

# Designing a website for a life-changing on-the-job general contractor training program

**CLIENT:** The Other Side Academy

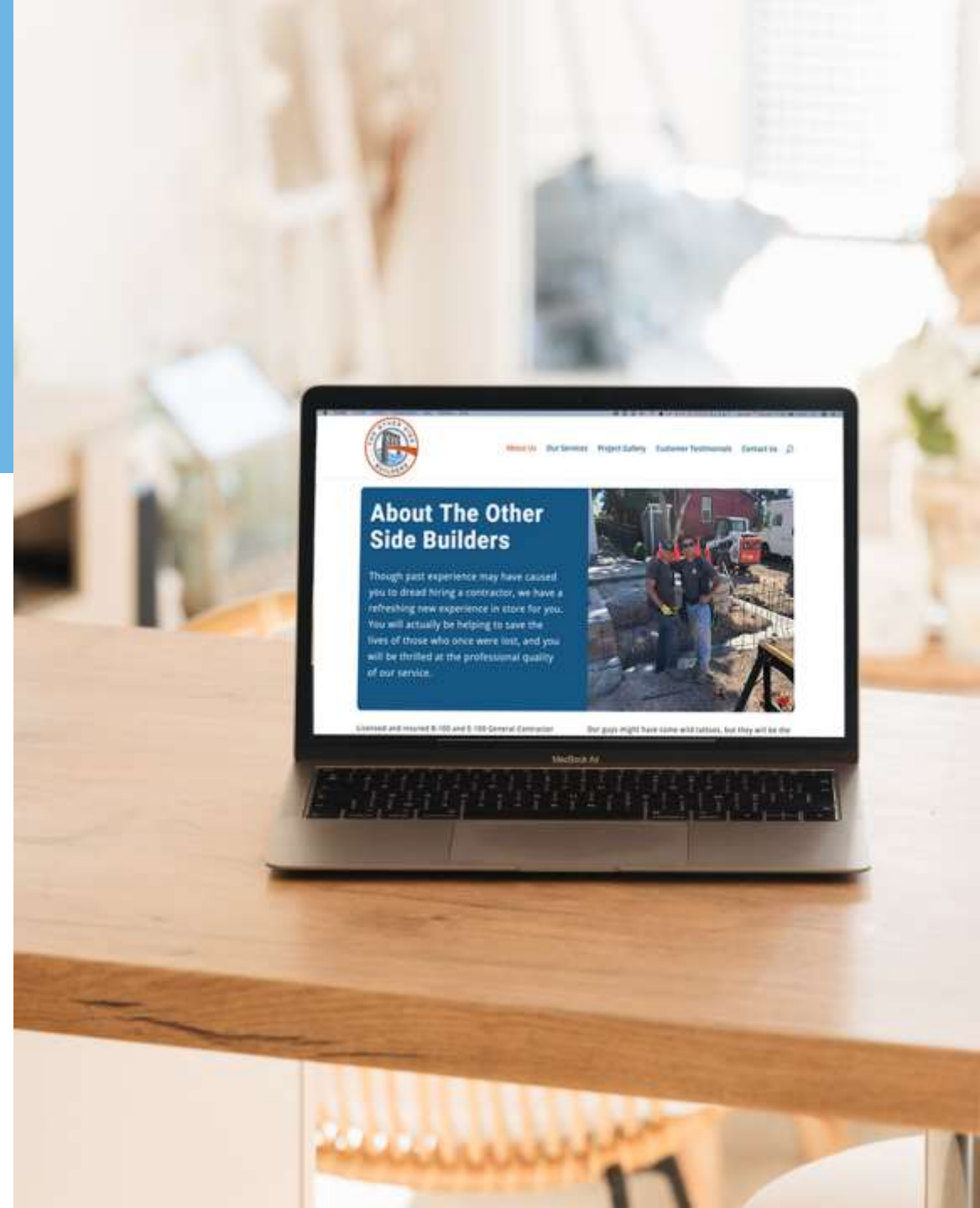
## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Other Side Builders is an on-the-job general contractor training program that helps former felons and substance-abusers live successful and productive lives, and they needed a website to promote their home improvement services and allow homeowners to request a project estimate.

## MY ROLES

UX Discovery | UX Strategy | UX/UI Designer | WordPress Site Creation

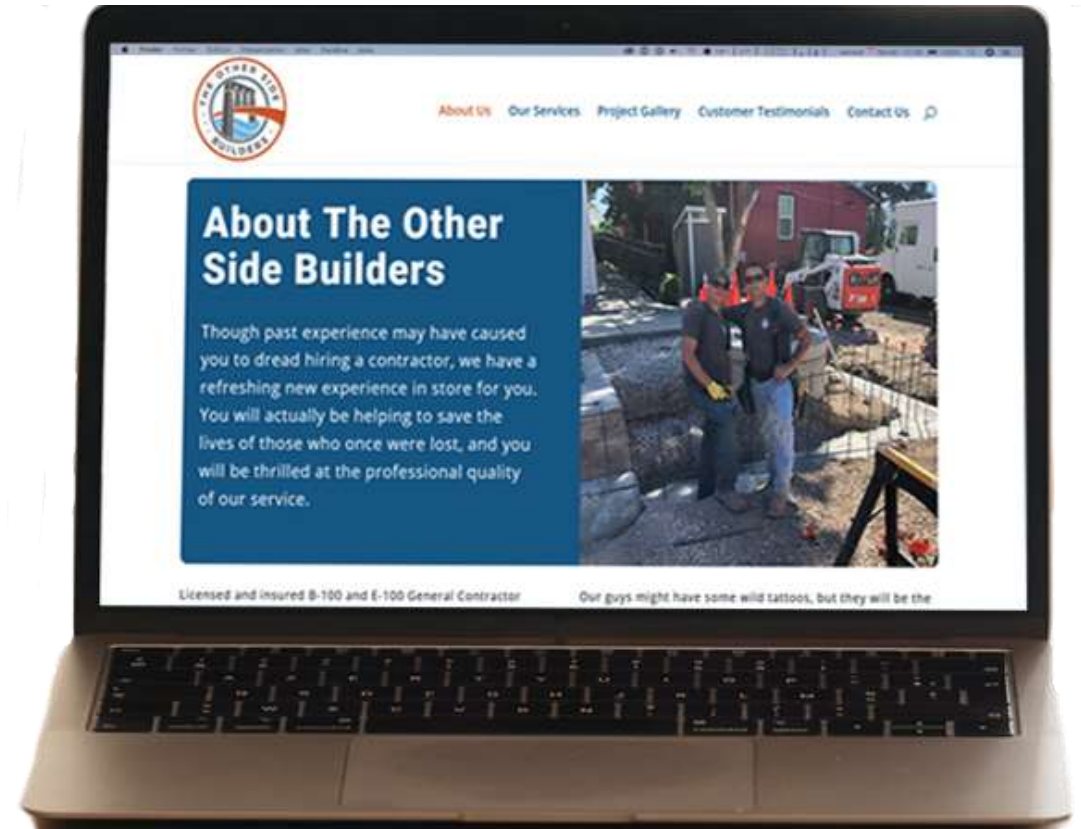
Worked with input and feedback from client.



The Other Side Academy (TOSA) **needed a CMS-based website** their staff could easily update for **The Other Side Builders (TOSB)**, to **tell the story of their recovery program** and **allow homeowners to explore TOSB's home improvement services** and **request a project estimate**.

### Outcome

I **designed** and **built** The Other Side Builders a complete **WordPress website** they can **update themselves** for a **savings of \$16,822**, allowing them to **fund their mission** to house, feed, clothe, and train people changing their lives through the addiction recovery program.



My process took me from **research through** to the **launch of the website**, where I was the sole researcher and designer, working collaboratively with input and feedback from the client.

1



### Research

Stakeholder interviews, competitive analysis, and user questionnaire.

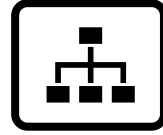
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### Understand the User

Developed user persona and mapped journey through site.

3



### Information Architecture

Developed a site map based on site content plan provided by the client.

4



### Design Process

Progressive-fidelity wireframes and clickable prototype. Design changes based on usability test results.

5



### User Testing

Prototype used to discover any usability issues. A/B preference test to compare designs.

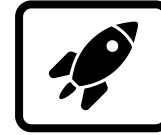
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### Build Website

Created content for website in WordPress. Incorporated formatted images, text, and device breakpoints for responsive design across device screens.

7



### Launch

Site launched May 2021. Handed-off site to client and provide video training on making site content updates.

To get a better idea about general contractors and their websites in Salt Lake City, I conducted a **competitive analysis** of **3** Salt Lake City **general contractor websites**. These offered **insight into the market** as well as **points of similarity** and **differentiation** in thinking about the **design** for The Other Side Builders website.

### Key Insights from Competitive Analysis:

- Contractors highlight licenses and credentials.
- Display customer reviews and any awards.
- Project galleries display examples of complete projects.
- Easy to request free project estimates.

### Key Takeaways for TOSB Website:

- The Other Side Builders website will need to match competitors in providing:
  - Licenses
  - Credentials
  - Project Examples
  - Customer Reviews
  - Ease in requesting estimates
- TOSB can leverage their unique story as an on-the-job training program for recovering addicts.

Given that the client did not have a budget for user research, I developed an **unmoderated online qualitative research questionnaire**, and the **client recruited 12 homeowner respondents**, to **gather homeowner data** without relying on time-consuming and expensive moderated interviews.



- 1** If you are looking to hire a general contractor to do work on your house, what is most important to you?
- 2** What information do you look for on a general contractor's website?
- 3** What do you find frustrating about the process of finding a general contractor?



# What Homeowners Said

**DETAILS** about the **contractor**, **services** offered, and **projects** completed are **important to homeowners**.

The contractor **website needs to make it EASY** for users **to find helpful information quickly**, because the **biggest frustration** is that it is **DIFFICULT** for homeowners to **research contractors**.

## Top things homeowners look for:

- Positive Reviews
- Licenses/Credentials
- Skills and Experience
- Details on Services
- Gallery of Projects

*“I like to see positive reviews and professional credentials.”*

*“Contractor should show evidence of quality work.”*

*“I want to know what services they provide.”*

From the research results, I created the **persona** of **Elizabeth** to **help** me **empathize** with the **needs** and **frustrations** of the **typical homeowner looking to hire a general contractor**.



Elizabeth, Age 65  
Nonprofit Executive Director  
Salt Lake City, UT  
Married, 3 Kids, 2 Grandkids

### **Behaviors & Attitudes**

- Looks for quality work, so the contractor should have examples of past projects with photos and client testimonials about the work done.

### **Needs & Goals**

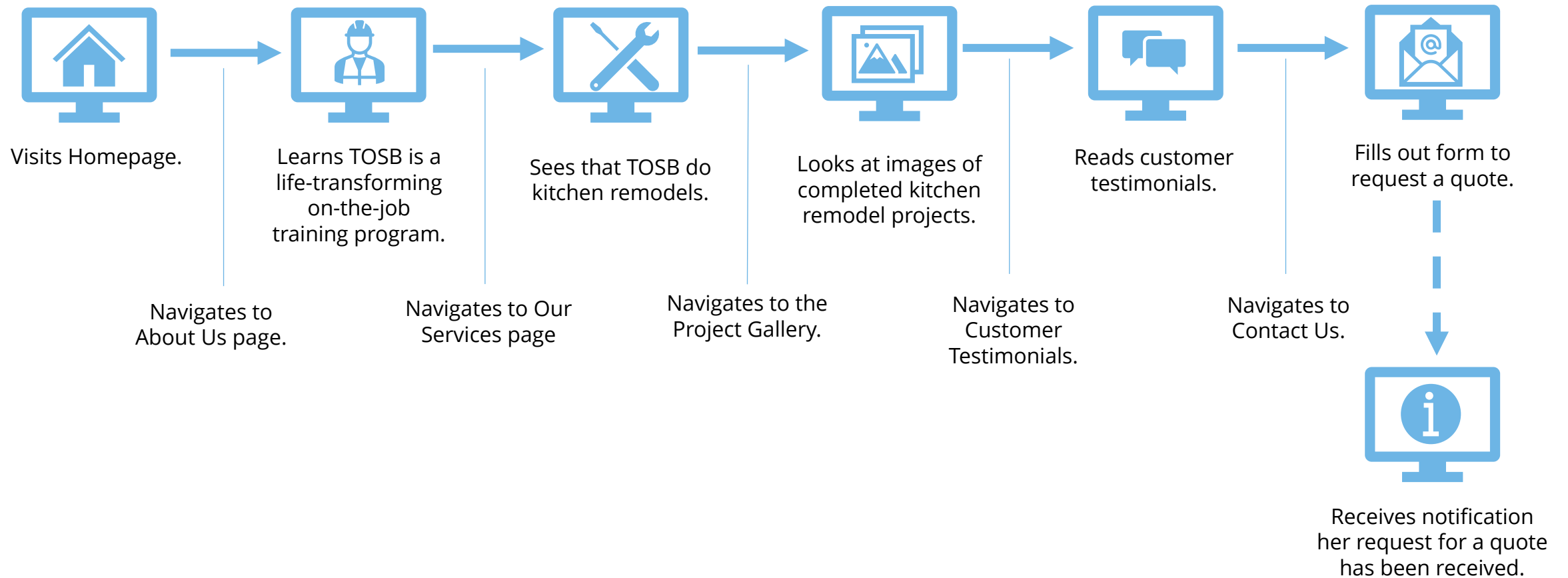
- Needs to hire a contractor to remodel her kitchen.

### **Frustrations**

- The time it takes to research contractors.

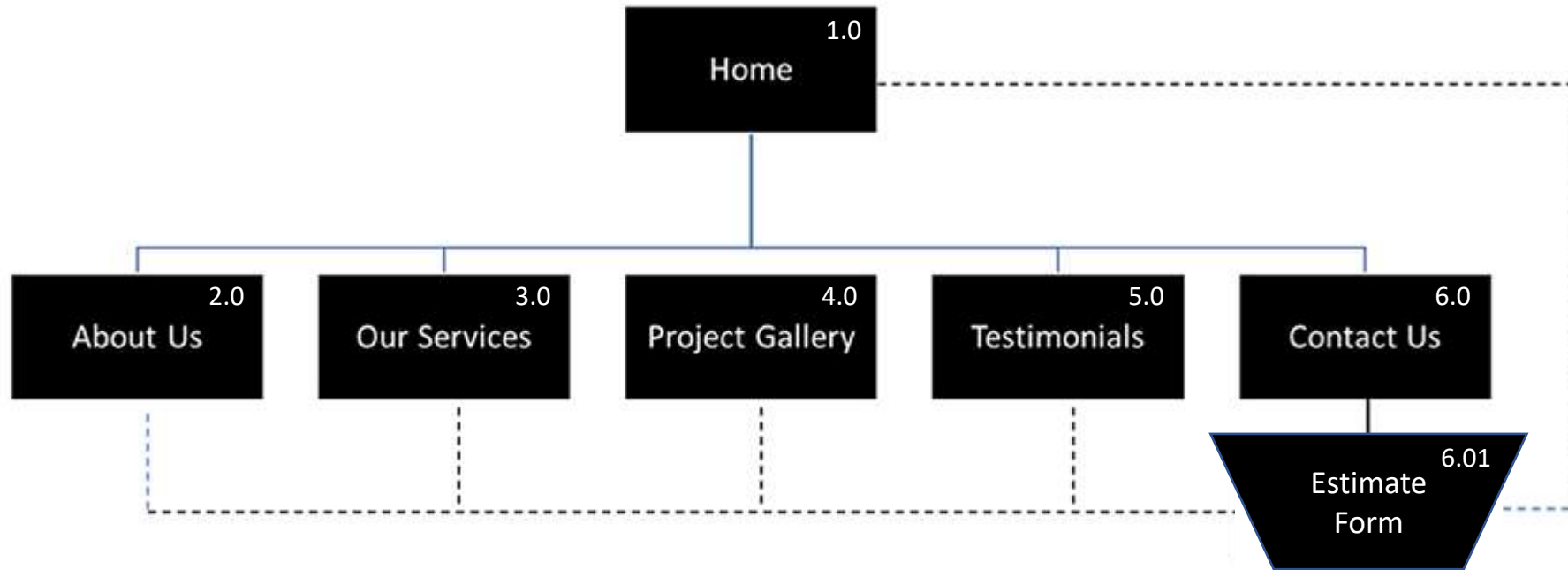
*"I'm looking for quality work with examples of completed projects"*

**Elizabeth's user flow helped me visualize** how she would **use the website to learn** about The Other Side Builders, their kitchen projects, and **request** an **estimate** for her home improvement project, leading to a user-centered design.



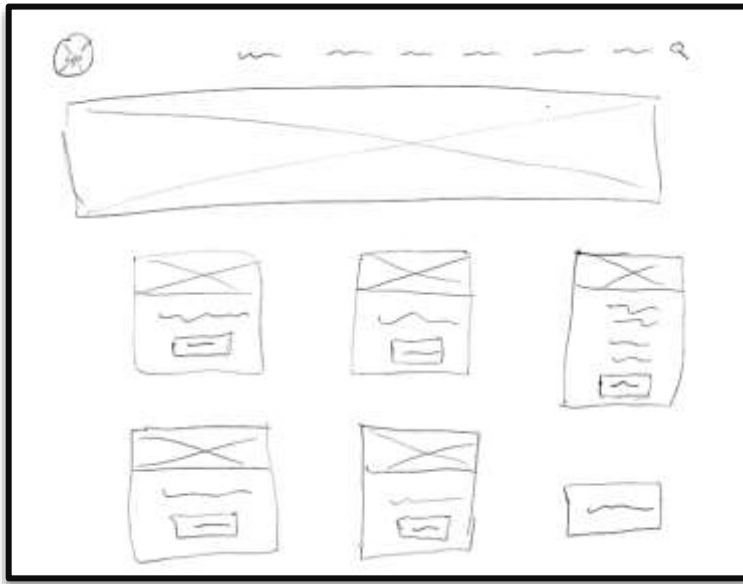


A **site map** identified the **structure** of the **website** so I could **focus** on the **pages** I would need to **design**.



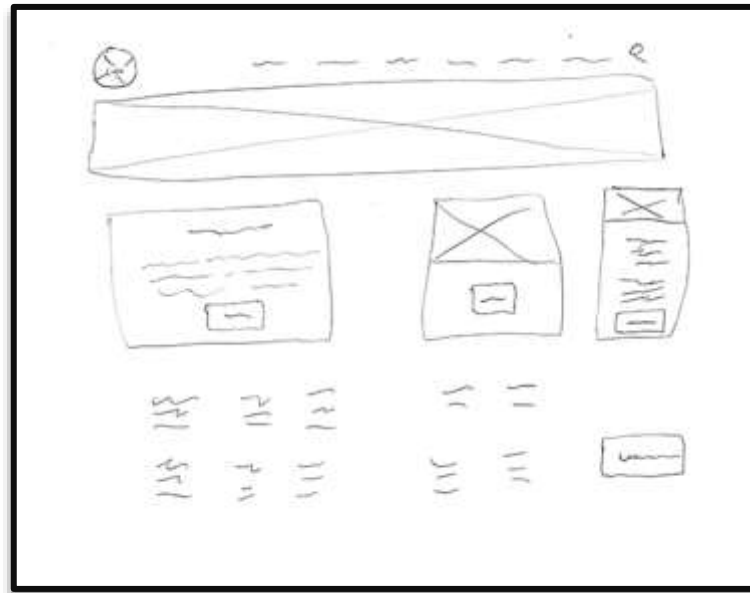
I transformed Elizabeth's user flow into **low-fidelity sketches** to get my **creativity flowing** with a **focus** on **how** the **pages** will **help** her **learn about kitchen projects** and **request an estimate**.

### 1 Home



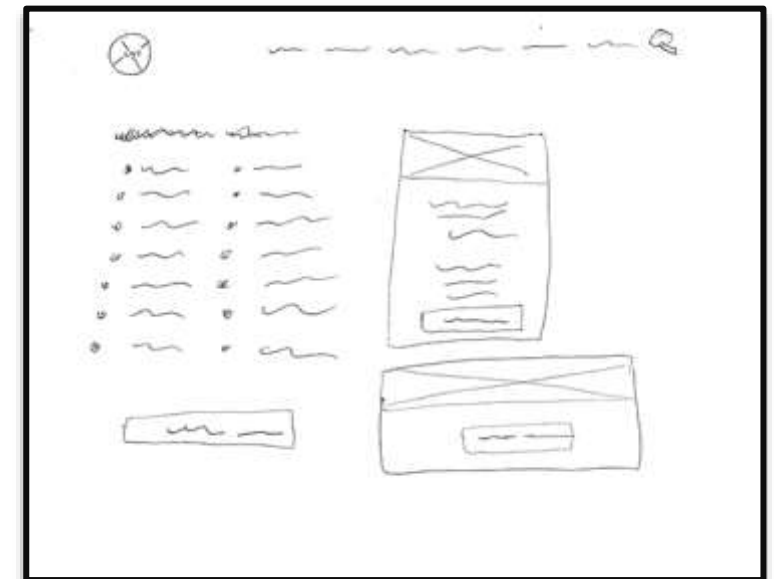
Elizabeth gets a quick glimpse of website content and navigates to About Us page.

### 2 About Us



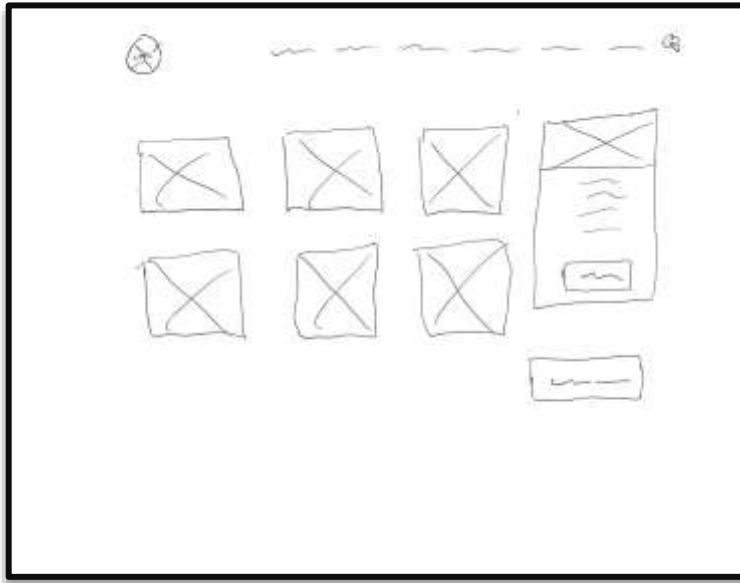
Elizabeth learns about TOSB as general contractors and their unique story.

### 3 Our Services



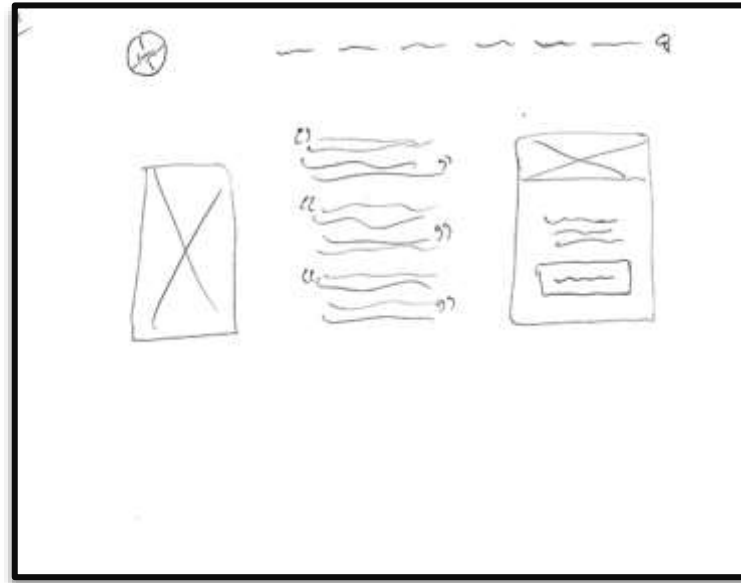
Elizabeth visits the Our Services page and learns TOSB do kitchen projects.

4 Project Gallery



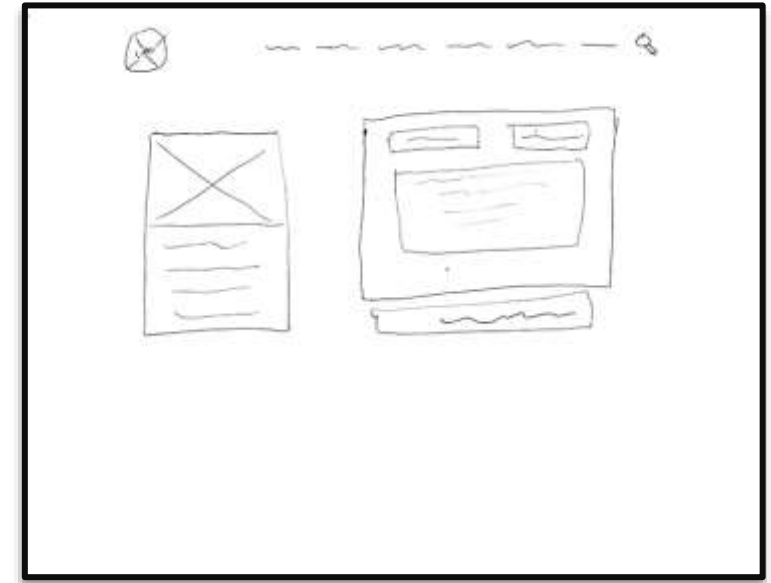
Elizabeth views images of completed kitchen projects.

5 Customer Testimonials



Elizabeth reads customer testimonials from past clients.

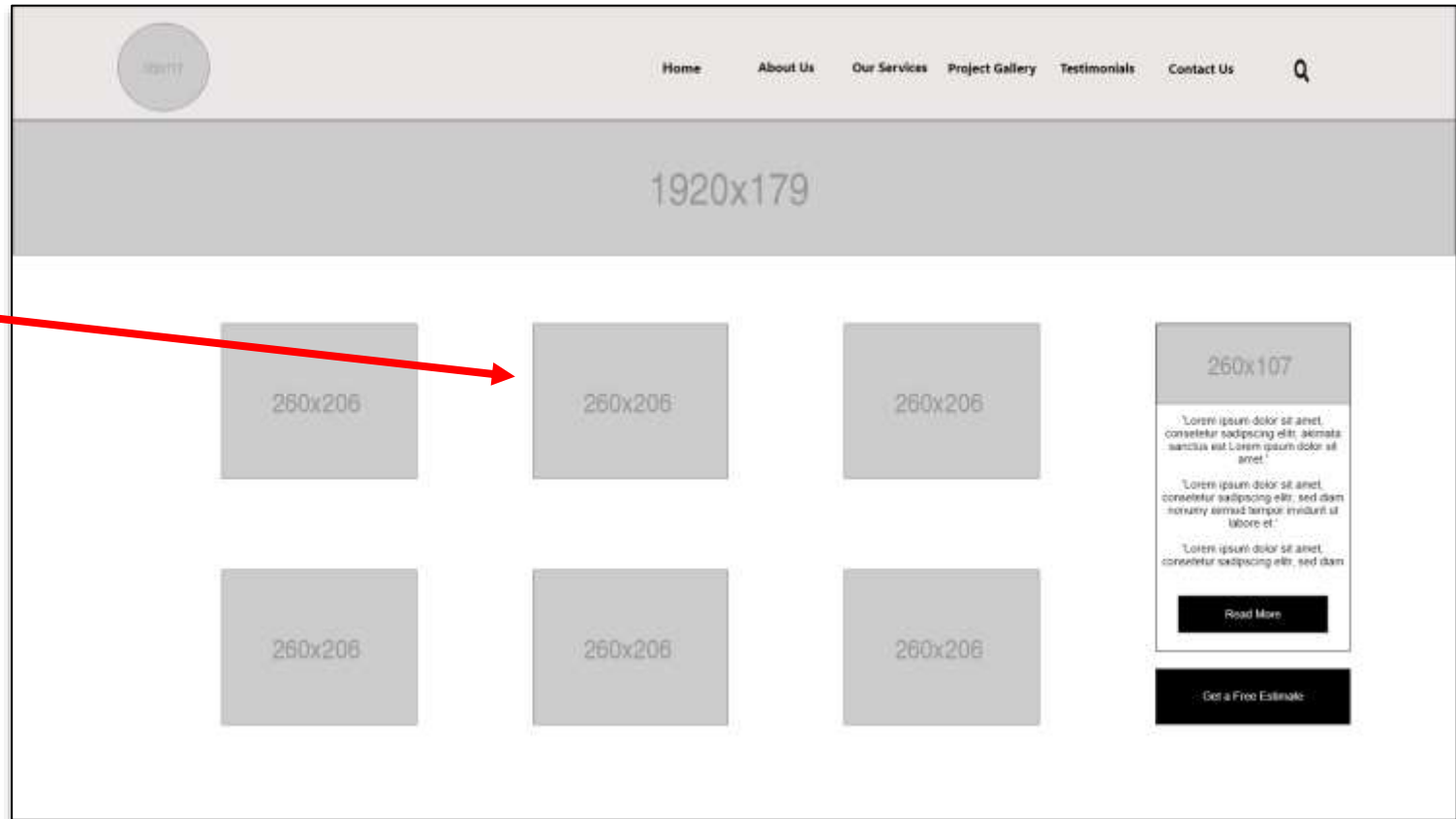
6 Contact Us

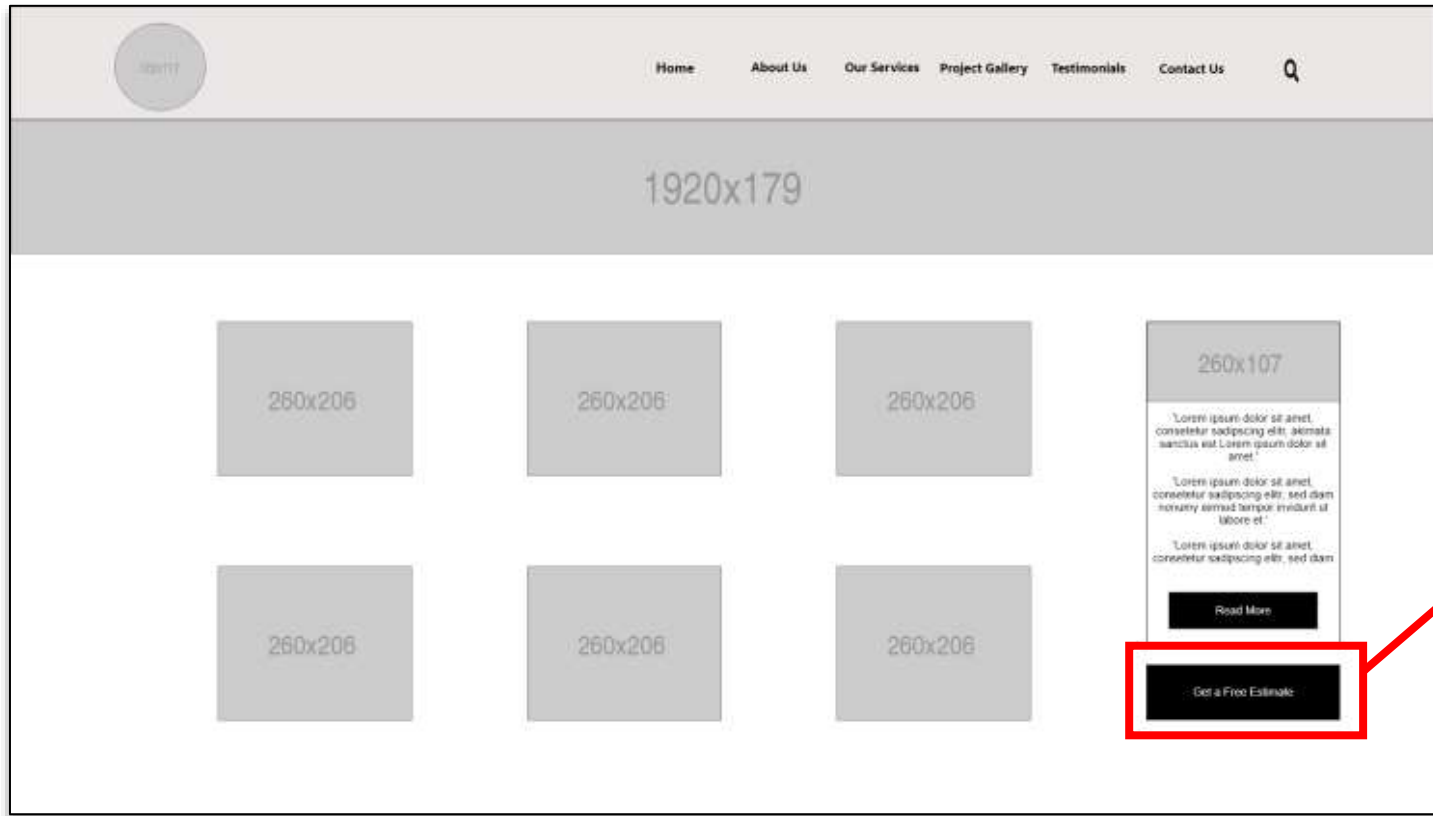


Elizabeth fills out a brief form and submits it to request an estimate for her kitchen project.

Moving into digital tools, my **mid-fidelity wireframes** focused on **layout** and thinking about **elements** needed so **Elizabeth** can **quickly gather information** about TOSB, kitchen projects, and **request an estimate**.

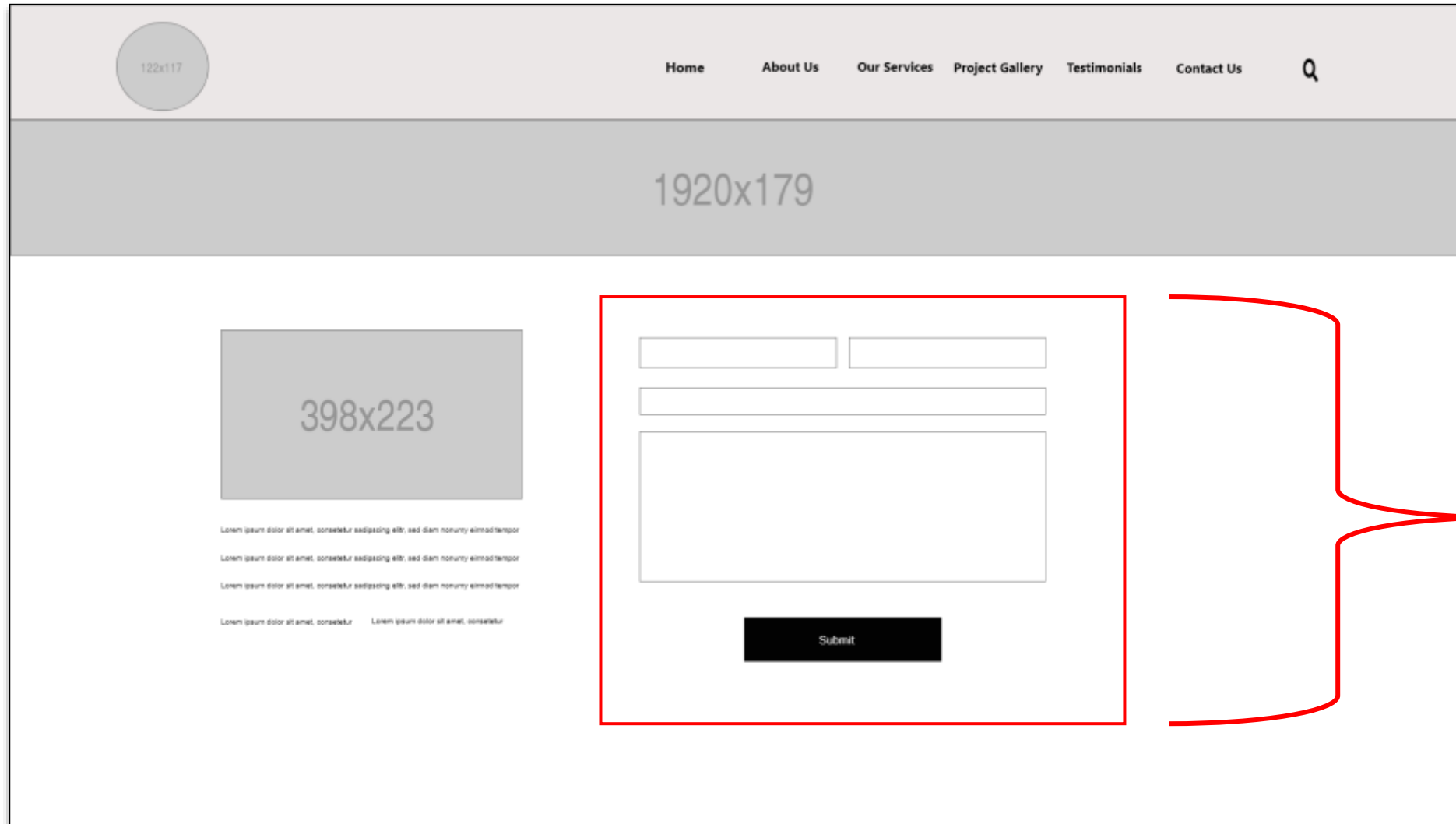
Elizabeth can scan an image gallery of projects and click on kitchen projects to view more kitchen images.





**Get a FREE Estimate**

Get a Free Estimate CTA button lets Elizabeth quickly access the project estimate form.



Elizabeth can fill out a contact form to request an estimate for her kitchen project.

I wanted to **test** the **usability** of the site with actual users before settling on a design to present to the client, so I conducted an **unmoderated online usability test** using a **clickable prototype** with **5 homeowners**. While the test affirmed the site's navigation structure, it **prompted** a **change** in **page layouts** and the **contact form**.

### Issue 1

Users commented the "Get a Free Estimate" and sample customer reviews were distracting being in-line with other main content on page

### Issue 2

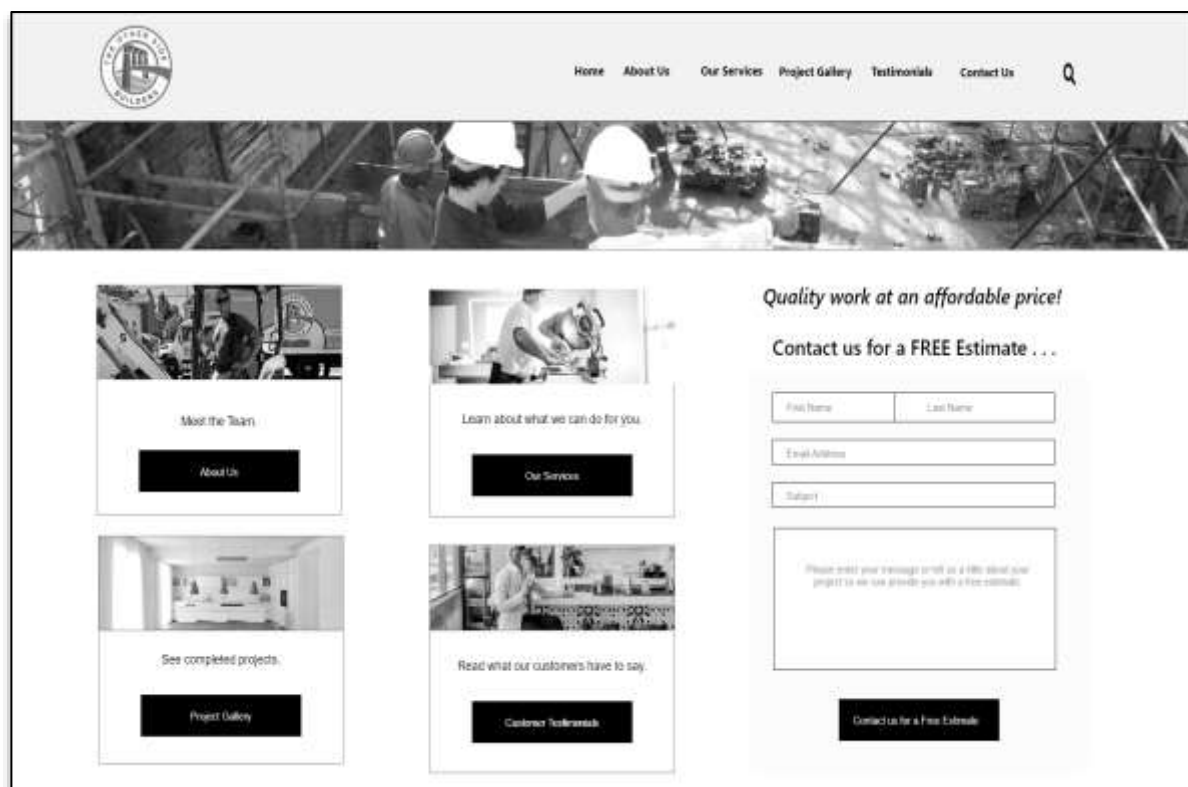
There were also some comments about the gallery layout, while informative, seemed "boxy."

### Issue 3

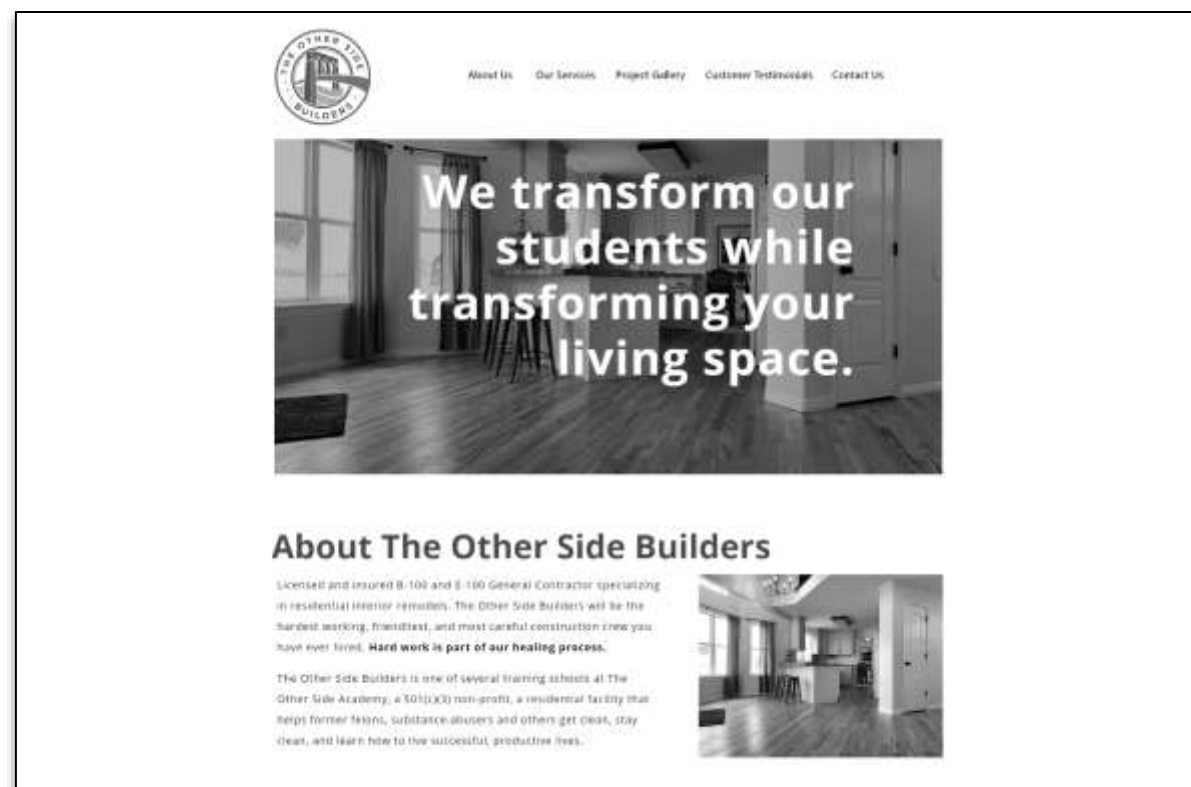
Rather than a regular contact form, users suggested it would be helpful to offer projects they can select from to minimize what they need to include in the message field.

I revised the design and then conducted an **A/B preference test** with **10 users** to see **how** the design **changes** were **received**, with **90%** of **users selecting** the **revised design** to provide confidence I had a good solution.

## Original: Page A (Selected by 10% of users)



## Revised: Page B (Selected by 90% of users)





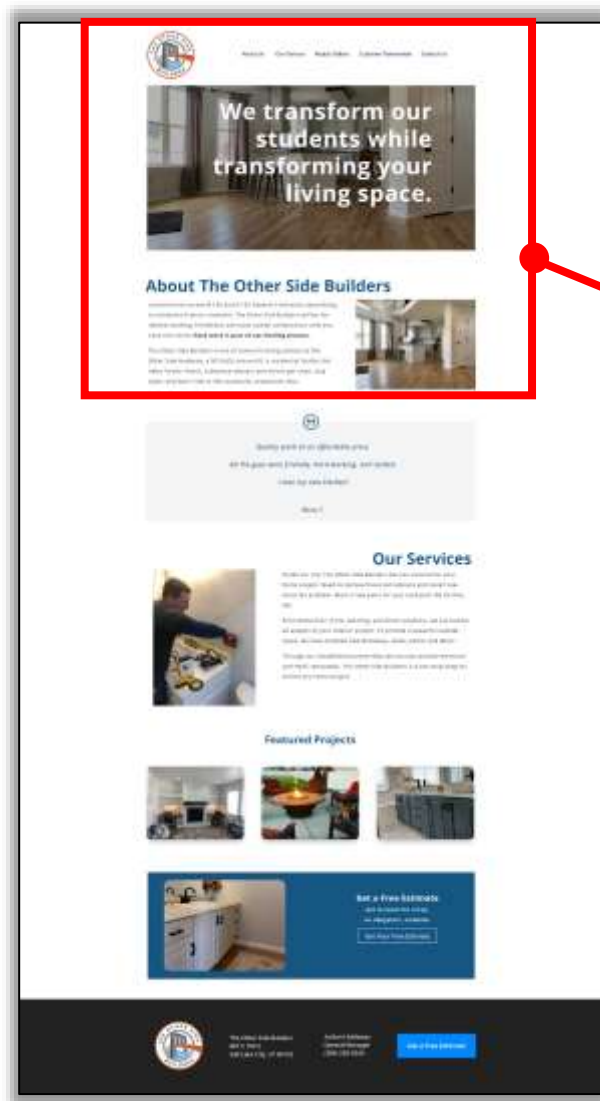
The **A/B preference** test for the **contact form** resulted in **80%** of users **preferring** the **revised design**.

## Original: Form A (Selected by 20% of users)

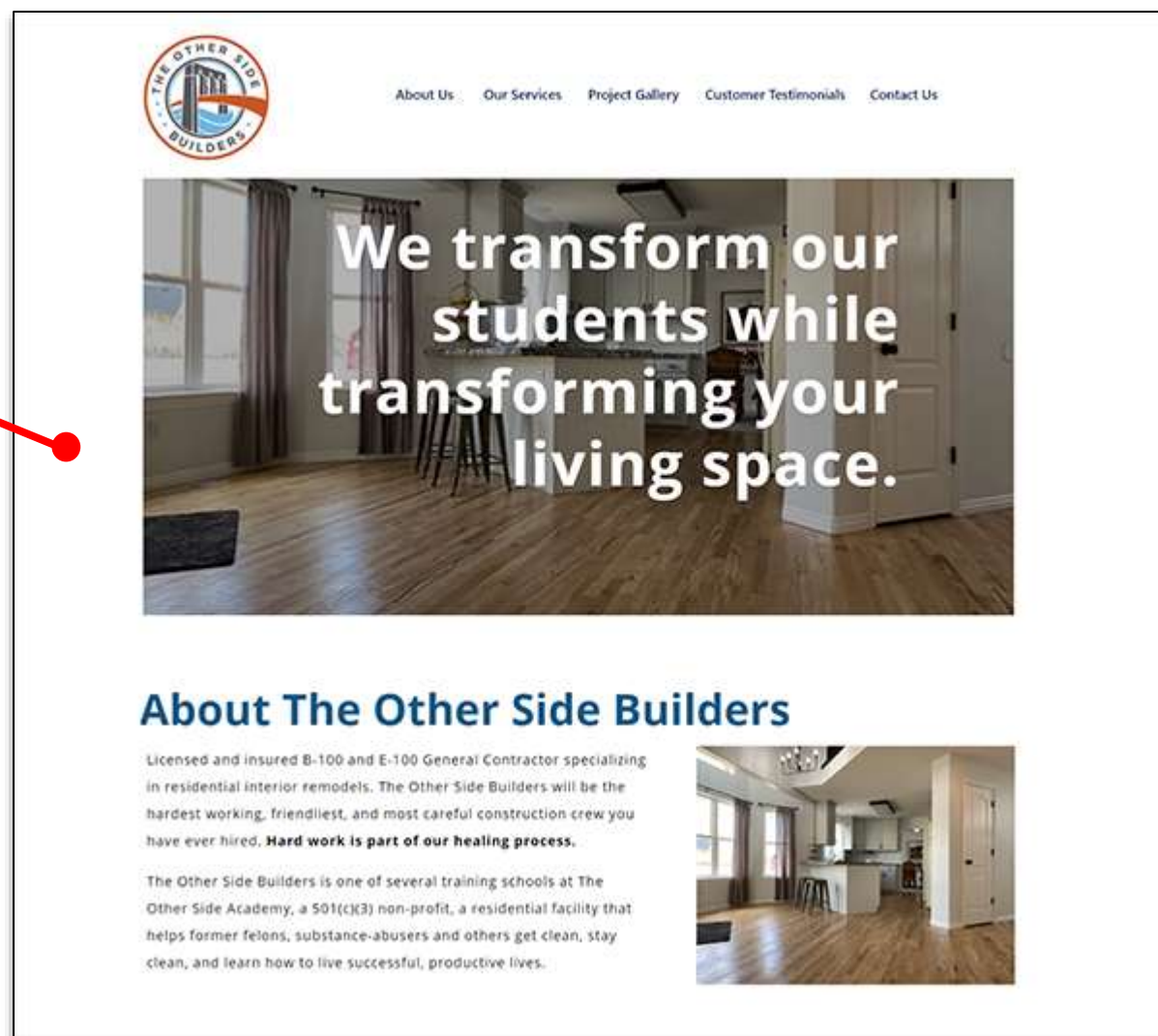
The original contact form (Form A) is a simple, functional design. It features a light gray background with a white border. At the top, there are two input fields for "First Name" and "Last Name". Below these is a single input field for "Email Address", followed by another for "Subject". A large text area for a message is positioned below the subject field, containing the placeholder text: "Please enter your message or tell us a little about your project so we can provide you with a free estimate." At the bottom center, there is a prominent black "Submit" button.

## Revised: Form B (Selected by 80% of users)

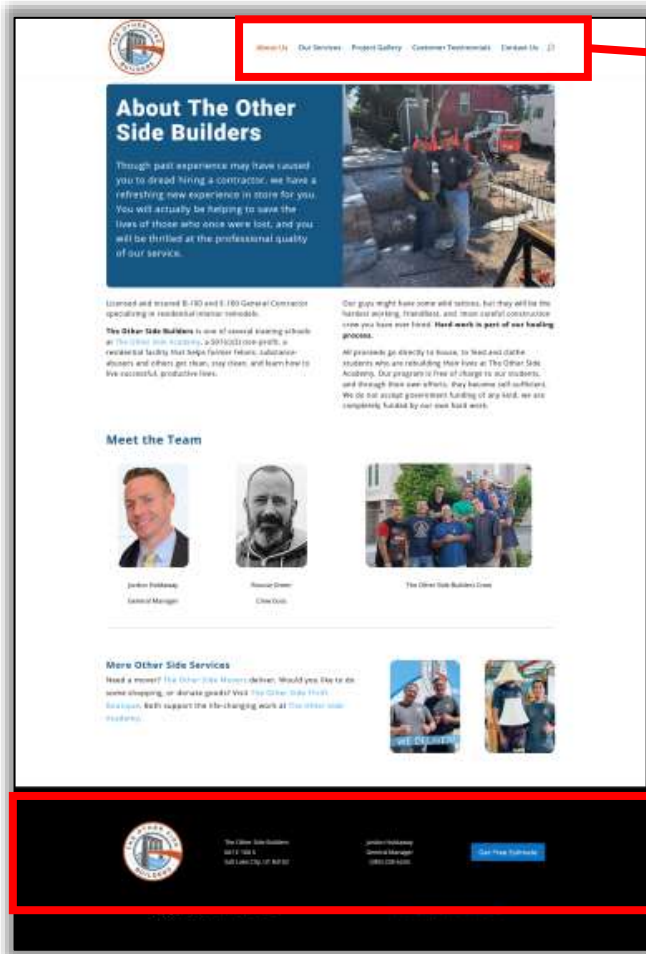
The revised contact form (Form B) is a more modern and user-friendly design. It features a light gray background with rounded corners. At the top, there are two input fields for "Name" and "Email Address", with a circular icon containing three dots between them. Below these is a section titled "Please let us know the project you are considering" with a list of radio button options: Bathroom, Bedroom, Dining Room, Driveway or Walkway, Kitchen, Living Room / Family Room, Outdoor Patio, Outdoor Decking and/or Steps, Painting, Other Exterior, Other Interior, More than one exterior project, and More than one interior project. Below the list is a large text area for a "Message". At the bottom right, there is a small "15 + 11 =" math problem next to a circular icon, and a dark gray "Submit" button.



A scrollable homepage offers an overview of site content, e.g. About The Other Side Builders



Navigation and footer bars provide Elizabeth important information from every page.

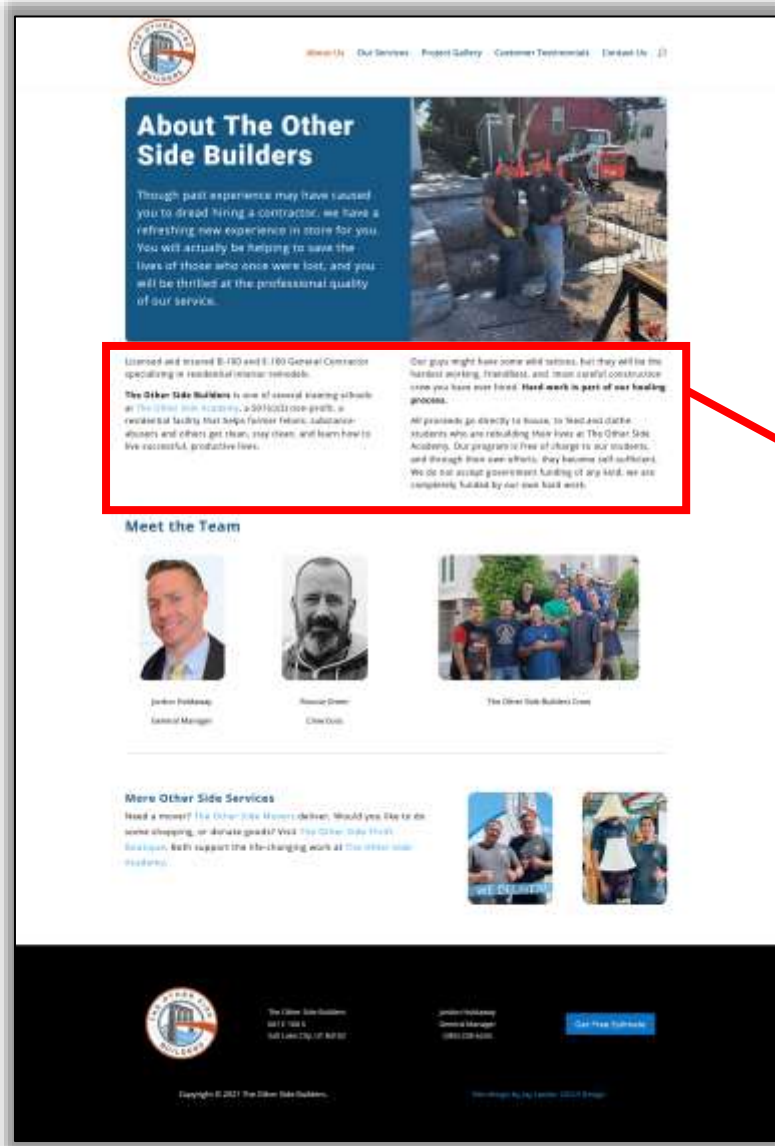


About Us Our Services Project Gallery Customer Testimonials Contact Us

The navigation menu informs Elizabeth where she is on the site by changing the text from blue to red.



The footer bar on every page brands the site with TOSB logo, basic contact information, and quick access to the contact form with the CTA *Get Free Estimate* button.



## About The Other Side Builders

Though past experience may have caused you to dread hiring a contractor, we have a refreshing new experience in store for you. You will actually be helping to save the lives of those who once were lost, and you will be thrilled at the professional quality of our service.



Licensed and insured B-100 and E-100 General Contractor specializing in residential interior remodels.

**The Other Side Builders** is one of several training schools at *The Other Side Academy*, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, a residential facility that helps former felons, substance-abusers and others get clean, stay clean, and learn how to live successful, productive lives.

Our guys might have some wild tattoos, but they will be the hardest working, friendliest, and most careful construction crew you have ever hired. **Hard work is part of our healing process.**

All proceeds go directly to house, to feed and clothe students who are rebuilding their lives at *The Other Side Academy*. Our program is free of charge to our students, and through their own efforts, they become self-sufficient. We do not accept government funding of any kind; we are completely funded by our own hard work.

### Meet the Team



Jordan Holladay  
General Manager



Andrew Green  
Chief Cook



The Other Side Builders Crew

### More Other Side Services

Need a mover? *The Other Side Movers* deliver. Would you like to do some shopping, or donate goods? Visit *The Other Side Thrift Boutique*. Let's support the life-changing work at *The Other Side Academy*.



A scrollable About Us page informs Elizabeth about TOSB as general contractors and their unique story as a training school of The Other Side Academy addiction recovery program.

Licensed and insured B-100 and E-100 General Contractor specializing in residential interior remodels.

**The Other Side Builders** is one of several training schools at *The Other Side Academy*, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, a residential facility that helps former felons, substance-abusers and others get clean, stay clean, and learn how to live successful, productive lives.

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Our Services offers Elizabeth a comprehensive list of home improvement services The Other Side Builders provide.

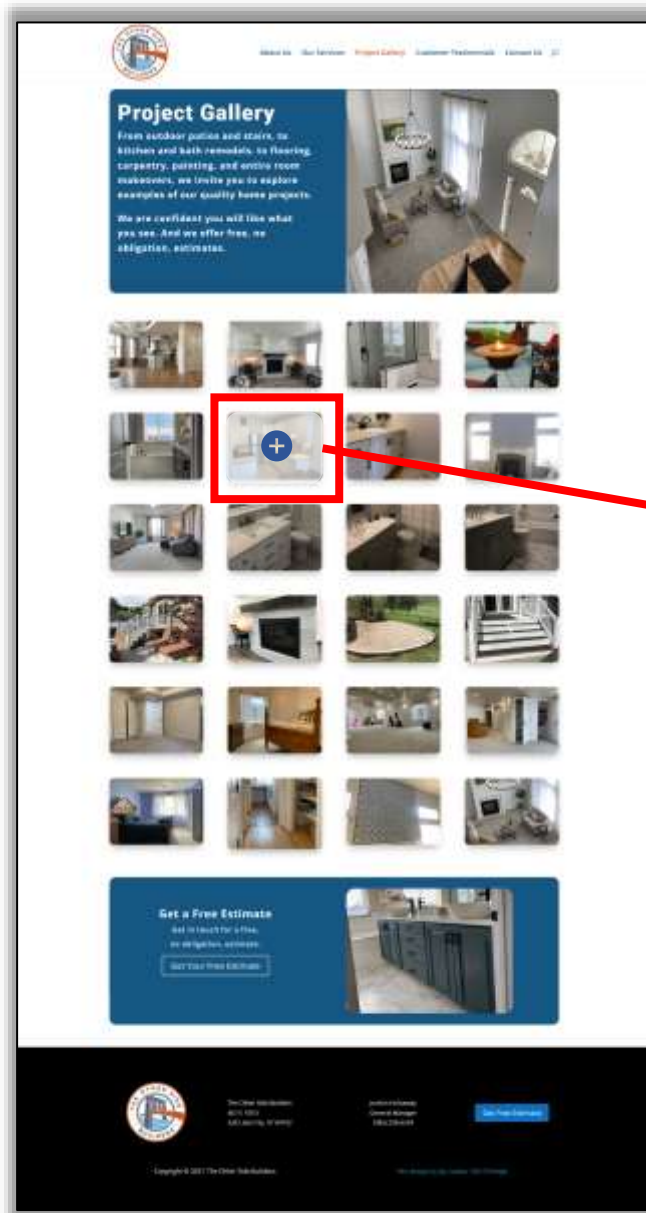
The screenshot shows the 'Our Services' section of the website. At the top left is the company logo. To the right of the logo is a navigation menu with links for 'About Us', 'Our Services', 'Project Gallery', 'Customer Testimonials', and 'Contact Us'. Below the navigation is a blue header with the text 'Our Services' and a paragraph: 'From demolition to tile, carpentry, painting, and finish work, we can handle all aspects of your interior project. To provide beautiful outdoor spaces, we have installed new driveways, walks, patios, decks, and stairs. The Other Side Builders is a one-stop-shop for any home project.' To the right of this text is a photo of a worker in a kitchen. Below the header is a red-bordered box containing a list of services: Demolition, Carpentry, Framing, Interior walls, Shelving, Concrete flat work, Outdoor patios, Tile, Flooring, Cabinets, Counters, Finish work, Painting, Decks and Stairs. To the right of this list is a paragraph: 'We also offer plumbing, electrical and HVAC renovation through our partnerships with high-quality, licensed and insured subcontractors that share in our mission. The Other Side Builders is your one-stop shop for any home project - inside and out.' Below the red box are three small photos showing construction work. At the bottom of the page is a dark blue footer with the company logo, contact information for 'The Other Side Builders' (447 E. 100 E, Salt Lake City, UT 84101), a phone number '(801) 228-6244', and a 'Get Free Estimate' button. Copyright information for 2021 and design credits are also present.

**We provide the following services:**

- Demolition
- Carpentry
- Framing
- Interior walls
- Shelving
- Concrete flat work
- Tile
- Flooring
- Cabinets
- Counters
- Finish work
- Painting

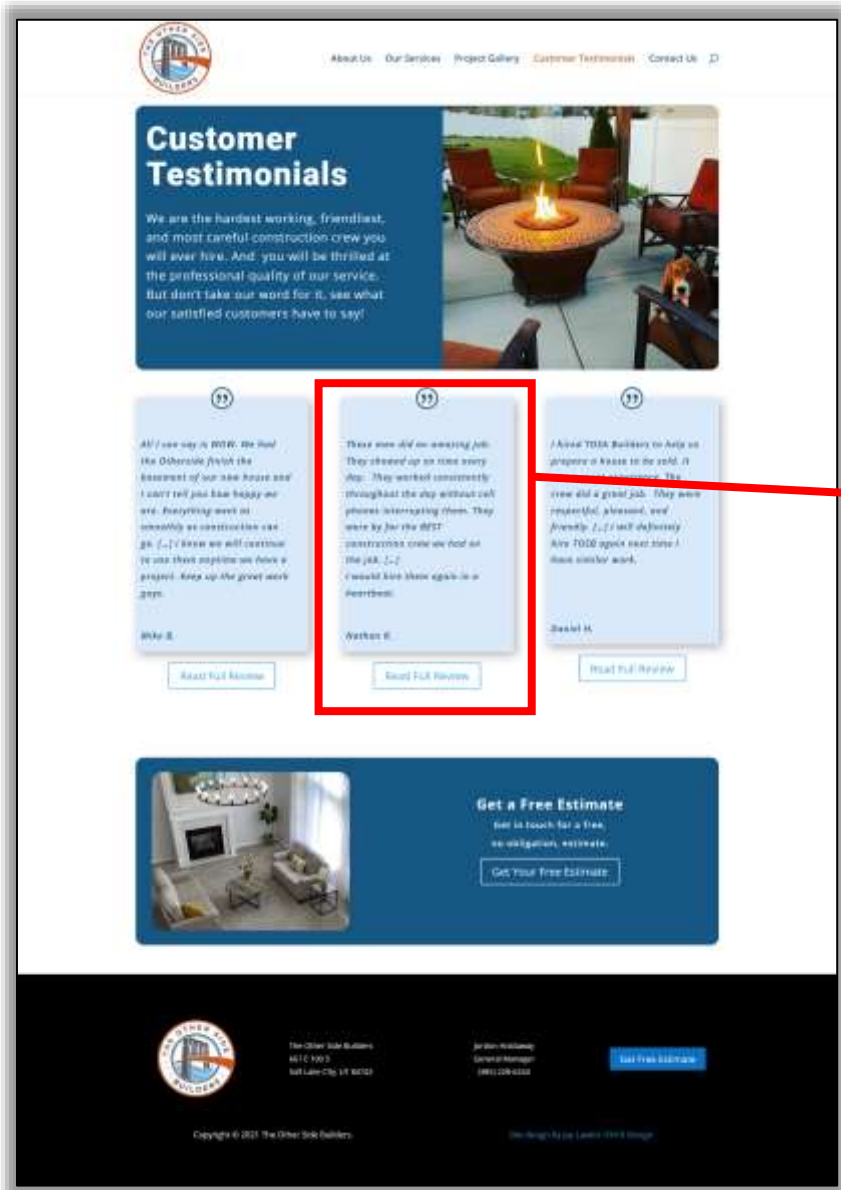
We also offer plumbing, electrical and HVAC renovation through our partnerships with high-quality, licensed and insured subcontractors that share in our mission.

The Other Side Builders is your one-stop shop for any home project - inside and out.

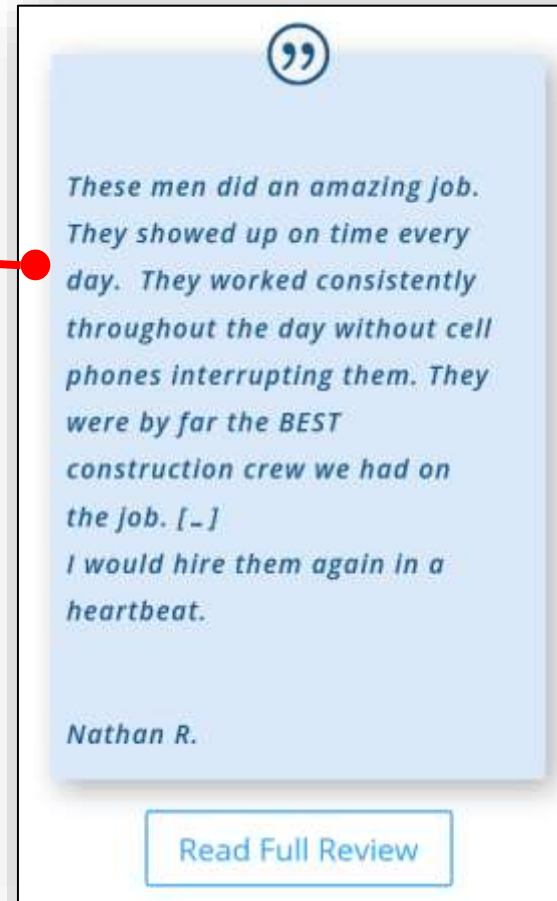


On the Project Gallery page, hovering over an image gives Elizabeth the option to click the picture for a larger view of a kitchen project.

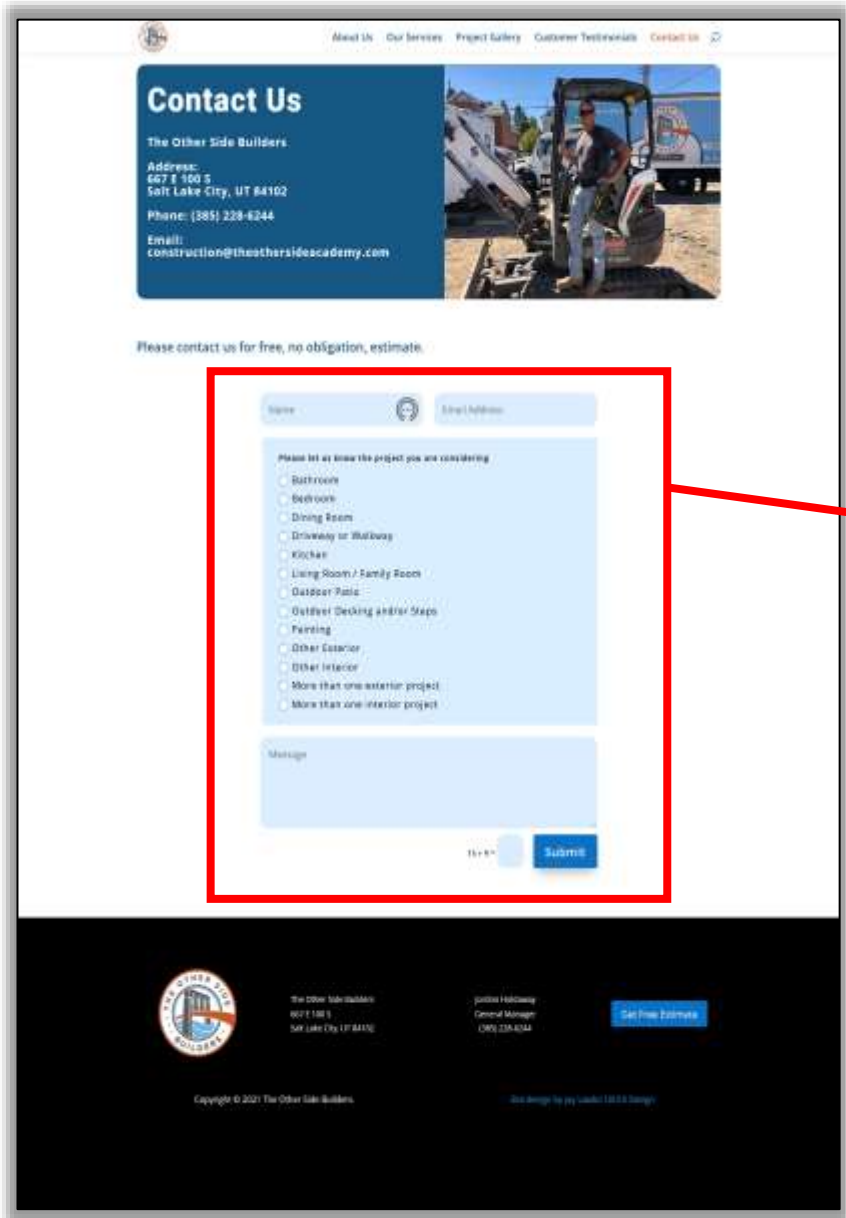




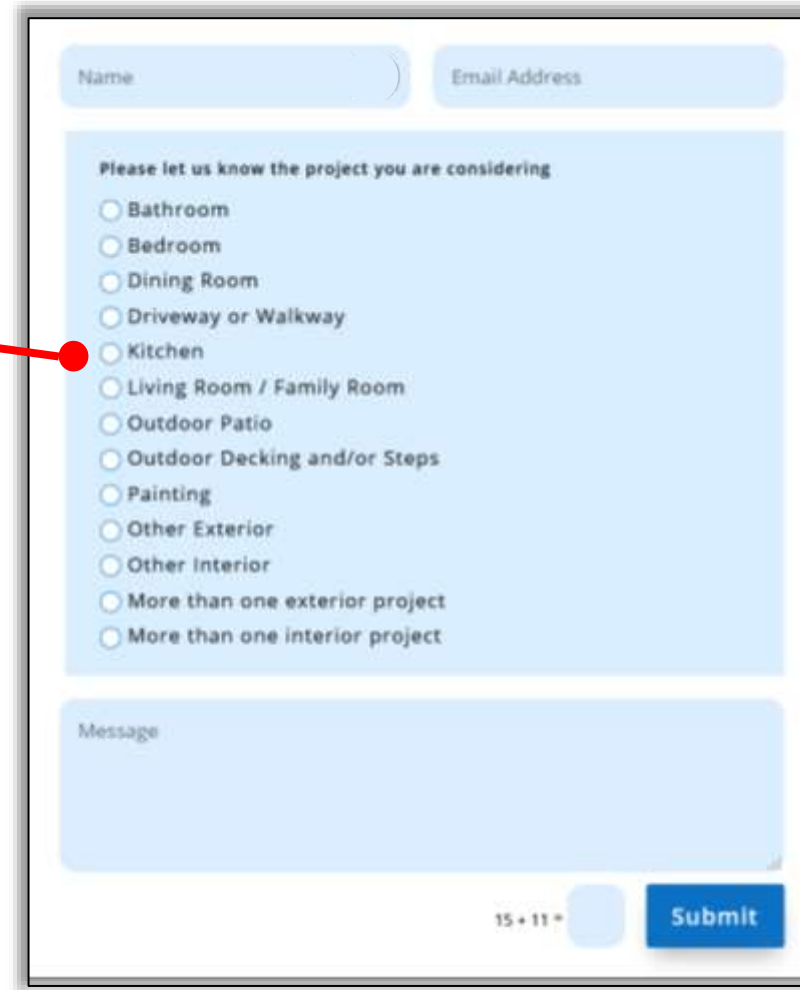
The Customer Testimonials presents Elizabeth with reviews from satisfied TOSB clients.



Elizabeth gets a representative summary of a client quote and is just a button click away from reading the full review.

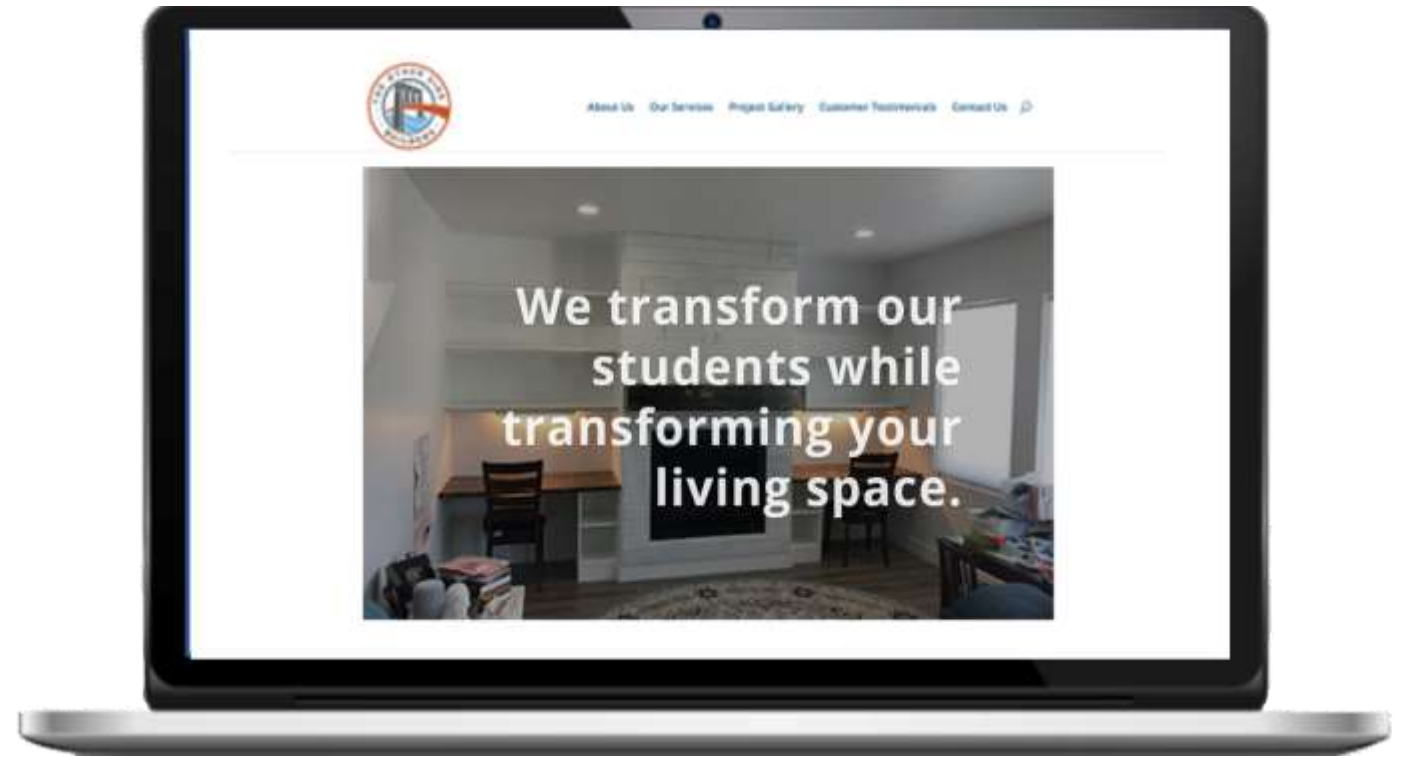
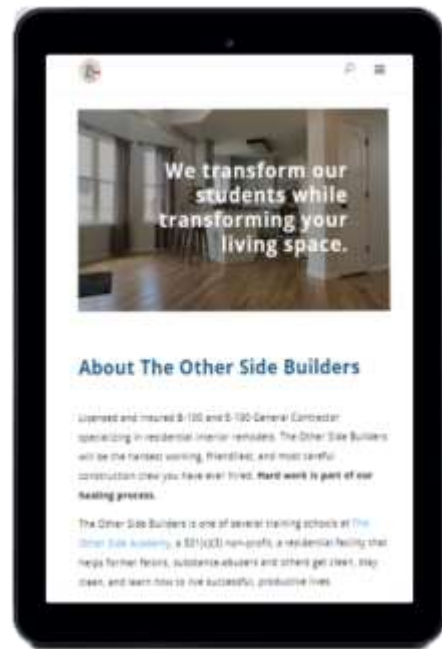


The Contact Us page lets Elizabeth quickly provide information to request an estimate for her kitchen project.





A **responsive design** means Elizabeth can **view** the website appropriately **formatted across** her **devices**.



## Color Palette



Logo provided by client.

The primary logo colors of Malibu (pale blue) and Chilean Fire (burnt red) were provided with The Other Side Builders logo. I chose a complimentary Allports blue for information card backgrounds and primary navigation text as it provided a better contrast with white in keeping with WebAIM accessibility guidelines.

Blue is used throughout the site as it evokes trustworthiness and is inviting.

## Typography

### Open Sans

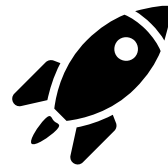
Open Sans is a modern and humanist typeface that is highly legible on screen and at small sizes. It is the 2nd most served font on Google Fonts.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÀÁÂÃÄÅËËÏÏÏ  
 abcdefghijklmnopqrs  
 tuvwxyzàå&12345678  
 901234567890(\$£€.,!?)

This project **provided** the **client** with a **complete WordPress website** they can **update themselves**, allowing them to **fund their mission** to house, feed, clothe, and train people changing their lives through the addiction recovery program.

**User testing revealed** some **issues** with the **layout** of content on the pages, which **led to an improved design**.

While originally going for a toolbox-like gallery layout, **usability testing caused me to re-think** the **design/layout** choice and **go** in a **different direction**.



Site launched and handed-off to client May 2021.

”



***Jay is the BEST to work with! Skilled, professional, and a great communicator. He put together a beautiful, functional website in much less time than I expected. He went above and beyond for us, and we are so grateful for his expert help and support.***

**- Lindsey N., The Other Side Academy**