

An indoor skate space for winter in Cambridge

Solving the problem quickly and cheaply



Introduction

- Skateboarding is hugely important for the physical and mental health of people, especially young people, in Cambridge.
- Despite these benefits, Cambridge skateboarders do not have access to facilities that are suitable for winter use.
- Cam Skate proposes a low cost solution that repurposes existing facilities to allow the council to provide this much needed facility to Cambridge skaters **as soon and as cheaply as possible.**

Why is skateboarding important?

Physical Activity

”Sport England recognises the record and further potential of Skateboarding to create more opportunities for people to be physically active and its considerable reach and impact from street to podium.”

Tim Hollingsworth, CEO Sport England

[Skateboard GB Design and Development Guidance for Skateboarding](#)

Skateboarding helps to combat obesity, and helps people develop fine motor skills, balance, and coordination. Most importantly this is a form of exercise that young people want to do. This enthusiasm should be nurtured.

- Low levels of physical activity are responsible for one in six deaths in the UK.
- Physical activity leads to higher self esteem, better mental health, and opportunities for social interaction.
- A lack of winter skateparks in Cambridge means this need is not being fulfilled for a large part of the year.
- Skateboarding is relatively cheap and accessible compared to other sports and does not require rigid training schedules. This makes it an approachable form of physical activity.



Why is skateboarding important?

Mental Health

“The sport has surged this year as boys – and, increasingly, girls – find an accessible way to test their skills and raise their spirits”

Elliot Violet Bramley
[The Guardian](#)

Many skateboarders talk about the focus that skateboarding requires as a kind of mindfulness, a way of staying present and leaving their anxieties behind for a bit. Skateboarding also teaches people the importance of perseverance and helps people overcome fear through practise.

“I’ve had a history of mental disorders, and skating makes you remove any of those thoughts because you have to concentrate on that skill [...] For those moments or hours, you skate, you’re in another zone.”

Annie McCormack
[Odd Girls Skate Hull](#)

Just some of the mental health benefits of skateboarding:

- Reduces boredom
- Provides escapism
- Builds confidence
- Provides a coping mechanism



Photo credit: Andy Buchanan for Skateistan

Why is skateboarding important?

Community, Creativity, Citizenship

Community

Skaters are friendly and welcoming and skate shops and parks often become centres of their community. For a lot of people the skatepark is a 'third place' after work/school and home, and they meet a lot of their close friends through skating.

Arts and Creativity

Skateboarding itself is creative but it also pushes people towards creative endeavours in other parts of their lives. Photography and video production, drawing, clothing, music, architecture, etc. are all interests that can be fostered by skateboarding.

Citizenship

Involvement procuring and/or community administration of skate parks/shops has **led many skaters from being community outsiders to engaged citizens**, people who are actively involved in how their local space is operated and organised. In addition, in many local areas the provision of a skatepark has led to significant **reductions in incidents of crime**, disorder and anti-social behaviour. For example, in Dorchester, a new skatepark led to a 45% decline in anti-social behaviour (BBC 2014).

[Source: Design and development guidance for skateboarding](#)



Photos credits: Charlie Foulkes, Cambridge skater and photographer



Winter Skating in Cambridge

A lack of appropriate facilities

If a skatepark is to be used in winter it needs lighting, protection from rain, and preferably warmth. There are currently zero facilities in Cambridge provided by the council that suit the needs of skateboarders in the winter.

A Cam Skate survey showed that **two thirds** of skateboarders in Cambridge have travelled out of the city to skate more appropriate parks.

Lighting

It gets too dark to skate as early as 4:30pm in the dead of winter. Only 1 skatepark in Cambridge, Orchard Park skatepark, has lighting.

Protection from rain

Without proper protection from the elements, an outdoor public skatepark becomes unusable for a day to a week at a time due to rain. In the winter this can mean even dry days are not viable skating days.

Fully enclosed - or at least covered - spaces are vital if skating is to continue in the winter.

Warmth

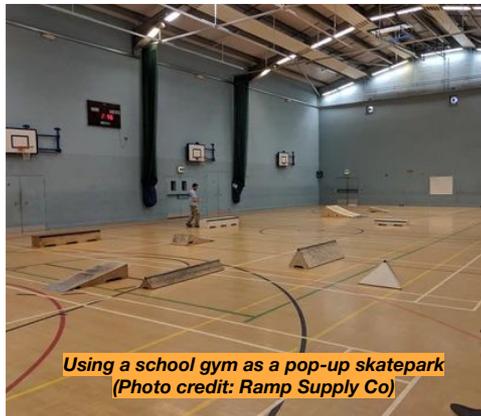
Skateparks should be pleasant places that people want to spend time in. A place that is protected from the wind and is heated would attract more users.



Cam Skate Lights at Jesus Green



Jesus Green not useable in the rain



*Using a school gym as a pop-up skatepark
(Photo credit: Ramp Supply Co)*



*Kaset Skatepark, Kings Lynn
Operated by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and
West Norfolk*

Potential Skate Spaces

We have spaces in Cambridge that are **better skateparks than our actual skateparks** in winter. These places have lights, they are dry, some are warm, and they have plenty of available space. We can repurpose one of these spaces into a temporary skatepark for the winter months.

- Car Parks
 - Grafton East (Level 8A)
 - Grand Arcade (Level -4)
- School halls & Gyms
- Community Centres
 - Clay Farm Centre
- Closed businesses (meanwhile spaces)
 - Bring business to The Grafton shopping centre
 - Revitalise the high street
- Pedestrian tunnel under Elizabeth Way Bridge

NOTE: [FOI request data](#) shows that **Cambridge Car Parks are unoccupied enough to support our proposals.**

Outdoor spaces should also be improved to address the huge year-round demand for skate facilities.

- Renovate Donkey Common skatepark
- Create a skate space at Elizabeth Way Roundabout

When a closed park during winter in a pandemic is still packed full of skaters, this points to a need for more facilities.



Suitable car parks in Cambridge



Grafton Ping Pong Parlour, an example of using retail space for free public sport

Proposed Solutions

We can address this need quickly and cheaply!

1. Pop-up car park skatepark

- Allow skateboarders to use car park space at certain times and under certain conditions, agreed upon between the users and the council.
- Leave a small number of skateable objects at the space.
- Transform the car park into a skatepark when convenient, and quickly and easily back into a car park afterwards.

Implementation details for this option are outlined on the following page.

2. Covered outdoor skatepark

- Create a more permanent skatepark in a covered area and run it like an outdoor skatepark.
- *Possible locations: Car Parks, Elizabeth Way Roundabout (with a canopy), Elizabeth Way bridge.*

3. Managed indoor skatepark

- Build a more permanent skatepark in unused retail space at The Grafton.
- Manned by volunteers who have a sense of ownership over the place and prevent anti social behaviour.
- Possibility of a nominal fee to enter

4. Lights at existing skateparks

- **Jesus Green** and **Trumpington (Clay Farm)** skateparks would both benefit from lights.
- **Waterbeach skatepark** is a model to follow. Skatepark users press a button to enable the lights for 30 minutes to prevent energy loss. Lights can not turn on past 10pm.
- This would make skateparks safer and could be combined with CCTV.



Implementation details

In the evening after the Grand Arcade closes, there are already frequently skateboarders using the bottom floor to practise their sport in dry, lit, and warm conditions. We are simply proposing that the council gives them their blessing and allows us to store a few pieces of equipment that would add value. Cam Skate will fund and organise this venture, all we need is permission.

The main concerns we anticipate with our proposal are conflicts of interest between skaters and other users of the space, safety, liability, and safeguarding of younger users. We propose the following conditions to mitigate these concerns:

Operating hours, sharing the space

- Skateboarders should wait at least 1 hour after the Grand Arcade closes before using the space to skate (setting up skate objects will take < 30 minutes).
- Skateboarders should wait for all cars to leave the space before skating.
- Drivers parking in the car park should be encouraged to use the other floors if they expect to park overnight.
- If the space is being used to skate a sign should be placed on the entrance ramp to clarify that it is closed to drivers and why.
- No litter should be left at the space.

Safety

- Skateable features should be placed in predetermined spots that have been agreed upon between Cam Skate and the council.
- These should be spots with smooth ground, 2m away from other features, where the ceiling is not low.
- A broom and a dustpan and brush should be provided to allow skateboarders to sweep any stones or litter out of skating areas.
- [Government guidance on COVID-19](#) should be observed at all times. Indoor sports facilities are currently allowed to remain open in all tiers.

Equipment storage, membership, liability

Equipment should be secured and locked in a space that does not disrupt the normal operating of the car park. In order to use the space, users must register as a member. Members acknowledge the risk of skating and waive their liability. Abuse of the space or equipment can result in membership being revoked. Trusted members will be given permission to help manage the space, and keys to the equipment lock. This is also a privilege which can be revoked.

Safeguarding

Children under the age of 16 can not skate the space without the permission or accompaniment of a parent or guardian.

Working with the council

The council has the final say on who has the right to skate in the space and when skating is allowed. For example if over Christmas the Grand Arcade opens for late night shopping, skating can be temporarily suspended for this time period.

Monday	7pm - 11pm
Tuesday	7pm - 11pm
Wednesday	9pm - 11pm
Thursday	7pm - 11pm
Friday	7pm - 11pm
Saturday	8pm - 11pm
Sunday	6pm - 11pm

Proposed operating hours, taking the Grand Arcade's opening times into account.