



Raising the Bar:

Imaginative solution wins praise at it secures site and improves environment in busy shopping location

Large vacant restaurant/club premises in Northampton shopping centre

BACKGROUND

A prime location in a very busy shopping street, this former bar and restaurant sits between Nationwide Building Society and an RBS bank, in Northampton's Abington Street.

It is wider than a standard double-sized retail unit with three entrance doors at the front, two of which have tiled porches open to the street that are two metres deep.

These recesses were used by rough sleepers to sleep and live in. Each day and night there was an accumulation of urine and faeces as well as general belongings and rubbish that were left there when the rough sleepers were moved on by the Police or other agencies.

The local council received frequent complaints regarding the premises being used in this way as it is on the main street in the town centre, very visible to shoppers and surrounding businesses, and attracting a lot of attention. The smell of urine and faeces was very noticeable to passers-by. The council, who requested help from VPS, was cleaning down the floor and removing the waste regularly but this took up resources both financially and in staff time. A local homeless charity also requested help as they were repeatedly tending to the rough sleepers with help and finding accommodation.

“The decal looks great and so much better, it has been noticed by a lot of people; so positive for the town centre.”

Mrs Louise Marshall,
Senior Environmental Health
Officer, Northampton Borough Council

OVERVIEW

SECTOR	Public Houses
CUSTOMER	Star Pubs and Bars
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted guests occupying doorways • Council complaints round waste deposited outside
SOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VPS Decals • SmartAlarm Gold with Verifeye Visual

BEFORE



AFTER



SOLUTION

After cleaning and sanitising the areas, VPS built a timber frame for the three oversized doorways; this timber was then painted to prevent weathering and to ensure the boards matched the fabric of the building. A tailor-made artwork 'decal' was designed by VPS to suit the customer's request and applied to enhance the appearance of the empty premises. A VPS SmartAlarm Gold, an advanced security system, was installed in the property with a Verifeye Visual camera to protect any additional entry points. The alarm is designed specifically to protect vacant properties, and operates as a stand-alone system with a long-life battery alarm and on-board tamper detection. It provides instant detection and alerting on a range of incidents including intruders, flooding and smoke.

The work was completed in less than 24 hours.

The effect and impact has been dramatic, changing the blighted site from an unpleasant eyesore and health hazard, repelling shoppers and local businesses alike, into a far more environmentally-pleasing and secure premises welcomed by the local authorities, police, homeless agencies and the property owner, Heineken.

This project is one of many that VPS have worked with landlords, property managers and local authorities to combine the need to secure challenging premises with an environmental consideration that ultimately helps to re-let or sell vacant premises more quickly than if neglected.

“A clever solution that has not only saved time, effort and expense in keeping the premises clean and tidy, but also keeps the site protected and much more ready for re-let.”

James Sharpe,
Heineken



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