The Borgeby site was in use before the 11th century. Archaeological excavations have revealed remains from the Viking times that show there was an early trading place in the area. A ring stronghold from around 1000 was found close to the present Borgeby. It was located there so that the Danish king could mint coins on site, as they are engraved with the word "Borbi", the old name for Borgeby.

The Christian church had won early successes in this part of Denmark. Remains of a churchyard dating from the 11th century have been found, and there are also traces of a stave church from the same period.

Denmark’s king built the first stronghold on the site in the late 10th century, with an aim to watch over and defend the river, Lõdde å, which was wider in those days and navigable. The stronghold later came under church ownership through a donation from the king, but it wasn’t until 1410 that an owner, archbishop Jacob Gertsen Ulfstand, can be linked with any certainty to Borgeby. The oldest parts of the present building date from the 1400s, including the chapel, west of the gatehouse. It was built in the 1450s, as the original castle was burned down by the Swedish king, Karl Knutsson Bonde, during a conflict with the Danish king, Christian I.

Another building in the area from the 1400s is "Börje’s tower", a four-storey building just north of the castle.

It was probably part of the original stronghold and made it possible to monitor and defend river traffic on Lõdde å from an elevated position. Today’s tower has a different character than the original, as architect Helgo Zettervall encased it in cement as part of the restoration in 1870.

The 1500s was marked to a great degree by the Reformation, which had consequences both for people and their faith, and for the church as an institution. Faith was to be based on redemption through God’s mercy, the Holy Scripture and communion in religious services. The institutional effect meant a break in relations with the papacy. Many changes took place after the Reformation, including the Catholic priesthood’s apologies and retraining, new rituals, confiscation of churches’ and monasteries’ property, the closure of monasteries and new content in priests’ education.

Borgeby was taken over by the Crown, but was soon granted to the famous Jörgen Kock, who was later mayor of Malmö. His strong personality, cleverness and standing with the king made him one of the Malmö area’s most powerful people in history. He was succeeded at Borgeby by Hans Spegel in 1559.

Thirty years later, the estate was sold to the Lindenov family, who kept the estate for many generations. Due to a lack of heirs, ownership passed in 1709 to Vibeke Lindenov, who was married to Hans Ramel of Löberöd and Hviderup.

At the start of the 1800s, Borgeby was owned, after division of an estate, by Gustav Trolle-Bonde. In 1861, it was acquired by Count Carl Wachtmeister of Johannishus, but he was forced to sell the estate at an executive auction. The buyer was the farmer, Lars Persson. In 1907, his daughter, Hanna Larsdotter, married the artist, Ernst Norlind, who lived and worked at Borgeby for the rest of his life.

Norlind later bequeathed the estate to "Hanna and Ernst Norlind’s Foundation" with the intention of making Ernst Norlind’s art accessible to the public. His son died in 1978, after which the foundation and activities at Borgeby Castle have been managed by Malmö City Council.

A cat among the ermines

For a time in the 1880s, the fate of Borgeby became a frequent topic of conversation throughout Scania. The estate, which had once been an archbishop’s manor and then owned by numerous figures from the Scanian nobility, was to be sold at executive auction. Count Carl Axel Roul George Henry Wachtmeister of Johannishus, son of the former foreign minister, Carl Wachtmeister, had severe financial problems and his creditors forced him to sell Borgeby at executive auction in 1887. As the event had become known to so many, the open courtyard at Borgeby was full of both curious onlookers and potential buyers of the estate. Many members of the nobility were there with the
intention of acquiring a well-situated and fertile estate for a cheap price. Several people from the wealthy middle class were there for the same reason. The priests who were present had no plans to buy, but has been drawn there as Borgeby had once belonged to Lund’s archbishops. There was at least one person from the farming community, who was seen to arrive in a horse-drawn wagon with a farmhand for company. The type of wagon was such that a farm foreman at Borgeby said he could not tie up his horses at the indoor stalls like the other auction visitors. Instead, he was instructed to tie up at a tree in the courtyard. The farmer was Lars Persson, and he had driven all the way from Hagestad in Österlen.

The bidding started, and to the surprise of those present, Lars the farmer placed the highest bid, and nobody topped it. After concluding the auction, the auctioneer asked the buyer for a guarantee of payment. The buyer said he did not intend to give one, as he wanted to pay cash.

With rising disbelief, those present looked on as he pulled out roll after roll of bank notes until the estate was paid for. It was then that the other potential buyers objected loudly and said the auction was invalid and there should be a re-auction. However, the buyer from Hagestad would not go along with that and got to work immediately by re-hiring the foreman who had barred him from the stable before the auction.

The only people who were not surprised by Lars Persson’s involvement in the nobility’s business were people from Hagestad who knew him. To them he was known as ”Rich Lars”, a nickname based on his zeal and thriftiness, and his simple manner, despite his wealth. Everyone knew that he had a secret concerning a treasure chest, which had come into his possession when it was discovered during the digging of foundations at his farm, Hagestad Number 25.