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## BAGOT, WALTER

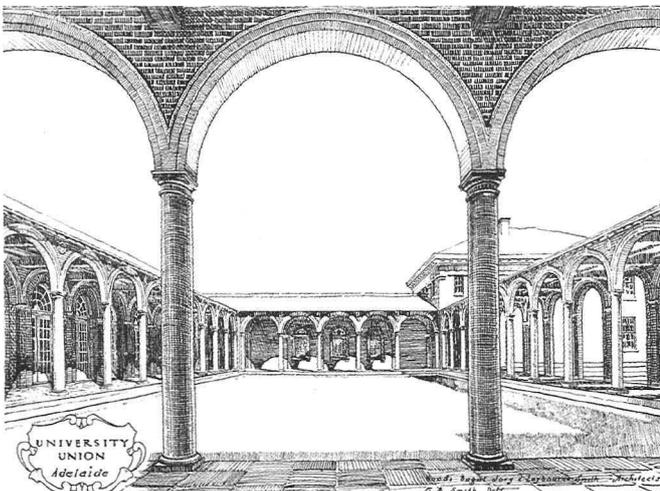
WALTER Hervey Bagot (1880–1963) was born in North Adelaide, son of a prominent stockbroker and pastoralist. He was apprenticed in 1899 to **Edward Woods**, later studying architecture at King's College, London (1902–5). Upon his return to Adelaide in 1905, Woods offered him a partnership, establishing the practice **Woods Bagot** (later known variously as Woods Bagot Laybourne-Smith & Irwin). Described as a 'master of architectural detail, both classic and medieval', he was passionate about classical and traditional designs, especially northern Italian architecture. He spending many summers there, embracing, in his writings and designs, the climatic relevance and appropriateness of this style for Adelaide and its Mediterranean climate. He perceived 'the striving for novelty as one of the great dangers of **modernism**' and grew to hate 'the glasshouses of the modern architect'. As a commitment to this philosophy, Bagot transformed his inherited Victorian residences of 'Forest Lodge' (1911–30s) into a summer retreat, with a northern-Italian garden complete with Cypress *allée*, *tazza* and statuary, and 'Nurney House' (1930–1), into an urban palazzo furnished with **Italianate** atrium, fountain, gates and rendering. Unconventional at the time, this stylistic approach was unfortunately not embraced by the Adelaide community, except at 'Broadlees' (1925–6) and 'Light's Vision' (1936), but it did not negate the success of his practice. In manner, he was described as the 'perfect gentleman ... He could sweep into a ... meeting with a commanding presence, attired in a black tie, red-lined cloak and top-hat' and was often seen dressed in this manner in Adelaide streets.

Bagot served as Chief Architect to the University of Adelaide (1911–60), designing many structures, including Bonython Hall (1936), Darling Building (1921–2) and the Barr Smith Library (1933), and was architect for St Peter's Anglican Cathedral (1907–45) and the Roman Catholic archdiocese (1905–26), personally designing the Chapel of the Convent of Mercy (1920) and additions of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral (1922). With **Louis Laybourne Smith** he helped found the architecture program at the School of Mines (1906), lecturing in architectural history (1906–11) until **Gavin Walkley** assumed this capacity; and he served as a Building Referee to Adelaide City Council as well as various senior heritage and garden organisations in Adelaide. Bagot wrote 'A plea for tradition'

in *Domestic Architecture in Australia* (1919), *Some nineteenth century Adelaide architects* (1958), 'Early Adelaide architecture' (1953–8), edited *Reveries in retrospect* (1946), written by his wife, Josephine Margaret Barritt, and regularly lectured on Italian painting at the Art Gallery of SA. He was the recipient of a Worshipful Company of Carpenters silver medal (1903), RIBA associateship (1904) and FRIBA (1926); served as RAIA (SA) President (1917–19), was elevated to LFRAIA (1960); and created a *Cavaliere Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana* (Knight of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy) in 1962 for services to the Australian–Italian Association.

DAVID JONES

- J. Collins 'Bagot, Walter Hervey', Architects of South Australia, online.  
D. Jones, 'Pre-Adelaide regionalism heritage: Regionalist Adelaide design, traditionalism and Walter Hervey Bagot' in D. Jones (ed.) *20th century heritage: our recent cultural legacy. Proceedings of the Australia ICOMOS National Conference 2001, 2002.*



Union Building, University of Adelaide, SA (1927). Architect: Walter Bagot. Source: South Australian Architecture Museum.