



*Decorated Farmhouses  
of Hälsingland World Heritage*

# ERIK-ANDERS







**Copyright:** Gävleborg County Administrative Board

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Hälsingebilder, Hälsinglands museum

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**E**RIK-ANDERS, part of the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage in the village of Asta in Söderala parish, has a mansion-like architecture with interiors inspired by the higher social classes. The rooms in the house are laid out in a double row, and there is an impressively wide grand festivities room on the first floor. The farmhouse's restrained decorations are the work of the Knutes, a family of

painters much in demand. Erik-Anders was named after Erik Andersson, who had the farm built in the 1820s. In the mid-1800s, one of his sons accompanied Erik Jansson, the leader of the Janssonists (a Swedish pietist sect) to Bishop Hill in America. The farm is now privately owned, and is open to visitors during the summer. There is a Visitor Center, café, shop and furniture display, and a garden that has been restored to how it looked in 1920.





*First-floor festivities room*

# A LARGE, WIDE AND GRAND FESTIVITIES ROOM

**THE LARGE FIRST-FLOOR** festivities room at Erik-Anders occupies the entire width of the house. Its walls are sectioned into panels decorated with light blue stencilled borders and marbling, which is repeated on the tiled stove. The room's dignity is emphasised by its doors, whose lintel panels are painted to simulate exclusive timber beams supported by corbels. They frame a multi-coloured floral motif. This room, like the whole house, was decorated in about 1850 by members of the well-known family of painters from Dalarna, the Knutes, who were very active in Hälsingland.

## *THE WHITE ROOM*

The first-floor landing has skilfully executed marbling in shades of grey, and mahogany-grained woodwork. A further large room has white distempered walls and simple door lintel panels, undecorated except for a frame of thin blue lines. The room's only colourful feature is the stencilled ceiling border, with a red and green rose pattern.

## *DAY-TO-DAY LIFE ON THE GROUND FLOOR*

Two rooms on the ground floor were used for day-to-day living during the 1800s: the "dagligstuga" (for cooking, eating, sleeping, etc.) and the chamber. Evidence for this includes the walls here being plastered with clay for better insulation against the cold. The walls of the ground-floor vestibule are distempered in an unusual, brightly coloured rainbow-like design. The woodwork here, as in many other rooms in the house, is painted to simulate mahogany. The interior of the kitchen to the left of the vestibule is preserved intact from the 1920s. Other rooms were restored in the 1990s,



using only hand-printed wallpapers in patterns that had been used previously in the house. There is a further large room on the ground floor with printed wallpaper, with patterns from around 1890.

## *MAGNIFICENT BUILDING*

Erik-Anders is one of the oldest farms in the village, but its precise age cannot be

established. The timber in the farmhouse was felled in 1824/5. The building was constructed soon after, appearing on a map of the village from 1827. The building is one of the oldest known residential dwellings in Hälsingland with a floor plan sufficiently wide and magnificent to accommodate two adjacent rows of rooms.

## *The history of the farmhouses of Hälsingland*

### *Many rooms for festivities*

A Hälsingland farmhouse could have up to fifteen decorated rooms, but only a couple of them were in day-to-day use. The others were used only for really important occasions, such as weddings. These festivities rooms are often richly decorated, and the painting technique indicates the room's use and status.



### *Linen, the forest and trade*

The farmers' healthy finances were based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Many Hälsingland farmers were also able to supplement their income with activities such as linen production, trade and the sale of forest land and timber rights.





*BEAUTIFUL DOOR SURROUNDS*

Like many other farmhouses along the coast, Erik-Anders has finished door surrounds instead of the porches so typical of the province. The features emphasising the entrance at Erik-Anders are borrowed from the typical ornamentation of classical architecture, though they have been adapted to a vernacular architecture.

*GREECE AND ROME AS MODELS*

The two-storey building is modelled on the classic architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. The farmer and juryman Erik Andersson, after whom the farm is named, originally had the house painted yellow. This choice of colour shows he was highly ambitious, a man keen to display an affinity with the higher social classes, the burghers and gentry, rather than with the farmers. His duties as a juryman conferred a status in the farming community that needed to be displayed.

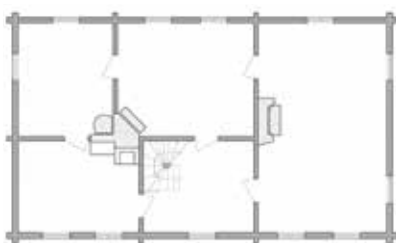


*EMIGRATION TO AMERICA*

During the second half of the 1800s, Erik Andersson suffered setbacks. His eldest son, the heir to the estate, joined a strong religious revival movement founded by Erik Jansson of Biskopskulla in Uppland. In 1846, Erik Jansson emigrated to America, where he founded the community of Bishop Hill in Illinois. His followers, called Janssonists, included Erik Andersson's son Jonas. The younger brother Olof

therefore took over instead, but he never had time to put his mark on the farm. He died young from injuries sustained in an accident with a bolting horse. His widow was unable to keep the farm out of debt, and it was sold at auction. At this time the house was furnished to be let. The three kitchens are a reminder of the time when the house was used by several families. The house was then abandoned and left unoccupied for many decades.

*Plan of Erik-Anders*



*First floor*



*Ground floor*









#### *CHANGED IN THE 1900S*

The farms in the village of Asta are situated close together along its winding road. As in so many other Hälsingland farms, the configuration of the settlement changed in the early 1900s, including the outbuildings being replaced by one large barn building. In addition to the cowshed itself, the building also housed stables, a poultry house and areas for threshing and hay storage.

#### *PRIVATELY OWNED TODAY WITH A VISITOR CENTER, TOURS, GARDEN, CAFÉ AND SHOP*

Erik-Anders is now privately owned, and is open to visitors during the summer. It has a Visitor Center, farm café, furniture display and shop.

#### *GARDEN AS IT WAS IN THE 1920S*

The garden at Erik-Anders has recently been restored to how it was in the 1920s. The garden layout and planting from that period have been restored. Now there are fences and paths in their original locations, and once again plants and trees both useful and ornamental. The scents, sights and tastes – currants, gooseberries, chives, perennials, apple trees and lilacs – are a reminder of how life was lived at Erik-Anders 100 years ago.

»» *The farmer and juryman Erik Andersson, after whom the farm is named, originally had the house painted yellow. This choice of colour shows he was highly ambitious, a man keen to display an affinity with the higher social classes, the burghers and gentry, rather than with the farmers.*









*A LITTLE ABOUT WORLD HERITAGE SITES*

A World Heritage site is an environment considered globally unique and therefore important to all of humanity. The criteria that must be met to warrant designation as a World Heritage Site are governed by a 1972 convention adopted by the UN agency UNESCO. Once something is entered on the World Heritage List, the country where it is located is obliged to ensure that it is preserved for posterity.

*THE DECORATED FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND ARE ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST*

The World Heritage List has nearly a thousand sites, with about thirty being added each year. Italy accounts for most, while Sweden has fifteen. Since summer 2012, seven farmhouses in Hälsingland have become a World Heritage site, Erik-Anders being one of them.

The Hälsingland farmhouses were inscribed on the World Heritage List under the name “Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland”.

The focus is on what is truly unique about the farmhouses, the vernacular architecture and the interiors. It is unusual for ordinary farmers to have built such large houses with so many large rooms exclusively for festivities. There are also more decorated domestic interiors preserved in Hälsingland than anywhere else in the world. Most of these farmhouses were built in the 1800s when construction reached its peak.



Pallars



Kristofers



Jon-Lars



Bortom Åa



Bommars



Gästgivers



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## THE SEVEN WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES

**Gästgivars** in Vallsta, Arbrå

**Kristofers** in Stene, Järvsö

**Jon-Lars** in Långhed, Alfta

**Bortom Åa** in Fågelsjö, Loos

**Bommars** in Letsbo, Ljusdal

**Erik-Anders** in Asta, Söderala

**Pallars** in Långhed, Alfta



### TOURS, VISITOR CENTER AND OPENING HOURS

The Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitor Center in Söderhamn Municipality is at Erik-Anders, with a café, shop and tours during the summer. At other times of the year, pre-booked tours can be arranged. For further information, please contact Erik-Anders ([www.erik-anders.se](http://www.erik-anders.se)) or the tourist office in Söderhamn Municipality ([www.turism.soderhamn.se](http://www.turism.soderhamn.se)) (websites in Swedish). **Please respect the private nature of the site, and do not visit when it is not open.**

### GET TO KNOW YOUR HERITAGE – BUT NOT WITH YOUR HANDS!

It is important to remember that our common heritage must continue to be protected. Do not smoke in the area, and do not touch the painted surfaces, wood and fabrics.





## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The farmhouse website/Visitor Center

[www.erik-anders.se](http://www.erik-anders.se) (in Swedish)

Farmhouses of Hälsingland's own website:

[www.halsingegardar.se](http://www.halsingegardar.se)

Tourist office in Söderhamn Municipality:

[www.turism.soderhamn.se](http://www.turism.soderhamn.se) (in Swedish)

Gävleborg County Administrative Board

[www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg)

*We reserve the right to make changes.*

Please respect the private nature of the site,  
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