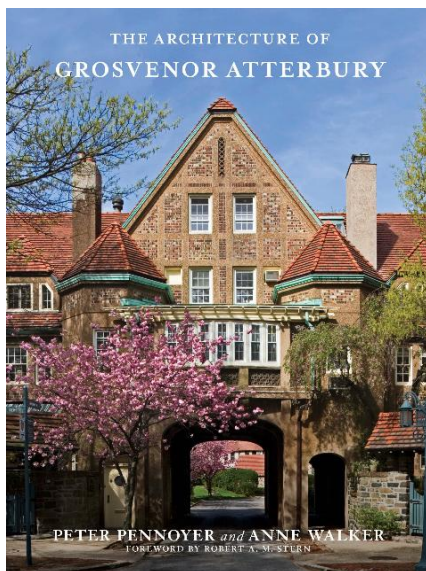


**The Architecture of Grosvenor Atterbury**, by Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker. W. W. Norton, 2009. 288 p. ill. ISBN 9780393732221 (cl.), \$75.00.



At the heart of the works of early twentieth-century American architect Grosvenor Atterbury is a dichotomy that runs throughout this recent publication: Atterbury designed for the high-society nouveau riche while his passion lay in the development of precast concrete housing solutions for the low-income worker. Authors Pennoyer and Walker, architect and historian respectively, have endeavored successfully to introduce the reader to an architect known to most students of American history only in passing. While triumphant in a genre best represented to today's audiences by McKim, Mead & White, Atterbury is a figure in the history of design innovation worthy of further study. In this the authors have succeeded in producing a monograph that deserves a place in any serious architectural library collection.

The book is heavily illustrated, and although the majority of the images are black and white reproductions, most are of excellent quality, with present-day photographs balanced by others contemporary to construction, as well as informative plans. The first thirty-two pages are devoted exclusively to color images. The first chapter presents a biography of Atterbury, an intriguing figure in his own right, having lived a life not devoid of career-based frustrations and disappointments. The following six chapters are divided by building types, and then by date. While this organizational scheme sometimes leaves the reader retracing chronological steps, it accurately emphasizes Atterbury's various design phases.

The readable text would be enjoyable both to the scholar of architectural history and those seeking to better inform their architectural practice. The format of the book is nearly equally divided between image and text and the scholarly apparatus is commendable, including a catalogue raisonné in addition to the usual notes, bibliography and index. The authors also have provided an appendix of those employees known to have worked in Atterbury's office, and those of the firm's buildings that are now open to the public as museums.

Overall the work is both beautiful and substantive. Furthermore the authors have been careful to avoid the long-held stereotype that "traditional" architects of this era are tarnished by their opulent commissions. Pennoyer and Walker have rendered an open-eyed consideration of the architect and his vast oeuvre of projects, while broadening the canon of American architectural history.

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