

Front-end Web Design (11056)

Responsive Website: Rationale

Keir Herbert (u3211239)

Tutor:

Riley Post

Reflecting on the Method

Following a strict process for this website design meant that before I coded a line, I first looked at the content I was dealing with (the provided website assets). Then I looked to other sites in order to better understand layout and find inspiration. Drawing up wireframe sketches of my design idea was the final step before heading into the coding environment.

I mention this process because it worked extremely well for me. It's *not* the process I would have followed if left to my own devices. Most likely I would have started in the coding environment and made it up as I went along. Probably the most important thing I've learned is that's clearly a terrible idea. It was enormously helpful to have my wireframe sketches to guide me through the build and I referred back to them several times. My final website matched very closely the design in my sketches, and I found that the extensive capabilities of HTML + CSS meant that I didn't need to make many compromises at all.

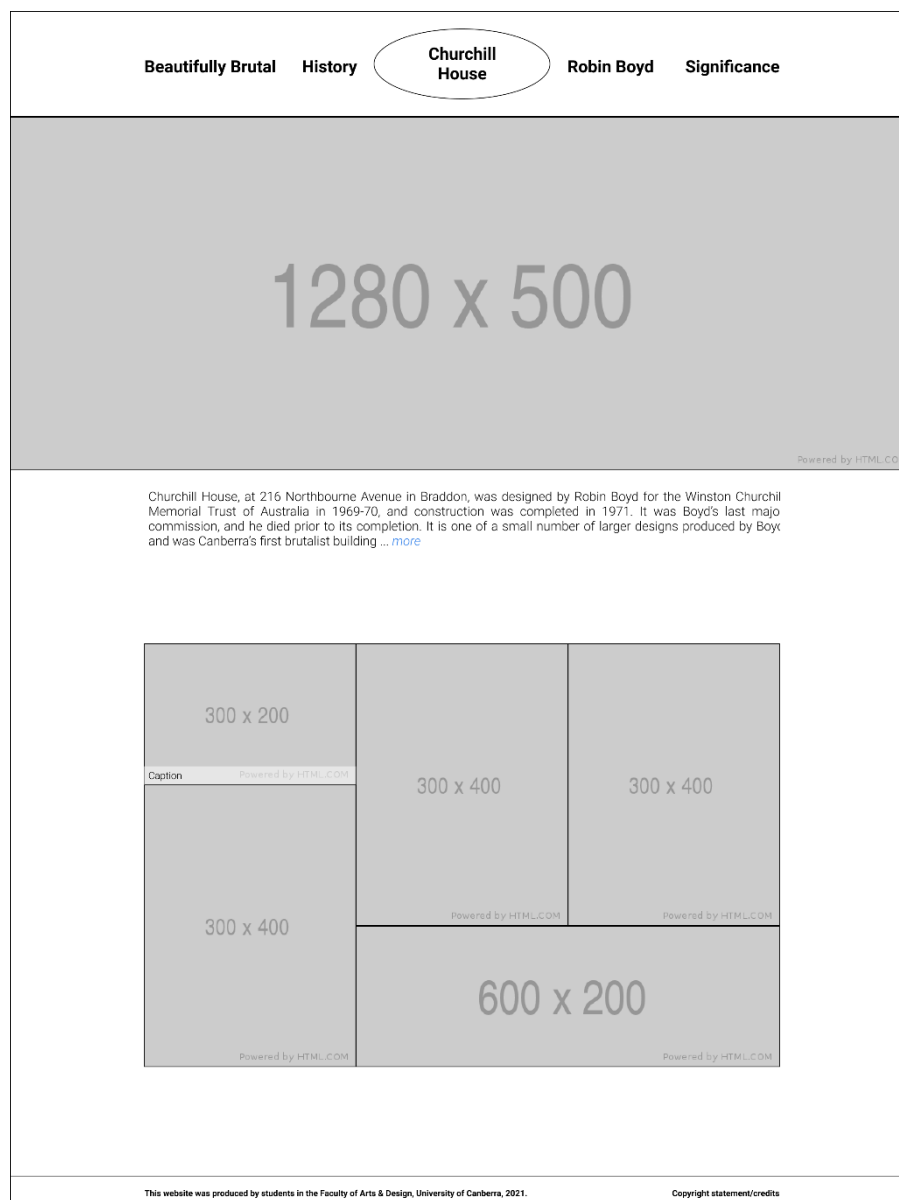


Figure 1 - The wireframe sketch for my main page.

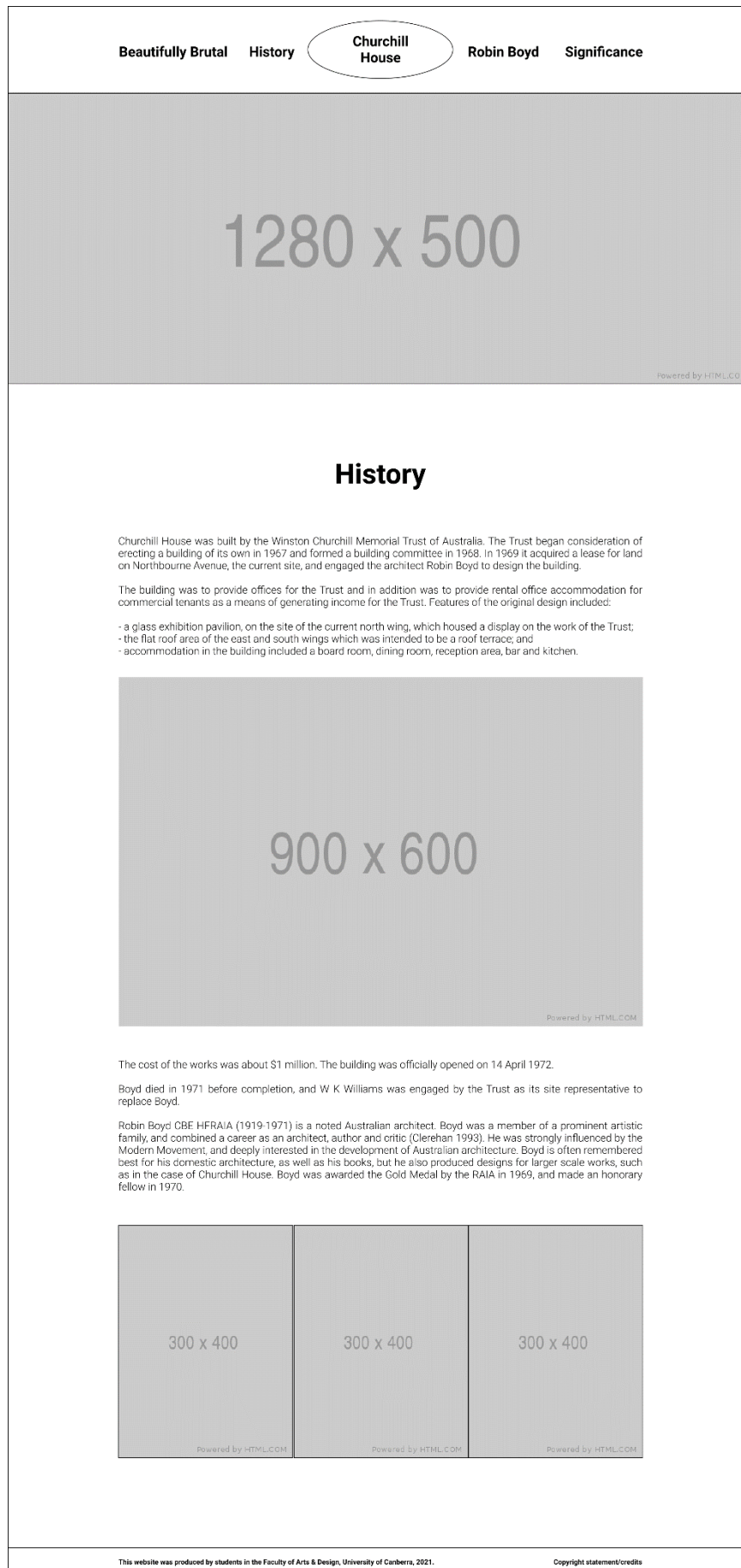


Figure 2 - The wireframe sketch for my content page.

HTML + CSS

I'm pretty impressed by what can be achieved using just HTML and CSS. It seems as though we're living in a great time for web development. An example being that one of the CSS mechanisms I leaned on heavily to build my website was grid layouts. Not only did it allow me to visually represent the arrangements of my page elements in my code (using the grid-template-areas method), but it simplified the task of making my pages responsive to a massive extent. It really was incredibly elegant and simple to use. This feature of CSS has only been available since 2017, which was basically yesterday. I'm a huge fan of CSS grids and even used them in a one-dimensional context (for single row image galleries) as I found them to be more versatile than the flexbox mechanism.

Responsive

I had a moment of clarity while thinking about how to make my website adjust to different screen sizes. Instead regarding the page as a single entity, I looked at each element individually and tested them to find the point at which they 'broke'. Making note of the browser width at those breakpoints, I coded some media queries to adjust the elements as required. So, there is no specific device or screen size being targeted, rather a strategy that will ensure my pages display appropriately regardless of what they are viewed on.

Classes and IDs

I found a [great analogy on the CSS-Tricks website](#) comparing Classes and IDs to barcodes and serial numbers, respectively. This served me well and I ended up going back through my code to think about whether or not what I was trying to achieve was best served by a class or an ID. I ended up changing a bunch of IDs to classes because they had no reason to be unique.

Resources

If I'd written down all of the web resources I read and watched over the course of this design project, I'm sure that it would be many pages long. There's so much information available on the Net that you really have to feel sorry for books. The following resources are ones which I kept returning to for guidance:

- [Stack Overflow](#) always comes up when I'm searching for answers to problems.
- [W3 Schools](#) works for me because I find it to be a super clear and consistent way of presenting concepts with examples.
- [CSS Tricks](#) was a little bit hard to digest for a newbie but as I learned more I found myself getting more value out of it.
- [DesignCourse - YouTube](#) is a great resource. YouTube in general is invaluable but this particular channel helped me a lot.

Conclusion

I don't think that many people regard coding as a creative pursuit, but I have always thought of it that way. For that reason, I really enjoyed building this Churchill House website and learnt a huge amount along the way. I am actually looking forward to utilising these skills to produce some websites of my own during my downtime.

The order of operations is likely the biggest lesson for me with this project. Not just the planning stage discussed at the opening, but the method of marking up your content first using HTML and then doing the pretty stuff with CSS. The next step for me will be to incorporate some of my JavaScript skills I learnt last year.