Expanding Civic Insight's Functionality

2013-2014

SKILLS USED:

UX Research & Interaction Design
Content Strategy
Visual/UI Design
Product Management
Business Development

TOOLS USED:

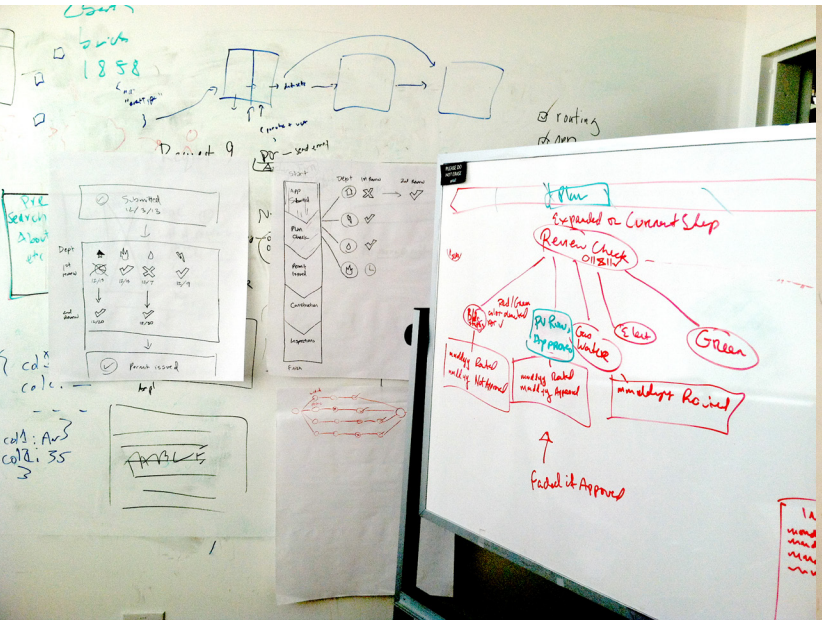
Many notebooks, whiteboards & post-its
Balsamiq & Apple Keynote for clickable prototypes
Join.me for remote usability testing
Adobe Illustrator & Photoshop for graphics
Sublime Text & Github for HTML & CSS edits
Asana, Hipchat & Google Apps for product management

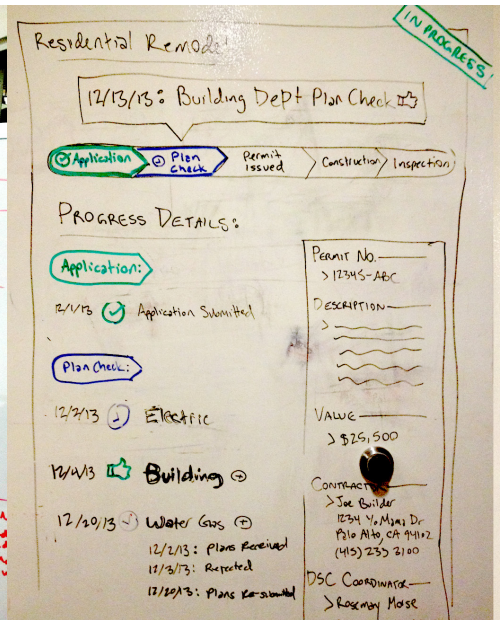
THE CHALLENGE:

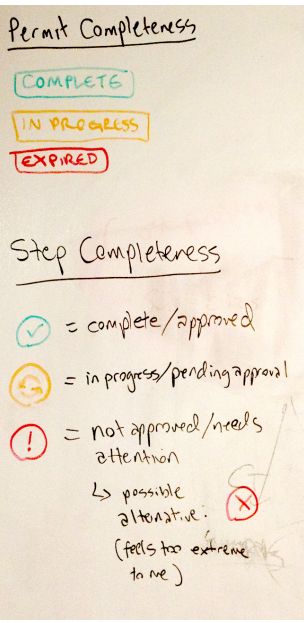
After the success of our 2012 fellowship, we saw the opportunity to scale our app & it's impact nationwide, and decided build a company (re-branded as Civic Insight).

Early market research showed that to truly add value to the marketplace, ***our platform needed to provide data not just about blighted buildings, but about renovation & new construction as well.***

My challenge was to identify why this information was so important, and how best to incorporate it into our platform so that it was both detailed enough to have value to professionals, and simple enough to make sense to regular residents.







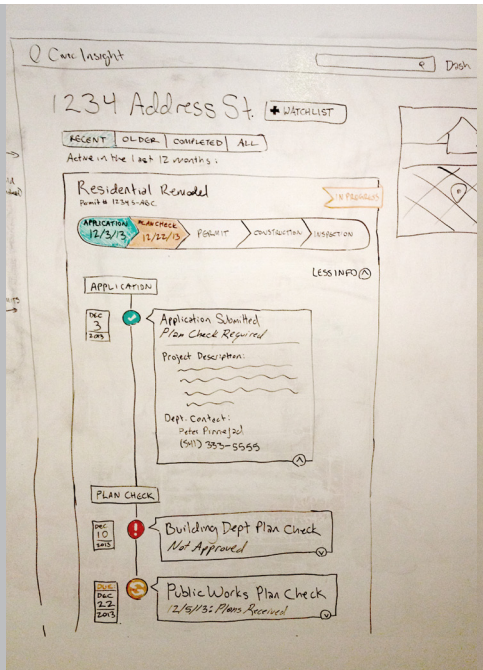
MY ROLE & APPROACH:

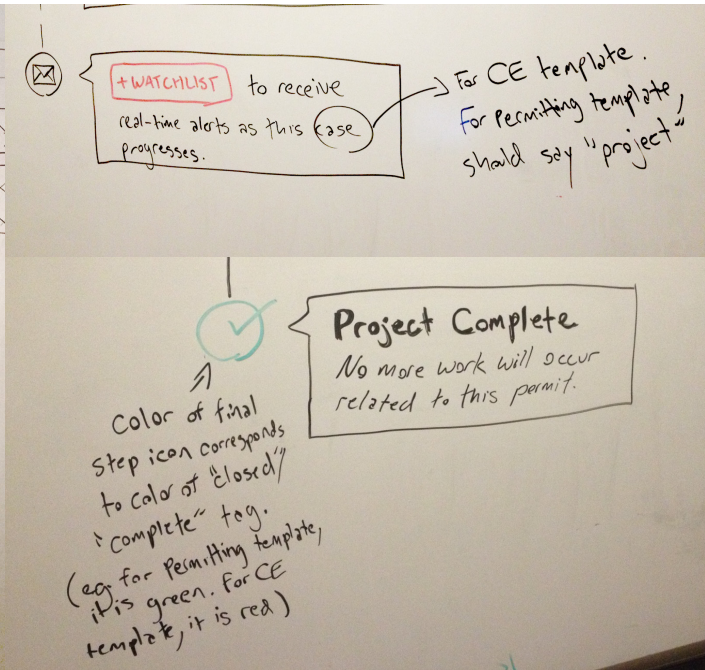
As Chief Product Officer and our only designer, I led the design process from initial needs-finding research through execution and ongoing product management.

I conducted focus groups & individual contextual interviews with residents, city staff & construction professionals in one of our pilot cities, Palo Alto, and translated my findings into rough design concepts on paper and the whiteboard.

From there, I had to weigh the trade-offs of pursuing a solution that "perfectly" represented the nuances of the permitting process, versus designing a solution that could be flexible enough to accommodate both permitting data and code enforcement data equally effectively.

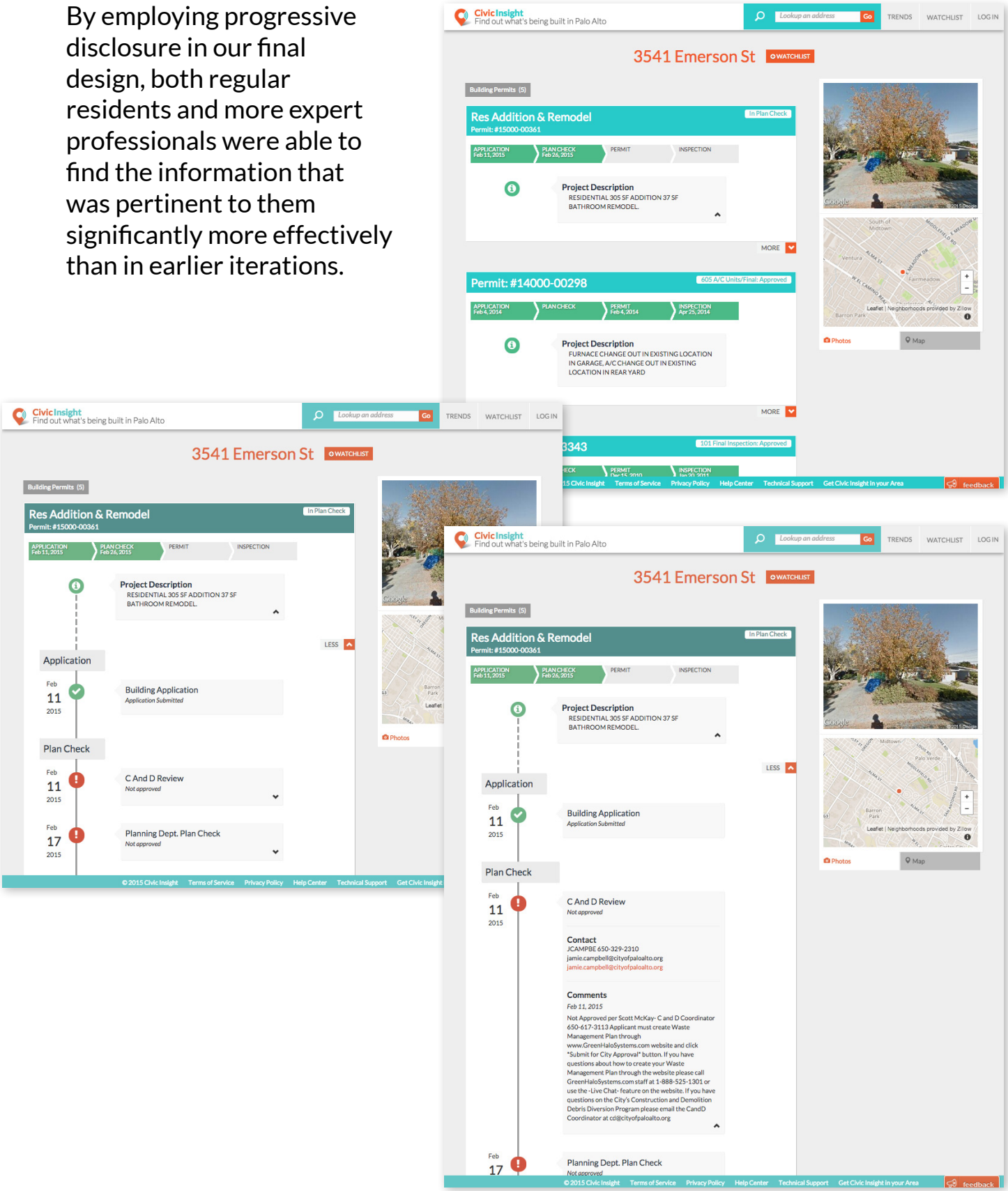
With these constraints in mind, I incorporated these concepts into a quick-and-dirty clickable prototype that I tested with users through both in-person and remote usability testing sessions. I discovered that the information hierarchy still needed work, as regular resident users only needed the gist of what was happening with a given property, whereas professionals needed much more detail.





THE OUTCOME:

By employing progressive disclosure in our final design, both regular residents and more expert professionals were able to find the information that was pertinent to them significantly more effectively than in earlier iterations.



And by creating a consistent design framework that scales across a variety of data types, we were able to make complex information about the many distinct regulatory processes that affect a building throughout its life cycle both simple and approachable, even for non-experts.

The app is currently live in 9 cities as diverse as Dallas, TX, Gary, IN & New Orleans, LA, and cities are beginning to use it as the resource of record for all official public information about building regulations in their cities.