4 The External Environment and Building Approach

4.1 Accessible Car Parking

4.1.1 Background

People with limited mobility who travel to buildings by car need to be able to park, have sufficient space to enter and leave their vehicle, on occasions move to the rear of their vehicle, then walk or travel in a wheelchair to the main entrance. Accessible car parking involves the appropriate designation and location of both car and multi-purpose vehicle parking bays and the provision of set-down/pick-up bays.

If people need to obtain tickets for pay and display parking, the ticket dispensing machines should be located in a way that allows a person in a wheelchair to gain close access to the machine and reach the payment and ticket dispensing functions.

4.1.2 Design Criteria

Parking bays, designated for people with limited mobility should be provided as close as possible to the building entrance, with a maximum travel distance of 50m. The bays should be clearly signposted with an upright sign sited out of the circulation space. The signage should be designed using a white international symbol of accessibility on a blue background. The bays should be on firm and level surfaces with maximum crossfall of 1:50. Avoid the use of inappropriate materials such as gravel, sand, cobbles etc.

The design of the parking bay should also plan for the safe transfer (dished kerbs, level approach routes, adequate lighting etc.) from the bay to the access route to the building without undue effort, barriers to wheelchairs or hazards that could cause tripping.

The size of the bay should allow for the safe transfer of a passenger or driver to a wheelchair, including a space allowance or accessibility zone for the use of a transfer hoist or ramp which may be attached to some vehicles.

The colouring used for accessible parking bays should be white markings on a slip resistant blue surface. The adjacent accessibility zone should be cross hatched in yellow. See Figure 3 on page 14.

The surface of the bay and adjacent accessibility zone should be firm, durable and slip resistant. Examples of inappropriate materials are loose sand, cobbles or gravel.

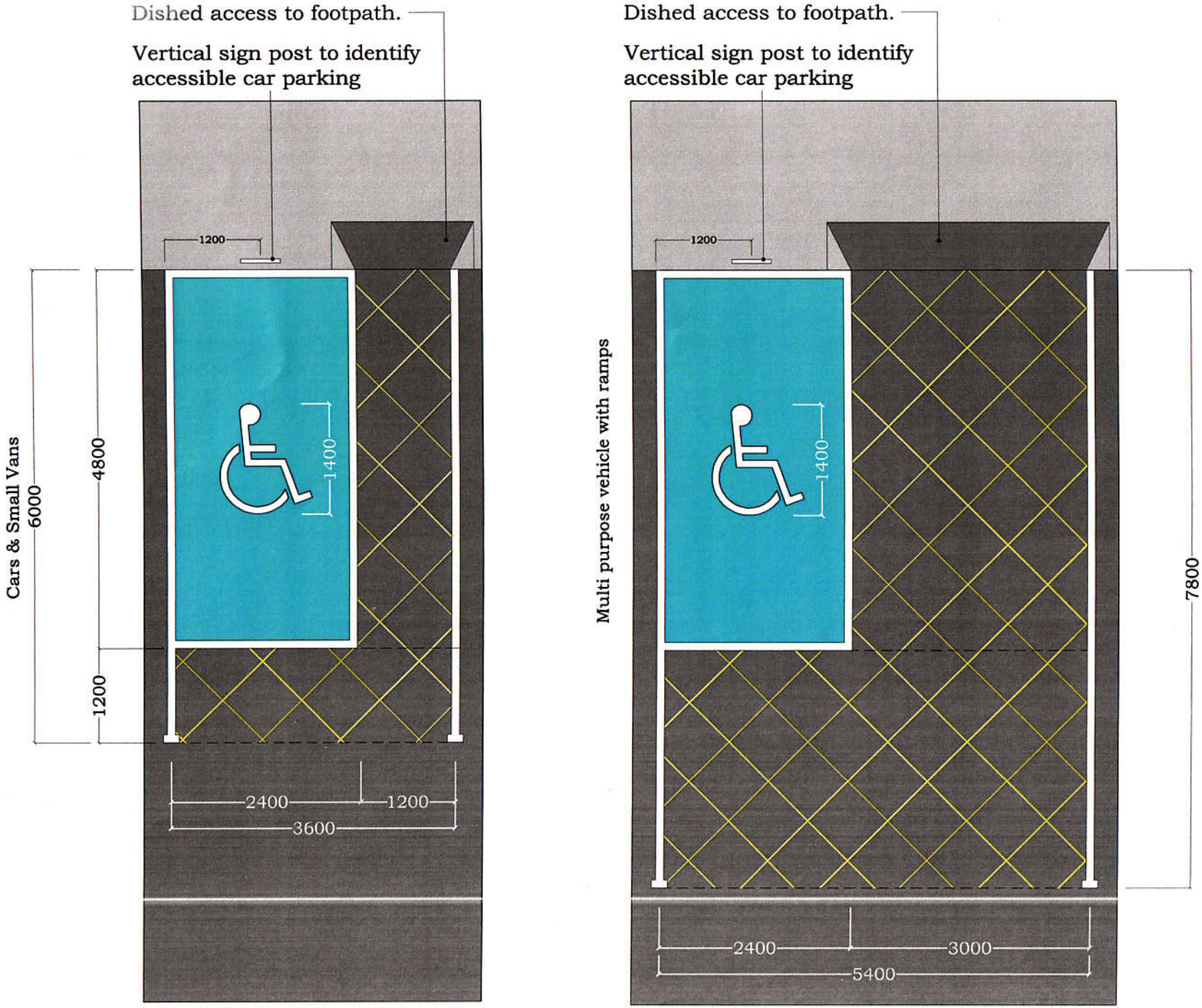

Figure 3 - Design of parking bays showing different size bays

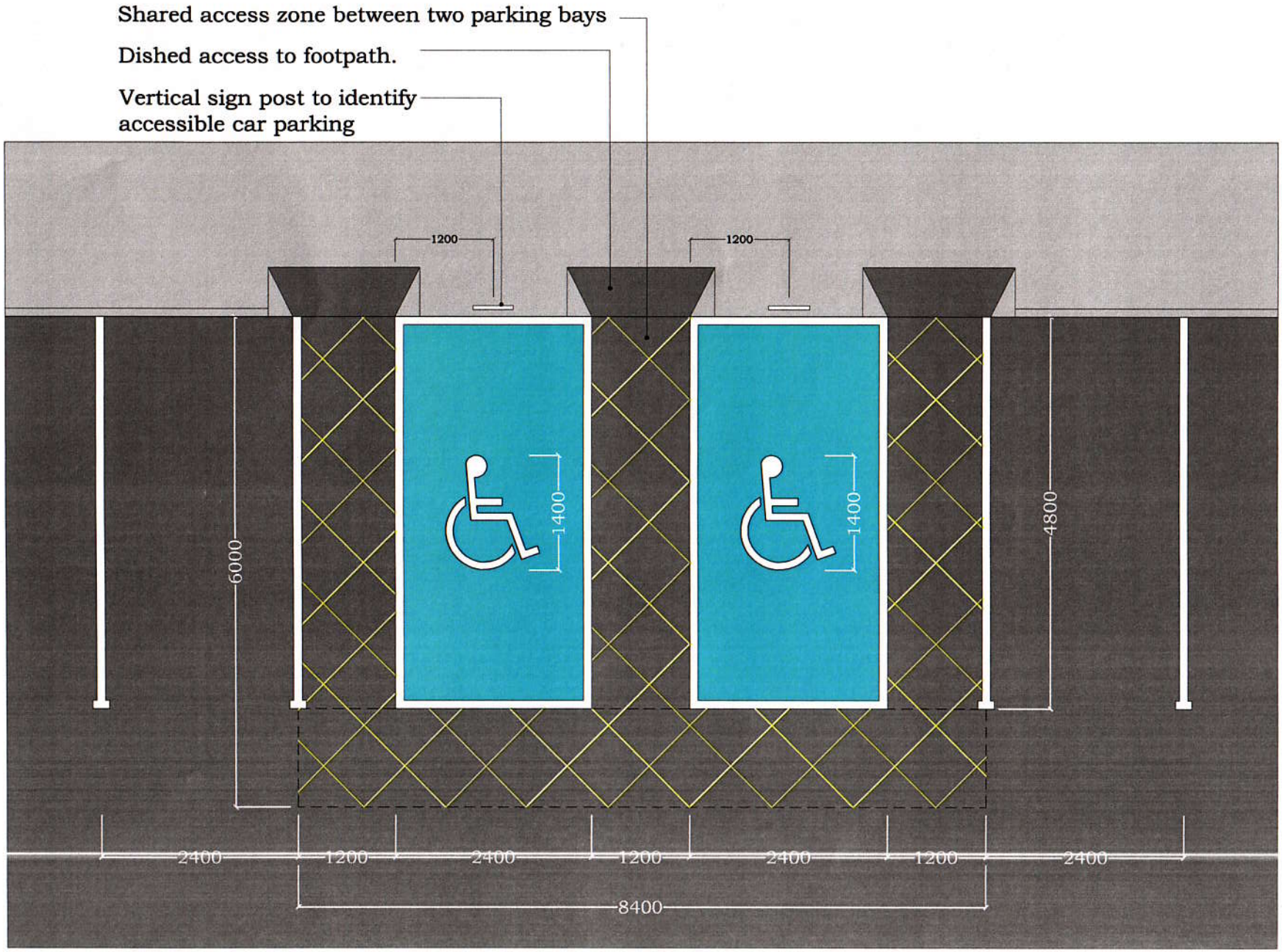

Figure 4 - Parking bays showing shared access zone

4.1.2.1 Size of Accessible Car Parking Bays

The recommended dimensions of the designated parking bays for cars and small vans are 3600mm width x 6000mm length, which includes a 1200mm hatched accessibility zone to the side or in-between and at the end of designated parking bays. There should be adjacent dished access to the footpath. The kerb dish should have a slip-resistant surface with a minimum width of 1200mm and minimum gradient of 1:15. Where a parking bay is in a parallel position to the footpath, the footpath should be dished along the length of the bay. See Figure 3 and Figure 4 on pages 14 and 15.

If the dished kerb adjacent to the parking bay is not in the direct line of pedestrian travel then there is no requirement for tactile paving on the kerb dish.

4.1.2.2 Size of Multi-Purpose Vehicle Bays

The recommended dimensions of designated parking bays for larger vans and multi-purpose vehicles with an attached hoist or lift are 4800mm in width x 7200mm in length including a 2400mm accessibility zone to the side and the rear of the vehicle for the use of hoist or lift.

Where ramps are used on multi-purpose vehicles, even more space is needed; 5400mm in width x 7800mm in length, including 3000mm accessibility zone to the side and rear of the vehicle for the use of the ramp. See Figure 3 on page 15.

These multi-purpose vehicle bays are not designed for bus parking.

4.1.3 Number of Accessible Car Parking Bays Required

Where public parking is provided, eg on street and at shopping areas, recreation and leisure facilities, hospitals, public transport parking facilities, 1 in 15 spaces should be designated for drivers and passengers with disabilities. Of these designated spaces, 1 in 4 should be designed to accommodate large multi-purpose vehicles. The recommendation is that these 1:4 bays would be of the largest size i.e. 5400mm x 7800mm, to accommodate vehicles using all entry/exit options i.e. hoist/lift/ramp.

For example, where 120 parking spaces are provided, 6 spaces should be designated for standard cars used by disabled drivers/passengers and 2 spaces designated for larger multi-purpose vehicle use. Premises with high usage by disabled people may require a larger than average number of designated spaces.

In addition to the above provision, spaces should be provided for employees who are disabled motorists and working in these locations.

Separate spaces should accommodate women who are pregnant and parents with young children. All spaces to be clearly designated with the appropriate signage.

4.1.4 Location of Car and Multi-Purpose Vehicle Bays

The designated accessible parking spaces should be located at the same level as and no more than 50m from the principal entrance to the building or buildings served by the car park. Approach routes to the building should be level and accessible in their design with

dished kerbs and adequate lighting. In multi-storey car parks, accessible bays should ideally be at the same level as the principal entrance. A suitable passenger lift or ramp should be installed to facilitate access from the parked vehicle to any level where facilities are located.

4.1.5 Design of Setting-Down and Picking-Up Points

Clearly sign-posted setting-down points and picking-up points for cars/bus/coach vehicles should be located on firm and level ground. The setting-down point should be as close as practicable and within sight line of the principal building entrance. The surface of the setting-down point should be level with the carriageway or provide dished access (minimum gradient of 1:15) to the adjacent path. This will allow for convenient access to and from the building entrance for people with walking difficulties or people using a wheelchair. Seating and shelter should be provided within the setting-down point.

The setting-down point should include both side and rear access zones including provision for the use of passenger lift/hoist/ramp at the rear and to the side of all vehicles. The required additional rear and side space for the use of passenger lift/hoist/ramp is 3000mm.

Wherever a kerb adjacent to a drop-off bay is dished in the direct line of pedestrian travel allowing flush access between footpath and road, hazard warning tactile paving must be installed for the safety of people who are blind or have a visual impairment.

4.1.6 Public Car Parking Facilities

Public car parks must include appropriately located and well-designed parking bays with all the accessibility features required to ensure safe passage from the car to the entrance to the building. In addition, particular attention must be given to the height provision of the car park and ticket machine systems used to give entry and exit to the premises and for automatic payment machines.

4.1.6.1 Height Clearance

To ensure access to all vehicles, a public car park should consistently provide a height clearance of 2600mm. This height clearance should be maintained from the vehicular entrance to the car park, to any designated parking spaces and the vehicular exit from the car park. The height designation should be clearly displayed at the entrance.

4.1.6.2 Ticket Entry System

On entering and exiting a car parking facility, the ticket entry/exit system should incorporate a voice or proximity activation control which can be used if the person cannot stretch to manually take the ticket dispensed. For more guidance on public access terminals, see also National Disability Authority "IT Accessibility Guidelines" at www.accessit.nda.ie