## Comeback kid: Long-lost Loew's Kings rebuild begins after three decades of decay

EXCLUSIVE: The hauntingly beautiful theater with architectural treasures hidden in ghostly fallen plaster will be restored to its former 1920s glory.

## By Lore Coghan / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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David Handschuh/New York Daily News

Loew's Kings Theater on Flatbush Ave. in Brooklyn will finally get a face-lift after decades of neglect.

An opulent Brooklyn movie house modeled on the Palace of Versailles is finally being rescued from ruin.

The hauntingly beautiful Loew's Kings Theater with architectural treasures hidden in ghostly fallen plaster will be restored to its former 1920s glory.

"Brooklyn gets back an historic jewel," said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, who will join Mayor Bloomberg at a Wednesday groundbreaking for its \$93.9 million rebuild as an entertainment venue.

The Flatbush Ave. picture palace closed in 1977 and rare visits by potential developers to the city-owned property were like touring the Titanic.



Brooklyn Borough President's office Crumbling interiors of Loew's Kings Theater in Flatbush, which is being renovated and turned into a performance venue.



Brooklyn Borough President's office Rendering shows what the interior of Loew's Kings Theater in Brooklyn will look like after renovations are complete.

"When you walk in you get a sense of how grand it used to be — and how grand it will be again," city Economic Development Corp. executive vice president David Ehrenberg said.

ACE Theatrical Group starts construction within a week at the French Renaissance-style theater that 50-plus-aged Brooklynites remember with nostalgic longing.

The restoration of the Flatbush movie house - where Bob Hope performed and a teenage Barbra Streisand vowed her name would one day appear in lights - will begin with asbestos removal and roof repairs.



David Handschuh/New York Daily News
The once majestic theater has been sore on the eyes for years.



Economic Development Corp.

Rendering shows what the exterior of Loew's Kings Theater in Brooklyn will look like after renovations are complete.

"I went to the movies long before I ever went to the theater...I'd go to the Loew's Kings in Flatbush every Saturday," Streisand reminisced at a 1995 concert, "to escape into a world of fantasy - and also because they had the greatest Mellowrolls. (It's) a little ice cream log... wrapped in paper that sat on a cone."

The rebuilding of the "Wonder Theater" — as Loew's most fabulous facilities were known — stalled during two decades of false starts, including a plan by Magic Johnson to make it a movie multiplex.

ACE will carry out a historically accurate restoration of the 3,200-seat picture palace with a sweeping staircase and rose-colored marble and wood-paneled walls.



Brooklyn Borough President's office Crumbling interiors of Loew's Kings Theater.

It will refurbish seven giant chandeliers to set the lobby ablaze with light and clean 90 years of grime from painted decorations on the 70-foot domed ceiling.

Pending approval by the city Public Design Commission, the marquee will look much like the 1920s original — except the word "Loew's" will not appear in lights because that's a trademarked name.

ACE will build a new four-story stagehouse on the back of the theater, fit for the 21st-Century shows that will be presented.



David Handschuh/New York Daily News

Another interior photo of Loew's Kings Theater shows decaying of the once majestic theater.

When it reopens in early 2015 the Kings will host more than 200 concerts, dance performances, musicals and comedy shows per year — including programs geared to appeal to a wide range of Brooklyn's diverse ethnic communities.

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