



Memorandum

Date 10 October 2023
Project Sgt. Derby Skate Park
To Noah Downing
From Frederic Knapp
Topic CEQA Memo
Copied Connor Turnbull
Via email

This memorandum accompanies the description and historical analysis of the Sergeant Charles Derby Park skateboard run previously prepared and submitted in the DPR 523-series format, which concluded that the existing skate track is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. After briefly summarizing the primary findings of the previous document, this memo describes the proposed design for the addition, evaluates conformance of the proposed design to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and offers potential options to increase the degree to which the design would conform to the Standards. See the DPR forms for more information about the skateboard track, including research citations.

The skate track is not listed in local, state, or federal historical registers, but CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 provides that properties which are *eligible* for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) are historical resources, treated the same way as properties which are officially listed. A project which causes material impairment of the features which make a property eligible for listing in the California Register can have a significant impact on the environment under this section of the Guidelines, but projects which conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are classified as having a less-than-significant impact on historical resources. Because the skateboard run is eligible, the purpose of this memo is to determine whether the proposed project is likely to cause a significant impact on it under the CEQA Guidelines.

Description

The skate track is part of the 3.5-acre Sergeant Charles Derby Park located in the west side neighborhood, adjacent to the Natural Bridges School (currently leased to the independent Gateway School). It is generally bounded by Woodland Way to the west and south, Natural Bridges School to the east, and an industrial park to the north. The park is characterized by a series of undulating mounds, grassy open spaces, intermittent mature trees, and concrete

pathways, with recreational facilities including tennis courts, a play structure, disc golf baskets, and a picnic area.

The skate park runs along the northwest sector of Sergeant Charles Derby Park, adjacent to a picnic seating area and a defunct volleyball court that is now recognizable only because it is flat and its grassy surface is much sandier than surrounding turf. The skate park is generally composed of a “snake run” running between an “upper bowl” at the east end and a larger “lower bowl” at the west end. The surface rises above grade and includes a grindable “boomerang/rocket pocket” at the east end and a bank curb closer to the lower bowl. A concrete sidewalk with “pump bumps” and “extended lips” wraps around the perimeter. A concrete ramp connects the lower bowl to the picnic area pathway. The concrete skate run is covered in painted graffiti.

History

Although a version of the skateboard was created in the early 20th century from boards and metal roller skate wheels, the first commercial skateboards appeared in the 1950s. From the 1950s onwards, the popularity and viability of the sport occurred in waves with c.1963 as the first wave. During the second wave in the 1970s, skateboard tracks appeared both in public parks as well as in private facilities that charged entry fees. By the mid-1990s skateboarding was highlighted in organized events like the X Games and appeared on prevalent cable television and satellite TV, as well as on the internet. Legislative changes in California during this fourth wave of skateboarding initiated the return of public skate parks and the general acceptance of skateboarding. The Santa Cruz area originally had three skate parks in the 1970s – Derby Park and Frederick Street Park in Santa Cruz and Skatepark Soquel just outside the city. Both Derby Park and Frederick Street Park were public and free, while the private Skatepark Soquel required an entrance fee.

The Sergeant Charles Derby Park skate track was constructed between 1977-1979 as part of the development of the park. Landscape architect Ken Wormhoudt and his firm, Wormhoudt Inc. designed the park through a process with five meetings for community input that also included community design charrettes. The final concept plan incorporated open grassy spaces, tennis courts, restrooms, picnic areas, a skateboard track, a par course, and pathways that meandered in an organic layout with each programmatic area framed and protected by landscaped mound formations.

In 1991 Ken Wormhoudt was hired to repair cracks in the existing concrete and add a concrete sidewalk around the existing skateboard track. Two speed bumps were added to the south section of the sidewalk. The existing concrete curb was altered and in some cases was eliminated so that the sidewalk was flush with the edge of the run or the bowl. In 2004, landscape architect Zach Wormhoudt, the son of the original designer, repaired cracks in the track and replaced steps between the track’s west bowl and the paved walkway with a concrete ramp. A 2012 project designed by Zach Wormhoudt reskimmed the surface with approximately 6,700 square feet of 4-inch shotcrete; removed the speed bumps; and added a 40-foot section

of “original style” double-sided lip near the top of the “snake run”, a 48-foot section of “original style” double-sided lip around a portion of the bowl, a “rocket pocket” at the beginning of the “snake run”, and increased height to the lower hip. Even with these changes, the original ground form of the Derby skateboard track is still legible, and except for periods of repair, it has never closed.

Ken Wormhoudt was born in Alhambra, California and received his landscape architecture degree from the University of Southern California. He entered practice in 1963 and moved to Santa Cruz in 1975, also designing parks, schools, playgrounds, and commercial and private residential projects. Derby Park was Wormhoudt’s first skateboard track and it launched his reputation as a skateboard park designer. After Derby, there was a long delay until his next skate park project, likely due to litigation stemming from injuries at skateboard tracks, both public and private. In 1991 Wormhoudt designed Palo Alto’s Greer Park and then additional skateboard tracks in Napa, Santa Rosa, Pleasanton, Milpitas, and Yucca Valley.

Significance

Derby Skate Park is significant at the local and state levels under the California Register Criteria as a late-20th century skate park design. According to selected sources, Derby is the oldest 1970s public skate park extant in California. The period of significance, 1977-1991, encompasses Ken Wormhoudt’s original skateboard track design and his 1991 sidewalk addition. Wormhoudt became the preeminent skate park designer and was known for revolutionizing the skateboard track design process through incorporating skateboarders’ input, beginning with the Derby project. The two bowls situated on either end of a snake run reflected the popularity of swimming pools, streets, and pipe infrastructure previously coopted by skaters for the sport. Unlike other skateboard tracks of its era, the distinctive Derby track has retained its essential form and has remained in use since it opened in 1979. The 1991 added concrete sidewalk updated the track to reflect popular early 1990s skating practices. The original form of the track remained visible as the curb line was retained and the run and the bowl forms were also retained.

Derby Skate Park falls within the California Register Special Criteria Considerations as defined by the Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Series #6 which states that an historical resource can achieve significance within the past fifty years “if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance.” While skateboarding has undergone waves of popularity since the 1950s, the construction of skate runs and skate parks is a phenomenon that dates from only the early 1970s, with ample print, motion picture, and online documentation allowing this property to be considered in its historical context.

Character-defining Features

- The concrete surface and original line of the curb/lip
- The original form with a snake run connecting two bowls
- The concrete sidewalk surround

Integrity

The Derby skateboard track retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association. The original 1977-1979 snake run and bowls are still legible and in their original Derby Park location and setting. The skate park's design was updated in an interactive process in 1991 by the original designer Ken Wormhoudt, ASLA, but this change did not erase the track's original form. The wear and tear of the sport of skateboarding requires that tracks undergo periodic concrete maintenance and resurfacing or reskimming, so the subsequent re-surfacing that took place in 1991, 2004, and 2012 does not lessen the authenticity of materials. Graffiti is a dynamic cultural activity closely linked to skateboard tracks and similarly does not pose an issue for integrity. The 2004 ramp addition at the track's west edge and the 2012 amendments were iterative changes that did not interfere with the basic form and identity for which the property is significant.

Proposed Addition

The proposed project would add a sizeable bowl south of the existing skate run, beginning at the east end of the lower bowl and extending to the far end of the upper bowl. The rough oval shape of the addition would nest in the crescent shape of the south side of the existing skateboard track, so that the combined footprint would be roughly kidney-shaped. The addition would be continuous with the existing skate park, so that users could navigate the entire course seamlessly, with varying lip features along the outer edge of the new bowl and a mound on its southwest end. Most of the south and west edges of the addition would have a sidewalk where they meet the turf of the surrounding park. In the center of the addition, there would be a trio of interlocking bowls, bounded by a level, raised sidewalk, so that the addition overall would consist of a bowl-like circuit surrounding a tripartite center bowl. The addition would be constructed in concrete of a different color from the material on the existing bowl.

Secretary's Standards

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties consists of Standards for Preservation, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation. Additions are evaluated under the Standards for Rehabilitation, as the other three Standards are geared exclusively to the historic form and appearance of a property, not additions.

Standard 1 requires that the rehabilitation be for a use appropriate to the property's original character—a requirement which the proposed addition obviously meets. Standards 2-6 are geared to the treatment of the existing historical resource and are not relevant to this project, which does not include alterations but is solely an addition. Standards 7 and 8 are also not applicable as they address chemical treatments and archaeology.

Standards 9 and 10 are the crux of conformance for a project which consists only of an addition; they require that the addition be compatible with the character of the historic property, that it be differentiated from the original to avoid creating the appearance that the addition is

actually original, and that the addition not require removal of important parts of the original property.

The proposed addition would be compatible with the original skateboard track because it is an in-ground, moderate bowl-form skate run like the original. (Various other forms found in other skate parks, such as a true half-pipe, would be less compatible or incompatible.) It would be differentiated in that it is a separate bowl and it would be constructed of a different color of concrete (though graffiti is very likely to obscure this). The existing run would retain its entire perimeter; neither the two bowls nor the snake run would be altered or extended. Perhaps most importantly and starkly obvious, the proposed addition would be reversible: because it would leave the entire existing skateboard track intact without alterations, Derby skate park could be returned precisely to its existing condition if the addition were demolished at some point in the future. For these reasons, the design of the proposed addition conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Improvements

Even for projects which would have a less than significant effect on the environment, the review process can consider potential improvements to minimize impacts as much as possible. Although CEQA does not require that the improvements be imposed on the design of such a project as mandatory alterations, the following measures could be considered:

- Arrangements and consultations with the "graffiti community" to devise a different style or appearance of graffiti on the addition, as the differentiation in concrete color is quite likely to disappear thanks to the never-ending graffiti process
- Inclusion of signage or interpretation so that visitors can learn more about the original design
- Adding some measure to mark or convey the original presence of the volleyball court
- Measures to mark the boundary between the existing skate run (including the sidewalk) and the addition
- Consideration of whether skateboarding features such as bumps or ridges could be placed along the boundary between the existing skateboard run and the addition, to make the demarcation between the two experiential as well as visual
- Making the sidewalk of the existing run and the perimeter of the addition discrete (instead of allowing the addition to rely on the existing sidewalk)—so that each of the two can read as a complete skate track independently of the other

These options are not intended to be interpreted as requirements, and altered versions of any of them could be worthwhile if they achieve the same result as the design concepts described here.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 19

*Resource Name or #: Derby Skate Park

P1. Other Identifier: Derby Skate Board Track

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County: Santa Cruz

and (P2b and P2c or P2d.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Santa Cruz

Date: 2015 T ; R ; ¼ of ¼ of Sec ; M.D. B.M.

c. Address: 508 Woodland Way

City: Santa Cruz

Zip: 95067

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data:

Elevation:

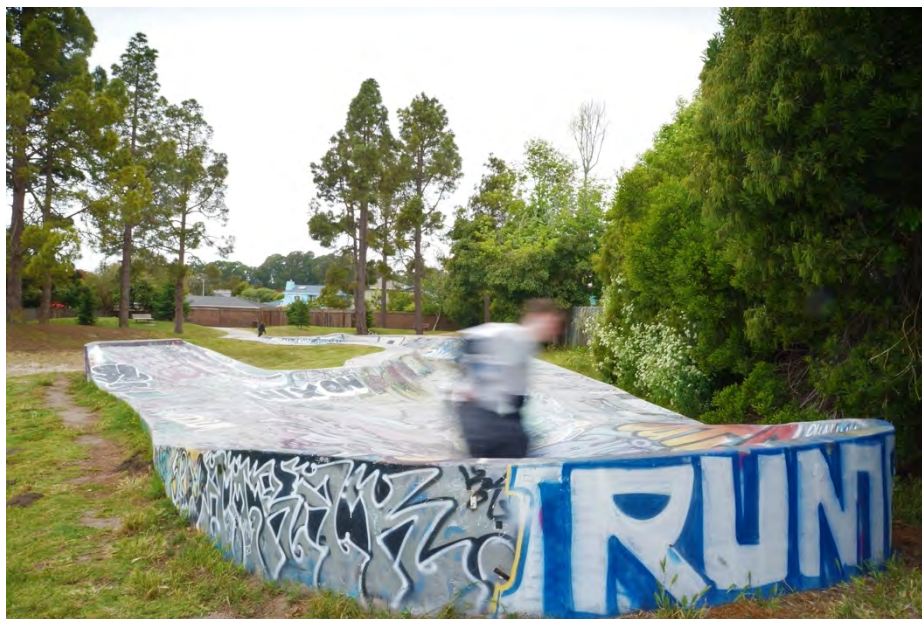
*P3a. Description:

Although Derby Skate Park sits within the larger Sergeant Charles Derby Park, the park as whole is not the focus of this record. The Derby Skate Park is a concrete skate board track (currently referred to as a skate park) constructed between 1977-1979 as part of the 3.5 acre Derby Park project. The park was renamed Sergeant Charles Derby Park in 2012 and the official address is 508 Woodland Way. Sergeant Charles Derby Park is located in the City of Santa Cruz's west side neighborhood and is adjacent to the Natural Bridges School and is generally bounded by Woodland Way to the west and south which creates its curved southern perimeter edge; Natural Bridges school to the east; and an industrial park to the north. The landscaped area is characterized by a series of undulating mounds, grassy open spaces, intermittent mature trees, and concrete pathways. Recreational elements are placed in staggered locations and include tennis courts, a play structure, disc golf baskets, a picnic area, a defunct volleyball court and the skate park that is the subject of this report. Other recreational elements such as a parcourse and climbing structure are non-extant. There are two official entrances to the park from the arcing Woodland Way residential street, one at the southwest corner and one closer to the southeast corner; and another ad-hoc path connects to the northeast corner from Swift Street and is a popular access route. (See Continuation Sheet)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP39

*P4. Resources Present: ☐ Building ☒ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing



P5b. Description of Photo:

View looking west, Frederick Knapp, July 2023

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Sources: ☒ Historic

☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

*P7. Owner and Address:

Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation
Department, 508 Woodland Way,
Santa Cruz CA

*P8. Recorded by:

Connor Turnbull, Preservation
Consulting; and Knapp Architects

*P9. Date Recorded:

July-September 2023

*P10. Survey Type:

Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: None

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 19

*NRHP Status Code 7

*Resource Name or # Derby Skate Park

B1. Historic Name: Derby Park Skate Board Track

B2. Common Name: Derby Skate Park

B3. Original Use: Skate Board Track

B4. Present Use: Skate Park

***B5. Architectural Style:** Other – late 20th century skate board track design

***B6. Construction History:**

(See continuation sheet)

***B7. Moved?** ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown **Date:**

Original Location:

***B8. Related Features:** None

B9a. Architect: Ken Wormhoudt ASLA

b. Builder: Colishaw Corporation

***B10. Significance: Theme:** Skate Park Design

Area: City of Santa Cruz

Period of Significance: 1977-1991. **Property Type:** Skate Park/Skate Board Track. **Applicable Criteria:** 3

Landscape Architect Ken Wormhoudt ASLA/ Wormhoudt Inc.

Ken Wormhoudt (1930 -1997) was a landscape architect based in Santa Cruz, California. Wormhoudt was born in Alhambra California and received his landscape architecture degree from the University of Southern California (*Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 1997 Obit). He established his practice in 1963 but only moved to Santa Cruz in 1975. Wormhoudt designed parks, schools, playgrounds, commercial and private residential projects, and skate parks. After his death, his son Zach Wormhoudt took over Wormhoudt Inc. The firm is currently known for their community-based approach to skate park design.

(See Continuation Sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes:

***B12. References:**

(See continuation sheet)

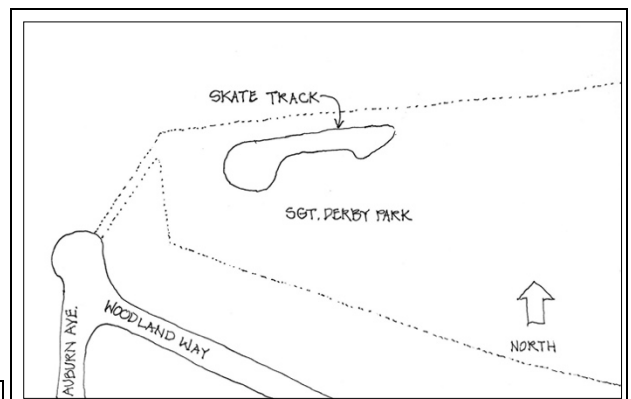
B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:**

Connor Turnbull, Preservation Consulting; and Knapp Architects

***Date of Evaluation:** July-September 2023

(This space reserved for official comments.)



***P3a. Description: (Continued)**

Derby Skate Park is generally composed of a “snake run” running between an “upper bowl” at the east end and a larger “lower bowl” at the west end. The skate park runs along the northwest sector of Sergeant Charles Derby Park, adjacent to the defunct volleyball court and picnic seating area. The concrete surface of the skate park is embedded in one of Derby Park’s grassy mounds. The surface rises above grade and includes a grindable “boomerang/rocket pocket” at the east end, and a bank curb closer to the lower bowl. A concrete sidewalk with “pump bumps” and “extended lips” wraps around the perimeter. A concrete ramp connects the lower bowl to the picnic area pathway. The surface is graffitied.



Image 1: Derby Skate Park, looking west at boomerang, July 2023 (Knapp Architects)



Image 2: Derby Skate Park, looking east at lower bowl, July 2023 (Knapp Architects)



Image 3: Derby Skate Park, looking northeast from lower bowl , July 2023 (Knapp Architects)



Images 4&5: Derby Skate Park, lower bowl to snake run (left) and from snake run to upper bowl (right), July 2023 (Knapp Architects)

***B6. Construction History: (Continued)**

This construction history includes the Sergeant Charles Derby Park as a whole, but the focus of this record is the Derby Skate Park element; other changes to the park are outside the scope of this record. The 3.5 acre Derby Park, including the skate board track, was designed by landscape architect Ken Wormhoudt ASLA. A previous arboretum style park designed by Dunckley Murray ASLA in 1975, under permit #P-1300, was never built (City of Santa Cruz, permit records). For the second Derby Park plan, the City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department Director Paul Thiltgen implemented a community-input methodology for the revamped Derby Park proposal and based it on the National Park Service community-input strategies (City of Santa Cruz, Parks & Rec Dept records, 12/9/1976 memorandum). Landscape architect Ken Wormhoudt was selected in December 1976 by the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department to implement the community input-based design process. His park design was the product of five community input meetings that also included community design charrettes. The final concept plan incorporated open grassy spaces, tennis courts, restrooms, picnic areas, a skate board track, a par course, and pathways that meandered in an organic layout with each programmatic area framed and protected by landscaped mound formations (City of Santa Cruz permit records, P-77-698 application summary filed June 30, 1977). The skate board track design component included a concrete snake run, an upper bowl and a lower bowl. The track's original concrete curb terminated directly into the surrounding landscaped area (see Images 6-9)

Derby Park was approved by the Central Coast Region Commission, part of the California Coastal Commission established in 1976, through resolution #77-197 on July 25, 1977 (City of Santa Cruz, Parks & Rec Dept records). The project was described as a good use of public land between a residential and industrial area (City of Santa Cruz permit records, P-77-698 application summary filed June 30, 1977). Derby Park was completed on August 14, 1979 and the opening dedication was on October 12, 1979 (permit P77-698 Resolution#77-197).

In 1981, *Thrasher* magazine published a review by Tim Plumart who described Derby Park as:

Located in the upper west side of the sunny seaside town of Santa Cruz is a very small, yet very important skateboard spot called Derby Park...The actual run is constructed entirely of cement and it is located on the northeast side of a conventional 'park.' It starts with a small oval platform that turns into a halfpipe. This halfpipe – which never gets deeper than three feet and is only about seven feet across – runs along for 60 feet and empties into a large, circular bowl. The run can take seconds or minutes depending on whether you make a straight speed run through the pipe into the bowl, or if you work the half pipe for all its worth. (Plumart, 1981)

In 1991 Ken Wormhoudt of Wormhoudt Inc. was hired to repair cracks in the existing concrete and a concrete sidewalk was also added around the existing skate track as part of the project (City of Santa Cruz records) (see Images 10-11). Two speed bumps were added to the south section of the sidewalk. The existing concrete curb was altered and in some cases was eliminated so that the sidewalk was flush with the edge of the run or the bowl. In 2004, landscape architect Zach Wormhoudt, Ken's son, repaired cracks in the track and replaced steps between the track's west bowl and the paved walkway with a concrete ramp (Wormhoudt Inc. records) (see Image 12). In 2012 Zach Wormhoudt repaired the track again and added modern skate park elements. In this iteration the surface was reskimmed with approximately 6,700 square feet of 4-inch shotcrete and the speed bumps were removed. A 40 foot section of "original style" double-sided lip near the top of the "snake run", a 48 foot section of "original style" double-sided lip around a portion of the bowl, a "rocket pocket" at the beginning of the "snake run", and increased height to the lower hip were added (Wormhoudt Inc. records and Vazquez, 2012) (see Images 13-15). In 2019-2020, a memorial bench and plaque commemorating the life of Santa Cruz skateboarder Brendan Lai-Wing was added adjacent to the skate track. It was subsequently removed due to vandalism (City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department records).

Derby Skate Park's surface is graffitied, a common element of both public and private skate parks. Based on videos and photographs, Derby Skate Park's graffiti has undergone numerous iterations, particularly during the 1991 and 2012 maintenance when the surface was repaired or reskimmed. According to an oral interview with Derby Skate Park stakeholders, there is a common practice of commemorating deaths of important skaters in the community with graffiti but there is also an assumption that the markings will change over time, as is the case at Derby Skate Park (oral interview, June 16, 2023).

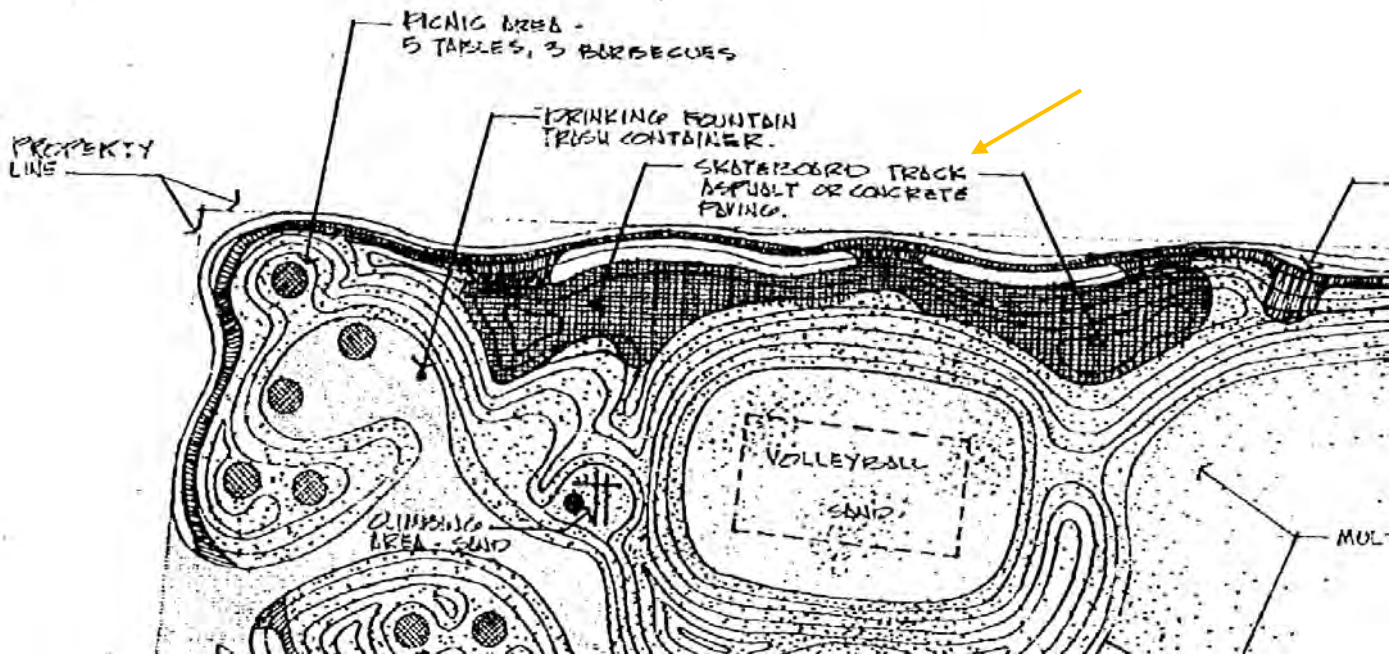


Image 6: 1977 Wormhoudt Derby Park preliminary plan, detail with skate board track (Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation, Derby files)



Images 7&8: 1978 Derby Construction Photos (Santa Cruz Department of Parks and Recreation, Derby files)

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 7 of 19

*Resource Name or # Derby Skate Park

*Recorded by: Connor Turnbull, Preservation Consulting; Knapp Architects *Date: July-Sept 2023 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

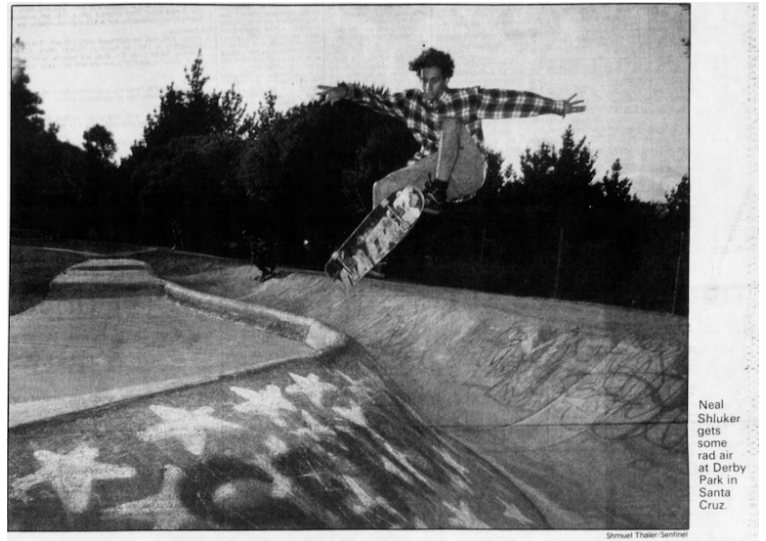


Image 9: 1981 *Thrasher* photo showing original curb, looking east (left)

Image 10: 1991 Derby after sidewalk addition, *Santa Cruz Sentinel* (right)

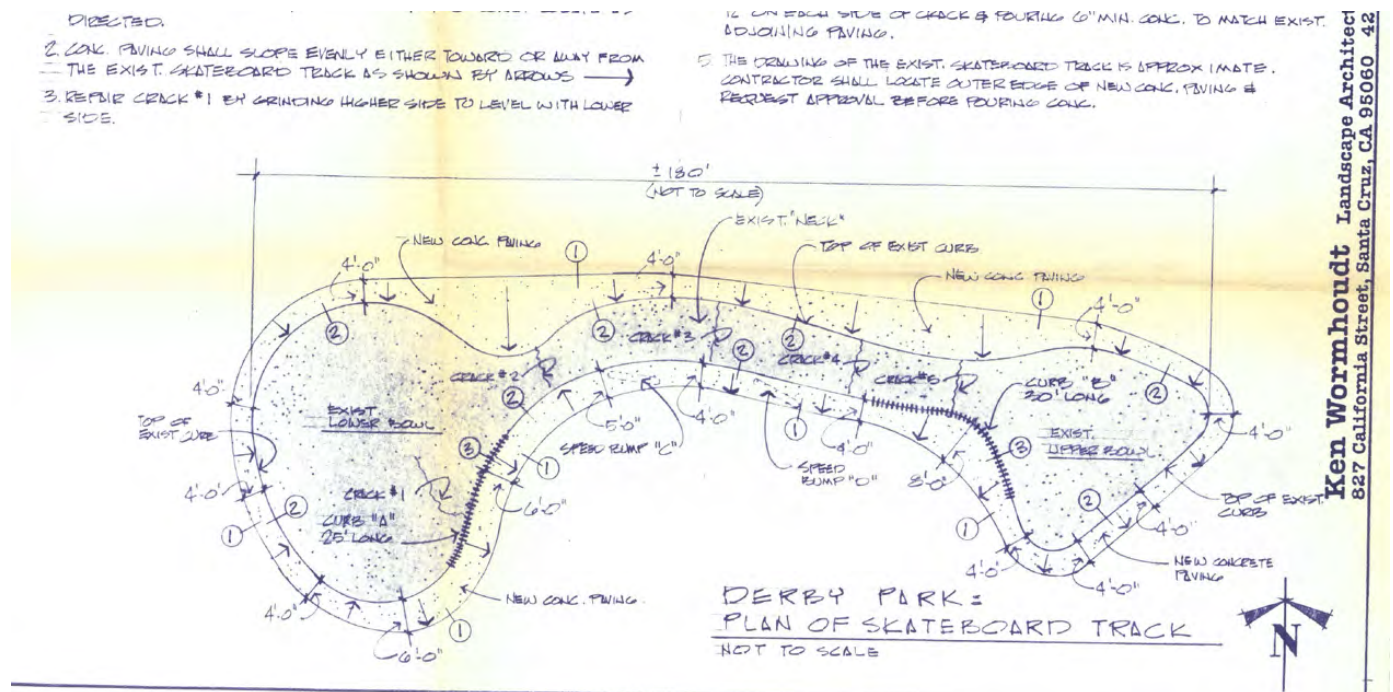


Image 11: 1991 Ken Wormhoudt maintenance plan with proposed repair and sidewalk addition (Wormhoudt Inc. files)

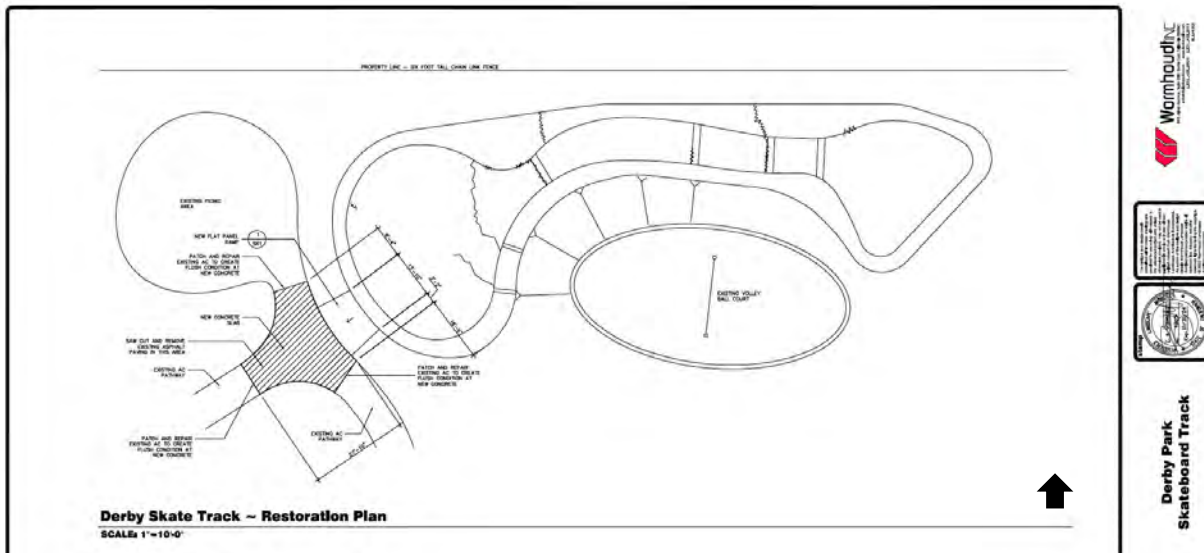


Image 12: 2004 Wormhoudt Inc. maintenance plan, addition, north arrow added (Wormhoudt Inc. files)

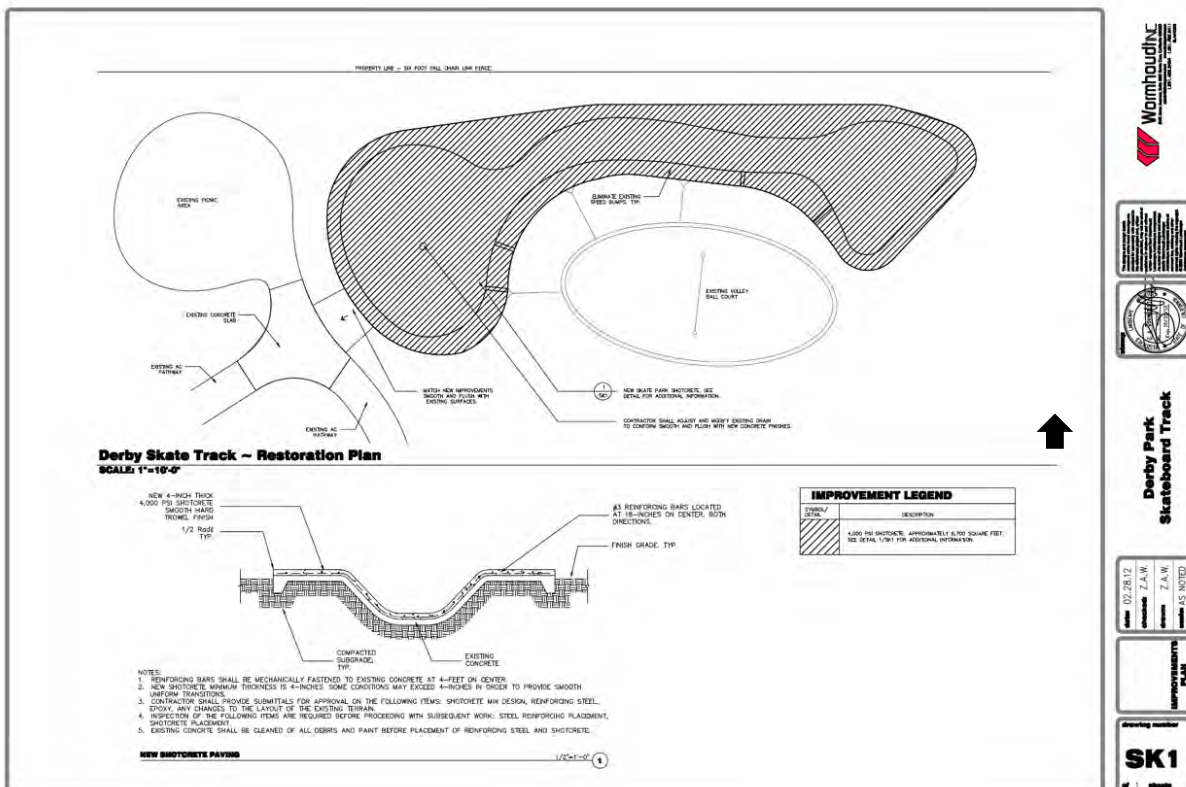


Image 13: 2012 Wormhoudt Inc. maintenance plan, surface reskimming work, north arrow added (Wormhoudt Inc. files)

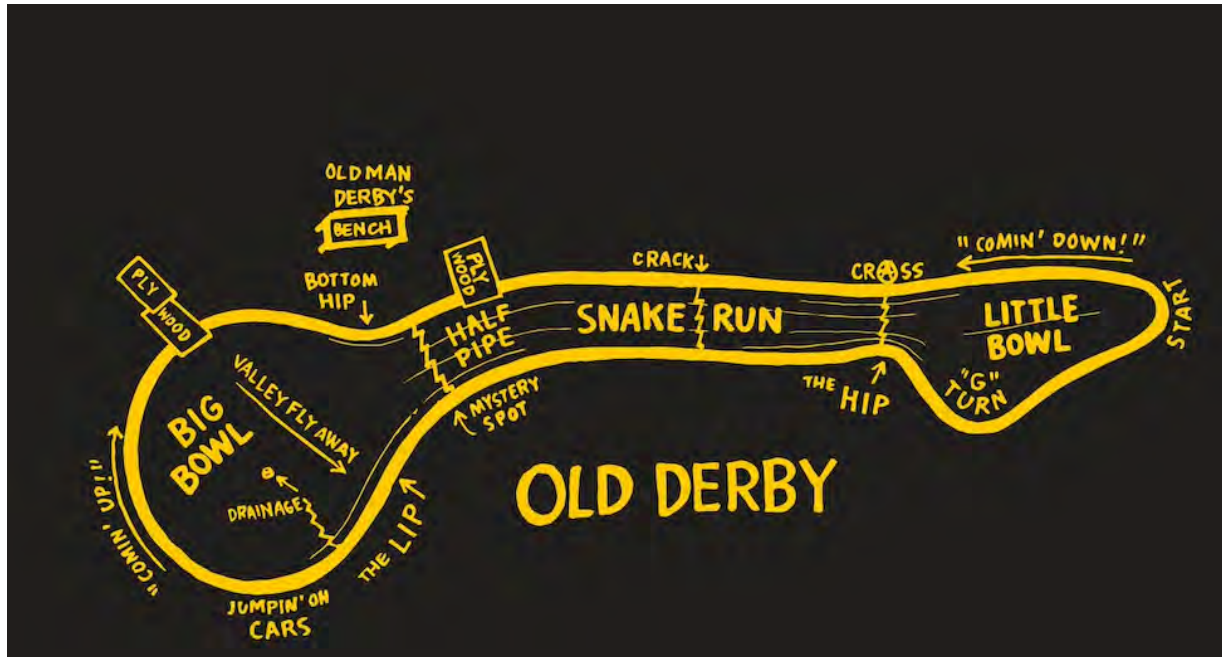


Image 14: Pre-2012 Derby Skate Park diagram t-shirt design, provided by Skateworks, plywood reference unknown (Skateworks store, Santa Cruz)



Image 15: 2023 Derby Skate Park, Google satellite view (courtesy of Google.com)

***B10. Significance: (Continued)**

Landscape Architect Ken Wormhoudt ASLA/Wormhoudt Inc. (continued)

The Derby Park skate board track was Ken Wormhoudt's first skate board track and it launched his reputation as a skateboard park designer. A November 23, 1996 *Santa Cruz Sentinel* feature article about Wormhoudt, written by Karen Kefauver in conjunction with a Santa Cruz McPherson Center Museum of Art and History exhibit, described his life and work. She states that the landscape architect received his license in 1956 and designed more than 500 residential gardens, parks, playgrounds and streets before building his first skate board track at Derby in 1978. He had moved with his family to Santa Cruz in 1975, just before the Derby Park process began. After Derby, there was a long delay until his next skate park project (Wormhoudt Inc. records). This delay is likely due to the stringent litigation rules applied to skate parks, both public and private. In 1991 Wormhoudt designed Palo Alto's Greer Park that was featured in skating magazines such as *Thrasher* and *Transworld* (cityofpaloalto.org). Between 1991 and 1996 he designed skate parks in Napa, Santa Rosa, Pleasanton, Milpitas and Yucca Valley (skateparks.com). In 1997, liability laws for skateboarding in municipal parks began to ease and this allowed for an increase in the number of skate parks in California.

Ken Wormhoudt allowed his skate board track designs to evolve with the changing expectations and interests of the skating community. This is evident in Greer Park which is essentially three connected versions of a swimming pool form, a tri-bowl (cityofpaloalto.org). And Wormhoudt amended his Derby skate board track design in 1991, concurrent to Greer Park, when Derby needed concrete repair work. He added a concrete sidewalk or "deck" around the track's edge in response to the 1990s skateboarding trends. In the 1996 *Santa Cruz Sentinel* article, Kefauver describes how Wormhoudt involved the skating community directly into his skate board track design from the beginning of his design process (see image 19). He told her, "I tell them to get organized, approach the city council, pack the place, then let one person speak" and then after the budget and basic parameters are clear he would invite the skaters to attend a meeting where they could form modelling clay to create the features they wanted in the design (Kefauver, 1996).

According to Wormhoudt Inc., the firm carries on the community-based skate park design practice established by Ken Wormhoudt and to date have provided services to over 450 communities throughout the world, and designed over eighty skate park and bike park facilities. Ken Wormhoudt died in 1997 but in the years just prior to this death he was in great demand for skate park design, or what he called "skate board track" design, as well as community consultations, all around the world (Kefauver, 1996). Ken Wormhoudt is widely recognized as a pioneer in skate park design and Derby Park, his first skate park, is one of the oldest continuously used public skate parks in the world.

Westside Santa Cruz and Sergeant Charles Derby Park Context

The City of Santa Cruz incorporated as a town in 1866 and officially incorporated as a city in 1876. Although a popular destination, access to Santa Cruz was challenging until Highway 17 was completed in 1940 (O'Hare, 2002). The Westside neighborhood of Santa Cruz is generally defined as the area west of the San Lorenzo River, excluding the downtown. Derby lies between the Natural Bridges Park area (previously Swanton Beach) and the section south of the Garfield Park neighborhood. The portion where Sergeant Charles Derby Park is located was originally an undeveloped area of Santa Cruz that was mostly used for farming (1941 Fairchild Aerial Surveys, UCSC special collections) (see Images 20-22).

In the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration undertook street improvements in the vicinity of Natural Bridges Park near present-day Derby Park (Santa Cruz Public Library). And in the late 1940s a group of local businessmen proposed the development of a Santa Cruz Municipal Airport and purchased this area of land on Santa Cruz's westside and called it the Swanton Subdivision. By the 1950s the developers decided to abandon the airport idea and subsequently sold a portion of their holdings and donated the remainder to the City of Santa Cruz. The Natural Bridges school was established along Swift Street in 1965. The surrounding neighborhood of Swanton Subdivision was re-subdivided by the city in the late 1960s and some streets were introduced or realigned as part of this development. During this period, the westside also acquired industries such as Lipton Tea (1969) and Wrigley's Chewing Gum (1955).

During the 1960s re-subdivision, a 3.5 acre area next to Natural Bridges School was set aside for a park, originally called the Natural Bridges Park, or sometimes called Swanton Beach Park, but renamed Derby Park to commemorate a local police officer. 1970s aerial photos shows the school and residential lots closer to the waterfront are developed and adjacent streets are laid out (Santa Cruz Public Library history collection and UCSC special collections) (see Image 20-22).

Westside Santa Cruz and Sergeant Charles Derby Park Context (Continued)

In 1973, the City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department created the Park Plan. Although Santa Cruz was known for its breadth of natural resources, the Parks and Recreation Department realized that “the increased pressure for development of remaining urban open space has necessitated an urgent examination of present and future park recreation needs...the Parks & Recreation Department is emphasizing development of parks to serve each neighborhood of the city” (Parks Plan, 1973).

Initially Derby Park was perceived as an arboretum type park with an array of different plants for instructional use, with some recreational spaces such as a lawn and tennis courts (City of Santa Cruz, permit records). The 1975 park design by Dunckley Murray ASLA was rejected for utilizing non-indigenous species and the permit was allowed to lapse. In December 1976, Parks & Recreation Department Director Paul Thiltgen wrote a memo to the Parks and Recreation Commission proposing the adoption of a community-input based system devised by the Synergy Consulting Service and utilized by the National Park Service, State Department of Parks and Recreation, and other governmental and state agencies. In his memo he describes the Synergy process as nothing earth-shattering but, “a slow, searching process that is extended over a period of time; but it involves the community in the whole design project from the information gathering stage, through the alternative development stage and to the implementation of the final master plan” (Thiltgen, 1976, p.2). Through this eight step process, Thiltgen argued that the outcome was less likely to result from arbitrary input from whoever might show up at community meetings but rather reflect a larger cross section of the community. Thiltgen proposed that Derby Park become the first project using the Synergy process-led park design. He also stated that “it is essential that all the actors in the drama be brought into the process from the beginning. One of the most critical of these people is the person who would complete the design documents.” (Thiltgen, 1976, p4). Five local landscape architects were approached about the project with the caveat of lower project fees. Two decided to apply, and Ken Wormhoudt was selected as the Derby Park designer (Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation, Derby records).

On January 11, 1977 Wormhoudt was officially hired and the community input model was established. Five community meetings were held in the first half of 1977, and Wormhoudt brought in-process drawings and models to the community for input. On March 14, 1977 the Recreation Commission approved the Derby Park preliminary plan and the final plans were submitted for City Council approval in July. Construction started in September. The Collishaw Corporation was selected to undertake construction in the Fall of 1977. Derby Park was completed in January 1979. The final park design included open grassy spaces, tennis courts, picnic areas, a volleyball court, a skate board track, a par course and pathways that meandered in an organic layout with each programmatic area framed and protected by landscaped mound formations (City of Santa Cruz permit records, P-77-698 application summary filed June 30, 1977).

When Wormhoudt began his design process there were several extant forces in the Derby Park neighborhood vicinity. The Natural Bridges School was interested in a park that would extend their available play space and the fence between the school and the park was to be eliminated. Part of the proposed play activities for children was a skate board track. The second existing element was “Junk Park.” This was the colloquial name for the Adventure Park established on the undeveloped Derby Park land in 1975. It was composed of a pile of junk such as old tires, oil drums and other raw material donated by the public so that children could use them for fort building or open process play (*Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 1976). “Junk Park” lasted from 1975 until 1976 but it laid the groundwork for a community-led design process on the Derby Park site. The other force was the increasing popularity of skate board parks and skate parks in the United States.

Skate Board Tracks and Skate Parks

Although a version of the skateboard was created in the early 20th century from boards and metal roller skate wheels, the first commercial skateboards appeared in the 1950s. From the 1950s onwards, the popularity and viability of the sport occurred in waves with c.1963 as the first wave. The first skateboard movie was *Skaterdater* (1965). Up to the 1970s, skateboard wheels were clay and the boards were very basic which led to injuries and the sport’s decline. In 1972 urethane wheels were introduced and skateboarding rebounded. The urethane wheels were followed by special trucks and in 1975 Road Rider developed the first precision-bearing wheel.

Skate Board Tracks and Skate Parks (Continued)

During this second wave in the 1970s, both public skate board tracks, or runs, appeared in public parks as well as private retail skate parks. The term “skate park” was added to the Merriam Dictionary in 1978. As always, there were issues with skateboarders using streets and other public areas and the tracks and parks gave a dedicated space for the activity. However, injuries continued to cause a backlash and many of these public and private spaces were shut down due to insurance costs and legislation and the skateboarders returned to the streets. During the 1980s, legislation deterred municipal skate parks and the sport evolved on the streets and in backyards until street skateboarding was increasingly outlawed by municipalities. Despite this, skateboarding continued to evolve during this third wave, and magazines and videography helped promote and document the increasingly popular sport.

By the mid-1990s skateboarding was highlighted in organized events like the X Games and appeared on prevalent cable television and satellite TV, as well as on the internet. Legislative changes in California during this fourth wave of skateboarding initiated the return of public skate parks and the general acceptance of skateboarding. In 1997, the first legislative easing for California municipal skate parks occurred, followed by State Senator Brian Jones 2015 AB 1146 followed by SB 1003 signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom (<https://cjpia.org/newsletters/issue-104/article-8>). The increased immunity for municipalites, combined with the shift towards a more intentional skate park design and the inclusion of landscape architects to design these spaces, as well as consultants with skateboarding experience, enabled the creation of viable long term spaces for skateboarding.

Skate Board Tracks and Parks in the Santa Cruz Context

Santa Cruz originally had three skate parks in the 1970s – Derby Park, Frederick Street Park and Skatepark Soquel. Both Derby Park and Frederick Street Park were public and free, while Skatepark Soquel required an entrance fee. The terminology to describe this skating element varies in use from the older skate board track or run and the more general use of skate park as an overall term.

Frederick Street Park near Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor was dedicated in December 1976. It is a four-acre park that was initially proposed as a condominium site. A neighborhood group calling themselves the “Frederick Street Irregulars” was established in 1972 to force the city to instead create the Frederick Street Park. The park included a tree house, skate board track, sand volleyball court and open space (newspapers.com). The original Frederick Street Park skate element was an “S” shaped track that was banked and dropped steeply into a bowl. The designer is unknown. It was a challenging and popular course and was already in use before the park’s official opening. In June 1976, the Parks and Recreation Department was forced to temporarily close the track due to multiple injuries. The department dumped dirt onto the track to halt use and Parks and Recreation Director Paul Thiltgen visited the park to discuss the temporary closure with the public. In an effort to retain the popular skate board track, Thiltgen offered the community six possible changes that involved modifying the track to make it safer. In a *Santa Cruz Sentinel* article about the closure, Thiltgen noted that “In all the years of this staff’s involvement with teenagers and young adults, we have never seen them so ‘turned on’ to a recreational activity as has occurred with the skateboard track” (*Santa Cruz Sentinel*, June 10, 1976, p.1). He reported that even before the park officially opened, it was used from sunup to sundown by at least 200 individuals and spectators. When Frederick Street Park was officially opened in December 1976, the track was still closed. In the end, the Frederick Street track was modified to create a primarily flat surface with some curvilinear edges meant for beginning skaters that was shorter and did not include the challenging half pipe and moguls of the original skate board track (see Image 18). The modified track remains extant and protection is required for use.

The privately funded and operated Skatepark Soquel was created in October 1977 as a direct response to the temporary closing of the Frederick Street Park skate board track. It was created and design-built by three Santa Cruz residents – Steven Houts, Ed DaRoza, and Bill Rose. The privately-owned park was located on South Main Street and included five different skate runs with dips, banks, curls and moguls, a pro shop, health bar, spectator area and a parking lot. Full protection was required, and it was members-only entry. Skatepark Soquel lasted until 1979 (newspapers.com). Only a remnant of a concrete curb remains of the original Skatepark Soquel (see Image 17). Like so many other 1970s skate parks, there is little evidence to show its existence.

In contrast to Frederick Street Park and Skate Soquel, the Derby Park skate board track was a deliberate bi-product of community input and municipal direction. Director Thiltgen hired landscape architect Ken Wormhoudt in 1977 to create a successful public and free park on the heels of the unprecedented popularity of the Frederick Street Park skate board track. In the case of Derby Park, Wormhoudt's design, his first skate board track undertaking, incorporated user knowledge. Over the five community input meetings for Derby Park, Wormhoudt amended his concept to create a final design that has remained a successful resolution for skating enthusiasts. Derby Park has always been free to the public and has never had to close due to injuries.

Over the years, Derby's track has undergone repairs, first by Ken Wormhoudt and then by Zach Wormhoudt. In keeping with the evolutionary nature of the sport, both designers updated the track first with the sidewalk surround, and then with more challenging elements such as the concrete ramp on the west edge and then the boomerang/rocket pack, banks, pump bumps and extended lips. However, the original ground form of Derby skate board track is still legible and except for periods of repair it has never closed (see Images 6, 11, 14, 15 & 24).



Image 16: June 2023 Derby Skate Park (Knapp Architects)



Image 17: June 2023 Skatepark Soquel remnant (Knapp Architects)



Image 18: June 2023 Frederick Street Park, skateboard track (Knapp Architects)

***B10. Significance: (Continued)**

Criterion 3 (It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method or construction, or represents the work of a master, or possession of high artistic values)

Derby Skate Park is significant as a late-20th century skate park design at the local and state levels. According to the Skateboarding Hall of Fame and Museum, *Thrasher* magazine, and two online skate park sources, <https://www.skateboardingheritage.org/archive/skateparks/> and <https://www.concretedisciples.com/global-skatepark-directory/usa-skateparks-guide/northern-california/>, Derby is the oldest known extant 1970s public skate park in California. San Francisco's oldest public skate park known as "The Dish" was constructed in 1980 and expanded in 2015. The period of significance (1977-1991) encompasses landscape architect Ken Wormhoudt's original 1977 skate board track design and his 1991 sidewalk addition. Later resurfacing and additions by Zach Wormhoudt of Wormhoudt Inc. are discussed in the integrity section.

Ken Wormhoudt ASLA became the preeminent skate park designer and was known for revolutionizing the skate board track design process through incorporating skateboarders' input into his work. Derby was Wormhoudt's first skate board track and the first to use this design process. In 1976, Ken Wormhoudt was selected by the City of Santa Cruz Department of Parks and Recreation Director Paul Thiltgen to participate in an unprecedented community-input based design process for public parks in Santa Cruz. This process was based on the Synergy Consulting process utilized by the National Park Service. Ken Wormhoudt participated in five community input meetings with Derby Park stakeholders. During that process he altered his park design, and particularly the skate board track component, to reflect the information provided by local skaters. He implemented his knowledge of landscape architecture, and the community input, to create a skate board track with two bowls situated on either end of a snake run. These forms reflected the popularity of pools, streets, and pipe infrastructure coopted by skaters for the sport. Unlike other public skate parks, and private skate parks, the distinctive Derby track has retained its essential form and has remained in use since it opened in 1979. In 1991, Ken Wormhoudt was asked to repair Derby's concrete surface cracks and he also added a concrete sidewalk around its perimeter. This sidewalk updated the track to reflect popular early 1990s skating practices. The original form of the track remained visible as the curb line was retained and the run and the bowl forms were also retained.

After Derby Park skate board track, Ken Wormhoudt did not undertake skate projects until the early 1990s but because of Derby's reputation he subsequently became a globally popular skate park designer and consultant. Wormhoudt died in 1997 but his firm Wormhoudt Inc. continues to specialize in skate park design under Ken's son, Zach Wormhoudt. The firm remains a leader in the field. The track is currently referred to as Derby Skate Park and it represents the work of a master of skate park design. Ken Wormhoudt's career as a skate park designer was launched by the success of Derby Skate Park. Ken Wormhoudt is widely recognized as a pioneer in skate park design and Derby Park, his first skate park, is one of the oldest continuously used public skate parks.

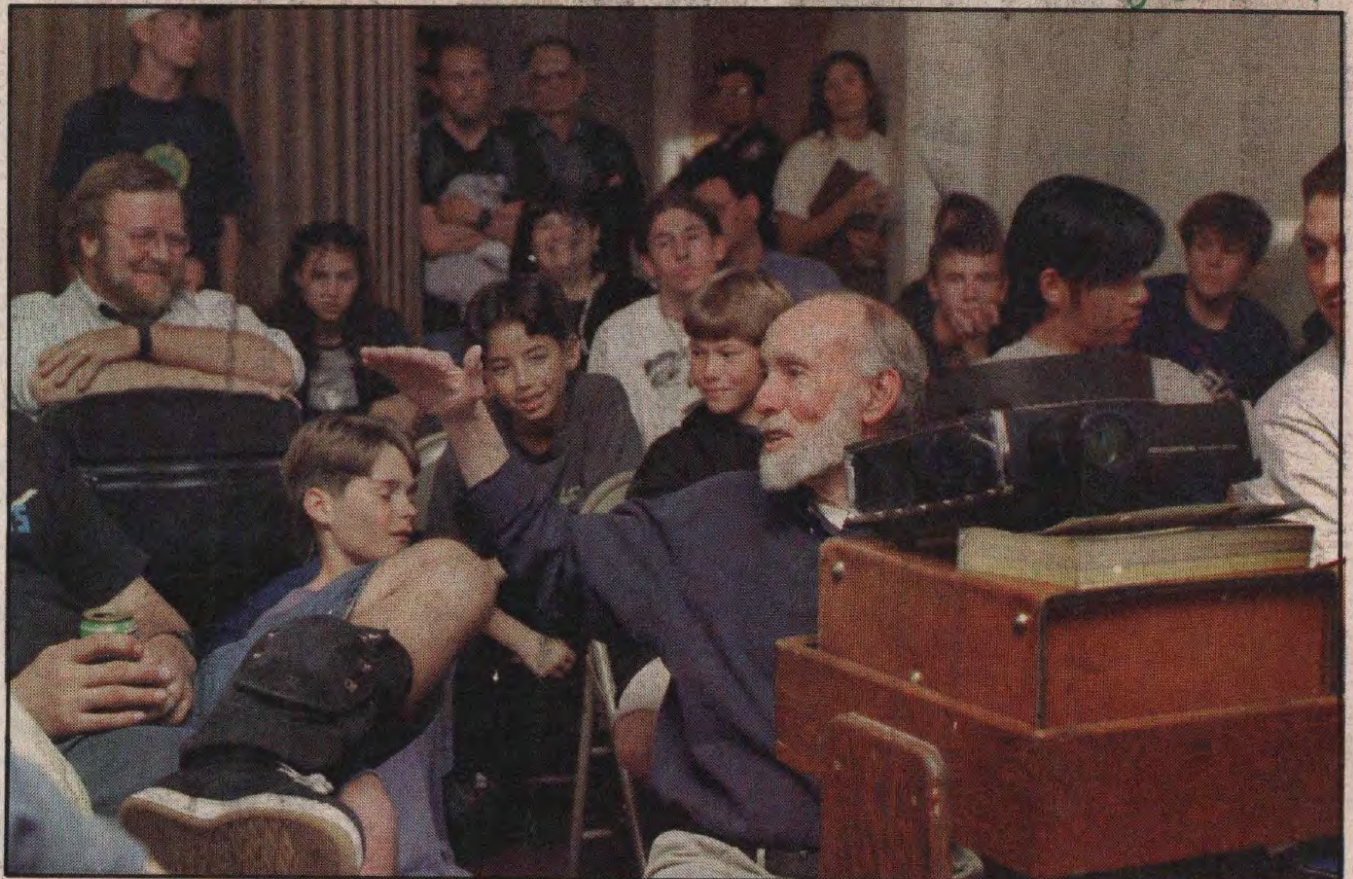
Derby Park skate board track's initial community-input design process began in January 1977 and the park opened in 1979 which means it is not yet fifty years old. Wormhoudt added the concrete sidewalk around the original bowls and snake run perimeter curb in 1991. However, Derby Skate Park falls within the California Register Special Criteria Considerations as defined by the Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Series #6 which states that an historical resource can achieve significance within the past fifty years "if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance." (<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov>) As discussed in the contextual history of skateboarding, the sport has undergone waves of popularity but the construction of skate runs and skate parks is a phenomenon that dates from the early 1970s. Therefore, Derby Skate Park dates from the earliest decade of skate board track design. Both the original track and the re-paving by Ken Wormhoudt define the period of significance 1977-1991. The design changes by Zach Wormhoudt of Wormhoudt Inc. do not fall within the period of significance and the special criteria considerations because not enough time has passed to understand their historical importance.

Character Defining Features include:

- Concrete surface and original line of the curb/lip
- Skate run and two bowls
- Concrete sidewalk surround

Integrity (Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association)

Derby Park skate board track retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association. The original 1977-1979 snake run and bowls are still legible and in their original Derby Park location and setting. The skate park's design was updated in an interactive process in 1991 by the original designer Ken Wormhoudt, but this change did not erase the track's original form. The wear and tear of the sport of skateboarding requires that tracks undergo periodic concrete maintenance and resurfacing or reskimming. Derby Skate Park's repairs and resurfacing occurred in 1991, 2004, and 2012 but the material remained consistent. The 2004 ramp addition at the track's west edge, and the 2012 amendments were an iterative change but the Derby skate board track still retains integrity and is still identified by the skating community as Derby Skate Park.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

Ken Wormhoudt gathers ideas from dozens of young skateboarders at a March forum.

Image 19: 1996 Wormhoudt at a community input meeting (1997 *Santa Cruz Sentinel* Obituary)

***B10. Significance: (Continued)**



Image 20: 1931 Aerial, detail cropped by Turnbull, circle shows general location (UCSC Special Collections)



Image 21: 1970 Aerial, detail cropped by Turnbull (UCSC Special Collections)

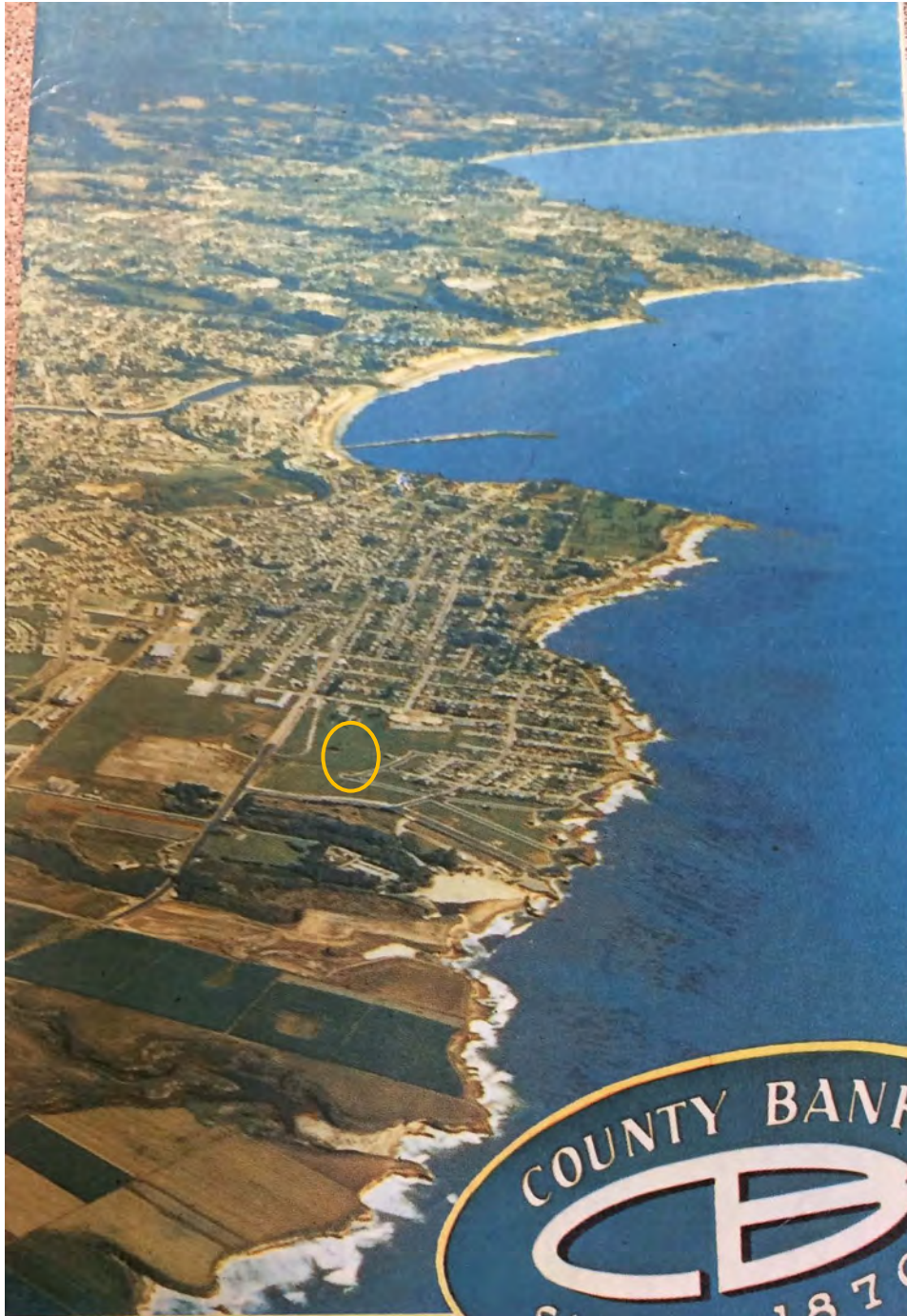


Image 22: 1971 Cover of Santa Cruz Street Directory, detail cropped by Turnbull (Santa Cruz Public Library)



Image 23: 1976-1977 Aerial, detail cropped by Turnbull (UCSC Special Collections)



Image 24: 1986-1987 Aerial, detail cropped by Turnbull, circle shows skate park (UCSC Special Collections)

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 19 of 19

*Resource Name or # Derby Skate Park

*Recorded by: Connor Turnbull, Preservation Consulting; Knapp Architects *Date: July-Sept 2023 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

B12. References

Brook, Michael. *The Concrete Wave: The History of Skateboarding*. Toronto: Warwick Publishing, 1999.

California Joint Powers Insurance Authority. Accessed via <https://cjpia.org/newsletters/issue-104/article-8>.

California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), Technical Assistance Series #6 and #7. Accessed via <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov>.

City of Santa Cruz Department of Parks and Recreation, Sergeant Charles Derby Park files - correspondence, community meetings, permits, maintenance and construction records, and general history.

City of Santa Cruz Department of Parks and Recreation – 1973 Park Plan and 2030 Parks Master Plan

City of Palo Alto, Greer Park website. Accessed via <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Open-Space-Parks/Neighborhood-Parks/Greer-Park>

Greenwood, Jeff. Concrete Disciples. Directory of skate parks of Northern and Southern California. Accessed September 5, 2023, <https://www.concretedisciples.com/global-skatepark-directory/usa-skateparks-guide/>

O'Hare, Sheila. *Santa Cruz*. Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2002.

Oral interview, Santa Cruz skating community members (June 16, 2023)

Senate Judiciary Committee session notes on AB 1146 (Jones). Accessed via http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab_1101-1150/ab_1146_cfa_20150629_153055_sen_comm.html

Skateboarding Hall of Fame and Museum. Phone conversation with Todd Huber, SFOH Executive Committee member on 9-6-2023, as well as general skateboard park information. Accessed September 5, 2023, <https://skateboardinghalloffame.org/shof/>.

Snyder, Craig B. Skateboarding Heritage Foundation. "Skateparks of the 1970s" directory from Craig B. Snyder's book. *A Secret History of the Ollie, Vol. 1: the 1970s* (Black Salt Press). Accessed September 5, 2023, <https://www.skateboardingheritage.org/archive/skateparks/>

University of California Santa Cruz Special Collections & Archives – maps, aerial photographs, and photographs by subject. <https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/speccoll>.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin #15*.

Wormhoudt Inc., Derby Park records, completed parks information. Accessed via https://skateparks.com/completed_parks.php

Newspapers, Videos, and Magazines

Santa Cruz Sentinel articles from 1960s-2000s that include references to Ken Wormhoudt, Zach Wormhoudt, Derby Park, Frederick Street Park, Skate Soquel, Natural Bridges School and Swanton Subdivision. Accessed via <https://www.newspapers.com>

Nickelodeon's "SK8TV". (1990). Host SkateMasterTate visits oldest skate park, Derby Park. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJWHeucMI2k>

Powell Peralta (Producer). (2019) "Future Primitive Cb.18 Derby Park". [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI4NGhthIL8>

Crawford, Jeff and Howard Dittrich (Directors) (1988/1989) "Santa Cruz's Streets on Fire". Derby Park clip. Santa Cruz Skateboards (Producer). [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfQscUEAUHQ>

Strange Notes (Producer) (1992) "The Vault:Jaya Bonderov" clips from "Hai Karate" video showing Derby Park. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br30J2Ufngw>

Thrasher magazine (Producer) "Skatepark Round-Up, Santa Cruz" with Derby Park and the Santa Cruz Team (2011). [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/MF-iAKA5NTA>

Plumart, Tim. *Thrasher* magazine, Derby Park review (1981), no page # (copy provided by Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department)

Vazquez, Emiliano. (May 4, 2012). "Remembering Derby Park". *Good Times*, no page # (copy provided by Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department)

Peralta, Stacy (Director). (2001). "Dogtown and the Z-Boys" [Film]. Agi Orsi (Producer).