

# EKSJÖ, THE WOODEN TOWN

**E**ksjö was established at the junction of two important roads: the north-south road from the Danish border in the south to Skänninge in the north and the east-west road between Jönköping and Västervik. It is believed that Eksjö emerged as a town in the 14th century, although the town centre was located some 500 metres south-west of where it is today. After the town burned down in 1568, during the Nordic seven-year war, it was rebuilt in its current location where the church already existed.

Today, the old-fashioned character and many wooden buildings have meant that large parts of the town centre are protected as cultural heritage. At the same time, the different parts of the town centre have their own distinctive character. The area north of the market square Stora torget still bears signs of the town plan designed at the end of the 16th century. This is also where you find the oldest wooden buildings. In 1856, a town fire broke out and wiped out the area south of the market square. A new town plan with straighter and wider streets was drawn up for the rebuilding. In this part of Eksjö, the wooden buildings are mainly from the second half of the 19th century.

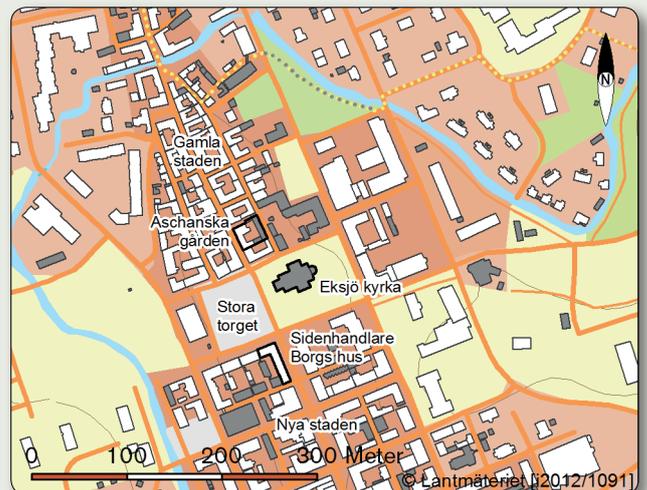
Many of the old town estates have an interesting history. One of these is Aschanska gården at Norra Storgatan 18. Some of the buildings belonging to the estate were constructed in the 1790s when the apothecary Rydell had a pharmacy here. The estate, however, is named after the Aschan family, who lived here and had a tannery in the courtyard from the 1830s. Today, you can visit their bourgeois home, where everything has been left intact since the late 19th century.

The corner property at Stora torget 1 is an example of the buildings that were constructed south of the market square after the town fire. It was built in 1857 and belonged to the silk merchant Borg. A modern feature among these street houses was to render the wooden facades.

In addition to the many courtyards, there are a number of other remarkable buildings. The church consists of a tower from 1784 and a nave which was inaugurated in 1889. After restorations in the 1880s, the tower was given a tall spire, but this was in turn replaced in the 1920s by the current dome, which is a copy of the original.



*This painting of the market square in Eksjö was made by Axel Otto Mörner around 1840. Beyond the lively trading, you catch a glimpse of the northern district with the old-fashioned wooden buildings. The original is owned by Jönköping County Museum.*



## HIDDEN GEM 53



### HOW TO GET HERE

Eksjö is located at the junction of the roads 40 and 32. North of the market square and church is the "Old Town" and to the south is the "New Town", which was built after the fire in 1856.

### Coordinates:

N 6391635 / E 498257  
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N  
57° 40' 1.126" / E 14° 58'  
14.838"  
(WGS84)



*The northern, and oldest, town centre is designed according to a town plan with medieval features. One example is that streets join together in a small square, like here where Färgaregatan and Nygatan meet. Photo around 1900: Jönköping County Museum.*

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## HIDDEN GEMS

There are so many things to discover in the countryside! Here, Jönköping County Museum presents some of the cultural environment and heritage attractions in the county.

They include well-known cultural monuments such as Habo Church and the Smålandsstenar Stone Circles, but also lesser known gems such as log-driving remains in the river Valån and Stengårdshult Church. Around the county you can find evidence of how people lived and worked in the past, everything from castles and manors to abandoned embankments and clearance cairns in forest areas.

The idea with Hidden Gems is to tempt you to make excursions in the cultural landscape – here you find our history, revealed in different ways in the physical environment. This heritage is worth experiencing and protecting. Bit by bit, we will be adding more sights under the heading Hidden Gems, both for people living in the county and visitors from further away. The more people who discover these gems, the better chance that they will be preserved for the future.

### FACTS

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In Jönköping County there are more than 4 000 registered ancient remains, 87 cultural environments of national interest, close to 130 listed buildings, around 150 churches, some 100 rural community centres with old settlements, a large number of industrial heritage sites, and two cultural reserves. There are also a large number of cultural environments with buildings worthy of conservation. More information about the sites can be found on the websites of the County Administrative Board, the municipalities and the local heritage societies.

### GOOD TO KNOW

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Access to the Hidden Gems varies. Some sites are well signposted, with easy access and proper parking facilities, etc. Others are more challenging to reach. Visitors may have to walk some distance, sometimes through scrubby forest, only to be met by a broken sign (if there ever was one) when they reach the site. All the sites, however, have an exciting and interesting history.

Please note that many of the cultural heritage buildings are privately owned and can only be viewed from the outside. Also, please respect private land. Many churches are open in the summer. During other times of the year, the churchwarden may be able to open the church for you.

