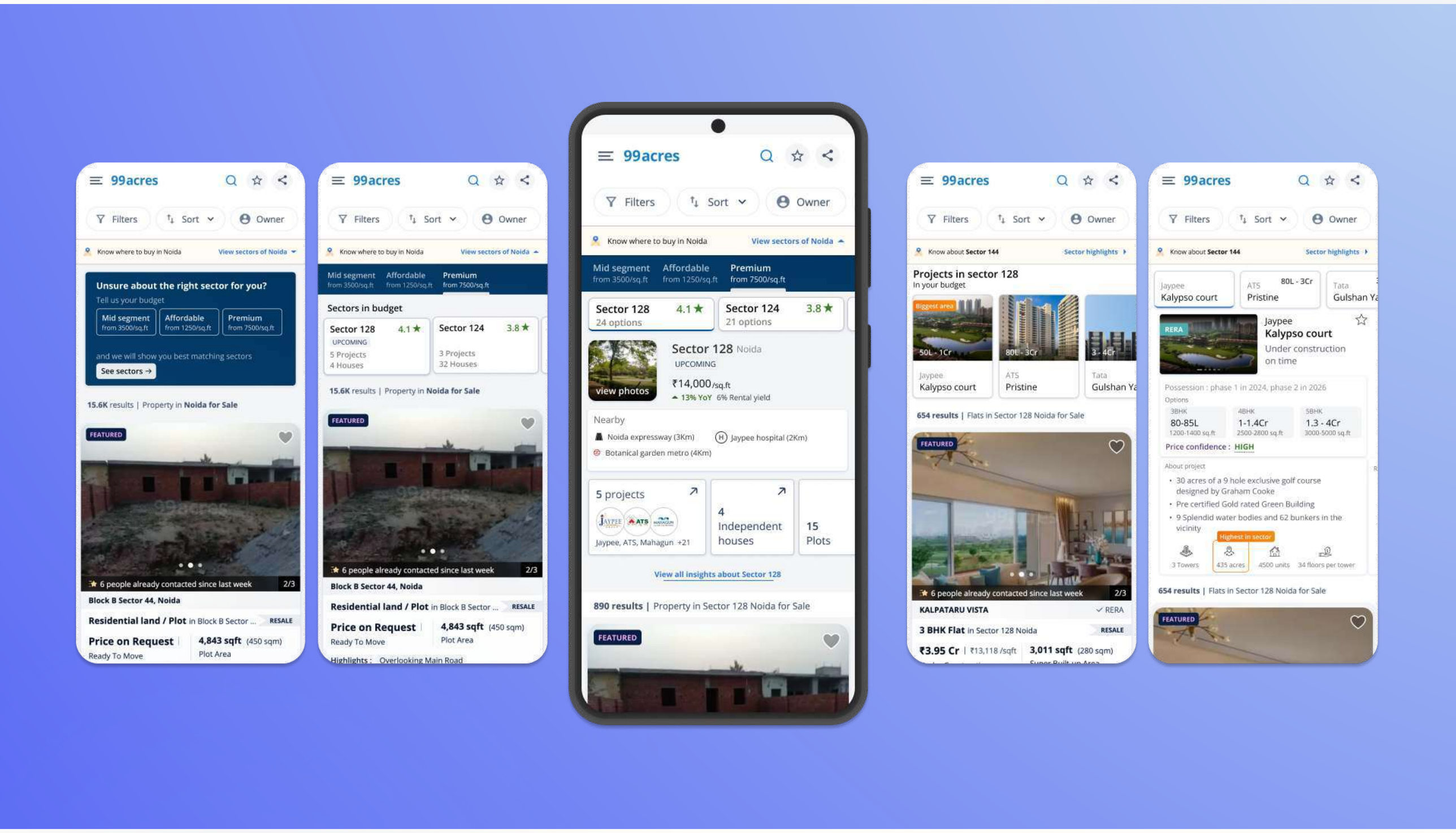
10 WEEKS ON SITE UX DESIGN

99acres Summer Internship

During the summer of 2023, I interned at InfoEdge as a UX designer working on 99acres - India's largest property listing platform. I identified a problem statement and came up with possible solutions for it.

Finding the perfect locality for you in a city.

Home buyers are often unaware of all the localities in their city that fits their requirements. To solve this issue, I proposed a section in the app where users can quickly see the localities of a city and narrow down their search.



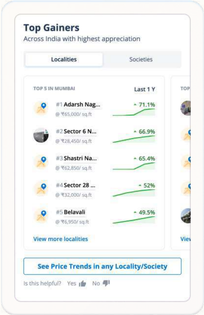
Process

- Discover
- Explore
- Define
- Design

I followed the double diamond approach with a few tweaks to better fit the requirements and time constraint.

Initial brief - integration of insights into the search flow.

After studying the 99acres app, I identified a gap in its utilization of Insights on the platform - the data can be used to help people make better decisions faster.



What are insights on 99acres?

Insights is a separate section on the platform with data points like price trends, transaction numbers, search trends, etc.

From here on, the project's scope was in the primary search flow on the platform.

Competitor analysis - Convergent evolution?

To understand how other platforms were using insights, I studied MagicBricks, Housing and Squareyards, along with two international platforms.

However, all three Indian platforms had very similar features and use of Insights.

Squareyards has high discoverability of insights, However their data is limited.

Zillow has a price confidence feature

IN-DEPTH

SUPERFICIALLY

Housing and Squareyards use a map to enhance discoverability.

Zerodown has heat-maps of the city showing price, demography and services data.

Transcribing → Coding → Insights

Digging deeper - interviewing home buyers.

6 INTERVIEWS IN PERSON 20 - 30 MINUTES

Having no experience in buying a house, It was crucial that I understand the buyer's journey.

I conducted 6 user interviews with participants from the office, who had bought a house less than one year ago.

Key takeaway

People don't know all the localities in a city that match their requirements until they talk to a broker.

People know the lifestyle they want to upgrade or maintain.

Other insights

Requirement can be categorized as

Primary: Price, schools, hospital, etc nearby - fuels discovery
Secondary: green, developed, safe, walkable - reinforces decision

People don't trust price on the platform

Brokers are spammy.

Number of results on all listing platforms are overwhelming.

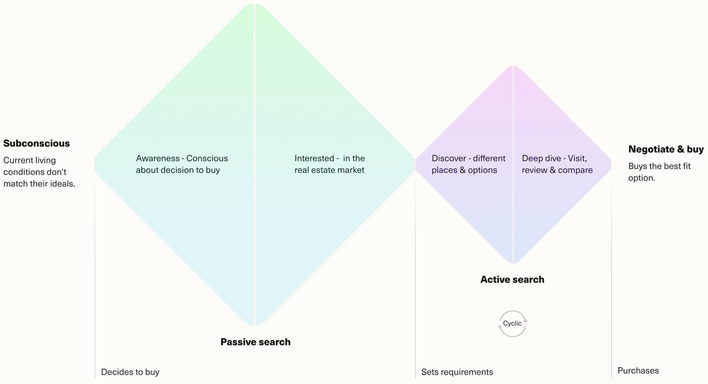
Friends, internet, and brokers fuel discovery of localities.

The people sourced were all from Delhi NCR and insights derived are specific to that region.

Buyer's journey - a double diamond in itself.

Interestingly, the buyer's journey can be mapped out on a double diamond framework.

6 MONTHS TO 1.5 YEARS 5 TO 20 SITE VISITS



Click here to view the in-depth journey map.

The journey map was made for the archetype of a first time flat buyer.

This archetype was derived out of the people interviewed and the general user base of 99acres.

Intervention - Locality discovery and narrow down with insights.

I brainstormed points of intervention for each stage of the buyer's journey.

Mapping those ideas on an effort vs impact graph and grouping ideas helped me redefine the brief to this.

Some other ideas.

These ideas were too ambitions or too vague to be explored further.

1) Improving the landmark base search.

→ **Travel time based search, map based finding.**

2) Comparison of property with market.

→ **Price comparison with other similar properties, price confidence.**

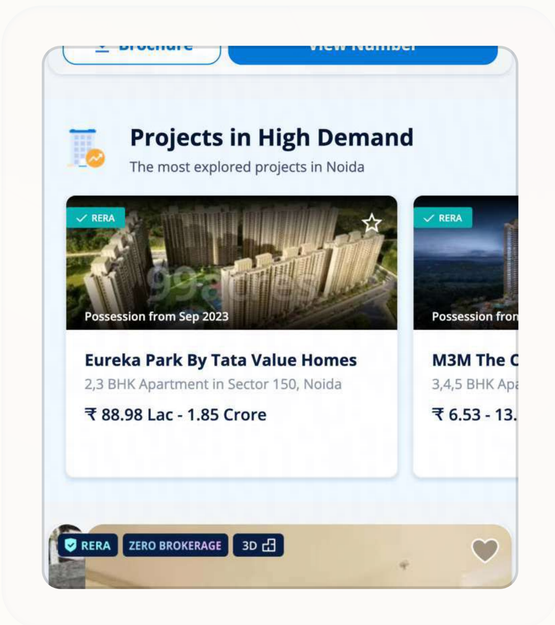
3) Introduce social proof on the platform.

→ **Forums, Propbuddies, reviews and search trends.**

Widgets - how to present insights on the result page.

The platform uses widgets to present insights on the search result page.

I looked at a list of top searches on the platform to see the data points that would best form a widget.



Widgets are small information snippets that appear on the search result page in between the search results.

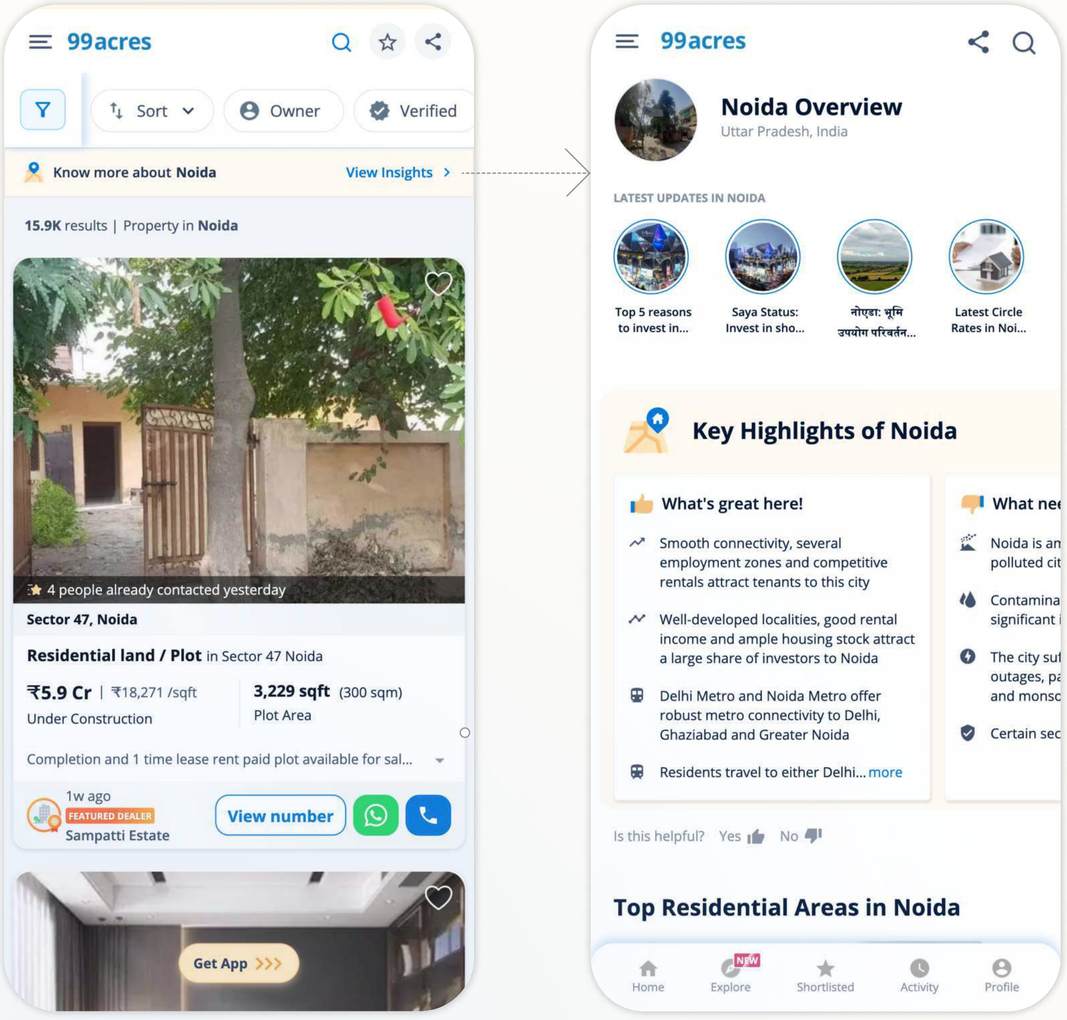
60% were done at a locality level. eg *uttam nagar Delhi.*

30% were done at a city level. *eg Delhi.*

These 30% searches can be quickly converted into locality level with insights.

Generating widgets and designs.

I adopted rapid prototyping to quickly create several iterations of my designs and get validations from fellow designers.

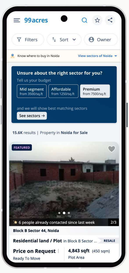


Don't break the flow!

The existing user flow has a prompt on the results page that takes users to the insights section of the app.

This breaks the flow of search entirely, resulting in high drop off rates after tapping the prompt.

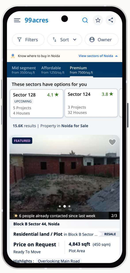
Final designs



Imagine this.

You perform a city wide search - unaware of the best locality of the city.

The platform recognizes this and shows you a banner about choosing the best sectors. You choose your budget to see sectors.



select sector.

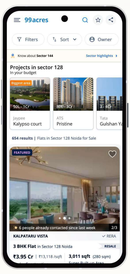
A small section opens up that shows you the number of options you have in each sector.

Your office is near sector 128, so you select that.

Sector snippet.

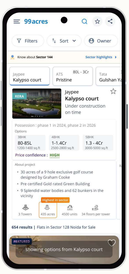
A small sector snippet opens up - with primary details of the sector - nearby.

Swiping that shows the secondary details of the sector with the help of review tags.



Sector wide search.

When performing a sector specific search, you get to see all the projects that exist in the sector.
special highlights are given to projects that stand out to reduce burden on making choice.



Project details.

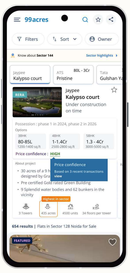
A larger section opens up with information snippet of the project.

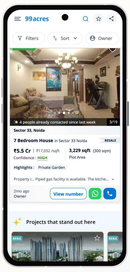
The search results below also get updated. You open details of the next project, you go back and forth to compare, etc.

You have narrowed down to a project.

Some other interventions.

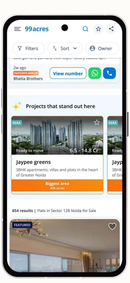
Apart from the main user flow of locality narrow down by proposing a section in the results page, I also designed a few widgets that use insights.





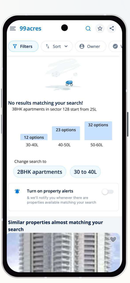
Price confidence indicator.

To curb the problem of people not trusting prices on online platforms, a price confidence can be introduced on both a single listing and project details page.



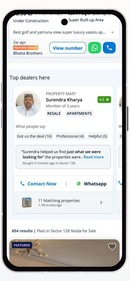
Projects that stand out widget

To reduce the overwhelming nature of the search results page, this widget aids decision making by showing projects that stand out.



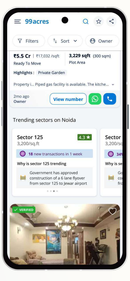
No results insights.

Data from insights can be used to help a user understand market situation in case of a no results page.



Dealer trust.

The dealer card was redesigned to introduce review and rating system for the dealers themselves. Also smaller changes were made to the information layout - like showing number of years on platform instead of joining date.



Trending sectors.

Not only does it tell you how is a sector trending - *X new transactions* But also why such a trend is there - news updates.

Learnings and conclusion.

Working in real world environment, I learned the importance of making decisions faster. I was often stuck being a perfectionist spending time away for minimal returns.

These interventions are not being implemented at this stage. Given the time constraint, I could not interact with product managers or developers. The project will be further refined before implementation.

Thanks for reading

Shivam Kumar Roy