Single Page Web Application

PET STOP

I decided to pre-plan the application by utilising the 5 planes of development as a planning framework.

Strategy

Brief:

- To design and build a single page web application allowing users to search for Pet Services or "Pet Stops" according to a given location using the Google Maps and Google Places API.

Application Spec:

- To possess a means of searching by location.
- To feature a way of selecting pet services.
- To display search results in a clear, visually appealing manner.
- To provide a website link to each returned business.
- To display user reviews for each returned business, where possible.

User demographic:

- Pet owners, prospective pet owners, other local business owners.

User needs:

- I want to be able to visit the application and enter a location in order to carry out a specific location based search.
- I want to be able to select the pet service/services that matter to me and find local businesses in my search area.
- I want to be able to see the most important details of any businesses I select.
- I want to be able to follow through to a selected result's site.
- I want to be able to amend my search criteria without reloading the page.
- I want to be able to reset my search without reloading the page.

Scope

Feature set:

- Text input field to enter a location
- Buttons to select search criteria
- A button to submit the search criteria
- A map displaying search results
- A means of displaying a selected search result
- A link to the company website
- Company details including name, address, phone number, email address, rating, reviews.
- A button to reset the search parameters.

Structure

Landing Page - First State

- Web application logo.
- Text input field.
- 6 buttons: Walk, Vet, Sit, Board, Shop, Groom.
    Walk: Selects search criteria to find local dog walkers/dog walking companies.
    Vet: Selects search criteria to find local vet surgeries.
    Sit: Selects search criteria to find local pet sitters.
    Board: Selects search criteria to find local dog kennels, pet boarding, cattery's.
    Shop: Selects search criteria to find local pet shops.
    Groom: Selects search criteria to find local pet groomers.

- Full viewport background image.
- Go button to action the search.

Results - 2nd State

All results to appear immediately below main landing page. Only visible after the search has been activated.

- Map displaying search results
- Display more detailed results below map, only visible when individual map markers are clicked.
- Below more detailed results include a reset button, which takes the application back to the first state.

Skeleton

Using Balsamic I created wireframes, firstly developing the mobile layout, then considering from there how I'd like to present the same content on larger devices and desktop.

PET STOP
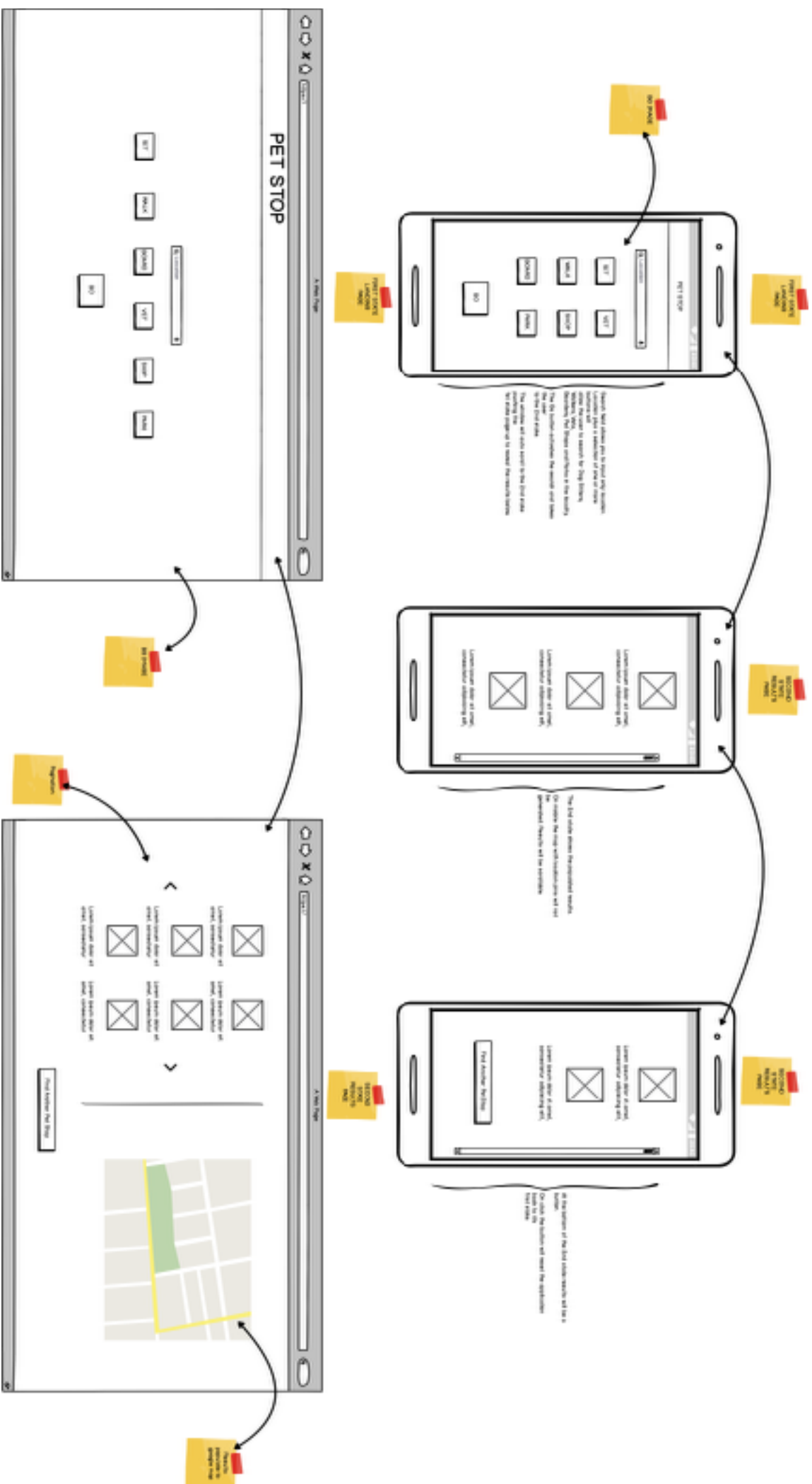
Surface

As with the first project, I wanted to give the site a clean and simple look. I decided that a striking background image and strong theme would be key in grabbing the users attention, encouraging them to progress further into the application. I wanted to keep the user interface as simplistic as possible. With minimal to no instruction at all, and as few clicks from their results as possible. A late addition were the thought bubbles. They are intended to provide simple user feedback in a tongue in cheek manner, making the application a little more fun to use.

I used Photoshop to enhance the background image and bring out the colours initially. Then used the image to help determine the colour scheme of the application. The logo background colour was picked by choosing a colour that closely matched the colour at the top of the original image, I then painted that colour back into the top of the background image to give the impression that the logo is actually a part of the image itself, creating a seamless transition between the two.

I created all button styles from scratch. Along with colour changes, I use box-shadow changes to give the impression a button has been clicked or hovered over.

When a search is eventually submitted. I wanted the site to automatically scroll down to a map displaying markers of the retrieved results. And upon clicking a marker, for a more detailed description of the business to drop down below the map. Here I intended to provide a link to the company website and other important information. Below this, a reset button is located which I decided once clicked, would peal the results back up and put you back at the landing page state with all parameters reset.

When choosing fonts I came to the conclusion that the title font could actually be very different from the rest of the site. In order to grab you and stand out I took this to the extreme and went for a very bold, comic book-like style. In contrast, the font for the results needed to be more reader friendly, but also soft, or rounded, in keeping with the font styles used for pet or family oriented applications or websites. This all helps towards giving the application a user friendly, but also suitable feel for the intended purpose and demographic.

Further Ideas

The site is a demonstration of HTML, SCSS, CSS, Javascript and jQuery front-end abilities for the purposes of the stream one interactive front-end project. Going forward, there are some changes and improvements I'd like to make to elevate the application further.

1. Include a means to get directions to the desired business location based upon your current position (mobile only).
2. Use the rating results to display stars, or fractions of stars based upon the retrieved result. Instead of the displayed numerical result.
3. Implement a means to narrow or broaden the search area.
4. Randomise the thought bubbles using a selection of 5-10 bubbles per selection button. This would give the gag a little more longevity than at present.