

# STRUCTURE

Frank Lloyd Wright in Los Feliz BY JOSHUA LURIE



ENNIS HOUSE

Frank Lloyd Wright is America's best-known architect. He left behind masterpieces like Pennsylvania's Fallingwater and Manhattan's Guggenheim Museum, but Angelenos might not know the extent of his local legacy.

Oil heiress Aline Barnsdall lured Wright to Los Feliz in 1919 to construct the **Hollyhock House** on Olive Hill. Barnsdall's 36-acre property was supposed to be an artists' utopia, complete with multiple theaters, rental units and retail along Hollywood Boulevard, but only four of the planned 16 structures materialized. Barnsdall occupied the sprawling concrete house in 1921, but it wasn't until 1926 that Wright's right-hand man Rudolph Schindler completed the second story master bedroom. Hollyhock imagery pervades the intricate concrete and art glass details. Barnsdall donated Hollyhock House to the City of Los Angeles later in 1926, with the caveat that it be used for the arts. California Art Club staged plays and hosted art shows there until 1942. Three years later, Dorothy Clune Murray defied Barnsdall's dying wishes and dem'd the interior to create an event space for returning soldiers. In 1974, Wright's son Lloyd Wright came in at the request of the city to (almost) restore Hollyhock House to its former glory.

**Ennis House** overlooks Hollyhock House from the Los Feliz Hills. This is the fourth, final and largest of Wright's patterned concrete block houses, which resemble Mayan pyramids. Charles and Mabel Ennis moved from Pittsburgh in 1924 to occupy the 6,800-square-foot, single-story house, which was built for the primary purpose of entertaining. Charles owned a downtown clothing store until his death in 1928. Mabel remained until 1936. In 1940, radio personality John Nesbitt added a swimming pool and billiard room with help from Wright and son. Gus Brown purchased the Ennis House in 1968 and established a foundation by the same name in the early 1980s with the proviso that he live there until his death, which arrived in 2001.

The house was ravaged by the 1994 Northridge quake, and then by punishing 2005 rains. The Ennis House Foundation completed a renovation and stabilization in October 2007, which included fortification of the southern retaining wall and replacement of about 3,000 of the house's 30,000 blocks. The process required over \$6 million in FEMA funds and donations.

Ennis House's appearance in movies like "Blade Runner" was justified. The dining room features mitered windows, seamless corner windows that provide panoramic views. On a clear day you can see Long Beach to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The high-ceilinged space features detailed art glass, teak floors, lush veneer ceilings and one of Wright's last remaining glass tile mosaics, which crowns the fireplace. [NA](#)

**ENNIS HOUSE** 2607 Glendower Ave., Los Feliz, Currently closed to the public

**HOLLYHOCK HOUSE** 4800 Hollywood Blvd., Los Feliz, (323) 662-8139, Tours Wed.-Sun.

PHOTOS BY JOSHUA LURIE

HOLLYHOCK HOUSE

