



Case information

Case ID	300059762
Name of Site	Livingston 'Livi' Skatepark, Almondside, Livingston
Postcode (if any)	EH54 6QU

Local Authority	West Lothian
National Grid Reference	NT 05569 67067
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	LB52626 Category B
Case Type	Designation

Received/Start Date	19/07/2022
Decision Date	27/02/2024

1. Decision

Previous Statutory Listing Address	N/A	Previous category of listing	N/A
New Statutory Listing Address	Livingston 'Livi' Skatepark, Almondside, Livingston	New category of listing	B

Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the building meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The decision is to list the building at category B.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

We have not previously reviewed this building for listing.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting the skatepark directly.

A residential care home is being constructed on land immediately to the south of the skatepark (Information from West Lothian Council, August 2022; February 2024).

- 0640/FUL/22: Erection of a 66 bed care home with ancillary accommodation, associated car parking and landscaping (Validated 03/08/2022, Planning Permission Granted 29/12/2022).

See 3.3 Policy Considerations.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

We received an application to designate Livi Skatepark from West Lothian Council on 19/07/2022. (Designations applications are published on our [portal](#) and will be available to view during the lifetime of the case and until 3 months after the case is closed).

The applicant provided the following information and views in their application:

- The former Livingston Development Corporation opened the skatepark in 1981
- It was once classed one of the best of its kind, not just in Scotland but around the world.
- It is an excellent example of an unsupervised facility that achieved an international status.
- Skating stars made the journey to skate its famous bowl.
- In its fortieth anniversary year, it is greatly valued and much loved by many.
- It is one of the jewels in Livingston's crown.
- It requires some strategic intervention to restore it to its former glory and reinstate it as a destination for enthusiasts.
- [At the time of application] Howden Park Centre has a forthcoming project and exhibition that will involve working with local photographers and artists, working with the local skateboarding community, and the Council's community regeneration team.

The applicant provided the following links as further supplementary information

- Carving Concrete Exhibition <https://lisafotos.com/2022/04/07/carving-concrete-exhibition>
- Turning Livingston into a Skater's Paradise, Scotland from the Sky, BBC Scotland <https://youtube.com/watch?v=h37XouQeJfl>
- Livingston Skatepark Progress Report September 2021 <https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-09-Livingston-Skatepark-report.pdf>

Separately, a member of the public also nominated Livingston Skatepark to us in a public online survey in April–May 2021 which asked for suggestions of sites to include in our programme, ‘Designed Landscapes of the Recent Past’.

This is an initiative to identify, recognise and celebrate Scotland’s modern garden and designed landscape heritage. It focuses on sites dating from 1945 to the early 2000s in Scotland. It aims to improve their representation in our publicly available records through photographic survey and recording, updating information and images in our online records and considering a select number for designation on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Please see our [website](#) for further details.

As part of our research and data-gathering, we

- visited the skatepark on 08/09/2022, 27/10/2022 and 13-14/04/2023.
- discussed the designation assessment process and the history and character of the site with the local authority, local community contacts, Skateboard Scotland and an academic contact specialising in the history of skateboarding.
- carried out an engagement exercise in April–May 2023 which included in-person engagement at Livi Skatepark and an online survey using the Historic Environment Scotland Citizen Space platform, facilitated through our engagement and liaison with Skateboard Scotland <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/livi-skatepark/>
- The online survey was created in partnership with Skateboard Scotland and ran from 11/04/23 to 18/05/23. We received 559 responses.
- A comment from a member of the public sent direct noted that they highly commended the action to list, that it was one of very few places for young people at that time, that it fostered friendships and that the park – which is still busy - is famous for hosting world famous skaters and bikers.

Comments provided through our engagement exercise have been taken into account in our assessment. More details on our engagement exercise are published in the following documents:

- Livi Skatepark Engagement Analysis Report (June 2023)
- Livingston Skatepark Online Survey - Responses in Full

These can be downloaded from our consultation website at <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/designating-livingston-skatepark>.

3.2 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

We carried out an assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether a site or place is of special architectural or historic interest. See **Annex A**.

The listing criteria and selection guidance for listed buildings are published in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019), Annex 2, pp. 11-13, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

3.3 Policy considerations

A residential care home is under construction on land immediately to the south of the skatepark (0640/FUL/22) (See 2.2 Development Proposals).

Further information about development proposals and designation is found in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, pp. 7-8. <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>. Our policy states that:

'We normally avoid intervening unnecessarily in the planning process or other regulatory processes where there are development proposals by adding a new designation. This may also extend to reviewing existing designations.

We consider the individual circumstances of each case. In deciding whether to designate a site or place or amend an existing designation while there are ongoing development proposals, appeals or enforcement, we will consider:

- the implications of designation on development proposals
- the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the site or place
- the extent to which plans have been developed for the site or place – where these are particularly advanced, we will not normally list or schedule'

In this case,

- Planning permission has been granted and construction is underway – designation has no impact on the proposed development.
- The proposed development is likely to have some impact on the setting of the skatepark, but the impact on overall significance would be minimal.
- Construction is underway.

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 21/11/2023 to 09/02/2024.

We consulted directly with West Lothian Council as the owners and planning authority.

The consultation report of handling was published on our portal for comment from interested parties.

Our online consultation page at <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/designating-livingston-skatepark/> provided a link to the report and included a brief online survey via the survey platform, Citizen Space.

Through Citizen Space, we asked if people agreed with the proposed designation and if they had further comments to make.

4.2 Designation consultations

Comments we consider

We will consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place and whether it meets the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

Comments we don't consider

We do not consider comments and representations on non-relevant/non-material issues, such as:

- Economic considerations
- Abusive or offensive remarks
- Whether you personally like, or do not like, a proposal

Our video about consultations explains how you can comment on our designations decisions, and what we can and can't take into account when considering your views. <https://youtu.be/ZlqU51tRA6g>.

4.3 Consultation summary

We received 184 responses to the consultation.

We received one written response from the Local Authority. We received 181 responses from private individuals and 2 responses on behalf of community groups via our Citizen Space survey.

The overwhelming majority of people who responded to consultation expressed support for the designation. The responses to consultation did not raise any issues that put into question the special architectural or historic interest of the building under review.

We have summarised the comments received that are material to our decision making and our responses as required in the table below.

	Comment (Interested parties)	Response (HES)
1	<p>West Lothian Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly agrees with the proposal to list Has prepared a Listed Building Consent – Procedure Note for use once the skatepark is listed A residential care home is being constructed on land immediately to the south of the skatepark (0640/FUL/22) 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>See 3.3 Policy considerations</p>
2	<p>There were 183 responses to our online consultation survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 177 'strongly agreed' with the proposal to list and 2 'slightly agreed' 2 'neither agreed nor disagreed', while 2 'strongly disagreed' with the proposal to list. <p>Recurring themes in the comments were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the skatepark to the history of skateboarding in Scotland and the UK Its relevance to the history and development of Livingston New Town The significance of the skatepark to communities of practice in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (skateboarders, bike riders, BMX, scooting) The international reputation of the skatepark and its association with Tony Hawk and other prominent individuals Its value as an accessible, outdoor community resource for socialising, learning, health and well-being 	<p>We have published a report that summarises our online consultation survey and shows the responses in full, where we have the necessary permissions. All of our engagement and consultation reports can be downloaded from our consultation website.</p> <p>We have made a minor addition to the report to note the history of the association between graffiti art and skateparks (section 3.2.2).</p> <p>We recognise that the practice of making and changing graffiti art is a cultural expression associated with the skatepark over a long period of time and is part of the skatepark's wider cultural significance.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That it should be maintained and protected for current and future generations <p>Some responses, (including from those who agreed, 'neither agreed nor disagreed', or disagreed with the proposal), noted the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti is an important part of the skatepark and listing should not prevent this from taking place • There is anti-social behaviour at the skatepark • It is in poor repair (falling down) • The most recent extension should not be included in the listing due to its lesser quality 	<p>It is for West Lothian Council as owners and planning authority to manage the site. We understand that the Council is producing some guidance for the management of the site.</p> <p>Condition of surviving fabric is not a relevant consideration for deciding whether a building is of special architectural or historic interest for listing. (See DPSG, p.12)</p> <p>We have noted in our report that the most recent extension to the skatepark has been criticised due to issues of quality. While Urquhart's original 1980-81 scheme is now the earliest surviving skatepark in Scotland and reflects the practice of early skateboarding, the expansions of the park also demonstrate later trends. The skatepark as a whole has social historical interest as an enduring icon of the Scottish skate and bike scene.</p>
--	---	--

Dara Parsons

Head of Designations
Heritage Directorate
Historic Environment Scotland

Contact	Julie Candy, Senior Designations Officer Julie.candy@hes.scot , 0131 668 8809
----------------	--

ANNEX A

Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

1. Statutory address

Livingston 'Livi' Skatepark, Almondside, Livingston

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

This is a purpose-built, outdoor concrete skatepark in Almondvale Park, completed 1980 and opened 1981 by Livingston Development Corporation to designs by Iain Urquhart (executed by Rainbow Construction Ltd). Later extensions date to 1992 (designed by Kenny Omond) and 2015 (Gravity Engineering Ltd). Located above the south bank of the River Almond, the skatepark has a landscaped setting in public park grounds.

The earliest (1980–81) part of the skatepark is at the northeast end of the site. It consists of two large adjacent features of shotcrete (pressurised concrete) construction, orientated northwest-southeast. The **Double Bowl** (or Pool) is formed of two interlocking, coped circular bowls with flattened bases, each around 9 metres in diameter, one deep and one shallow. The coping was added in 1987. The **Reservoir**, also with flattened base, measures approximately 24 by 18 metres, with a banked carving area to the northwest, 'Andover Bank' and a halfpipe to southeast.

A curving concrete **wallhead**, often with graffiti murals on its 'inner' southeast-facing elevation, defines the northern edge of the decks (flat platforms) of the deep bowl of the Double Bowl and Reservoir. On its outer northwest elevation, the wallhead forms the vertical top part of a **climbing wall** of textured concrete that rises from a splayed base at ground-level. Two flights of concrete steps give access to this part of the skatepark from the riverbank below.

The 1992 extension comprises two elongated parallel bowls, extending perpendicular (southwest) from the reservoir, separated by a small hip, and separate, larger 'mole-hill'.

At the southwest end of the skatepark, the 2015 extension consists of a rectangular bowl, fullpipe, and two round bowls or pools. A street / beginners area (completed 2015) is located in the triangular area between the 1981 halfpipe and 1992 extension. It consists of a horse-shoe-plan circuit of slopes, one section with ledge and flatrail, around a central area of shallow transitions.

A landscaped viewing area with elongated curving steps is sited on the higher slope east of the skatepark. There are boulders arranged individually and in groups on the grassed areas immediately around the skatepark and its access footpaths.

2.2 Historical development

Skateboarding originated in 1950s California. Early skateboarders emulated the experience of surfing ocean waves on concrete and asphalt - first through basic modifications of childrens' kick scooters, and later on progressively more sophisticated boards and urethane wheels. Skateboarding spread globally in the 1960s and 70s, developing its own distinct culture. Early skateparks mimicked the contours and curves of skateboarding's original 'found space' - culverts, tunnels and famously, the emptied swimming pools of wealthy Los Angeles suburbs (Borden 2019: 335).

In 1976–77, skateboarding was on the rise in the UK. Newspapers and television reports proclaimed the arrival of a new 'craze' and skateboards were sold in their thousands. In Livingston, local skateboarder, Kenny Omond, met with Livingston Development Corporation on 7 July 1977 to discuss the possibility of an authentic, purpose-built skatepark for the town (LDC/TD/1/3/1/34). He had seen first-hand the skating environments of California the previous year (Omond 2003). Just one week following the meeting, the Livingston Post reported that skateboarding was "coming to Livingston", quoting Omond as optimistic about a grant and new facility for the sport (LDC/TD/1/3/1/34).

Livingston was a young town. It had become Scotland's fourth New Town in 1962, with Livingston Development Corporation responsible for the housing schemes, roads, infrastructure and public spaces for its growing population. In 1975, the average age of incoming residents was just 23 (West Lothian Courier 1975). Public recreation and amenity was a priority, and an outdoor exercise circuit known as a 'Trim Course' was opened in Almondvale Park in 1977.

In the months following Omond's meeting, the Chief Architect's and Planning Office took up the challenge to design a skatepark, writing to the Scottish Sports Council to request data, and exploring its feasibility. The lead architect for the emerging project was Iain Urquhart. In January 1978, they presented recommendations for a skateboarding strategy to the Corporation Board and secured agreement for a large, central skatepark "to supplement the recreational facilities in the town, satisfy a growing demand and possibly absorb much of the energy which otherwise might find its expression in vandalism" (LDC/BD/2/132).

Iain Urquhart took a close interest and innovative approach to the skatepark design. With his wife, Dee Urquhart (who became a skateboarder herself), they travelled to California, visiting skateparks such as the Big O and the Skate Ranch in Marina del Rey. They met skateboarding pioneers and witnessed how they engaged with these concrete structures, performing ever more complex sequences of carves, kickturns and other moves ('Long Live Livi 2020'). Urquhart also visited skateparks in Europe

and southern England. Back in Livingston, he developed detailed plans inspired by what he saw, working with other Corporation architects, technicians and engineers to tailor them to the specific location earmarked in Almondvale Park.

Livingston Skatepark with its integrated climbing wall was built by Rainbow Pools Ltd in the second half of 1980 and was named the 'Rock'n'Roll Skatepark'. The total cost was £48,300 of which £21,250 came from the Scottish Sports Council as part of their grant scheme for 'Prototypes and Experimental Projects' (LDC/FD/1/28/141). Livingston Development Corporation had applied on the basis of building not only the skatepark but developing a wider 'multi-sports landscape'. During the works, Urquhart helped apply the shotcrete himself using his own bespoke timber 'transition machine' to achieve the smooth surfaces required. Completed in late 1980, the skatepark was officially opened in May 1981 by Peter Heatly, Chair of the Scottish Sports Council, as part of a programme of sporting displays and skatepark demonstrations put together largely by Urquhart (LDC/FD/1/28/141)

The skatepark was immediately recognised as a success. It became a draw for amateurs and professionals alike (Urquhart, P. in HES Engagement Analysis Report p.11-12). Skateboarders from further afield camped out at the skatepark (*ibid*) and the Skateboarding Association noted it was "rapidly gaining a reputation as being one of the best facilities in Europe" (Urquhart, D. 1981, in LDC/FD/1/28/141). Designed for competition standards, Livingston Skatepark hosted competitions from that summer. In 1982, Steve Caballero and Andy McGill from the famous Bones Brigade visited. Iain and Dee Urquhart remained closely involved in the skateboarding scene until Iain's death in 1983.

Kenny Omond, chair of the local skateboarding club since the late 1970s, continued to champion Livingston Skatepark as an important community and sporting resource during the 1980s and 90s. He was influential in securing the skatepark's future at a time when the national 'craze' had passed and Livingston Development Corporation expressed concern about safety and 'youths with bikes'. An internal memo of 1984 even suggested filling in the bowls (LDC/FD/1/28/141). Omond, however, pointed out that dedicated enthusiasts continued to use the park, and BMX riding – an emerging sport in the mid-1980s – could be accommodated (LDC/FD/1/28/141).

The Corporation invested further with new coping and resurfacing works (1987) and graffiti murals (1991). In July 1991, the skatepark was part of another Bones Brigade tour including the renowned Tony Hawk. In the same year, Livingston Development Corporation agreed to a major extension to designs prepared by Omond (executed 1992). In 2014, Kenny Omond rode Livingston Skatepark as one of the Queen's Baton Bearers ahead of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games (Youtube 2014).

West Lothian Council extended the skatepark for a third time to designs by Gravity Engineering Ltd (completed 2015). The skatepark is used by skateboarders, bike and BMX riders, in-line and rollerskaters and scooter riders (2023).

3. Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

To be listed a building must be of 'special architectural or historic interest' as set out in the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#). To decide if a building is of special interest for listing we assess its cultural significance using selection guidance which has two main headings – architectural interest and historic interest (see Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, 2019, Annex 2, pp. 11-13).

The selection guidance provides a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The special architectural or historic interest of a building can be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

3.1 Architectural interest

The architectural interest of a building may include its design, designer, interior, plan form, materials, regional traditions, and setting and the extent to which these characteristics survive. These factors are grouped under two headings:

3.1.1 Design

Livingston Skatepark (phase 1) has architectural interest for its high-quality design, resulting from an unusually innovative approach by the architect. Iain Urquhart (c.1939–1983) had joined Livingston Development Corporation in 1970 and mainly worked on recreational facilities and buildings. He had previously won a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) silver medal for his student project, 'A Climbing School at Glencoe' (Dictionary of Scottish Architects: Urquhart, I).

Assigned as lead architect for the project, Urquhart visited skateparks in the US, Europe and the UK to better understand the requirements, and engaged directly with skateboarders, documenting observations that fed into the design and build process ('Long Live Livi 2020', Urquhart S. in HES Engagement Analysis Report p.12). The integration of the climbing wall reflected his own personal interest in climbing and the prevailing idea of a community facility catering to varied interests.

Urquhart's collaboration with skateboarders and immersion in the skate world ensured correct gradients and proportions for the elements and transitions, and also resulted in the pioneering flattened bottoms to the bowls and reservoir, which became a standard for later parks (Leighton Boyce, T. HES Online Survey Report – All Responses, P.89). The 'Transition Machine' (a blade mounted on a timber radius arm to plane the face of the bowl) was another unusual innovation by the architect that contributed to the achievement of a 'near perfect' surface (Borden 2019: 404).

The design also has interest as an authentic reflection of early skate culture (Pepper C. HES Online Survey Report – All Responses, p.67). The half-pipe could accommodate the then popular competitive disciplines of slalom and freestyle, while the Andover Bank referenced an earlier skatepark in Andover, Hampshire (Omond

2003). Most notably, however, the overall design and the Double Bowl, were based directly from Urquhart's observation of the influential later 1970s skateparks of the US, and in particular, Marina del Rey. Built using the latest wet-process shotcrete technology, these skateparks incorporated pool-like elements in response to the popularity of 'found-space' emptied suburban swimming pools among the skateboarding community (Borden 2019: 335–336).

'Pool riding' drove the development of the sport at this time, with the verticals, tight curves and deep-end bowls giving momentum for exciting tricks with aerial manoeuvres and accompanying acoustic effects (*ibid.*). The design lineage for early generation skateparks with pool-like features can be traced back via the Californian suburbs to the famous Modernist precedents of the 1948 Donnell Pool (Sonoma County, California), and before that, the 1939 kidney-shaped pool by Alvar Aalto (Villa Mairea in Noormarkku, Finland) (*ibid.*).

Iain Urquhart's 1980–81 scheme achieved international renown within the skate scene in the years following its completion due to its scale, ambition, surface quality and inherent 'skate-ability'. Its finely-tuned transitions were considered 'years ahead' of anything else, and it was unusual in having a viewing area as part of the design. (Borden 1998: 242).

To achieve Urquhart's design, the Landscape Architects section of Livingston Development Corporation executed a range of landscaping works in order to successfully integrate the structure into the steeply sloping park grounds. They incorporated excess material from other contemporary town centre projects, built earthworks and oversaw the final shaping, drainage, footpaths, seating and planting of the immediate area (Swift, D. in HES Online Survey – All Responses, p.33-34); LDC/FD/1/28/141). While the skatepark has been extended westwards, and some levelling works have taken place, some of the original landscaping remains evident.

In terms of design quality, Livingston stood apart from many other early generation skateparks that were poorly designed or executed, contained ill-suited features from previous ice or roller rinks, and were often dangerous (eg. Kelvingrove and Falkirk). Repair works and the addition of the coping to the Double Bowl in the 1980s proved popular (Letter, Omond K. in LDC/TD/1/28/9/18). Livingston Skatepark continues to be regarded as an important milestone and high quality prototype for concrete skateparks in the UK (Leighton Boyce, T.; Borden I - HES Engagement Analysis Report, p.12), with the depth of the double bowl remaining a stand-out feature.

There is additional design interest in the 1992 extension to the skatepark. Executed when few concrete skateparks were being built nationally, it was designed by Omond to cater for all abilities and to incorporate the potential for progression (Omond 2003). Both the 1992 extension and 2015 extension by Gravity Ltd. increased the overall surface area of the park and diversity of features, although there has been criticism about the quality of some aspects of the 2015 extension and the dimensions of the full pipe (HES Engagement Analysis Report, p.22; Curran, R. in HES Online Survey – All Responses, p 119; Keirnan and Moohan 2021: 3).

3.1.2 Setting

Livingston Skatepark is set within Almondvale Park – a linear public park along the River Almond to the south of the town centre. The skatepark is surrounded by grassed areas, trees, public paths and retains some of its original landscaping with interspersed boulders. It is prominent within the local landscape in some views along and across the river valley due to its monumental qualities – notably the height of the climbing wall and concrete wallhead above the river bank and the scale and extent of its concrete forms.

Livingston Skatepark is now the main surviving feature of an otherwise largely lost ‘multi-sports landscape’, conceived alongside Urquhart’s skatepark as part of Livingston Development Corporation’s ongoing commitment for recreation and open space in the heart of the New Town. During the 1980s, this landscape included the ‘Trim Course’ - a circuit of 13 exercise stations covering eight acres of parkland, the skatepark itself with integrated climbing wall, a BMX track, pitch and putt course and a canoe platform on the riverbank immediately below the skatepark. From 1992, there was also a short-lived model car racing circuit (west of the skatepark), while an amphitheatre was built into the opposite slope of the riverbank to the north. Photographs from this period show the skatepark and these other elements within a mainly open, grassed landscape along the river (eg. Aerial image SC 1681557).

Almondvale Park has changed significantly from the 1990s to the 2020s. Vegetation has matured and there are new areas of planting. Most of the ‘multi-sports landscape’ features survive only in vestigial form or have been removed entirely during a series of changes to the park from 2009–2017. These include the construction of the Civic Centre building to the northwest of the skatepark, a new play park on the site of the amphitheatre, and other smaller-scale additions including new signs, paths, benches, paving and artworks (Almondvale Park, <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk>; New Town Archaeology).

While the wider setting of Livingston Skatepark has altered over time, the general arrangement of the skatepark within a public park setting endures, with the relevance of the skatepark to the provision of open space and leisure facilities for the town still legible in the modern landscape (2023).

3.2 Historic interest

Historic interest is in such things as a building’s age, rarity, social historical interest and associations with people or events that have had a significant impact on Scotland’s cultural heritage. Historic interest is assessed under three headings:

3.2.1 Age and rarity

Purpose-built skateparks of the 1970s–1980 are very rare in the UK. Although many were built in towns and cities during skateboarding’s peak in the mid-later 1970s, the great majority were short-lived - demolished or filled in very soon after the wane of the national ‘craze’. (Borden 2019: 407–411).

In Essex, the Rom Skatepark by Adrian Rolt of G-force (1978) is recognised as the best and most completely preserved in England (listed grade II ref.1419328). Other survivals are Harrow (1978, also by Adrian Rolt) and Stockwell (1978) (both in Greater London), and Southsea Skatepark (1978).

Livingston Skatepark incorporates three phases of construction. Iain Urquhart’s 1980–81 ‘Rock’n’Roll’ scheme is now the oldest skatepark in Scotland and one of just a handful to survive from this period in the UK. While it was built at the tail end of the 1970s boom period, it has long outlived earlier or contemporary facilities, such as the original skatepark at Kelvingrove Park (1977), which was largely dismantled and filled in during the later 20th century (Blair: non-dated)

Kenny Omond’s 1992 scheme also has interest under this heading. During the 1980s–early 1990s, skateboarders and BMX riders gravitated towards street settings or ‘street spots’, or built their own improvised ramps (Borden 2019: 413; Guise 2022). Few concrete skateparks were built during this period and Kenny Omond’s scheme represents a rare public investment to expand the skatepark following the earlier tradition of concrete skatepark design.

From the late 1990s, local councils began to build skateparks in greater numbers. Skateparks are now common in public park settings across Scotland, with the vast majority built since 2000 (Scottish Skatepark Directory). Smaller examples may be timber, steel or composite, while larger skateparks are usually concrete and cater for a range of abilities and styles. Perth skatepark (2003, designed by Clive Bowman, built by Clachan) was the first big custom concrete skatepark to appear in this period (Scottish Skatepark Directory <https://skateparks.skateboardscotland.com/>). Saughton Skatepark in Edinburgh (2010, Clachan Construction) is a later but major example. Within this context, the third phase of Livingston Skatepark (completed 2015) has some interest for its fullpipe, which is a very rare feature in UK skateparks, although it has not been universally accepted due to its proportions (Keirnan and Moohan 2021: 3).

3.2.2 Social historical interest

Livingston skatepark is valued as an enduring icon of the Scottish skate and bike scene. It contributes to our understanding of urban wheeled sports and their associated culture in the later 20th century and early 21st century.

While Urquhart's original scheme reflects the practice of early skateboarding, the survival, maintenance and eventual expansions of the park also demonstrate later trends. These include the emergence of BMX (early-mid 1980s), which likely contributed to the survival of the park, the resurgence of skateboarding, including street styles (later 1980s-90s) and the appearance of the stunt scooter (around 2000 onwards). Known locally, nationally and internationally for the design quality of its original phases, Livingston Skatepark has hosted formal competitions and displays and has been the training ground for individuals achieving high standards (eg. Henderson, G. in HES Online Survey Report – All Responses, p.9)

Livingston Skatepark is also valued as a free and informal outdoor space for skill development at all levels, and as a place of social gathering, community identity and inclusion that has endured since the earlier days of the New Town (HES Engagement Analysis Report, p.13–14; 20–21). In this sense, it has interest as an important survival of later 20th century public enterprise by Livingston Development Corporation that reflects their aspirations for the town in the context of post war, new town planning.

Livingston was Scotland's fourth New Town following on from East Kilbride, Glenrothes and Cumbernauld. It was designated in 1962 to accommodate overspill population from the cities and to create a new economic centre in the central belt. Livingston Development Corporation was charged with building the town – providing not only essential infrastructure and housing, but also cultural and community facilities to help create a balanced and thriving population (Wills 1996: 29–30).

Post-war planners at this time were influenced by greater recognition of the importance of sport and physical recreation in society, with landmark reports and new institutions setting the benchmark for a new era of public sports provision (eg. The Wolfenden Committee on Sport's report (1960), the Albemarle Report into Youth Services (1960), and the establishment of the Scottish Sports Council in 1972 (see The Sports Leisure Legacy Project <https://sportsleisurelegacy.co.uk/>).

While other early skateparks operated on a commercial basis (eg. Skate City in London and Kelvingrove in Glasgow), Livingston skatepark was designed to be freely accessible. Following Omond's initial approach in 1977, and Urquhart's design work, Livingston Development Corporation embraced the idea for a skatepark as a novel recreational facility that would supplement the facilities of the town. They were successful in securing grant funding for its construction as part of a highly unusual plan for an outdoor 'multi-sports landscape'.

Livingston Skatepark has since achieved renown not only for its design but as a place of social and cultural expression and community cohesion. Although skateparks can have negative associations in society, they are also recognised as important places for socialising where behaviours such as cooperation, taking turns and learning from others are commonplace (Wood, Carter and Martin 2014; 'Skateboarding and the inclusion of young people', University of Western Australia).

Livingston skatepark was an early focus for social activities via local interest clubs (Skatekats, founded by Kenny Omond, and later, Livingston Skates) and also the annual Livingston fun-day/jam. This began in 1984 and is among one of the longest established skateboarding traditions (Omond 2003). Evidence from our engagement exercise also shows that the principle of unsupervised, free access remains a highly valued characteristic of the skatepark (HES Engagement Analysis Report).

The skatepark is associated with other forms of cultural expressions, including creating images and film on social media and graffiti. Graffiti art can be considered an important part of the culture of skateparks, as it was one of the cultural phenomena that was imported into Scotland from the USA in the 1970s. Community knowledge is developed and expanded by participants not only through using the park but also by learning about the different concrete forms. These can be named for a variety of reasons – they may have associations with people who might have created a trick there, or where graffiti has remained and/or been repainted (information courtesy of a member of the public).

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

There are important associations with people that have had an impact on how the skatepark is valued within the skate and bike communities.

Livingston skatepark has attracted many well-known skateboarders and bike riders since its original opening in 1981. Contributors to our engagement exercise told us the names of many (HES Engagement Analysis Report, p.12-13) Most famous of these is Tony Hawk, who visited Livingston Skatepark as part of a Bones Brigade tour in July 1991. An ex-professional pioneer of vert skateboarding from San Diego, Hawk remains the single most influential skateboarder in a global context. He featured in a documentary on Livingston Skatepark (Long Live Livi 2020) and recalled that already in 1991 it was considered “such a legendary place” (quoted in Sunday Post, 01/03/2020).

While Hawk and other individuals may have visited Livingston skatepark only briefly, and while this association is not evident in the fabric of the skatepark, their visits have influenced how the skatepark is valued and contribute to its historic interest within the skate and bike scene.

4. Summary of assessment

Livingston ‘Livi’ Skatepark meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- The 1980–81 design closely reflects the origins of early skate culture and is recognised internationally for its pioneering design, high quality and as a prototype for later concrete skateparks

- Surviving largely intact, the 1980–81 scheme reflects the interest of its architect, Iain Urquhart, for his innovative approach to the design and build.
- The skatepark remains prominent within its public park setting.
- The 1980–1 phase is now the oldest skatepark in Scotland and among a very few surviving purpose-built concrete skateparks of this era in the UK.
- The 1992 extension also has interest for its rarity – few other concrete skateparks were built during this time.
- The early phases represent an important survival of public enterprise architecture by Livingston Development Corporation and contributes to an understanding of later 20th century planning in a New Town context.
- Livingston Skatepark has social historical interest as an enduring icon of the Scottish skate and bike scene.

5. Category of listing

Once a building is found to be of special architectural or historic interest, it is then classified under one of three categories (A, B or C) according to its relative importance. While the listing itself has legal weight and gives statutory protection, the categories have no legal status and are advisory. They affect how a building is managed in the planning system.

Category definitions are found at Annex 2 of Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

5.1 Level of importance

Livingston ‘Livi’ Skatepark’s level of importance is category B.

Buildings listed at category B are defined as ‘buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are major examples of a particular period, style or type’.

Taking into account the quality, age and rarity of the earlier phases of the skatepark and its overall social historical interest, within what is now a prolific building type, and within a setting that has lost other contemporaneous recreational facilities, category B is considered to be the most appropriate level of listing.

8. References

Canmore: <https://canmore.org.uk/site/373668/livingston-skatepark>

Archives

Image - Aerial View 1989, <https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1681557>

Curves and Concrete, BBC Sunday Feature, Produced and presented by Steve Urquhart, Released on 01 Nov 2020 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000p2ch> [Accessed 8 October 2023]

Long Live Livi, BBC Documentary, Directed by Parisa Urquhart and Ling Lee, First broadcast on 11 June 2020 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000k06g> [Accessed 8 October 2023]

Sunday Post, Skate Expectations, 01/03/2020 <https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/skate-expectations-superstar-tony-hawk-says-historic-west-lothian-park-could-become-a-world-leading-attraction/> [Accessed 8 October 2023]

West Lothian Council Archive,

LDC/BD/2/132 - LDC Board Papers - 216th meeting, 20/01/78

LDC/TD/1/3/1/34 - Skateboard Facilities

LDC/FD/1/12/6/10 - Lease of ground for skatepark

LDC/PS/3/3/31/7 - Livingston Skatebowl

LDC/TD/1/28/9/19 - Extension to skate bowl for model stock car racing track

LDC/TD/1/28/9/18 - Almondvale Park Skate Bowl

LDC/PS/3/3/32/1 Skatebowl 1991

LDC/FD/1/28/141 Sports landscape - climbing wall and skate park etc. Skate bowl extension for model stock car.

West Lothian Courier (1975) – *Livingston's Growing, but oh so slowly*, 01/08/1975

Printed Sources

Borden, I. (1998) *A Theorised History of Skateboarding with particular reference to the ideas of Henri Lefebvre* PhD Thesis, The Bartlett, University College London, [Borden_10121656_thesis.pdf \(ucl.ac.uk\)](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/theses/10121656) [Accessed 8 October 2023]

Borden, I. (2019) *Skateboarding and the city: A complete history*, London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts

Chalmers, M. (2022) 'Pipe Dream: Livingston Skate Park' in *Urban Realm*, Vol.12, Issue 51, pp.36–43

Keirnan, L. and Moohan B. (2021) *Livingston skatepark progress report*, <https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/> [Accessed 8 October 2023]

Wills, E. (1996) *Livingston: the making of a Scottish new town*, Edinburgh: Rutland Press for Livingston Development Corporation

Wood, L.; Carter, M. and K. Martin 2014: 'Dispelling Stereotypes...Skate Parks as a Setting for Pro-Social Behavior among Young People' *Current Urban Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, p.62–73

Online Sources

www.historicenvironment.scot

Historic Environment Scotland, Longmore House,
Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

Historic Environment Scotland
Scottish Charity No. SC045925
VAT Number: GB 221 8680 15

Almondvale Park, West Lothian Council
<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/almondvalepark#SnippetTab> [Accessed 25 October 2023]

Blair, J, (nd) *Kelvingrove* North Skate Magazine
<https://www.northskatemag.com/blogs/north-latest/kelvingrove> [Accessed 8 October 2023].

Guise, T (2022) *Take a ride around the underground history of BMX in Britain*, The Redbull Bulletin, [Mark Noble: Emulsion BMX book – interview \(redbull.com\)](https://www.redbull.com/uk-en/mark-noble-emulsion-bmx-book-interview) 10/05/2022 [Accessed 12 October 2023]

HES – Livi Skatepark Engagement Analysis Report – June 2023
<https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/designating-livingston-skatepark> [Published 21 November 2023]

HES - Online Survey Report – All Responses – Livingston Skatepark – June 2023
<https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/designating-livingston-skatepark> [Published 21 November 2023]

Omond (2003) Livingston: Carved in Stone – unedited – republished 2009 from original interview 2003, *Sidewalk Magazine*
https://sidewalkmag.com/features/interviews/livingston_carved_in_stone_unedited.html [Accessed 8 October 2023]

New Town Archaeology: Relics of the Trim Course
<https://www.scottishshale.co.uk/stories/new-town-archaeology/> [Accessed 12 October 2023]

Scottish Skatepark Directory, Skateboard Scotland,
<https://skateparks.skateboardscotland.com/> [Accessed 8 October 2023]

Skateboarding and the inclusion of young people in the community, University of Western Australia <https://www.uwa.edu.au/projects/skateboarding-and-the-inclusion-of-young-people-in-the-public-realm> [Accessed 06/11/2023]

Sports Leisure Legacy Project <https://sportsleisurelegacy.co.uk/> [Accessed 29 October]

The Rom Skatepark, Historic England List Entry,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1419328> [Accessed 8 October 2023]

Youtube 2014: Meet the Baton Bearers: Kenny Omond, 08/06/2014
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajxesxcN5Qw>