

August 6, 2020

Ms. Colleen Wenke  
311 West 42nd Street Associates  
c/o Taconic Investment Partners  
111 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1500  
New York, NY 10011  
Via email: [cwenke@tacon.com](mailto:cwenke@tacon.com)

Dear Ms. Wenke:

DOCOMOMO US/New York Tri-State is the local chapter of an international organization working in over 65 countries around the world. Our mission is to increase public awareness and appreciation of Modern movement architecture, landscape, and urban design; to identify and document local examples; and to advocate for the protection of those determined most significant. Since 1996, the chapter has been advancing this mission in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

We are writing today to ask Taconic Investment Partners to consider preserving the iconic mosaic mural by Anton Refregier at 310 West 43rd Street as part of your new development plans for the site.

The 15-story building, known as the Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center, was originally designed by Julius Stein in 1967. The most prominent and memorable feature is a mosaic tile mural dating to 1970 by the prominent artist Anton Refregier. Originally from Moscow, he was active from the 1930s until his death in 1979, designing many public murals, paintings, and other works across the country. He first came to prominence working for the Works Progress Administration with a commission at Greenpoint Hospital in Brooklyn. His archive is held by the Archives of American Art, part of the Smithsonian Institution, demonstrating his significance in the world of public art.

As you know, when 1199 SEIU left their longtime headquarters, they did not take the mural with them. While we understand the 1199 building itself is not likely to be preserved, we hope that Taconic will consider incorporating the mosaic into the new development. The mosaic on West 43rd Street encompasses the entire street level facade and includes a black hand and a white hand intertwined at center surrounded by healthcare workers, childcare workers, and other figures. It could be a distinctive feature of the mixed use complex being planned, as part of the facade of a building or incorporated into the lobby.

Your website states, "We are New Yorkers and we are committed preservationists. We build upon a foundation of what exists, re-envisioning buildings and revitalizing neighborhoods to create an urban experience that includes, inspires, and empowers people." We hope that means you share our view as preservationists that the mural is a unique asset worth preserving.

Please consider preserving this important example of art incorporating unifying messaging which is even more important at this moment in our nation's history. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the mural's preservation with you and assist in any way we can. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John S. Arbuckle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Shreve Arbuckle

President

DOCOMOMO US/New York Tri-State

info@docomomo-nytri.org

CC: DOCOMOMO US, Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Municipal Art Society