

Interface Redesign

dexterhistory.org

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Executive Summary

The Dexter Area Historical Society (dexterhistory.org) requested WEB associates to receive a redesign for their site. The current website is running on the Weebly platform, a “drag and drop” website builder and host. This presents some difficulty considering the limitations of Weebly. As thus, the redesign will not feature anything out of the ordinary for Weebly. This way, the platform may be kept if the desire is to keep the current host.

Some of the biggest problems with the site, in its current form is that the design does not adhere to common design principles. These principles are the alignment, aesthetic, balance and consistency principles, along with the neglect of the Gestalt rules of continuity and similarity. These issues present themselves in inconsistency across the site, not giving feedback to the user, misaligned content, unusual design choices, and imbalanced content.

1. *Analysis of the Current Interface* – This section will attempt to define much of what the site is currently, and by applying common design principles, ideas, and theories, pin point what is good and in need of improvement on the site.
2. *Redesigned Wire Frames* – This section features two wire frames. One is a redesign of the current homepage and the other is a redesign of a subpage. These wire frames offer a skeleton to where items are placed and arranged on a page.
3. *Analysis of the Redesigned Interface* – This section will explain the design choices for the redesign, which will offer insight into how this redesign will solve the problems presented in the analysis of the current interface.
4. *Implementation Options* – This section will briefly discuss what it would take in the coding of the new site, primarily when dealing with responsiveness.

Some of the advantages in the newly designed interface:

- More consistent across the site, with clear indication where the user is.
- More white space on the site, allowing for the site to breathe and to help define a visual hierarchy on the site.
- Realigned content in new ways to allow for better continuation. These ‘lines’ will allow for the eye to follow them, directing the user down the page.
- Consideration to aesthetics of the site, using still a few, but well placed images, using white space, and utilizing a grid, the site will be more appealing to users.

Analysis of Current Interface

Layout

- The Dexter Area Historical Society logo (see Appendix A) and images on the site are fixed-width, relatively positioned. However, upon reaching a tablet size, the images shrink by a few pixels. Text and paragraph elements on site are responsive and will change with the width of the site.
- Navigation links are found in the nav bar, located to the left side of the page. There is no navigation capabilities found within the top section of the site, including the logo, which cannot be clicked to be brought back to the home. There are links scattered throughout the content for navigation purposes.
- Entire site is responsive, and stacks all content and hides the navigation within a hamburger menu.
- There is a link to the cart in the nav, which features a circle with a number inside indicating how many items the user has within the cart.

Colors and Graphics

- Site has lots of contrast being primarily a black and white site, however, there are two colors on the site besides black and white. One being a blue which ties into the logo (on specific pages), and the other a muted orange, which indicates a link within the content.
- Images are limited, with only four small images on the homepage, and one larger image on the subpage (see Appendix B).

Interface Elements

dexterhistory.org contains a fairly simple interface, which will be brought into the new redesign in some form. Elements may be changed for the sake of the redesign:

- HTML text navigation bar
- Cart (which indicates number of items within it)
- Footer with hyperlink to Weebly
- Various content sections
- Graphics
 - Logo and tagline
 - Event fliers
 - Dexter Museum image
 - Gordon Hall image

Interface Design: Strengths

The site currently performs well in various Gestalt visual perception rules and interface design principles, which is prominent throughout the site:

- The site currently adheres to Gestalts' rule of proximity well, in which content is neatly grouped together. On the home page, the "Dexter Area Museum" section paragraph is flanked by an image of the museum, with the title above the paragraph. All close enough together to clearly indicate they belong together.
- The site adheres to the principle of contrast well. The site, being mostly white and black, has good contrast most of the time.
- The site currently follows enclosure fairly well, with whole sections encapsulated by black lines, indicating that they are one whole section, rather than individual sections. This also is similar to the proximity of the content on the site.
- The site does a good job with the design principles of simplicity, repetition, and focus. Site is simple throughout, focusing on the historical society, and uses lots of repetitive content throughout site such as familiar photos and wording to clue the user.

Interface Design: Areas for Improvement

The biggest areas in need of improvement for the current interface primarily deal with misalignment issues, failure to implement common design patterns, and lack of visual interest. There is also no point in the site in which the Gestalt principle of connection is implemented.

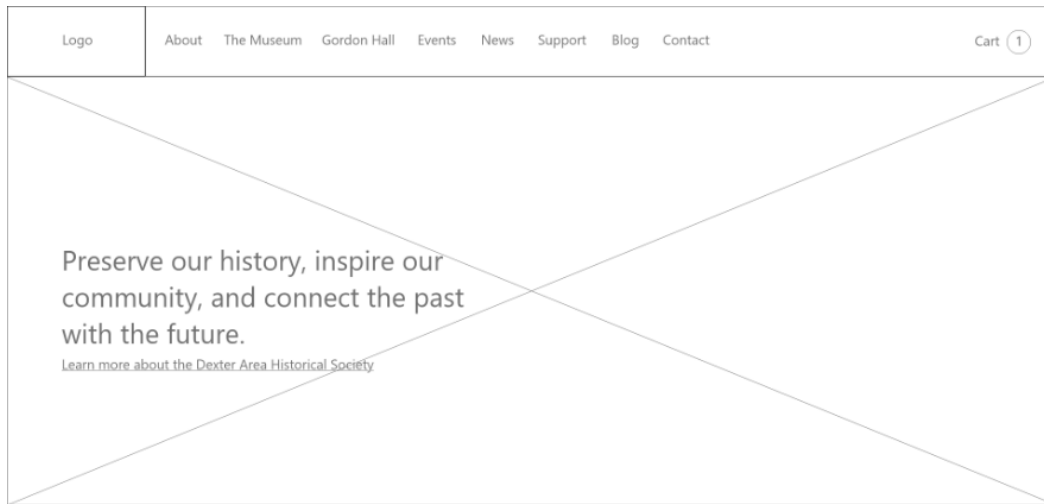
- Content does not line up on main page, breaking the Gestalt rule of continuation (continuity). The text on the main page in the Dexter Area Museum section and the text for the Historic Gordon Hall are not aligned, with an extra indent on the Gordon Hall section. This problem extends to the desktop version, and not the mobile version. This breaks the rule of continuation, which does not guide the eye down the page. This creates a sense of awkwardness in the user, and would be remedied by lining up the text.
- The images on the site vary between portrait and landscape, violating the Gestalt rule of balance. The two images appear awkward and misaligned on the home page, which adds to the unaligned text within the same sections.
- The site's logo, found at the top-left of the site is not clickable. This violates the gestalt rule of similarity and common design patterns of websites, in which the logo of a site will take the user to the home page.

- On higher-resolution screens, the tagline text near the logo is not aligned, breaking the Gestalt rule of continuation.
- The site violates the feedback principle consistently throughout the site. It is not clear, upon landing on the site's homepage or various other sub pages which page you are on. The navigation does change color for the page you are on, however, not every page has a headline clearly indicating where you are. On the home page for example, the first headline you see is: "Upcoming Events".
- In the navigation, the page you are on changes colors to a lighter gray. This clearly indicates to the user where they are in the site, (providing feedback) however there is a problem with poor contrast with the white background, making it very hard to read. Furthermore, it detracts from what is attempted to be done, and that is indicate to the user what page they are on.
- There is a lack of hierarchy on the site, with no clear place for your eyes to go. This breaks rules of visual hierarchy. This is a result of the violation of the principle of negative space, or white space.
- The navigation to the left of the page is difficult to read. Being italicized and 11pt font, the text would be very difficult to read for those with less than stellar vision.
- The site lacks very much visual interest, thus not following the aesthetics principle. Though the limited use of graphics will create quick loading times for the site, the lack of visual interest may present itself as a problem if the user clicks off the site.
- The site struggles with the consistency principle. The logo will be on one page, but absent on the next. The tagline colors may alter depending on the page, and sometimes the tagline may not even be present.

Redesigned Interface Wire Frames

Home Page

(See next page. It is worth noting that I was having difficulties exporting with Adobe XD, and some of the lines were not exporting right. That's why some lines on the side of the wire frame(s) are missing)



Locations

Museum
3443 Inverness Street
Dexter, MI 48130

Gordon Hall
8311 Island Lake Road
Dexter, MI 48130

Museum Hours

May thru November
1 -3pm
Friday and Saturday

Upcoming Events



Dexter Area Museum

Located in the Village of Dexter, Michigan the Dexter Area Historical Museum serves as western Washtenaw County's link with history. The museum is housed in the former St. Andrew's United Church of Christ built in 1883. In addition to numerous artifacts, the museum contains a large display area, a genealogical library, a local history library and the Corner Gift Shop.

The Dexter Heritage Guild is the fundraising group for the Museum.

[Museum & Heritage and Guild Information](#)



Historic Gordon Hall

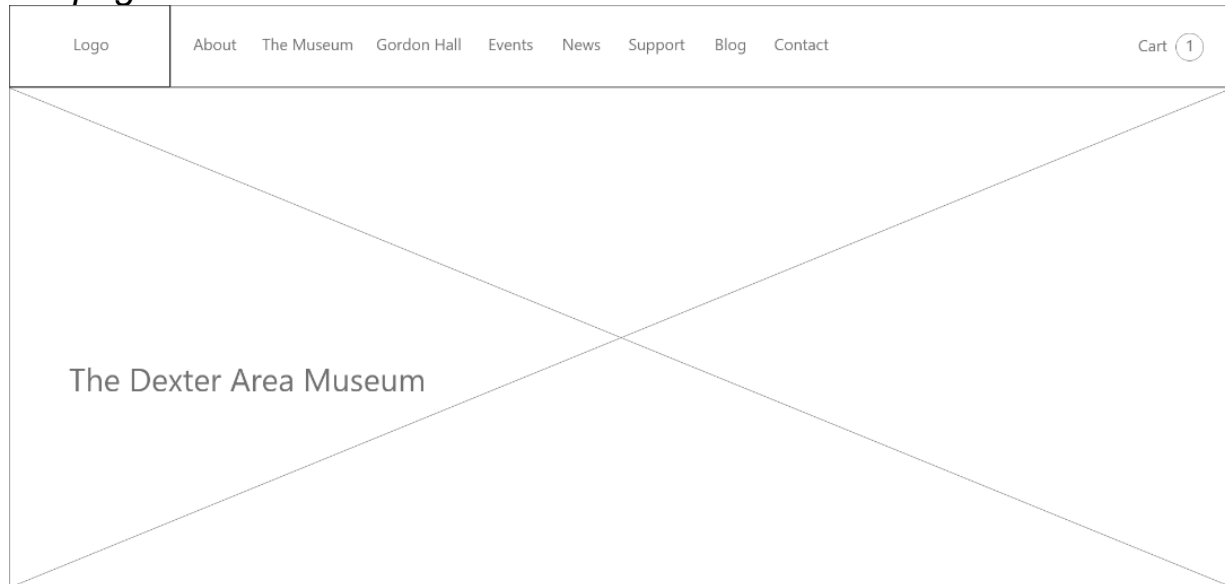
Built in the 1840's Gordon Hall is owned and operated by the Dexter Area Historical Society. The society puts on events at Gordon Hall throughout the year to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the building. The venue may also be rented for weddings and other events.

[Gordon Hall history and event scheduling](#)

The Dexter Area Historical Society (DAHS) is a nonprofit organization in Dexter, Michigan, which supports the preservation of the history of the Dexter area. DAHS owns and operates two properties: the Dexter Area Museum and Gordon Hall.

[Check out our newsletter!](#)

Subpage



About

Located in the Village of Dexter, Michigan, the Dexter Area Historical Museum serves as western Washtenaw County's link with history. The museum is housed in the former St. Andrew's United Church of Christ, built in 1883. The building was moved one block to the corner of Inverness and Fourth streets, to allow the construction of the current St. Andrew's. In addition to numerous artifacts, the museum contains a large display area, a genealogical library, a local history library, and the Corner Gift Shop.



The Dexter Heritage Guild is the fundraising group for the Dexter Historical Society Museum. They host two major events yearly. The Guild's main fundraiser is the Museum's Holiday Bazaar, held the first Saturday in December. The bazaar includes handcrafted items for the whole family, plus a delicious bake sale. In the spring the Guild hosts appraisers from DuMouchelles Art Gallery in Detroit at the museum. Customers can get their antique items appraised for a very reasonable fee.

The Guild welcomes new members and/or volunteers who enjoy crafting and meeting new friends. Meetings are at the Museum on the 3rd and 4th Wednesdays from January until the beginning of September. From September until the second week of November, meetings are every Wednesday. For more information call president Pat Pudduck at (734) 426-8952.

Analysis of Redesigned Interface

The redesigned interface solves many of the issues presented previously mentioned within this document, including issues with continuation, similarity, and usability and beauty. Furthermore, the redesign honors many of the traditions of the previous site, including the intelligent grouping (proximity).

- Moved the navigation bar from the left side to the top, and increased the size of the text. This is easier for modern internet users who are familiar with nav bars being located at the top, and made it easier to find/see for older or visually challenged users.
- Changed aligned content, allowing for better scan-ability by applying the law of continuity and the principle of alignment. Eyes follow the lines down through the content, ensuring the user does not get lost or overwhelmed.
- Utilized white space by giving proper padding between sections to ensure the tradition of good proximity is prevalent in the new design.
- Used big headline images to grab the users attention and add the principle of aesthetics. Additionally by adding the extra white space, the site is allowed to breathe, further cementing the aesthetic appeal of the site. Also, by having every page have it's on hero image, the site remains consistent.
- Put headline text over the hero image, and by applying the Gestalt rule of connection, the user will put the two together, which can be used to create an emotional response and a connection to the past.
- Another big change was the shift in where content is located. Locations and hours is information a user may need or want quickly, and thus by putting it as the second bit of content on the site, the user will be able to find it much faster.
- By simplifying the search bar, the user will be able to scan the list of links quicker.
- Shifted the tagline to be on the homepage, removing unnecessary clutter at the top of pages across the site, yet still stating the mission of the site from the start. And by following the rule of connection, the tagline will be associated by the user to the historical society since the text will be lying over an image of the society.

Implementation Options

The redesign may be implemented in various ways. Three ways will be listed below for convenience of development.

Approach One: Modifying Existing Weebly Theme

- The first approach is to continue using Weebly.
- This approach is not recommended, but the cheapest and easiest option. No developers would be needed and the designer could do it entirely.
- Simply modifying the existing Weebly theme will allow for the redesigned site to work, and site's responsiveness will always be ensured.
- Could implement code strings into individual elements to perform more detailed work. With such capability, site could continue to grow.

Approach Two: Implementing Break Points

- The second approach would be to convert the site into a HTML/CSS/JS site, move away from the Weebly platform, and implement break points.
- This could allow for the site to keep it's general shape for as long as possible, as fluid content will naturally begin to overlap. At key points, the site will automatically snap back into shape.
- This would only work for desktops and large tablets. Smaller tablets and phones would need their layout.
- Breakpoints will make it easier to ensure site remains aligned (alignment principle) and give more control over what the site will look like on all screens.

Approach Three: Completely Fluid

- The last approach would be similar to the second, but instead of break points create a fully responsive, fluid site, where the content will naturally stack as the page becomes smaller.
- This will be easiest to implement and feels the most natural when shrinking the screen down.
- Will be harder to control when something is on the screen and where it is aligned.

Approach Recommendation

Of the approaches mentioned, approach two would be the most ideal. Site could still be fluid, yet give the most control over each moment with the site.

Appendix A

Images of site are on a 4k, 15" screen.

Figure 1: Home Page

[home](#)
[about us](#)
[dexter area museum](#)
[gordon hall](#)
[news](#)
[support us!](#)
[blog](#)
[contact](#)
[gordon hall video](#)
[archaeology at gordon hall](#)
[2018 holiday events](#)
[cart 0](#)



Preserve our history and inspire our community to connect the past with the future

Upcoming Events:




[Click here for more information on the Holiday Events:](#)

[Check out our November 2018 Newsletter!](#)

The Dexter Area Historical Society (DAHS) is a nonprofit organization in Dexter, Michigan, which supports the preservation of the history of the Dexter area. DAHS owns and operates two properties: the Dexter Area Museum and Gordon Hall.

The DAHS board meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the museum.



Dexter Area Museum (Opens for the season Friday May 4)

Located in the Village of Dexter, Michigan the Dexter Area Historical Museum serves as western Washtenaw County's link with history. The museum is housed in the former St. Andrew's United Church of Christ built in 1883. In addition to numerous artifacts, the museum contains a large display area, a genealogical library, a local history library and the Corner Gift Shop. The museum is open May - November on Friday and Saturday afternoons.

The Dexter Heritage Guild is the fundraising group for the Museum.

[Museum and Heritage Guild information](#)



Historic Gordon Hall

Built in the 1840's Gordon Hall is owned and operated by the Dexter Area Historical Society. The society puts on events at Gordon Hall throughout the year to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the building. The venue may also be rented for weddings and other events.

[Gordon Hall history and event scheduling](#)

LOCATIONS

Museum 3443 Inverness Street Dexter, MI 48130	Gordon Hall 8311 Island Lake Road Dexter, MI 48130
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MUSEUM HOURS

May through November

Friday and Saturday afternoons from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM *Gordon Hall is open during special events and by appointment only.*

Appendix B

Figure 2: Subpage

[home](#)
[about us](#)
[dexter area museum](#)
[genealogical department](#)
[corner gift shop](#)
[gordon hall](#)
[news](#)
[support us!](#)
[blog](#)
[contact](#)
[gordon hall video](#)
[archaeology at gordon hall](#)
[2018 holiday events](#)
[cart 0](#)



Preserve our history and inspire our community to connect the past with the future

DEXTER AREA MUSEUM



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[Genealogical Department](#)

[Corner Gift Shop](#)

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