



## Stockholm Modern

A century of inspirational building and design

**24–29 June 2025 (ML 723)**

6 days • £3,560

Lecturer: Professor Harry Charrington

A celebration of 20th-century architecture, design and landscape in the most beautiful of waterfront cities.

Great breadth of building – sacred and civic, public and private – carefully linked through walks, drives and boat trips.

Developments of the 21st century and the more historic give additional context.

Led by an architect and architectural historian.

Swedish design has had a remarkable ability to cultivate a simplicity in design in the service of the everyday – exemplified by Ellen Kay's 1899 *Beauty for All* – with the incidental charm and humanity found in Carl Larsson's watercolours. Its best practitioners were determined in their aims but inventive in approach, concerned less with puritanical order and more with the balance of illumination and shadows, contrasting and complimentary colours, rough and smooth surfaces, and refined and vernacular materials.

Leading these were Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz, two of the most overlooked 20th-century architects. Their work, as it moved from arts and crafts to classical to modern, is defined by a conception of buildings as organic unities in harmony with their sites and their users, with their Stockholm Woodland Cemetery being, arguably, the most significant landscape design of the century. Ragnar Östberg is similarly important, and his celebrated Stockholm City Hall, merging the Nordic and the Venetian, became the model for town halls from Norwich to Nairobi. The work of the British-born Ralph Erskine remains a touchstone for a participatory approach to housing design and the innovative use of modest, unexpected materials for spectacular effect. At the same time, the 'accidentism' of Josef Frank's interiors and textiles, developed with Estrid Ericson at Svenskt Tenn, would create the template for post-war designers worldwide.

Pragmatism and concern for milieu is most evident in urban design, in which the practicalities of climate, space standards and public health are met with an overall aesthetic concern for the city. Moreover, there could be no more beautiful a setting than Stockholm,



Woodland Cemetery Asplund Lewerentz.

with its Old Town nestling on an island at the meeting of Lake Mälaren and the sea, and the wider city strewn across bluffs, hills and the seemingly endless skerries of the archipelago. Water, and its reflected light, imbues everything with delight, and it is little wonder that an ideal of 'Swedish Grace', simultaneously natural and modern, classical and romantic, would beguile designers the world over – even if it would remain tantalisingly out of reach.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Mid-morning flight (Scandinavian Airlines) from London Heathrow to Stockholm. Our waterfront hotel is in fashionable Östermalm, helpfully next door to Ericson–Frank's Svenskt Tenn shop. A late-afternoon walk introduces the neighbourhood including the magnificent Market Hall (Isak Gustaf Clason and Kasper Salin, 1888).

**Day 2.** Walk round the harbour and cross onto Skeppsholmen. One of the smaller islands, it is home to the Modern Art Museum (Rafael Moneo, 1998) and the Swedish Centre of Architecture and Design, renovated in 2024. Time to visit both collections before sailing round to the Gamla Stan. The historic core is a maze of cobbled streets and squares, lined with 17th- and 18th-century houses. End at the Venetian-inspired City Hall (Ragnar Östberg, 1923) for a guided tour of its glorious interiors.

**Day 3.** Ferry to the museum island of Djurgården. See the vast Vasa ship, dredged intact from the harbour 300 years after it

sank and now safely housed in a building by Marianne Dahlbäck & Göran Månsson, 1990. Visit the early Nordic Classical Liljevalchs Konstell (Carl Bergsten, 1916) with its contemporary extension by Wingårdhs (2021). Walk through the Norrmalm neighbourhood passing Ivar Tengbom's concert hall (1926) and Asplund's Skandia cinema (1923). Visit by special arrangement of the former National Social Insurance Board (Lewerentz, 1932) before continuing to the great Arts and Crafts Engelbrekt Church, designed by Lars Israëll Wahlman in 1914.

**Day 4.** A day away from the centre begins at the UNESCO heritage-listed Woodland Cemetery (Asplund and Lewerentz 1915–40); the rites of the forest blend with the solemnity of the classical funerary chapel to create a sublime landscape of death and return. Special access to the exquisite funerary chapels and crematorium (*subject to confirmation*). Nearby is Lewerentz's profound, brick vaulted, St Mark's Church (1963). Walk in Hammarby Sjöstad, a former waterfront industrial zone being revived into an ecologically responsive neighbourhood. Overlooking the bay, the Maritime Museum is a restrained example of Nordic Classicism by Östberg (1934), telling the story of Stockholm's maritime heritage, and housing a remarkable collection of model ships dating from the 1600s. A walk along this idyllic shore leads to Lewerentz's green-painted clapboard Stockholm Rowing Club (1913).

**Day 5.** A short drive to Bromma to see Paul Hedqvist's functionalist terraces (1933).

Stockholm Modern  
continued

Continue to Drottningholm, beautifully sited on the island of Lovön in Lake Mälaren. Known mostly as the residence of the Swedish Royal family, and for its 18th-century theatre, our focus is on the 20th century. Here, in the 1960s, Ralph and Ruth Erskine built their remarkable light-filled vision of home and work around a courtyard nestling in a garden of pear trees (*visit by special arrangement; subject to confirmation*). Sail back to Stockholm for some free time. We suggest the National Museum (painting, sculpture, design).

**Day 6.** The final visit is to the extraordinary house, studio and garden of sculptor Carl Milles and his artist wife Olga. Overlooking the water on Lidingö, the site was developed over fifty years including the house by Carl M. Bengtsson (1908) and Anne's House by Evert Milles, with interiors by Josef Frank (1955). Continue to the airport. The flight lands at Heathrow at c. 8.00pm

*A number of the visits are by special arrangement and cannot be confirmed until nearer the time. It is possible the order of visits may change.*

## Lecturer

**Professor Harry Charrington.** Architect and Head of the School of Architecture & Cities at the University of Westminster. He read Architecture at Cambridge, where he was the founding editor of *Scroope: Cambridge Architectural Journal*, and subsequently combined academia and practice in both England and Finland. He has a particular interest in the history of modernism and obtained his PhD from the LSE on Alvar Aalto. His books include the award-winning *Alvar Aalto: the Mark of the Hand* and contributions to *Artek and the Aaltos: Creating a Modern World* (Yale University Press).

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £3,560 or £3,310 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,260 or £4,010 without flights.

**Included:** flights (economy class) with Scandinavian Airlines (Airbus 320 Neo); travel by private coach and public ferry as indicated in the itinerary; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 1 sandwich lunch and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions and donations; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Hotel Diplomat, Stockholm** (diplomahotel.com): well-placed on the waterfront in Östermalm district, rated locally as 5-star. *We have booked Superior rooms for two sharing and Queen rooms for sole occupancy – all without harbour views. Please contact us for a quote if you would like to upgrade to a room with a view.*

**How strenuous?** This is a busy tour involving a lot of walking, some of it on uneven ground. Participants need to have a good level of fitness and be able to walk at a reasonable pace. Average distance by coach per day: 15 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.

**Combine this tour with:** *Great Swedish Houses*, 30 June–6 July 2025. Details available in July 2024.