



Concept Note

Heritage Sandy Springs website

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to lay out the design concepts for the Heritage Sandy Springs website. Sarah McFather was project manager of the web development, and it was created during Webraising 2004. Other team members that participated in the production of the website were Jesse Edwards, Maria Avila, and Tony Turner.

Heritage Sandy Springs preserves and promotes the historical and cultural identify of our community. Heritage Sandy Spring strives to build a sense of community by offering several programs and events geared towards families, schools, and adults with an interest in historical subjects.

2 Target Audience

The audience definition is a broad description of a possible market segment or group that will be using the prospective site. Heritage Sandy Springs has a broad mission and, therefore, serves many audiences. As an organization, the organization strives primarily to build a sense of community in Sandy Springs. As such, the target audience can be defined as anyone who wants and values a sense of community within the local area. Specific programs and events, however, have very specific target audiences. Primary among these are families, schools, and adults with an interest in historical subjects.

3 Sitemap

A typical sitemap presents the top few levels of the information hierarchy. It provides a broad view of the content in the web site and facilitates random access to segmented portions of that content. When looking at a sitemap as a hard copy, it is easier to get a feel for the general layout of a site without becoming over laden with images and graphics.

The following page shows the sitemap that will be employed for the Heritage Sandy Springs website. The homepage is indicated at the top. This, of course, is the opening page of the site. Below, the following list represents the global navigation. Global navigation can be thought of as links that never stray from the overall layout of the page. Any links below this global navigation is considered secondary navigation, and is only displayed in its designated area.

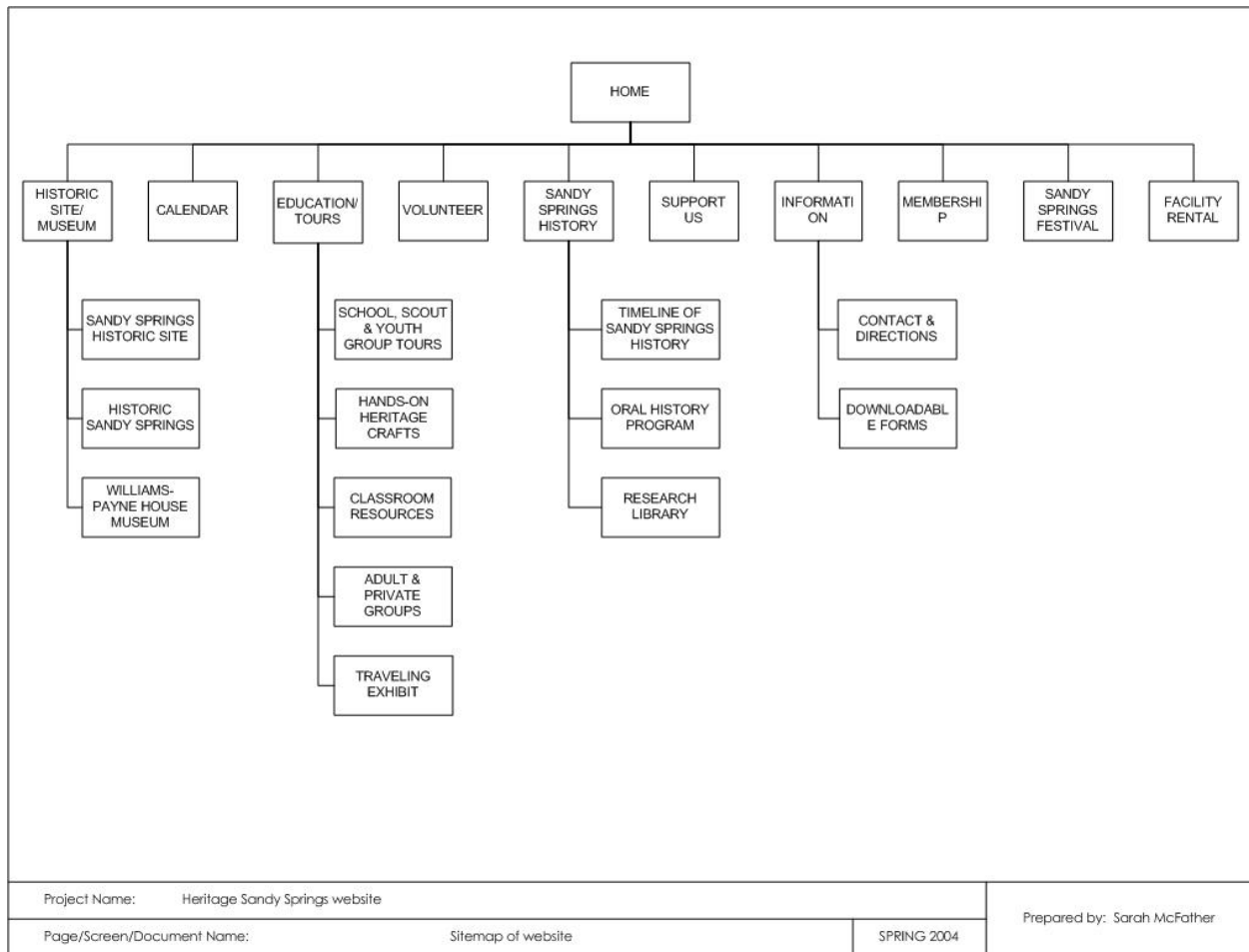


Figure 1: Sitemap for Heritage Sandy Springs website

4 Overall Design Approach

Heritage Sandy Springs expressed their desire to have a website that was sophisticated, classical and colorful. The website would be considered a place for community gatherings, so it was important that the site be appealing for a wide range of users. The organization asked that no flash be used for the production. Instead, they were interested in a site that was easily viewed by users with varied connection speeds, and did not want anything too “over the edge,” technologically.

Heritage Sandy Springs were particular to what links they would like to be used globally. For that reason, a design had to be created that would be able to contain a large amount of links from page to page. These links needed to be divided into two groups: links having to do with history, tours, and heritage, and links having to do with membership, sponsorship, and rental information.

The organization is known for its gardens on site; for this reason, it seemed appropriate to use a color scheme that was reminiscent of the earth, growing, and newness. Although the site contained no specific area that pertained to the gardens, the site does embody the idea of community and growth. Because of this, it felt that a green color scheme would further enhance the mood of the site.

Heritage Sandy Springs did mention that they were interested in incorporating blue into the design, as a reminder of the springs that preside on the property. In order to include this, blue highlights needed to be used somehow so that

users might be reminded of this. For more information regarding the colors, please refer to the section entitled Color.

Finally, Heritage Sandy Springs wished to incorporate images that illustrated what the organization was all about. They provided an extensive library of images to be used for the website. Each page, therefore, needed to have an image of the site so that users would be able to identify with the organization outside of the website.

5 Branding and Identity

Heritage Sandy Springs provided a logo that they wished to use for the site. This logo can be found on every page of the site, which would help to give the organization branding and identity. In addition, certain color styles were used to give an underlying tone of what to expect from the organization. The green hues signify that the organization is interested in nature and gardens, which can be found on its property. In addition to this, Heritage Sandy Springs wanted the green to inspire community growth as well. The blue hues used in the site are referential to the springs that run through the property, for which they and the community are named. By using these aspects, Heritage Sandy Springs can be identified by being pastoral place, eager to embrace not only the location in which it is based, but the community of Sandy Springs as well.

6 Graphic Style & Typography

Heritage Sandy Springs wanted a style that was colorful and to the point, while at the same time looking professional and tailored. To create this, minimal graphics were used to build the site, other than images of the site provided. By designing in this fashion, the user's eye would naturally flow to the images of the organization, rather than being fixated on the website itself.

For typography, a sans-serif font was used for the text of the site, as serif fonts are much harder to read on a computer screen. For the headers, however, a serif font was used to make it stand out over the other text. By giving the headers this type of style, it gives the indication that the site is sophisticated and polished, while the remaining text can be read without difficulty. Heritage Sandy Springs also specified that they would prefer to use textual links for the navigation; style sheets were used for the typography of the website.

7 Layout

Layout is the first step that a designer must take in beginning the overall plan of a website design or redesign. It creates an element of organization—without it, content can quickly become cluttered and illogical in placement. For the Heritage Sandy Springs site, the site needed to be viewed as an organized structure, as there were lots of different areas that users might want to know about. The layout consisted of four main sections: the horizontal navigation, the vertical navigation, the sub-navigation area, and the main content area.

In the horizontal navigation area, the links were specific to the organization itself. That being said, there was general information about contacts, sponsorship, membership, facility rental, and ways to support volunteer. These links ran horizontally at the top of the page atop a light green background. Each of these links had a hover state as a rollover effect.

The vertical navigation area contained links that were specific to the Sandy Springs area. In these links, users would be able to locate information about what Sandy Springs and Heritage Sandy Springs have to offer. To indicate that these links were different than the others, they ran vertically along the left side of the screen. Each of these links had a hover state as a rollover effect. It also had a light green background.

The next main area of the layout was the sub-navigation area. This section was blue to indicate a difference between the global navigation and the navigation specific to whatever section the user might be in at that time. Not all

sections of the site contained sub-navigational links, but the blue area was nonetheless present in each page to allow for future sub-navigational elements to be added. The content area begins with a status indicator to let the user know what page he is currently viewing, followed by the content for that page.

Finally, the last main area of the layout was the main content area. This area was the one part of the layout with a white background. The content for each page would be found in this section, along with a header of some sort to provide the user with a status indicator, as well as an image that pertained somehow to the content at hand. Each page strived to be brief to prevent excessive scrolling.

The site was designed for an 800x600 screen resolution, which would omit horizontal scrolling for most users, since the bracket of users with a screen resolution smaller than this is very small. There is limited content on most of the pages of the Heritage Sandy Springs site, causing there to be little to no scrolling.

The site does not use any sort of pop-up window function, as there seemed to be no call for it. However, any link on the site that might take a user to another website or open a PDF file was targeted to a new window so that the user might be able to go back to the Heritage Sandy Springs website with ease.

8 Colors

As mentioned before, Heritage Sandy Springs was interested in keeping the design sophisticated, classic, and colorful. For that reason, the design used a bright color palette with various blue and green tones. It was feared that adding too many more colors might endanger the site into becoming garish and childlike. For that reason, more colors were used just for the homepage, while only select colors were utilized throughout the rest of the design.

Two hues of green were used throughout the website, which symbolized growth, both with the community, and also with the gardens and nature surrounding Heritage Sandy Springs historic site and grounds. Two hues of blue were incorporated to symbolize the springs for which Sandy Springs were named. Finally, white was used in all other instances, in order to keep the site looking clean and professional.

Provided below are the colors that were used for the Heritage Sandy Springs site:








Color Thumbnail	Hex Color Code	Font Style	Font Type	Description
	#000000	Main Content	Verdana	Main Body Content; links, visited links
	# 666666	Links	Verdana	Link hover color
	# 98B15D			Header background color
	# D6E0B5			Global navigation background color
	# 3C3360			Accent bar above sub-navigation
	# A1B9DF			Sub-navigation background color
	# FFFFFFFF			Background color

Figure 2: Color swatches for Heritage Sandy Springs website

9 Interaction & Links

All of the links are text-based except for the option to click on the logo in the top-left corner to return to the homepage. While having a professional site is understated, the site should be represented in a format in which the users will feel most comfortable and will come to expect. That being said, there is a hover effect that is placed next to each text link to add a little more interactivity to the site. These textual links are bold, unless the user is in that particular section, at which it would then have a normal font weight.

10 Accessibility Standards

This site has been designed so that certain accessibility standards may be adhered to. These standards are somewhat general, but nonetheless help the site to be usable for certain groups with disabilities. Standards are set by the World Wide Consortium; the ones used for this site include:

- Providing a textual substitution for all graphics where needed, i.e. pictures, images that are used as links, etc.
- Site can be viewed in black and white without hindrance to the overall design
- Site uses the clearest and simplest language appropriate for the site's content

The textual substitution of graphics will be accomplished by alt tags for any image. In addition, the navigation is created as text links. The site was designed for adequate contrast in color so that it may be viewed without color. There are no areas that blend into each other, making it impossible to navigate through the site. Finally, the site uses HTML as its primary language with minimal use of style sheets and scripts.

11 Conclusion

The goal of the design of this site is to provide information about this organization to the user in a classic, sophisticated manner. By combining identity-based colors with a clean layout, a user can easily navigate from section to section without having to search incessantly. By combining these elements of color, navigation, and layout, a perspective user will be sure to happily return to the site.