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1-1-2009

Review of *Bertram Goodhue: His Life and Residential Architecture.* By Romy Wyllie

Benet Haller
Chicago Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning

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Haller, Benet, "Review of *Bertram Goodhue: His Life and Residential Architecture.* By Romy Wyllie" (2009). *Great Plains Quarterly.* Paper 1248.
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Bertram Goodhue: His Life and Residential Architecture. By Romy Wyllie. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. 224 pp. Photographs, illustrations, color plates, notes, bibliography, list of buildings and projects, index. $60.00.

Romy Wyllie's *Bertram Goodhue* is a richly-illustrated and well-researched exploration of Goodhue's architectural work. Using a large number of historic and current photos, floor plans, and architectural renderings, Wyllie covers much of the same ground as Richard Oliver in his 1983 *Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue*, but with a greater emphasis on his residential work. Oliver's book covers nearly all of

Goodhue's nonresidential projects and five completed and five proposed residences. Wyllie describes twenty of Goodhue's completed residential projects and six of his unbuilt home designs in great detail. She discusses some of his significant nonresidential projects, particularly as they affected the evolution of his practice and the impact such projects had on regional residential architecture.

Wyllie highlights Goodhue's efforts to develop different architectural styles for different parts of the country. She sees his work as a blend of local traditions with a variety of initially European but ultimately worldwide influences in both the buildings' details and massing, along with some romantic touches he had been developing since his earliest childhood drawings. The buildings he designed for the Panama California Exposition and his residential work in southern California popularized the Spanish Colonial style in the southwestern United States. In Hawaii, however, his efforts to apply a nontraditional Spanish influence fell flat. Overall, though, he proved able to design homes in a wide range of different materials and stylistic idioms.

Wyllie does cover his ecclesiastical and governmental commissions. For civic commissions, Goodhue took a more universal approach in developing these structures without much regard for local architectural traditions, starting with a stripped-down classicism but gradually incorporating elements from monumental architecture throughout the world, reaching its culmination in the Los Angeles Public Library and the Nebraska State Capitol. The Capitol's design was only possible late in Goodhue's career, when he was more open to nonwestern architectural forms. Further, his close and enlightened relationships with sculptors, mosiacists, and other craftsmen helped to integrate their works within the architecture in ways almost never seen in the United States before or since. The result is a spectacular, iconic building which commands the flat plain of the city. However, this provides little insight into how Goodhue would have responded to that same plain when designing a house. What might he have proposed for a prairie home, if such a commission had been offered?

In Oliver's book, Goodhue's financial worries seem to play a more central role in his life, Wyllie's Goodhue seemed to enjoy his life and work more. Wyllie covers his rather considerable involvement in literary (he designed his own font) and social circles. She also writes of all the alterations to each house up to the present day. Though valuable were one to visit a Goodhue building, these are digressions from the evolution of Goodhue's life and work which might have been better relegated to an appendix.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Goodhue's work, whether from a design, academic, or general interest perspective.

BENET HALLER
Director of Urban Design and Planning
Chicago Department of Zoning
and Land Use Planning