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Rent rise wrangle ‘is a threat to famous club’

Trailblazing venue facing closure over £320,000 hike

Friday, 8th March — By [Dan Carrier](#)



HEAVEN nightclub, the trailblazing venue that has a world famous reputation, is facing closure after its landlords whacked a £320,000 rent rise on its owners.

The Arch Company – the private firm who manage railway arches for Network Rail – say the club isn't paying market rates and must suck up the increase.

The club is now locked in arbitration with an ombudsman to sort out the problem.

Heaven's owner Jeremy Joseph said that unless the increase is scrapped, the club, which opened in 1979 and has become a landmark in London's LGBTQ+ and Acid House scene, would close.

"I've decided to go public with what has been going on with our Heaven nightclub landlords The Arch Company," Mr Joseph said in an Instagram post. "The last five months have been extremely stressful. Last September Heaven had an automatic rent increase of £80,000 but that wasn't enough for Arch Co, who are wanting another £240,000 on top. That's a total increase of an extra £320,000 a year."

Mr Joseph said it has cost his firm a fortune in legal fees to fight the rise and the issue does not bode well for other venues in the West End.

He said: "We have been fighting them for five months and they aren't willing to back down, so it's going to go to arbitration and has cost us already nearly £10k in legal fees. The fight has just begun as it's time to put public pressure on landlords. This isn't just about Heaven, this is about every hospitality venue, because if our rent goes up it will increase the rent of other venues, because at arbitration, they use other comparable rents to value yours.

"We are not the only venue that is at risk because of landlords. It's time to fight back and protect hospitality, too many venues have closed."

Heaven (pictured), an openly out and proud club, helped pave the way for gay clubs to become established in the capital, and is known as one of the first clubs in the UK to play Acid House music.

It opened in 1979 in what was once a nightclub called Global Village.

The arches, beneath Charing Cross train station, were originally used to store wine for the hotel above.

Club founder Jeremy Norman had previously established The Embassy in Old Bond Street, which became a renowned nightspot, likened to New York's infamous disco headquarters, Studio 54.

Heaven loosened the shackles for gay clubbers, who had often been forced to use nondescript venues that did not advertise their existence.

It broke new ground for music.

DJ Ian Levine has been credited with being the first DJ in the UK to beatmix tunes together and it has been a mark of the club's growth that resident DJs pushed the boundaries for dance music and were at the forefront of new sounds.

As well as a host of UK names, famous DJs from the United States made a beeline for the venue, including the likes of Frankie Knuckles.

The threat to the club follows the closure of two nearby LGBTQ+ venues, The Glory and G-A-Y Late.

An Arch Company spokesman said: "Heaven is a long term and valued customer and we have been working closely with them to reach an agreement on the market rent for their premises.

"Unfortunately we have not been able to agree this between ourselves and so an independent third party has now been appointed to help resolve."

