

City Celebrates Hollyhock House Designation as UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Contributing
Editor

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City Councilman Mitch O'Farrell led a celebration Tuesday to mark the addition of Hollyhock House, an east Hollywood landmark designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The city-owned Hollyhock House, located within Barnsdall Art Park, is the first UNESCO site in Los Angeles and the third such site in the state of California.

"This designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site underscores the significance of Los Angeles' rich history of modern architecture," O'Farrell said. "Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House is a beloved masterpiece locally and now a treasure worldwide. The inscription of this nomination marks the first modern architectural cultural property designation not only in California, but the United States."

According to the Barnsdall Art Park website, Hollyhock House was built between 1919 and 1921 as the personal residence of oil heiress Aline Barnsdall, who asked the architect to incorporate her favorite flower — the hollyhock — into the design. The house — Wright's first Los Angeles commission — was a harbinger of California Modernism architecture, according to the website.

Jeffrey Herr, a curator at Hollyhock House, said the designation to the UNESCO list was a 14-year effort among various city, state and federal agencies, as well as the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy.

"This is a wonderful moment. It is a unique moment because it's a moment that will have consequences far beyond our lifetimes," Herr said, as he thanked all the volunteers who facilitate the thousands of visitors to the house each year.

O'Farrell also said more improvements will start on Residence A, a separate structure within the 11 1/2-acre Barnsdall Art Park, which also houses the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, the Junior Arts Center and adult art programs, and the Barnsdall Gallery Theatre, a low-cost venue for the performing arts.

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Barnsdall gave the acreage to the city of Los Angeles in 1927 and stipulated that the site must "forever remain a public park... for the enjoyment of the community in general [and that] no buildings be erected except for art purposes." Los Angeles' Department of Cultural Affairs operates the cultural and artistic programs at Barnsdall Park, while the grounds are maintained by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

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