

# SpecialPlaces App and Responsive Website

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# Project overview



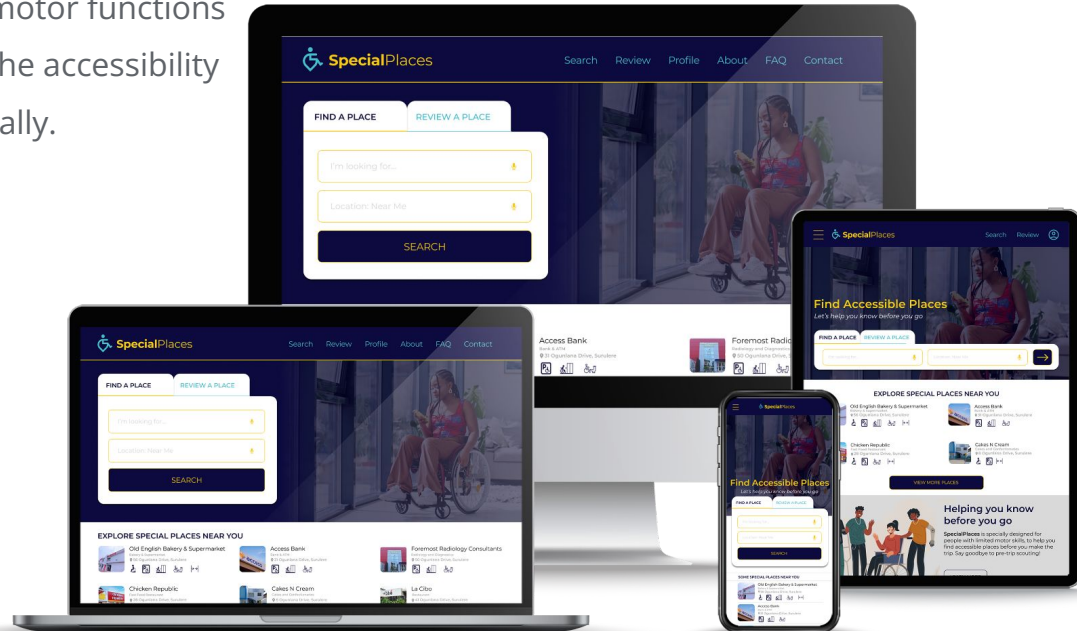
## The product:

**SpecialPlaces** is an app and responsive website that seeks to provide people with limited motor functions an avenue to get information about the accessibility of a place before they go there physically.



## Project duration:

September - October 2022



# Project overview



## **The problem:**

People with limited motor functions have difficulty in finding accessible places before they go out. Most times, they have to do an initial scout of a venue before they go there, to check if it has basic amenities like wheelchair ramp etc that support their mobility.



## **The goal:**

Design an app and responsive website that removes that inconvenience and provides a means to get information about the accessibility of a place before users go there.

# Project overview



## My role:

UX researcher and designer, designing the App and responsive website from conception to engineering hand-over



## Responsibilities:

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

# Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- Competitive audit
- Ideation

# User research: summary



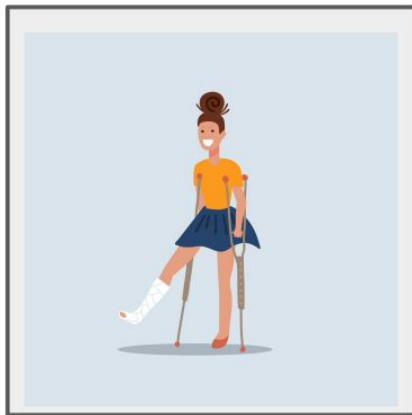
Before interviewing users, I did some secondary research on the problem, and that helped to expose the depth of the issue that needed solving. With that background information, I interviewed real users, created empathy maps and discovered more pain points that needed to be addressed.

My initial assumption was that the solution was going to be for people with disabilities, but the research processed helped redirect my attention to the real focus group: not just people with disabilities, but specifically people with limited motor functions.

# Persona 1: Agnes

## Problem statement:

Agnes is an Artist with limited motor functions who needs to find accessible venues ahead of time because She needs to complete work related tasks easily.



**Agnes**

**Age:** 38

**Education:** College Graduate

**Hometown:** Lagos

**Family:** Single Mother of 3

**Occupation:** Artist

*"I refuse to put "dis" in my abilities"*

## Goals

- Needs to visit the bank regular to cash cheques from her customers
- Needs to go to stores for her art supplies

## Frustrations

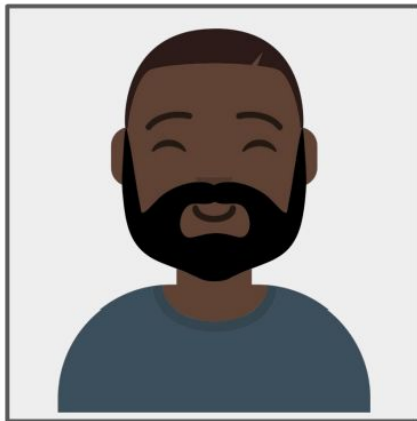
- Banks and other places do not have provisions for people with special needs especially when there is a queue
- Tired of doing pre-outing scoutings to check accessible venues

Agnes is an artist who has limited motor functions. She is a single mother of 3 who enjoys spending weekends with her kids. Her art is thriving and she has clients from all over the world. Not all her clients can make bank transfers to her so she has to go into the bank a couple of times in a month to receive payment. She also needs to buy art suppliers from stores. She needs a way to know which venues are accessible before making the trip.

## Persona 2: Luke

### Problem statement:

Luke is a IT support staff whose girlfriend uses a wheelchair, who needs To take her out to fun and accessible places because he wants to grow their relationship and be happier .



Luke

**Age:** 26  
**Education:** Degree  
**Hometown:** Lagos  
**Family:** Single  
**Occupation:** IT Support

*"Find love is beautiful, but finding it with the right person is everything"*

### Goals

- Needs to take his girlfriend out on dates
- Social butterfly who enjoys going out and having fun outside of work

### Frustrations

- A lot of fun places in town aren't well equipped for his girlfriend's wheelchair
- Venues don't list on their websites and social media that they are accessible

Luke is an IT support worker who enjoys going out in the evenings after work. Sometimes he's with friends, but he prefers to go out with his girlfriend, Bola. Bola was involved in an accident two years ago and currently needs a wheelchair to move around. Luke finds it frustrating going to places and finding out that they aren't accessible for Bola's wheelchair.



# Competitive audit

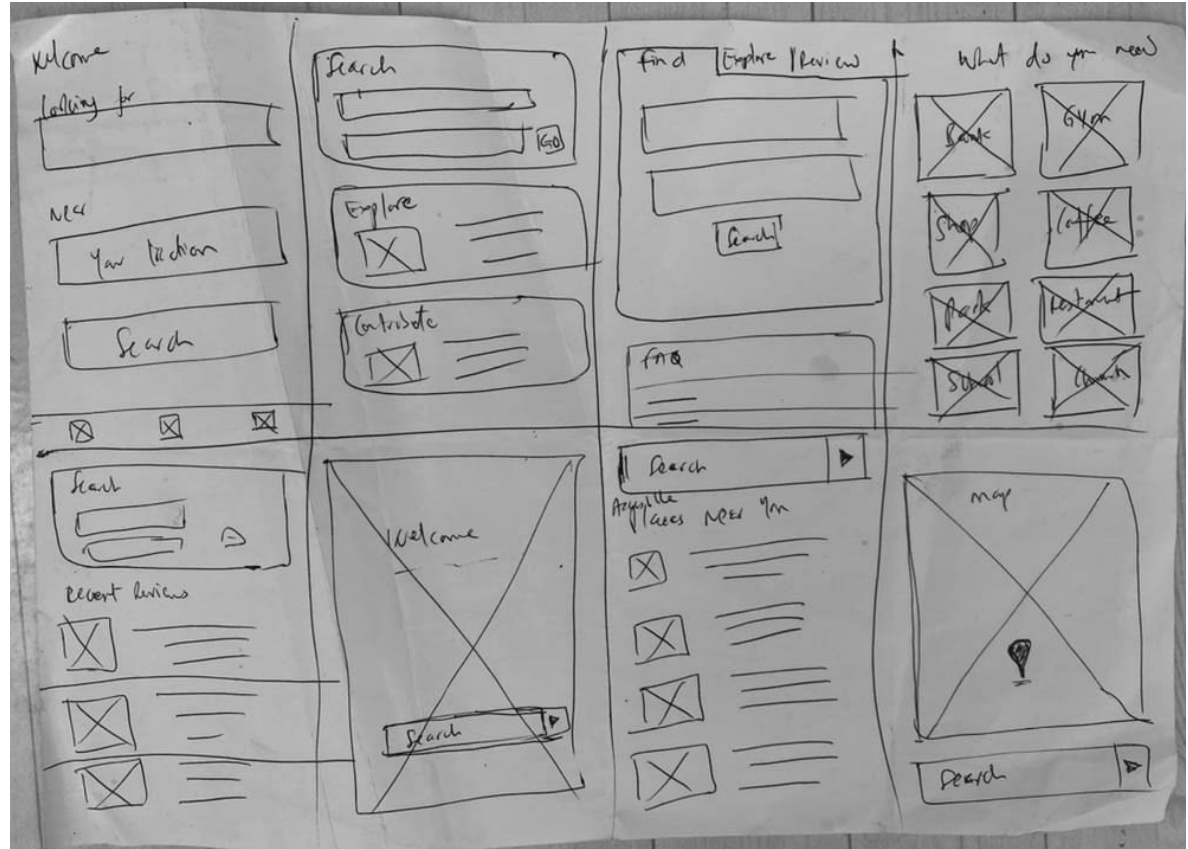
Conducting an audit of the existing products of direct and indirect competitors revealed opportunities and gaps that needed to be addressed

Competitive audit									
Competitive audit goal: identify and analyse features in currently existing products for mobility access in public places									
General information								First impressions	
Competitor type (direct or indirect)	Location(s)	Product offering	Price \$ - \$€€	Website (URL)	Business size (small, medium, large)	Target audience	Unique value proposition	Desktop website experience	App or mobile website experience
Accessible	United Kingdom	Mobile app and website to search for accessible places to go	Free	<a href="https://www.accessible.org.uk/">https://www.accessible.org.uk/</a>	Medium	People living with disabilities	To take the chance out of going out	OUTSTANDING + Strong consistent branding + Easy to Navigate	OUTSTANDING + Beautifully presented + Strong branding + Allows users to use without an account
Google Maps	Global	Mobile app and website to search for all kinds of places and directions on the map	Free	<a href="https://www.google.com/maps/">https://www.google.com/maps/</a>	Large	Everyone	Explore and navigate your world	OUTSTANDING + Easy to use and navigate + Content sourced + Useful features + Difficulty to filter for accessibility	OUTSTANDING + Easy to use and navigate + Content sourced + Useful features + Difficulty to filter for accessibility
Access Now	Canada	Mobile app and website to discover Accessible Places	Free	<a href="https://www.accessnow.org/">https://www.accessnow.org/</a>	Medium	Everyone	Accessibility for all	GOOD + Clear user-friendly interface	GOOD + Mobile is responsive on mobile
Access	Atlanta, GA	Mobile app for route, routes & research places based on their accessibility	Free	<a href="https://www.accessnow.org/">https://www.accessnow.org/</a>	Medium	Users with disabilities	Know better, go	OKAY + Clean, easy interface + Web app not available on desktop	GOOD + Easy to use + Large clear images

UX (what needs work, okay, good or outstanding)					
Features	Accessibility	User Flow	Navigation	Visual design	Content
GOOD + User without an account + Good search filters + Location specific	OUTSTANDING + Strong use of visuals and colours + Large readable text + Includes an accessibility toolbar screen reader	GOOD + Straightforward and easy to use	GOOD + Easy navigation	OUTSTANDING + Strong brand presence + Good use of brand colours and fonts	Friendly and informal + Descriptions are straightforward + Conveys information clearly
OKAY + Easy to find general places + Difficult to find accessible places	GOOD + Can be filtered for accessibility features + Difficult to find accessible places	GOOD + Easy to navigate + Difficult to find accessible places	GOOD + Search functions easy to use + Wheelchair accessibility on screen is hidden + Buttons	OUTSTANDING + Strong visual and brand identity + Consistent fonts and typography	OUTSTANDING + Conveys information clearly
OKAY + Search bar is a link that goes to a different page	OUTSTANDING + Nice large images + Readable text in larger fonts	GOOD + Easy to use	GOOD + Links are well labelled and easy to identify	OUTSTANDING + Brand well represented + Good use of colours	OUTSTANDING + Good use of descriptions + Short and concise
GOOD + Multi-city support + Unable without login or creating an account + Difficult to find accessible places	GOOD + Clear fonts + Some icons are tiny	GOOD + Easy to navigate and direct + Difficult to find accessible places	GOOD + Nice and easy navigation	GOOD + Consistent fonts and typography + Brand not clear	GOOD + Descriptions are too short

# Ideation

Equipped with more insight into the problem, I quickly ideated possible solutions using the Crazy Eights technique. My focus was **to provide users with a quick and easy way to find accessible places, with as minimal clicks as possible.**



# Starting the design

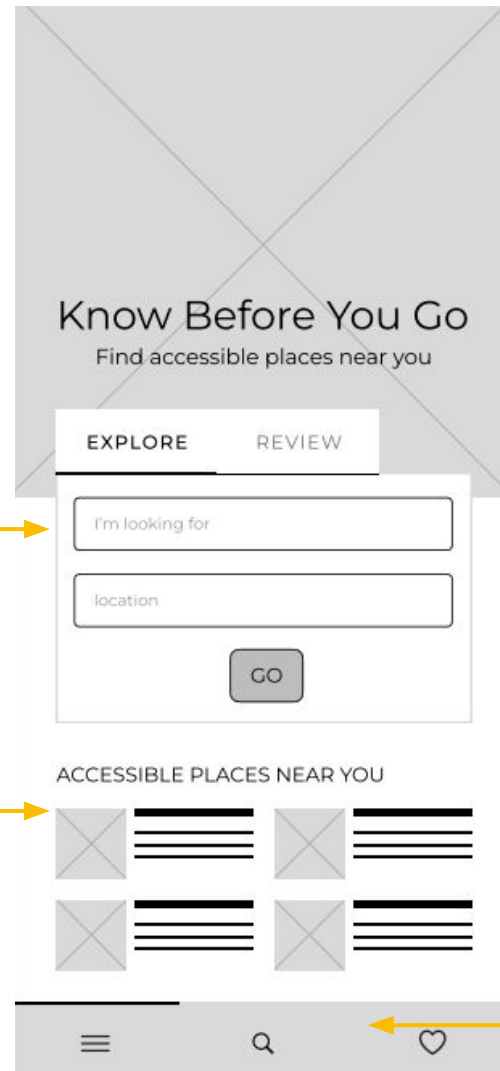
- Digital wireframes
- Low-fidelity prototype
- Usability studies

# Digital wireframes

From the Crazy Eight sketches, I picked the most valuable elements and sketched out a final paper wireframe. I then used this paper wireframe to create a digital wireframe in Figma

Quick search feature on the homepage so that the user can find what they need right away

A section that suggests accessible places near the user

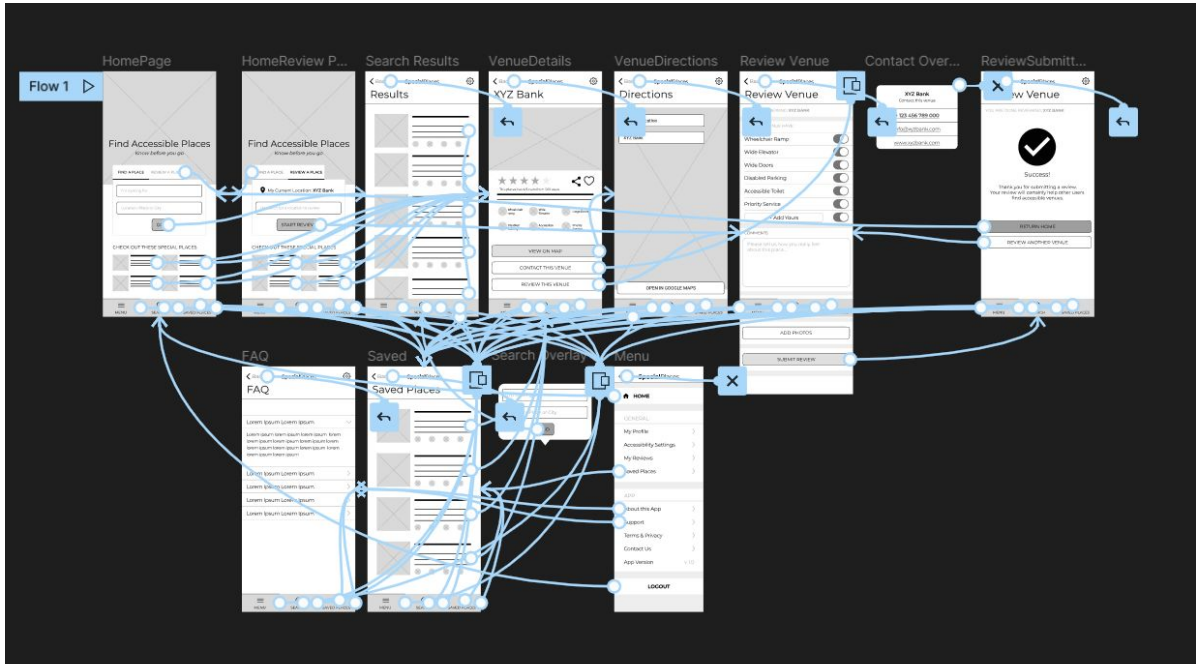


Accessible navbar on all pages, so that users can access the search function and their saved places easily

# Low-fidelity prototype

With wireframes created for all pages, I prepared for usability test by creating low fidelity prototype connecting all the pages in the user flow

[View the Special Places low fidelity prototype here](#)



# Usability study: parameters



## Study type:

Unmoderated usability study



## Location:

Lagos, Nigeria and Remote



## Participants:

5 participants



## Length:

30 minutes

# Usability study: findings

From the usability study, I identified patterns and themes, and I was thus able to generate insights that lead to the following findings:

1

## Copy

Users found the wording of the “Explore” and “Review” tabs confusing. They didn't know what to do and that affected ease of use

2

## Layout

The layout of the Venue Details Page needed rearrangement

3

## Accessibility Features

Users felt the accessibility features of a venue weren't exhaustive, and would like to add their own when reviewing a venue

## Refining the design

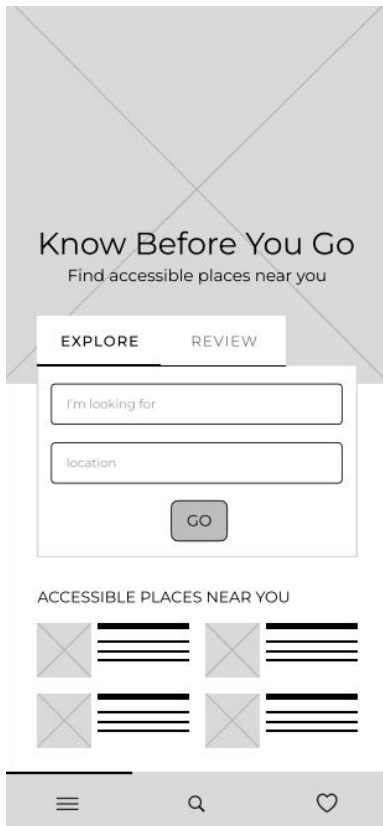
- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility



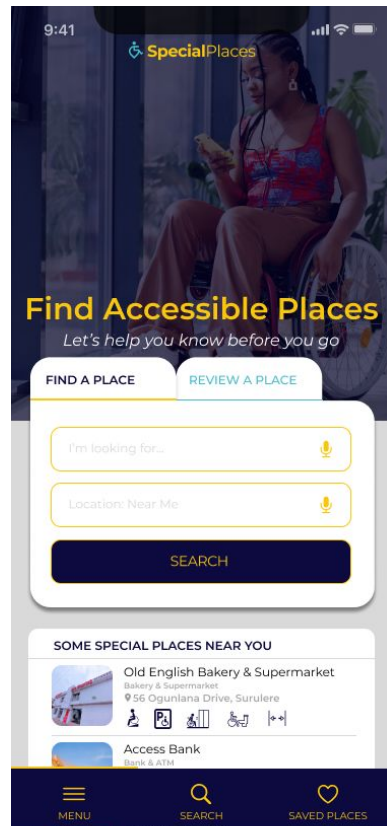
# Mockups

Based on the prioritized insights from the usability study, I changed the copy on the search tabs and added more accessibility functions: the microphone icon on the text boxes allows users to speak instead of type; the navbar buttons were also labelled for ease of use with screen readers

Before usability study

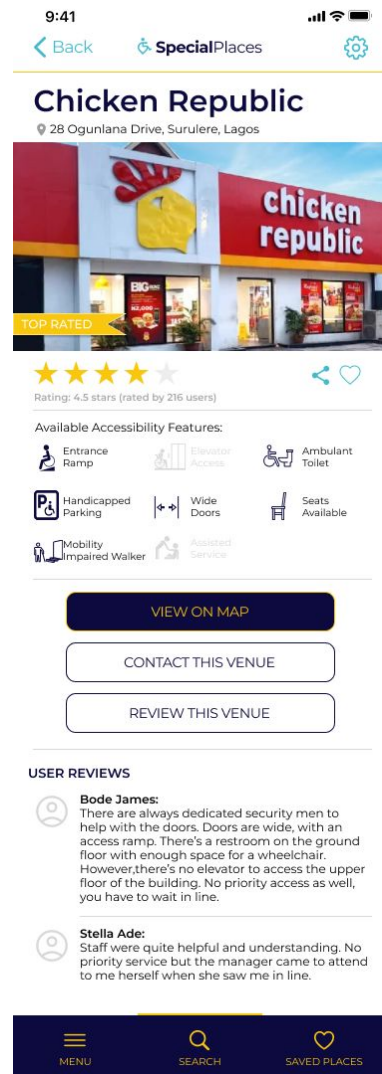


After usability study

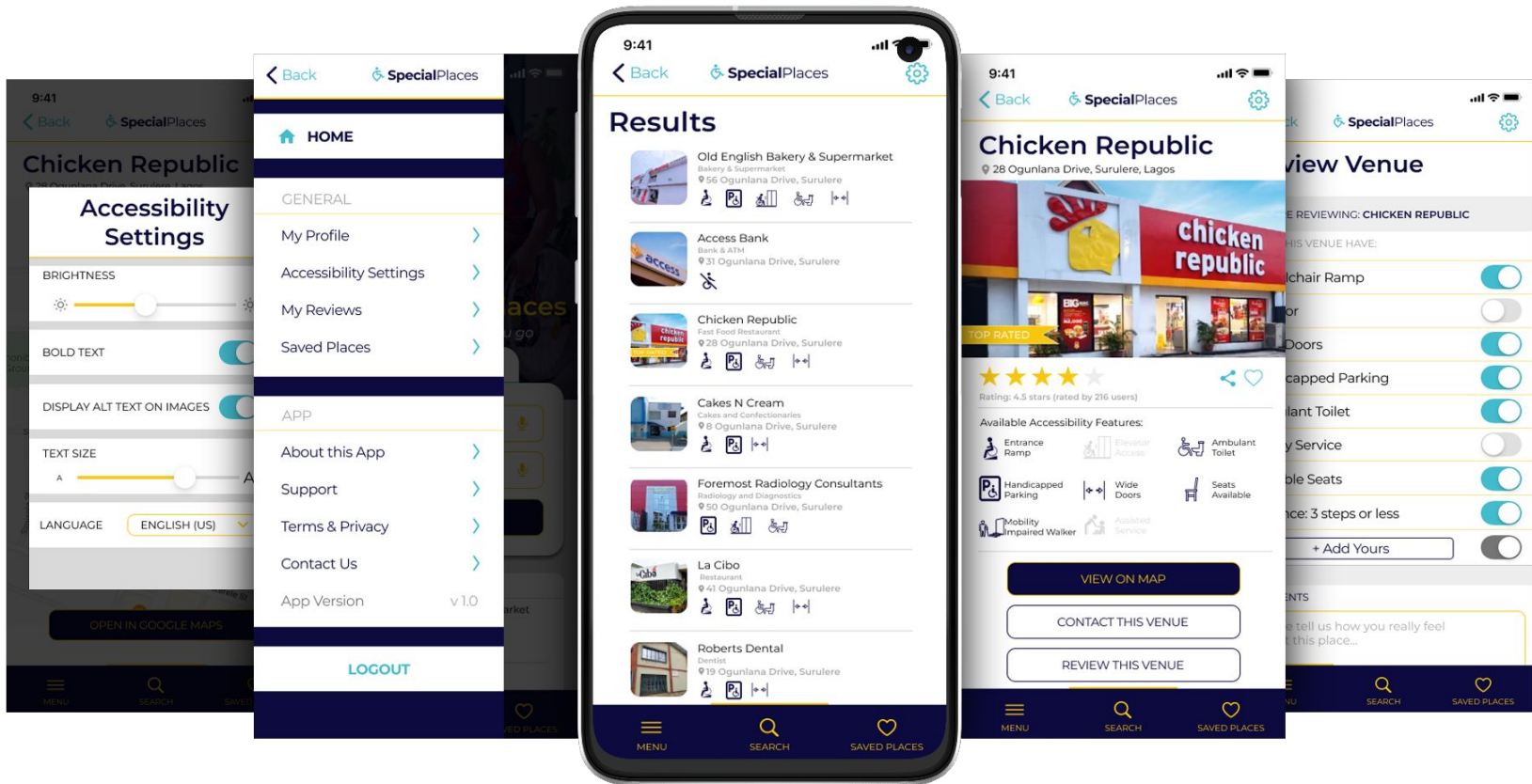


# Mockups

Based on user feedback, I added more accessibility features for the venues, a share button and reviews from other users



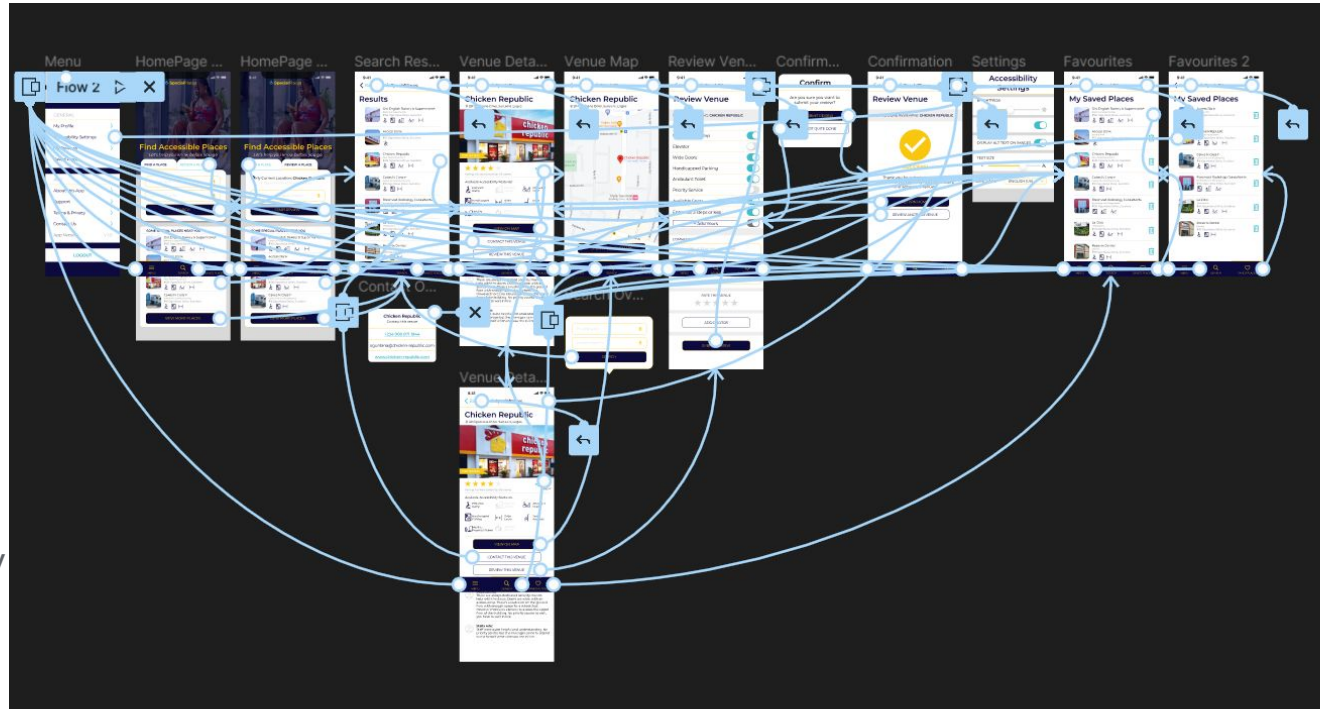
# Mockups



# High-fidelity prototype

With the mockups completed, I connected the screens to create a high fidelity prototype for another round of testing. The main focus still was ease of use and accessibility

[View high fidelity prototype here](#)



# Accessibility considerations

1

Since it was an app for users with limited mobility, accessibility was very important. I included a whole page for accessibility settings where users could change brightness, text size, alt text on images, language options etc

2

It was also important to include labels on icons for easy access for screen readers

3

Making the home page easy to use and direct was important as well. Users should be able to find a venue with as little clicks as possible. I also included a speech-to-text button for the input fields for accessibility

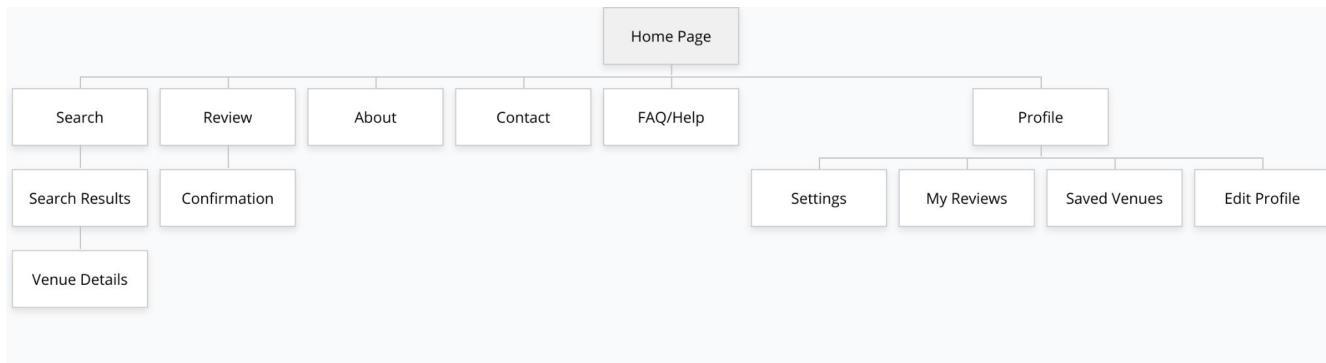
# Responsive Design



- Information architecture
- Responsive design

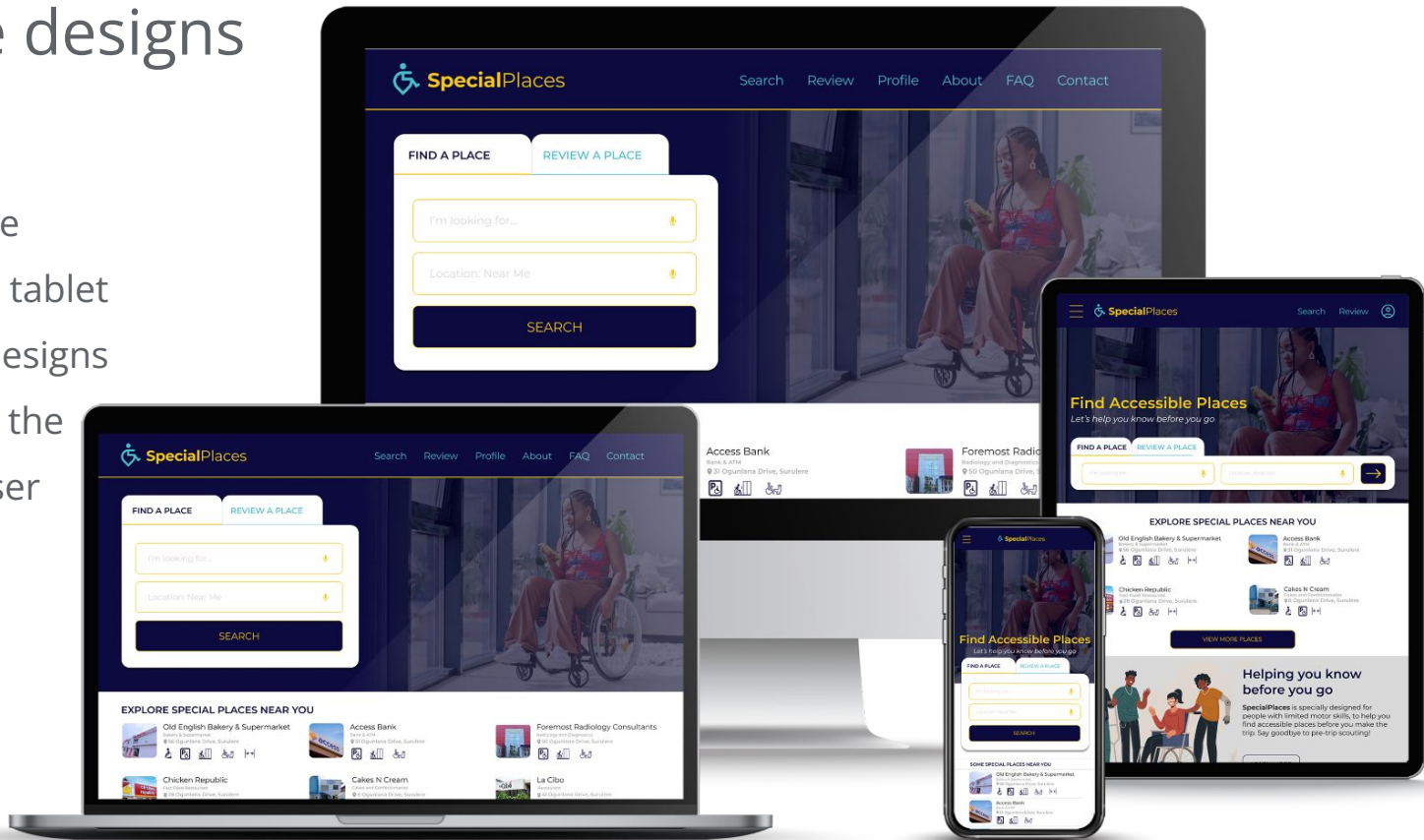
# Sitemap

After completing the app, I started working on the responsive designs for the website. I revisited the information architecture created when designing the app, and created a sitemap.



# Responsive designs

I created responsive designs for mobile, tablet and desktop. The designs were optimized for the screen sizes and user needs.





## Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

# Takeaways



## Impact:

As part of the usability studies, I visited a centre that specialized on trainings for people with disabilities. The aim was to test the app with real users who needed the product. The feedback was very positive and they were excited that such an app was finally going to be made to address their needs. It was quite a fulfilling process.



## What I learned:

With this project, I learnt that the UX designer is first a problem solver before being a designer. The design should solve a problem with real users, not just look aesthetically pleasing. I also learnt that a designer shouldn't design for themselves, but for the users: accessibility should always be a paramount consideration

# Next steps

1

Conduct another round of usability tests with users at the Project Enable Africa to find out if the final app meets users needs

2

Add more features like “Donate” and “Educate” to create resources that will encourage venues to make their places accessible to all users

# Let's connect!



Thank you for reading through! I created this as an entry-level designer, so I am still on a journey to discover better design.

Contact me at: [shylle@gmail.com](mailto:shylle@gmail.com)  
Or view my portfolio on [www.shylle.com](http://www.shylle.com)