

RentAHome - Browse Rental Homes

Sridatt Kamath

Project overview



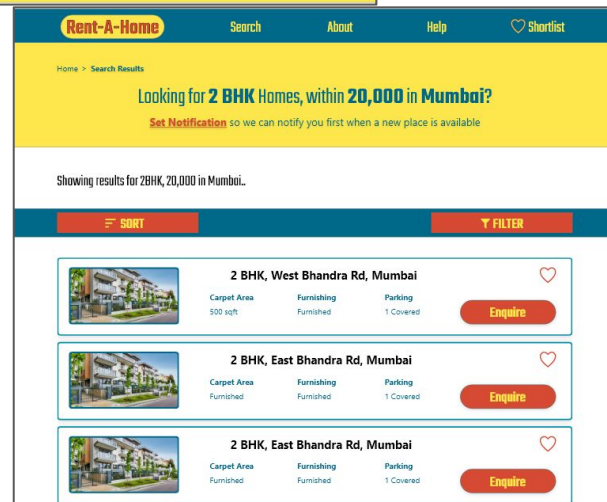
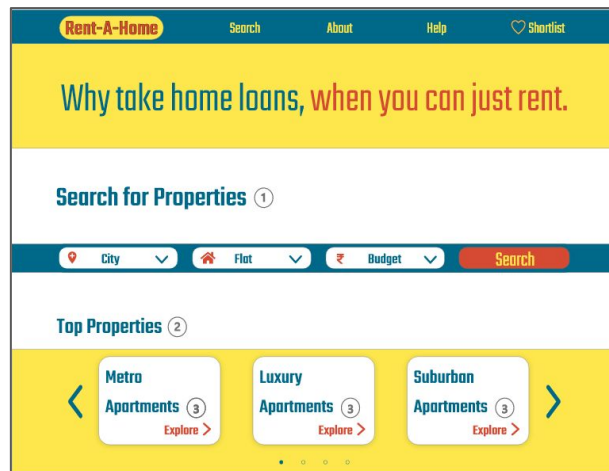
The product:

RentAHome is a website that lists verified properties from popular living areas that are available for rent. They handle the communications between the customer and the owner of properties.



Project duration:

01 November 2022 - 30 November 2022



Project overview



The problem:

- People want to be notified when homes of their choice are available for rent rather than checking everyday.
- People want a quick and easy user flow from browsing to booking session to view the apartment.



The goal:

- Design a website that lists all properties and provides a search feature that helps people search apartments of their choices.
- It provides a feature for people to save their search filters in order to get notified when new homes are added to the filter.

Project overview



My role:

UX designer leading the RentAHome's website design



Responsibilities:

Conducting interviews, paper and digital wireframing, low and high-fidelity prototyping, conducting usability studies, accounting for accessibility, iterating on designs and responsive design.

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary



I defined research goals and conducted interview of people who were placed in the preferred target audience for my app. The primary user group was mostly young office workers who had recently started their careers in new cities.

As I continued the research by creating empathy maps, crafting personas and plotting journey maps, I realised the major problem was the reliability of the search function, and ability to get notified when apartments are available.

User research: pain points

1

Time

Working adults are too busy and hate checking websites daily if new homes are available.

2

Information

Existing platforms don't have proper search function which allows them to add various criteria for searching.

3

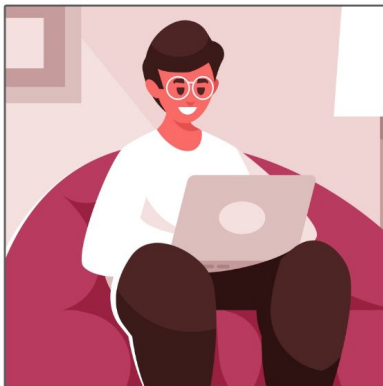
Accessibility

Existing platforms have issues with their headings, and colours and contrast.

Persona: Alex

Problem statement:

Alex is a freelancer who likes to move around to different every couple years. He wants to be notified when new rentals are available so he doesn't have to check the site everyday.



Alex

Age: 28
Education: Masters in Tech
Hometown: Hyderabad
Family: Lives alone
Occupation: Freelancer/ Self employed

"I like to continually change my surroundings, it keeps me motivated to work hard"

Goals

- Wants to be able to work at his own comfort.
- Likes to move around the city after every year or two.
- Wants to have an easy way to find and rent places for couple to multiple months.

Frustrations

- "I would like it if I get notified if rentals of my preferences becomes available, I hate checking websites every single day"
- "Most of the websites have such complicated search parameters, it makes me give up"

Alex has been working as a freelancer for almost 5 years. He has also had some stints at startups and big corporations in between. He hated the monotonous journey to work, sit at the same desk, work in your own cubicle kind of life. He soon became a full time freelancer and kept moving around after every year or so. He finds it difficult sometimes to find the right apartments and ends up being disappointed with the whole process of finding a new place. If there was a site which would the process simpler for him, he would move about quite more often,

Empathy Map



User journey map

Mapping Alex's user journey revealed that providing an feature for notifying the user when a new rental home is available would be immensely helpful for the users

Persona: Alex

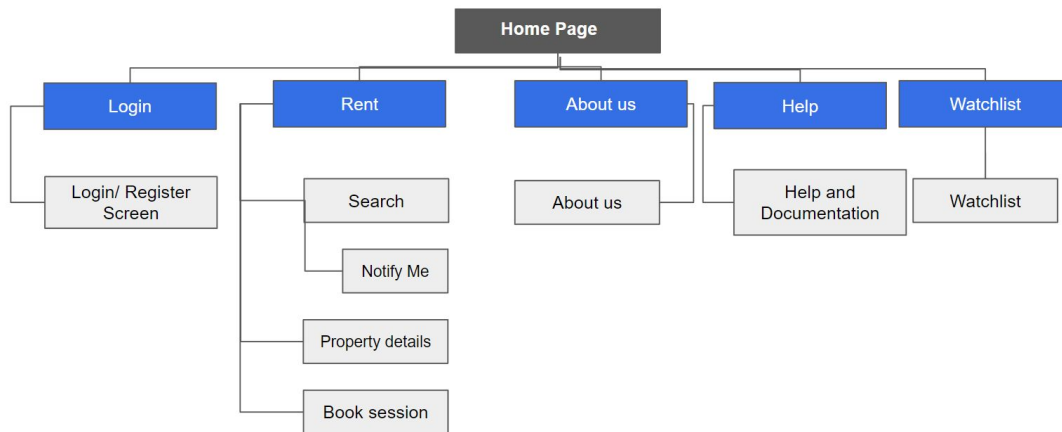
Goal: To save search filters so they can be notified upon availability of homes within it.

ACTION	Open any renting website	Search for apartment	Browse through listings	Check the selected apartment features	Book session with agent/renter
TASK LIST	A. Search for home renting websites B. Choose the website of your choice.	A. Add location as the city you want. B. Add filters for how many rooms. C. Add any other additional filters and search.	A. After search, browse through list of apartments B. Check price and reviews if any. C. Click apartment of choice.	A. Once open, check detailed information of the apartment. B. Check photos C. Check information about renter.	A. Click on book session. B. Add Name, phone number and other details. C. Wait for call-back
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Pretty excited to see available apartments	Annoyed there is no feature to save filters.	Frustrated that there is no option to change filters without going back	Happy with the photos provided, and renter details.	Excited to get a call back and discuss further details
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Make homepage for RentAHome very inviting	Provide minimal and only necessary filters in the beginning Add feature to	Let users change filters once selected.	Provide information that renter is verified.	Provide feature for users to set desired time.

Sitemap

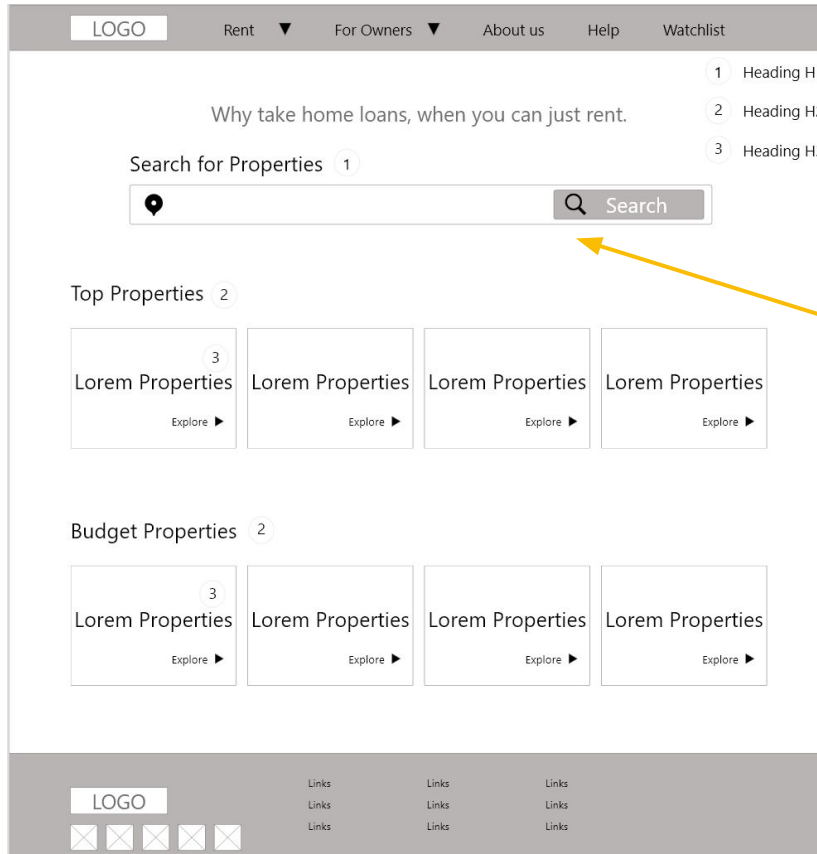
Difficulty with website navigation was a primary pain point for users, so I used that knowledge to create a sitemap.

My goal here was to make strategic information architecture decisions that would improve overall website navigation. The structure I chose was designed to make things simple and easy.



Digital wireframes

Based on the research,
Users wanted to search for
new apartments easily, so
providing a big search right
at top helps users focus on
the main action.



Big search bar
on top lets user
focus on the
important
action first

Digital wireframe screen size variation for mobile

A digital wireframe for a mobile application screen, showing a search interface for rentals. The screen is oriented vertically. At the top, there is a grey header bar containing a 'LOGO' placeholder on the left and a hamburger menu icon on the right. Below the header, the main content area is white. It features a text prompt: 'Why take home loans, when you can just rent.' followed by three vertically stacked search filters. Each filter consists of a small icon (a location pin for 'City' and a square with an 'X' for 'Flat' and 'Budget') followed by the filter name and a downward arrow indicating a dropdown menu. At the bottom of the screen is a grey search bar with a magnifying glass icon on the left and the text 'Search' on the right.

LOGO

Why take home loans,
when you can just rent.

City

Flat

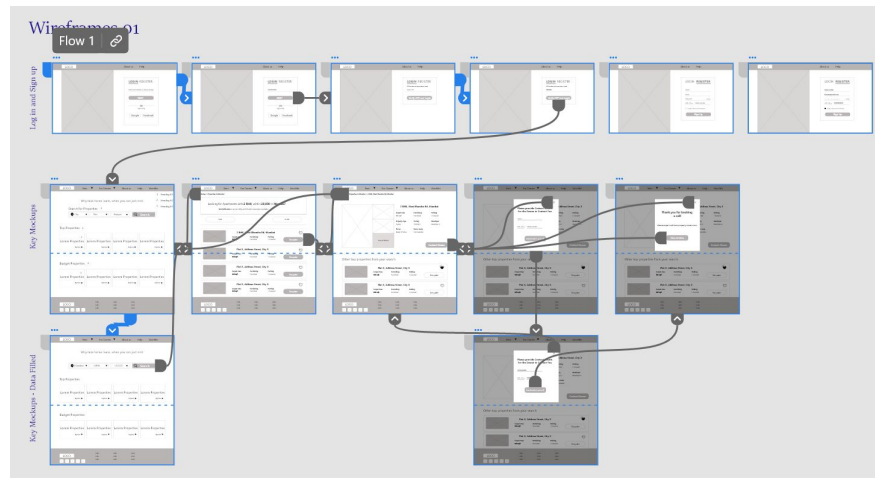
Budget

Search

Low-fidelity prototype

To create a low-fidelity prototype, I connected all of the screens involved in the primary user flow of logging in, browsing rentals and booking a session.

At this point, I had received feedback on my designs from members of my team about things like placement of buttons and page organization. I made sure to listen to their feedback, and I implemented several suggestions in places that addressed user pain points.



View [RentAHome's low-fidelity prototype](#)

Usability study: parameters



Study type:

Unmoderated usability study



Location:

India, remote



Participants:

5 participants



Length:

20-30 minutes

Usability study: findings

These were the main findings uncovered by the usability study:

1

Search bar

Users wanted a easy way to add tags while searching.

2

Notifications

Users wanted to be able to set custom filters for being notified instead of being set by default as per search parameters.

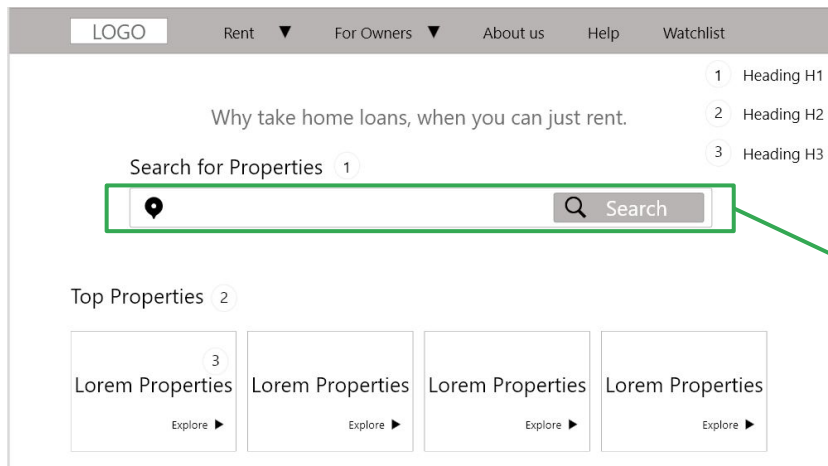
Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

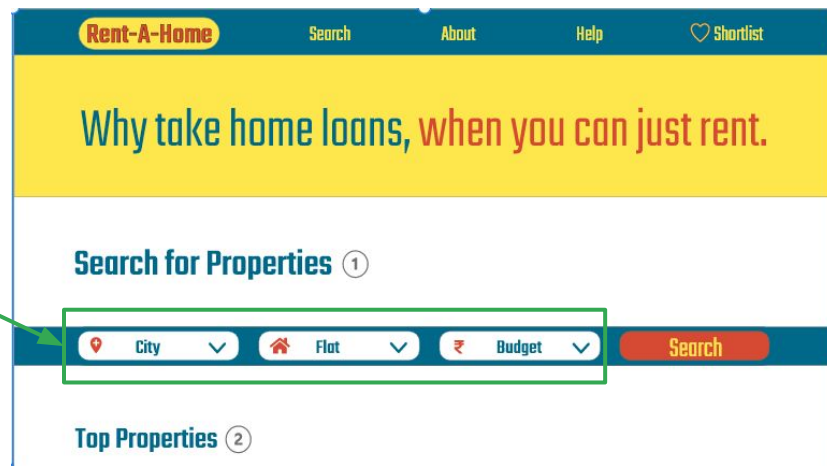
Mockups

Based on the insights from the usability study, I made changes to improve the search function. One of the changes I made was adding smaller boxes in the search for users to search city, flat type and budget separately within the search bar. This makes it easier for users to search for flats of their choices.

Before usability study



After usability study



Mockups

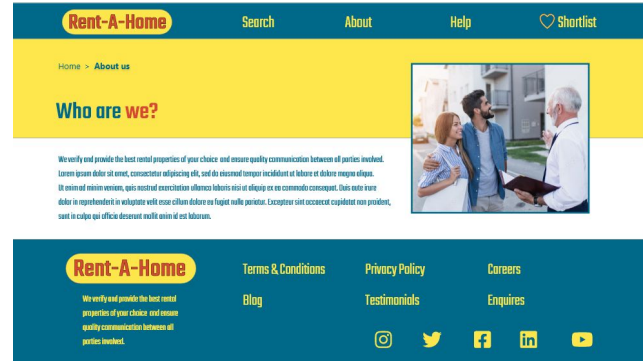
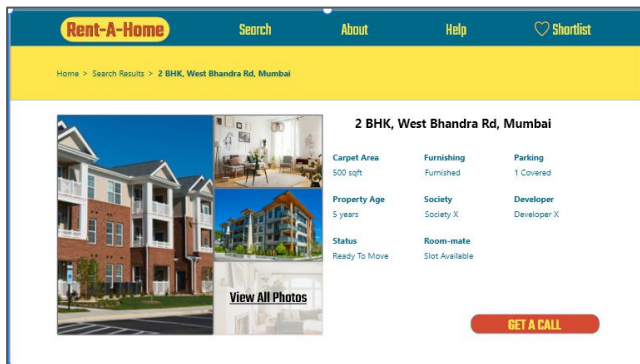
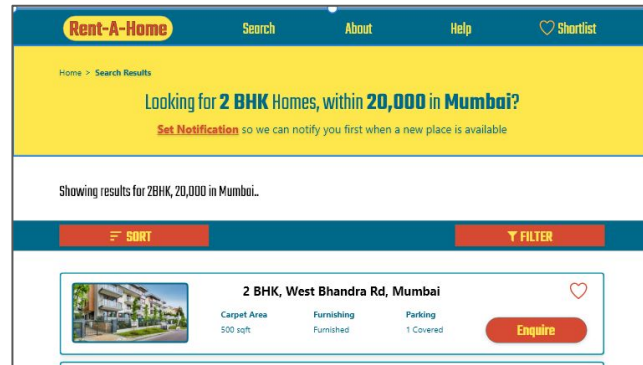
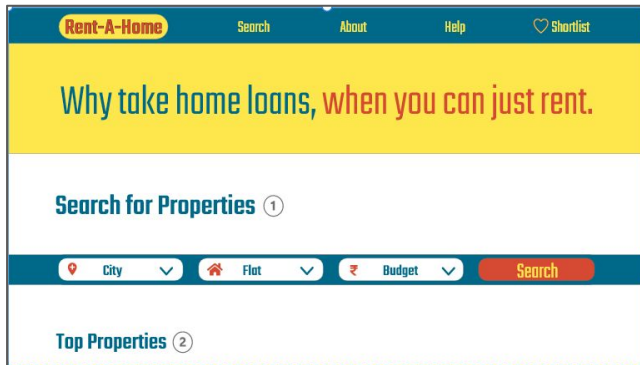
A separate page was designed to let users set their own custom filters for notifications.

Page added after usability study

The mockup shows a web page for 'Rent-A-Home' with a navigation bar containing 'Search', 'About', 'Help', and 'Shortlist'. The main heading is 'Set Alerts so that you are notified as soon as a home of your choice is available on our site.' Below this, the section 'Set Parameters for the Notification' contains a form with the following elements:

- Location: A dropdown menu with 'Mumbai' selected and a '+ Add More' button.
- Property Type: A dropdown menu with '2 BHK' selected and a '+ Add More' button.
- Budget: Two input fields labeled 'Min. Budget' and 'Max. Budget' with a 'Budget ₹' label.
- Parking: A checkbox labeled 'Parking'.
- Roommate: A checkbox labeled 'Roommate'.
- Buttons: 'STOP ALERTS' and 'SET ALERTS' buttons at the bottom.

Mockups: Original screen size



Mockups: Screen size variations

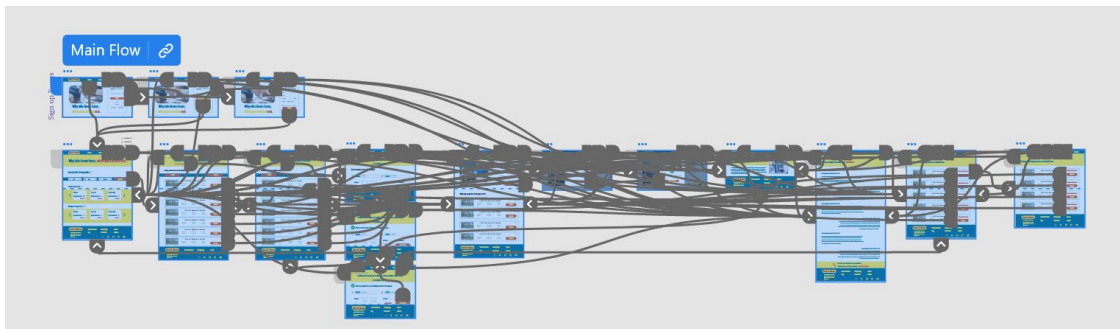
I included considerations for additional screen sizes in my mockups based on my earlier wireframes. Because users browse from a variety of devices, I felt it was important to optimize the browsing experience for a range of device sizes, such as mobile and tablet so users have the smoothest experience possible.



High-fidelity prototype

My hi-fi prototype followed the same user flow as the lo-fi prototype, and included the design changes made after the usability study, as well as several changes suggested by members of my team.

View the RentAHome's [high-fidelity prototype](#)



Accessibility considerations

1

Followed Accessibility standards while choosing colors to ensure the contrast follows AA and AAA standards for people with colorblindness.

2

Used icons to help make navigation easier.

3

Clear headings were provided so that website is compatible with screen readers.

4

Useful landmarks were used like Search and Hamburger menu.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

This website helps user search for rental homes easily and efficiently also saving people's time as they don't need to search for apartments until they get notification.

One quote from peer feedback:

"The website is so easy to use that I would definitely recommend this to my friends and family who are looking for rental homes "



What I learned:

While designing the RentAHome website, I learnt a lot about how the initial processes about empathizing and defining user needs and how it helped me be clear on what needs to be designed. Usability studies and feedbacks helped me in improving the designs further.

Next steps

1

Conduct another round of usability studies to validate whether the pain points users experienced have been effectively addressed.

2

Conduct more user research to determine any new areas of need.

Let's connect!



Thank you for your time reviewing my work on the RentAHome Website! If you'd like to see more or get in touch, my contact information is provided below.

Email: dummy@email.com

Website: dummydesign.uxportfolio.com

Thank you!