



Ennis House

Frank Lloyd Wright · Los Angeles, CA · 1924

Ennis House is arguably the most famous of Frank Lloyd Wright’s textile block houses. Named after the way the concrete elements in their facades seem to weave together like fabric, some of the other iterations of this style of Wright’s vernacular design include Millard House, Freeman House, and Storer House. Nestled high in the Hollywood Hills near Griffith Observatory, however, this dwelling, created for men’s clothing retailer Charles Ennis, is a truly remarkable example. Resembling a hulking Mayan temple, its unique appearance has made it a popular film location, and has been featured in, among others, *Blade Runner*, *House on Haunted Hill*, *The Day of the Locust*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Designed by Wright and his son Lloyd, the structure, with its theatrical interlocking planes, was constructed of more than 27,000 concrete blocks, many of them patterned with overlapping squares, rising out of a massive base, reinforced by an equally robust retaining wall. The home, and an adjacent chauffeur’s residence, now a guesthouse, wrap around a paved courtyard, with unimpeded views of the city. Lush, terraced gardens and patios make their way around the home’s exterior, while the interior consists of tall, narrow loggia; dramatic double-height living and dining rooms; three bedrooms; staff rooms; a billiard room; and seemingly endless cinematic spatial gestures. Just to add a tad more drama, a colorful wisteria glass mosaic hovers above the fireplace.

Within this inner sanctum, repeating columns covered in patterned blocks form a seductive loggia. Stained glass doors and windows inject movement, framing views of the city, and raised landings allow visitors to perch over spaces, as if they were outside. Other features seem otherworldly. Chief among them are the long balcony attached to the living room as well as the dwelling’s mitered windows. The former gives guests the sensation of floating on thin air while the latter dissolves the barrier between inside and out.

The temple-like home, supported by massive concrete-block retaining walls, perches above Los Feliz (foreground) and Downtown Los Angeles (background).