

# Introduction

1.1 The Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) is a highly successful development initiative based around the concept of an international rail-port linking the UK with the continent, via the Channel Tunnel. DIRFT provides warehouse, distribution and manufacturing units of varying sizes on land to the west of the A5, north and south of the A428 and north of the Northampton loop on the West Coast Main Line (WCML). The Rail port at DIRFT, which opened in 1997, is now one of the busiest rail freight terminals in the UK. The expansion of DIRFT to which this Design Guide relates, will provide an additional 180,741 sq m (1,945,500 sq ft) of warehouse, distribution and industrial uses on a site covering approximately 54 hectares. The majority of the plots to be developed on the DIRFT Expansion Site will be directly rail-linked.

## Purpose of the Design Guide

1.2 The purpose of this Design Guide is to provide a clear framework for the future development of DIRFT on land to the west of the A5, north and south of the A428 (see figure 1). The Guide sets down the design requirements for future planning applications and reserved matters applications on the site, which the developers of the site shall adhere to. The Guide describes the main structural elements of the DIRFT Expansion, which are already agreed in principle with the relevant authorities and provides detailed advice for the

development of individual plots. Development shall respect the design parameters already established at DIRFT. Sustainability and quality design are key principles of this guide. The document will provide a degree of certainty for the local authority, people living nearby and incoming occupiers of buildings as to the eventual form of completed development.

1.3 This SPD applies to the DIRFT Expansion Site as granted planning permission by Daventry District Council on 10 January 2005. Other parts of the DIRFT development granted planning permission in the 1990's at DIRFT South, Central and East are almost completed and have been subject to a previously agreed Design Guide. The description of the components of DIRFT in the subsequent sections is included to provide context and background to the future expansion of DIRFT.

## Consultation

1.4 The consultation draft was placed before Planning Committee on 6th July 2005 and Strategy Group on 21st July 2005. It was accompanied by a separate draft Sustainability Appraisal. A final draft of both documents returned to Planning Committee on 16th November and Strategy Group on 24th November, with the Design Guide being adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by Full Council on 8th December 2005.

## Structure of the Design Guide

1.5 This Guide is divided into five main sections:

- i) Section 2.0 provides a brief introduction to the history of DIRFT and brief chronology of the phasing of the development of the site.
- ii) Section 3.0 provides a description of the proposed DIRFT Expansion development, followed by a discussion of the main development constraints on the site, including; land use limitations, floorspace limitations and planning conditions which impose height restrictions and phasing, for example.
- iii) Section 4.0 outlines the main design concepts and gives consideration to the likely plot locations, building heights, railway and vehicular access parameters and public transport links with the aim of ensuring quality and consistency in the communal areas of the development.
- iv) Section 5.0 describes the planning of the site including development densities and parking principles. It focuses on building design, in particular the possible floorspace requirements of potential occupiers. Details of materials, colour, signage, car parking, energy efficiency, health and safety, and perimeter treatments on the site are also set out. The aim of this part of the Guide is to ensure a high level of design quality and consistency is achieved over the site.

- v) Section 6.0 focuses on site landscaping, and provides guidance on appropriate strategic, plot and hard landscaping. This section will also address the requirements of the planning conditions with regards to the timing of the implementation and possible replacement of landscaping as well as biodiversity issues.
- vi) Section 7.0 refers to construction management and sets out the constraints imposed in terms of the requirements of both planning and legal agreements in connection with; hours of operation, the routing of construction traffic, the enclosure of compounds and the treatment of sites awaiting development.

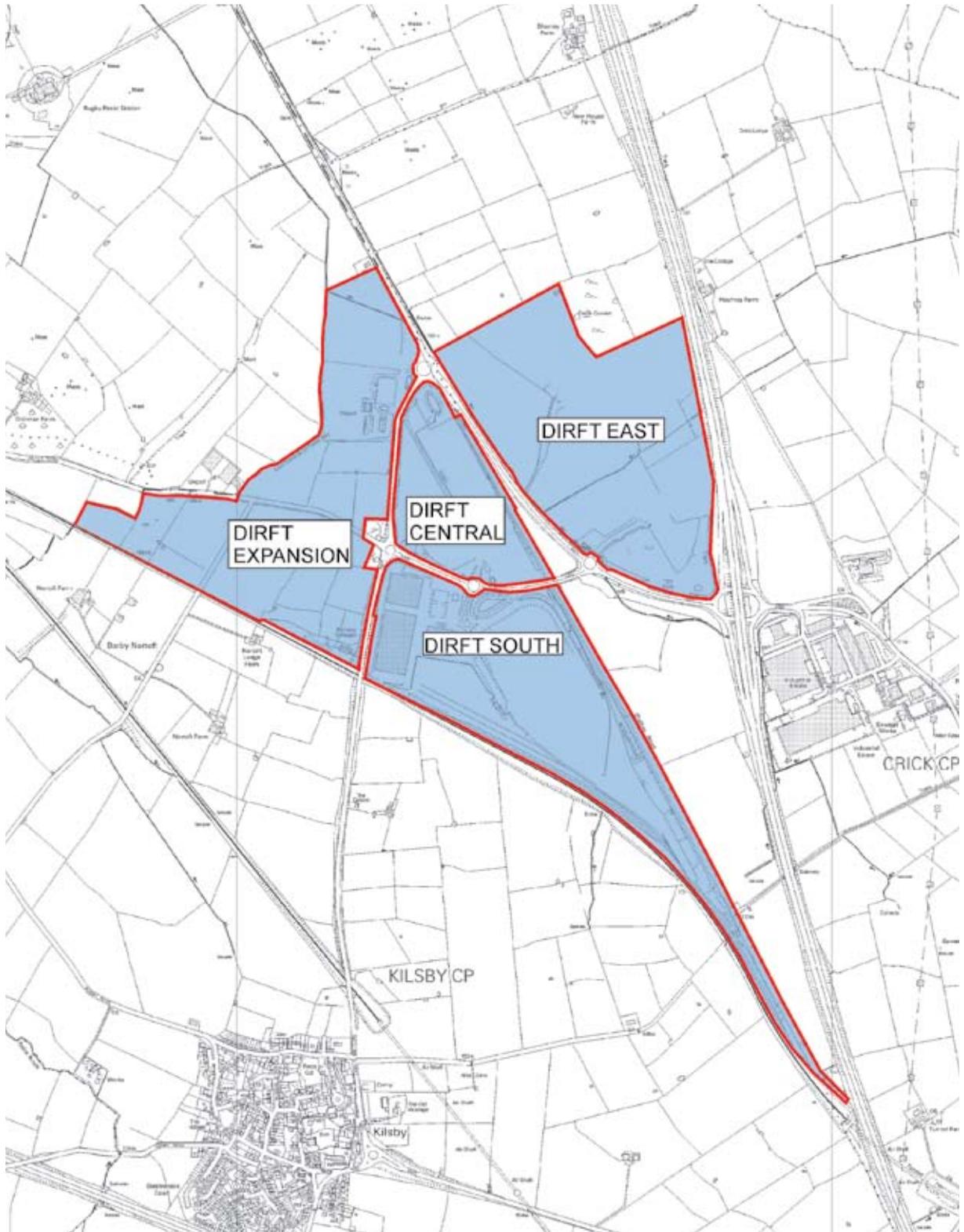
## Using the Design Guide

1.6 The Guide is intended to ease the process of design by providing a framework within which architects, landscape professionals and engineers etc can work. Daventry District Council considers design to be of key importance and it is not the intention to stifle creativity. Original and innovative design will be encouraged.

1.7 The process of design is likely to involve the production of initial concepts, taking account of the guidance. The process will normally consist of the following:

- i) Pre-design to establish main design objectives
- ii) Initial design submission indicating uses proposed,

- proposed development programme, plans, elevations and sections, car parking, servicing, and landscape proposals etc.
- iii) Detailed design submission (including full specification) if this is considered necessary. Samples of materials may be required by condition attached to detailed approvals.
  - iv) Initial meeting with planning officers at Daventry District Council, where the main design issues should be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
  - v) Submission of a planning application or application for approval of reserved matters, will normally be required following the above process.



**Figure 1: Site Location plan**