

The Otto Ubbelohde House and the people who have lived there



1898

Otto Ubbelohde, landscape artist and graphic designer, decides to have a house cum studio built in Gossfelden, a small village near his hometown Marburg /Lahn. In 1999, he buys a plot of land near the river Lahn.

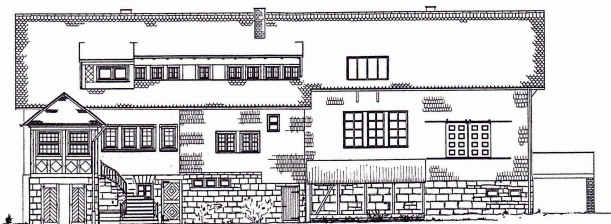
1900

The painter and his wife Hanna move into the house, which is built according to his own design, in close cooperation with local craftsmen.

The large studio, then as now lit by a skylight and the windows to the north, is the central and most important room. The raven frieze running along the walls dates from this time. Part of this large room serves as a lounge. The bedroom of these early years is later transformed into the so-called picture shed ("Bilderstall") which today serves for exhibitions. Chickens and a pig were kept in the basement.

1902

In the course of time the Ubbelohdes acquire the gardens surrounding the house, the "bee garden" and the vegetable garden as well as the area along the brook, where a double line of poplars is planted.



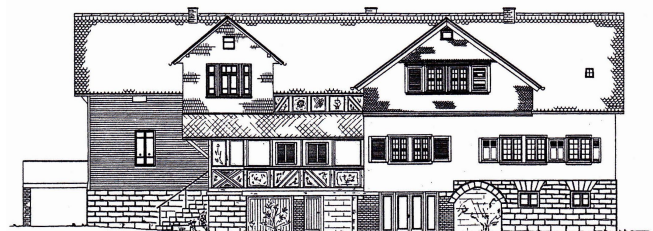
Otto Ubbelohde House, view from the north
(building survey before restoration)

1905

The house is extended towards the east and more rooms are added, including a dining room and a kitchen, again according to Ubbelohde's own design. The main reason for the extension is probably the summer academy which he sets up for student painters.

Up to 1915

house and estate undergo various changes. For the first time, an architect is consulted. In the course of another extension to the east, the door on the south side becomes the backdoor, while on the north side a representative main entrance is established. The initials O and H (for Otto and Hanna) can be found in the iron railings leading up to the door.



Otto Ubbelohde House, view from the south
(building survey before restoration)

1922

Death of Otto Ubbelohde, aged 55.

1926

The marriage being childless, Hanna Ubbelohde adopts Heinrich Doering, ethnologist and long-time correspondent of Ubbelohde's, who after the war met his later wife Else Hettner in Ubbelohde's house. The couple assume the name Ubbelohde-Doering and live in the house until they move to Munich in 1932. Their children Reinhard and Brigitte stay with their grandparents whenever their parents are on archaeological excavating missions in Peru.



The artist's desk where the illustrations to the Grimms' fairytales were designed.

1932

The painter Franz Frank, shunned by the Nazi government, moves into the upper storey with his wife and first daughter. The skylight above the studio is closed, the studio itself is cut off from their living area, but remains unaltered to preserve the memory of Otto Ubbelohde.

1945 / 1946

In the post-war years, a number of Hanna's relatives are given shelter in the house. Margarethe Zinn (1905-2006), a niece of Hanna and Otto Ubbelohde's, comes to live in the house with her children Hermann and Maritta. She lives there until 1996. For many years she passionately tends the mixed borders in the so-called vegetable garden, which until today is part of the gardens surrounding the house.

1948

Death of Hanna Ubbelohde, aged 75.

1954

With their four daughters Brigitte, Eike, Elisabeth and Barbara, the Frank family move to Marburg.



1956

Else Ubbelohde-Doering, niece of Hanna and Otto Ubbelohde, her husband and their daughter Brigitte come back from Munich to live in the house. They change the interior of the studio. However, the furniture and the fairytale frieze remain stored in the house. Today it can be seen again above the living area of the studio.



1991

Death of Else Ubbelohde-Doering. Based on a legacy in her will, the legal estate is converted into a foundation. Brigitte Ubbelohde-Doering has since been living in the private part of the house and acts as a curator of the museum.

1994

The Otto Ubbelohde Foundation is established.



In the studio

1996-1999

By order of the foundation, the house undergoes extensive renovation and the original layout is restored. The studio roof and the staircase are opened up. The living area of the studio is re-established with the original furniture and décor.

At the same time, parcels of land belonging to the original property, which over the years had been sold, are bought back in order to establish the original size of the estate.

The layout of the gardens is restored according to the memories of former and present residents,.

1999

The Otto Ubbelohde House is handed over to the public as a museum by Ruth Wagner, Hessian minister of Science and Culture.