

The Story Behind Ryvangs Allé 14–16



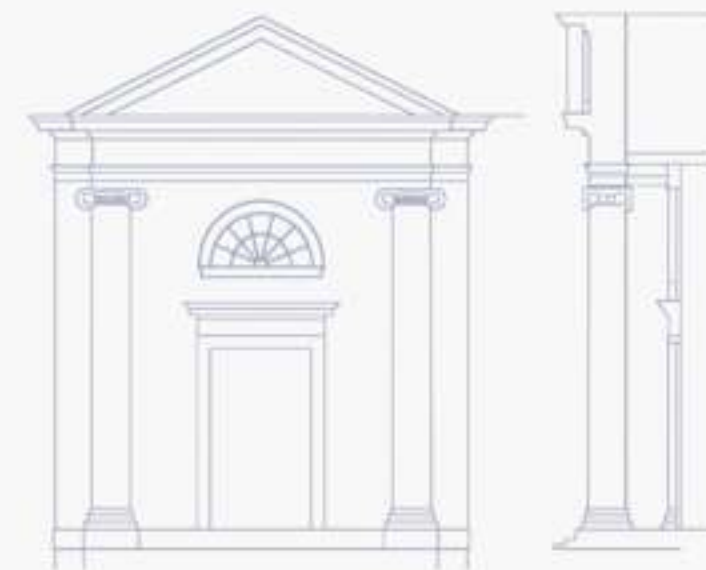
1. Original Proposal of the Residence viewed from the street. Note the difference in the entrance design compared to the final construction.



ændringerne ved Alløbet fra Ejendommen Matr. Nr. 464
Kbh. 1. Kvarter. *Ryvangs Allé*
beløbet Alløb fra 5. Stk. Vandklosetter

Overensstemmelse med de i Tillægs af 8. August 1923
emmelser

den 6. Oktober 1924.



1925 — 2025

Have you ever wondered about the story behind the striking and unconventional building at Ryvangs Allé 14–16, now home to the Chancery and Residence of the Embassy of the Czech Republic? Who was the original owner? Who designed the building? What was its intended purpose? When was it built? As the building marks the 100th anniversary of its official approval, we invite you to step into its rich history. Discover the vision behind its architecture, the personalities who shaped its legacy, and the transformation that led to its current role as a symbol of Czech diplomacy in Denmark.



Architect & Owner



Andreas Mehren Ludvigsen

Architect

22 January 1889 – 19 March 1971

Born in Copenhagen, Andreas Mehren Ludvigsen was the eldest of four siblings. His father, Berent Ludvigsen, a sculptor from Bergen, contributed to the reconstruction of Christiansborg Palace and Copenhagen City Hall. After an early apprenticeship, Ludvigsen studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, graduating as an architect in 1924. He began his career at Martin Nyrop's studio, worked on Bispebjerg Hospital, and later joined DSB (Danish State Railways), where he designed Peter Bangs Vej and Vesterport stations. Ludvigsen was awarded the title Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog in 1952 in recognition of his work.



Marius Henrik Nielsen

Owner

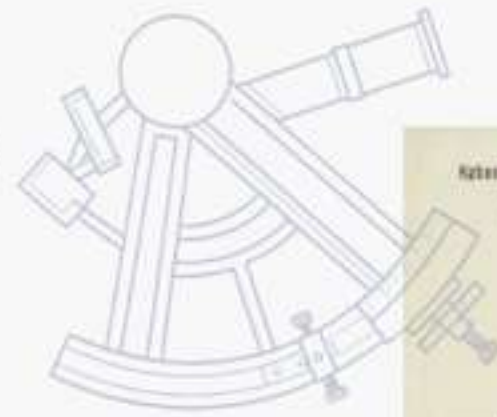
10 March 1867 – 17 January 1954

Born in Odense, Marius Henrik Nielsen was a prominent shipowner and founder of Dampskibsselskabet Progress A/S, established in 1904 in partnership with the firm Holm & Wonsild. Nielsen and his wife, Ellen Rigmor Marx, had three sons and two daughters. From 1916, Nielsen became the company's main shareholder and, together with P. & S. Plum, he established a new company, D/S Skagerak A/S. During World War I, the company acquired 11 vessels from D/S Vesterhavet A/S and lost two vessels, S/S HANS BROGE and S/S CARMEN. The company was later taken over by his sons and gradually declined. Marius Henrik Nielsen died in 1954, two years before Czechoslovakia purchased his summer villa at Ryvangs Allé 14–16.

YGGE- OG BOLIGDIREKTORATET
 Nr. 4649 Udenbys Klædebe
 Ryvangs Allé 14 og 15
 indøger Ark. nr. Børge Andresen og Hemming Thøisevad 6
 2850 Nørum
 Byggetider - APK. DV. KLAUSEN, STRANDVEJEN 8, 2100 -
 ARK. HEMMING THØISEN
 Lygherre The Embassy of the Czechoslovakian Socialist Re
 Copenhagen
 Administrator

Summer Villa of Marius Henrik Nielsen

The two-story house was originally built in the 1920s as a summer villa for the family of Marius Henrik Nielsen, owner of the shipping and shipbuilding company Dampskibs A/S Progress. It was completed and officially approved in 1925. At the time, the main building was accompanied by a rural estate, which no longer exists today. The villa was designed by Danish architect Andreas Mehren Ludvigsen. In 1956, the Nielsen family sold the property, and it was purchased by Czechoslovakia to serve as its Embassy. The complex underwent gradual reconstruction during the 1970s and expansion in the 1980s.



1: Architect Ludvigsen asking for permission to build the new villa closer to the original rural estate than was stipulated by law, 1923.

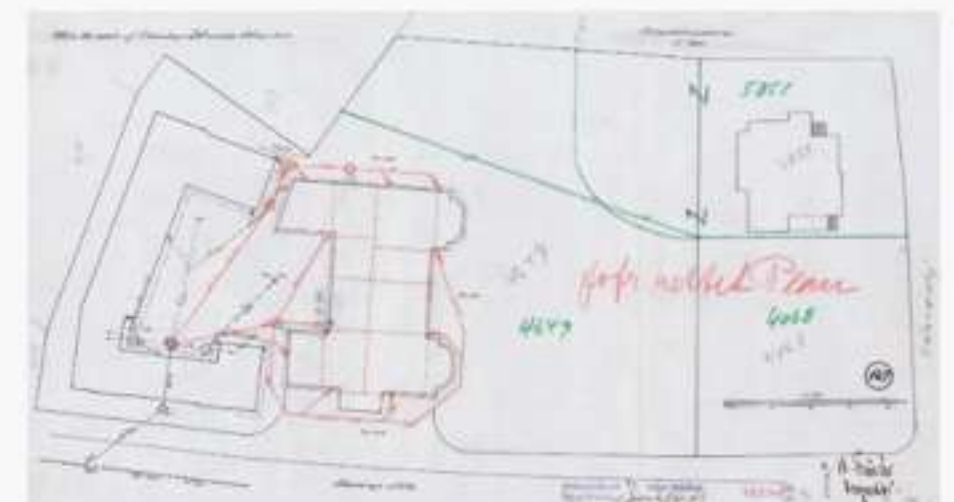


2: Residence from the garden, 2025.



3: First sketch and proposal for the implementation of the new Chancery, 1983.

The modern buildings with the Chancery and diplomatic housing were designed by architect J. N. Clausen and officially approved in 1983. Following the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the diplomatic compound was split between the Czech and Slovak Republics. Today, the main building serves as the Ambassador's Residence and a representative venue for official events.



3: Original plan of the new villa next to the original rural estate building, 1923.

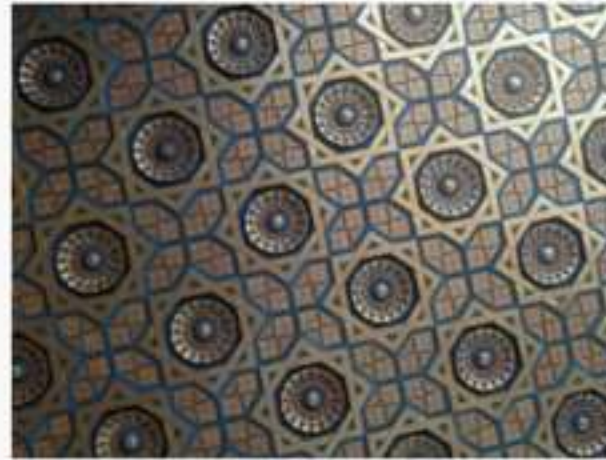


1: Rear lounge with coffered ceiling.

Passion for the sea



2: Color ceiling-stained glass window in the entrance hall.



3: Coffered ceiling in the rear lounge.



4: Fresco of Neptune.



5: Stucco compass rose.

The profession of the original owner and his passion for the sea are clearly reflected in the building's design.

Above the main entrance, a shield features a fresco with a Viking ship motif, symbolizing seafaring heritage. It is clearly visible from the street.

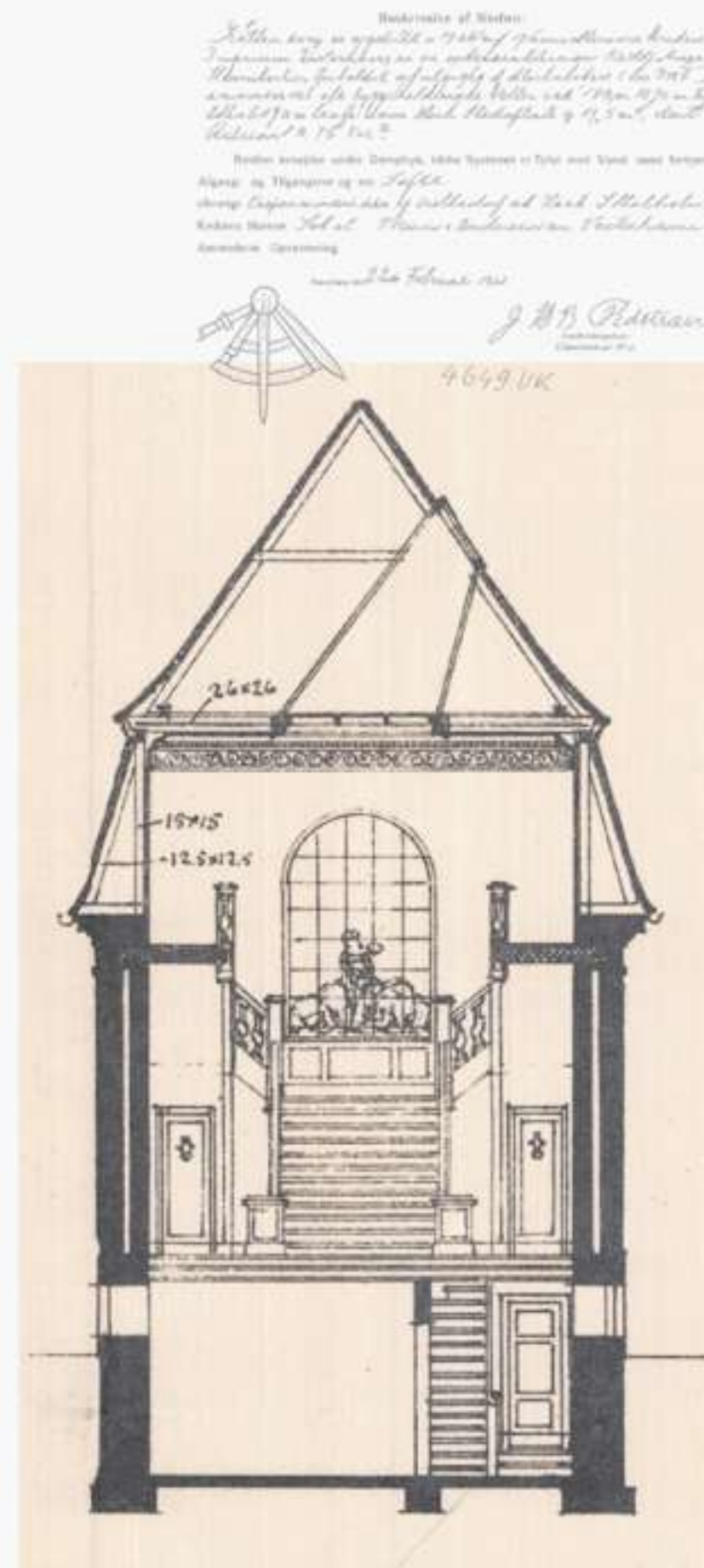
The entrance hall is illuminated by a glass-lined window adorned with a stylized shell, evoking marine imagery.

The main dining room is decorated with a stucco ceiling and frescos depicting Neptune and Mercury, classical figures associated with the sea and commerce. The rear lounge, which is used for public diplomacy events and high-level meetings, still has its original coffered ceiling. In its antechamber, has a stucco compass rose, painted in white, ochre, and gold. The orientation of its cardinal directions is not arbitrary - it precisely aligns with the actual compass points.

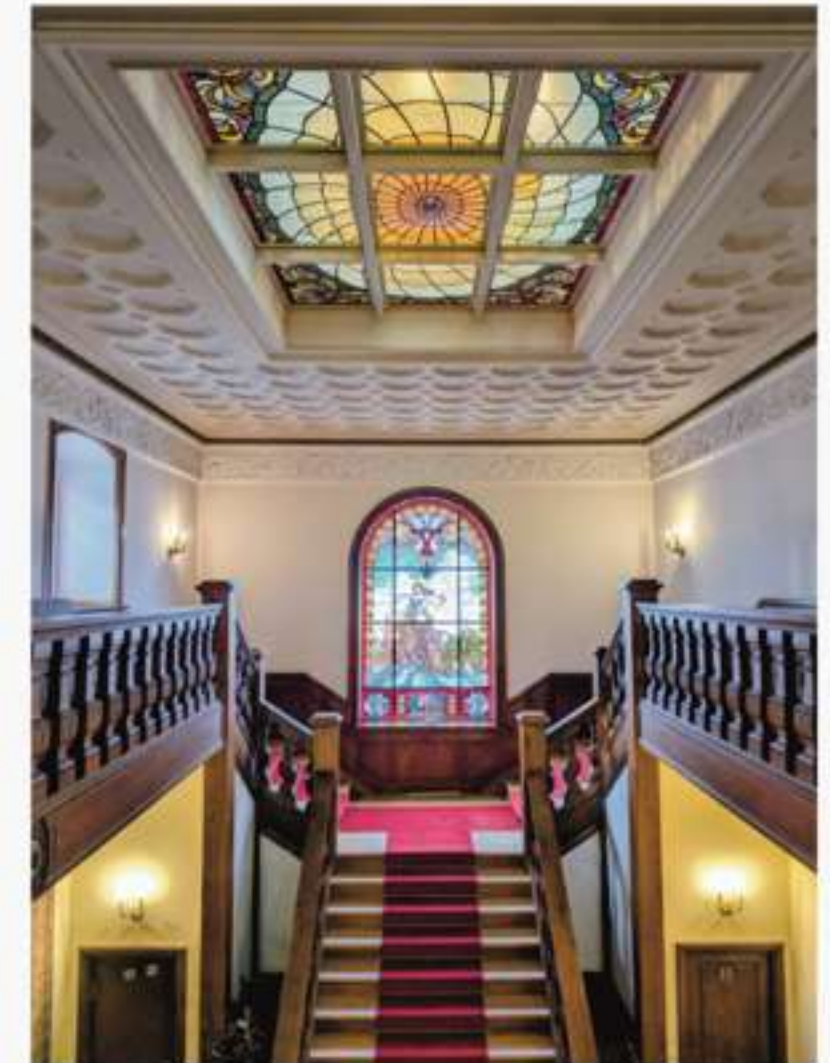


Gefion – True Symbol of the Residence

The glass-lined window depicting the Nordic goddess Gefion, with four bulls harnessed to a plough, dominates the entrance hall of the Residence. This striking artwork illustrates a well-known legend from Norse mythology, deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of Scandinavia. According to the myth, the Swedish king Gylfe promised Gefion as much land as she could plough in a single day and night. To take full advantage of the offer, Gefion transformed her four sons into powerful oxen and set them to work with a massive plough.



1: Gefion – first sketch of the front view inside the house – staircase and glass-lined window of goddess Gefion.



2: Current situation.

By the end of the allotted time, they had carved out a vast piece of land, which she then transported and placed into the sea forming the Danish island of Zealand (Sjælland), where Copenhagen is located today. The void left behind became Lake Vänern, Sweden's largest lake. As you can see, the original vision of architect Ludvigsen is still clearly visible today, and Gefion continues to greet all guests of the Embassy each time they enter the Residence.

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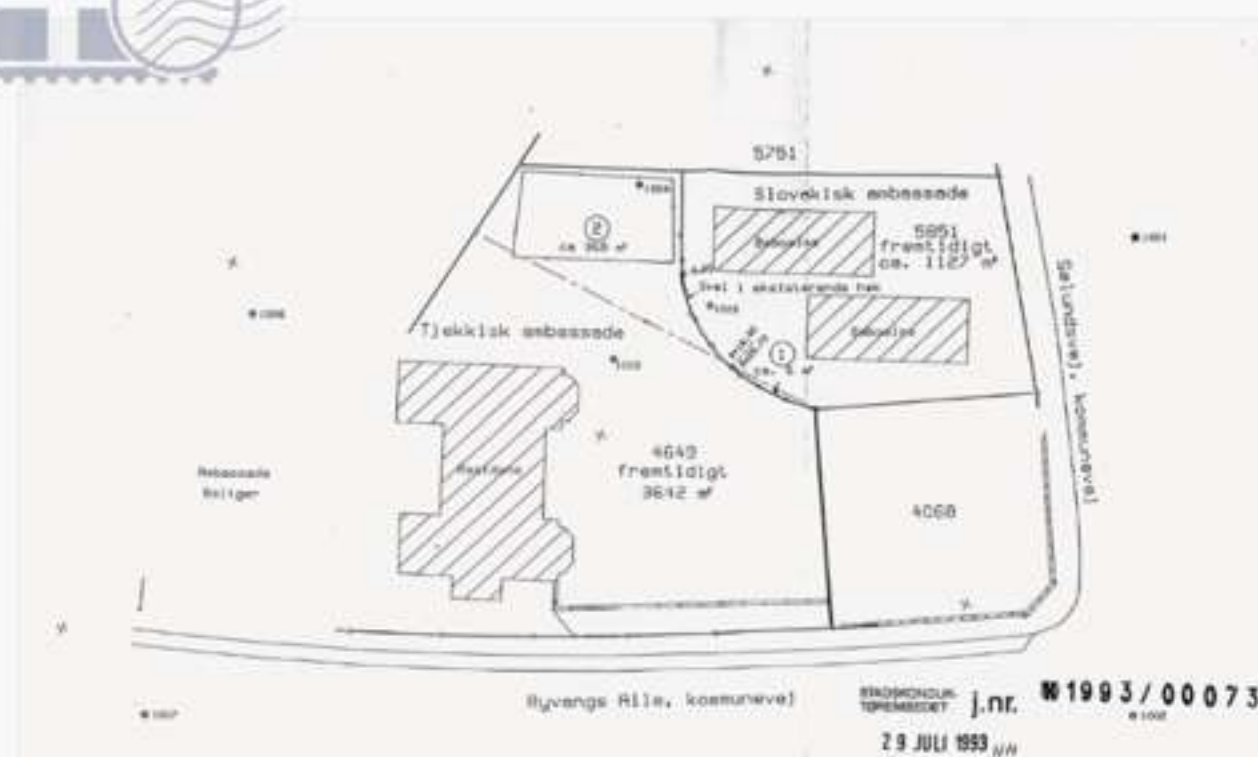
A black and white photograph of a large, traditional stone house with a steep, tiled roof. The house features multiple windows, some with shutters, and a prominent chimney. A vintage car is parked on the street in front of the house. The scene is set in a residential area with trees and a sidewalk.

A black and white photograph of the exterior of the Old Town Hall in Newbury. The building is a large, classical-style structure with a prominent portico supported by columns. A car is parked on the street in front of the building, and a motorcycle is parked on the sidewalk. A tall, thin pole stands in the foreground. The scene is set on a street with trees and other buildings in the background.

A photograph of a two-story brick building with a white garage door and a wooden door, with two people standing in front. The building has a red-tiled roof and a white decorative band along the top of the brickwork. A utility pole stands in the foreground on the left.

A color photograph of a white, two-story building with a red-tiled roof and a classical portico. A red car is parked in front of the building. The scene is outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

The new Chancery building, still in use today, was completed in 1983. The original vision of the Danish architect is evident in the color photographs from the early 1980s. On the left, you can see the order for the money transfer issued by the Czechoslovak National Bank, officially approved on 23 August 1956.



1: Land division between the republics, approved in 1993.

"Velvet Divorce" in Copenhagen:

split of the Republic and its diplomatic property

Udenbys Klædebo Kvarter,
København



P.S.V.
Helene Larsen
Helene Larsen



2: Danish-Czech sign "Property under surveillance" still visible at Sølundsvej 8, 2025.



3: Former diplomatic housing at Sølundsvej 8, viewed from the Residence — now private property; photograph from the 1980s.

In 1993, following the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the country's diplomatic properties were divided in accordance with federal agreements. This marked the last major change to the Czech diplomatic compound in Copenhagen.

The Czech Republic, as the larger successor state, retained the main complex at Ryvangs Allé 14–16, including the historic Ambassador's Residence and the modern Chancery building, completed in 1983.

The Slovak Republic received the former diplomatic housing at Sølundsvej 8, visible in a photograph from the 1980s. Slovakia later sold these buildings and they now serve as private residences.