

Hollyhock House to Offer Virtual Reality Tour Option

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Hollyhock House. Photo: jwpictures.com

BARNSDALL PARK — Those wishing to get a glimpse inside Frank Lloyd Wright’s iconic Hollyhock House, located inside Barnsdall Art Park at 4800 Hollywood Blvd., may soon be able to do so from the comfort of their own homes, thanks to virtual reality tours planned to begin this fall.

The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) in collaboration with the Department on Disability (DOD) and the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation announced the planned virtual accessibility experience in a press release August 13th.

According to the press release, the tour will use “the most appropriate, emerging technologies to create elegant, user-centered, and inclusive experiences for visitors of all abilities.”

Los Angeles-based firm AVA Inclusivity was selected to create the virtual simulation, which is intended to provide a lifelike experience for users with disabilities, living across the globe, or who otherwise are not able to see the home in person.

“Everyone should be able to experience L.A.’s cultural landmarks,” said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Hollyhock House is a remarkable piece of architecture, and virtual reality will allow people with disabilities and the elderly to explore a location with deep history in our city.”

The DCA-led initiative is funded with a \$133,000 award from the City’s 2016-17 Innovation Fund.



Hollyhock House interior. Photo: jwpictures.com

“This new project utilizes innovative technology to enhance the Hollyhock experience to people with mobility or physical issues,” said Danielle Brazell, Department of Cultural Affairs General Manager. “The Department of Cultural Affairs serves the 4 million residents of our city and over 50 million visitors annually and this project will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to experience this architectural gem.”

Completed in 1921 as the home of noted philanthropist and art collector Aline Barnsdall, the UNESCO-nominated Hollyhock House is noted as the first Los Angeles building designed by the famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. It reopened in February 2015 after an extensive four-year, \$4.4 million renovation.

While Hollyhock House is fully ADA compliant with wheelchair accessibility to the first floor of the house, the addition of the new platform will allow the second floor of the Mayan Revival building, previously inaccessible to wheelchairs due to the site’s historical architectural value, to be enjoyed by all.



Hollyhock House interior. Photo: jwpictures.com

“Creating an immersive and inclusive experience for Hollyhock House visitors, particularly for people with disabilities, has always been our mission. We are thrilled that this new technology will allow people all over the world to fully access this public treasure,” said Hollyhock House Curator Jeffrey Herr.

This virtual accessibility experience will be browser-based and available to anyone with a computer or mobile device and Internet access.

Hollyhock visitors who use the virtual tour on-site will have several other choices to best fit their needs, in addition to the option to use their own device.

The tour will also feature the option of a narration to complement the visual experience, especially useful for those who choose to experience the House from an outside location, away from the live narration offered by the trained docents.

Choices of captioning will be available for the hearing impaired.



Hollyhock House exterior. Photo: jwpictures.com

In addition, high-resolution 360 degree photography will allow users to view exquisite design details, from the grain of the wood to the patterns details in the stained-glass windows.

“Being within the environment of Hollyhock House is a multi-sensory experience, not merely a visual one. The virtual accessibility experience that AVA is developing for Hollyhock House is designed to be used by visitors inside Hollyhock House with the involvement of a docent. The visitor and the docent are having a shared, visual encounter. Docent interaction combined with the virtual tour provides the disabled visitor with an experience that is comparable to physically being in an area of the house, which is currently inaccessible to disabled visitors,” said AVA Inclusivity President Astrid Reed.

Hollyhock House currently offers self-guided “Walk Wright In” tours, which are open to the public from Thursday through Sunday with tickets available online or onsite for a cost of \$7 for Adults; \$3 for Seniors/Students with ID and free for Children 12 and under.

<http://barnsdall.org/hollyhock-house/about/>