

# General Design Considerations

- 4.1 This section of the Design Guide sets out the strategic design practices and principles for new development. More detailed guidance on the design of individual plots and the buildings within them is provided in the next section.
- 4.2 The basic design concept involves the provision of a number of industrial and distribution buildings, the plots for which, where practicable, will be connected to the West Coast Main Line electrified railway (Northampton Loop) and operated in association with Rail Port. The connection of these plots by rail will further enhance the sustainability of DIRFT by extending the opportunity for inter-modal transfer of freight.
- 4.3 The technical specification of the rail network within the site imposes the following operational limitations on the setting out of the sidings:
  - i) Minimum internal radii of 160m
  - ii) Maximum gradients of 1 in 80.
- 4.4 Developers proposing buildings on land adjacent to the railway line shall submit details of foundations, fencing, finished ground levels and drainage to Daventry District Council for approval prior to commencement of development. Buildings and trees shall be sited such that access over land owned by Network Rail is not required for building or maintenance. Deciduous trees shall be sited well back from the railway to prevent operating difficulties caused by falling leaves. Use of red or green lighting shall be avoided and any white lights shall not be directed towards the railway in the interest of operational rail safety.
- 4.5 Developers shall consider the potential of their development to interfere with telecommunications and broadcast signals and are referred to PPG8: Telecommunications. The Local Planning Authority will assess this as part of any future development applications.

## Landscape Character

- 4.6 Immediately surrounding the site, the quality and character of the landscape are affected by a variety of large structures as well as a loss of hedgerows and trees resulting from intensive farming.
- 4.7 The land beyond the western and northern boundaries of the development site is comprised of land developed with tall radio masts, which dominate views for several miles from the surrounding countryside.
- 4.8 The topography of the site is generally flat, at a level above Ordnance datum of between 103 and 117m. To the east, the land rises over the established DIRFT development until the Motorway is reached, beyond which there is undulating land which rises to 155m AOD at Crack's Hill to the north of Crick. To the north and west the land rises slightly until it falls to the River Avon and the Oxford canal; whereas to the south the land rises more quickly, reaching a height of 155m AOD around Kilsby.
- 4.9 The farms that lie to the south of DIRFT, beyond the railway line, support a variety of agricultural uses, ranging from sheep and cattle grazing to arable land. The fields range in size between 10 and 60 hectares,

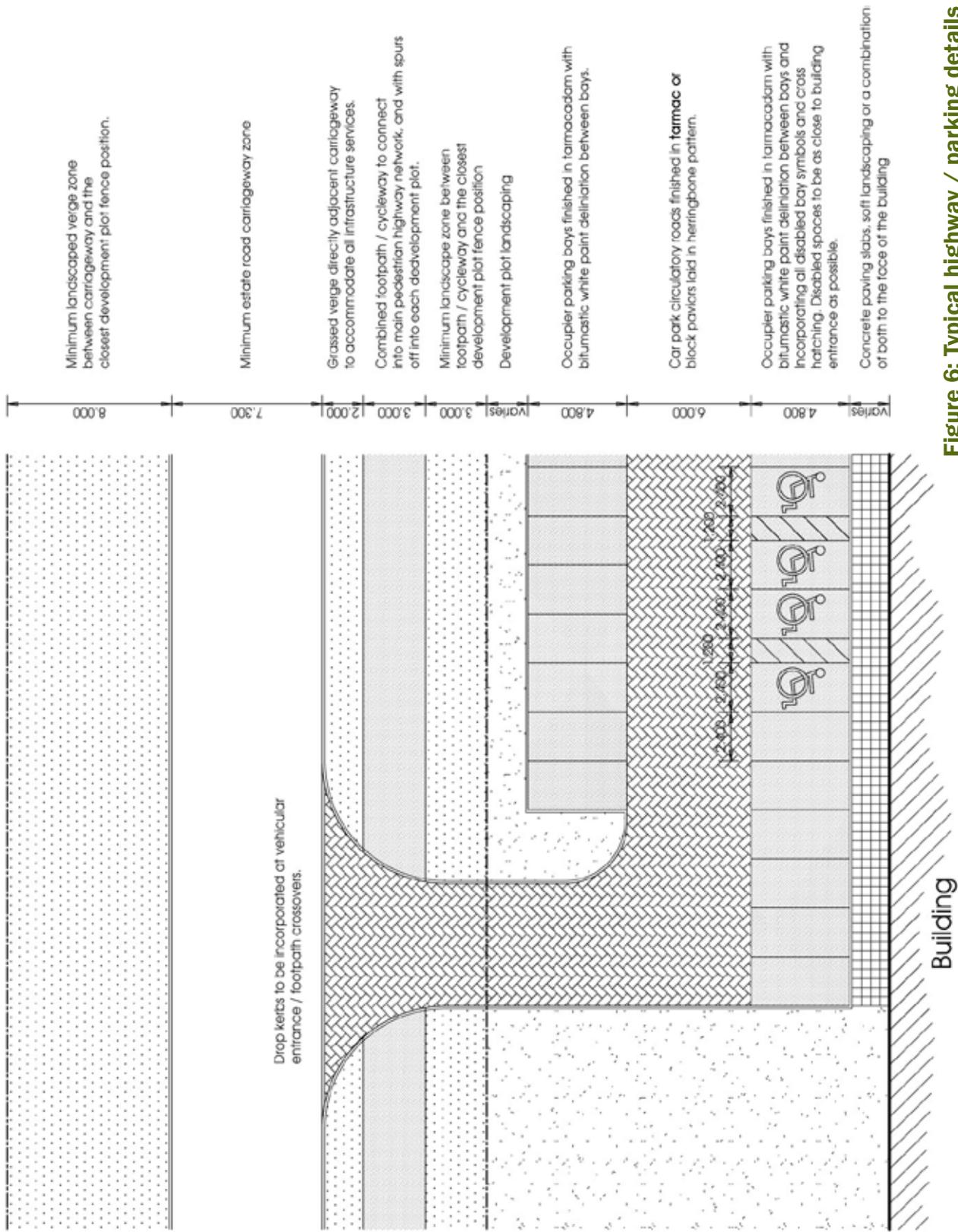
bounded by managed hedgerows clipped to a height of around 1.5m, whilst others have been left to grow unchecked.

- 4.10 Within the above context, the site is presently flat and low-lying, rising to the south adjacent to the railway line. The central section of the northern leg of the site which lies to the west of the roundabout where the A5 meets the A5/M1 link, has been used for many years as a lorry park. Much of the land is now used as the central depot for Eddie Stobart Ltd and has been environmentally enhanced as a result. Other than the landscape of established screen planting and drainage ponds that exists adjacent to the roundabout, there are no landscape features on this portion of the site.
- 4.11 There are hedgerows, some continuous and some intermittent, which offer some screening of the site, on the east, north, and west boundaries (with the exception of the lorry park boundary), but on the southern boundary there is little more than an occasional shrub growing on the line of a post-and-wire railway fence. Alongside the roads, the A5, the A428 and the C class lane to Barby, there are narrow belts of trees, essentially of oak and ash with some sycamore, field maple and willow.
- 4.12 The landscape strategy shall have regard to the landscape character of the area surrounding the site. Developers should refer to the Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment. The landscaping of the whole site shall

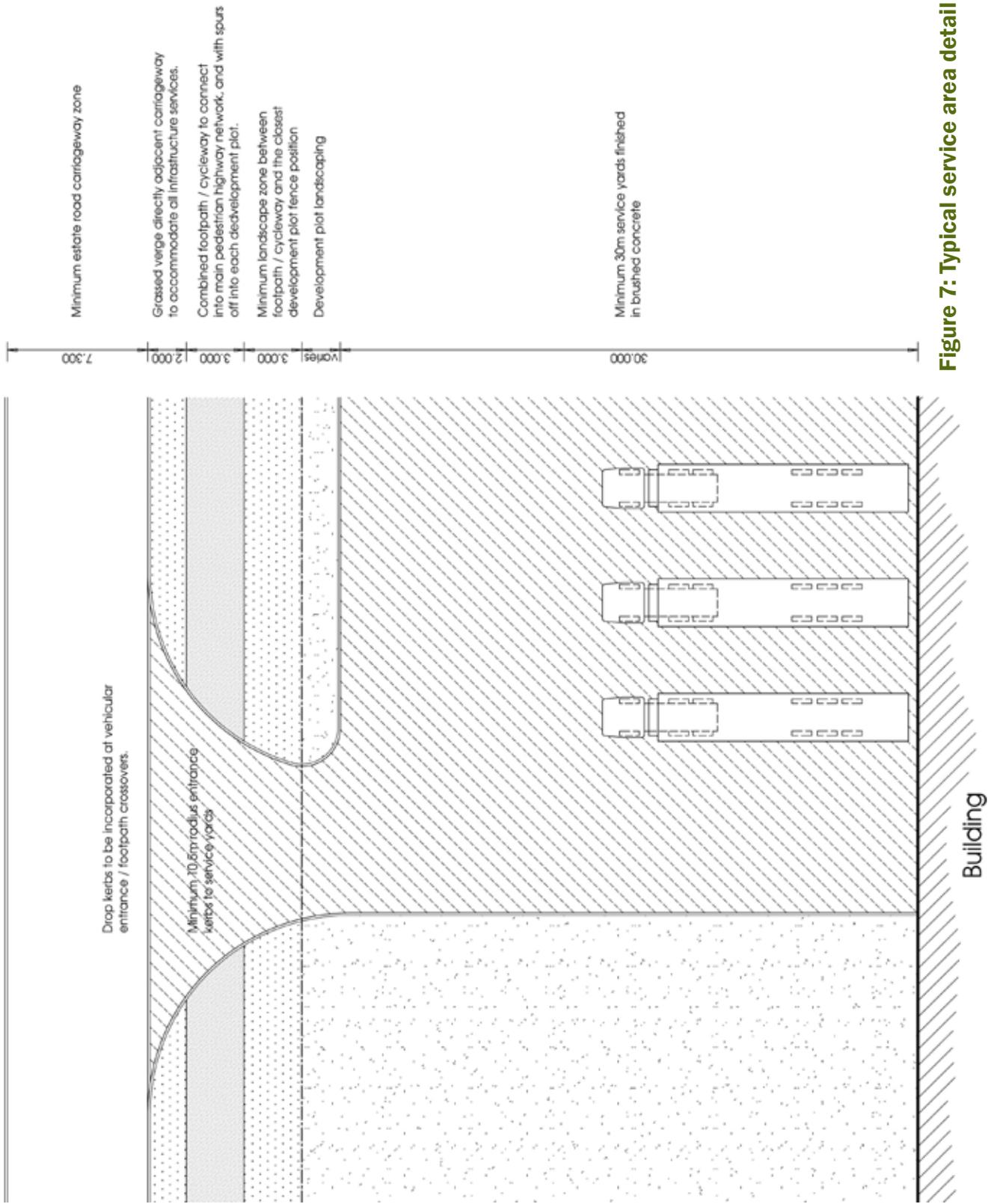
be driven by the aim to present a character of landscape which softens the size and layout of the proposed buildings and the spaces between them when viewed from long and short distances, including those from neighbouring properties.

### **Sustainable Transport and Access**

- 4.13 A potential major sustainable transport benefit derives from the development of the DIRFT Expansion site. The development is predominantly rail connected and on completion, is estimated to be capable of removing 56,000 HGVs from the region's trunk roads in total each year (Source: The Environmental Statement for The DIRFT Expansion Site, para 9.42). This will add to the delivery of very positive sustainable transport objectives that the existing DIRFT facility has demonstrated since opening in 1997. The transfer of freight from road to rail also brings substantial environmental benefits eg. the reduction in CO2 emissions.
- 4.14 The site is subject to an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, which includes a requirement for contributions to be made towards the provision of sustainable transport including cycle and footway provision and other green transport initiatives to be implemented with the development. A Travel Plan for example will need to be agreed with the District Council in relation to individual buildings. Further, building occupiers shall be expected to adhere to the vehicle routing agreement included in the Section 106 Agreement which is attached at annex 6.



**Figure 6: Typical highway / parking details**



**Figure 7: Typical service area detail**

- 4.15 Travel Plans shall involve a package of measures targeted to the needs of individual buildings and be aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel choices and reducing the reliance on the car. A set of mechanisms and initiatives will need to be developed to benefit the environment, whilst also benefiting firms occupying individual buildings and the staff working within them.
- 4.16 Developers of buildings at DIRFT and occupiers of those buildings will be expected to comply with the guidance for the production of Travel Plans set out at Schedule 3 of the Section 106 Agreement of January 2005 and reproduced as Annex 1 to this Guide.
- 4.17 The vehicular access to the units for both private and commercial traffic will be via new access roads, taken off the existing highways (A5 and A428), with minimum design parameters adhered to. (See Figures 6 & 7). These access roads shall be designed to avoid their use as HGV parking areas. Any changes proposed to highways will need to be discussed and agreed with the relevant highway authority(s).
- 4.18 Public transport links to the site could include the provision of new bus stops located on the new access roads or adjacent to the Expansion Site on the existing highway network (A428 or A5). Locations of bus stops will have to be agreed with the County Council and relevant bus operating companies. The site is currently served by public transport in the form of three bus services, numbers 94, 207 and 208 operating between Northampton and Rugby and linking DIRFT to these towns and the villages of East Haddon, Daventry, Hilmorton Ravensthorpe, Church Brampton, West Haddon, Lilbourne, Crick, Althorpe, Yelvertoft, Kilsby and Barby on Mondays to Saturdays between the hours of 8.00am and 7.00pm (approximately).
- 4.19 Combined footpaths and cycleways will run alongside the access roads with spurs off into each development plot. (See Figure 6) Cycle parking provision will be made within each plot. All pedestrian access into the development plots will adhere to the gradient provisions required for disabled access. See also Section 5.