

User Experience: Literary Edinburgh

Literary Edinburgh is the minimum viable product of a mobile-first web application that introduces users to the rich literary history of Scotland's capital. The site introduces visitors to novels, across numerous genres, which are set in Edinburgh and informs users about literature-related sights, attractions, tours, and events throughout the city. The website's aims are thus to enrich the experiences of cultural tourists and to increase interest in tourism in the city. Literary Edinburgh is designed in the first instance as shoulder marketing to existing tourist marketing for the city, such as that offered by *This is Edinburgh: Official Guide to Edinburgh* (<https://edinburgh.org/>), and, as such, is envisaged as a local government initiative to boost economic growth in the city, i.e. rather than a for-profit business in and of itself. Literary Edinburgh could appear as a link on the *This is Edinburgh* website, on flyers in tourist offices, museums, libraries, handed out during festivals, etc., and, later, have its own social media accounts.

Edinburgh thrives on cultural tourism, most notably through its many festivals in August, e.g. the International Book Festival, the Fringe Festival, and The International Festival. Such events draw huge numbers of tourists with disposable income and a keen interest in culture and the arts to Edinburgh each year. These cultural tourists form the primary target group for Literary Edinburgh. As such, the site aims to cater to cultural tourists who are already visiting or interested in visiting Edinburgh in August.

In its present form, Literary Edinburgh is designed for a post-Corona world, in which tourism and event restrictions have returned to normality. However, should the current situation persist in the long-term, the site's "Books" page enables users to discover Edinburgh through fiction. And in such a context the site could be modified to involve virtual literary tours or act as a platform for writers to perform and discuss their work.

Strategy plane

What is culturally appropriate and what content is relevant?

Users of Literary Edinburgh are likely to be educated, adult tourists with keen interests in reading and the arts, and who are seeking a literary experience of Edinburgh. As such, the website should provide descriptions of and easy purchase access to literature set in Edinburgh. Visitors are also likely to have the disposable income necessary to travel and to experience festivals. As such, the website should also include information on further literary-cultural experiences and tourist sights to be found within Edinburgh.

Although many users may come from elsewhere in the UK and from other English-speaking countries, it is likely that a significant proportion of website visitors will be non-native English speakers. For this reason, it is appropriate that the website not make use of too much idiomatic language that might trouble non-native speakers of English in terms of understanding the website's content. Additionally, text content should be relatively short and concise, and site and page navigation should be easy and intuitive.

Given that most users will be tourists or potential tourists looking for a cultural experience in Edinburgh / Scotland, it is appropriate to engage this interest with images and video content, as well as a Scotland-inspired colour scheme for the site, e.g. blue and white to match the colours of the Scottish flag.

What technology is appropriate?

Given that many users will be tourists already in the city when they find out about the webpage, it is likely that a significant proportion of visitors will first access Literary Edinburgh using a smartphone. As such, the website should take a mobile-first approach. Consequently, Bootstrap has been used as the framework in the design.

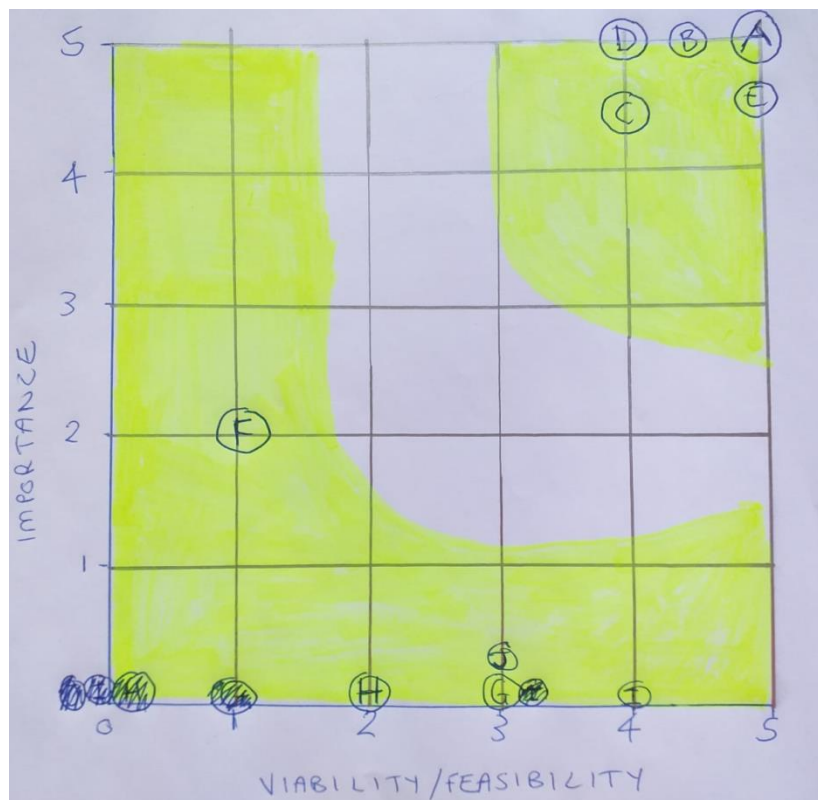
Why is this so special?

Literary Edinburgh is the only website dedicated to reading and literary tourism specific to Edinburgh.

Why would a user want this?

In 2019, more than 3 million visitors attended the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (source: <https://bit.ly/3gXLMeO>), 430,000 visited the Edinburgh International Festival (source: <https://bit.ly/38RF73d>), and 250,000 attended the Edinburgh International Book Festival (source: <https://bit.ly/38SNbAJ>). This represents a large number of people with a keen interest in culture and the arts, many of whom are likely to have overlapping interests in literature and in finding out more about Edinburgh. Literary Edinburgh seeks to meet those needs and to engage further interest in the city as a means to promote tourism.

Importance of website features and their viability / feasibility



Key:

- A) Create a website for Edinburgh literature
- B) Provide info on books set in Edinburgh
- C) Provide easy purchase access to books
- D) Provide cultural info on Edinburgh
- E) Provide literary-touristic info
- F) Create an 'Edinburgh authors' page
- G) Establish a platform for authors to showcase their work and connect with readers
- H) Connect site visitors with Edinburgh bookshops
- I) Provide a map API for literary sights and bookshops
- J) Engage with visitors on social media

NOTE: Given that Literary Edinburgh is conceptualized as static shoulder marketing to the official Edinburgh tourist site *This is Edinburgh: Official Guide to Edinburgh* (<https://edinburgh.org/>), no “About” or “Contact” pages were included, since contact and overall information would best be delivered on the main site. However, were Literary Edinburgh to become a standalone site with a working marketing team. “About” and “Contact” pages would be among the first additions.

Opportunity / Problem	Importance	Viability / Feasibility
A) Create a website for Edinburgh literature	5	5
B) Provide info on books set in Edinburgh	5	5
C) Provide easy purchase access to books	4	4
D) Provide cultural info on Edinburgh	5	5
E) Provide literary-touristic info	5	5
F) Create an 'Edinburgh authors' page	2	2
G) Establish a platform for authors to showcase their work and connect with readers	3	0
H) Connect site visitors with Edinburgh bookshops	2	0
I) Provide a map API for literary sights and bookshops	4	0
J) Engage with visitors on social media	3	0
Total	38	26

Those opportunities / problems with low viability / feasibility are not currently actionable due to time constraints (F), due to a lack of coding know-how at this stage in the course (F, G, H, I), or simply due to the site context being fictitious (J). As such, the project focuses on addressing those opportunities and problems which entail both high importance and high viability / feasibility (A, B, C, D, E).

What does a satisfying user experience of Literary Edinburgh entail?

Users are likely to already have a keen interest in both Edinburgh and reading. Therefore, they will expect information on books as well as literature-related sights, tours, and activities. A satisfying UX will provide all of these elements in a visually attractive site that is easy and intuitive to navigate.

Scope plane

Which features are on the table and which features on off the table?

Following the results of the strategy plane analysis, the table below shows which features are on the table for the site and which features are off the table.

Features on the table	Features off the table
Create a website for Edinburgh literature	Create an 'Edinburgh authors' page
Provide info on books set in Edinburgh	Establish a platform for authors to showcase their work and connect with readers
Provide easy purchase access to books	Connect site visitors with Edinburgh bookshops
Provide cultural info on Edinburgh	Provide a map API for literary sights and bookshops
Provide literary-touristic info	Engage with visitors on social media

User stories

User story 1:

“As a huge bookworm, I always love to read about the places I visit so I want to find some great books set in Edinburgh to put me in the mood before I get there.”

User story 2:

“As someone who loved visiting Edinburgh last year, I want to read more about the city so I can learn more about its culture and history.”

User story 3:

“As someone considering a visit to Edinburgh for the Fringe next summer, I’d like to know more about what tours and attractions the city has to offer so I can decide where to spend my holiday.”

User story 4:

“As a major reading nerd, I always want to know where I can get my hands on books whenever I’m in a city so I know where to go if I’m in the mood to read something new.”

Requirements: functional

What do users / stakeholders say they need?

- A website with information on books set in Edinburgh
- Information about tourist and cultural sights and attractions in the city

What do users / stakeholders actually need?

- A mobile-first website for users, many of whom will already likely already in the city, which is also fully responsive to different devices, particularly for example if users outside of the city are using laptops and desktops
- Concise information digestible by both native and non-native speakers of English
- Hyperlinks to relevant touristic websites
- Embedded videos with relevant tourist information

What do users / stakeholders not know that they need?

- ‘Buy now!’ buttons with easy links to a trusted website for purchasing books
- Simple, intuitive site and internal page navigation

How the site will meet user needs

User story 1:

“As a huge bookworm, I always love to read about the places I visit so I want to find some great books set in Edinburgh to put me in the mood before I get there.”

How the site will meet this need:

The “Books” page will provide a list of novels, categorized by genre, that take place in Edinburgh. The page will contain a description of each novel and a “Buy now!” button with a link to the Amazon page of each novel.

User story 2:

“As someone who loved visiting Edinburgh last year, I want to read more about the city so I can learn more about its culture and history.”

How the site will meet this need:

In addition to the “Books” page providing novels set in Edinburgh, the “Sights” page will provide background historical and cultural information on Edinburgh literary landmarks, monuments, and festivals. This information will be supported by hyperlinks to relevant, informative websites and by embedded YouTube videos.

User story 3:

“As someone considering a visit to Edinburgh for the Fringe next summer, I’d like to know more about what tours and attractions the city has to offer so I can decide where to spend my holiday.”

How the site will meet this need:

The “Sights” page will contain descriptions of, hyperlinks to, and embedded videos on tours of Edinburgh as well as the city’s major landmarks, monuments, and festivals.

User story 4:

“As a major reading nerd, I always want to know where I can get my hands on books whenever I’m in a city so I know where to go if I’m in the mood to read something new.”

How the site will meet this need:

The “Sights” page will contain hyperlinks to, and embedded videos on the National Library of Scotland, The Edinburgh International Book Festival, The Writers’ Museum, and The Scottish Storytelling Center, all of which offer ample reading material for anyone interested.

POST-CODING NOTE: The final version of the site also includes a section on bookshops, which further meets the need stated by user story 4.

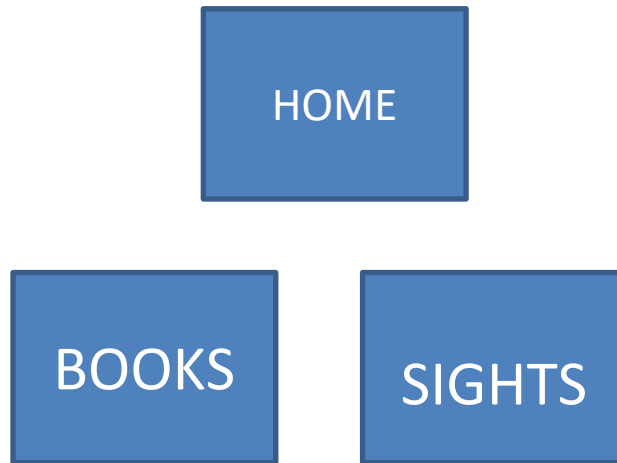
Requirements: Content

To meet the needs required above, the website requires mixed multimedia content including: text, photographs, hyperlinks, videos, Buy now!’ buttons, site-wide navigation buttons, internal page navigation buttons, and ‘return to top of page’ navigation buttons.

Structure plane

Information architecture:

The website will be structured using a simple tree design that takes the landing page as the main node and the other two pages as sub nodes. Users will navigate using a fixed navigation bar at the top of each page.



Interaction design

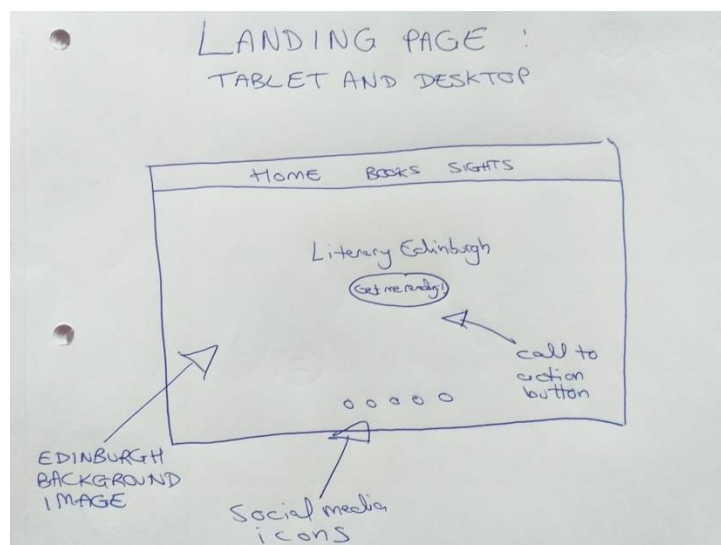
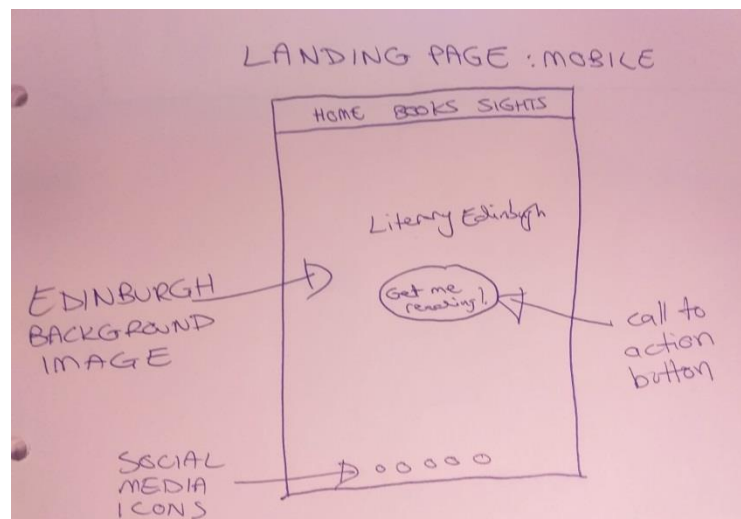
- The navigation bar will be fixed at the top of each page to allow users to easily move from one page to the other without having to scroll upwards for an unnecessary amount of time.
- No hamburger icons will not be necessary because the site will maintain a simple structure, without sub-sections, given that many users may be non-native English speakers.
- In addition to the 'Books' section of the navigation bar, the landing page will contain a call to action button that takes users straight to the 'Books' page. This button will have a hover effect.
- A fixed footer at the bottom of the page will keep the social media icons in view at all times and promote further engagement.
- The navigation bar items and social media icons will each contain hover effects to show users which item they are about to click.
- 'Books' page
 - o The 'Books' page will contain an internal navigation bar to enable users to jump quickly to their preferred reading genres. The genres will appear simply as words in the navigation bar, given that no universally recognized icons exist for some of the terms and that rendering the navigation bar with 8 images, for 8 genres, would likely be too unwieldy.
 - o For clearly marked intuitive interaction, users will be informed in a page sub-heading that they may read content on the 'Books' page by either clicking their preferred genre or by simply scrolling down.
 - o A 'Return to top of page' button at the end of each genre section will allow users to jump back easily to both the internal page and site-wide navigation bars so as to avoid having to scroll to the top again.
 - o A prominent 'Buy now!' button after each book description will take the user to the Amazon page for the relevant book in a new tab. The buttons will also contain hover effects.
- 'Sights' page
 - o The 'Sights' page will contain an internal navigation bar that employs terms such as 'Landmarks' and 'Monuments' layered on top of photo images. These photos will both provide an attractive aesthetic and act as a visual cue as to what each section of the page contains. Each photo/navigation item will contain a hover effect.

- For clearly marked intuitive interaction, users will be informed in a page sub-heading that they may read content on the page by either clicking their preferred type of sight/attraction or by simply scrolling down.
- A 'Return to top of page' button at the end of each section will allow users to jump back easily to both the internal page and site-wide navigation bars so as to avoid having to scroll to the top again.
- Each page sub-section will contain 3-4 sights/attractions that are clearly marked by an <h3> or <h4> heading and a relevant image or video.
- Textual information on each sight/attraction will contain clearly marked hyperlinks to external websites that will open in new tabs.

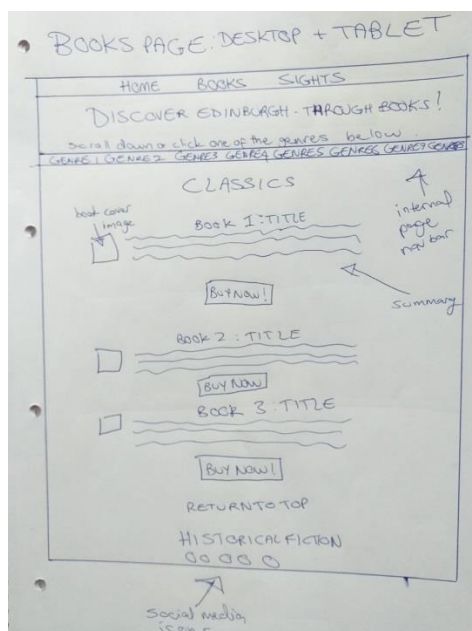
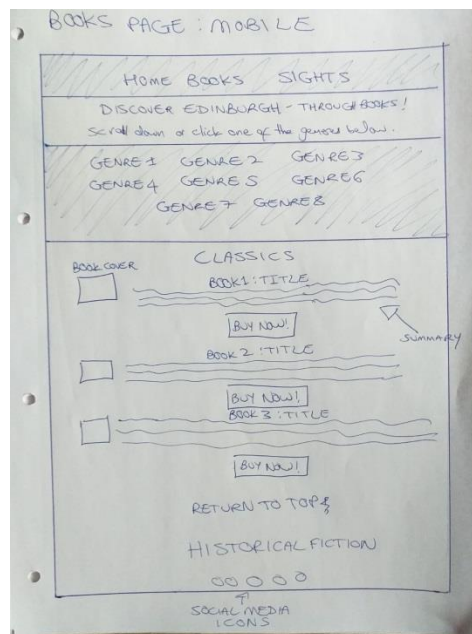
POST-CODING NOTE: For both the 'Books' and the 'Sights' page an image at the bottom of the page was added during coding to provide both the aesthetic role of a nice picture to end on and the practical role of providing a buffer so that the social media icons do not remain fixed over the content of the last book.

Skeleton plane

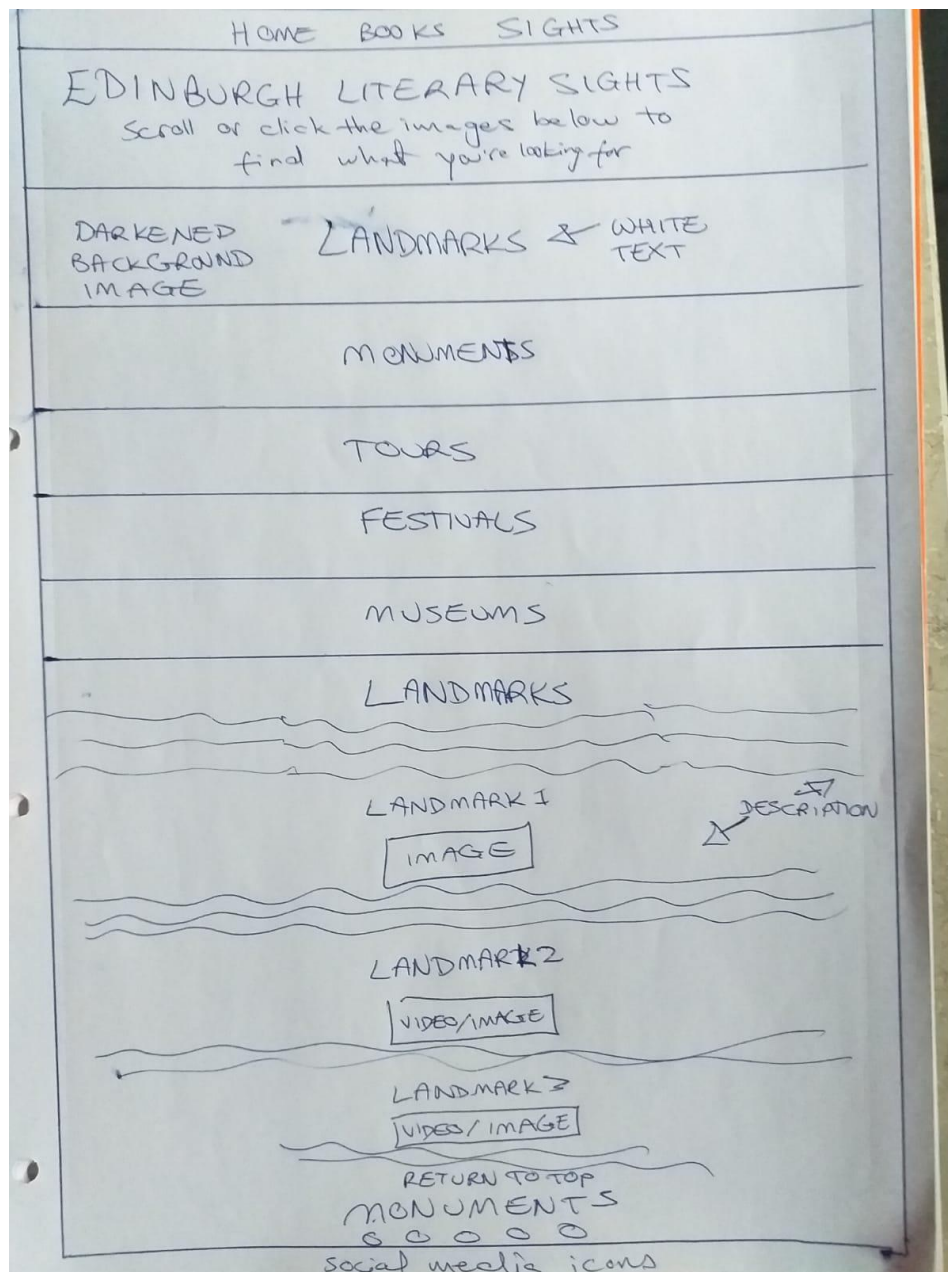
Below are the initial sketches for the website layout.



POST-CODING NOTE: Initially, I intended to have one image, scaled differently, on all devices, but during coding it proved more aesthetically pleasing to have a horizontal image on mobile devices and a landscape image on tablets and desktops.



POST-CODING NOTE: Initially, the 'Books' page was intended to follow more or less the same structure on both mobile devices and tablets / desktop devices. However, during coding it became apparent that having the book cover images to the left of the text on desktop devices and some tablets left too much white space and a poor aesthetic. As such, the layout on desktop devices / some tablets was amended to place the book cover images above the text.



POST-CODING NOTE: The design of the image-based navigation bar for the “Sights” page went through three iterations. Initially, the design envisaged more or less the same layout across all devices, with the image-driven internal page navigation bar consisting of landscape images stacked on top of the other. However, in practice it seemed far quicker to view and more aesthetically pleasing to lay out the tablet and desktop design with two landscape images followed by three side-by-side vertical images. This design, however, began to lose its structural integrity at screen widths above 3820px, with an unappealing amount of whitespace appearing between the three bottom row images. As such, I switched to a design of all horizontal images and added a sixth section, “Bookshops”, so that desktop devices and tablets could display three rows of two side-by-side landscape images, i.e. both taking col-md-6 in the Bootstrap grid. This design proved both to have a better overall aesthetic and to maintain its integrity up to the 3840px screen width requirement laid out in the task guidelines.

Surface plane

The primary colour scheme for Literary Edinburgh will be blue (on the darker end of the spectrum) and white. Not only do these colours reflect those of the Scottish flag, thus being thematically relevant to tourism in the country, but darker blues are said to evoke feelings such as trust and authority in viewers (source: <https://www.colormatters.com/the-meanings-of-colors/blue>), i.e. sentiments necessary to inspire user confidence that the information they receive from Literary Edinburgh is reliable. Second-tier colours used will be those that go with blue, e.g. yellow (yellow will be appropriate for the 'Buy now!' buttons on the 'Books' page given that yellow has largely been adopted across the internet as the standard colour for purchase buttons) and neutral colours such as black and grey. Text on each page should be large enough to be legible for all ages and dark enough to contrast against the white background, i.e. black or a charcoal grey.

The main headings on each page should be suggestive of writing, perhaps simulating handwriting, but should nevertheless be legible.

The landing page background image will be a photograph of Edinburgh that should convey a sense of discovery. This image must be opaque enough to contrast well against the text overlaid on top. The navigation photos on the 'sights' page must also be opaque enough to contrast well against the overlaid text.

The 'Books' page will contain cover images for each of the books highlighted. These images must be large enough to be visible on all devices, but not so large that they dominate the page.

The 'Sights' page will contain both photographs and embedded videos of sights, tours, etc. These images must be large enough to be visible on all devices, but not so large that they disrupt the flow of the page. The text content of the 'Sights' page will also contain hyperlinks to external websites; these hyperlinks should be clearly marked.