

Mixed-use building will replace former Stadium Theatre in Tottenville

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nws theater

The old Stadium Theatre in Tottenville has a large construction fence blocking the sidewalk. The building will be demolished and replaced with a three-story mixed-use building. (Staten Island Advance/Rachel Shapiro)

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. - A long-abandoned former theater on Main Street in Tottenville will soon be demolished and replaced with a three-story mixed-use building.

The former Stadium Theatre at 217 Main St. opened in 1927 and closed as a movie theater by 1957. In 1969, it re-opened as a rock music venue, and later housed a roller rink in the 1970s.

It has been closed ever since, sitting vacant and racking up complaints from residents and violations from the city Buildings Department.

DEMOLITION TO BEGIN SOON

The current owner, Robert Pelosi and his company, Taormina Properties, have a demolition permit for the Main Street parcel and will begin work to tear down the building in the next month or two, he said.

Shortly thereafter, construction will begin on the building, which will have 1,495 square feet of commercial space on the first floor and 13,380 square feet of residential space above it. The second and third stories will each have nine apartment units, Pelosi said, and there will be enclosed parking with 26 spaces, according to plans approved by the city Buildings Department.

Pelosi has been speaking to a few potential commercial tenants but nothing is solid yet.

He expects construction to take about eight months and is optimistic the rental units will be well-received by the community.

"I think there's a need for it out there with people running to New Jersey," he said.

With shuttered storefronts and limited commercial options on the narrow Main Street, "Hopefully we can bring back the block," Pelosi said.

LONG HISTORY OF NEGLECT

Sitting vacant for decades, the old theater has been the subject of 32 complaints dating back to 1991, ranging from a large hole in the side of the building, to accumulation of water, accumulation of garbage, roof damage, debris falling from the building and more, according to Buildings Department records.

Irene Wuethrich lives a few blocks away in Tottenville and said she doesn't care what happens to the building, but is concerned with the large wooden construction fence that blocks the sidewalk. Pedestrians must walk in the narrow street, a possibly dangerous scenario.

The theater's marquee sits atop the front of the building, a possible safety hazard, and the fence below it.

Wuethrich wondered why the marquee couldn't be removed from the building, making the fence unnecessary and the sidewalk open for pedestrians.

"There was a woman pushing a baby carriage," she said. The mother had to veer off into the street -- "This is a very important issue."

Several of the 32 complaints were the same as Wuethrich's.

There have been 38 Buildings Department violations dating back to 1957 but most occurred since the 1990s.

Fourteen are active -- 10 are regarding the marquee, others are from other construction-related offenses, including emergency or hazardous violations.

There are 18 violations with the Environmental Control Board, four of which are open, with \$13,200 in fines associated with them.

Two of those violations are regarding the construction fence that is there without a sidewalk-closing permit.

The two other violations are for failure to maintain building walls, leading to a partial roof collapse.

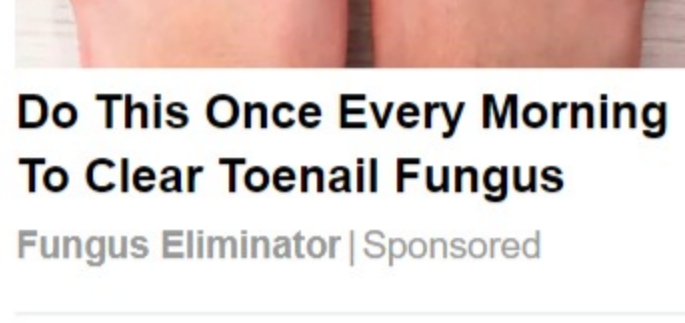
Councilman Joe Borelli (R-South Shore) noted that the soon-to-be-erected three-story building is no higher than the adjacent buildings, so it's not out of character for the street.

Borelli said it was clear that saving the building was never on the developer's agenda, but having a positive use for the site is a win.

"I'm happy to hear the building will come down, and then shortly thereafter, the construction fences that have been blocking the sidewalk for about two or three years," he said.

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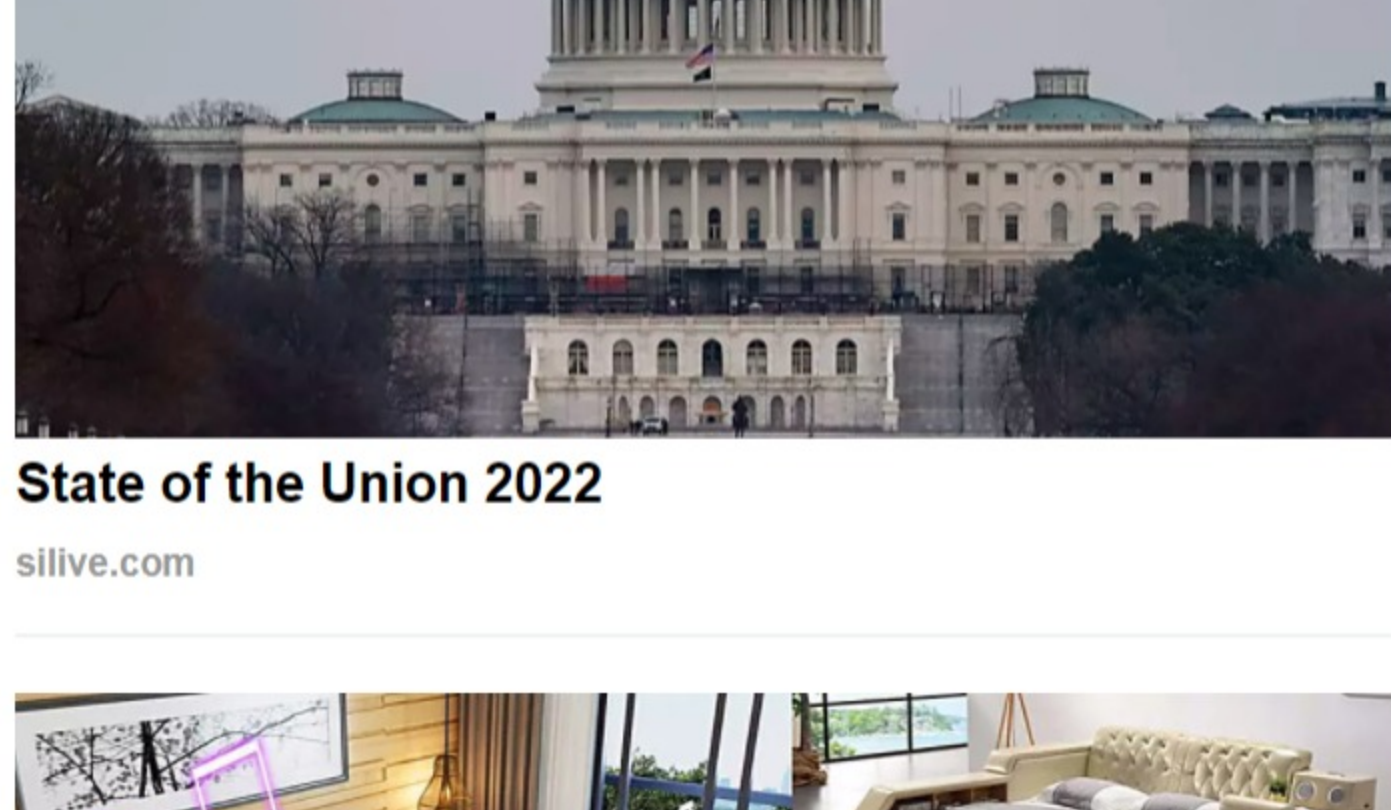
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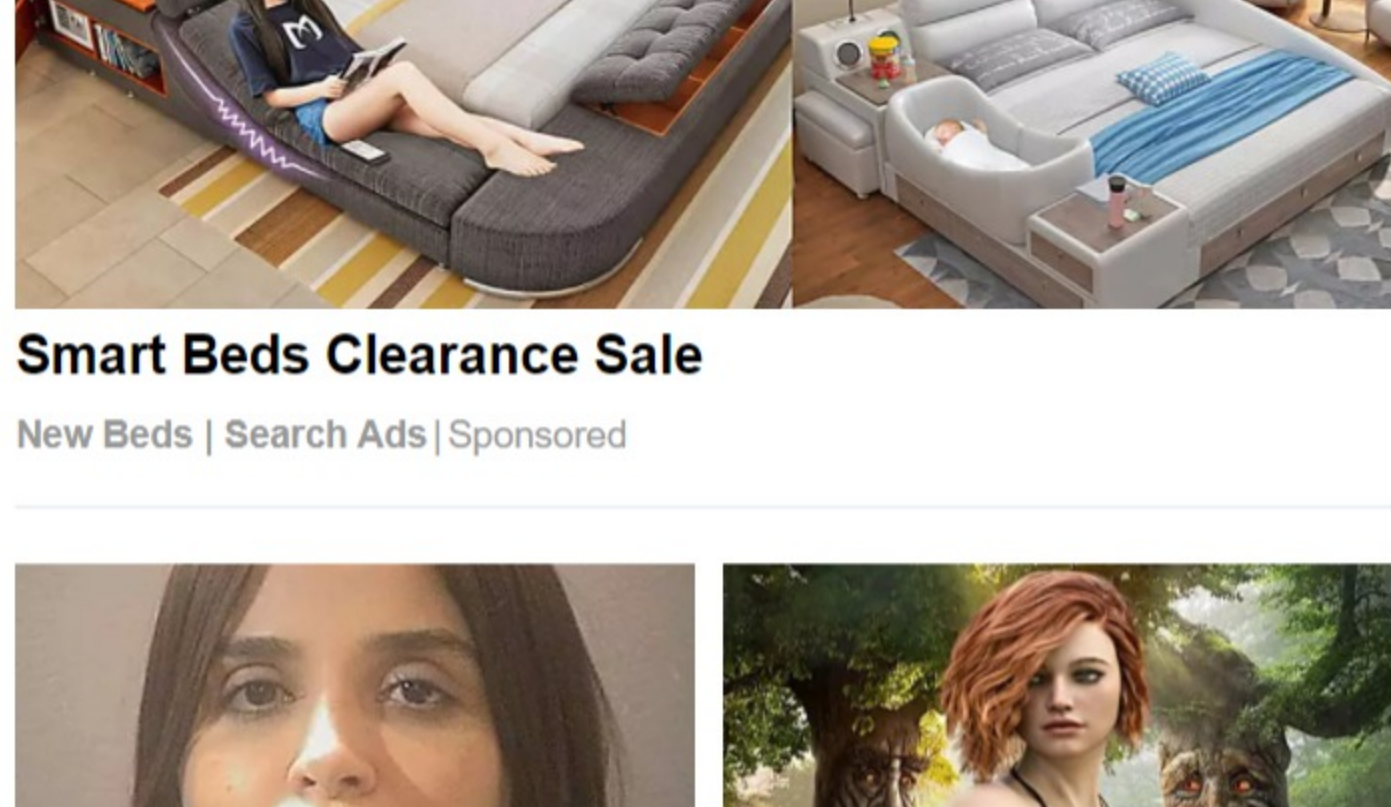


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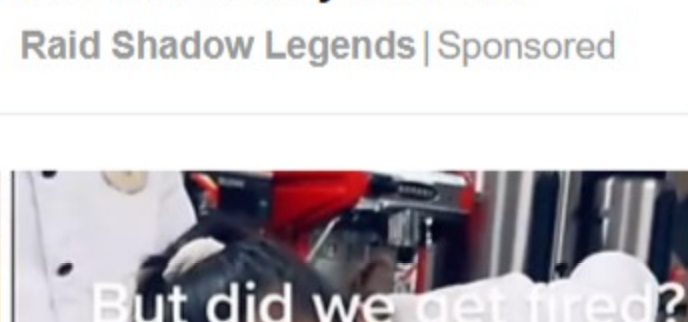
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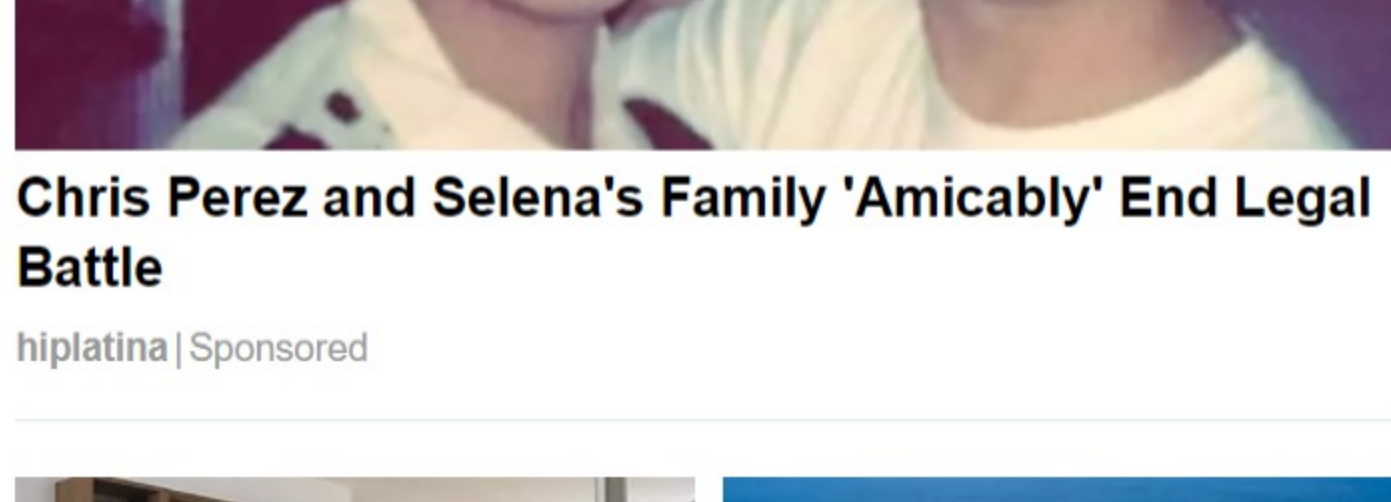
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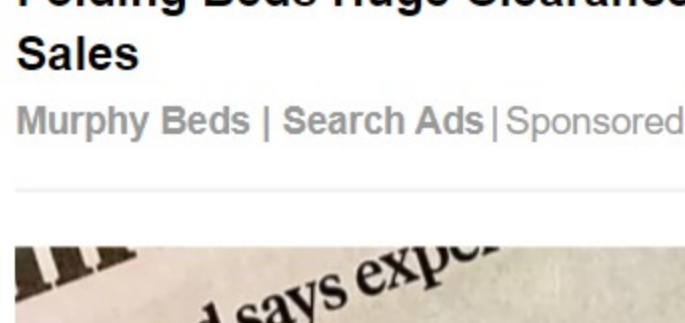
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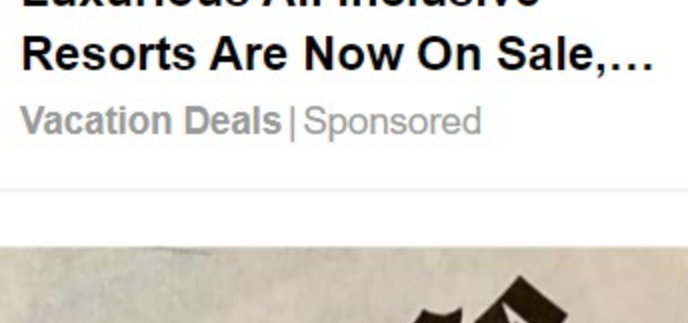
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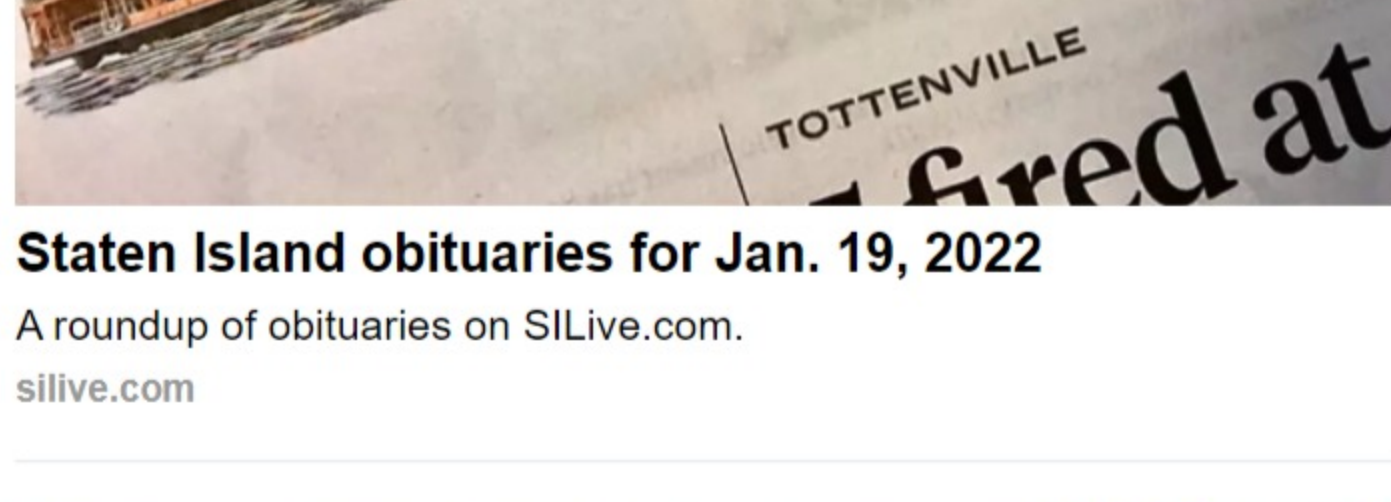
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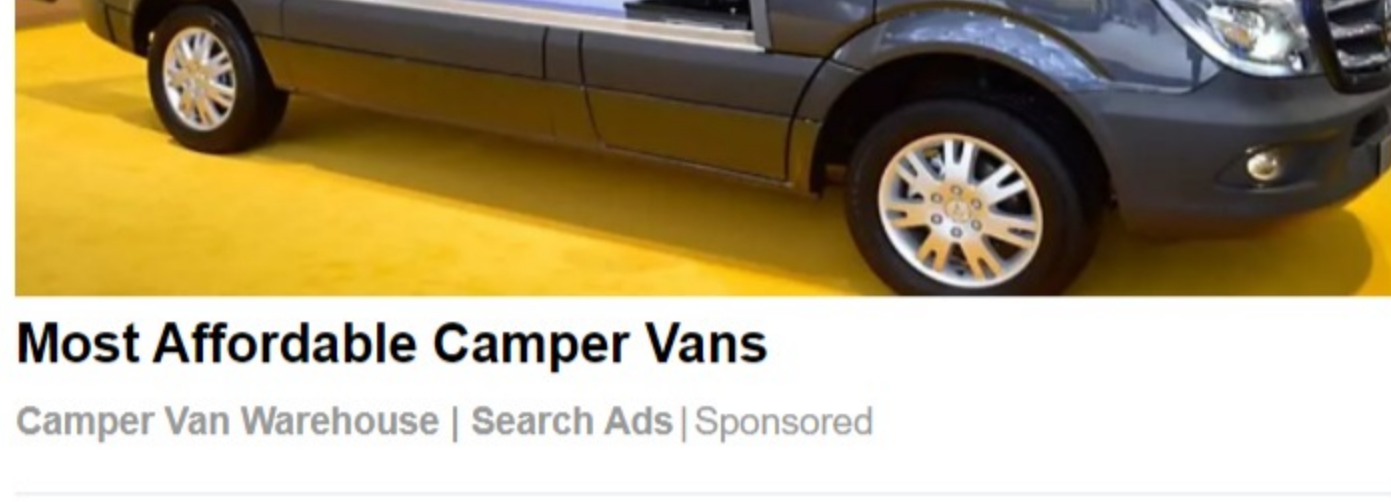
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