of the 20th century there was a small rowing ferry across the canal so that the guests could take bracing walks up the mountain of Ramunder to the café and music stand at the top.

The spa business ended in the 1960s. Today there is a hotel, restaurant and conference establishment here.





**37. Mangelgården (the Mangling House)** was built in 1776-77. The name derives from where the house first stood, in Skönbergagatan 12, where there was a public stone mangle in an outhouse of the yard. The house was dismantled timber by timber in 1945 and rebuilt here to be a youth hostel. Before 1945 the gate house was the youth hostel.

**38. Korskullen.** S:t Ragnhild's Guild, founded in 1918, moved old buildings here. The original houses are **the gate house** from the 18th century, **the main house** from the end of the 19th century and **the folly** at the top of the hill from 1832. The camping site is from 1941.

**The windmill** was built in 1851 on Hägerö in the archipelago of Gryt and was used for grinding grain until 1914. In 1930 the mill was transported on barges into Söderköping. **The store house**, probably from the 18th century, comes from an island belonging to the manor of Thorönsborg. **The fisherman's cottage** is a ridgeroofed house from the 18th century with a sod roof and was originally situated by the lake Hällestadssjön in Västra Husby.





## ÅGATAN

During the Middle Ages boats could run the river Storån up to the Town Hall square. Later the river's waterlevel sank. At the square the two rivers, Storån and Lillån, meet. Lillån was led through a culvert in 1860.

**39. The Court House**, built in 1902. It was later used by the municipality and as a school.

**40. The Worker's Association House**. The building dates from 1882 and was the town's entertainment centre with a theatre, cinema and the town's first public library. Now it is a doctor's surgery.

**41. "Kastenhof"** is the first big block of flats in Söderköping. It was built in 1894 by the wholesaler Kastensson. (Pict. in the background of the text.)

**42. Blomkvist's Yard**. The main building is from the end of the 18th century. The other dwelling houses are from the second half of the 19th century. Cow shed, stables and outhouses form a U and are from around 1800. During the first part of the 20th century there was a nursery for plants here. Today it is a private house.

**43. The Rector's Yard** is built of plastered timber in





the 18th century and has medieval cellars with walls 1.5 metres thick.

**44. Stadsläkarens gård.** The house was built by the medical officer of the town on top of medieval cellars in the beginning of the 19th century. The poet and hymn writer Bengt E Nyström was born here in 1886. Today it is a restaurant.

**45. The Town Hotel** was built in 1911 and replaced a coaching inn. It became a popular restaurant with seating also in the garden. Today it is flats here.

**46. The von Horn House.** The house was built as a private house by Count von Horn in the 1830s on top of a medieval cellar. The town bought the house in 1855 to be used as an inn and town hotel.

**47. The Forseman Block.** "Lindner's Yard" is one of the best preserved trading houses. It is from the beginning of the 19th century but several of the houses have late medieval cellars. The octagonal house in the yard was built in 1830 and has been used as a coffee roasting business. The house facing the street is built in the same year. The houses facing Hamngatan are rebuilt store houses, also from that period.



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## THE CANAL HARBOUR

**Göta Canal** was opened in 1832. The outlet is in Mem. You can walk or cycle there on the old towpath. 12 of the 58 locks in the canal are in the vicinity of Söderköping. Above the canal towers the **mountain of Ramunder**. You can reach the top with its viewpoint via stairs by the lock or via the road after the bridge over the canal by E22. Nature reserve.

**The villas by the canal** are built during the first decade of the 20th century. They have names such as Villa Rosa, Villa Viking, Villa Nordanå, Kanalhyd-dan and Port Artur. Magasinsgatan (pict. below) is a small idyllic street with houses from the 19th and early 20th centuries. No 8 is a cottage moved from the lock Duvkullen Lower.

**48. The Ware Houses** remind us of a time when barges trafficked the canal and loaded and unloaded their cargoes here. The plastered ware houses to the west was built in time for the opening of the canal. Those of wood were built in 1898.

**49. "Fyrtornen och Renseriät"**. The silos from the end of the 1950s were rebuilt in 2004 to residential flats with an additional building on the roof. The building next door used to be a grain dryer but has since been converted to offices, shops and restaurants.

**50. The Lockkeeper's House** was built 1869-1870 and the keeper of Söderköping's lock lived here. The lock cottages contain one room and a kitchen and a room in the attic as well as a garden for the household's need of vegetables.

**51. Trumkällan** is situated in a small white building above the lock, part of the way uphill. The well is known since the Middle Ages. The well house was originally built in 1821 and rebuilt after an accident with stones falling down in the 20th century.





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