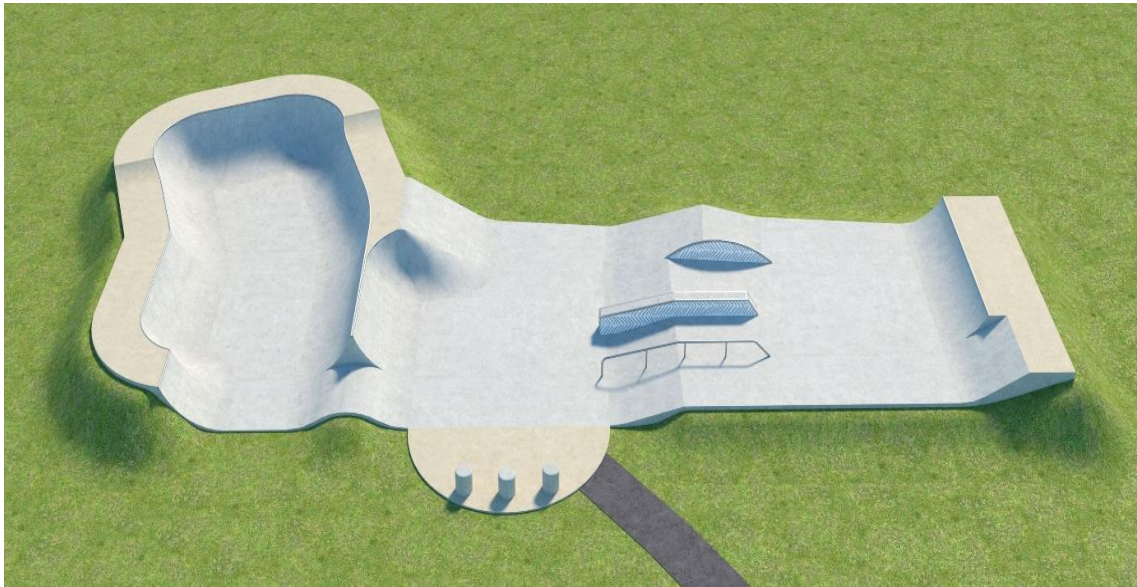




**North
Northamptonshire
Council**



**R4: Design and Access statement for a
replacement skatepark in
Bassett's Close, Wellingborough**

March 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Design Process

- 2.1 Contextual setting
- 2.2 Skatepark Location
- 2.3 Social impact
- 2.4 Benefit to the community
- 2.5 Consultation process
- 2.6 The existing skatepark
- 2.7 The design brief
- 2.8 Sustainability in Design
- 2.9 Design statement
- 2.10 Construction statement
- 2.11 Drainage
- 2.12 Flood zone

3. Access

- 3.1 Means of accessing the site
- 3.2 Construction traffic access

4. Contextual Setting

- 4.1 Trees
- 4.2 Landscape amenity
- 4.3 Lighting
- 4.4 Noise
- 4.5 Crime Prevention
- 4.6 Heritage status
- 4.7 Biodiversity
- 4.8 Demolish of current skatepark at Bassetts Close Park

Documents included in application.

Reports

- R1 DLW/7350/A AIRO Environmental Sound Assessment
- R2 Lighting Design Bassetts Close Skatepark
- R3 Community Engagement Report
- R4 Design & Access Statement
- R5 Full Data Protection Impact Assessment & associated documents

Supporting Documents

- SD1 Local Green Infrastructure Corridors in the Town
- SD2 Location within Bassetts Close Park
- SD3 Site Selection
- SD4 ASB/Crime prevention Report

Plans

- P1 Location Plan
- P2 Site Plan
- P3 In situ Cross Sections
- P4 Tree Protection

P5 Dimensions
P6 Maintenance plan

Elevations

Plan 1 Elevation from Westfield Road
Plan 2 Elevation from St Barnabas
Plan 3 Elevations Facing Westfield Road
Plan 4 Elevations Elevation looking southwest on the park

Design Board Images

DB1 Design Board 1
DB2 Design Board 2
DB3 Design Board 3
DB4 Design Board 4
DB5 Design Board 5

2. 1.Introduction

Good urban design aims to deliver attractive, pleasant, useful and above all, liveable urban environments that support and enhance local communities. This proposal is for the construction of a replacement concrete skatepark in Bassett's Close Park, off Westfield Road, Wellingborough, NN8 4LR to replace the existing skatepark in the south of the park for the local community. This will comprise of a well-designed, free formed, in situ spray concrete skatepark with steel edge protection and grass bunding. The area currently offers community play facilities, outdoor gym, an existing skatepark, a bandstand and open spaces.

This report will explain how the skatepark development will fit in with the surrounding land and existing facilities, as well as the rationale behind the design process and the public engagement programme undertaken by North Northamptonshire Council. It also addresses the concerns raised by residents and schools.

The skatepark will replace the existing concrete precast skatepark that is currently located in the Bassets Close Park behind the bandstand on the south side of the park by St Barnabas primary school. The replacement skatepark is part of the redevelopment of Bassett's Close Park, which has recently had the play area updated.

Consideration has been given to the location of the skatepark so it does not encroach on the main open area of the park, is closer to the other recreational facilities and will be further away from the primary school and housing. The proposed new location is as far away from the nearest residential property as possible and will be sympathetically landscaped with grass bunds, which will help to reduce the visual impact of the skatepark, this is explained further in Section 2.2 skatepark location.

3. Design Process

2.1 Contextual Setting

The proposed site for the skatepark is in Bassett's Close Park and the recreation ground covers an area of approximately 39,850m². The new skatepark will occupy 342m² of this, compared to the existing skatepark occupying approximately 240m² of the park. This is a relatively small footprint when taken as a percentage it is only 8.5% of the whole space of the park. It is viewed as being an appropriate size to have a skatepark facility with a low-level impact on anyone else using the park for other purposes. The existing skatepark will be removed and the area of the existing skatepark made good.

The park has walking routes within it and links to St Barnabas Street to the south-west, West Villa Road to the east and Westfield Road to the north Figure 1a shows walking routes within the park. The site is located within the Wellingborough urban area and the Park includes mature trees.

The Park is identified as Local Open Space in the Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough as shown in *supporting document 1 (SD1) Local Green Infrastructure Corridors in the town*. In the plan it states Open Spaces should have a welcoming, clean and litter free site providing a wide range of leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities for all ages, varied and well-kept vegetation, lighting with attractive and appropriate boundaries to promote the feeling of safety. The appropriate location and level of ancillary accommodation (including benches, signage, notice boards, toilets, litter bins and dog bins) with accessibility by various forms of transport. To encourage informal recreation with clear access and footpath surfacing which improves accessibility.

The park is located to the west of town and outside of the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area.



Figure 1 - Walking routes within the park

The park currently has toddler and junior play facilities, an outdoor gym and the existing skatepark. It is adjoined by open land, a network of paths and a bandstand. Residential properties and two schools are located around the park.

There is strong local demand shown in a variety of ways including:

- A 2013 petition to have a new skatepark in Bassetts Close Park which was signed by 169 supporters,
- 73 emails in support of the skatepark sent to council in 2022 with the council receiving many emails on a monthly basis from skaters asking for updates on the new skatepark and how they can help to secure a new improved skatepark, which will replace a small skatepark on the south side of the park.
- A private Facebook group 'Wellingborough Skatepark Community' which has five main members and over 138 members.

For further information please see *R3 Community engagement full report*. The project has committed funds from NNC and the support of local skating community.

Interestingly the park has a long history of wheeled sports. Figure 1.1 the 1966-67 OS map shows a roller-skating rink around the bandstand.

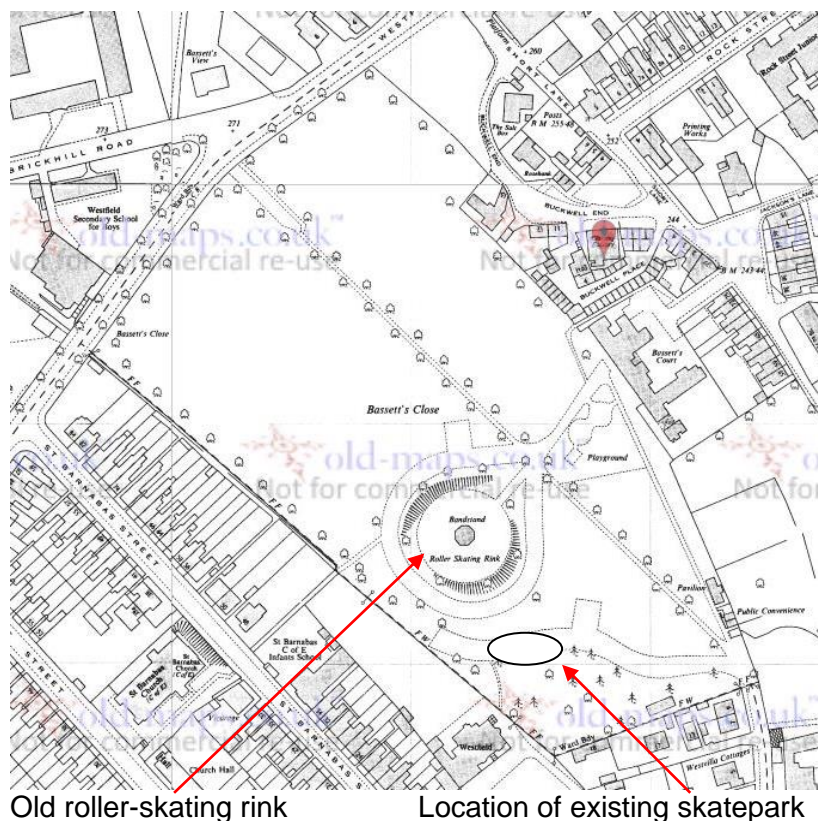


Figure 1.1 - 1966-67 OS map

2.2 Skatepark Location

The Council have considered whether the new skatepark would be better in another park, however it decided that based on the heritage of wheeled sports in Bassett's Close Park, and the presence of an existing skate park which is in need of refurbishment, it would be the appropriate location. Please see *SD 2 Locations within Bassetts Close Park & SD3 Site Selection*.

Bassett's Close Park is a town centre park with good **accessibility** for all areas of Wellingborough with buses into the town centre from all directions and a short walk to the park. In contrast, Croyland Park (Kingsway end) is a 25min walk from the main bus stop. There are shops nearby along Oxford Street or in town for user **comfort**.

Bassett's Close Park meets the criteria of a good, active park. There is already a skatepark off Nest Farm Road that is located away from houses, with no other facilities near to it. This is not well used as skaters do not feel safe and the facility is not easy to access. Often it is found that skateparks are located away from facilities, houses etc and due to this many females and younger children feel unsafe to use the facilities. Our aim is to keep the skatepark within the same park where there has been a skatepark for years but bring it to a more visible location so everyone can feel safe to use it.

A good example of a similar facility is Desborough Skatepark Ironwood Avenue, Desborough Kettering NN14 2JJ, which is located near play facilities and many younger children use the facilities which has proven to work well.

The park is near schools which will encourage school children to use the facility. It is a busy park with other play facilities within the park. Installing a skatepark in an area away from other facilities would make younger and female skaters feel intimidated to use the park. A well located skatepark will encourage them to use the facility, knowing that other park users are nearby. The park also has further secondary supervision from local dog walkers.

Bassett's Close Park has a long history of skating. In the 1960s there was a roller-skating rink around the band stand.

There are many parks in Wellingborough but only a few central ones with easy access, one park that was considered by Council for the new skatepark was Croyland Park which is one of the largest parks in Wellingborough with facilities such as football pitches, play areas, multi-use games court, calisthenic equipment and also hosts various yearly events. The park was not picked as it already has a wealth of facilities.

Each park in Wellingborough needs to offer different facilities and with facilities spread across the town. Bassett's Close Park has a skateboarding facility within the park already and it is proposed that this is repositioned in a different location with up to date, suitable and inclusive features for better usage and skill development.

The skatepark will be set 35m off the fence line along Westfield Road and not directly opposite the school. The park is raised up from the road where the school faces. The school and park are separated by a busy road and the park is lined with trees. Most skateparks aren't that busy during the school day as users are either in school or at work. From the school, the children will only be able to see users standing on top of the end quarter pipe as the school is lower than the park with higher windows and the park will be bunded. Many of the windows of the school had blinds down on the day of visiting the site and one was frosted.



Figure 2 - Photo taken from outside of Freeman's Endowed School



Figure 2.1 - View from the skatepark location to Freeman's Endowed School.



Figure 2.2 - View of Freeman's Endowed School with trees in leaf.



Figure 2.3 - View of skatepark location from residential housing on St Barnabas Street (note figure for edge of skatepark).



Figure 2.4 - View from new skatepark location towards residential housing on St Barnabas Street and St Barnabas School.

There is free parking at Jacksons Lane to allow for any car users that come to the skatepark to park so there will be no disruption caused on the roads and streets near the park. Being located close to the town centre allows for the use of public transport for users from all surrounding areas and is in walking distance of the main bus stop on Church Street.

The park was selected due to the existence of a skatepark within the park, proximity to existing play facilities and good access from the local community as well as being close to bus links with the surrounding villages. It is also further away from residential properties; the nearest property back garden is 56m away compared to the existing skatepark where the nearest property is 40m and St Barnabas School is 30m away. The new skatepark will complement these facilities and will have a low impact on the rest of the site. It is already well used by the local skating community and by the general public for various play, leisure, and sporting activities.

The area has always been used for recreational purposes and wheeled sports in the park date back to the 1960's. The Council looked at relocating the new skatepark to various other parks/ locations please see *Supporting Document (SD) 2 & 3* but felt that Bassett's Close Park offered an ideal setting for the replacement skatepark. The proposed location of the new skatepark within the open space has been selected on the following reasons:

- There is better natural surveillance from other park users in the new location.
- The new location will be more visible from Westfield Road providing better surveillance.
- The park is surrounded by fencing on Westfield Road and a number of mature trees are established along the fence line, screening the view from Freeman's Endowed Church of England School which makes the park less visible from the school to cause any distractions to the students.
- Nearer and complimentary to the existing play facilities, keeping all facilities closer together. This is beneficial as if a parent has one child using one space, they can supervise another child at the skatepark.
- The new skatepark can be integrated into the existing landscape through the use of mounding and ground modelling. This will remove the underneath spaces for people to hide which are a current problem under that the existing skatepark.

- The new location does not impact the main play area but will allow a parent to be able to supervise their children if one is to play on the play area and one on the skatepark closely and also encourage the younger children to use the skatepark knowing other people are near without feeling intimidated.
- Further away from residential housing on St Barnabas Street than the existing facility with trees and hedging providing a robust screen out onto the park.
- Sufficiently located away from the trees to ensure no damage to the trees or root damage to the skatepark.
- Studies show that as the ramps will be solid and bunded the skatepark should be quieter in use. Tree lines may also help to absorb noise.
- Improved design and location will help to reduce anti-social behaviour, particularly to the primary school and residential houses by the existing skatepark.
- There will be ramps for beginners as well as features for more experienced riders, encouraging children and adults to participate in the sport.
- The location of the new skatepark allows for any future development as access to other areas will not be restricted.

2.3 Social Impact

Wheeled sports facilities are proving a valuable environment for young people to develop in a higher risk (but controlled) environment. Psychologists and educational thinkers agree that young people need risk to fully develop their potential – a factor denied through risk adverse design and standard playground equipment. The sport encompasses risks where confidence, skill and hazard are calculated before commitment to a move. In towns without skateparks, these skills are often practised in the street where the consequences of a mistake can be life changing.

Participation in community sports encourages and develops activity and fitness. The physical exertion involved in wheeled sports is often under-estimated by observers and does generate a high level of physical fitness.

The installation of a well designed and constructed skatepark will offer an inclusive facility to a multi-generational community. Mental health and lack of physical wellbeing in children and young adults has become a serious issue. A skatepark offers a safe environment for users to learn not only physical skills, but an opportunity to develop life-long friendships, communication skills, and social skills. Traditional and competitive team sports do not suit all people, and many give up being physically active as they cannot find an alternative place where their interests are accepted.

Communities sometimes believe that the construction of a skatepark will bring a rapid increase in anti-social behaviour from young people. In fact, many articles argue that well designed skateparks and skatepark users are not associated with anti-social behaviour, examples of this can be read in the following articles these articles provide information that well designed green spaces can help in mental help and better wellbeing in adolescents:

https://www.paxcroftmead.org.uk/forum/files/web_skateparks_and_anti_social_behaviour.pdf
<https://sweep.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/020-More-than-just-a-skate-park.pdf>

The skatepark provides an environment where users can develop social and physical skills and where respect of the facility and other users is very apparent. A skatepark offers an environment for both young children to adults to learn from each other in a way that few other sporting facilities do. A visit to a well adopted skatepark with a good user group shows the best environment for youth development. Skateboarding has been proved to offer young people an alternative to gang culture and teaches respect, social, physical and communication skills.

Community involvement and community adoption of the project is vital to the success of the skatepark. This process ensures that the group are involved in the whole process, from design consultation, throughout the construction phase, and to ongoing maintenance and improvements. If consistently consulted and involved, users will take pride in the park that they have helped create. This also helps to ensure that the park is looked after by this group and that anti-social behaviour is not tolerated at the park.

The design of the skatepark and the surrounding landscape is critical in helping to deter anti-social behaviour. The skatepark will be set back from the main path accessing and play area, but easily accessible to users, visitors, and emergency services.

2.4 Benefit to the community

The construction of the new skatepark will benefit the local community, local shops and other amenities. It will also ensure that the whole park is well used and will become a focal point for a diverse, multi-generational and vibrant local community. This will have a positive impact on not only the local community, but also on real estate, as the area will offer a varied multi-sport/play area that will appeal to a wide cross section of the community.

The new skatepark will also give another option for people to access a new leisure facility, which will improve both physical and mental health. The new skatepark will be located in the vicinity of two local schools and the children will be able to use the facilities both before and after school. All facilities that give the opportunity to increase time spent outdoors and to improve the physical activity of children has to be welcomed. Obesity and inactivity in children are currently a crisis we are facing. The Covid pandemic has shown the importance of being physically fit and active.

A study by the British Heart Foundation has shown that by age 11, children are doing more than an hour less of physical activity a week than at age 6. This study found that 61 per cent of children in Year 1 did at least an hour of vigorous activity per day, but by Year 6, only 41 per cent achieved the target. The drop was particularly steep for girls, who fell from 54 to 28 per cent by the time they finished primary school. The report went on to recommend that these numbers prove that more needs to be done to ensure children keep active as they approach adolescence. Developing early intervention strategies that help children retain activity levels could include after school physical activity opportunities, focusing on participation and enjoyment in sports – and a greater emphasis on promoting weekend activities. The 2019/20 National Child Measurement Programme shows that 10 per cent of 4-5-year-olds in England were obese – doubling to 23.6 per cent for boys 10-11-year olds. While 90 per cent of children who are obese at age 3 remain overweight or obese in adolescence.

There is an increasing awareness that planning and public spaces are dominated by men and that we need to ensure that all spaces are designed to meet everyone's needs. Girls feel that parks are unsafe and offer nothing for them due to their design. Research has shown that from the age of 8 the imbalance between boys and girls was 80/20 and that teenage girls felt ten times more unsafe in public spaces. The current facility exacerbates this problem as it is hidden away, unwelcoming, attracts ASB and has no seating area.

2.5 Consultation Process

The Council undertook a consultation process with input from the Skatepark Project (a group helping improve skating facilities in England through improved design and location). The consultation process took place with the local community and with the local skaters in 2019 where the local public was asked to send in their views on revamping their skatepark. Please see *R3 - NNC Community Engagement Report* for full details on engagement from the council.

A competitive tender process was carried out by Borough Council of Wellingborough in 2020. After the award of contract, the user group were then involved in further consultation on the design development during Zoom consultations due to Covid restrictions, which were attended by over 20 people, including local residents. Further meetings were held, and a final design agreed on. The consultation process also removed the graffiti wall, which was originally requested in the 2019 consultation, as the skatepark users felt it would detract from the aesthetics of the site, particularly to non-skaters.

2.6 The existing skatepark

The existing skatepark, whilst made out of concrete, suffers from a number of issues:

- Lacks flow and is a poorly designed space.
- Suffers from the sloping topography of the site.
- There are no street or plaza features so the existing skatepark doesn't appeal to all wheeled sports users.
- Not aesthetically appealing to users and visitors and will particularly not appeal to new or younger users.
- Features are not suitable for new or younger users.
- Installed very close to the St Barnabas Primary School and residents on St Barnabas Street.
- Is tucked away and lacks good sight lines across the park and poor secondary supervision from other park users.
- The open back of ramps allows people to hide under the ramps and cause a nuisance.
- Noisy for locally residents as the existing skatepark is located in close proximity to residential housing.
- Intimidating for many users and visitors.
- There have been incidents of vandalism of neighbouring resident's property.
- No seating for users or supervising parents.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) already exists within the park, and this has included graffitiing the property of a local residential property and intimidating behaviour from people near the skatepark. Whilst it is hard to say if all the ASB comes from users or other users of the park, it is generally felt by the community that the ASB comes from non-skaters but happens at the skatepark as it is tucked away in the south of the park. The new skatepark will help to mitigate some of these issues as the new skatepark will:

- Be in a more prominent location.
- Have no areas for people to hide under or behind.
- Have better supervision from the main path through the park from Westfield Road to West Villa Road.
- Be inviting and encourage new users to participate and will therefore change the demographic of the users with younger, newer users.
- Have better supervision from the play facilities and outdoor gym.

2.7 The Design Brief

The design brief was to provide a modern, inclusive facility to replace the existing skatepark that would be suitable for use by local BMX bikes, skateboards, scooters and skates and would cater for beginners to more experienced riders. The Park was to provide ramp and street features to keep users challenged and engaged, whilst allowing beginners to learn the basic skills. The design was to ensure that the skatepark would be more welcoming and interesting

to visitors of the park. The skatepark was to be designed to accommodate the topography of the site which slopes down towards the bandstand.

2.8 Sustainability in Design

Sustainability can be divided into two areas: (1) the specification of the structure and (2) the design of the park and its ability to maintain long term interest over several generations. In terms of the design, it is important to avoid fashionable quirks that may not have lasting appeal and be expensive to maintain. The core of the design of both the skatepark should incorporate some of the classic features, which develop all-round skills, whilst offering challenges and skills progression. The design should also lend itself to future development by the next generation of users. Sustainability will also be achieved through the quality of construction and choice of construction materials. The facilities will be robust enough to survive with minimal routine maintenance.

2.9 Design Statement

The tendered design was developed through the results of the initial consultation held by the Borough Council of Wellingborough (now North Northamptonshire Council). The design was further developed with the local skating community, looking at many different variations and tweaks until everybody was completely happy with the final design.

The new skatepark has been designed to challenge experienced riders, whilst offering beginners lower-level ramps and key features to develop and practise skills on. Experienced riders will also use these features, but the low-level ramps will give younger and inexperienced riders confidence and time to develop the skills before trying the higher and more technical features in the park. The skatepark also ensures excellent vision across the park so that riders will always be aware of where other riders are in the park and help to reduce collisions. The new design will also help to make the park more attractive to girls as it will be open, have a variety of features for different abilities and a seating area.

We have ensured that the design will:

- Be suitable for all ages.
- Provide a facility suitable for all wheel types.
- Have features for beginners.
- Be bespoke.
- Have flow lines to challenge experienced riders.
- Be accessible.
- Features will be appropriately spaced to enable safe riding.
- Will meet BSEN14974:2019 standard Safety requirements and test methods for skateparks.
- It has a seating area and footpath.

The design creates an organic, flowing skatepark with the potential to be used by a whole range of skill levels and wheel types. There are many street and ramp features which have been designed with a modern, progressive attitude to form and have been carefully positioned and thought out to achieve a good flow with minimum potential for collisions.

The new design offers both transition ramps and street features to ensure that all riders are catered for at the park. Transitions offer an array of trick options as well a tool for directing the flow of traffic around the park and these have been carefully considered. The ramps also allow riders to stay within the ramp area on busy days and not conflict with other riders in the street area. The street area is where you'll find the features that imitate obstacles a rider may find in

an urban environment which are: ledges, curbs, hubbas, rails and banks. The range of heights and gaps offers a variety of options for users of different abilities.

The layout of the design lends itself to good flowing lines no matter how busy the skatepark is. Flow is key in any skatepark. Good flow means continual riding and use of multiple features, but also means there is the opportunity for multiple riders riding simultaneously. On quiet days riders will be able to utilise the whole skatepark by carving around ramps transferring from feature to feature. The skatepark has been designed with busier days in mind and a wealth of platform space will accommodate larger groups of riders where they will wait for their turn to ride and socialise. The design ensures that skatepark users will have a clear view of the whole area.

The new skatepark will be fully accessible with a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant footpath coming off the main park's footpath. The skatepark will offer an inclusive environment for users with a flat space off the seating area and easy to access low level ramps in smooth concrete. The design has avoided putting steps in which make accessibility difficult, *Figure 3* below shows the wheelchair routes that can be used the new skatepark.

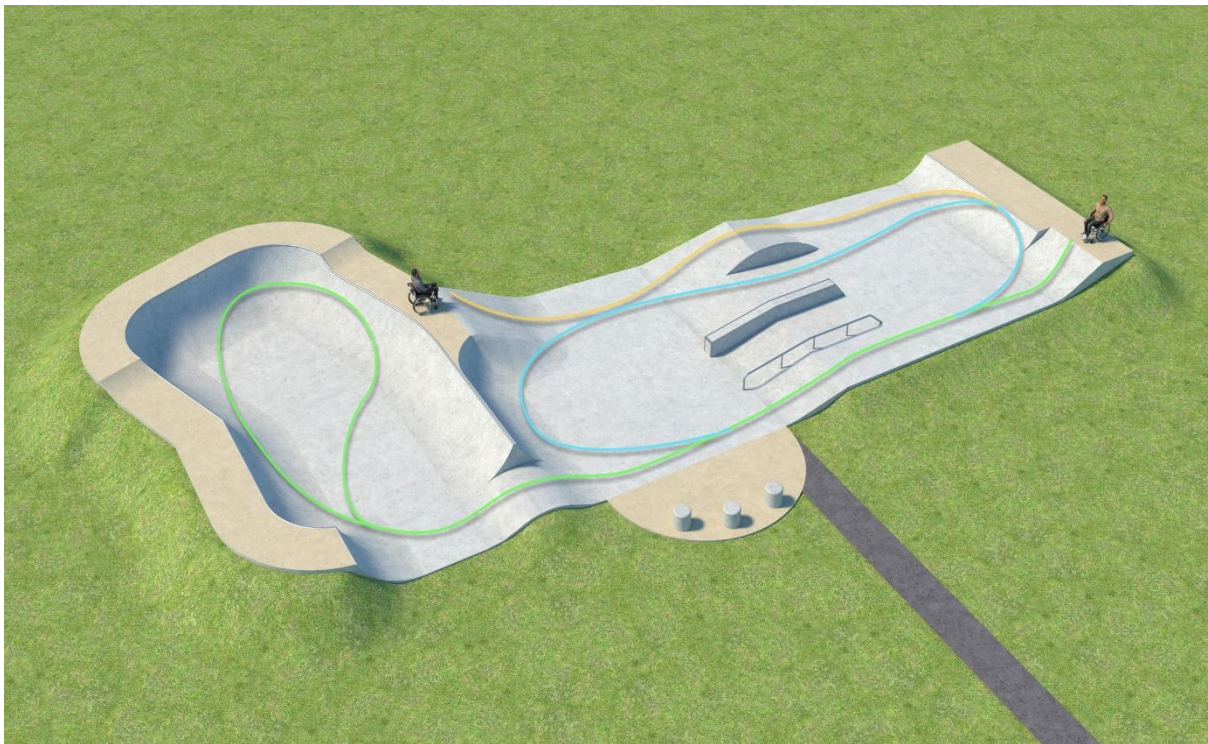


Figure 3 – Wheelchair routes

2.10 Construction Statement/Maintenance

The new skatepark will be constructed by a specialist skatepark construction company. The new skatepark will be constructed from smooth, spray concrete and will have all joints sealed and level. Galvanised steel copings and edgings will protect the edges of the concrete from damage. The new skatepark will carry a 20-year guarantee. A concrete skatepark requires very minimal maintenance. The new skatepark will be constructed by Bendcrete's in-house construction teams who are highly experienced at building concrete skateparks. The new skatepark will be set to falls (1:100) and surface water will be drained off. The new skatepark will meet ROSPA and BS EN14974:2019 safety standards.

The park has always been open land or a recreation ground and there is no evidence of any building from the historic maps to show any previous construction has taken place in the area of the skatepark. We can, therefore, be confident there will be no land contamination, however we will proceed with caution and stop construction if there is any indication of made-up ground.

The new skatepark will have grass bunding around it which North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) grounds team have been consulted on to make sure they have the equipment for mowing, which they have agreed is fine as long as the levels are no more than 30 degree angles, which for this new skatepark will not be more than 18 degrees please see P6 - *Maintenance plan* submitted. The skatepark will be added to the council play equipment list to be inspected weekly as the play areas are and then a yearly ROSPA check.

2.11 Drainage

The topography of the site falls from the north to the south. The geology maps Figures 4 & 4.1 below show the area to be made of Diamicton, which has subordinate lenses of sand and gravel, clay and silt. This is supported by local bore hole data. It is therefore unlikely that a soakaway will work, and we would propose to set the skatepark to falls of 1:100 and discharge the water to the grass and trees.

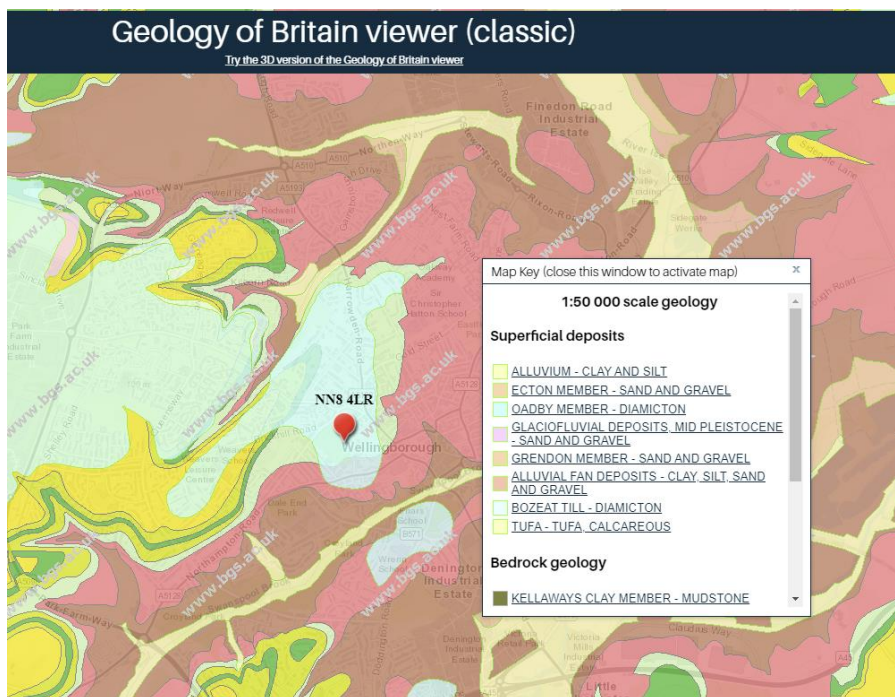


Figure 4 – Geology Map

SP 86 NE/101
RECORD OF WELL (SHAFT OR BORE)

At Bowling Club 8860 6842 1" N.S. 186
 Town or Village Wellington County Northants Six-inch quarter sheet
 Exact site SP 86 NE/101 6838 210
 in parish of _____

Level of ground surface above sea-level (O.D.) _____ ft. If well starts below ground surface, state _____ ft.
 Shaft 19 1/2 ft., diameter _____ ft. Bore _____ ft. Diameter of bore: at top _____ ins.; at bottom _____ ins.
 Details of permanent lining tubes (internal diameters preferred) _____

Water struck at depths of (feet) _____

Rest-level of water _____ feet. Suction at _____ feet. Yield on _____ hours' test
60 gallons per hour (with pump of capacity _____ g.p.h.); depressing water level to _____ feet
 below top. Time of recovery _____ hrs. Amount normally pumped daily _____ g.p.h. for _____ hours.
 Quality (attach copy of analysis if available) _____
 Sunk by _____ for Mr. _____ Date of well _____

Information from _____

GEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION.	NATURE OF STRATA (and any additional remarks).	THICKNESS		DEPTH	
		Feet	Inches	Feet	Inches
	Soil	1	-	1	-
Northampton Beds	Loamy clay	11	6	5	6
	Soft limestone	2	-	7	6
	Clay sand	1	6	9	-
Upper Lias	M. L. Clay	3	6	12	6
Lower Lias	D. sand	4	-	19	6
Chalk					
H.W. c.f.					

Figure 4.1 – Geology Well records

2.12 Flood Zone

The new skatepark is to be constructed on land in flood zone 1 – see Figure 4.2 below. The new skatepark will be set to falls and water drained off away from the skatepark. Areas deemed to be in flood zone 1 have been shown to be at less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year, this is sometimes known as having a 1:1000-year chance.

Likelihood of flooding in this area

This location is in an area with a low probability of flooding

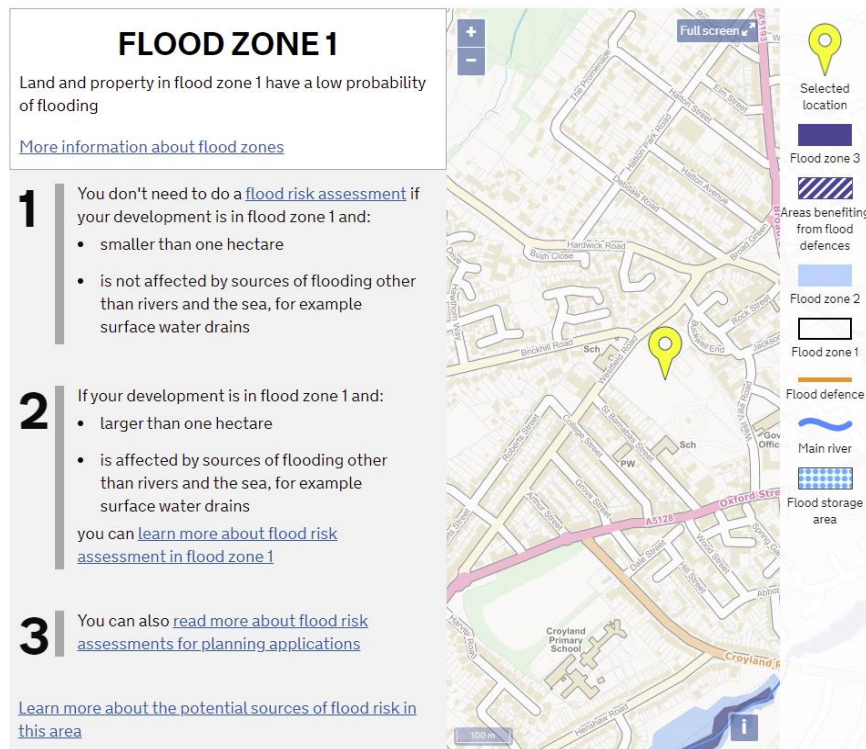


Figure 4.2 – Flood zone

plan

3. Access

3.1 Means of accessing the site

Bassett's Close Park, NN8 4LR is located in Wellingborough and access to the park is off Westfield Road, St Barnabas Street and West Villa Road as shown in figure 5.1.

The new skatepark will be accessed within the park by an existing network of footpaths. Access for pedestrians is shown on the Figure 5 below. The new footpath will link from the main footpath to the skatepark. The new path is shown the tree protection plan.



Figure 5
Walking routes within park



Figure 5.1 – Bassetts Close Park Access Points

Bassett's Close Park is located centrally within Wellingborough and has excellent links to all areas of the town. The park is approximately 1.5 miles from the main train station as shown in Figure 5.2 below and is located in the close vicinity of a number of bus stops that serve all the surrounding villages as identified in Figure 5.3 below.

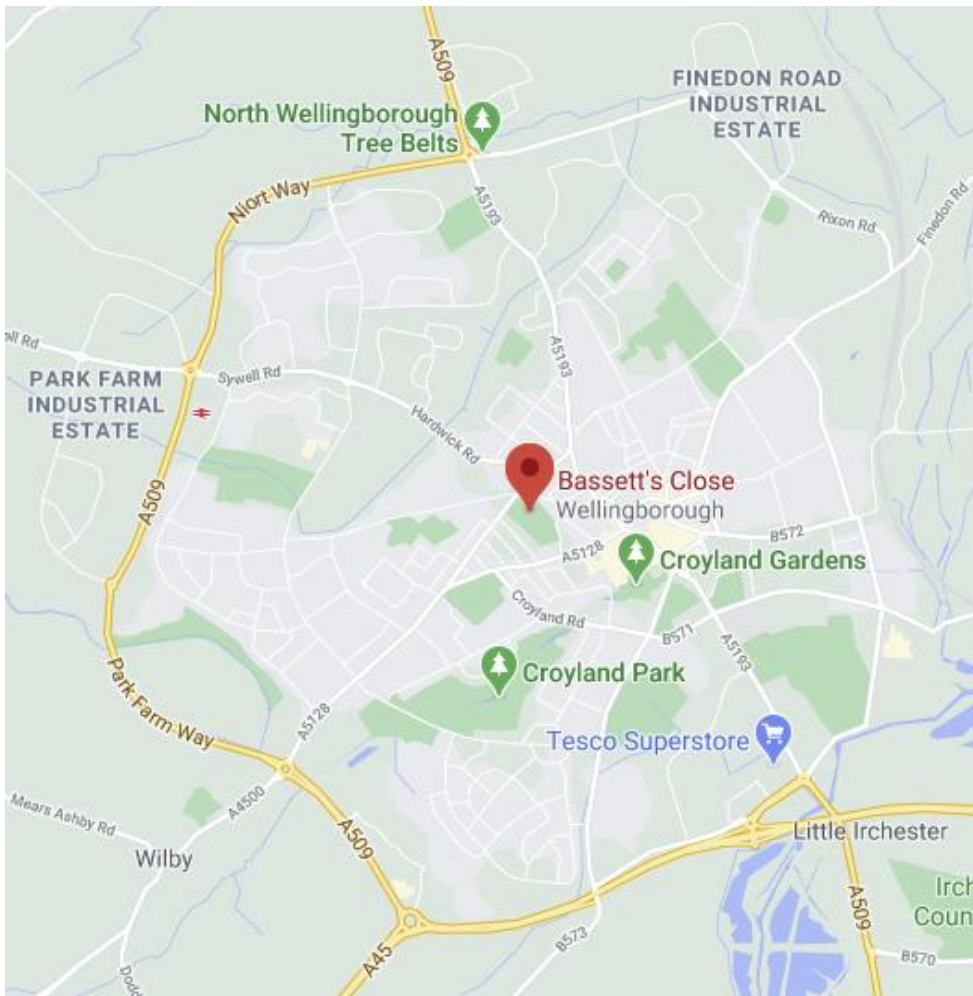


Figure 5.2 - Location of train station to Bassetts Close Park.



Figure 5.3 - Bus routes and stops

3.2 Construction traffic access

Access for construction traffic will be from Westfield Road to cause minimal disturbance to users of the park. The access route will use the existing paths in the park to access the site. If the ground is wet, further ground protection boards will be used. During construction, a banksman will be used at all times to safeguard the general public and users of park to see in deliveries.

4. Contextual setting

4.1 Trees

There are a number of trees surrounding the site and these will be protected from the construction traffic and works as shown below in Figure 9. A tree protection fence will protect the trees by the construction site access and appropriate signs will be erected on the fencing shown on *P4 Tree root protection plan* submitted. The NNC Landscape officer has been consulted on the tree protection and this has been agreed the skatepark will be approximately 15m from the edge of the existing footpath.



Figure 6 - Trees within the park

4.2 Landscape amenity

Concern's that the proposed development would introduce a large, incongruous and undulating feature into an open and level area of the park were raised, and this would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the park, its landscape and the visual amenity.

The new skatepark will be constructed above ground level and to avoid large expanses of concrete walls and guardrails, the new skatepark will be set into the park with grass bunds formed from the excavated topsoil and subsoil. These will be as minimal as possible to ensure the flat character of the park is retained. The bunds will be seeded and will look like the park below once the grass has established. The colours of the concrete can also be adjusted to blend in with the space. Elevations have been submitted of what the skatepark would look like within Bassett's Close Park please see *Elevations Plans 1,2,3 & 4*. An actual example of a similar one constructed as that proposed at Bassett's Close Park are below, Full details of ground levels are shown in the Cross Sections plans submitted.

Figure 6.1 Bunding Photos





Figure 6.2 - Images above examples of similar design

From Westfield Road and the view from Freeman Junior Academy, the skatepark will seem to fit almost seamlessly into the park invisible due to the park being raised up from the road by the school and the bunding of the ramps. The topography of the site also falls away from Westfield Road.

The bunds will also help to reduce Anti-social behaviour as people will not be able to sit or hide under the ramps as they are at the existing skatepark.

4.3 Lighting

The park will include solar lighting to allow the park to be used during the winter months. The lighting will be available from dusk until 10pm. A lighting design for Bassetts Close Park has been submitted with this application the design as has been approved by the Commission of Darker Skies who agreed this design will minimise nuisance to neighbours and the environment full details in *R2 Lighting Design for Bassetts Close Park*.

NNC has consulted with the Police Crime Prevention Officer & the Commission for Dark Skies and the lighting has been designed in line with their recommendations. It should be noted that there is existing lighting within the park and photo below (Figure 6.3) shows the amount of ambient light already given off by the footpath lighting, this lighting is on all evening shown on the photo below.

The lighting report submitted has six lights around the skatepark, the lights themselves will be fitted with the minimum upward tilt to reduce light nuisance and glare becoming an issue to neighbouring properties and have light shields to stop the lighting spill. The Commission for Dark Skies has recommended that the LED lights be a warmer white light output of in the region of 3000 kelvin, as these are increasingly being considered more environmentally friendly for nocturnal living things including humans. Increasing evidence suggests LEDs with a greater blue rich output are having a negative impact on human and animal sleep patterns and nocturnal insect behaviours including predation and reproduction. The lighting company has designed the lighting in line with this recommendation.

The Police have asked for the lighting to be on constant instead of PIR so that the skatepark is visible from the road until the lights go off at dusk for security and safety reasons. If the skatepark is lit up and someone is injured or there are any other incidents this can be seen from Westfield Road & CCTV and help can be sent.



Figure 6.3 – Existing lighting Westfield Road

4.4 Noise

There is always anxiety around the construction of a new skatepark by the local community, fears of anti-social behaviour, drugs and noise usually being the top of the agenda. A noise report has been prepared to understand the impact of moving the skatepark to the new location and also the improvement in reducing noise through the construction method of solid ramps set into bunds. Without doubt, moving the skatepark from the existing location will dramatically improve the residents and the primary school's experience in St Barnabas Street.

The existing play facilities and skatepark already generate some noise in the park. Furthermore, the local infrastructure, schools and roads also generate noise. The new location is much closer to Westfield Road and the traffic noise will help to mask the skatepark noise.

The new skatepark has been designed to be solid in construction and banded with the excavated material and seeded. This will help to reduce the noise from the use of the skatepark. The features that generate more noise (rails and blocks) have been located nearer the footpath and away from the houses. The ramps and bowl features tend to be quieter in use.

The chatter from users can't be prevented, but by locating the skatepark nearer the play park, the general noise from recreational facilities will be condensed into a smaller area, ensuring all other areas of the park will offer quieter spots for the rest of the community.

Noise generated from the new skatepark will be considerably further away from St Barnabas Primary School and the residential housing.

A noise survey was instructed by the Council due to the concerns from Freemans School that the noise level of the skatepark will affect the school due to the new location. The report was conducted by AIRO who placed the monitor on the school grounds to monitor the noise. The report concluded:

'Skatepark sound would be expected to be audible outside the nearest dwelling at the busiest times. However sound levels at the nearest residential property arising from the proposals

during peak use are assessed to be less than existing daytime and evening period and maximum environmental noise levels’.

Although for a given sound level, the character of a skatepark sound may be perceived as more annoying than a more anonymous sound such as road traffic, equally it could be anticipated that there will be significant periods when the skatepark is little used such as during school time, during adverse weather and at night lessening the overall effects compared with continuous sound.

The skateboard sound levels at the comparison site were largely controlled by user’s voices rather than being due to the specific sounds of impacts or rolling and may therefore be considered similar to other recreational activity.’ *R1 DLW/730/A AIRO Environmental Sound Assessment*.

The skatepark sound levels at a comparison site were largely controlled by user’s voices rather than being due to specific sounds of impacts or rolling and may therefore be considered similar to other recreational group activity.

NNC has consulted and sought advice on the concerns the environmental protection officer had from the previous application submitted in 2021 and these have been addressed and clarified and shown in *R1 DLW/730/A AIRO Environmental Sound Assessment*.

4.5 Crime prevention

The Council are committed to ensuring that all new developments seek to design out crime and disorder and reduce the fear of crime. At a site meeting with Northamptonshire Police, the design of the skatepark was discussed in how it would help to reduce crime and the fear of crime. The landscaping of the skatepark was welcomed as it would reduce the problems associated with the existing skatepark in people being able to hide under the hollow existing ramps. The new location of the skatepark was also welcomed as the existing skatepark was hidden away from the main path through the park and couldn’t be seen at all from the north of the park.

There is currently some anti-social behaviour in Bassett’s Close Park, and this is centred around the current skatepark. The current facility is tucked away at the back of the park and suffers from being away from the main areas of the park. The ramps are open backed, which allow people to congregate under them. It should be noted that not all the ASB is related to skaters, but this area has become known for being a problem area as it has little secondary surveillance and can’t be seen from the road. Most skaters are at skateparks to participate in the sport and to enjoy the community spirit of skateparks.

The new skatepark has been designed to be a welcoming and inclusive skatepark. The skatepark will be of solid construction and the back of the ramps will be bunded and seeded to ensure the new skatepark sits cohesively into the landscape. The skatepark will be located by the park’s other recreational facilities and will be accessed off the main footpath. The landscaping and new location of the park was welcomed by the Police as it will help to resolve some of the issues associated with the old park’s design and location. The skatepark will be visible from the road so if anyone is needing help or is in trouble this can be seen from the road, full details of how Council has worked with Police to put in measures to reduce full details *SD4 ASB & Crime is in the ASB/Crime Prevention Report submitted*.

There will be good visibility from all areas of the park and all these measures will help to reduce ASB. Tucking skateparks away has always created problems for users and the community. Furthermore, the facility will attract new multi-generational users, and this will further inhibit ASB as this is not accepted by the skating community. In most areas it has been shown that a well-designed skatepark will bring communities together and provide a safe environment for skaters.

It is proposed to install two CCTV cameras within the park shown on Plan1 Location Plan, details are shown within *R5 Data Protection Impact Assessment* documents submitted. The CCTV cameras will monitor the whole park not just the skatepark and will be linked to the Wellingborough town centre CCTV monitoring services. The CCTV is welcomed by the police to help monitor the park not just for ASB but for safety concerns if anyone needs any help i.e. fallen or hurt or anything more serious.

CCTV has proven to help reduce crime significantly, having CCTV installed within the park will also address the concerns of residents for further ASB/crime as this will help deter the ASB which will reduce any incidents occurring dramatically making the community feel safe for all park users.

4.6 Heritage Status

The park is outside of the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area, but forms part of its setting. NNC have repaired and improved the park railings and gates along Westfield Road. The existing bandstand, park railings and gates form part of the visual and historic landscape of the park. Looking at the OS map of 1900, there is little evidence of a formal park at this time. The bandstand appears on the 1925 map but could have been built between 1900 and 1925. The bandstand is not on the historic list of buildings.

In the 1960's there is evidence of a roller-skating rink around the bandstand, and this is also on the 1976 OS map. Later maps don't show the level of detail to see when this was removed. The bandstand has been in the park since at least 1925.



Figure 6.4 - 1900

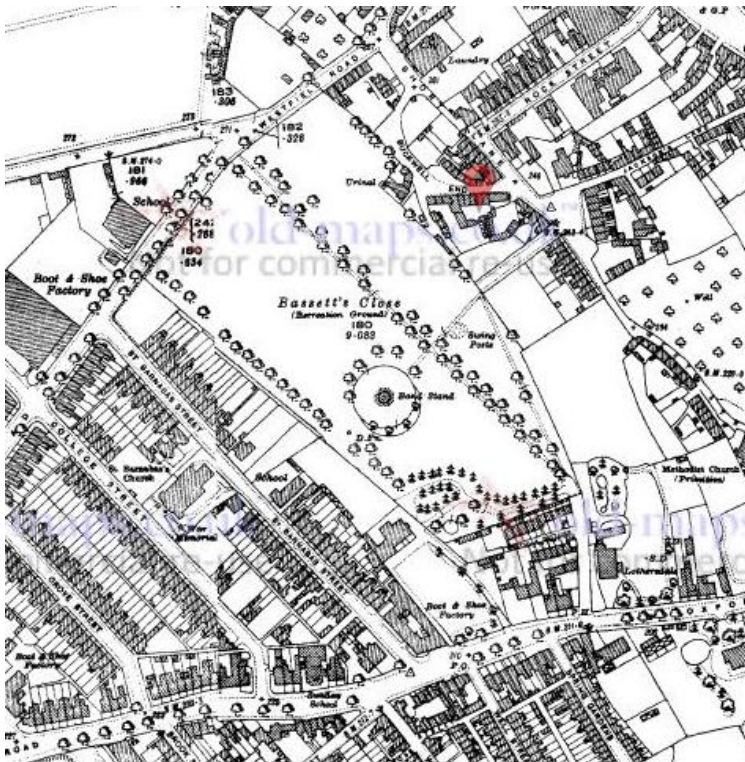


Figure 6.5 – 1925

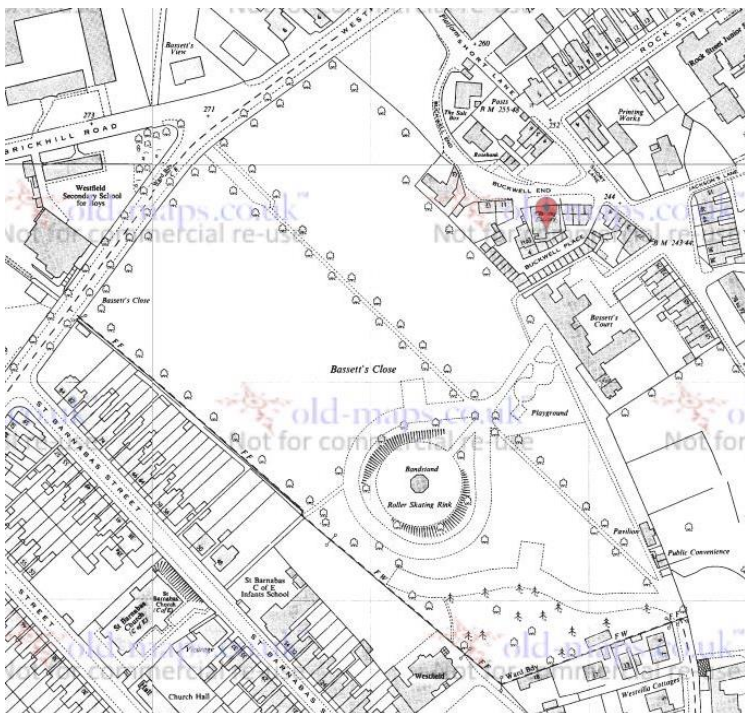


Figure 6.6 - 1966

Following an initial meeting with the Heritage consultant it was agreed that we would look at alternative locations for the skatepark, colours used in the skatepark, additional facilities at the skatepark and how the skatepark would be set into the park.

The council investigated the issues discussed with Heritage officer as follows:

The proposed skatepark will be landscaped with grass bunds which will allow for the skatepark to blend in with the aesthetics of the park, it will have an access path from the main path with seating and bins. The design of the skatepark reflects the topography of the site which is falling from the north (Westfield Road) down to the band stand. We looked at putting the skatepark below ground level to help maintain the flat nature of the park, but the geology of the park would have made this very difficult to drain. It is felt that the skatepark will have a low impact on the park and the site lines from the park railings to the bandstand. The park has many mature trees that will help to reduce the impact of the skatepark.

The Council considered all locations within the park for the skatepark shown in *SD3 Locations within Bassetts Close Park*, but in order to keep the park as far away from the houses and schools, the proposed location has proved to be the most suitable. Furthermore, moving the skatepark to another park will not necessarily move the ASB issues relating to Bassett's Park. The park has also had a heritage of wheeled sports since at least the 1960s. It is also a good idea to spread the different recreational and sporting facilities between all the parks, rather than putting them all in one park.

The new skatepark location is away from the area used for events and will therefore not impact the area used for the annual funfair. Furthermore, there will be more space in the events area once the existing skatepark is removed.

In a further meeting the Heritage Consultant confirmed that he was happy with the proposed sympathetic landscaping measures proposed to minimise the impact on the park's heritage assets.

4.7 Biodiversity

To mitigate the loss of green space as well as reinstating the old skatepark space to grass the NNC grounds team will be planting 4 trees in its place, 2 Sorbus and 2 Prunus within the park. Trees can help combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, Trees help to improve soil and prevent flooding and erosion. A walk among trees enhances mood, reduces stress and improves mental wellbeing.

5 Demolish of current skatepark located in Bassetts Close Park

Once the new skatepark is built the current skatepark shown on *Plan 1 Location plan* and *Figure 7* below will be demolished and the area reinstated to grass, funding has been set aside for these works to be completed.



Figure 7 – Existing skatepark to be demolished.