

Inside breath-taking buildings given new life by Wetherspoons – from church to cinema

Take a look inside some of the most jaw-dropping Wetherspoons buildings in the UK. Spoons saved these former opera houses, cinemas, police stations and churches from falling into ruin.



The Opera House, Tunbridge Wells (Image: Google)

Wetherspoons is known for its affordable pints, lively atmosphere and lairy carpets – but the pub chain has some very unique venues too.

Over the years, Spoons has saved a wide variety of different buildings from extinction.

As a result, there are now boozers in opera houses, former magistrates courts, counting houses and even churches.

Guests have the option of enjoying a pint in a jail cell, theatre stalls or beneath ornate glass domes.

To celebrate the Daily Star's Great British Booze Off competition, we've rounded up some of the quirkiest JD Wetherspoon pubs out there.

How many of these watering holes have you visited? Let us know in the comments below.

1. The Opera House, Tunbridge Wells, England

The Opera House first opened in Tunbridge Wells in 1902 (Image: Wetherspoons)

If you don't associate Spoons with class and sophistication, think again.

The Opera House, which is located in Tunbridge Wells, is a converted opera house. It still has plush red chairs and royal boxes customers would sit in as they watched arias being performed.

There's also a grand ceiling, gold banisters, grand curtains and even crests on the wall. Every year, boozers celebrate its former use by opening for opera performances for three days.

2. The Crosse Keys, London, England



The Crosse Keys - a converted bank turned pub in London (Image: Google)



The Crosse Keys building used to be headquarters of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (Image: Wetherspoons)

This boozier, located near Monument, is named after a famous coaching inn that was erected in the 1550s.

It was destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666 before being repurposed centuries on.

In the early 1900s, it was used as former headquarters of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation. The luxurious building was designed by W. Campbell Jones and first started welcomed customers in 1913. But nowadays, it's a Wetherspoons pub that's maintained many of its original features.

After walking through a lavish entrance, you'll find pillars, a marble fireplace, coffered ceilings and a glass dome directly above the stairwell.

3. The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Cumbria, England



The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Keswick (Image: Google)



Former holding rooms are now used as alcoves where punters can have a pint (Image: Wetherspoons)

Some get loud and lairy after they've had a few.

But this Spoons in Keswick, Cumbria, would be bound to put-off any punter from misbehaving.

The eerie building, that used to be a "workhouse" in the 1642, was converted into a magistrates' court and police station.

It was founded by lawyer Sir John Banks, who became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1640.

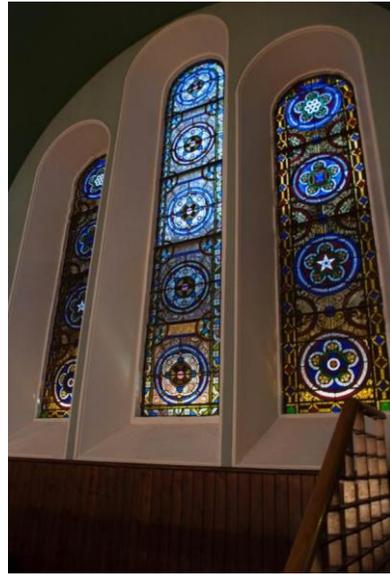
It was founded by lawyer Sir John Banks, who became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1640. The pub is named after the early modern lawyer and has retained some unique features that can still be seen today.

Door still have bolt locks on them and former cells have been turned into private alcoves you can enjoy a pint in.

4. The West Kirk, Ayr, Scotland



📍 The West Kirk pub, Sandgate, Ayr (Image: Ayrshire Post)



📍 There are stunning stain glass windows inside the former church (Image: Wetherspoons)

Sandgate Church was founded by Free Church clergy during the great Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1845.

The place of worship closed in 1981 but thankfully its beauty didn't go to ruin.

JD Wetherspoon opened a boozier in the religious building – and you'd never know it was a pub from the outside.

Punters can marvel at original stain glass windows when they meet up with mates for a drink. There's also grand pillars and a balcony area – but instead of heading up to the alter, customers queue at the bar!

5. The Palladium, Llandudno, Wales



📍 Wetherspoons' pub, The Palladium, in Llandudno (Image: Daily Post Wales)



📍 Old stalls and royal boxes are used now in the pub (Image: Wetherspoons)

This Welsh watering hole was formerly used as the Palladium cinema.

It was built back in 1920 and replaced Llandudno's first market hall.

When the venue was first showing films, it boasted 1,500 seats and an orchestra that would provide dramatic music to accompany the flicks.

Then the late 90s, it was converted into a bingo hall with a 600-seat cinema above. In 2001, Wetherspoons turned the old building into a pub.

The bar is in the old stalls area and there's still balconies, royal boxes and sparkling gold decor.

6. The Corryvreckan, Oban, Scotland



📍 The Corryvreckan, Oban, is one of Tim Martin's favourite pubs (Image: Wetherspoons)



📍 The pub boasts spectacular waterside views (Image: Wetherspoons)

When the Daily Star asked Wetherspoons founder Tim Martin to share his top pub, he couldn't pick a favourite.

Despite this, he did mention a few venues that are close to his heart.

And The Corryvreckan in Scotland is one of the boozers that really stands out to the businessman. The pub was built on the former Railway Quay site and overlooks a bustling pier.

It is named after the Corryvreckan whirlpool, which is located between Jura and Scarba. According to Martin, the ferry to the islands stops almost next to the beer pumps too!

7. The Corn Exchange, Bury St Edmunds, England



📍 The Corn Exchange is a Grade I listed building (Image: Wetherspoons)



📍 The interiors are equally as stunning (Image: Wetherspoons)

This Grade I listed monument first opened for business in 1862 on the site of an old market called The Shambles.

Products like wheat, barley and other cereal grains were traded by merchants and farmers at the location.

The building was designed by Ellis & Woodward and constructed by Lot Jackaman for £7,000. Then another floor was added in 1969, which allows there to be a hall and shopping area.

The pub was refurbished in 2010 to make it suitable for pub-goers but has retained some quirky characteristics like archways and a glass roof.

8. The Counting House, Glasgow, Scotland



The Counting House has an opulent glass domed ceiling (Image: Wetherspoons)



Punters also have the option of boozing in an old vault (Image: Wetherspoons)

The Counting House is another converted bank that now operates as a Wetherspoons pub. It dates back to the 1860s, when it was designed by J T Ruchead.

The building has a stunning style that's in-keeping with the Italian Renaissance.

Nowadays, punters marvel at the glass domed ceiling, marble figures and artwork on the walls. They're also able to drink pints in old bank vault cells with jail bars and bolted doors.

Click [here](#) to see the article on the Daily Star website.