# Controversy grows as Whitby approves Viking-themed bar in historic building



Whitby, the picturesque seaside town famed for its historical charm and Gothic literary connections, finds itself embroiled in controversy over plans to repurpose a Grade-II listed former ironmongers into a Viking-themed bar. As the cobblestone lanes echo with the sound of tourists, local residents voice their concerns, fearing an encroachment of party culture in an area they cherish for its tranquillity.

The bar, envisioned as a new establishment under Valhalla Ltd, promises an enticing blend of mead and heavy metal, drawing on the Viking theme that has gained traction in popular culture. However, locals are alarmed by the impending transformation, citing potential noise disturbances and an increase in antisocial behaviour. Residents like Gillian Blessed, who has lived in close proximity to the site for 25 years, express visceral apprehension: “I don’t want to have stag and hen parties rolling out onto the street. My husband is not well, and he’s in bed by 9pm.” For many, the stark reality is that the quietude traditionally associated with their town might soon be replaced by the boisterous revelry linked with such venues.

The objections have not been limited to noise. Richard Peake, another resident, noted the absurdity of the bar’s smoking area and its proximity to his own outdoor space, stating, “I just don't understand why the council feels there is a need for another bar or pub in Whitby.” Indeed, local figures indicate that the town already boasts more than 40 such establishments, leading many to question the necessity of yet another venue in a narrow thoroughfare that is only twelve feet wide.

The debate extends beyond mere noise pollution. There is a growing fear among locals that Whitby risks losing its identity as a family-friendly destination. David Wharton, an octogenarian resident, laments the ongoing shifts towards a rather raucous tourism culture: “We want families with their buckets and spades, not drunken adults staggering about.” This sentiment resonates with many who believe that the influx of visitors has turned Whitby into a venue for wild weekends, rather than a sanctuary for peaceful retreats.

Such concerns are further magnified by the recent approval for additional holiday flats, including those in the erstwhile Langley Hotel, a six-storey Victorian landmark. The decision reflects a broader trend towards short-term rentals that has significantly impacted the local housing market. With about one-third of properties now classed as second homes or holiday lets, residents are finding it increasingly difficult to establish a sense of community. North Yorkshire Council has even doubled council tax for second homeowners in an attempt to address these issues, yet locals wonder if more stringent measures are required to rein in the transformation before it is too late.

Despite the outcry, plans for the bar have been granted permission. Vincent Roberts and Matthew Beddingham, co-owners of the Valhalla brand, assert that they intend to preserve the essence of Whitby while injecting their unique concept into the town. They describe their vision as rooted in history rather than as a mere thematic gimmick, aiming to create a venue that strikes a balance between local heritage and night-time entertainment.

As Whitby stands at this crossroads, the outcome of such developments will undoubtedly shape its character for years to come. With protests rising from its inhabitants, the burgeoning divide between tourism and resident satisfaction continues to widen, leaving many to ponder what the future holds for this once-quiet bastion of British coastal culture.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/11/viking-statue-linked-far-right-slavery-police-warn-council/), [[3]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/jks-bar-whitby-bar-facing-losing-its-licence-announces-voluntary-closure-until-it-is-sold-4468613)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-67424662), [[7]](https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/jks-bar-whitby-bar-facing-losing-its-licence-announces-voluntary-closure-until-it-is-sold-4468613), [[6]](https://www.yorkmix.com/council-rejects-unacceptable-changes-to-front-of-historic-whitby-pub/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-67424662)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.yorkmix.com/council-rejects-unacceptable-changes-to-front-of-historic-whitby-pub/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14759699/Outrage-popular-UK-seaside-town-plans-transform-historic-former-ironmongers-Viking-themed-bar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/11/viking-statue-linked-far-right-slavery-police-warn-council/> - An unrealistic Viking statue outside a shopping centre in Jarrow has been featured in a police review. Northumbria Police took part in an audit of monuments to identify associations with slavery and oppression. The review determined that several sites related to the Vikings could have 'associations with far-Right symbolism' and Nordic mythology. The statue, erected in the early 1960s, depicts two warriors and is located near a shopping centre named 'Viking'. The council has not taken any action to remove the statue or make alterations to the public space.
3. <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/jks-bar-whitby-bar-facing-losing-its-licence-announces-voluntary-closure-until-it-is-sold-4468613> - JK’s Bar in Whitby, facing potential licence revocation due to numerous complaints, announced a voluntary closure as it is being sold to a new owner. North Yorkshire Police had applied to revoke the bar’s licence, citing a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The decision was postponed to allow the sale to proceed. The new owner, Northern Bay Leisure, plans to invest in the bar, appoint new staff, and rename the establishment. The premises will remain closed until improvements are made.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219> - JK’s Bar in Whitby, which faced losing its licence, can reopen after police withdrew their objection following its sale to a new owner. North Yorkshire Police had applied to revoke the bar’s licence, citing a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. After the sale, the police withdrew their application, allowing the bar to reopen under new management. The new owner assured the council that the premises would remain closed until improvements were made.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-67424662> - North Yorkshire Police have called for the revocation of JK’s Bar's licence in Whitby due to a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The bar has faced numerous complaints, including breaches of licensing conditions and incidents of disorder and anti-social behaviour. The police's request follows several months of reviews and meetings concerning the bar. Public representations concerning the application for the bar's licence to be revoked are currently being invited by the council.
6. <https://www.yorkmix.com/council-rejects-unacceptable-changes-to-front-of-historic-whitby-pub/> - North Yorkshire Council has rejected plans for the installation of a shelter at the front of the 17th-century Middle Earth Tavern in Whitby. The council stated that the proposed structure was 'inappropriate from a conservation perspective' and would have a 'detrimental impact on neighbours and the area due to the structure being out of character'. The pub, located on Church Street, is a Grade-II Listed building situated in the town’s conservation area.
7. <https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347> - Objections have been raised over plans to open a new bar in the heart of Whitby. North Yorkshire Police and members of the public have expressed concerns about the location of the proposed venue, citing issues such as antisocial behaviour and noise. The proposed bar would be located within Whitby’s cumulative impact zone, which brings with it a presumption that applications for new licences will normally be refused if relevant objections are received.