

## Press release

---

March 2021

In the middle of New York:

### Stylish apartment building with striking ceramic building shell

**The special features of the building on Broadway in New York designed by the architecture firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) undoubtedly include the flats measuring up to 250 m<sup>2</sup>. However, the finely structured facade surfaces with ceramics from Agrob Buchtal are also unique: the KeraShape and KeraTwin systems made it possible to integrate the more than 60 metres high building into its urban environment with both self-confidence and respect.**

#### **Tribeca: from industrial to in-district**

Downtown Manhattan, i.e. living in the banking and business centre of New York, is enjoying great popularity. This is evidenced not least by the many new apartment buildings which have been filling the last gaps for a few years now or are being built in place of low-rise commercial buildings. A particularly trendy district is Tribeca, a former industrial quarter directly north of Ground Zero, which was first discovered by artists and creative professionals, then by wealthy families, film and pop stars. One of the quarter's latest projects is "91 Leonard", located on Broadway. The 19-storey building with a total area of 16,500 m<sup>2</sup> was designed by the New York architecture firm SOM, which, amongst others, was also responsible for the construction of the One World Trade Center. Hill West Architects was responsible for the implementation planning.

#### **Delicately embedded**

The new building fits sensitively into its urban environment in many respects. On the one hand, like its neighbouring buildings, it has retail space on the ground floor and a structure which gradually recedes with increasing height. On the other hand, the high-rise has a finely structured facade with large windows as a reverence to the neighbouring old warehouse buildings and lofts with their brick and natural stone facades. "Our primary goal was to create a building which relates to and respects the surrounding historic urban structure while being a modern addition to the quarter at the same time", explains SOM Director Kim Van Holsbeke.

#### **Sensuous three-dimensional ceramic facade**

The pleasantly calm uniformity of the orthogonally structured facade is based on regularly placed double windows framed by an attached lattice structure of ceramic rectangular tubes of the KeraShape system of Agrob Buchtal. The surfaces between this lattice structure and the recessed window openings with bronze-coloured reveal frames are made of ceramic tiles of the system KeraTwin K20. According to the architects' specifications, the tiles were specially profiled in cross-section so that their raised stripes correspond to the face width of the rectangular tubes. "The horizontal stripes provide a surface rich in details and contrasts. They also serve to bring the individual panels together to create a uniform appearance."

**AGROB BUCHTAL GmbH**

Buchtal 1 · D-92521 Schwarzenfeld · [www.agrob-buchtal.de](http://www.agrob-buchtal.de)

Contact: see page 3

Added to this is the restrained, elegant, velvety dark glaze (colour no. 4534 black matt glazed) of the facade ceramics, which creates a coexistence with the neighbouring existing buildings that is as respectful as it is natural. "The colour, texture and glaze of the tiles were carefully chosen to create an impression of depth and a varied play of light and shadow - in a sense, a contemporary interpretation of Tribeca's typical stone and cast iron buildings."

### **Discreet access**

It is only at second glance that one notices that the ground floor, parallel to the well-known Broadway, offers exclusively retail space. This provokes the question of where the access to the total of 111 flats is located. The answer is given by the project name "91 Leonard". In the sense of large connected retail spaces, but also in order to be able to offer a postal address suggesting tranquillity, the architects decided to arrange the entrance in a small side street, Leonard Street. This was possible because the property has a narrow alleyway to it. In Leonard Street, an entrance building was created which is barely three metres wide and around seven metres high, whose portal, also clad with KeraShape rectangular tubes and KeraTwin facade ceramics, is reminiscent of the minimalist entrance to the shop of a luxury brand. The actual residential building can then be seen above the entrance building in the rear of the plot.

### **Luxurious living**

Once you have passed the narrow two-storey entrance building, you enter a spacious lobby which is staffed around the clock by doormen. The noblesse of this area, with exquisite furnishings, extensive glazing and a view of a green courtyard, offers a foretaste of the opulently furnished flats. Designed by Whitehall Interiors in the "Tribeca Loft Style", the flats range in size from 50 to 250 m<sup>2</sup> and feature whitewashed oak parquet flooring, marble kitchen units and floor-to-ceiling windows. Outside their own four walls, the residents have access to various communal facilities such as a roof terrace with lounge furniture, barbecue and open fireplace, a children's playroom, a cinema hall, a fitness room and a spa area with an 18-metre pool, steam bath and sauna. From the outside, nothing of this luxury is visible. However, not least because of the facade, which is executed with great precision and craftsmanship, even passers-by quickly realize that a special building has been created here. "The decisive factor for choosing ceramics was its aesthetic qualities", explains Kim Van Holsbeke. "The mysterious sheen, the visual depth, the attractive reflective behaviour and the noble colour shade give the facade a lasting subtle value."

### **Durable aesthetics and sustainable environmental protection**

Like many collections of the wide Agrob-Buchthal range, the tiles of the KeraTwin system used here are equipped with Hytect technology. This innovative finish lends special properties: Tiles with Hytect are extremely easy to clean because water does not form drops but a thin film that washes dirt away. On façades, this leads to a self-washing effect that turns every rain shower into an environmentally friendly and free cleaning. This supports impeccable aesthetics and enables significant savings in maintenance costs. In addition, Hytect has an antibacterial effect without the use of chemicals, preventing the formation of algae and moss on façades. Furthermore tiles with Hytect decompose air pollutants such as nitrogen oxide (car exhaust gases) and sustainably improve air quality every day - all benefits that are of high relevance especially in densely populated metropolises like New York.

**[www.agrob-buchthal.de](http://www.agrob-buchthal.de)**

6,450 characters (with spaces, without heading), **Reprint free of charge**

**Contact and photos: see next two pages**

## Contact

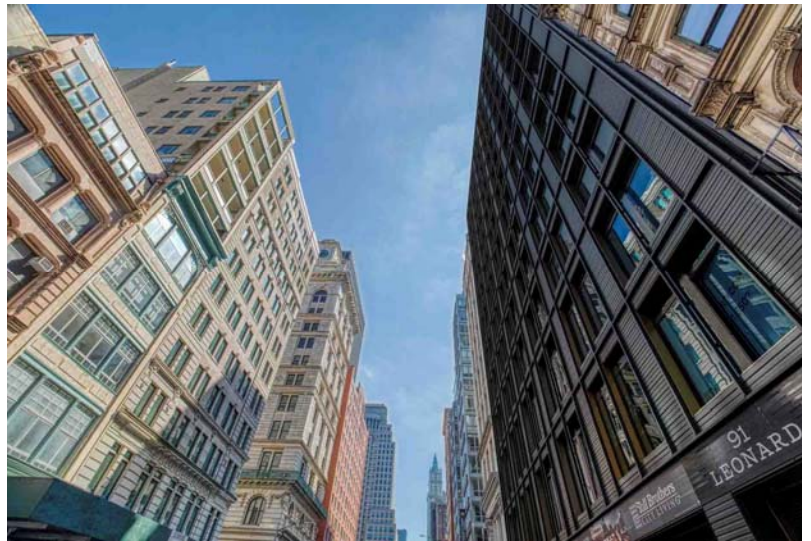
Werner Ziegelmeier  
(Head of Public Relations)

Phone +49 (0)9435 / 391-33 79  
Mobile +49 (0)160 / 90 52 71 59  
Fax +49 (0)9435 / 391-30 33 79  
Email [werner.ziegelmeier@deutsche-steinzeug.de](mailto:werner.ziegelmeier@deutsche-steinzeug.de)



### Organizational note on the following photos:

*As far as we know, the first flats were occupied in the second half of 2019, although various remaining work was still being done on the exterior. After that, the Corona pandemic came, which particularly affected New York. This made photo shoots extremely difficult, with the result that we are only now able to offer pictures from various sources.*



**Motif 1** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Evan Joseph

**Motif 2** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Richard James Earl

The apartment building "91 Leonard" (in the right half of **motifs 1** and **2**) is located in the heart of New York in Manhattan in the particularly trendy district of Tribeca - a former industrial quarter which has now become a sought-after residential area.

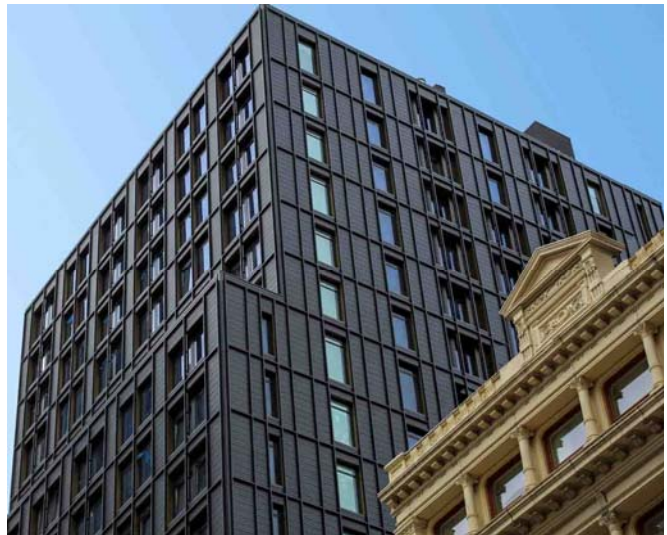


**Motif 3** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Richard James Earl

The essential characteristic of the 19-storey building is the dark ceramic facade of the brand Agrob Buchtal: appearing monochrome from a distance, it develops interesting visual-haptic effects as one gets closer.

**Motif 4** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / M. Staller

Three-dimensional surface tiles (KeraTwin system) combined with ceramic rectangular tubes (KeraShape system) give the building envelope a filigree structure. Together with the mystically deep colouring, this ensures a thoroughly perceptible presence, but also a respectful approach to the existing buildings.



**Motif 5** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Evan Joseph

The ground floor of the building parallel to Broadway (**motif 5** below right) is exclusively occupied by shops. The small side street (**motif 6** below left in the shadow) is Leonard Street. The entrance (**motif 6**) to the noble lobby, which leads to the luxurious flats, is deliberately discreetly located there (for clarification, use Google Maps satellite view if necessary: New York, 91 Leonard Street).

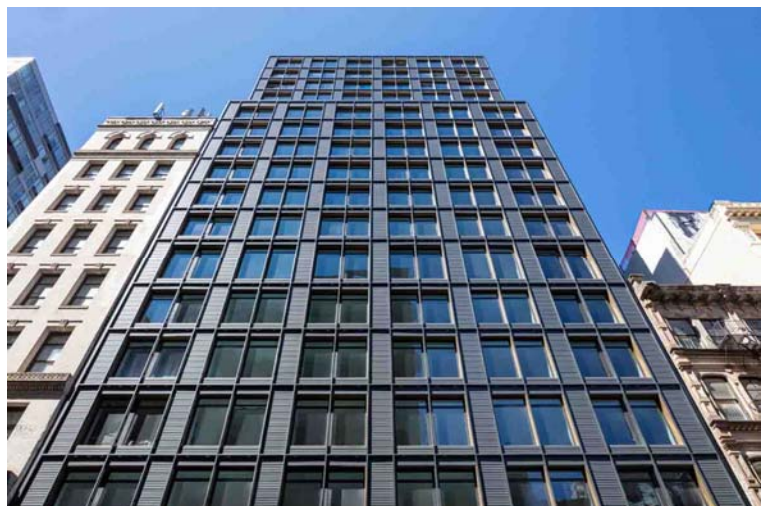


**Motif 6** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Richard James Earl



**Motif 7** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Evan Joseph

This photo shows the central location of the building (in the background: Hudson River) and the soft shimmer of the rhythmically structured facade when light falls on it.



**Motif 8** / Picture source: agrob-buchtal.de / Evan Joseph

An architectural statement with clear stringency: in full daylight, the colour tone lightens towards anthracite, but retains its powerful, archaic aura as a reminiscence of the industrial tradition of the Tribeca district.