REPORT | CRIT 3:

FIRMNESS

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Contents

Overview

Twitter Description

Architecturally:
An illustrated guide to help locals and visitors explore London's diverse landscape of architecture. (122 characters)

Project Summary
The site will:
◇ include information on individual architectural pieces
◇ offer a section on the main architectural styles seen across London
◇ use illustrations as imagery to depict buildings and to highlight certain concepts or facts within the text
◇ provide access or transport information to encourage/enable users to explore the architecture in the real world

Information Architecture – Revised

I created a survey to gauge general interest for the site, whether they'd use specific parts of the site, and what other functions they'd want to include on the site. From the results I found that users wanted a map which gave an overview of all the building listings in London and where they were. I decided to rearrange the IA of the site to reflect this, by making the map a main section of the site and turning the 'Resources' section into an additional page and renamed it 'References' so that users still have the option to explore if they wish to find out more about architecture:
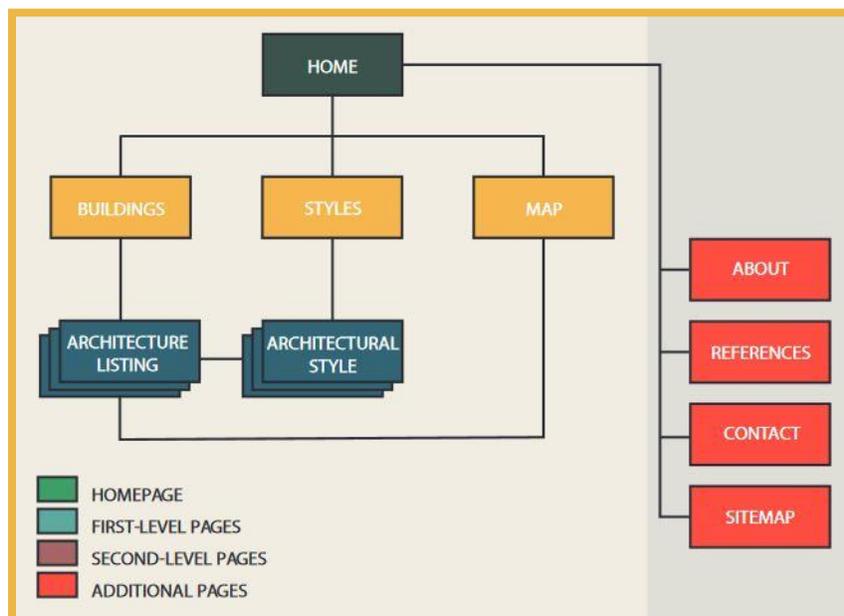
Requirements

What I'll need my site to do:

◈ Provide a search/filter function for users to browse through and select a building listing quickly

◈ An interactive map where they can see the locations of buildings in relation to one another

◈ Have seamless content relationships across the site i.e. users will be able to easily find related content that they might be interested in

◈ Include SVG animations to enhance user experience

Front-end technologies

SVGs

I've included a section on SVGs as I'll be using them for all of the illustrations on the site.

◈ ### SVG Optimiser

In order to keep file sizes to a minimum and help to improve the performance of the site, I'll be using Peter Collingridge's SVG Optimiser which is an online tool. The advantages of this tool over others is that there is a live preview when going through different optimization options, and this will allow me to optimize the SVGs without affecting the overall quality or feel of the illustration.

◈ ### <svg></svg>

I'll be using the <svg> tag to embed my illustrations inline into the HTML, as I'll then be able to target specific paths etc. for animation / transformations.

◈ ### Accessibility

To ensure that anyone can use the site, there are a couple of really good resources which I'll be referring to.

Leonie Watson - Tips for creating accessible SVGs

Heather Migliorisi - Accessible SVGs

◈ ### Responsive

I'll need to ensure that all the SVGs are responsive, and aim to provide a range of different versions for illustrations so that when screen sizes become smaller a simplified version of the illustration will be served.

Inspiration from: Joe Harrison – Responsive Icons

CSS

◈ ### BEM

In terms of organising and structuring my CSS, I'll be using the BEM naming convention. I've previously used this before and felt that it helped with my workflow a lot in terms of efficiency and avoiding confusion with clear descriptive class names. Although it may seem like a bit of an overkill for the scale of the project, I felt it was a good idea for me to continue with a method I felt comfortable with and could work quickly with. If it happens that the CSS files become too large, then I'll consider taking elements of BEM to organise my stylesheets. Originally I'd also planned to use ITCSS, however after some feedback from the tutors who felt that this method is really only used by very large organisations and I may find that it would be a hindrance rather than of help. I re-evaluated and will be structuring my layout similar to methods of SMACSS, which is more suited to smaller projects.

◈ ### SASS

I'd like to use Sass as a tool to speed up the workflow, and with features like nesting, mixins, and variables, I feel that it can be beneficial in terms of reducing my development time. The only hump would be to learn how to use it effectively, but there are plenty of resources and articles out there which will help me.

◈ ### Zurb Foundation

I looked into using a grid framework for the layout of my site and came across Zurb Foundation as a popular choice. The framework is well-tested across all browsers, it's responsive, secure, and there's a huge amount of documentation on it. Although, with many sites looking the same nowadays due to frameworks like these, I'm a bit apprehensive about using one and may just decide to create my own grid system as I'd like my site to look unique but also improve my skills even if it does take a bit longer!

◈ ### CSS Animations

Ideally I'd like to use these for both UI elements and the larger buildings illustrations, yet I'll need to find a balance and not overuse them. I hope to use mainly CSS animation if I can to try and reduce the amount of javascript that will be needed for more complex animations. I've played around with some animation effects which you can view in the presentation.

Javascript

◈ ### Libraries for SVG animation

There are a range of js libraries out there which can be used for SVG animation. I've had a look at a few and have narrowed the list down to four:

◈ svg.js – the leanest and lightest
◈ snap.svg – specifically for SVG animation
◈ GSAP – has a lot of different options for animation
◈ velocity.js – also has a wide range of functions you can use

I'll need to delve further into these and have a play with them to see which one I feel is the most suitable for the type of animations I'd like to do. From the feedback, David mentioned 'don't just do animations because you can', and moving forward from this, I'll need to really think about which elements should be animated and which

shouldn't in order to prevent too much from going on at one time – affecting the performance of the site and also user experience.

◈ General

I'd like to use as little javascript as possible to improve the site load time, but will use it for things like responsive nav menu and little progressive enhancements if needed.

Back-end technologies

Referring to the requirements of the site above, I'll need to use a CMS for the back-end which will require PHP and MySQL.

The requirements for the CMS I'd like to use is:

◈ Have complete control of what goes into the CMS
◈ Easy management of content categorisation
◈ Ability to search and filter well
◈ Provide add-on functions for future expansion e.g. e-commerce, accounts
◈ Have a user-friendly interface

I knew that I didn't want to opt for a template-driven CMS like Wordpress, and wanted complete flexibility in how the site looks. I came across Perch and Craft, which are both completely flexible in terms of what you want to put in the CMS and not template-driven at all. I've laid out the Pros and Cons below for both CMSs:

	PROS	**CONS**
PERCH	◈ Lightweight ◈ No themes ◈ Can retrofit to a static site ◈ Easy to use/friendly UI	◈ License fee (£50) ◈ Documentation and tutorials only limited to site
CRAFT	◈ Easy installation procedure ◈ Lots of documentation ◈ Huge community/support ◈ Live preview ◈ Great categorisation of content	◈ Uses TWIG, simplified templating language for PHP, so will need to learn

Hosting

I've chosen to go with the 1&1 basic package which includes:

◈ shared hosting – affordable price
◈ Up to 600MB RAM
◈ Unlimited bandwidth
◈ SSL certificate
◈ 24/7 support

Analytics

The site will be monitored on a weekly basis using Google Analytics and Google Search Console.

Google Analytics will:

◈ Provide website traffic
◈ Analyse traffic sources and flow
◈ Identify demographics
◈ Include a breakdown of keywords

Google Search Console will:

◈ Provide search analytics
◈ Analyse any incoming links to the site
◈ Monitors and resolves markup issues

Content Creation Schedule

	Completion date	Status
Prep		
Collate text and online resources	Jan 31	Completed
Research into architectural styles	Jan 31	Completed
Choose general list of buildings to include on the site	Jan 31	Completed
Refine list of architectural styles for glossary	Jan 31	Completed
Refine list of architectural building listings	Feb 5	Completed
Glossary of styles pages: research and draft		
Romanesque	Feb 18	Completed
Palladianism	Feb 18	Researched
Art Deco	Feb 18	Researched
Architectural listings: research and draft		
Romanesque buildings	Mar 4	Researched
Palladianism buildings	Mar 18	
Art Deco buildings	Apr 1	
Create illustrations:		
Romanesque buildings and style	Apr 2	
Palladianism buildings and style	Apr 30	
Art Deco buildings and style	May 7	
Icons/general	May 21	
Additional pages content:		
Write content for References page	May 28	
Write content for About page	May 28	
Refine all content	Jun 4	