



Haringey
LONDON

FINSBURY PARK SKATEPARK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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CONTENTS



1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	3
2 APPROACH	4
3 RESEARCH FINDINGS - 'THE RELATIONSHIP WITH FINSBURY PARK'	5
4 RESEARCH FINDINGS - 'THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SKATEPARK'	6
5 COMMUNITY INSIGHT - 'IMPROVING ON FINSBURY PARK SKATEPARK'	7
6 COMMUNITY INSIGHT - 'DESIGNING A FUTURE SKATEPARK'	10
7 FINDINGS - 'TAKING INSPIRATION FROM OTHER SKATEPARKS'	11
8 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS	13

INTRODUCTION

Haringey Council, Friends of Finsbury Park (FoFP), Betongpark and My Place have been working together to transform Finsbury Park skatepark into an accessible and welcoming space that will both provide a satisfying challenge for experienced skaters and encourage beginners to give skating and other wheeled sports a try.

Throughout November and December 2022, a variety of community engagement events were held to consult local people on their uses of the park and their hopes for a improved skatepark. Betongpark worked alongside My Place, a local organisation based in Finsbury Park who empower young people to be leaders in their communities.

This report has been put together by Betongpark to summarise the community engagement approach and findings from the 2 months of public consultation, and acts as an appendix resource for the design brief for the accompany concept design.



CONTEXT

The project gathered wider support from local stakeholders during the Summer of 2021, initiated by the local interest group, Friends of Finsbury Park (FoFP) who undertook a crowdfunding campaign to improve the skatepark.

A year later Betongpark were commissioned by Haringey Council to deliver ‘Phase 1’ of the project - designing a process for local people to participate in the designs, building relationships with the local interest groups, and carrying out in-person and online consultation as part of the community engagement.

top left: Local skaters fly out of the bowl to street section, courtesy of Harry Wilson

top right: Friends of Finsbury Park fundraiser for the Skate Plaza in 2021

below: Design render of the Skate Plaza for Finsbury Park by Betongpark, from previously assisted on concept design development back in 2021.

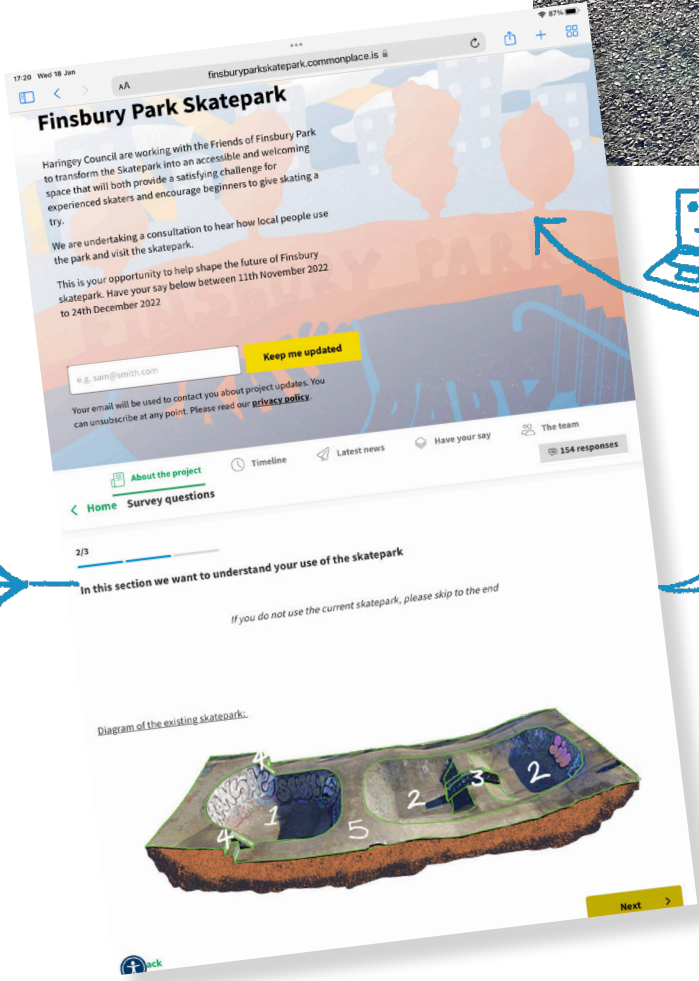


APPROACH

For the project we adopted a mixed approach to engagement, combining in-person surveying across Youth Spaces and Finsbury Park, as well as online surveys via Commonplace.

Through these survey questions we wanted to explore how the space in and around the skatepark is used, what can we improve, as well as how we can make the space more inclusive to encourage people who wouldn't use it to feel they can.

For in-person engagement, groups of up to five people were enlisted from Betongpark and My Place - with a Haringey Council officer. The team was briefed on sensitivities and risk assessment before talking to people who were comfortable sharing their opinion.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section we break down the findings based of the various questions asked on the survey, and the discussions undertaken at the different engagement events.

TOP LINE STATS:



Total contributions: 203

113 took survey within Finsbury Park

31 took survey from Community space

54 from home/other

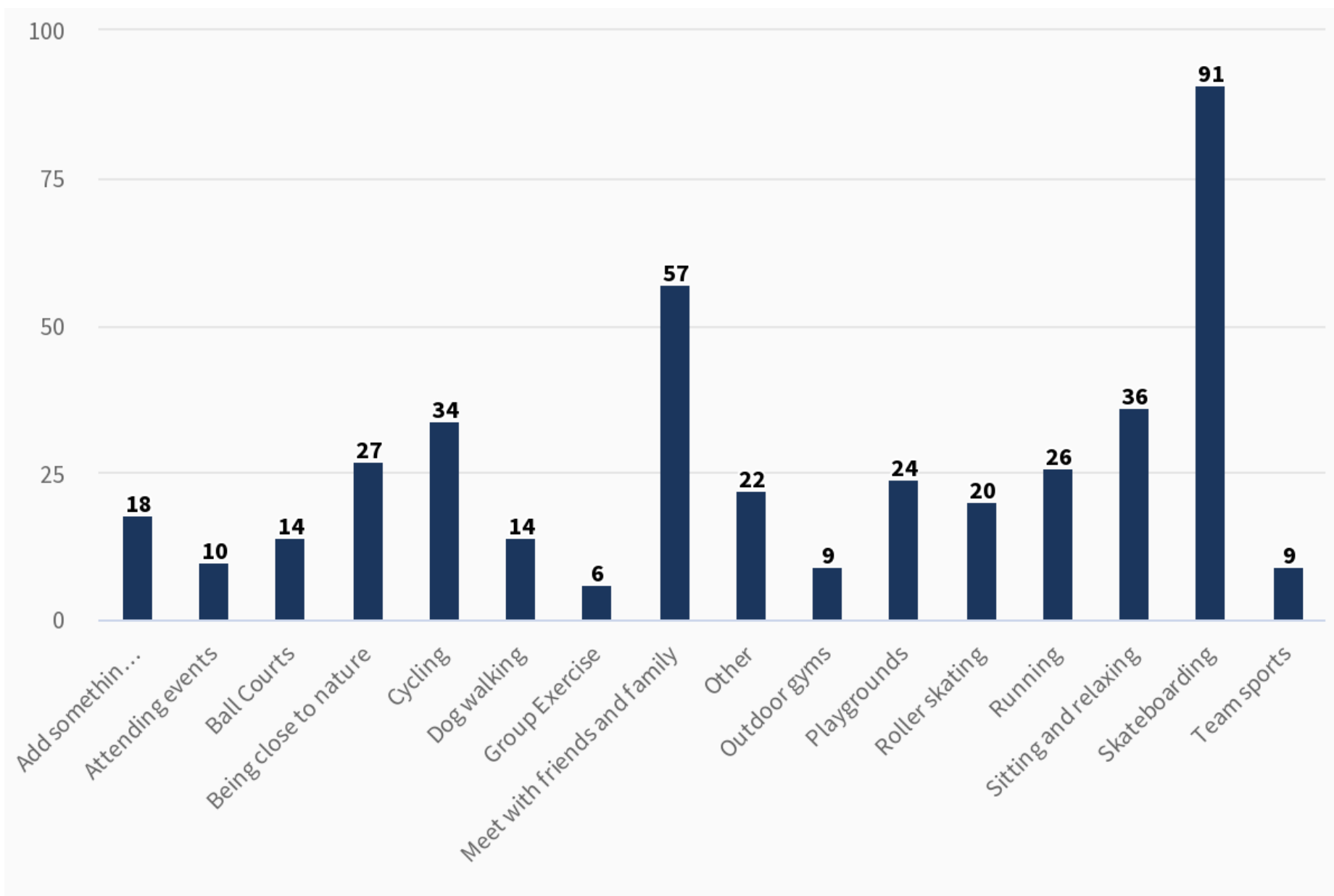
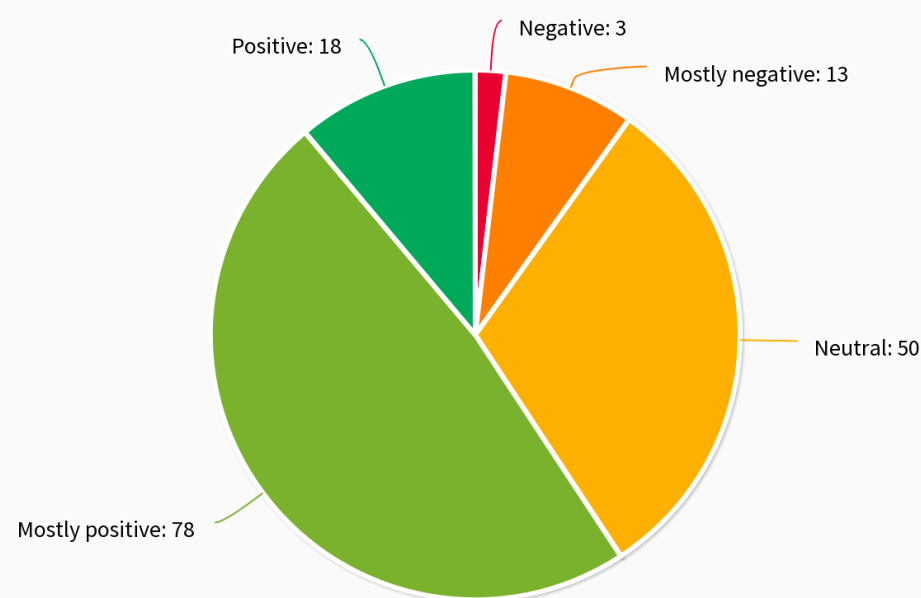
5 from London skate whatsapp chats

The relationship with Finsbury Park (more generally)

We asked 'What type of activities do you take part in across Finsbury Park?' to which you can see most of those we spoke to selected skateboarding as an activity they do in the park.

'Meeting with friends and family' (56) and 'sitting and relaxing' (36) combined were as high as 'skateboarding' (91) for favoured activity within the park. As a result, socialising activities will inform the concept design. Roller skating and cycling also represented common activities. These combine with skateboarding to represent wheeled sports as a popular pastime in the park.

When asked about the sentiment of Finsbury Park, people largely felt positive when using the park, however negative feelings associated with the park were largely based around feeling unsafe (at night).

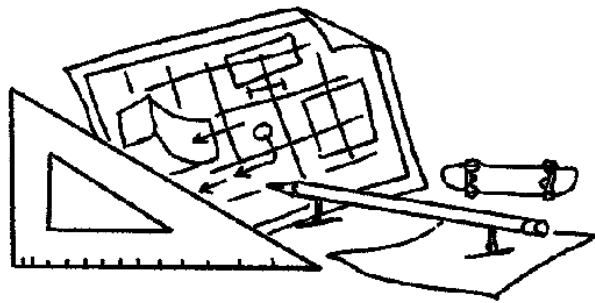
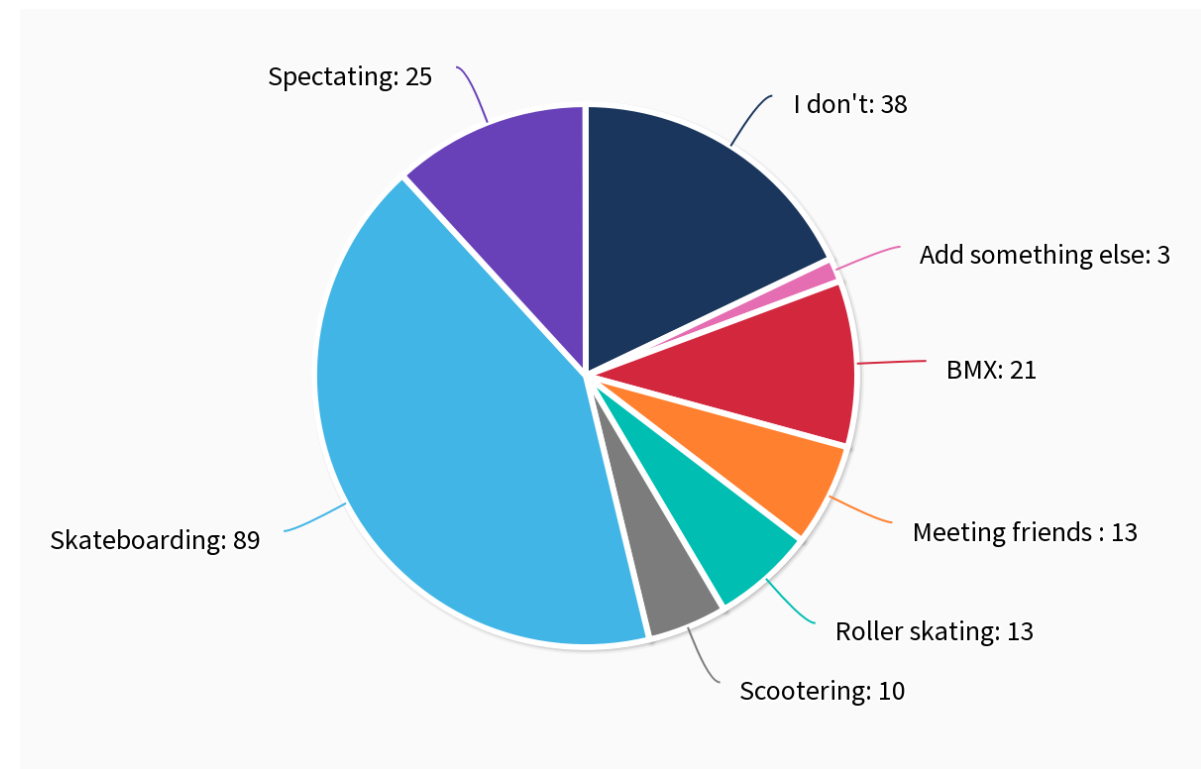


The relationship with Finsbury Park Skatepark

When asked 'what activities do you do at the skatepark', just under half of our respondents were skateboarding, followed by those who did not use the skatepark. The act of spectating at the skatepark was surprisingly popular with 12% of respondents.

Barriers to using Finsbury Park Skatepark

We then asked why people did not use the park, which were largely split between the park design, abilities, and disrepair.



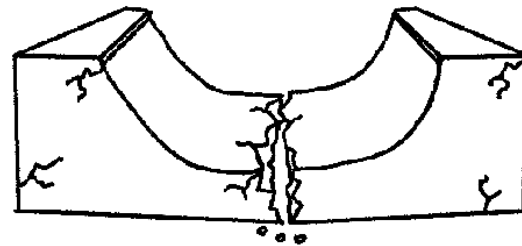
PARK DESIGN

It is very small and tight not allowing for multiple skill levels or growth in expertise

Very little in options of lines, tiny poorly made jump box and the transition of the bowl section at the end is far too slack for how tight it is

It's too small and only caters for certain types of skating. Doesn't have much for street skaters or smaller obstacles for beginners

I have been skateboarding for 20+ years and live opposite Finsbury park, I don't skate there because the current park is so bad



PARK DISREPAIR

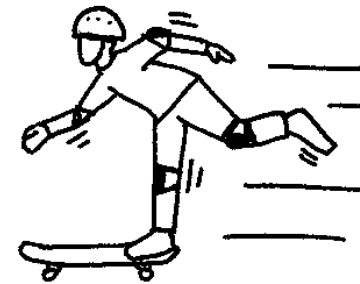
There is often rubbish and debris in the bowl

I have seen fires set in the middles of the bowl - which spoils the surface.

The bowl is so bumpy

Slappy curbs which were put here have been broken

The fence around it is pointless, as it's been half de-assembled



ABILITIES

I'm learning to skateboard and I haven't built up the confidence to try the bowls yet and I don't want to get in people's way. Still learning to balance, ollie and do flat-ground tricks, so mostly use the netball courts

I'd be keen to get involved with skateboarding, but having not done it ever I am nervous to start. I got the confidence to use the skatepark with my son, but as for myself using it, I'm not aware of the etiquette about who goes first etc - maybe there is a way for this future skatepark to educate parents and other users about skatepark etiquette



OTHER

I tend to use the netball courts, because the skatepark is too difficult for my roller skating

Need a whole stretch of levelled-out flat ground for roller skating

I didn't know the park existed

Skateparks are magnets for drug dealers, drunks and bad behaviour from people that don't use the park. Often seating is placed too close to the skate park or the obstacles in it that they become unusable

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Improving on Finsbury Park Skatepark

In this section we explore what improvements could be made to encourage more people to use the space. We asked people 'what activities or offerings could encourage you to use the skatepark'.

SKATEPARK REDESIGN

Larger park, for a larger range of capabilities

Bigger street section - using the rough tarmac area surrounding it as flat ground.

Lights for skating after the sun goes down

A new plaza to skate with more variation of obstacles - like rails and ledges.

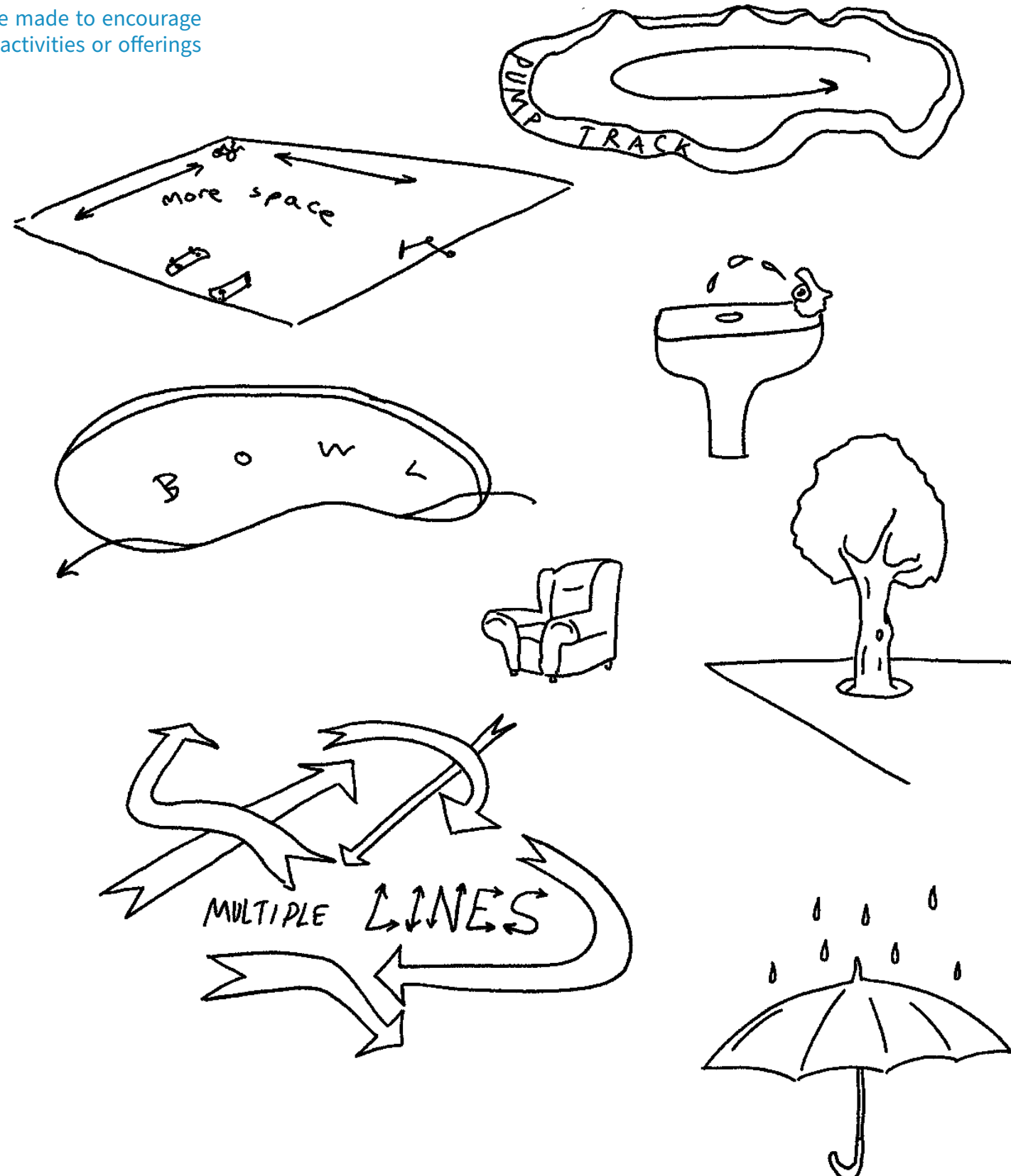
Pump tracks

It would need to be more in line with the requirements for the Olympics e.g a large bowl section, small bowl section, and street section. A good benchmark would be a combination of what is in Clissold Park with what is in Lloyd Park in Walthamstow

A larger more complex bowl with more features and options. It is essential that it's designed by people that currently ride/skate

Larger space for beginners and smaller children as I have a 4-year-old keen to try but there isn't much space at busy times

Would be good to leave the original bit but just extend



OTHER DESIGN

Seating to spectate, but also having it skatable seating

More cafes and more indoor spaces - e.g. cafe or kiosk

Plant lots of trees around it

A water fountain

Good seating, and lighting - tennis court lights would be sufficient. Also, I would like closer toilets and bins. Could be good to connect the space between the netball courts and the skatepark - the road between is like volcanic rock - it's dangerous to skate.

There is some rough tarmac just outside the skatepark that could be smoothed over for rollerskaters

A covered area for when it's rainy

OTHER ACTIVITIES / SPORTS

Drawing

Badminton

Calisthenics, table tennis - spread out so it doesn't obstruct skating

Skate lessons for kids and adults would be great

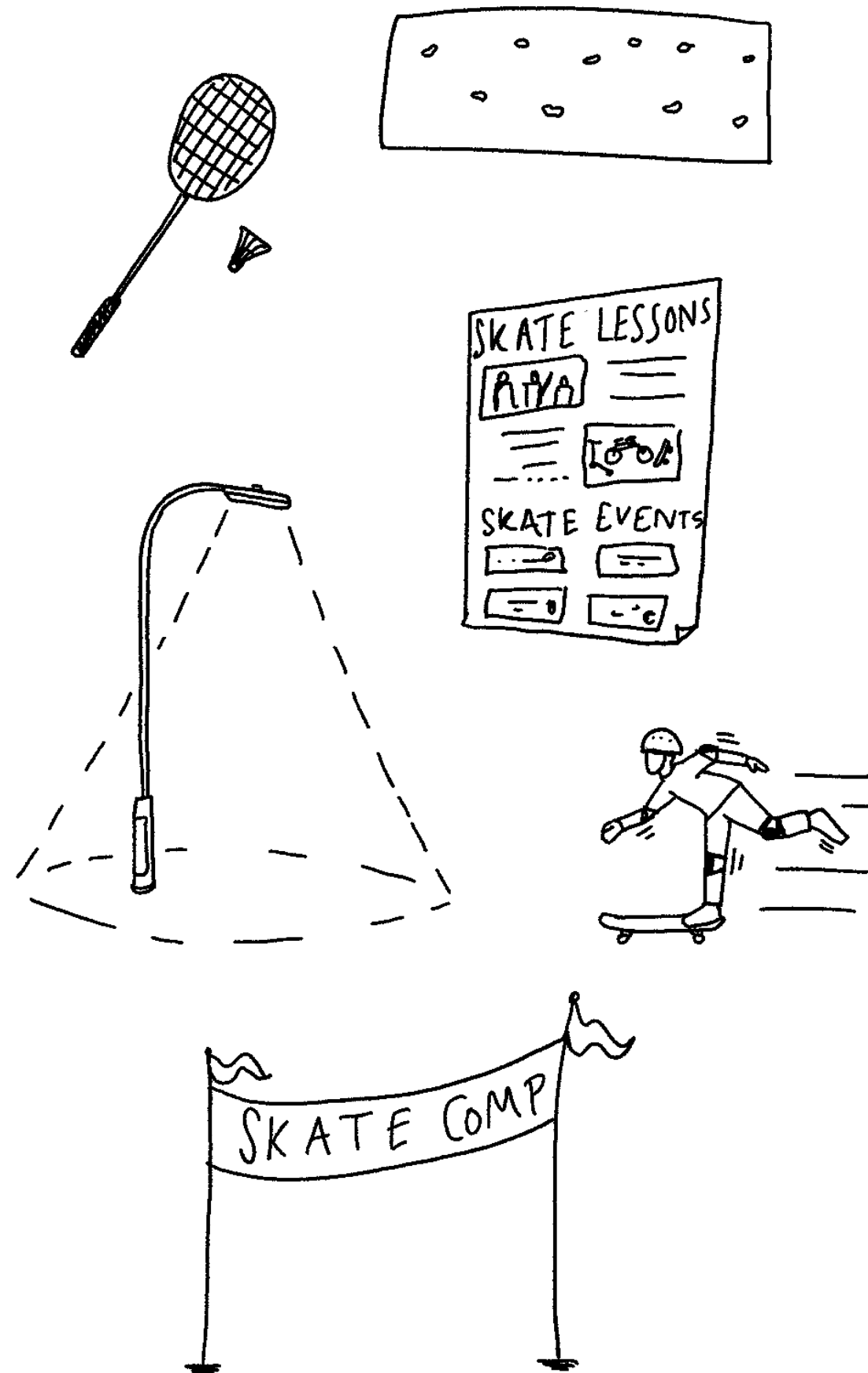
Flat ground for street dancers

Lights - so we can skate into the evening. Power, so we can use sound systems for roller disco!

If there was a skate shop that was local and offered decks and replacement parts for boards, I would feel more influenced to spend time at the skatepark

Bouldering and cycle loop next to it to mix the groups using it and make it feel safer

If they held skating events, I may attend as a spectator



SAFETY / HEALTH

Lights! (15% of respondents said listed lighting in a response to this question)

It would make me feel safer to have CCTV and lights

Cleaner area, less rubbish

You need to add lighting - not just in one area, but from the entry to the exit so people can safely leave late.

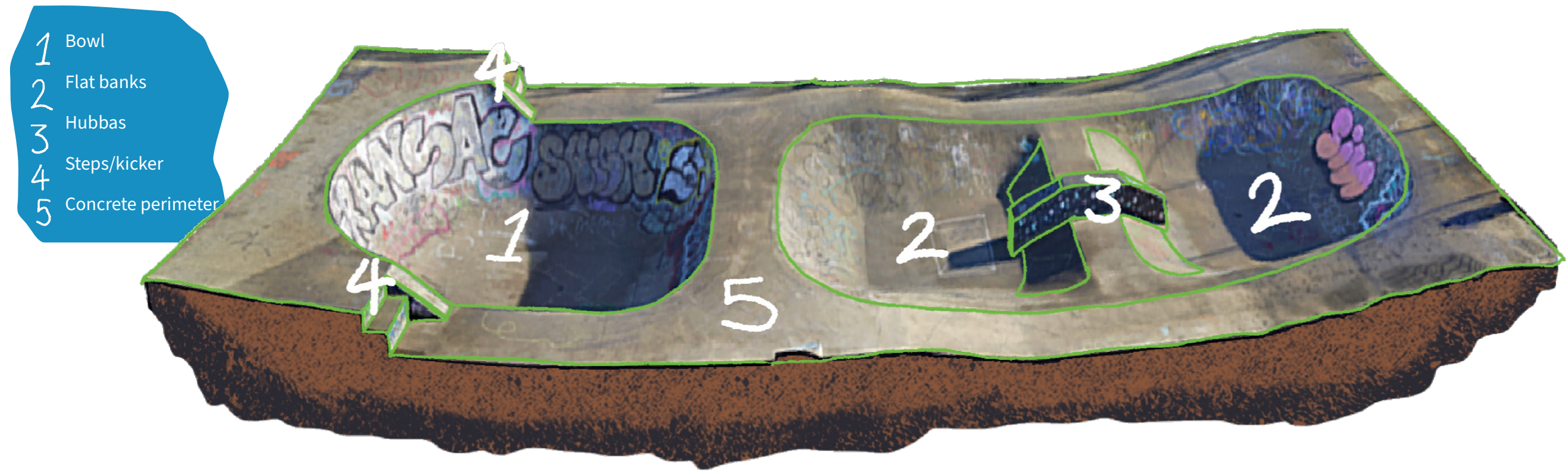
COMMUNITY SPACE

A good skatepark is good for the community

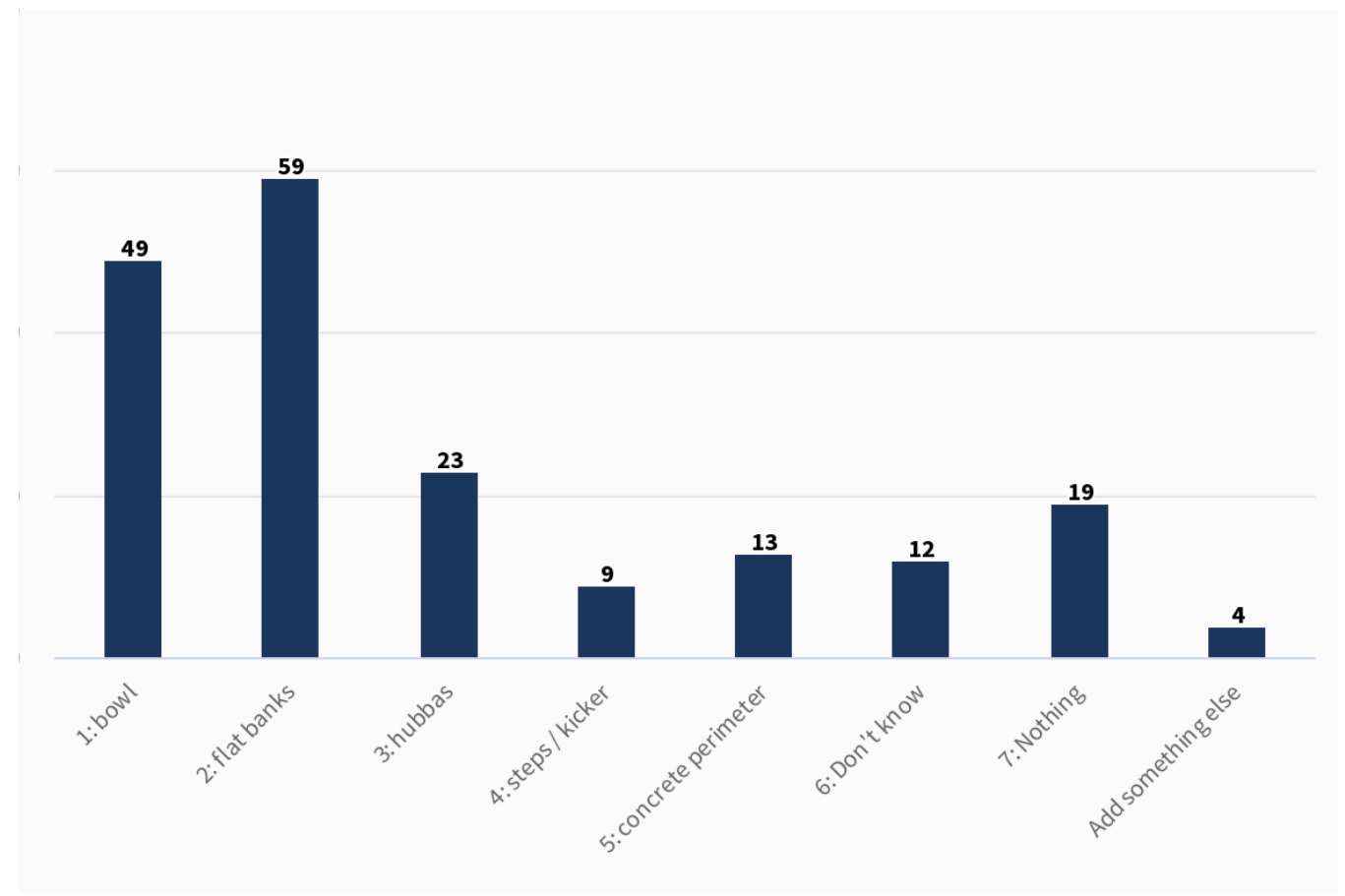
A more open and comprehensive skate park would make finbury park a destination spot for local riders and skaters that would otherwise go to Brixton.

All you need is flat smooth ground and it will attract lots of people, like Bethnal Green gardens. Get a good user group together of local knowledgeable experienced users and the park will be good.

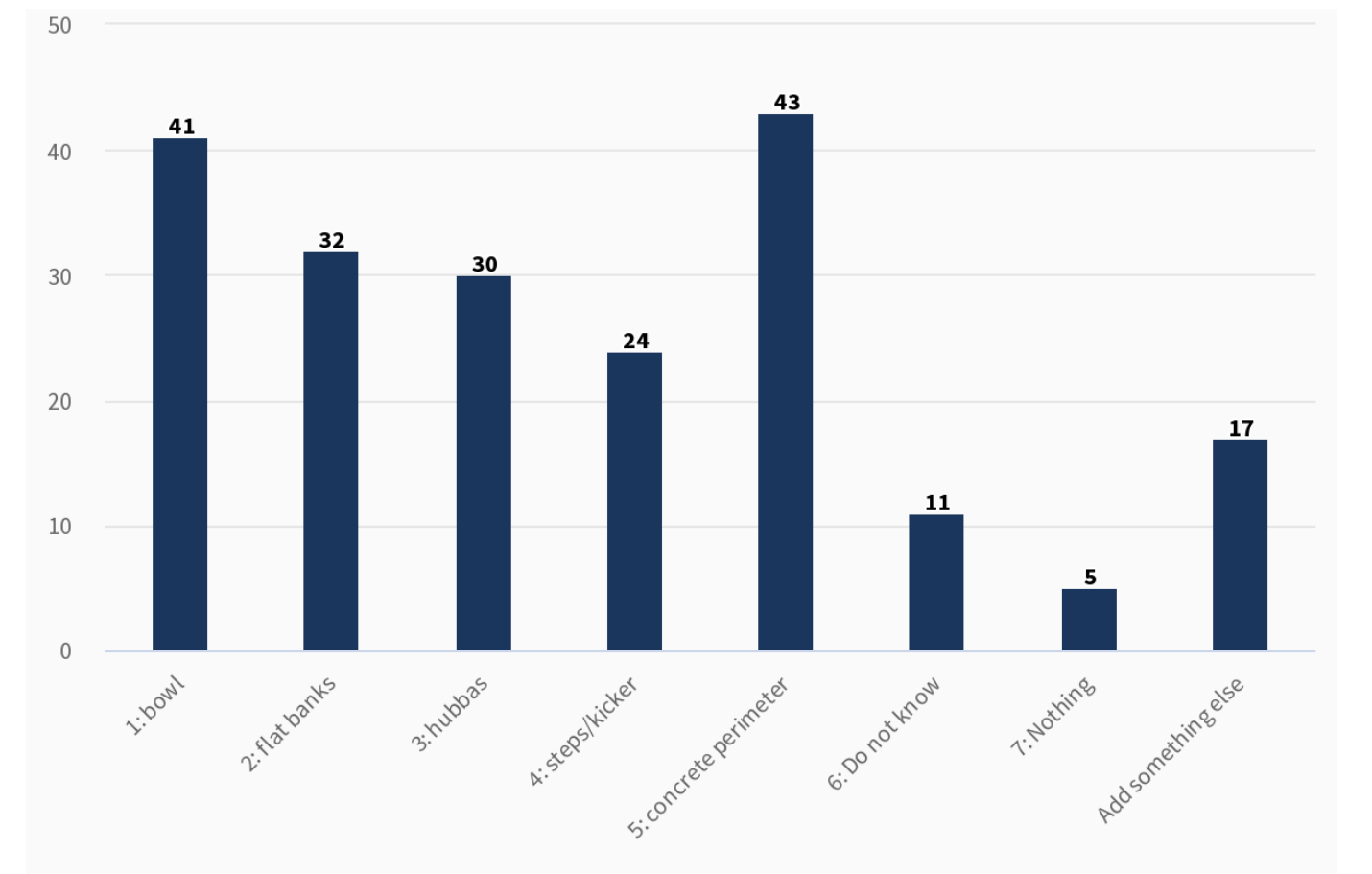
I really think an improved skatepark would be a huge advantage to the park and the community



In keeping with sustainability it is important to preserve what we can of the existing park - especially if it is liked by local users. When asked to label which of the obstacles/areas they enjoyed the most we found the flat banks were most popular, followed by the bowl. Very few enjoyed the steps/kicker, and 10% of respondents like 'nothing' about the existing park.



Asking which parts of the existing park they would like to see improved, we found that people responded far more to each of the options, largely citing the 'concrete perimeter' to be made into an extension of the skatepark onto the tarmac area next to it. The call for improvements of the bowl and flat banks were often to do with their small size not offering enough options for skaters or BMXers.

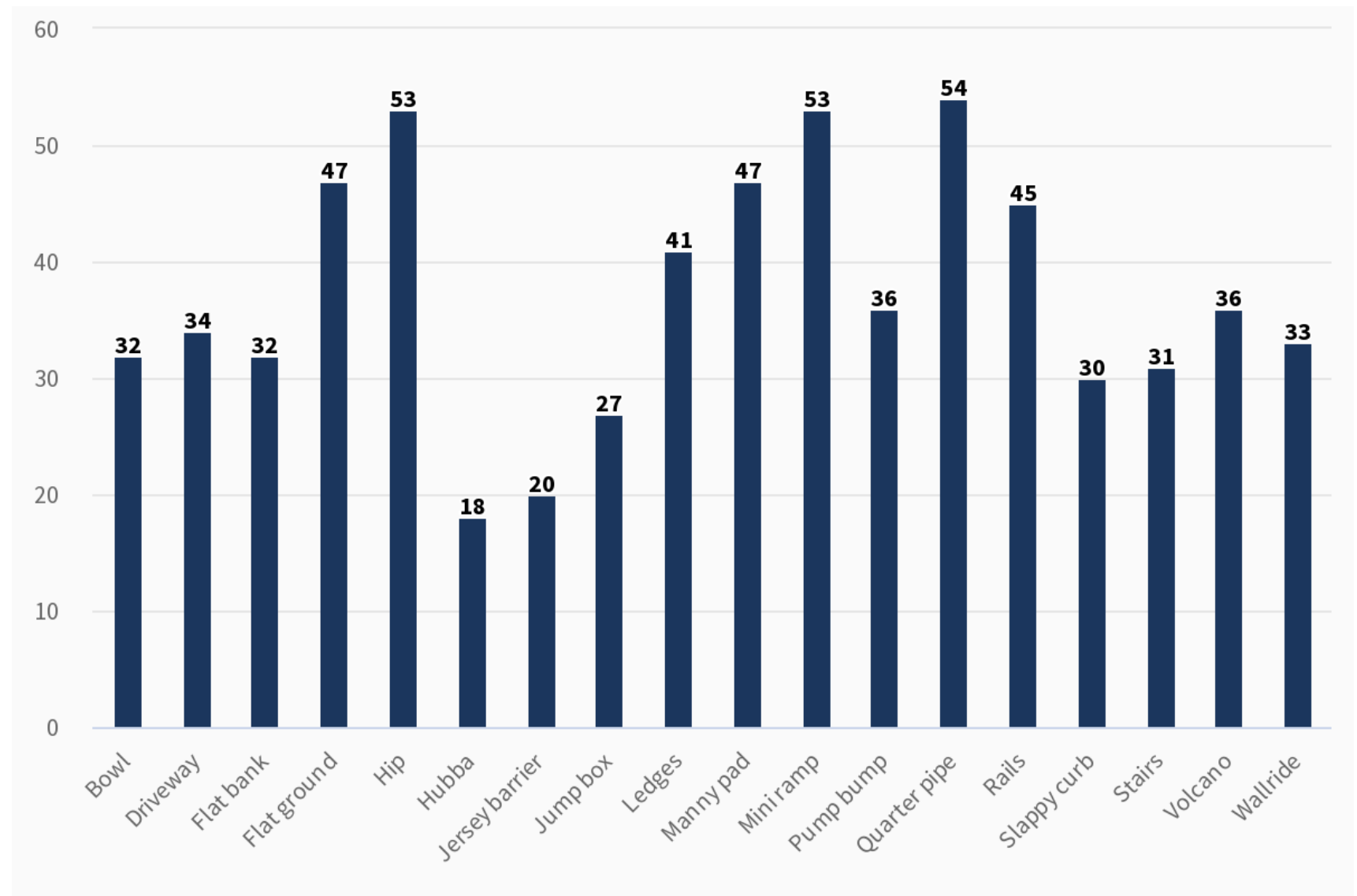
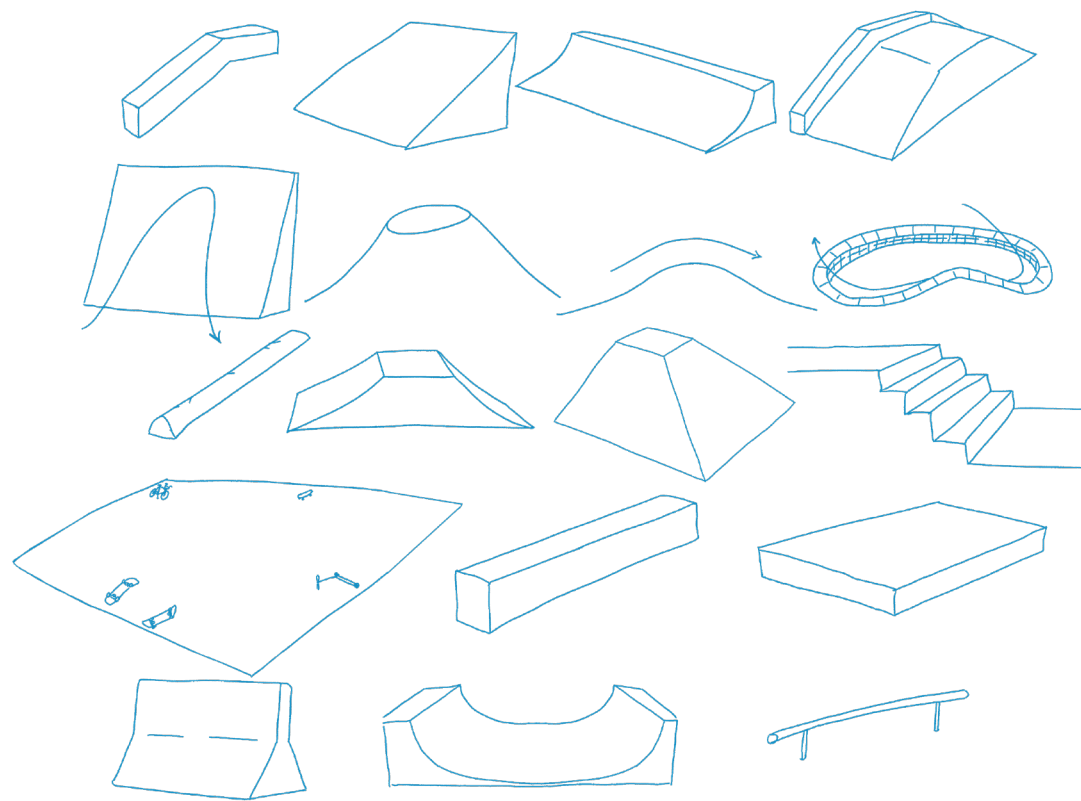


Designing a future skatepark

When given a selection of potential skatepark obstacles, people's favourite selections was a simple quarter pipe, as well as more street obstacles including manny pads, hips and ledges. People would often mention the idea of a skate plaza, with spaced out obstacles for a range of abilities which allow flow. Roller skaters would frequently select flat ground as their favourite feature of a future skatepark.

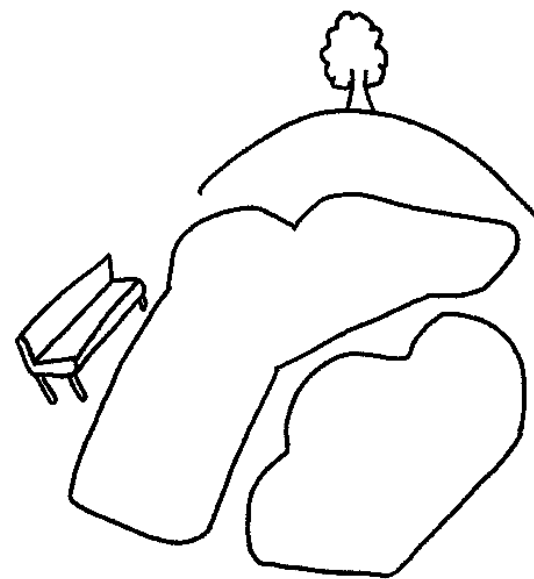
Creating the next generation of skaters

The diverse age range of participants showcased the need to create a more dynamic space, one that can cater for different ages and types of wheeled users



Taking inspiration from other skateparks

With so many brilliant skateparks across London, its important to take inspiration from them, while also ensuring we do not replicate what is offered nearby. Asking people 'which their favourite skatepark and why' people gave some great insights on what makes the spaces so speacial to them. (Other mentions include Brighton level, Dean lane, Barking xtreme, Croxley, Watford plaza)



Clissold

Carefully designed by people that skate/BMX which is essential

Great shaped bowl. Lots of lines. Also small options for beginners to practice dropping in

it's well built and the council listened to the skate and bmx community.

it's very well designed, after riding it extensively for 12 years I still see new lines being done.

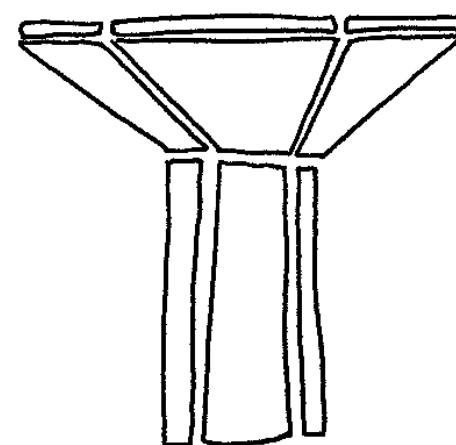
Good for meeting friends / hanging out there



Stockwell

Incredible unique space with a thriving community

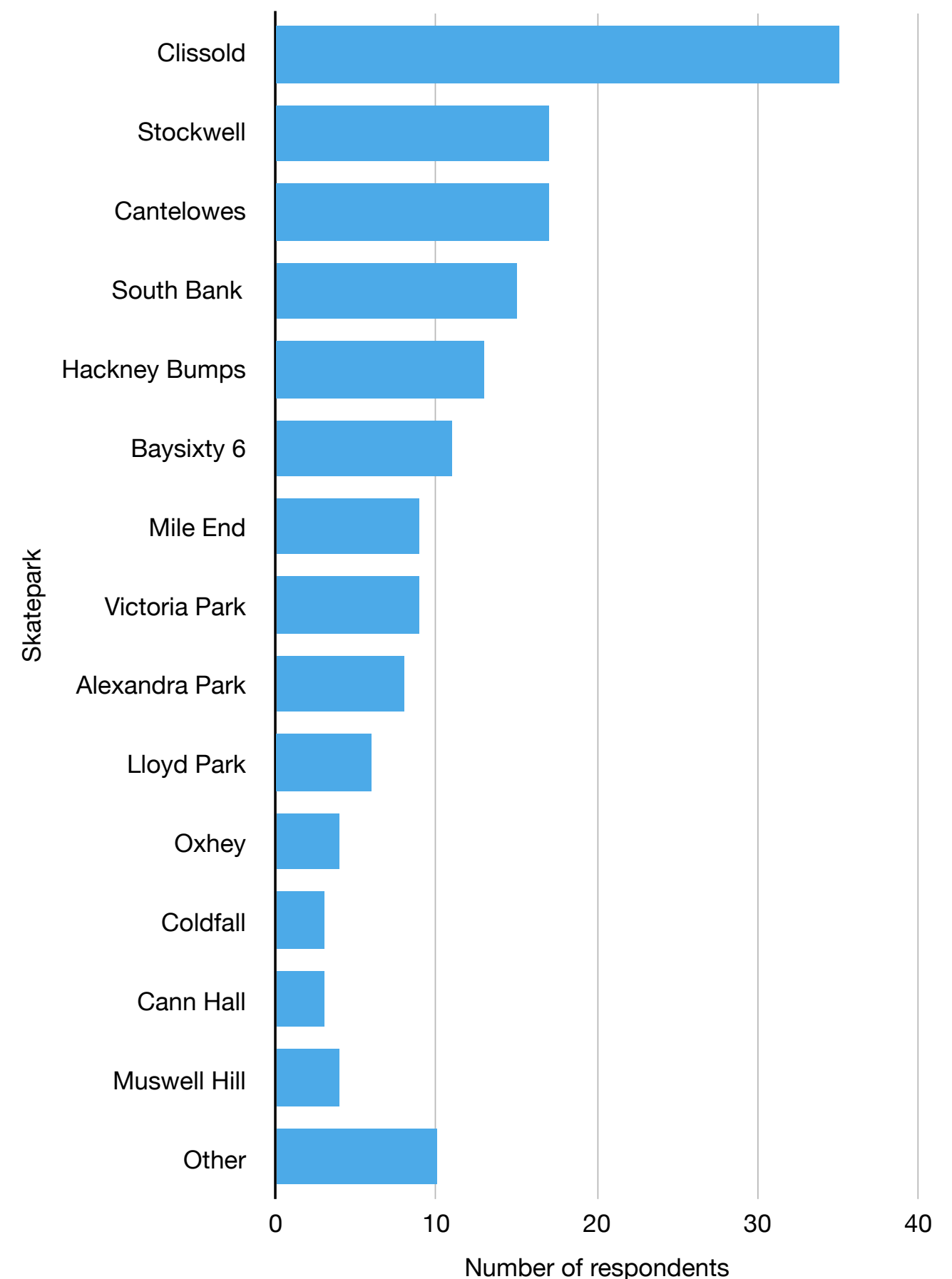
Stockwell, due to its flow and the range of transitions on offer - the whippy quarters around the outside of the park especially.

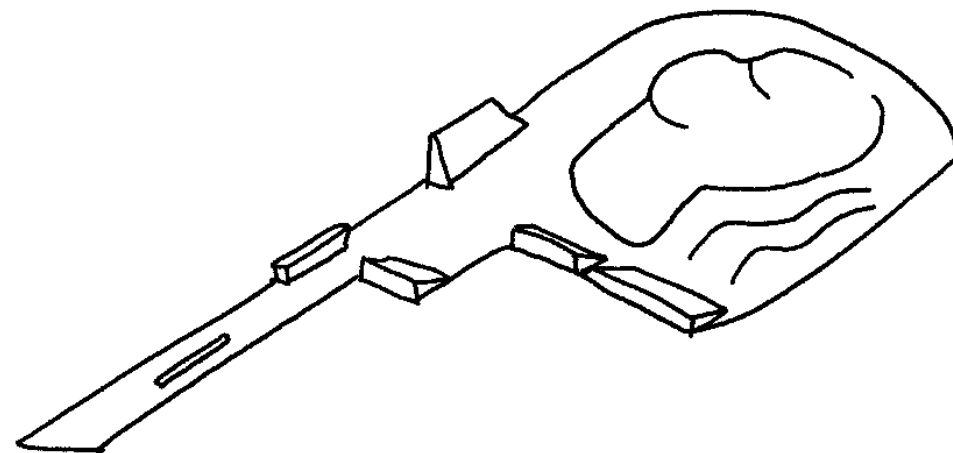


South Bank

Challenging and interesting obstacles, other more experienced skaters there I can learn from

Sheltered!





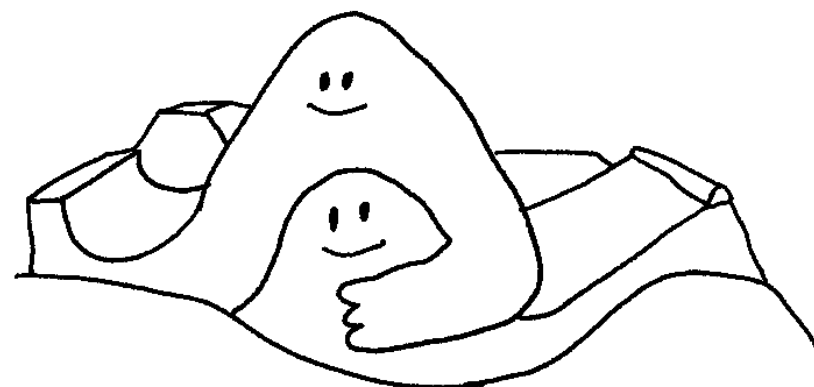
Cantelowes

It's big and has enough space for rollerblades

It's got the most option for street riding in the local area but still no rails or or down ledges

Cantelowes because it is the only half lit up bowl in London.

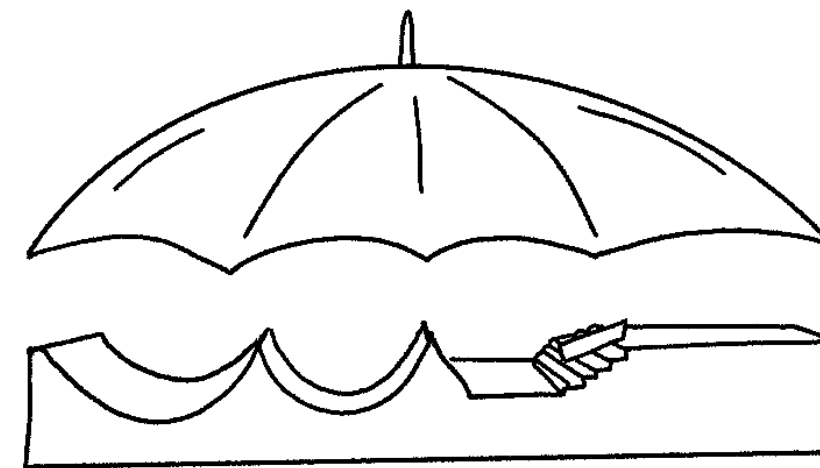
Well maintained



Hackney Bumps

Has lots of space around the outside allowing you to flow around

Lovely community based around there

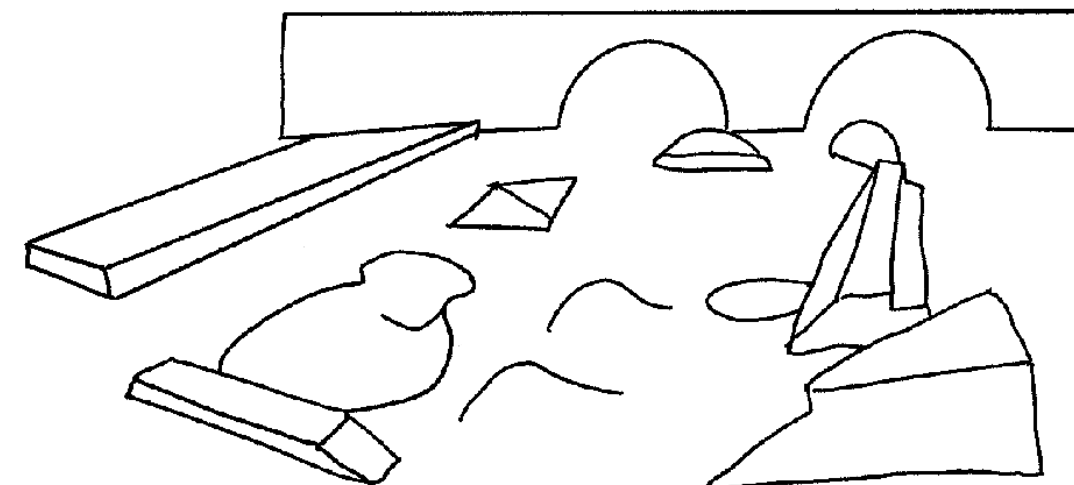


Baysixty 6

Bay 66 as it has lighting and good rails and stairs to skate

There's a beginners area

offer mellow-mini ramp, boxes, manny pads, smooth rolling surface



Mile End

I like smooth open space and obstacles that cater for all skills and have unlimited possibilities like a classic ledge unlike a quicker obstacle which can only have a few things done on it and only by the best skaters

Lots of space so multiple people can skate at once, lots of space to warm up and good flow

Mile end for long ledges nice vibes and long triangle bank

