

Isle of Wight Council

Supplementary Planning Guidance

# Advertisements and Shopfronts



August 2004

**This is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents. The Isle of Wight Council adopted this guide, August 2004, following public consultation. It is published by Isle of Wight Council, Directorate of Environment Services.**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 There are many factors, which attract businesses to a town, and the form and design of shop fronts is one of them. All property owners should be aware of this fact since the business potential of a town will depend much upon the collective appearance of its individual properties. Attractive shopfronts with appropriately designed and positioned signage help to create an effective advertisement for the business and enhance the appearance of the built environment.
- 1.2 Under planning legislation alterations to existing shop fronts and the creation of new shopfronts including external security measures, which materially affect the appearance of the building, require the Council's approval. Many types of signs also require approval before they can be displayed. The purpose of this document is to provide positive advice and guidance by highlighting important planning considerations. Approval for a new sign, shopfront or security measure is more likely to be granted if the advice in this leaflet is followed.
- 1.3 Planning applications will be primarily considered against the policies within the Unitary Development Plan. The purpose of this guidance is to supplement these policies with more detailed information. The guidance has been prepared in consultation with the public and is the subject of a Council resolution, which means that weight can be attached to them in the development control process.
- 1.4 For the purposes of these guidelines, a "shop" is defined as a retail outlet having a fascia sign and/or display window. Non-retail premises such as banks, betting offices, estate agents, restaurants, building societies and public houses are included.
- 1.5 The large number of listed buildings and conservation areas on the Island, indicates the quality of its buildings and spaces and the shop front is such an immediate visible element that it, too, must reflect this quality and maintain the standard for the Island.

### Policies within the UDP:

D5    B1  
D6    B4  
B8

## **2 General advice:**

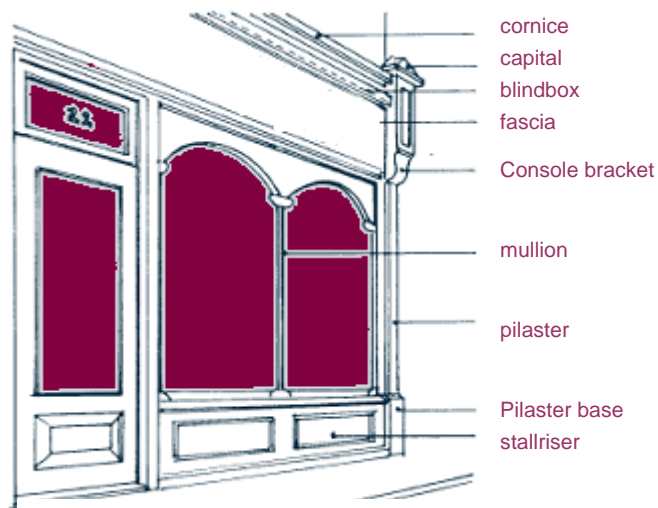
- 2.1 Any alteration or addition to an existing building that is Listed, will require Listed Building Consent, regardless of whether or not planning or advertisement consent is required. Applicants and/or agents should check with the Council's Development Control Section whether a building is in a conservation area or a listed building. If you are in any doubt, whether you

require permission you should contact the Council's development Control section before you start.

- 2.2 Planning permission will be required for the removal of an existing shopfront. If the shopfront is in a conservation area and makes a positive contribution to the area this will be a material consideration.
- 2.3 The need for consent for "change of use" is not covered by this document. Additional advice will need to be sought for this type of development.
- 2.4 Building Control approval may also be required for changes to shopfronts, and in particular the need provide for access for all users. Owners should ensure that any changes take into account the needs of all users and do not worsen accessibility.

### 3 Existing Shopfronts

- 3.1 Most of the main central shopping areas within Island towns are within conservation areas. The Council therefore believes that wherever old shopfronts of architectural merit survive, every effort should be made to retain and repair them, as they make a significant contribution to the history and character of the area.
- 3.2 Preference should be for the retention of any well-designed and proportioned shopfronts.
- 3.3 Before considering a proposal to remove or alter an existing shopfront of any date, an evaluation of its quality should be made. If necessary, investigation should be made in order to establish the quality of any earlier shopfront or features that may remain behind later alterations. Existing features of historic or architectural interest should be retained and details, which reflect traditional character, need to be historically correct.
- 3.4 Quality fixtures and fittings of retained shopfronts should not be discarded. Blind boxes, ventilation grilles, hanging signs and their brackets, door furniture, tiling, shutters and engraved, etched or "brilliant" glass are a selection of features worthy of repair or reuse.



TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONT FEATURES

#### **4 New and Replacement Shopfronts**

- 4.1 Most shopfronts have a clearly defined area for the display and advertisement of the goods they sell. Therefore, as premises change hands the shopfront appearance may also change. Normally, the Council will have no objection to changes in shopfront design, provided this does not result in the loss of the features of merit or detract from the character and appearance of the rest of the building. Where original features remain, they should as a general rule be retained and incorporated in to any new shopfront, especially if the property is situated within a conservation area, or is a listed building.
- 4.2 Planning applications and listed building consent applications should be accompanied by detailed drawings that clearly illustrate the existing shop front and the proposal. Drawings need to be clear and provide sufficient information to enable officers to consider the application. Plans, sections and elevations must be provided including details of materials and colours. Elevations should be at 1:20 scale with some full size construction details. Drawings should illustrate the shop front in context with the adjoining properties and upper floors shown.
- 4.3 The new shopfront must not be designed in isolation. Care should be taken to respect the design of the building into which the shopfront is fitted and the adjoining properties. Balance, rhythm and subdivision of the upper floors should be considered in relation to the design of the new shop front.

## 5 Scale and Proportion:

- 5.1 New shopfronts should be sympathetic in scale and appearance to the original building. This can usually be achieved by working within the space created by the original fascia and pilasters. The effects of excessively deep fascias, the removal of pilasters and the insertion of large horizontally proportioned plate glass windows will create a disproportionate shopfront which will destroy the original proportions of the building.



New shopfronts within original fascias and pilasters

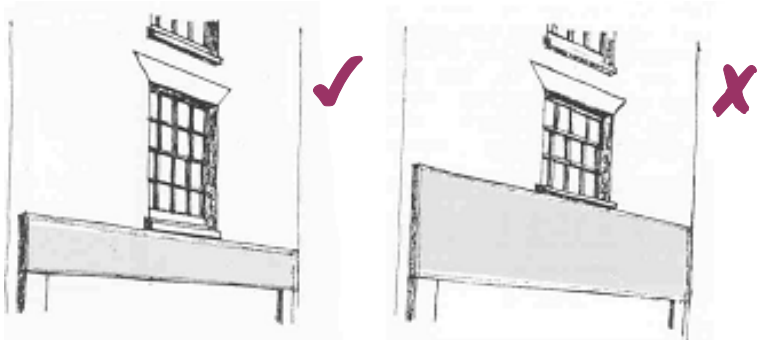
SCALE AND PROPORTION

Pilasters removed, overbearing fascia and large glazed area

- 5.2 Pilasters are thin piers projecting from the face of the wall normally arranged either side of a glazed shopfront. Most traditional shopfronts incorporate pilasters in some form, the design and material may vary but they will always have a defined base (pedestal), middle section (shaft) and capping (capital). Pilasters create an important vertical framing effect separating shopfronts from its neighbours and should always be retained where existing and incorporated into new shopfronts.
- 5.3 The stall-riser is the area of the shopfront between the pavement and the underside of the shopfront. Care should be taken to retain existing stall risers with architectural features and that new shopfronts incorporate a stall-riser of adequate depth. Excessively high or low stall-risers can adversely affect the appearance of the shopfront.

## 6 Fascias:

- 6.1 New fascias should be of the appropriate depth to suit the building and incorporate along the upper edge a cornice or capping. The fascia should provide a clear definition between the shop front and the upper floors. In cases where large inappropriate fascias are to be replaced, the Council may insist upon a reduction in depth.



- 6.2 Fascias should be positioned to avoid covering up any original architectural details. Investigate existing fascias that may have been covered or removed. Original fascias are generally well proportioned and may contain architecturally interesting features. These should always be retained where possible or reinstated where necessary.
- 6.3 Modern designs may be acceptable, however, the fascia should still respect the character and appearance of the building.

## 7 Shop Windows:

- 7.1 Glazing bars and mullions are essential to create vertical subdivisions in display windows. They give added visual support to the building and reflect the proportions of upper floor windows. Large undivided areas of plate glass have the opposite effect and are not acceptable. All glazing must be toughened in accordance with Building Regulations.



Vertical subdivisions should reflect the proportions of the upper floor.

- 7.2 It is important to ensure the design of a new shopfront is appropriate to the period of the building in which it is set. Poorly finished decorative features will detract from the shop front's appearance; therefore good materials and detailing are essential.
- 7.3 Original curved glass features within existing shopfronts, should where ever possible be retained. Curved glass is a rare feature and makes an important contribution to a towns architectural heritage.

## 8 Materials:

- 8.1 Traditionally shopfronts were constructed in a number of materials that included heavy timber fascia boards, pilasters and brick stallrisers. Where these features are missing and it is intended to reinstate them, consideration must be given to the use of appropriate materials if the desired effect is to be achieved. UPVC, concrete, plastic and ceramic materials should be avoided.

## 9 Groups of Buildings:

- 9.1 A difficult design problem arises where more than one property is in the ownership of a single business. Understandably, the owner may want to establish the business identity and display a large sign across the full extent of the shop.



GROUPS OF BUILDINGS

- 9.2 The Council believes that where this occurs the individuality of each building should be respected. This can be achieved by the use of fascias, cornices, side pilasters and window divisions. The corporate identity of linked buildings can be maintained without detriment to the street scene, provided the segregation of upper and lower floors of the building is not exaggerated by wide “unbroken” fascias and the individuality of each separate building is not ignored.

## 10 Access for people with disabilities:

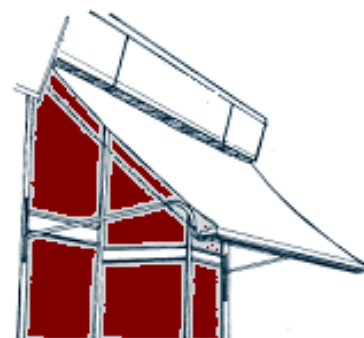
- 10.1 All new buildings that are to be used by the public are required to make services accessible to people with disabilities and other users with mobility problems. This should be borne in mind when designing a new shopfront. In particular consideration should be given to:

- Positioning entrances to the advantage of any reduction in levels across the site;
- Design, where possible to incorporate ramps internally as not to compromise the street scene.

- 10.2 For more information on this subject, you should contact a member of the Building Control staff, whose contact details are available at the end of this document.

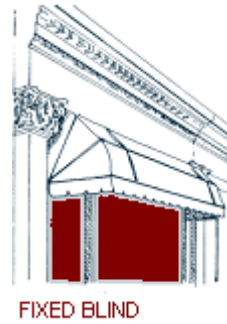
## 11 Canopies and Blinds:

- 11.1 Retractable blinds – The traditional sunblind is the “awning” type, usually of hardwearing canvas and always fully retractable into a recessed box (blind box) usually contained within the cornice, forming an integral part of the shopfront. This type of blind was used for practical purposes such as the protection of goods from sunlight.



RETRACTABLE BLIND

11.2 Fixed blinds – Fixed blinds are those where material covers a wood or metal frame and although they appear retractable, they cannot be retracted conveniently on a daily basis, or without special tools. An increasingly popular example of this type of blind is the Dutch Canopy that traditionally has a curved profile with enclosed ends. Frequently used as an advertisement or eye-catching ornamental feature rather than for practical purposes. The lettering of advertisements should be symmetrically placed, be an appropriate size and style. Modern varieties are of rigid plastic construction and should be avoided.



11.3 Often the size, shape, projection and colours and material of canopies can combine to produce an extremely intrusive element in the street scene. Also attractive architectural detailing on a shopfront can be concealed. This problem is more significant within conservation areas and on listed buildings where the Council will normally resist the use of “Dutch” blinds.

11.4 The Council will in most cases prefer the use of retractable blinds provided they adhere to the following guidance:

- The blind should have a satisfactory relationship to the building, reflecting its architectural style. The blind should cover the whole width of the shopfront (same width as fascia) but avoid the pilasters.
- The blind should be located well below designed fascias, avoiding the need for further signage on the blind.
- Blinds should not be placed on the first floor or upper windows.
- Projecting blind boxes should form an integral part of the fascia design.
- Blinds should be woven material. The use of glossy plastic and UPVC materials should be avoided.
- The blind should be matt and preferable neutral in colour relating to the predominant colours of the fascia.
- The blind should not be detrimental to public safety.
- Advertising on the blind should be avoided. When advertising is proposed it should not duplicate information contained on the fascia or lead to a cluttered appearance (Some advertising may require further consent).



## 12 Signs and Advertisements

- 12.1 Following on from considering shopfronts it is also important to consider signage on and around the building and the built environment in general.
- 12.2 Well-designed signs coupled with pleasing shopfronts can add to the quality of the area, whereas poor design will detract. Even small signs can have a detrimental effect over a large area if they are badly designed. All shop owners can play an important role in ensuring that the attractiveness of the town centre commercial areas is maintained and enhanced by considering the following guidance.

### 13 Fascia Signs:

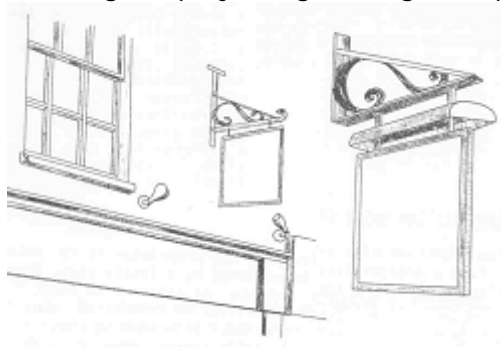
- 13.1 Generally, the main sign on shop premises is the fascia sign, and the most important consideration is that it is designed not to be too deep or bulky. Fascia boards should be designed as an integral part of the shop, contained within the existing pilasters and cornice. Harsh or garish colours and reflective materials should be avoided. Subdued colours should be used to emphasise important elements of the design. Large nationally known shops may have to adapt their standard sign if it would be out of character in its particular location, such as within a conservation area or on a listed building.

### 14 Lettering:

- 14.1 The most pleasing and sympathetic approach to signage is the use of individual letters either painted or fixed to the backdrop of the fascia or façade. The depth of the fascia and the proportions of the building will mainly determine the size and style of the lettering. The Council will encourage hand painted signs on certain properties.
- 14.2 Where upper floor premises are being used for a different business, the Council will resist applications for new external signs other than on the ground floor fascia or façade. As an alternative the Council will consider the use of lettering on the glass of upper floor windows.

### 15 Projecting and Hanging Signs:

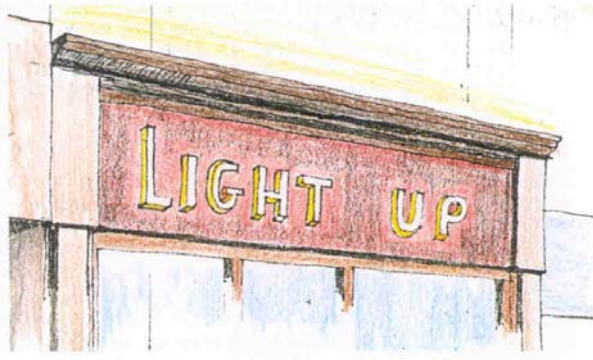
- 15.1 In addition to fascia signs many businesses advertise their premises with the use of projecting and hanging signs. The Council will resist inappropriately designed projecting box signs, especially if they are internally illuminated.



- 15.2 Traditional hanging signs of appropriate size and constructed in either wood or metal and hand painted will be encouraged, especially in conservation areas.

## 16 Illumination:

16.1 In nearly all cases illuminated signs require advertisement consent from the



Council. There are two basic ways of illuminating signs and these are “internally” and “externally”. Both forms of illumination can easily ruin the appearance of a shopfront and detract from an area. The Council will generally resist applications for internally illuminated fascias, box and “halo” signs (individual lettering which is illuminated around the



edges) in conservation areas, on or near listed buildings and in residential areas. In cases where it is essential for the sign to be visible at night and the level of street illumination is poor, preference will be given to the use of reflected light from discretely positioned spotlights or lighting units, provided they are not over elaborate in design and kept to a minimum.

## 17 Safety:

17.1 Badly designed and positioned signs can cause accidents. The Council will resist all signs that would obstruct the vision of motorists and pedestrians.

## 18 Clutter and Precedent:

18.1 Single advertisements by themselves may not be unduly harmful, but the cumulative impact of a number of displays can have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of both urban and rural areas. The Council will resist applications that would create an image of clutter and confusion. Where consent is given for a new sign, it will normally only be for a period of 5 years, after which further approval will be necessary if the sign is to be retained. Where a number of businesses share a building, the Council will encourage a co-ordinated display of signs to avoid an untidy proliferation of signs. This also applies to shops situated within arcades.

18.2 In rural locations the display of signs can detract from the appearance of the countryside, therefore consent for advance and directional signs to business premises will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

## 19 Shopfront Security

19.1 The Council recognizes the need for adequate security measures against an increasing trend in theft and vandalism. However, in most cases, the most obvious high profile measures, such as external shutters will have a detrimental visual effect upon their surroundings and this is particularly the case within conservation areas, residential areas and on listed buildings. However, the Council believes that in the majority of cases effective security measures can be found that will also look acceptable.

## **20 What work requires planning permission?**

20.1 Planning permission is required for all external screens (fixed or removable), which materially affect the appearance of any building. Internal screens do not require planning permission; however, if the building is listed, listed building consent will be required. If these features are installed without the appropriate consent, the Council may take enforcement action to secure their removal where it is considered that they are detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.

## **21 Alternative Shopfront Security**

### **Strengthened glass:**

21.1 The use of strengthened glass is preferable as the appearance of the shopfront is unaffected. This is especially important for listed buildings and in conservation areas. However, in order to act as a deterrent the qualities of the glass should be advertised on the shop front.

### **Internal surveillance equipment:**

21.2 This is effective and unobtrusive and can be used to guard problem areas such as doorways.

### **Shopfront design:**

21.3 When installing a new shopfront, or altering an existing one, security should always be carefully considered at the outset. Strengthening stallrisers or the shopfront frame, by internal structural reinforcement if necessary, could help to combat ram-raiding. Levels of security can be achieved in an overall attractive shopfront design that would not be possible by trying to add security measures later.

21.4 Introducing mullions or glazing bars, where appropriate, in the design of the building will create smaller, stronger areas of glass. These are, in the worst event, less expensive to replace and less of a temptation for wilful damage.

### **Internal open lattice grilles:**

21.5 Where there is no alternative but to provide a security screen, an open lattice grille, fixed internally, is preferred. With a well-designed grille your shop display remains virtually as attractive as during opening hours. Vision into the shop offers some security in itself. The enjoyment of window shopping encourages more people into the area, helping to reduce opportunist crime. Also, in the event of an alarmed window being broken, the grille is a further barrier to penetrate whilst the alarm is sounding.

### Externally mounted removable grilles:

21.6 Removable grilles have the advantage of doing away with the box housings and side rails of fixed systems. Where there is no alternative but to provide an external security screen, removable grilles may be acceptable if well-



designed. The Council will consider granting consent for external removable grilles at high risk premises, subject to:

#### REMOVABLE GRILLES

- The use of unobtrusive fixings and grilles that do not damage architectural features or mouldings, and are painted to blend with the shopfront.
- The grilles do not cover pilasters and other features, but fit within individual elements or window areas of the shopfront.
- The grilles are stored out of sight when not in use.
- On listed buildings, where such measures would be generally only a last resort, individual designs to complement the character of the building may be needed.
- The grilles do not intrude into the public highway.

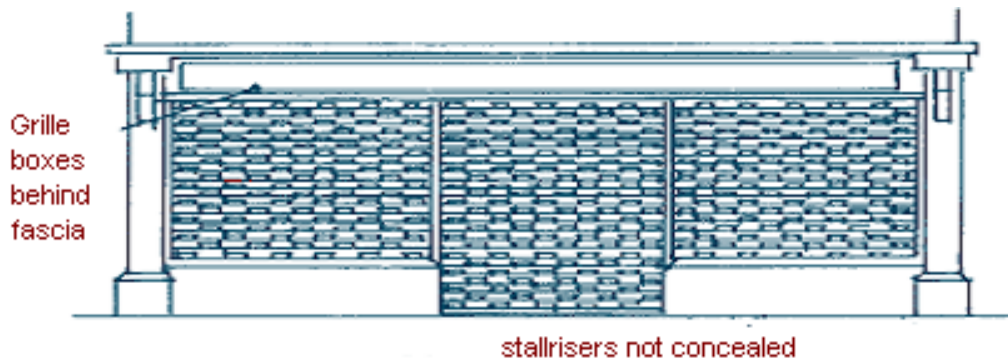
21.7 To protect recessed shop doorways, the traditional idea of a removable (even concertineroed or hinged) well designed 'gate' holds good, being both practical and of reasonable appearance.

### Externally mounted open lattice roller grilles:

21.8 Once set in front of the glass, security grilles become much more prominent, and require bulky roller boxes and side runners. Attractive architectural features and details may become covered over. A much harsher look in the streetscene results, especially when repeated at several premises. Therefore, the Council will normally discourage the use of such grilles in the interests of visual amenity, particularly upon listed buildings, in conservation areas, and for businesses situated in residential areas. In considering possible exceptions, the Council would need to be satisfied that:

- No other combination of security measures is feasible.
- Boxes and runners can be concealed adequately behind fascias and inside pilasters.
- A well-designed grille of suitable colour will be used, including where necessary grilles individually designed to minimise their visual impact.

- The grille will not intrude into the public highway.



### ROLLER GRILLES

#### Alarms:

21.9 The Council welcomes security alarm systems as a way of being less dependent upon equipment such as external shutters. However alarm boxes are sometimes still relatively bulky items in themselves and may be used at many premises along a street. They need to be positioned as carefully as possible in relation to the shop front. Businesses are asked to take into account the following guidelines when considering installing an alarm box:

- Use modern equipment that is obvious to the would-be intruder yet fits discreetly into the overall shopfront.
- Use equipment of a colour to tone with the shopfront, as far as possible.
- Where there is no alternative but to place a box upon the face of a building or shopfront, carefully site it in relation to the elevation of the building. Listed building consent may be required where a box is proposed on a listed building.

21.10 Alarm systems can be connected to the Police, which may help avoid the need for exterior boxes (only needing an alerting 'sticker' or logo on the premises). However, such connections usually go to a central station and not the local police station, which may not always suit your circumstances.

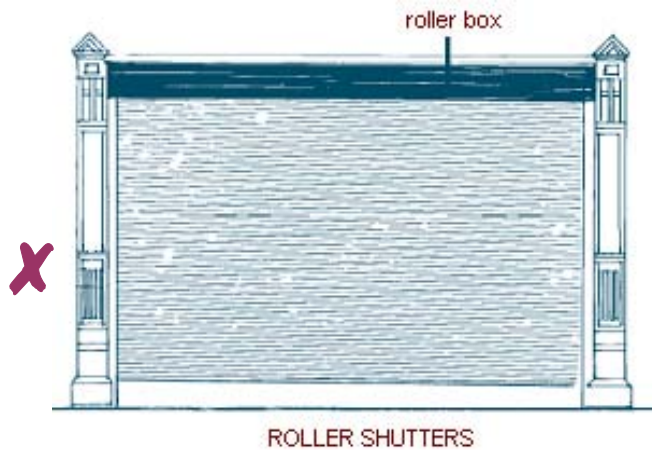
#### Street bollards:

21.11 The Council will not normally consider the use of bollards for security reasons in the highway or on pavements. This is necessary to avoid obstructions to pedestrian flows, danger to the visually handicapped and other people with disabilities, and visual clutter. Siting on private land could be considered where this does not significantly detract from the visual appearance of the property or the area.

## Solid roller shutters

21.12 Solid shutters obliterate the shopfront. They bring a crude and deadening effect to the street. Window-shopping is curtailed and less light reaches the street. This creates an unwelcoming and fortified look and tends to put people off coming into the area, in turn reducing incidental supervision by

the public. Any intruder entering the shop from the rear is also not visible from outside.



21.13 The Council realises that for many businesses solid shutters at first sight offer high profile, effective security.

However, environmentally they have to be regarded as the most damaging. The Council will normally

refuse permission for their use, especially upon listed buildings, in conservation areas or for businesses situated in mainly residential areas. Otherwise, planning consent will only be granted in the most exceptional cases. Where they are permitted they must be painted and should be of the perforated variety that allow surveillance of the shop from outside when the shop is internally illuminated. Such shutters should only cover the glazed area of the shopfront with the shutter box installed behind the fascia board.

21.14 The guidance on shopfront security is intended to give a balanced range of possible measures that will be effective, whilst reducing visual effects upon the environment. It is appreciated that individual circumstances vary widely and that innovations in security are constantly coming onto the market. Thus, the Council will always be pleased to discuss your problems, and ideas; and to learn from you first hand about security concerns.

## 22 Listed buildings

22.1 Alterations to listed buildings including shop security measures and the display of advertisements will be subject to special controls.

## 23 Advice and Further Information

23.1 If you are uncertain about any of the points made in this leaflet in relation to a particular building or group of buildings you are considering having converted, you may find it useful to discuss your proposal with a member of staff from the Council's Development Control Section, whose address and telephone number is given below.

23.2 Appointments can also be made to meet a member of staff at the Council's planning offices, and such contact will enable the principle of re-use to be established, and could save time and money on drawings and a structural survey.

23.3 You will also need to gain Building Control Permission for any conversion works, which is in addition to planning permission.

## **24 Summary of Contacts**

The Development Control Section is part of the Council's Planning Services Department, which is located at:

Seaclose Offices, Fairlee Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, and PO30 2QS Tel: (01983) 823552

The Planning Reception is open Monday – Thursday 08:30 – 17:00 and Friday 08:30 – 16:30. Planning Officers are available to give advice between the hours of 08:30-12:30 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

The Council's Building Control Section is also located at the address above.

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The assistance of the following Local Authorities and organisations in supplying information used in the publication of this Supplementary Planning Guidance Note is gratefully acknowledged:

- Hambleton District Council
- North Cornwall District Council
- London Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
- Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council