

Edinburgh's Tower Restaurant to remain closed

Last orders for Edinburgh's Tower Restaurant

One of Edinburgh's long established restaurants has closed its doors for the final time in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Twenty two years after first opening, The Tower Restaurant on the roof of the National Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street is coming to the end of its lease and will not now reopen after the lockdown ends.

Once called 'the hottest table in the city' by food critic AA Gill, proprietor James Thomson has concerns about how it would be able to operate under social distancing restrictions, which will make the business uneconomic moving forward.

James said: "The Tower was the first rooftop restaurant in Edinburgh and quickly gained a worldwide reputation for great food and service which has stayed with us down the years. Covid-19 presents us with some insurmountable difficulties and, with our lease coming to an end anyway, we've had to take the decision not to reopen."

Redundancy consultations have started with 37 members of staff, adding to the toll of jobs affected by the current crisis in the hospitality sector.

James added: "The longevity of our success has been down to our loyal customers and the hard work and dedication of our incredible staff. Some of them have been with us for years so this is a sad time for all of us."

On behalf of National Museums Scotland, Director of NMS Enterprises Peter Williamson said: "We are saddened by the closing of the Tower restaurant after 22 enjoyable and successful years of working with James and his team. The hospitality sector has been hit very hard by Covid-19 and we now need to take stock and consider the long term future of this space so that visitors and guests can continue to enjoy what remains one of the best views in Edinburgh."

James Thomson also owns The Witchery and Prestonfield in Edinburgh. It's hoped both those businesses will be able to reopen on 15 July 2020 following final confirmation from The Scottish Government.