LIFESTYLE

Now anyone can admire Frank Lloyd Wright’s original Hollyhock House drawings

Blueprints and drawings of the Hollyhock House, including this pencil sketch of the west
Archives are the stuff yawns are made of, unless you’re a pale researcher or wizened academic locked in a dusty room, where only the favored few are permitted to peek at the molding “treasures.”

“Even I have had difficulties with certain archives, that require an act over and above Congress to get access,” said Hollyhock House curator Jeffrey Herr.

But architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House has always broken the mold, both in design and audience interest. Last summer, the city expanded the number of rooms people can visit, and created a virtual tour online — the Hollyhock House Virtual Accessibility Experience — that allows you to examine the entire house in detail via your computer. Now, the city’s department of cultural affairs has downloaded all of Wright’s archival blueprints and drawings for the house — 81 documents — so anyone can pull them up online.

The interest in these archival plans is still untested. “It’s a grand experiment,” Herr said. “We put up all the construction blueprints that exist — there’s only 11 — and then all the original drawings. Now, people who want an even broader perspective are just a mouse click away from information they couldn’t have had otherwise.”
One document lets viewers closely examine Wright’s pencil drawing of the house’s west facade, which includes doodle-like sketches in the abstract hollyhock design he incorporated into the decorative friezes. “That’s what makes these drawings so exciting,” Herr said, “that mental thought process you can actually see, transcribed into lines on the paper.”

Making the documents so accessible should relieve the demands on the tiny Hollyhock House staff while helping people satisfy a simple curiosity. Such interest, once fed, could develop into a passion, Herr said. When the Hollyhock House became Los Angeles’ first UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2019, the already steady stream of visitors jumped by 54% over the following six months, Herr said. “What that says to me is that interest in Frank Lloyd Wright is probably greater than anyone suspected.”

**TRAVEL**

Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House becomes L.A.’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site

**July 7, 2019**

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The Hollyhock House Archive will likely expand as it gets enough money to include the plans from the 1940s renovation and 1970s restoration work by Wright’s architect son, Lloyd. Herr said his most immediate goal, however, is to upload photos of the property taken by Edmund Teske in the 1940s.

“They’re important to the history of the house over and above their artistic merit, which is quite high, because they are the only documents we have of what the condition of the house was in the 1940s.”
Want to see more of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House? Now you can.

Aug. 2, 2019

Hollyhock House at Barnsdall Art Park

Where: 4800 Hollywood Blvd., East Hollywood

When: Self-guided tours 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, last tickets sold at 3 p.m.

Tickets: $7 adults, $3 seniors/students, children under 12 free. Available online or by calling (323) 988-0515.

Info: barnsdall.org

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