The oldest known building on the Vrams Gunnarstorp estate was built in the late 1400s on the same site as the present castle. Parts of the original building are still preserved in the castle’s east wing. Vrams Gunnarstorp originates from Vramsgård, an archbishop’s estate from the 1400s close to Vram Church. The earliest records refer to an archbishop in Lund, Birger Gunnersen, who pledged Gunnarstorp to Hans Skougaard in 1517. Following a conflict within the church over the pledge, Skougaard was forced to leave the manor. After a legal dispute, he won back ownership and the family kept Gunnarstorp, later Vrams Gunnarstorp, until the 1620s. The old castle from the 1400s was restored in the 1550s with additions such as the two-storey north wing. In the early 1600s, first the Ulfstands, and later the Vinds, married into the owning Skougaard family, and Lord High Admiral Jörgen Vind owned the estate from 1621. He continued building in the years 1633-1644 and created a quadrangular castle around a closed courtyard in the style of Christian IV. It was called this as the king was an architecture expert and introduced the style in Denmark based on a Dutch model. Jörgen Vind was killed in a sea battle at Fehmarn in 1644 between Danish and Swedish-Dutch units, and Vrams Gunnarstorp was taken over by the widow, Ingeborg Skougaard née Ulfstand. Shortly after her son took over, the estate was sold to Christopher Giedde, a member of an old Danish noble family. In the next Giedde generation a daughter, Hedvig Sofia Elisabeth, became owner of Vrams Gunnarstorp. Her second husband was Caspar John Berch from Estonia. After five generations of the Berch family, the estate was sold in 1839 to Captain Rudolf Viktor Tornérhjelm. In time, he became one of the Swedish monarchy’s confidants and was appointed crown equerry. The Tornérhjelm family has retained ownership of Vrams Gunnarstorp to the present day. The castle was given a thorough restoration in the mid-1800s following the designs of the well-known Danish architect, C.F. Zwingmann, who planned restoration work and new construction at several Scanian castles during his career. Vrams Gunnarstorp is located 4 km south of Åstorp on the northern slope of the ridge, Söderåsen. The castle park is beautifully situated near the ridge and there are several elements of historical interest. Linné mentions on his journey in 1749 the box-hedges and hornbeam passage from the 1600s, which still exist. The park has its own type of rose that bears the owner’s name. The present owner is Rudolf Tornérhjelm

The aristocracy era's architect

Few of the Nordic countries’ sovereigns have left such a clear monument after them as the Danish king, Christian IV. In contrast to many who made a reputation through war, Christian IV became the great architect and builder of his time. His reign was during the aristocracy era in Denmark. The period stretched from the Reformation in the late 1530s to the transition to royal absolutism in 1660. It was mainly the Catholic Church’s decline and the granting of confiscated church land by the Crown that made the nobles wealthy and virtually autocratic. Christian was born in 1577 at Frederiksborg Castle in Hillerød. He was the son of King Frederick II and Queen Sofia of Mecklenburg. As an 11-year-old, he was reminded of his future duties by the death of his father in 1588. He inherited the throne, but the land had a regency government until he was formally crowned king in 1596. Christian IV had variable success in the areas he tried to influence. Even though his reign was darkened by financial setbacks and military defeats, Christian IV is one of the most prominent, beloved and admired kings in Denmark’s history. At the time he acceded to the throne, Denmark was still the leading power in the southern Baltic area. To maintain this domination, the Danish fleet was dramatically expanded, whereas the army
never rivalled the Swedish farmer-based army’s standard and numbers. The struggle for the Baltic region was exemplified by the Kalmar War (1611-1613), which Christian IV was more or less forced into by his own privy council. The state had to pay a very high cost to bring in mercenaries in order to match Sweden’s forces.

The peace that followed was expensive for Sweden, and Christian had temporarily retained control of the southern Baltic. Twenty years later the situation was totally reversed when Denmark’s involvement in the Thirty Years’ War was a fiasco and Sweden developed into a major power due to its military victories.

In the economic sphere, Christian IV gave a trade monopoly to the trading cities, and set up the Icelandic, Greenlandic and East India trading companies. In 1616, he acquired Trankebar and made it a Danish colony.

Christian IV was one of Denmark’s all-time greats in one area. Architecture and town planning was his big passion and he is still regarded as one of the architectural masters of the Nordic countries. It was not only that he built, but also that he was often his own architect. The Dutch Renaissance was his inspiration when he developed his own Danish Renaissance style. He built several cities on Renaissance principles where the streets are at right angles to each other. Kristianstad is the best known in Scania and its trinity church, “Trefaldighetskyrkan”, is the most beautiful single building. The Stock Exchange, Holmen Church and Rosenborg Castle are examples of well-known buildings in Copenhagen that follow Christian IV’s style.

Christian IV died in 1648 at his beloved Rosenborg.