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Project Name: Fibber Magees Pub — Website Design Progress Documentation

Phase 1: Brainstorm

The brainstorming phase for the Fibber Magees Bar website started with a deliberate exploration of possibilities. I sketched ideas that ranged from a simple content update to a more interactive redesign of the site's customer experience. Early concepts included a clean, mobile-first one-page layout that highlighted hours, location, and weekly events; a reservations and table-hold microflow for peak weekend hours and social sharing; and a visible menu page showcasing specials. Each idea was chosen to address a specific issue I noticed on the current site and common problems with bar websites. A straightforward, mobile-first layout improves discoverability and caters to the high percentage of users who search for bars on smartphones (Nielsen Norman Group). The reservations and contact sign-up aim to ease caller load and prevent overbooking by offering patrons a quick, online way to reserve limited seats. The discoverable menu with filter tags (e.g., vegan, gluten-free, cocktails, drafts) resolves the problem of slow decision-making for groups with mixed preferences, which shortens time spent on the site and makes it easier to turn curiosity into a visit. My approach favored ideas that could be added in small steps: features that are technically achievable with a typical small-business

hosting setup and that would generate clear metrics like event RSVPs. I assessed each idea's viability by asking three questions: Does it address a real customer pain point? Can it be implemented within the project's timeline and technical constraints? And how will we measure success? This process led me to deprioritize a full loyalty system (valuable but requiring backend integration and ongoing operations) in favor of immediate UX improvements that provide high perceived value with modest development effort. Looking back, I believe these choices were correct; if I had chosen a different path, I might have focused on an integrated SMS reminder system for events because of its strong potential to boost attendance, but that would have also required setting up a third-party service beyond the project scope. My decisions were guided by Norman's principle that good design reduces unnecessary complexity and makes tasks effortless for users, which motivated the incremental, user-focused choices I made (Norman).

Phase 2: Identify

Of the brainstormed ideas, the most viable was the mobile-first one-page layout combined with an events calendar that surfaces RSVP and simple ticketing options for special nights. This solution targets the primary problems identified in the discovery phase: poor mobile discoverability and an inability to communicate time-bound offers (happy hour, live music) in a way that drives repeat visits. The one-page approach consolidates the bar's key decision points, when we're open, where we are, what's happening tonight, and how to get in touch, into an efficient scroll experience that matches how prospective patrons search for bars on their phones. The events calendar adds two measurable benefits: it reduces the number of phone calls asking, "What's on tonight?" It provides an opt-in mechanism for the bar to collect contact information for future promotions. Those additions were kept intentionally simple to avoid the technical debt

associated with full user accounts while still improving the experience. This iterative improvement follows proven UX practice: start with a testable hypothesis, measure user interaction, then refine features based on observed behavior rather than assumptions (Nielsen Norman Group).

Phase 3: Define

The project plan set achievable milestones aligned to the semester calendar: Week 1 discovery and researching (similar pub website); Weeks 2–3 sitemap and wireframes; Weeks 4–5 mid-fidelity prototypes; Week 6 high-fidelity visuals and accessibility pass; Week 7 final project submission, performance optimization, and documentation. Inspiration points included usability literature on affordance and information scent, guidance on usability testing and mobile-first priorities, and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which informed the accessibility requirements I treated as non-negotiable (W3C). In practice, I adhered to the timeline for core deliverables but allowed additional time during Weeks 4–5 to build realistic event data variants for testing; this took longer than expected and compressed the final optimization window. A notable unplanned obstacle was ensuring accessibility compliance across cross-browser and older mobile devices; the WCAG guidance required some additional visual adjustments (contrast, focus outlines, keyboard navigability) that I had not fully budgeted for at the outset (W3C). Addressing those issues should, however, improve overall usability and broaden the site's accessibility.

Phase 4: Ideate

The ideation and sketching phase produced multiple storyboard routes to visualize patron journeys. These sketches emphasized fast decision-making and minimal taps. After a small round of paper prototype testing, I chose a hybrid approach that favored simplicity but selectively adopted the richer UI's social sharing and product tagging features where they added clear value without introducing complexity. The sketches were translated into two distinct wireframe passes: a low-fidelity mobile wireframe to validate information hierarchy and a mid-fidelity desktop layout to ensure the events and menu content scale for larger screens. These user-driven changes reflect established human-centered design techniques: ideate broadly, prototype quickly, and iterate from real feedback (Nielsen Norman Group).

The first four phases of the GIT 480 design process for the Fibber Magees Bar website established a solid foundation for a user-centered, measurable redesign. Brainstorming produced a mix of practical and aspirational ideas, which were evaluated for feasibility and impact. The identified solution, a mobile-first one-page layout with an events calendar and RSVP capability, evolved through iterative testing into a focused product that reduced friction and improved discoverability. The project plan and milestones provided a clear path, and ideation produced multiple storyboards that allowed the selection of the most effective hybrid model. Throughout, design decisions were anchored to usability principles and accessibility standards, ensuring the final work is not only attractive but also functional and inclusive.

Phase Five: Prototype

During the prototype phase, I organized development into clear, incremental stages so that each version could be tested and iterated quickly. The prototype was a low-fidelity wireframe intended to capture the site's high-level structure: the header, primary navigation, hero area, three feature/menu cards, booking form, contact section, and footer. That skeleton let me validate information architecture and the ordering of content without getting distracted by styling decisions. After validating the structure, I produced a medium-fidelity prototype that introduced typography choices, the site color palette, and placeholder imagery to check visual hierarchy and contrast. Finally, the high-fidelity prototype combined the final content, responsive CSS rules, and client-side scripts (form validation and the guessing game) so I could observe real interactions. At each stage, I documented objectives and acceptance criteria: the wireframe had to clearly present content groups, the medium fidelity had to show legible headings and paragraph scale, and the high fidelity had to behave reliably across common browsers. These staged milestones shortened feedback cycles and reduced rework because early problems were inexpensive to fix in wireframe form rather than after visual polish.

As I progressed through the prototypes, I encountered technical and design obstacles that shaped the approach. One recurring technical constraint was that several images had hardcoded `width` and `height` attributes in the HTML; these caused layout breakage at narrower viewports. The mitigation was twofold: in the prototype, I deliberately replaced fixed attributes with fluid CSS (`max-width:100%; height: auto`) and used smaller, compressed image assets for testing to reduce load time. Another obstacle was navigation complexity: the original desktop-oriented nav consumed horizontal space and became unusable on smaller screens. The workaround in the prototype was to test stacked and collapsible navigation patterns and retain an

accessible toggle that preserves the same link order. Finally, grooming the booking and contact forms for clarity required iterative label and affordance changes after peers reported confusion about required fields; adding clear inline labels, required-field markers, and larger tap areas solved most of these issues. The development process of staged prototyping worked well because it kept changes small and testable; if anything had failed, an alternative, such as parallel A/B prototype tracks, could have revealed user preferences faster, but for this project, the incremental approach balanced speed and control effectively (Nielsen).

Phase Six: Test

 Testing combined informal peer reviews with observation-based usability checks. For the peer review sessions, I presented the medium- and high-fidelity prototypes to classmates. I invited them to complete common tasks: find the menu, book a visit, and submit a contact message. Observational notes captured where reviewers hesitated or mis-clicked. Peers consistently commented that the primary navigation needed clearer labeling and that the "Full Menu" affordance should be a direct, obvious action rather than buried as a small text link; this feedback prompted a revision to a prominent button labeled "Full Menu" and a plan to host a downloadable PDF behind that control. This led me the design a menu using InDesign and add the menu to the butt.on labeled "Full Menu". Classmates also noted inconsistent spacing between content blocks and recommended stronger section dividers, which validated my decision to use consistent padding and subtle background changes to separate sections.

Phase Seven: Refine

Refined translated test findings into actionable changes. Based on classmate input, I simplified the navigation labels, increased button sizes, and introduced a distinct primary action style for booking and the full menu link; these changes improved discoverability and reduced time on task in subsequent quick checks. To address user requests for scannability, I broke longer paragraphs into shorter paragraphs and added subheadings and bullet summaries on the prototype pages where appropriate; this improved skim-reading performance during follow-up reviews. Accessibility refinements included adding a visible focus state, adjusting color contrast for some dark-on-dark elements, and ensuring link and button tap targets met recommended minimum sizes, changes which both classmates and target users acknowledged as helpful. For items where peer feedback conflicted (for example, a decorative script font that some reviewers loved but others found hard to read), I adopted a compromise: use the decorative font for large, non-essential headings and a highly legible sans serif for all body text. If certain feedback was not implemented, the reason is documented: either the change introduced a usability trade-off (for example, a very large hero pushed critical content below the fold) or it required more development resources than available within the project timeline.

Phase Eight: Implementation

The implementation phase produced the deliverable site based on the refined prototype and included preparing the project for deployment and promotion. I consolidated the finalized HTML, CSS, and JavaScript into a commitable repository and verified the site across common browsers. Overall, I feel the project turned out well: the delivered site communicates the core offerings clearly, provides straightforward routes to book or contact, and reduces friction around locating the menu and hours. What went particularly well was the iterative workflow: prototypes,

quick tests, and tight iterations enabled me to fix structural flaws early, saving rework later. What did not go so well were time and asset constraints; compressing images and validating responsive breakpoints took longer, and a few microinteractions (for example, animated feedback on form submission) remained lower fidelity than intended due to time pressure.

Reflecting on what I learned about myself as a designer, the project reinforced the value of pragmatic clarity: aesthetics are important, but functional readability and task completion are the primary responsibilities of a design serving real users. I also learned to treat feedback as a design resource rather than a critique; peer and target audience observations were invaluable to prioritize fixes. As a project manager, I gained experience in prioritizing scope: defining a small set of must-fix issues (navigation, menu access, booking flow) enabled consistent progress and a coherent final product. If I were to do this again, I would schedule an earlier usability test with target audience members and reserve time for a second refinement sprint; that would allow us to validate the implemented changes with a wider set of typical users before final deployment (Nielsen, "Design Process Documentation Lecture").

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