

Q1. Project Requirements and Intended Outcomes

When I started this project, the FGS NZ website was in rough shape broken databases, corrupted files, and missing media everywhere. Honestly, it felt like walking into a digital earthquake zone. My main goal was to bring it back to life: rebuild it using WordPress and PHP, make it scalable and maintainable, and align it with FGS branding.

But this wasn't just about "fixing" things. I had to dig into old backups, recover media files via FTP and Media Sync, and rebuild key pages like Home, About, Contact, Temple Info, and Events using Gutenberg blocks. I also needed to make sure navigation worked smoothly, layouts matched the Figma designs, and CSS was modular so future updates wouldn't turn into a headache.

By the end, my goal was to deliver a site that wasn't just functional it had to be clean, professional, and easy for staff and future developers to manage. It needed to represent FGS online in a way that felt polished, welcoming, and accessible to everyone.

Q2. Applying Industry Best Practices

I leaned on industry-standard practices throughout the project it helped me feel like I wasn't just winging it, especially when restoring something so fragile. For project management, I used Notion to track tasks by weeks and technical focus. Each task included goals, blockers, notes on shortcodes, FTP restoration, or CSS tweaks. This way, even though I wasn't on a full Agile team, I could treat each week like a mini-sprint and see steady progress.

Styling was another big focus. I set up modular CSS, so each page or component had its own scoped file. That made debugging or future edits way easier. Components like the event cards or gallery carousel could be updated independently without breaking anything else.

I also leaned on prototyping and testing. Figma was my visual guide, and WordPress previews let me check layouts, responsiveness, and accessibility before pushing pages live. For the backend, I created a custom post type for activities using CPT UI and ACF. That gave staff control over content without relying on bloated plugins, keeping things fast and manageable.

Restoring media was its own adventure. I carefully retrieved files from old backups and ensured nothing was missing or misrepresented. In the end, combining structured tracking, modular CSS, and iterative testing let me meet the project requirements efficiently while following professional development practices.

Q3. Design Thinking in Action

Even though a lot of this project was technical I kept the user experience front and centre. I found myself constantly asking, “How will someone actually use this site?”

When empathising, I considered both the visitors and the staff managing content. Navigation needed to be simple, anchor links clear, and content easy to edit with Gutenberg blocks. I wanted future staff to feel confident updating pages without feeling lost in code.

For prototyping, Figma was my reference point. I translated its design tokens into block structures, built custom components like event cards and gallery carousels, and tested early in WordPress. Iterative previews helped me catch issues before they became bigger problems.

Design thinking wasn't just a method it was a mindset for me. I stayed focused on clarity, accessibility, and real-world usability. I'm proud not just of the site I restored, but of the resilience it took to get here. Ten weeks of obstacles, growth, and mahi and I showed up for every single one.

Q4. Agile Mindset

Even though I worked solo, I found myself naturally applying an Agile mindset throughout the FGS restoration project. I focused on people first and the staff who would manage content and the visitors who needed a smooth, accessible, and welcoming experience.

Every choice came down to improving usability and maintainability I wanted the restoration to feel cared for, with each part rebuilt thoughtfully from scratch. My goal was for both visitors and staff to have a smoother, more reliable experience that reflected that same sense of care.

Also, I stayed flexible when challenges came up. If a short code broke or a layout didn't match the Figma design, I would ask my mentor questions and I would use his advice to go on side missions learning and reading, testing these methods out. This adaptability and willingness to learn and explore really helped me stay calm under pressure, especially when dealing with corrupted backups and plugin conflicts that had taken many days to resolve. During my final presentation, my mentor noted how quickly I could identify issues, solve them, and move forward describing that fast, iterative cycle as something rare. Hearing that reinforced just how much my adaptability and problem-solving had grown over the course of this project.

Agile thinking also shaped how I viewed progress. Instead of waiting for a perfect final build, (which has been quite complex for myself as a beginner to WP & PHP) I focused on delivering small, working improvements each week whether that was restoring navigation, rebuilding the events section, or stabilising the CSS layout. That iterative reflective approach made the project feel achievable and kept me grounded.

Agile to me isn't just about following a process it's about adaptability, empathy, and treating every challenge as a chance to learn and honestly that's something I've really started to love and live by.

Q5. Agile Practises

I applied Agile-style practices to keep my workflow structured, transparent, and adaptable. Since I was working independently, I treated each week like a mini sprint using Notion to map out tasks, blockers, and any reflections this acted like a Kanban board and these all helped me stay accountable and track steady progress across ten weeks.

Each sprint focused on a specific outcomes for example, restoring key pages, fixing broken short codes, or refining the CSS structure. By setting small, clear goals, I could measure success incrementally and adjust priorities when unexpected issues came up.

My development process was highly iterative. I'd build a section, test it, get feedback, and refine it immediately rather than leaving fixes to the end. This approach meant the project kept improving in real time and I could catch design or performance issues early. My mentor feedback became part of this continuous loop of improvement which I'm grateful to Jai for.

Towards the end of Internship, I started to really use my **QA tracker & Blockers Tables** (*notion*) to document bugs, plugin issues, and accessibility checks. This acted like an Agile backlog, helping me prioritise efficiently and reflect on what was working or needed attention. Looking back, these small cycles of planning, testing, and refining made solo development feel more structured and collaborative even without a full team. I look forward to implementing this more all through my future build processes.

These Agile practices helped me manage my time better, reduce stress, and maintain consistent momentum from start to finish. This was especially important during a few tough weeks where I was navigating personal challenges, including changes to my benefit and supporting my son through a difficult time at school. Staying adaptable and task + solutions focused, helped me keep moving forward even when things felt super heavy and stressful, I always had a vision forward. Agile to me again is learning continuously and improving through reflection and iteration.

Q6. Stakeholders

A few key groups shaped this project. FGS leadership needed a stable, branded website to represent the organization publicly. Staff and administrators needed a backend that was simple and maintainable. End users temple visitors, event participants, needed clear navigation and accessible content. My mentor Jai supported me with guidance, and future developers would benefit from clean architecture, easy to follow documentation and modular code.

Keeping all these groups in mind helped me make decisions that were practical, user-focused, and sustainable. It reminded me that even a technical restoration is really about people how they interact, how they manage, and how they feel when using the site.

Q7. Ethical Considerations

Restoring the site came with responsibilities. I took care to protect media integrity, validate file ownership, and avoid exposing any sensitive data. Where assets were missing, I used placeholders rather than misrepresenting anything.

Accessibility and fair access were priorities. I tested layouts, screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, and font/contrast choices to make sure the site is inclusive. I also optimized performance by removing unnecessary plugins and scoping CSS, which reduces load on servers and is a small way to consider environmental impact.

Navigation and interactions were designed to be transparent and no dark patterns, no misleading buttons. This ensures freedom of choice for visitors and builds trust.

The outcome is a site that's not only functional and visually polished, but also accessible, ethical, and responsible.

Q8: Communication

Throughout the FGS restoration, I prioritised clear and transparent communication to ensure project requirements were met and also because it really helped me stay on track with the project requirements. I checked in with my mentor weekly via video calls, sharing both wins and blockers, and asking for guidance when I needed it. These conversations helped me make sure I was tackling the right tasks and staying aligned with the project goals.

I also kept Alan, my sponsor, in the loop whenever personal challenges came up, like times I struggled to focus as a solo parent. By reaching out early, we could adjust expectations and find solutions without holding the project back.

I used Notion to track progress and prepare for presentations, which made it easier for Alan to see updates and give feedback. Active listening and taking onboard suggestions meant I could refine the site structure and fix missing functionality while keeping the project requirements front of mind always.

Overall, staying open, honest, and solution-focused helped me respond effectively to the project's needs. It wasn't just about talking it was about listening, reflecting, and making sure everyone felt heard, which helped me deliver a final outcome I'm proud of.

Q9. Evaluating Communication & Collaboration Methods

The communication and collaboration methods I used during the FGS restoration were effective because they kept me grounded, accountable, and connected even while working independently.

Using Notion as a central hub was especially powerful. It allowed me to track tasks, blockers, and QA issues in real time, and share progress with my mentor and stakeholders. This asynchronous method worked well during busy or emotionally heavy weeks, especially when I was juggling personal challenges. It gave me space to reflect, document clearly, and stay aligned with project goals.

Collaborating on the presentation was another highlight. My mentor helped me shape the narrative, refine the tone, and balance technical depth with emotional honesty. That process helped me see the project not just as a technical build, but as a story worth telling.

Reaching out for help especially during Week 7 when things felt overwhelming was a turning point. Communicating openly helped me stay focused and reminded me that collaboration isn't just about code; it's about support, trust, and shared problem-solving.

What Could Be Improved

If I were to repeat this in a future project, I'd build in more real-time conversations these could have helped me catch issues earlier and feel more supported during high-pressure moments. This is something I'm actively learning.

I'd also explore collaborative coding tools like GitHub Projects or live pair programming sessions for key components. That would allow for faster iteration and shared learning, especially when dealing with complex shortcode logic or database restoration.

Lastly, I'd make space for emotional check-ins even just a note in Notion to reflect on how I'm feeling. Because when the work gets heavy, having a space to acknowledge that makes the collaboration more human and sustainable.

Q10. Key Elements of My Contribution

My contribution to the FGS legacy site restoration was hands-on, architectural, and deeply personal. I didn't just patch up broken pieces I rebuilt the foundation with clarity, structure, and care.

One of the biggest elements was restoring the site from corrupted backups. I manually recovered media via FTP and Media Sync, validated gallery assets, and rebuilt key pages like Home, About, Contact, Temple Info, and Events using Gutenberg blocks. This required patience, precision, and a lot of troubleshooting.

I also designed and implemented modular CSS architecture, where each page or component had scoped styling. This made the frontend scalable and maintainable, and allowed future updates without breaking layout flow. I translated Figma designs

into clean, responsive blocks, and created custom components like event cards and gallery carousels.

On the backend, I built a custom event system using CPT UI and ACF, with shortcode-based rendering and a custom archive template. This gave staff control over content without relying on bloated plugins, keeping the site fast and future-proof.

I created a Notion QA tracker to document device testing, layout issues, plugin behaviour, and accessibility fixes. This helped me stay organized and communicate progress clearly. It also became a key part of my handover documentation.

Beyond the technical work, I contributed resilience and reflection. I navigated personal challenges while staying focused, honest, and solution-oriented. I reached out when I needed support, communicated openly, and kept showing up even when things felt heavy.

In the end, I delivered a site that's functional, polished, and ready to grow. But more than that, I built trust in myself as a developer who can handle legacy systems, think architecturally, and lead with integrity.

Q11. Learnings and Future Employment Impact

This project taught me more than just technical skills it reshaped how I approach challenges, communicate under pressure, and think like a developer with long-term vision.

One major area of growth was my ability to troubleshoot legacy systems. I learned how to restore corrupted backups, recover media via FTP, and rebuild a WordPress site from the ground up using PHP, Gutenberg blocks, and custom post types. I now feel confident navigating broken environments and making sense of outdated architecture skills that are highly valuable in real-world dev roles.

Another key learning was architectural thinking. I didn't just style pages I built scoped, modular CSS that's maintainable and scalable. I translated Figma designs into reusable components, created shortcode-based rendering logic, and documented everything clearly in Notion. This taught me how to build systems that others can understand, extend, and trust.

Just as important was learning how to self-manage and work completely solo. I planned, built, tested, and documented the entire restoration independently. I created my own QA tracker, structured my workflow in Notion, and made decisions without relying on constant oversight. That level of autonomy gave me confidence in my ability to lead projects, stay organized, and deliver results under pressure.

Beyond the technical, I learned how to communicate with clarity and integrity. Whether I was updating my mentor, logging QA issues, or presenting my work, I stayed honest about blockers and focused on solutions. That mindset owning the process, not just the outcome is something I'll carry into every future role.

These learnings directly enhance my employment prospects. I now have hands-on experience in WordPress restoration, scalable frontend workflows, and collaborative documentation. I've proven I can take a broken system and turn it into something clean, functional, and future-ready. And I've done it while managing real-life challenges, staying focused, and growing through every obstacle. I'm not just ready to contribute I'm ready to lead with clarity, resilience, and a genuine love for Full-Stack Development and WordPress.

Supporting Documentation

10 Week Plan Updated,

10 Week Summary,

Blockers,

Events Setup,

Learning Log,

Notion QA Tracker

are included in my GitHub repository:

<https://github.com/Cess-stack/fgs-nz-site-restoration.git>

These files reflect my full restoration process from technical recovery and media restoration to architectural decisions and QA testing. They're organized in the /docs folder for easy access and future reference.