

MA Web Design &  
Content Planning

# REPORT | CRIT 2:

## COMMODITY

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# Overview

## Twitter Description

An illustrated guide for locals and visitors to explore London's diverse landscape of architecture.

(98 characters)

## Project Summary

The site will:

- ◇ include information on individual architectural pieces
- ◇ have a glossary of 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

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# Users

## Target Audience

Based on previous research from cognate and non-cognate site analytics (Crit 1), the demographics for architecture-focused and design-orientated sites differed slightly:

- ◇ both had a similar age demographic: 18-34 year olds
- ◇ architecture-focused sites which featured as part of an event were majority: women
- ◇ sites where illustrations were at the forefront of the site design, and content offered was focused on design were majority: men

As the site I'd like to create is an informative exploration tool for finding architecture around the city, the target audience is fairly broad as it will be for: both men and women, aged between 18-34 years old who are already based in London, or visiting the city and would like to learn a little more about the capital's buildings. However, in terms of the age demographic, this could vary as the site would be open to anyone who's interested in architecture. The site will be more of an introduction to the different architectural styles and architectural buildings in London rather than a comprehensive site about technical architecture terms or in-depth timeline/history of architecture, so it could be for those wanting to learn about architecture or those who already love architecture and just want to know what's out in the city to explore.

## User research

After conducting a user research interview based on how the user felt about cognate sites and what they'd want from an online exploration tool for architecture, I've listed below some interesting points that will help me to better tailor my site for users:

### *Homepage*

- ❖ Images preferred over text – gives quick overview of what site is about and draws their eye quicker
- ❖ Likes the idea of curated content to help explore different types of architecture

### *Finding content*

- ❖ Would want to be able to search to find buildings easily
- ❖ Search filters such as area, type, and style would be useful

### *Information offered*

- ❖ Would like the option of 'read more' and expanding content sections rather than having all the information laid out – can be a bit daunting
- ❖ Content should include history of the building, famous facts, less well-known facts or a 'did you know?' section
- ❖ Directions and transport links to visit the buildings would be useful, and also ticket info or access details if applicable
- ❖ Would be good to know what architectural style a building is in, and then be able to see more buildings of that type, but wouldn't necessarily want to read more on the actual architectural style itself

### *Animations*

- ❖ Would be a bonus to have them but would not affect their experience that much of using the site as they're mainly there for the content
- ❖ Mini-animations might inspire them to have a look at what other illustrations did though e.g. if the bridge of Tower Bridge lifted up then might want to see what Big Ben's illustration would do – therefore help explore the site a bit more

### *Other features*

- ❖ Would be useful to have an account so that users could create a wishlist or a 'been there' list
- ❖ Maybe a rating feature on the building pages so that a weekly 'highest-rated' list could be generated and attract users

## User personas

A few examples of possible users detailing their background and why they might visit the site:

### DAN (18, Male)



- ◆ 1st year university student studying architecture, based in London
- ◆ Avid web user, accesses the web mainly via his laptop in dorm-room or smartphone when he's on the go
- ◆ Spends about 4-5 hours on the web every day
- ◆ Interests in architecture, design, music, sport, travelling
- ◆ Just moved to the city so would use the site to explore the different areas of London; familiarise himself with the architecture of London and research on places he'd like to explore and get inspiration for future projects
- ◆ Would benefit from curated content on the homepage to help him explore the site

### EMILIA (26, Female)



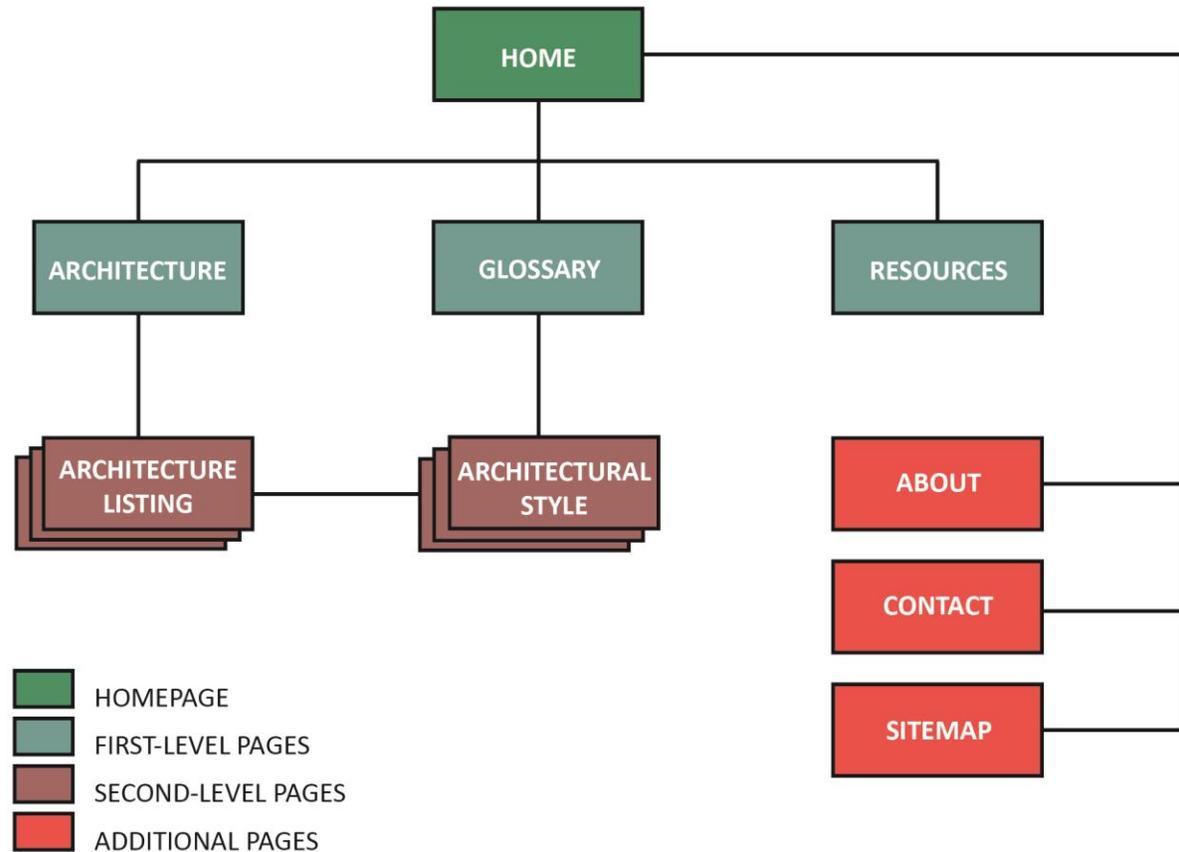
- ◆ Press Officer at a charity organisation, based in London
- ◆ Moderate web user, accesses the web mainly at work on desktop and at home via a tablet
- ◆ Spends about 3 hours on the web every day
- ◆ Interests in food, new experiences, craft, cycling, walks
- ◆ Lived in London for 8 years, so she knows the city really well but always looking for new things to explore; would come to the site to find new places/areas in London that she hasn't seen before
- ◆ Would benefit from search/filter function as she'd have in mind which areas of London she'd like to explore more

### PAUL (40, Male)



- ◆ Teacher at a high school in New York, father of 2
- ◆ Accesses the web via his smartphone during commute to work
- ◆ Spends about an hour on the web every day
- ◆ Interests in other cultures, history, activities, travelling
- ◆ Planning a family holiday to London in the Summer, and would use the site to find places which aren't the typical tourist attractions and are a bit 'off the beaten track'
- ◆ Would benefit from the filter function, but also make use of the Architectural Styles section as he's already familiar with some architectural terms, to find buildings of styles he's interested in

# Information Architecture



## Site plan

The site will be split into three main sections: *Architecture* which will feature individual architectural listings e.g. Houses of Parliament / The Shard; *Glossary* which will link to informative pages about each of London's architectural styles e.g. Neo-Classicism / Contemporary; and *Resources* where users will be able to access further information on London architecture or architecture in general through useful sites, books, or walking tours.

The first two sections will be where the majority of the site's content can be found and users will be able to browse through these two sections seamlessly via related links e.g. 'See architecture in this style' or 'Find out more about this architectural style'. Breadcrumb trails will also be implemented to indicate to the user where they are on the site so they can navigate back to previous sections if they wish.

Additional pages such as *About*, *Contact*, and *Sitemap*, will also be featured on the homepage as well as being included in the footer so that users can easily access these on any page if they wish. Social media links such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, will also be included in the footer if users wish to take a look at these, but they will not be made too prominent as to draw users away from the site.

## Homepage

Users will be able to access the three main sections of the site via the homepage in addition to the additional pages mentioned previously through clear navigation. A brief paragraph will be included to introduce the user to the site and explain a little bit about what it is, however illustrations will be mainly used in attracting users to click on curated collections e.g. 'Architecture in Hackney' or '19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings', to help them explore the site. Two or three of these will be featured on the homepage and will be refreshed on a weekly basis to keep content new and the site updated.

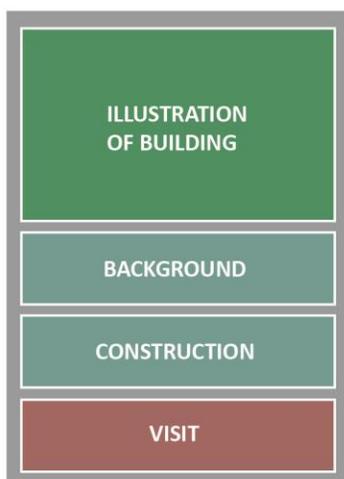
## Section 1: Architecture

### *Main landing page | First-level page*

- ◇ Consist of all the architectural listings on the site
- ◇ They will be listed alphabetically initially
- ◇ Users will be able to search through the listings via a filter system
- ◇ Search filters will be:
  1. architectural style
  2. century
  3. area (borough)
  4. type

Once users have found a listing they're looking for, they'll be able to click through to the individual page which will provide more information on the building:

### *Individual architecture listing | Second-level page*



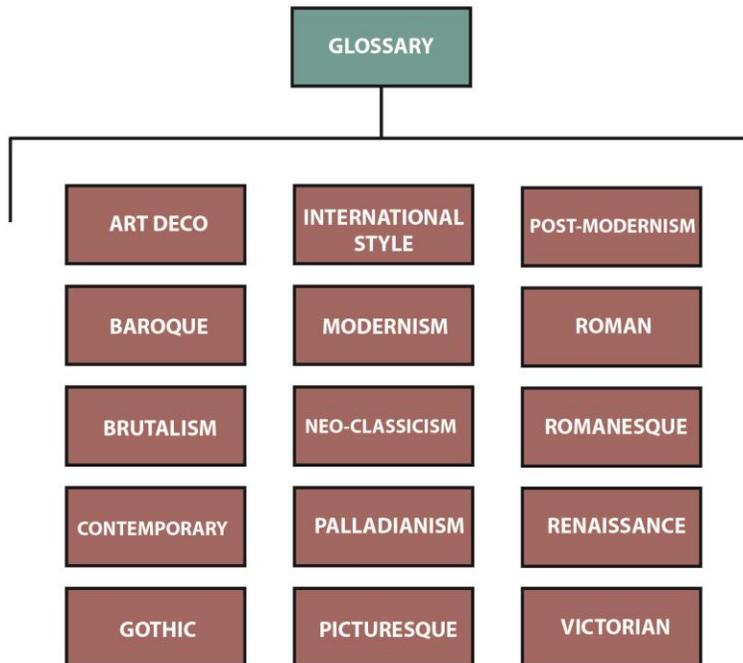
The structure of the individual architecture listing pages will be:

- ◇ Large image of the building:
  - Animate the illustrations using CSS and JS
- ◇ Textual content on the building will be broken down into (still to be refined):
  - Background/history: when was it built/who built or designed it/why it was built
  - 'Did you know' section
  - Lesser-known facts
  - Construction: methods and materials used
  - Visit: how to get there, entrance/ access details

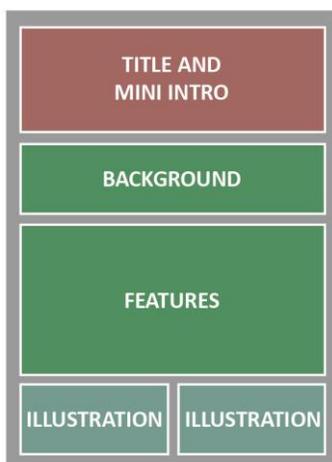
## Section 2: Glossary of styles

*Main landing page | First-level page*

A list of all the main architectural styles seen across London in alphabetical order or maybe date order:



*Individual architectural style page | Second-level page*



The structure of the individual architectural style pages will be:

- ◇ Illustrated banner of style elements with title
- ◇ Textual content will be broken down into:
  - background
  - features
- ◇ Illustrations will be used to portray style elements
- ◇ Links to other listings of buildings in that style

# Content

## Content Creation

Content on the site will be primarily driven by the information and illustrations on the individual architecture listings and style pages. I'll be producing both the text and illustrations on my own through research of text and online sources, in addition to finding inspiration for my illustrations from the physical buildings themselves and hope to visit as many of them as I can myself, so that I can provide content from a personal perspective too e.g. special features to look out for or the best route to get there etc.

## Textual content

I've started to research and compile the information for architectural styles across London, however refining and writing content for individual architectural listings will take a bit more time. I'll need to make sure that the list of buildings I include on my site for this initial phase will consist of both familiar and unfamiliar buildings in order to attract initial users to the site but keep them engaged with content they may not have come across before. The site should consist of examples from every architectural style, and then in future phases, the listings will build up and become more comprehensive.

Taking into account feedback from my presentation, it is likely that the 15 styles I initially decided on launching the site with will be reduced to three styles: Romanesque, Art Deco, and Brutalist. Then each style will include around 5-6 buildings, which will be located in different areas of London. This is so that I can ensure I allow myself enough time to focus on the quality of the content and implement the technical and aesthetics of the site to a high standard. In later phases, once I know that this proof of concept will work, then I can build upon the content slowly.

## Illustrations

The use of illustrations will be an important component of the site as I aim to offer a different way to explore London's architecture, and use illustrations rather than photographic images to create a more whimsical and intimate feel. Each content-heavy page will require a large image and a couple of smaller ones which will take a little longer to complete; however, I'm hoping that I'll be able to reuse certain illustrations or elements throughout the site to reduce the workload. The larger illustrations on each style/architectural listing page will require some more time as I'll need to research into animating SVGs using either pure CSS or a JS library like velocity.js or something equivalent like snap.svg, as I'd like to have an animation feature on each architectural building page. If possible, I'd also like to include mini animations in the user interface of the site to enhance user experience.

There will be three main types of illustrations:

- ◆ Illustrations of buildings: will be on each architecture listing page
- ◆ Decorative: mini-illustrated images within the text on text-heavy pages to break up large chunks of reading, and will be used in particular for the glossary section to provide visuals
- ◆ Icons: help users quickly identify what category a piece of architecture falls under

## Tone and messaging

The tone of my content will be friendly and informative, and will try to avoid using too much technical jargon, or if it's needed, find a way to provide the meaning to the users. The content will be easy to read and divided up into clear sections for users to browse through, in addition to being accessible to all users and digestible on all devices. I'm hoping that the tone and messaging of the text will encourage users to either research more into architecture around London, or go out and explore it for themselves. Hopefully in future phases I'll be able to provide audio so that users can listen to the content on the go too.

## Accessibility

To ensure that the site is accessible to all users and on all devices, it will adhere to WCAG 2.0 standards – incorporating accessible design and semantic, lean, and optimised code.

Progressive enhancement will be implemented and the site will be tested throughout the build without CSS and JS to ensure that it functions well without the need of these technologies. Cross-browser support will be tested to ensure any vendor prefixes which may be needed.

As the site will be heavy in illustrations, I'll need to make sure that SVGs are optimised and any fall back images are provided for older browsers which may not support animation.

Majority of the pages will also be quite text heavy, so the content on these will be divided into sections with clear headings to help guide the users through or to provide them with the choice of whether to read a specific section or not. Content will be marked up in clean semantic HTML with ARIA roles. I also aim to provide users with tooltips for any technical architectural terms so that users have this information by hovering or tapping on the word, but will need to ensure that these are device-friendly.

## Content Creation Schedule

	Completion date	Status
<b>Prep</b>		
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	
<b>Glossary of styles pages: research and draft</b>		
Romanesque	Feb 18	
Art Deco	Feb 18	
Brutalist	Feb 18	
<b>Architectural listings: research and draft</b>		
Romanesque buildings	Mar 4	
Art Deco buildings	Mar 18	
Brutalist buildings	Apr 1	
<b>Create illustrations:</b>		
Romanesque buildings and style	Apr 2	
Art Deco buildings and style	Apr 30	
Brutalist buildings and style	May 7	
Icons/general	May 21	
<b>Additional pages content:</b>		
Write content for Resources page	May 28	
Write content for About page	May 28	
Refine all content	Jun 4	