# Historic Indian restaurant Veeraswamy faces closure after nearly a century



A historic Indian restaurant located just steps from Piccadilly Circus is facing imminent closure after nearly a century of operations. Veeraswamy, known as the oldest Indian restaurant in the United Kingdom, has been serving its renowned cuisine since 1926. The establishment has a distinguished reputation, having catered to notable figures including Princess Anne, former Prime Minister Lord David Cameron, and King Abdullah of Jordan.

The future of Veeraswamy hangs in the balance due to a dispute with the Crown Estate, which manages the property where the restaurant is located. The restaurant's lease on its premises in Victory House is due to expire in June, and the Crown Estate has informed the owners that the lease will not be renewed. This decision has come as a shock to Ranjit Mathrani, the restaurant's 81-year-old owner, who felt blindsided by the announcement. “It came completely out of the blue,” he commented.

According to the Crown Estate, the decision to not renew the lease stems from a need to renovate the building, including upgrades to the office entrance that has remained unoccupied since a flood last year. The estate claims that in order to facilitate these renovations, the entrance area currently occupied by Veeraswamy must be removed to create an additional 11 square metres of space. The Crown Estate argues that the entire premises requires a thorough revamp, and the restaurant's location is impeding that process.

“There’s no alternative entrance for the restaurant due to restrictions on the listed building,” a spokesperson from the Crown Estate explained, detailing that the renovations aim to make the building more accessible. However, Mathrani has countered that other options were never genuinely explored. He expressed frustration at the situation, stating, “They don't care a bugger for history. Had they wanted to, they could’ve easily … put the [office] reception on the first floor."

Currently, the owners are entangled in a legal battle to extend the lease, while simultaneously contemplating potential relocation. Mathrani disclosed a willingness to move, provided they are granted sufficient time to find and fit out a new location for the restaurant. “We need two years to find a site [and fit it out], but that is not currently something they are willing to do,” he stated.

The possible closure of Veeraswamy would not only disappoint its loyal customer base but could also lead to redundancy for the staff, many of whom have been integral to the restaurant's operation over the years. The legal proceedings against the Crown Estate could determine whether Veeraswamy will continue to serve its cherished dishes for another year or face an imminent end to its longstanding legacy.

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