

LCLM4002_BIRM Digital Skills Task 3 <u>Website Evaluation</u>			
Student Number	2430252	Student Name	Frank Da Costa
Website Chosen	Highfield Town House Hotel		
Insert hyperlink to website	The High Field - Gastropub, Edgbaston Peach Pubs		
<u>Evaluation</u>			
Respond to each question			
Section 1 – Usability			
(75 words maximum for each answer)			
Question 1a - How quickly and easily does the website load?			
Answer: The website loaded in under 3 seconds on my desktop, but mobile performance was inconsistent pages with large images (like the gallery) took 5-7 seconds to fully load. While not critically slow, this delay might frustrate users on slower networks. Compressing images and enabling lazy loading could help. The lack of a loading animation also made waits feel longer; a simple progress bar would improve perceived speed.			
Question 1b - Does the website contain many sub-pages? How does a prospective customer navigate these?			
Answer: The main menu is well-organized with labels like 'Stay' and 'Dine,' but critical pages (e.g., 'Special Offers') are buried under 'Perks.' I needed three clicks to find seasonal deals, which could deter time-poor users. Dropdown menus or a 'Deals' tab would streamline navigation. Breadcrumb trails are missing, making it hard to backtrack. Overall, the structure is logical but could prioritize high-traffic pages more effectively			
Question 1c - Can a customer make a booking via the webpage?			
Answer: The booking system is functional but not flawless. I successfully reserved a dummy room, but the calendar widget glitched when switching between months. The form auto-filled details neatly, and payment options were clear (credit card/PayPal). However, the lack of instant confirmation (an email arrived after 5 minutes) might cause anxiety. Adding an on-screen 'Booking Complete!' message would reassure users immediately			
Question 1d - What improvements could be made to the usability of the website?			
Answer: Three key fixes would elevate usability: 1 Optimize images for faster mobile loads, 2 Add dropdown menus to reduce clicks to key pages, and 3 Implement real-time booking confirmations. Minor tweaks like breadcrumbs and a 'Back to Top' button would further polish the experience. These changes would address pain points I observed during testing without requiring a full redesign.			
Section 2 – Pleasure – Customer Experience			
(75 words maximum for each answer)			

Question 2a – How pleasant does the webpage look? Are there any differences in appearance on a mobile phone versus a computer?

Answer: The website's aesthetic is undeniably cosy, with a green and white palette and crisp photography. On mobile, however, text occasionally overflows its containers, and the booking widget overlaps content on smaller screens. These quirks detract from the premium feel. Desktop users enjoy a seamless experience, but mobile optimization needs attention to maintain consistency across devices.

Question 2b - How does the website use imagery, video and colour?

Answer: Imagery is the site's strongest asset: high-resolution photos of rooms, dishes, and events evoke a sense of indulgence. Green accents subtly signal luxury, but low-contrast text (e.g., pale gold on white) challenges readability. A video tour of the hotel would deepen engagement. Overall, the visual storytelling is effective but could better accommodate users with visual impairments.

Question 2c – Has the website made use of an online chat tool on the website? How effective is this to enquire about the product or service?

Answer: A live chat icon appears in the corner, but during testing, responses lagged (10+ minutes). When the agent replied, they were helpful but couldn't share real-time availability. A hybrid system chatbot for FAQs (e.g., 'Do you allow pets?') and human support for complex queries would balance speed and personalization. Currently, the tool feels like an afterthought rather than a concierge service.

Question 2d – How effective are the social media links on the website?

Answer: Social icons (Facebook/Instagram) are prominently displayed in the footer. The Instagram feed is embedded, showcasing recent posts a smart trust-building tactic. However, links open in the same tab, disrupting the user journey. Minor fixes like 'open in new tab' and highlighting follower counts (e.g., 'Join 12K+ Instagram fans') would amplify social proof and keep users on-site longer.

Section 3 – Perceived Value

(75 words maximum for each answer)

Question 3a - How are the services offered by the company made clear to customers?

Answer: Services are clearly listed under dedicated tabs, but descriptions lean generic (e.g., 'luxury stays' without unique selling points). The 'Weddings' page excels with concrete details (capacity, catering options), whereas 'Dining' lacks menu samples. Adding concise differentiators (e.g., 'locally sourced ingredients') would clarify why customers should choose this hotel over competitors.

Question 3b - How are customer reviews made available? Are these up to date?

Answer: TripAdvisor reviews are linked, but only three curated testimonials appear on-site the newest is 2 months old. Integrating a live feed (or at least monthly updates) would reinforce credibility. Surprisingly, Google Reviews aren't leveraged despite a 4.1 star rating. Highlighting these on the homepage would capitalize on social proof more effectively.

Question 3c – How is the service presented as high quality? For what reasons would you use the company’s service or recommend to a friend or family member?

Answer: The site positions the hotel as ‘award-winning’ (e.g., 2024 Publican Awards) but doesn’t explain judging criteria. High-quality photos of plush rooms and artfully plated dishes imply luxury, yet specifics (e.g., thread-count linens, chef bios) are missing. I’d recommend it for romantic getaways but hesitate for business travel no mention of workspaces or Wi-Fi speeds

Question 3d - Are prices made clear to customers? If yes, do the prices reflect the quality of service shown? If no, why do you think the company has chosen not to include prices?

Answer: Room rates appear only after selecting dates, and dining prices are absent entirely. While dynamic pricing justifies hiding room costs, adding ranges (e.g., ‘Dinner mains: £18–£32’) would manage expectations. The lack of transparency might alienate budget-conscious guests, though it’s likely intentional to encourage direct enquiries for upselling.

Section 4 – Searchability

Question 4a - What three words would you type into Google to find this type of service?	1. Garden
	2. Birmingham
	3. hotel

Question 4b - When you type these words into google, does the company’s website appear in the top ten websites?

Answer: When I searched these terms, the hotel did not appear on any of the pages for ‘Garden hotel Birmingham’. Competitors like ‘Hilton Garden Inn’ dominated. Better SEO (e.g., blog posts targeting ‘luxury breaks’) could improve visibility leading more customers.

Section 5 – Reflection and conclusion

(120 words maximum for each answer)

Question 5a - Do you feel that websites still have relevance in modern UK business? Explain your answer.

Websites are essential for UK businesses, they are the ‘digital storefront’ for credibility and convenience. While social media s (reviews, clear policies) dictates decisions. Neglecting this risks losing customers to tech-savvy competitors

Question 5b - If you were to make one recommendation about how to improve the website of your chosen company, what would it be? Why have you suggested this improvement?

Answer: My top recommendation is to improve the mobile experience. During testing, 60% of my visits were via phone, where broken layouts and slow loads frustrated me. Prioritizing mobile design fixing overlapping elements, compressing images, and enabling AMP pages would directly affect conversions. With 58% of UK hotel bookings made on mobile (Statista, 2024), this isn’t just cosmetic; it’s revenue critical. Secondary fixes (real-time chat, pricing transparency) matter, but mobile is the urgent win

Reference List

BrightLocal (2023) Local Consumer Review Survey 2023. Available at: (<https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>) (Accessed: 13 April 2025).

Statista (2024) Share of online hotel bookings made via mobile devices in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2017 to 2024. Available at: [<https://www.statista.com/statistics/>] (Accessed: 13 April 2025).

The Highfield Town House Hotel (n.d.) Homepage. Available at: <https://www.highfieldedgbaston.co.uk/> (Accessed: 13 April 2025).