

# **Creative Brief: Brabant Coffee & Chai**

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## Introduction

Brabant Coffee & Chai first opened in 2005 in the University District of Seattle and has experienced considerable growth over the past eight years. Now boasting a second store in the Pioneer Square area of Downtown Seattle, Brabant has maintained 5-star reviews on Yelp and has twice won Best of CitySearch competitions.

Brabant serves as a welcoming community space in Seattle and hosts several different types of events including open mike nights, weekend music shows, and art showings. The original design and coding was done by a friend of the owners who was not highly professional. Although Brabant has grown considerably, the website ([www.brabant.com](http://www.brabant.com)) was never replaced (as it should have been) and it has not even been meaningfully updated in several years. Among other problems, it uses fixed widths and is, in other respects, unfriendly to mobile devices. This is now recognized as a major detriment that we must address. Furthermore, while Brabant now uses social media (e.g., Twitter and Facebook) to promote itself, links to these social media outlets cannot be found on the website. Instead, employees update the website to announce special events, but this does not always occur in a timely manner. Although not reflected in my preliminary design, I am exploring ways to integrate Twitter and Facebook into the Brabant website and possibly include a blog.

Although the University District store is always busy with students and neighborhood denizens, the Pioneer Square store has not yet acquired a comparably loyal base of regulars. A redesigned website, serving to highlight all of the reasons why Brabant is unique in both environment and approach, will help promote and publicize this store and hopefully drive neighborhood traffic there. This creative brief describes the design requirements, the plans for the redesign, and the design as it exists now.

## Statement of Purpose

The main purpose of this website is to promote the business. A simple but crucial item of information is the address and hours of operation of Brabant's two locations. But beyond this, a good website can bring in customers and foster customer loyalty. Two important content elements for achieving this purpose are (1) the information about specialty coffee standards and (2) Brabant's ethical purchasing standards for coffee and chai. It is also important to notify customers about upcoming special events.

Secondary purposes are to generate an increased sense of pride for employees and to enhance our status within Seattle's specialty coffee community and beyond.

# Audience Analysis

## Primary audience

The primary audience of for the website is a broad as our current and potential customer base. At the University District store, patrons include students, University of Washington employees, nearby workers, and neighborhood residents of all ages. At the Pioneer Square store the customer base tends to be young professionals, artists, and some visitors to Seattle. Because both shops—though somewhat different in layout and aesthetic—have a youthful, trendy atmosphere, the website should be able to echo the interior design of these stores without harming the online experience.

This audience may be either deciding whether to try out one of our shops or, if they know us, confirming the address or checking on our hours of operation. They may intend to simply pick up a quick cup of coffee or chai (we have no drive-through service), spend a few minutes with us enjoying their beverage, or looking for a place to spend extended periods of time working or socializing. The website should promote Brabant Coffee & Chai as a place for any and all of these activities.

Customers intending to visit an independent, specialty coffee shop likely want to support small businesses as opposed to larger, ubiquitous chains such as Starbucks or Tully's. They also tend to be responsive to attractive décor, and an attractive website implies that the Brabant organization understands and appreciates good design. They may also be seeking information about our offerings in specialty coffees and chai about the special events that Brabant hosts.

## Secondary audience

The secondary audience for this website consists of business owners, managers, and other employees in the specialty coffee and chai business and other members of the coffee and chair community.

These individuals are likely to be updating their knowledge of the local market and benchmarking Brabant against their own organizations. In so doing, they will be forming opinions about the quality of our organization and business. Because Brabant hires regularly at both the management and barista levels, an attractive and effective website will help in the recruiting process.

We expect our entire audience to make extensive use of tablets and smart phones as well PCs, to use all the major browsers. Store locations and hours must be especially easy to find and read on mobile devices. Even though we focus on a youthful demographic, we recognize the importance and ethical imperative of accessible design.

## Business Model

As noted, the website is promotional. Brabant has no plans to sell product through the website.

## Comparison with Similar Websites

Before designing the Brabant Coffee website, I visited numerous other websites of local coffee shops and roasteries to determine what type of information is typically displayed on coffee shop websites. The websites surveyed represent all of Brabant Coffee's major peers in the local specialty coffee scene.

The websites visited include:

<http://www.victrolacoffee.com/>  
<http://www.espressovivace.com/>  
<http://www.herkimercoffee.com/>  
<http://www.stumptowncoffee.com/>  
<http://www.caffevita.com/>  
<http://www.49thparallelroasters.com/>

Although these sites vary in organization and amount of content (and some are within the e-commerce domain as they sell wholesale coffee online), they have many similarities. All of the sites have a dedicated page listing locations and hours open. For this reason, I have decided to include a page on the Brabant homepage with photos of both locations, their respective addresses, and the hours of operation. On the current Brabant homepage, this content is on the side of the page and is easily overlooked. There are also currently no photos of the store exteriors and few graphics of any kind.

Out of all of these sites, the most effective and well-designed is the website for Stumptown Coffee Roasters. With its careful integration of multiple colors and its well-scaled text elements, this website manages to present a wide variety of content, including colorful photographs, text-heavy educational content and rich media (videos), without becoming boring or overwhelming the visitor. Because I hope to add educational content to the current Brabant Coffee homepage and because management wants the Pioneer Square murals integrated into the design, the Stumptown Coffee website will serve as a good model.

## **Content and Content Acquisition**

The website will feature updated versions of content that currently exists on the website, except that the special events information will be now be offloaded to Facebook and Twitter. The Events link will now provide only a general overview of our special event programs. In addition to the mural, we will show the exteriors of both stores for the benefit of first-time visitors.

Management has already drafted updated educational content and has committed to updated About Us content by May 25. There are “soft” plans to hire a professional photographer, but I am prepared to take all photographs myself if necessary. I do not foresee any problems with intellectual property. I will create several alternative pages designed to accommodate video players in case video is added later.

## **Technical Implementation**

All photos and graphics will be edited using Adobe Fireworks and Photoshop (CS6). The website will coded using Notepad ++. At the moment, I do not foresee the need for JavaScript, but I can incorporate and tweak publically available JavaScript if necessary.

## **Theme, Style, and Mood**

The theme of the website is as follows:

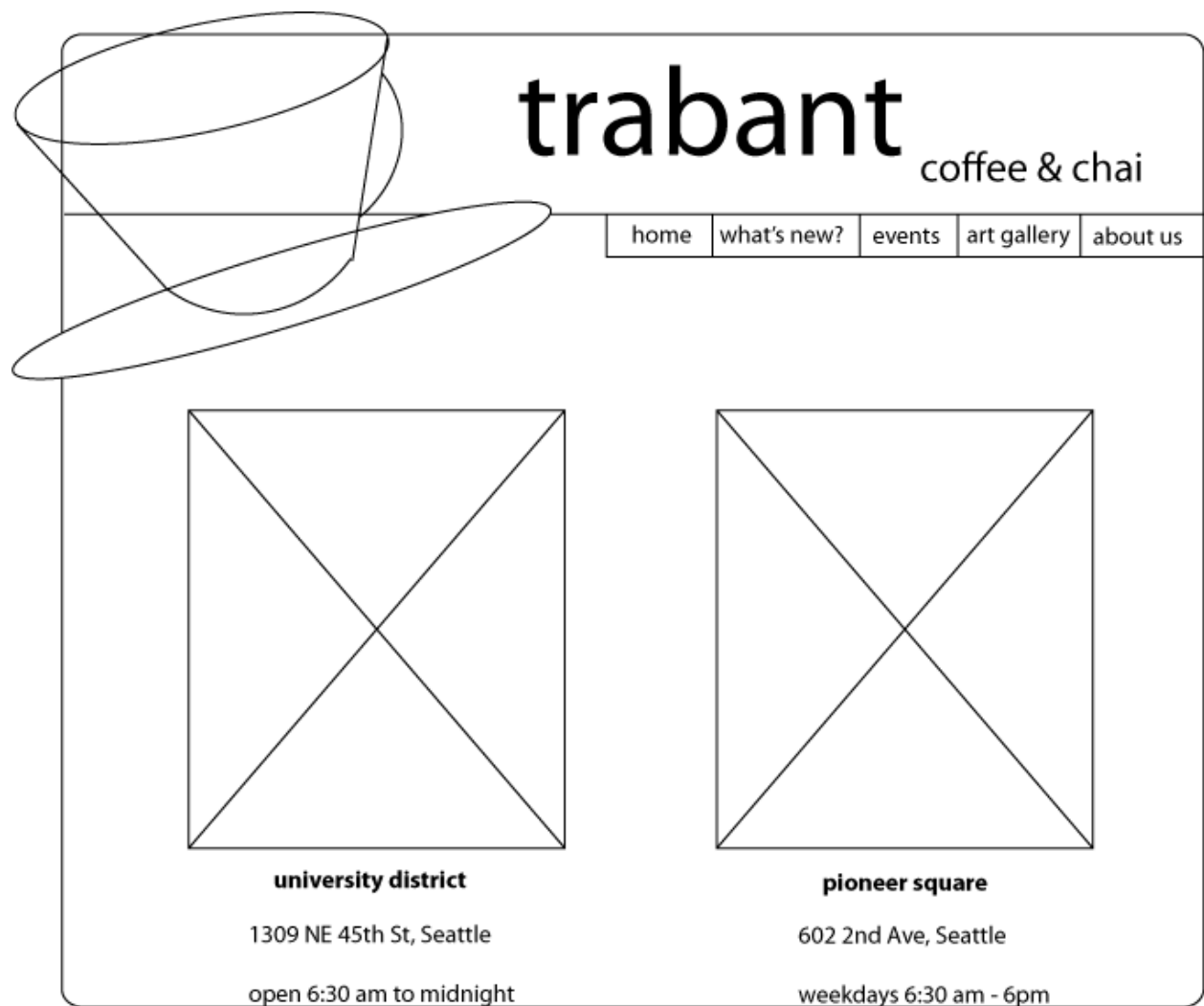
Folks who want something beyond the ordinary seek out Brabant Coffee & Chai. They get superb, ethically sourced coffee and chai beverages, prepared by specialty beverage artisans. They enjoy their beverages in a stylish and attractive setting with a hip, youthful vibe. They look to Brabant for special events that enhance their lives and the surrounding community.

In order to strengthen the Brabant brand and visual identity, the styling of the website will echo the interior design of Brabant’s two physical stores. Therefore, the site will draw its color palette from the bleached oak of the University District store and the zebrawood paneling and distressed red brick of the Pioneer Square store. Photographs of the well-known murals of the Pioneer Square store will be incorporated into the design, and an approximation black and white the tile floors of the U District store will likely be used as backgrounds. In order to unify the somewhat disparate design elements from both stores, I will use robin’s egg blue as an accent color. This is also the color of the Brabant porcelain coffee cups.

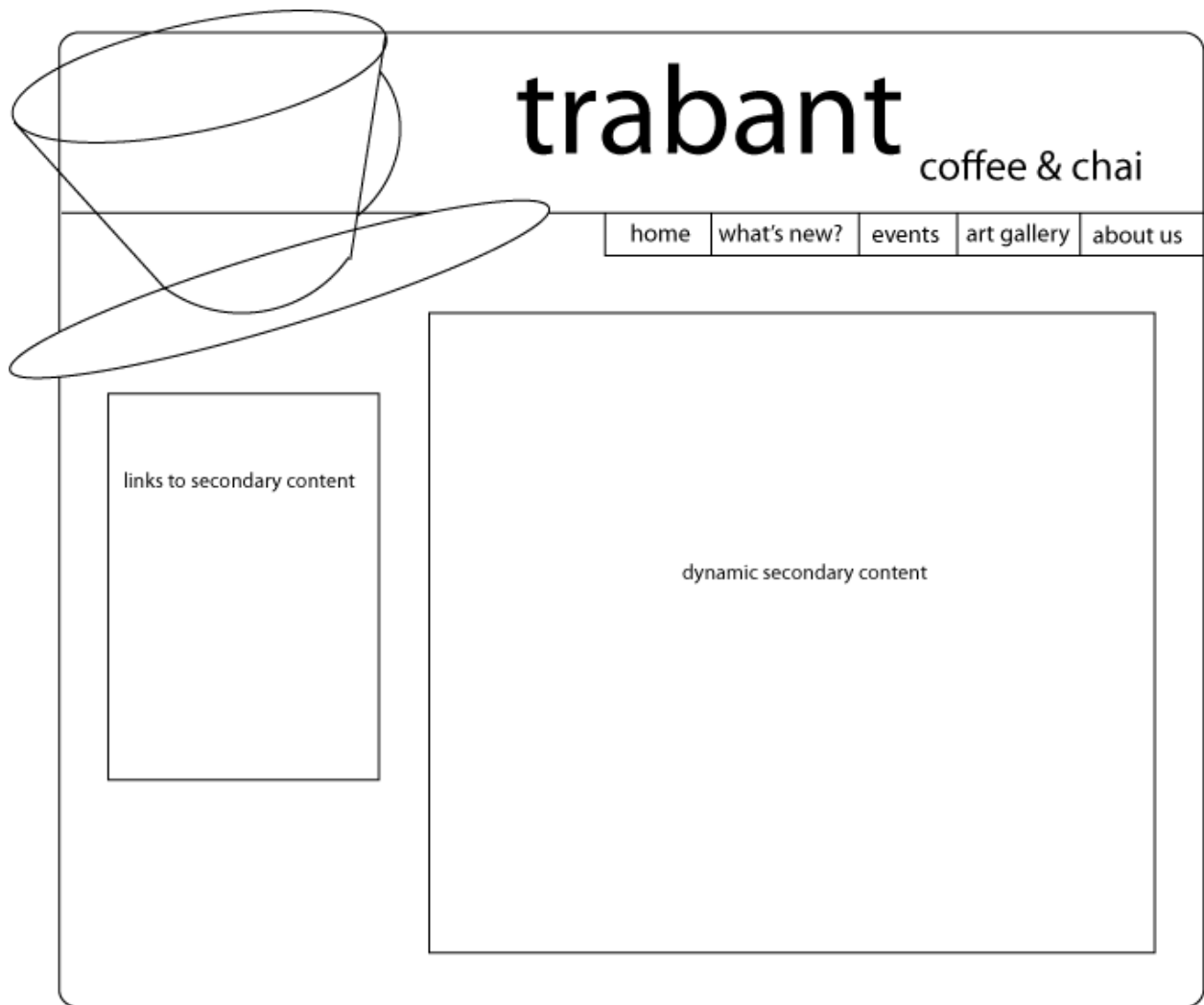
The site will project a mood of youthful energy. Interesting people are talking about interesting things in these coffee shops.

## Early Concept Sketches

I have developed some early concept sketches, presented as wireframes and without color added or final choices of fonts. Due to the modern and trendy style of Brabant Coffee's stores, I am leaning towards more informal sans-serif fonts, as depicted in the following sketches



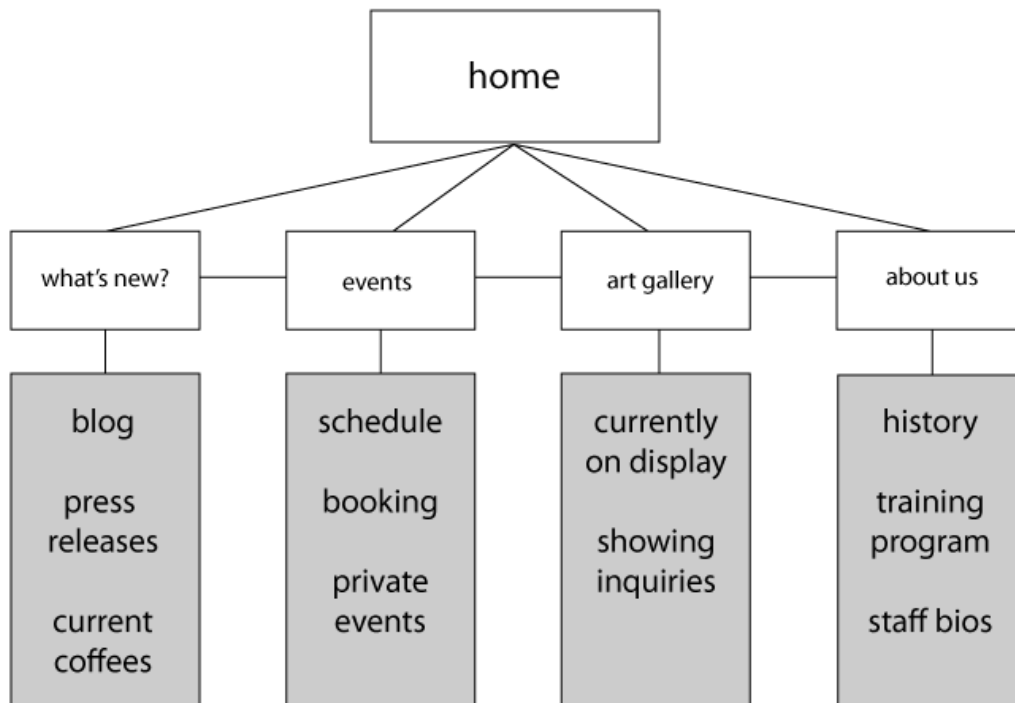
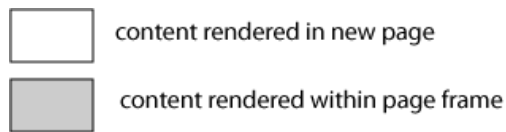
*Concept sketch of "Home"*



Concept sketch for all other pages with secondary content  
("What's New", "Events", "Art Gallery" and "About Us")

## Node-Link Diagram

The node-link diagram show below represents the current scope and structure of the site. I am leaning toward longer web pages with top-of-page TOCs to provide quick access to the individual sections of each page.



## Plans for Project Evaluation

In order to evaluate this website, I will solicit help from fellow Brabant Coffee employees and regular customers, who are familiar with the Brabant Coffee brand and will be willing to give their opinions about the website without requiring compensation. I will also find usability participants who have never visited a Brabant store.

I will first test with a medium-fidelity interactive wireframe (using HTML and CSS, but in greyscale). In testing a medium-fidelity wireframe, I am hoping to narrow the usability participants' focus to issues with navigation and information hierarchy as opposed to design elements such as color and typography. I will then test again using a higher-fidelity version of the site (with a finalized color scheme and typography) in order to ensure that those elements add to the viewer's experience instead of detracting from it.

I am expecting the aesthetic design of this website to be highly iterative (due to the relative ease of making changes to color and typography with CSS) and would like to primarily focus on the information architecture at the outset of this project.