# Whitby residents resist Viking-themed bar plan amid fears of rising noise and lost heritage



In the picturesque coastal town of Whitby, plans to convert a historic ironmongers’ shop into a Viking-themed rock bar have ignited considerable local debate. This proposal to turn the Grade II-listed building on Grape Lane into an outpost of Valhalla Ltd, known for its lively venues offering craft ales, mead, and rock music, has met with stern opposition from residents who fear the consequences of further nightlife expansion.

Whitby, renowned for its enchanting cobblestone streets and rich maritime history—once serving as inspiration for Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*—is grappling with the changes wrought by a surge in tourism and the proliferation of bars and holiday lets. The intended transformation of the former ironmongers into a vibrant pub and adjoining holiday flats has residents like Gillian and Keith Blessed expressing deep apprehension. Having lived across from the site for over two decades, they worry that the inevitable noise and uproar from stag and hen parties will disrupt their peaceful home environment. Gillian, 72, spoke candidly about her concerns, lamenting that the atmospheric charm of their historic home, built in 1640, is under threat. "I worry that the noise will force us out of our home," she shared, highlighting the close quarters as her home is just a mere 12 feet from the proposed bar.

Residents have raised multiple objections to the planning application, pointing to potential increases in noise, antisocial behaviour, and the unsuitability of such a venture on a narrow street that already bears the burden of lively evening crowds. Richard Peake, another local, voiced his frustration: "I just don't understand why the council feels there is a need for another bar or pub in Whitby. We already have more than 40," he stated, capturing the sentiment of many who feel their quaint town is losing its identity amid a wave of boisterous tourism.

Community dissent extends beyond concerns about noise. Many locals, including Mark Gregg and David Wharton, expressed dismay that Whitby is becoming a destination primed for boozy weekends rather than the family-friendly beach resort it once was. Wharton, 80, emphasised the dramatic shift in local culture, recalling how two out of the 17 cottages on his street are now only occupied by holidaymakers. “It’s turning into a real problem,” he said, as he described the unfortunate scenes of intoxicated individuals littering the streets, asserting that such unsavoury behaviour detracts from the charm and atmosphere the town has long cherished.

The planning application, which is currently under review by North Yorkshire Council, has not been without broader implications. The council has previously taken steps to double the council tax for second home owners in a bid to encourage more permanent residents and address the issue of diminishing housing availability. This initiative reflects a growing awareness of the imbalance caused by short-term rentals, a topic of heated debate within the community.

Vincent Roberts and Matthew Beddingham, co-owners of Valhalla York, defend their vision for the new establishment, suggesting that their successful York venture could bring a thriving yet respectful atmosphere to Whitby. They noted the appeal of good craft beer and an alternative vibe, claiming that their establishment seeks to preserve the town’s historic essence while inviting an exciting new chapter in its hospitality offerings.

As North Yorkshire Council continues to evaluate the proposal, locals remain resolute in their belief that the character of their beloved town is at stake. With each new bar or holiday flat, concerns about noise, community identity, and the balance between tourism and residency grow ever more pronounced. The desire for a tranquil, family-oriented Whitby, rather than a raucous party hub, encapsulates the heart of this unfolding debate.

## 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), [[2]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/valhalla-york-submits-plan-to-turn-former-whitby-ironmongers-into-micropub-and-holiday-let-4952101)
* 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.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/valhalla-york-submits-plan-to-turn-former-whitby-ironmongers-into-micropub-and-holiday-let-4952101), [[3]](https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347)
* Paragraph 3 – [[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.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/valhalla-york-submits-plan-to-turn-former-whitby-ironmongers-into-micropub-and-holiday-let-4952101), [[3]](https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347), [[5]](https://yorkmix.com/council-rejects-unacceptable-changes-to-front-of-historic-whitby-pub/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[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), [[3]](https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/11/viking-statue-linked-far-right-slavery-police-warn-council/)
* 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), [[3]](https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347), [[6]](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), [[2]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/valhalla-york-submits-plan-to-turn-former-whitby-ironmongers-into-micropub-and-holiday-let-4952101)
* 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), [[2]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/valhalla-york-submits-plan-to-turn-former-whitby-ironmongers-into-micropub-and-holiday-let-4952101), [[3]](https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347)

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.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/valhalla-york-submits-plan-to-turn-former-whitby-ironmongers-into-micropub-and-holiday-let-4952101> - Valhalla York has submitted plans to convert a former ironmongers in Whitby into a micropub and holiday flats. The Grade II-listed property at 6 Grape Lane would feature a micropub on the ground floor and basement, with residential flats on the upper floors. The proposal aims to enhance the town's hospitality offerings while preserving its historic character. The application is currently under review by North Yorkshire Council, with no decision date set yet.
3. <https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/business/objections-raised-over-location-of-new-bar-in-whitby-town-centre-3061347> - Plans to open a new bar in Whitby's town centre have faced objections from North Yorkshire Police and local residents. The proposed venue, located in the Youth Shack building on New Quay Road, has been vacant since January 2019. Concerns include potential noise disturbances, antisocial behaviour, and the bar's proximity to a public toilet. The council's licensing sub-committee is set to decide on the application, considering the objections raised.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/11/viking-statue-linked-far-right-slavery-police-warn-council/> - An audit by Northumbria Police has identified a Viking statue in Jarrow as potentially linked to far-Right symbolism and slavery. The statue, depicting two Viking warriors, was erected in the 1960s and is part of a shopping centre named 'Viking'. The review, conducted in response to Black Lives Matter protests, has raised questions about the appropriateness of such monuments in public spaces.
5. <https://yorkmix.com/council-rejects-unacceptable-changes-to-front-of-historic-whitby-pub/> - North Yorkshire Council has rejected plans to install a steel-framed shelter at the front of the 17th-century Middle Earth Tavern in Whitby. The council deemed the proposed structure 'unacceptable' due to its impact on the building's historic character and the surrounding conservation area. This decision follows previous refusals for similar developments at the site.
6. <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, citing a 'complete disregard' for authorities and residents. The bar has faced multiple complaints, including breaches of licensing conditions and incidents of antisocial behaviour. The council's licensing sub-committee is considering the application, with public representations invited.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-68484219> - JK's Bar in Whitby can reopen after police withdrew their objection following its sale to a new owner. The bar had faced potential licence revocation due to previous complaints and breaches. The new owner has assured the council of improvements and new staff, with plans to rename the establishment.