

February 14, 2023

The Honorable Sarah Carroll, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Re: Amendment to Certificate of Appropriateness 22- 04937
330 West 42nd Street - McGraw Hill Building - Individual Landmark

Dear Chair Carroll:

DOCOMOMO US/New York Tri-State is a local chapter of an international organization working in over 70 countries around the world. Our mission is to increase public awareness and appreciation of Modern architecture, landscapes 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.

Designed by Raymond Hood, and Godley & Foulhoux, and completed in 1931, the McGraw Hill Building is an extremely important example of early Modern architecture in America. It was among the few American buildings included in both the Museum of Modern Art's seminal *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* in 1932 and the widely influential book *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (1932), written by the exhibition's curators Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. Designated an individual New York City Landmark in 1979, it also became a National Historic Landmark in 1989.

First, we commend the building ownership and project team for their proposal to recreate the McGraw Hill signage, replicating the original at the main entrance, which is now intended to become the residential entrance. That is a very welcome change from the prior proposal. We also applaud their previously approved plans to fully restore the façade at the base of the building.

However, we strongly object to two proposed alterations to that same 42nd Street entrance. Most egregiously, the proposed marquee would be an inappropriate, unnecessary and far too prominent alteration to a highly visible portion of the original main facade. Although the project team has pointed out that marquees were included in other New York buildings of the era, Hood did not intend for one to be here. In addition, we object to the proposal to increase the height of the entry doors there. The previously approved Certificate of Appropriateness already allowed an increase in height from 7' to 8'2", a rather significant and, in our view, already excessive departure from the original design. The additional height increase now requested from 8'2" to 9', would be an even greater departure from the original design. While it might make the entrance appear more grand, it would be an inappropriate and entirely unnecessary alteration.

Finally, we would like to comment on two aspects of the project, as currently proposed, beyond the scope of LPC review. With a newly proposed lobby plan, more similar in form to the original, we hope that the project team will be able to reinstall the remaining historic elements of the original lobby in their original configuration to the greatest extent possible. We welcome efforts to repurpose historic Modern buildings for appropriate new uses. However, we are disappointed that the ownership intends to set aside absolutely none of the new housing to be created here as affordable, especially considering the present housing affordability crisis in New York City.

DOCOMOMO US/New York Tri-State respectfully requests that the Commission consider our objections to the inappropriate proposed alterations to this important landmark and encourages the Commission to reject those aspects of the proposed amendment.

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 S. Arbuckle
President
DOCOMOMO US/New York Tri-State
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