# Veeraswamy restaurant faces uncertain future as lease expiration looms



Beloved by royals and celebrities alike, Veeraswamy, a Michelin-starred Indian restaurant that has stood the test of time since its establishment in 1926, now faces an uncertain future as it grapples with its landlord, the Crown Estate. The venue, located just steps from Piccadilly Circus, is hailed as the oldest Indian restaurant in the UK and has been the dining choice for notable figures including Princess Anne, former Prime Minister David Cameron, and King Abdullah of Jordan.

The restaurant’s imminent closure looms as its lease for the premises at Victory House is set to expire in June 2023, with the Crown Estate announcing that they will not be renewing it. Executive Chef Uday Salumkhe and restaurant owner Ranjit Mathrani, 81, have expressed profound dismay over the decision, which Mathrani described as coming “completely out of the blue”. Notably, just a year prior, the Crown Estate had inquired about the possibility of expanding Veeraswamy into additional space within the building.

According to the Crown Estate, the reason behind the decision is rooted in a need to refurbish the entire premises after a flood led to the upper floors being left vacant. They argue that the restaurant's entrance needs to be removed to facilitate the improvement of the office entrance, offering up an extra 11 square metres for the refurbishment project. However, Mathrani has challenged this assertion, stating that the historical significance of the venue was overlooked, and alternatives for relocating the restaurant's entrance were never properly explored.

In an interview with The Times, Mathrani remarked, “They don’t care a bugger for history. Had they wanted to, they could’ve easily … put the [office] reception on the first floor. If they’d have asked us to match the [office] rent, I would have.”

Veeraswamy's staff are understandably worried about the potential loss of employment, given the restaurant's storied legacy in London. Mathrani has indicated that they are currently in a legal battle to extend the lease, while conceding the reality that they may have to vacate eventually. “We’re open to moving, because we accept the inevitability that, sooner or later, they will be able to turf us out,” he stated. He expressed that ideally, a two-year window to locate and fit out a new site would be necessary, a request which he claims the Crown Estate has not been willing to accommodate.

In a statement provided by the Crown Estate, a spokesperson emphasised the necessity for a “comprehensive refurbishment” of Victory House, reiterating that removal of the restaurant’s entrance is essential due to the limited options available within the constraints of the listed building. They clarified that this alteration excludes the possibility of extending Veeraswamy's lease when it expires.

With the clock ticking down to June, the future of Veeraswamy hangs in the balance, leaving staff and patrons apprehensive about what the coming months may hold for this historic establishment.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.fineindianrestaurants.com/media/qkcfatpf/veeraswamy-press-kit-full-2024.pdf> - This URL provides background information on Veeraswamy's establishment in 1926 and its historical significance, including its status as one of London's oldest Indian restaurants. It also details its ownership and transformations over the years.
2. <https://www.veeraswamy.com/history/> - This URL further details Veeraswamy's history, including its founding by Edward Palmer, its evolution under different owners, and its current status as a Michelin-starred restaurant.
3. <https://www5.open.ac.uk/research-projects/making-britain/content/veeraswamys> - This Open University project highlights the historical significance of Veeraswamy's, including its establishment by Edward Palmer and its role in popularizing Indian cuisine among British aristocracy and celebrities.
4. <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although not directly related to the information in the article, this URL could have provided the initial source about Veeraswamy's current situation and historical context if it were specified or mentioned.
5. <https://www.regentstreetonline.com/locations/veeraswamy-restaurant/> - Not available directly in the search results, but Regent Street's official website would typically list Veeraswamy as a historical and significant establishment on the street, corroborating its presence and importance.
6. <https://www.crownestate.co.uk/> - This is the official website of the Crown Estate, Veeraswamy's landlord, which might provide information on their property management decisions, though specific details about Veeraswamy's lease might not be publicly available.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14605675/Britains-oldest-Indian-restaurant-shut-doors.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data