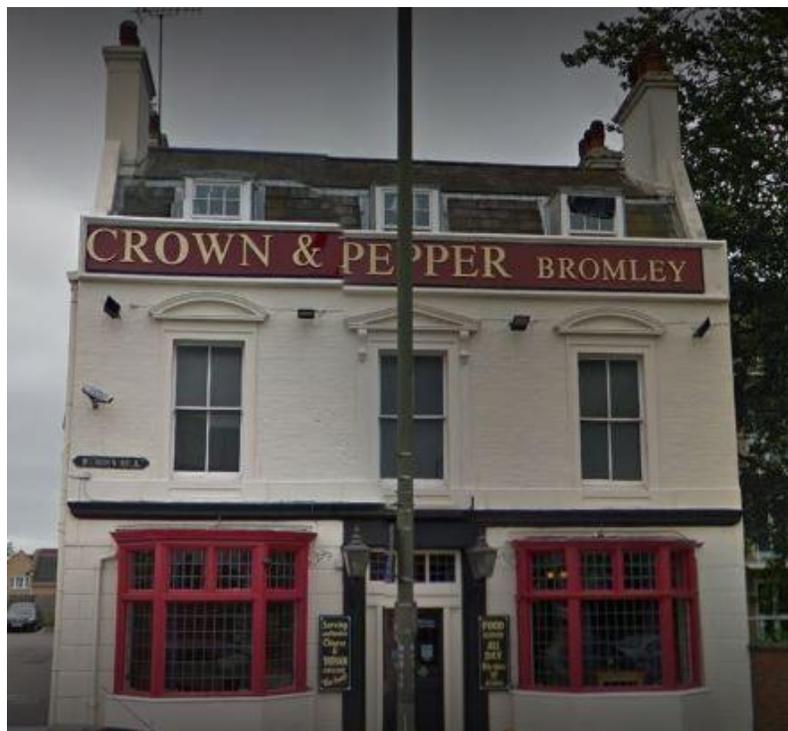


News Shopper

A dead rat, gnawed vegetables and two-week-old food found at Crown and Pepper restaurant in Bromley during food hygiene inspection

7th September



A dead rat was found in the basement of a Bromley restaurant by a hygiene inspector along with gnawed vegetables meant for customers.

The Crown and Pepper in Tiger Lane near Bromley High Street was inspected by Bromley Council's food safety team on June 5.

Inspectors rate establishments out of five options, from zero - meaning 'urgent improvement necessary' - to five, meaning 'very good'.

The Crown and Pepper was given a zero in the inspection.

In the report, the inspector said: “At the time of my visit, gnawed vegetables and bags of flour, rats' dropping and a dead rat were found in the basement.”

The report, seen by News Shopper, also says cooked vegetable dishes were kept for up to two weeks before being served to customers.

The inspector said: “At the time of my visit you stated that the shelf life you apply to cooked vegetable dishes is two weeks.

“Prepared chilled food should be used within 72 hours of preparation.”

The restaurant made other mistakes.

The inspector said: “At the time of my visit you did not have a sanitiser, therefore you were unable to carry out adequate cleaning.”

Despite getting a zero for its hygiene inspection, the Crown and Pepper is a popular restaurant and has four stars on Trip Advisor.

More than half of reviewers gave it five stars, with one of the site's users Andy Geake saying: “Never judge a book by its cover they say!

“Walking into this pub, you think you're in a typical south London drinking hole, large screen TVs and wooden tables and benches at the back making this seem very non-descript.

“BUT the Indian food they serve is some of the best I've ever tasted! I'm very fussy about Indian food, but this stuff is outstanding. The fish curry is great. A real eye opener and thoroughly recommended.”

Since the inspection, Bromley Council has been working with the restaurant to improve its hygiene.

Councillor Kate Lymer, executive councillor for public protection and safety, said: “Food safety is highly important and these scores are very useful indicators for all concerned and readers may be interested to know that when a food business receives a low score, we follow up with these businesses and work with them to help them improve their hygiene and related standards.

“If businesses don't take this seriously or don't improve, then we will start enforcement action, with food safety notices being served and as a last resort, we will prosecute.”

Nobody from the Crown and Pepper was available for comment at the time of publication.