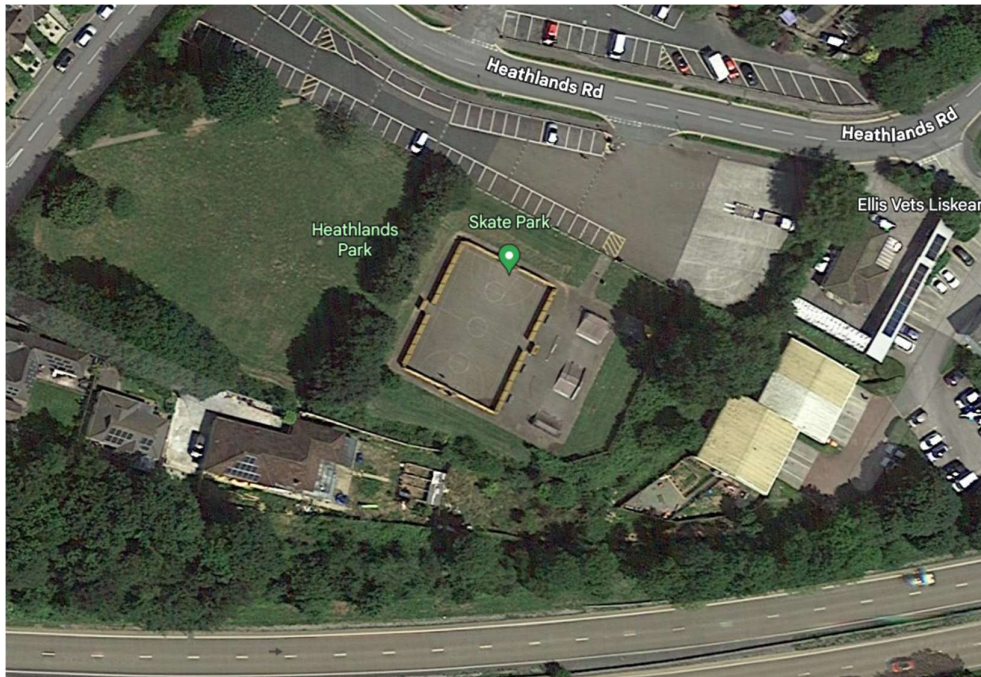


## **Rapson's Park – Skatepark Site Report 28.02.2024**

**by Russ Holbert of Maverick Skateparks**

### **The Existing Site – Rapson's Park, Heathlands Road, Liskeard, Cornwall**

The current skatepark is located on the fringes of Heathlands Business Park. There is a large carpark to the north and the busy A38 to the south. The existing skatepark shares the recreation space with a MUGA which may be moved to another park in town. This would free up the space and enable a fresh approach to design. As discussed, the plan is to remove the existing, outdated facility and replace it with a modern spray concrete park. I think a new wheeled sports space could work well within the proposed site.



### **Access and Parking**

Access into the facility is off Heathlands Road and into a large car park. There is a short sloping footpath straight onto site. Access for construction is ideal.

### **Services**

As discussed, we are reasonably confident that there are no services running through the site. Moving forward, we can undertake a utility search. It is important to understand the position and type of services in the ground because these can affect the planning permission process and the design of the facility.

### **Surveys & Drainage**

At the appropriate point, I would recommend undertaking a topographical survey, this is important because it provides a scale plan of the proposed area along with levels information, so a future design can be tied into the landscape and drained effectively. We can recommend a specialist engineer for this survey. The current tarmac area is cut into the ground and there appears to be a shallow drainage ditch to

the South. There are a number of drainage options on this site, these can be explored in more detail as the design develops.

### **In-Situ Construction**

In my opinion, a new spray concrete facility could work well in the existing site. The facility can be designed to connect with the grass landscape surroundings with any excess tarmac removed, so that we can avoid the need for handrails. Handrails are a maintenance issue and can become bent out of shape and rusty over time. As you can see from the photo, modern style concrete facilities do not require boxing in, due to the style of construction.



The above photo was taken at the Bodmin Wheeled Sports facility in Cornwall. Please click on the link below for more information.

<https://www.maverickskateparks.co.uk/bodmin>

### **Noise**

As discussed, the existing skatepark is quite close to one residential property to the South. The Fields in Trust guidelines generally recommend that wheeled sports areas should be at least 30m from the boundary of properties. In this instance the skatepark is already in existence and very close to the busy A38 which generates high levels of noise from passing traffic. It might be sensible to explore the idea of installing a line of

acoustic fencing with plants as part of a new development. A new facility could also be designed to minimise noise levels. As discussed, the plan is to create a new facility within the recreation ground to replace the old, outdated, and noisy structure. Spray concrete is the quietest way to deliver wheeled sports due to the density of the material.

### **Permissions/Planning**

The space is owned by Cornwall Council and leased to Liskeard Town Council. I believe that you may be able to apply for a Certificate of Lawful Development with this project. This is a much more straightforward process than full planning permission. You would need to demonstrate that a new facility was under 200m<sup>3</sup> in volume and under 4m in height. Maverick can assist you with this planning application. We have a 100% track record in supporting Councils to achieve planning permission.

### **Conflict of Activities**

If the MUGA is moved to a different site, there is no conflict of activities within this space.

### **Safety**

The proposed site is set within a well-used/safe recreation area with clear sight lines. A modern spray concrete skatepark would help to further reduce any anti-social behaviour because it will attract older riders (due to the style of construction). Spray concrete facilities tend to become community spaces for all age groups, riding disciplines and levels of ability.

Working with the local community to design a purpose-built spray concrete skatepark will enable riders to be involved in the process and take ownership of the project. Spray concrete skateparks will encourage a wide age group of riders into the space and the older users in particular will self-police the site and ensure the facility is looked after. This is not the same for more conventional ramp parks.

Below is a link to the Dorchester video created by the BBC. It shows how good quality skateparks can help to reduce anti-social behaviour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZlkjWEtaU8>

As discussed, I would recommend removing the existing, tired youth shelter and replacing it with an open plan community seating area.

### **Flood risk**

The existing site does not appear to be in a flood risk area.

### **User and Community Support -**

Local riders, the community and the Council would support this site.

### **Existing Facilities/Infrastructure**

The site is close to the centre of Town and local amenities with ample opportunity for parking. The nearest public toilets are approx. 500m away (Sungirt Car Park).

### **Trees**

The new skatepark should be located well away from the canopy of established trees to ensure that the root systems are not damaged.





### **Advantages of concrete over other riding surfaces**

As discussed, below are some of the advantages concrete has to offer over other riding surfaces: Concrete allows for a seamless riding with no fixtures and fittings, this is not the case for modular ramp structures; concrete enables riders to generate more speed because it is solid and dense and built properly, allows for an ultra-smooth finish; concrete has virtually zero maintenance costs over its lifetime unlike modular ramps structures that will require thousands of pounds of investment and resurfacing; concrete will not rot and is a more suitable material to use given the climate in the UK; concrete is proven to be the quietest way to provide a wheeled sports facility; concrete enables the designer to create completely bespoke facilities that can be tailored exactly to the local riding community's needs. It can be finished into shapes that cannot be replicated in wood or skate lite; a concrete design will not require handrails which will also require maintenance programmes and costs to be factored in throughout the park's life; concrete can be blended with the existing topography, enabling a better, more aesthetically pleasing fit with the landscape; according to RoSPA concrete has significant safety benefits of modular ramp structures; concrete has a 40 Year + lifetime whereas modular ramp structures require constant ongoing maintenance and generally fail after 10 years.