

MA Web Design &  
Content Planning

# REPORT | CRIT 4:

## DESIGN

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# Contents

|       |                                 |   |
|-------|---------------------------------|---|
| I.    | <b>Design inspiration</b> ..... | 2 |
| II.   | <b>Design concept</b> .....     | 2 |
| III.  | <b>Colour</b> .....             | 2 |
| IV.   | <b>Typography</b> .....         | 2 |
| V.    | <b>Logo</b> .....               | 3 |
| VI.   | <b>Imagery</b> .....            | 4 |
| VII.  | <b>Style tiles</b> .....        | 5 |
|       | Version 1 .....                 | 5 |
|       | Version 2 .....                 | 6 |
| VIII. | <b>Feedback</b> .....           | 6 |

## Design inspiration

The design for my site was drawn from a number of inspirations, such as cognate and non-cognate sites, the architectural buildings themselves, and also printed material such as city guides and travel books. I also looked at a range of different illustration styles for inspiration, from simple line icons to the more complex life-like creations.

## Design concept

Many cognate sites I found were often poorly designed with poor visual aesthetics in terms of colour, font choices, and imagery, and tended to be non-cognate sites which offered much bolder designs with better aesthetics. Due to the nature of the site's content, I wanted my design to reflect something similar to those of non-cognate sites, yet have injections of my own style. With this in mind, the design needed to achieve three main things:

- ❖ Avoid looking and feeling too childish – a couple of people commented in the survey I sent out during the research stage about illustrations coming across as more tailored towards a young audience, which meant that I needed to take this into consideration when creating the illustrations and also designing the site.
- ❖ Be friendly yet informative – as the site has a wide target audience, I wanted the tone to feel friendly and approachable, but have my content to come across as trustworthy and reliable.
- ❖ Be bold and engaging – as I wanted the site to look fairly minimalistic with a focus on the illustrations, the design and the colours of the site needed to reflect this but also compliment what the site was about.

## Colour

Finding the right colour scheme for the site was probably the most difficult aspect of the design process. I knew I wanted bold and strong colours, but at the same time did not want to over-clutter the site. I looked at the colours of the buildings around the city and found a muted selection of colours that could work well with bolder ones. As part of the site, I also wanted to include some vintage design elements too and found old London Underground posters from the 30s onwards which have really great bold colours. It took a while to come up with a balanced colour palette which would also adhere to accessibility contrast standards.

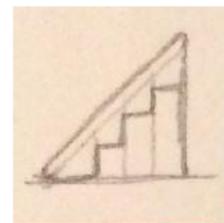
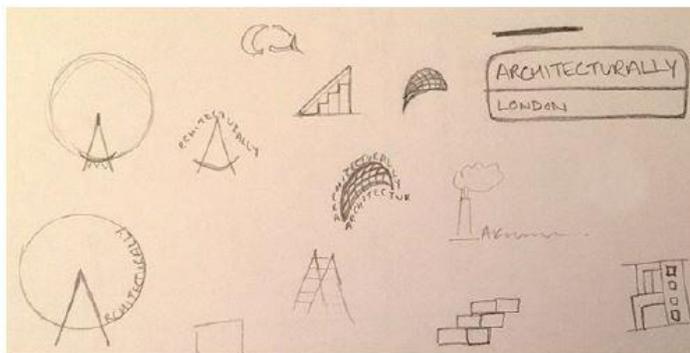
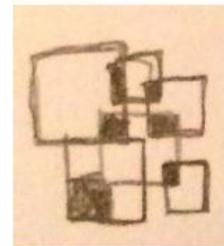
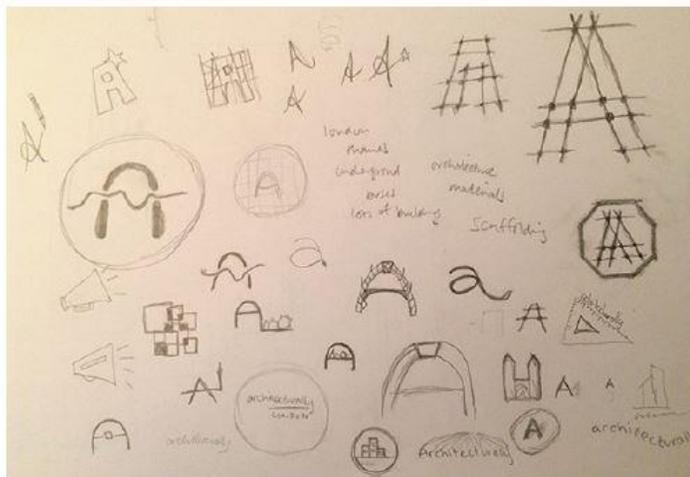
## Typography

For font choices, I decided to have a mixture of sans-serif and serif typefaces to distinguish between the headings and the body text. For the sans-serif typeface, I looked to old London Underground posters again, as I like the simplicity and clarity of the Johnston typeface. The modern version of this is now the P22 Underground, however as

the cost of buying the font family was fairly high, I decided to opt for Lato on Google Fonts which is free but also has a very similar look and feel to the original Johnston typeface. As the body text would be in a serif typeface, I wanted something with more character yet was still clear to read, and chose Libre Baskerville on Google Fonts which I felt worked well with Lato, and fitted in with my requirements.

## Logo

I struggled on coming up with a logo for the site and am still in development stage. I sketched down quite a few ideas, but none really seemed to fit with the design for the site. I wanted something sophisticated without it being cliché or obvious, and also wanted to avoid having the logo as a specific building or a specific type of building as that could be misleading for users when trying to understand what the site is about. I came up with a couple more abstract designs, one which consisted of the letter 'A' made of scaffolding, and the other which was more abstract with blocks on top of each other. The latter seems to be more popular from the feedback given, however it was also mentioned whether a logo is needed at all. I could opt to put 'Architecturally' in the serif font, and just use that.

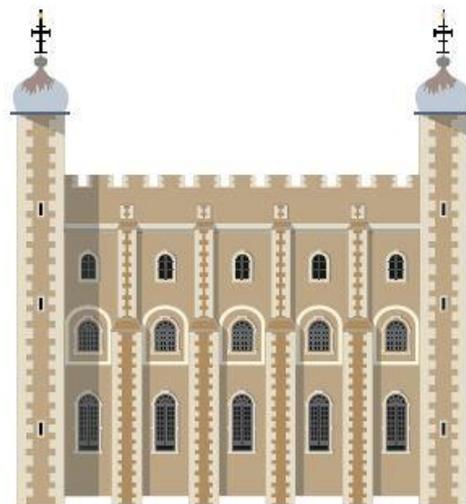
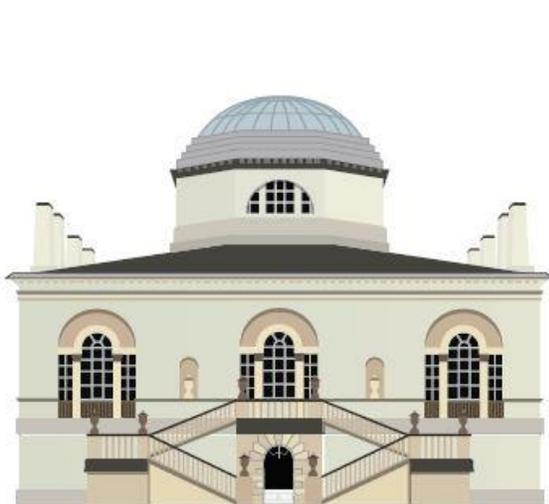
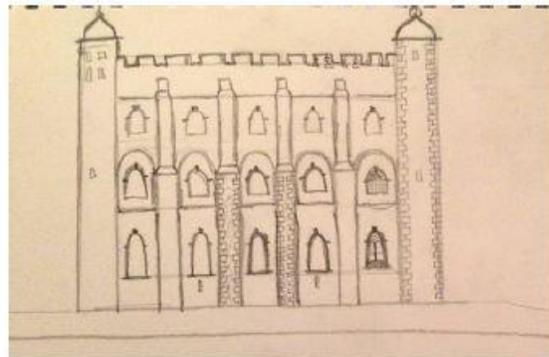
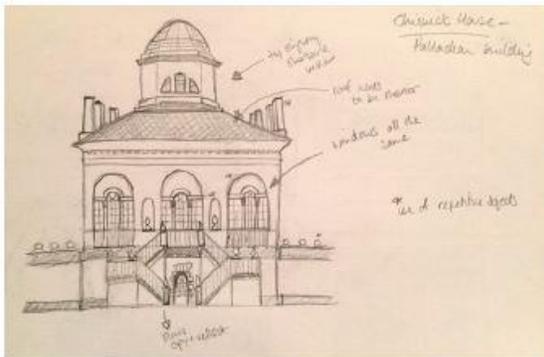


## Imagery

As one of the main reasons for choosing this project was to improve my illustration skills, I knew that imagery would be a huge part of this project and play a crucial factor in the success of the site. My plan has been to include a large SVG illustration on each individual building page of the architecture in question and then have mini versions of them on the index page. I would also quite like to include illustrations on the architectural style pages too to accompany the text, however this is time dependent and may be part of Phase 2.

Initially, when I researched into different illustration styles, I opted for the simple line icon drawing style as it gave off the bold feel that I wanted. However, as I tried out my first illustration, I was naturally inclined to draw the building more realistically with true-to-life colouring and shadows to make them feel less flat. I sketched out some initial buildings first to see what detail could be omitted and what needed to be included, as I aware that the more detailed the illustration, the bigger the SVG file would be.

I also created some icons for the different architectural styles and some patterns which could feature on the different architectural style pages.

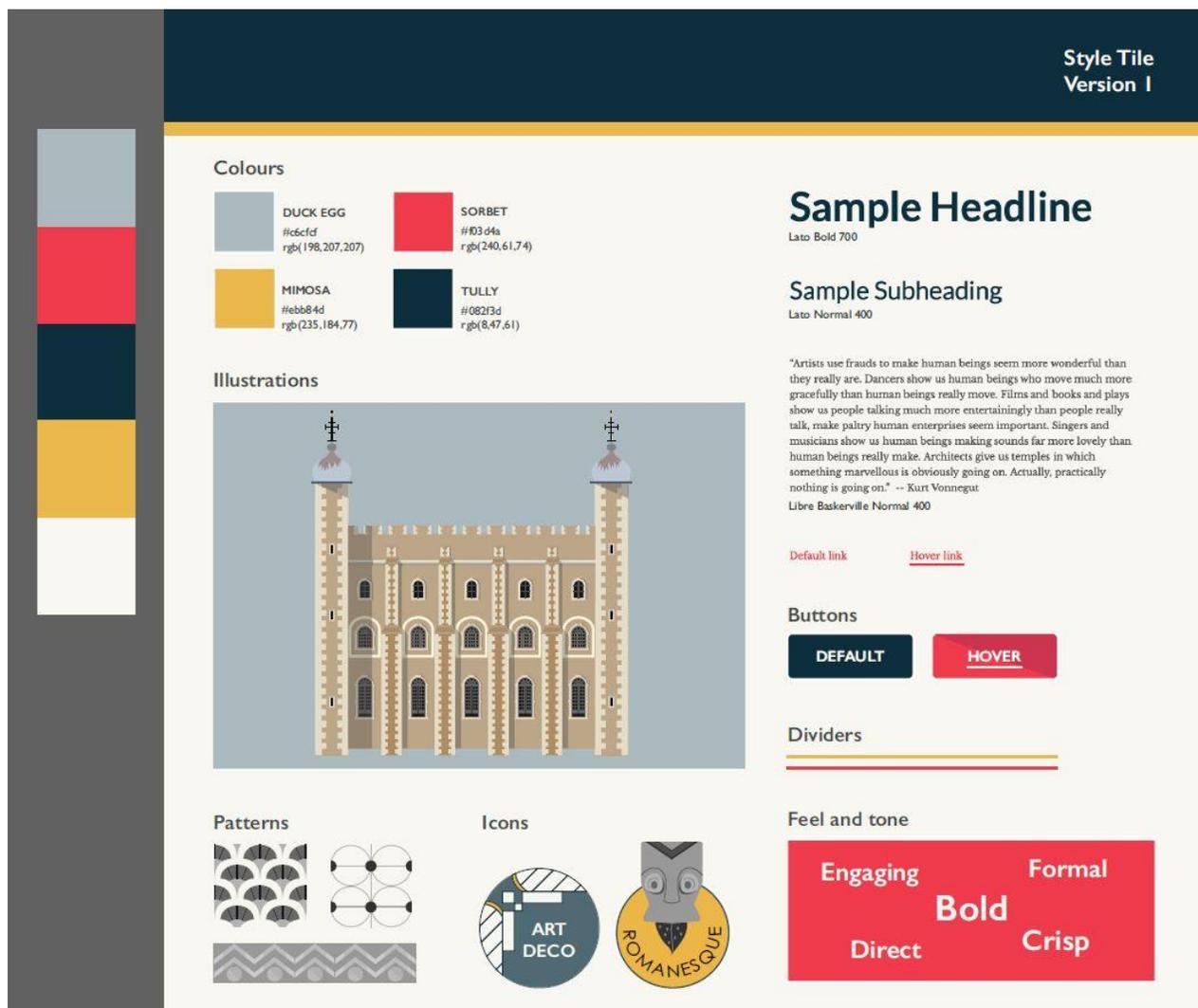


# Style files

In the end I decided on two designs that could work for the site:

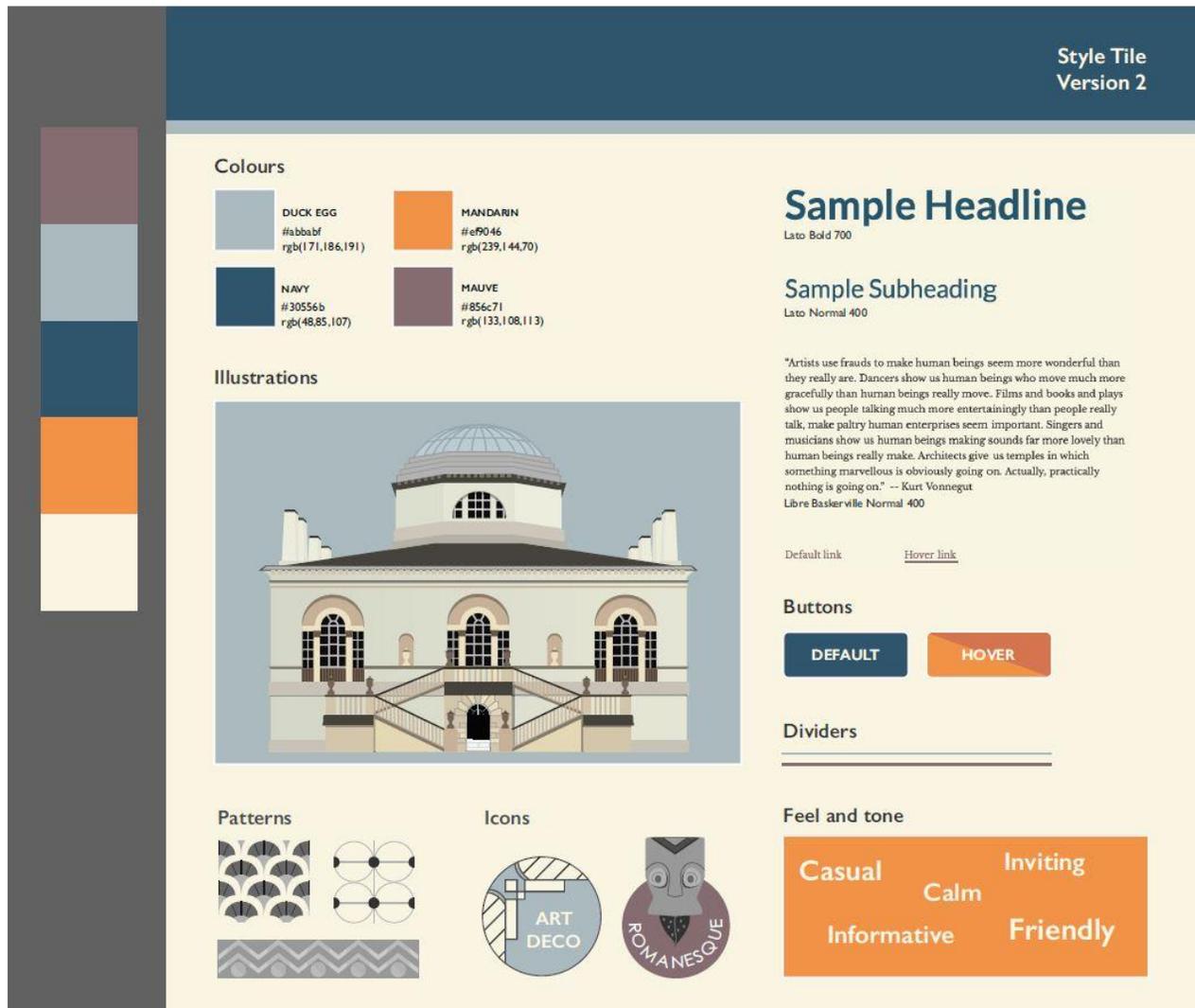
## Version 1

I chose a bold palette here, opting for 'Sorbet' and 'Mimosa' as the accent colours for the site. I thought the bold colours would help to lift the illustrations off the page and enhance them even more. I also wanted the site to have a feel of printed guides from the 1950s which usually had a bold but limited colour palette. For the hover state on buttons, I wanted it be a little different so decided on a two-tone colour.



## Version 2

This version is more mellow with a calming vibe, but could also be seen as boring. The colour palette is fairly muted with the blues and purples and so I included the orange to add a bit more colour.



## Feedback

During the presentation, more positive feedback was received for Style Tile 1 as people felt it was a much bolder and stronger design which would complement the illustrations. I decided to go ahead with this colour palette and design scheme for the final project.