Case Study: êspc

ESPC App Redesign

the goal in this case was to modernise the app with a clean, simple and intuitive UI which is easy to navigate, understand and use.
In addition to this, highlight to users the USP's of using the ESPC app over its competitors leading to increased retention rate and the number of new ESPC accounts.
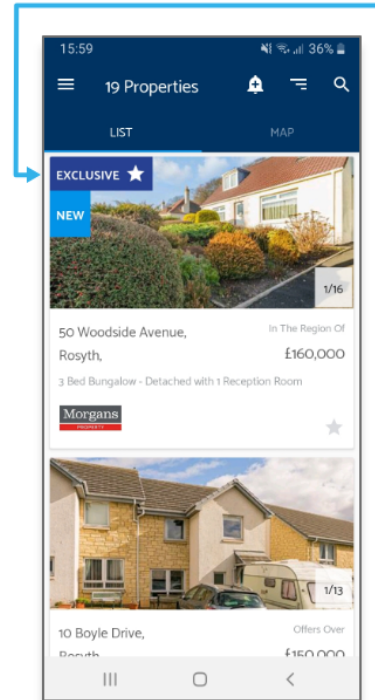
Roles: **UI Design, UX Design, App Design**

Tools: **Figma**

So...Why?

This app redesign was a personal project that was initiated as a result of personal experience in house hunting over a period of multiple months, below are some considerations throughout my experience

👍 **Positives**

👎 **Negatives**

+ Exclusivity Feature

Main benefit to the user of returning to the app.
Fear of missing out on new (dream)

+ Quicker Uploads

It was noted through extensive use as well as speaking with solicitors and mortgage advisors that the ESPC app did occasionally list some properties (not just exclusives) quicker than their competitors
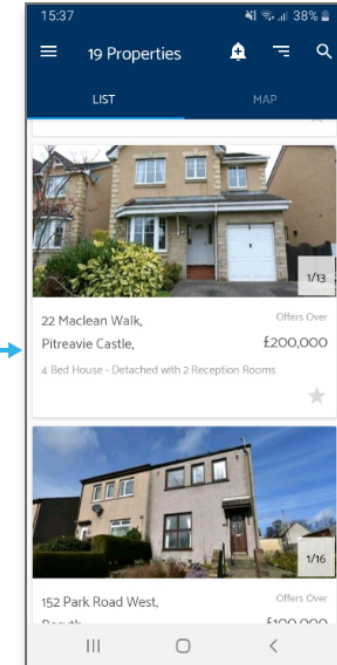
- Feels Outdated

Aesthetically, the app is not as appealing as its direct competitors (Zoopla, Right Move)

- Lack of Hierarchy

Lack of visual hierarchy between different text elements.
Eg. between property price, address and the type of property advertised

Defining the User's

The user in the case is none other than...

Myself

Name
Jay Mitchell

Age
28

Needs
to be able to search for new houses that are within a specific price range that are coming to market.

Fears
Missing out on the perfect property due to competitive nature of desired area
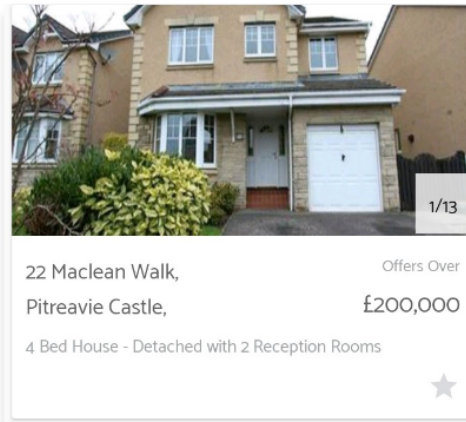
Overview

First time buyer, new to the housing market and comfortable with technology/using apps. Renting currently, eager to check the latest properties to come to market to get on the property ladder

Okay okay not just me... As there were no interviews carried out in this case, I created the persona below to help keep focus on different user's experiences throughout this redesign process

Name
Karen Brody

Needs
A larger property, the ability to search by number of bedrooms

Age
32-40

Fears
Wants her children to be in the catchment area of a decent local primary school

Overview
Has had numerous properties over the years and has moved from location to location as a result of her career. Has a young family and is looking for a bigger property
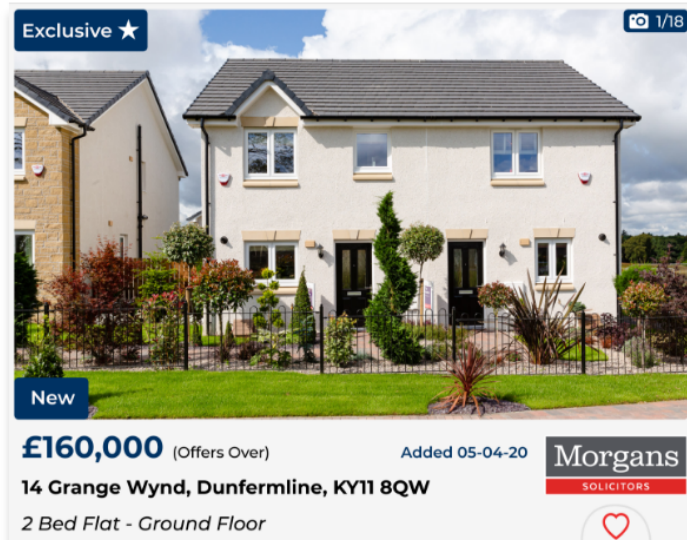
The Process...

I felt that one of the key (no pun intended) goals was the importance of good information architecture as this is what I felt, in my opinion, the current app was lacking so...

22 Maclean Walk,
Pitreavie Castle,

Offers Over
£200,000

4 Bed House - Detached with 2 Reception Rooms

1/13

I highlighted the most relevant information in a coherent manner and attempted to distinguished different components from each other.

Exclusive ★   📷 1/18

New

£160,000 (Offers Over)   Added 05-04-20   Morgans SOLICITORS

14 Grange Wynd, Dunfermline, KY11 8QW

2 Bed Flat - Ground Floor

Having the price as the main element of focus was simply that I believed the as a house hunter myself, the price of a property is paramount and I personally wouldn't want to look at images of a property that looked perfect but the price was out of range because I perhaps missed it)

I incorporated overlays onto the images of the properties to ease the user's experience when browsing for a property. Including these for new properties and exclusive properties to ESPC was important as mentioned previously with the fact that exclusivity and previewing listed properties first were great pulls for ESPC and something to focus to increase retention rate. Making sure that these were not too intruding but large enough to notice was also taken into consideration.

Exclusive ★ **New** 📷 1/18

As just mentioned, in conjunction with an overlay of newly listed properties. The date the property was added was a big element for me as a user of house hunting apps. I was continuously asking myself when was this added? particularly if I hadn't checked the app for a few days. It is also important as a consumer of the app from the perspective that if a property has been listed for a few months there may be room for negotiation on price

£ £ £
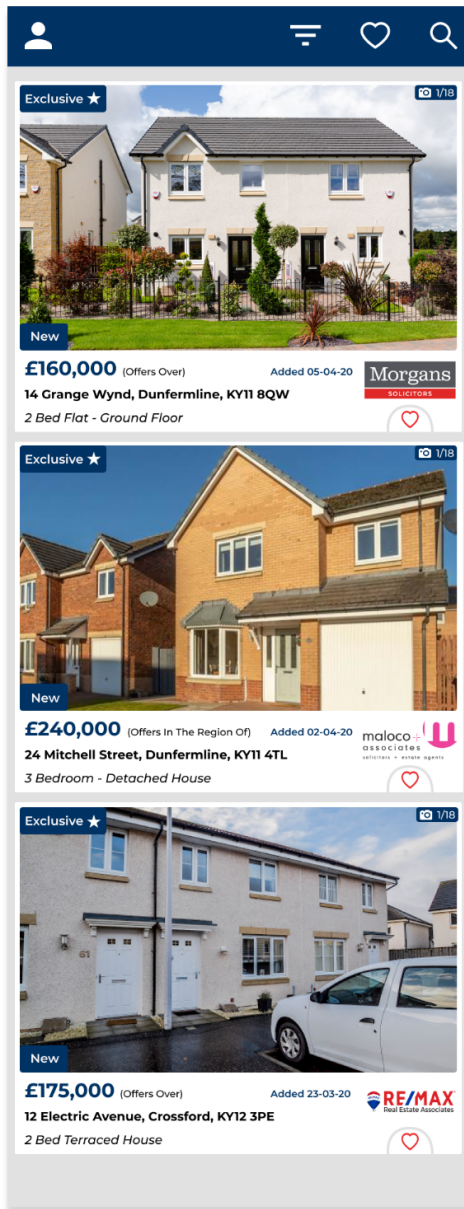
I started the prototype with a home screen to display a screen in which a search had already been searched performed and incorporated familiar icons into the app bar.

Included an account icon further acting to encourage users to sign up for an ESPC account to receive property alerts, personalisation and to view saved searches as seen below

The 3 lines signify which would allow the user to filter the results for example. (lowest price first, highest price first, date added)

The heart icon used throughout the UI to indicate a favourited property in which your list of favourited properties you wanted to keep a keen eye on encouraging users to take the time to sign up for an account and to return to the app.

Magnifying glass is of course the universal symbol of searching in which a pop-up search bar appears which allows the user to control the specific area, price rang e, no. of bedrooms, exclusivity to ESPC amongst other parameters to narrow their search and to help find exactly what the users are looking for.

Also chose to incorporate a share icon for an easy way to share a property with a friend/partner. screenshots are great but screenshotting through all of a properties images is just tedious...

The images of the property themselves acted as a call to action button as it felt intuitive that If you wanted to look further into that property clicking the images was a natural and intuitive thought process.

Montserrat Bold
Montserrat Semi-Bold
Montserrat Medium
Montserrat Medium Italic

#003263   #33B2E9

I incorporated the deep blue of the ESPC brand throughout (app bar, call to action buttons) as well as a light blue to compliment as well as contrast the deep blue elements.

Montserrat font family was the font family of choice which was used to establish the goal of visual hierarchy throughout the app.

Implemented a few large call to action buttons on the individual property screen. with arranging a viewing of the property being a vital step in the process, it was important to have a clear and simple visual representation of this. This action would require users to be signed in to their account and send an e-mail to the specific estate agent for them to arrange a viewing with you.
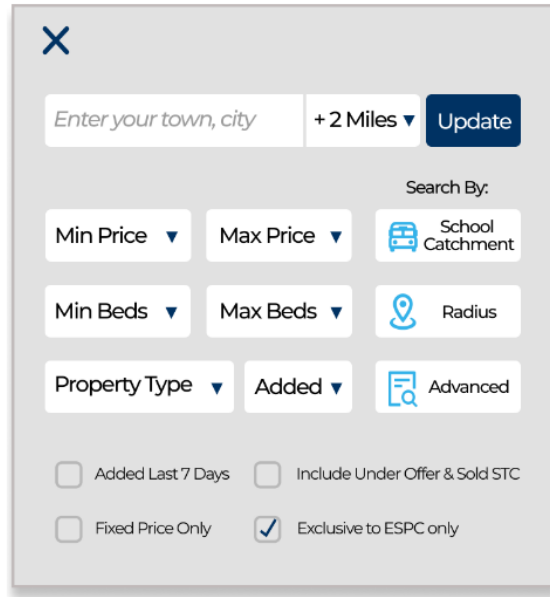
Beside this, the ability to download the home report for the property to allow further inspection, to find out finer details of the properties condition and its independent valuation was notoriously hard to find in any of the apps mentioned. It being particularly important in my experience given a mortgage provider only able to issue a mortgage to the value of the home report value.
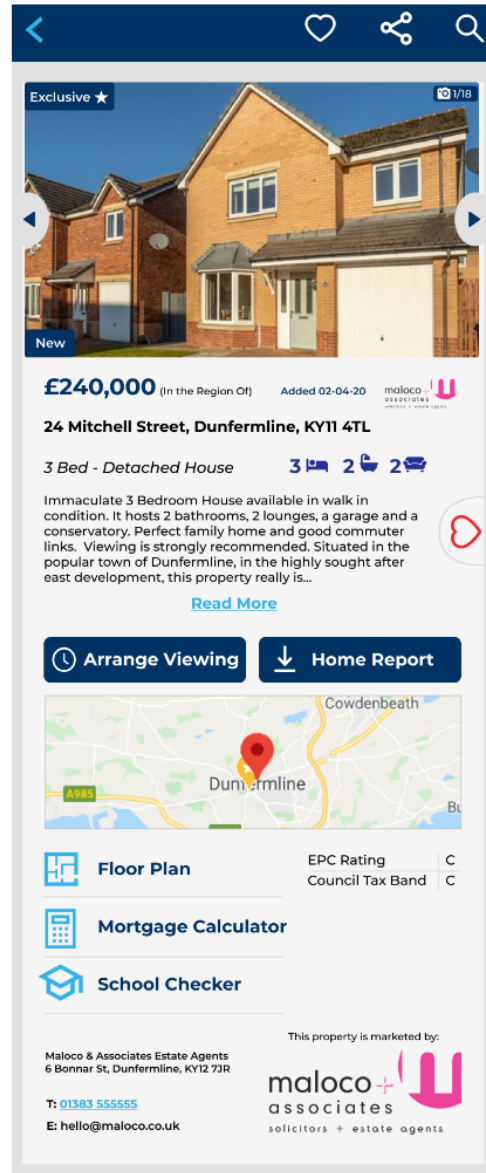
The inclusion of icons in this redesign was also one of the key goals in this. I wanted to ensure the user wasn't bombarded with a dreaded wall of text (Irony for those reading this...) but could still access a full description provided by the estate agents which can be accessed when clicking the text/read more option.

A heart was used for favourited properties as a star was already in use for the exclusive to ESPC overlay and was conscious that I didn't want this to clash or confuse users as well as diminish the importance of each other.
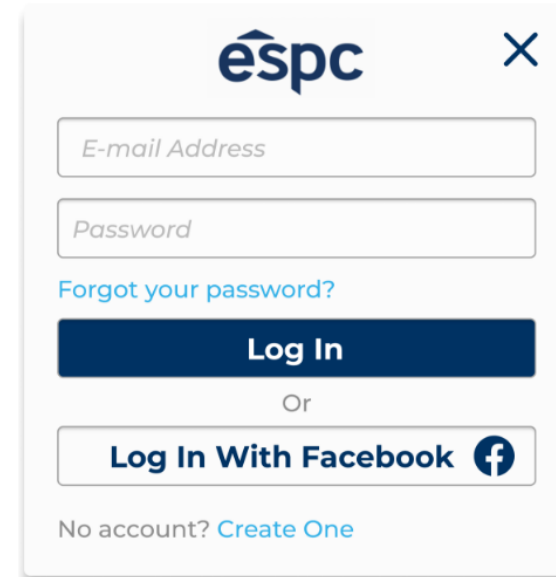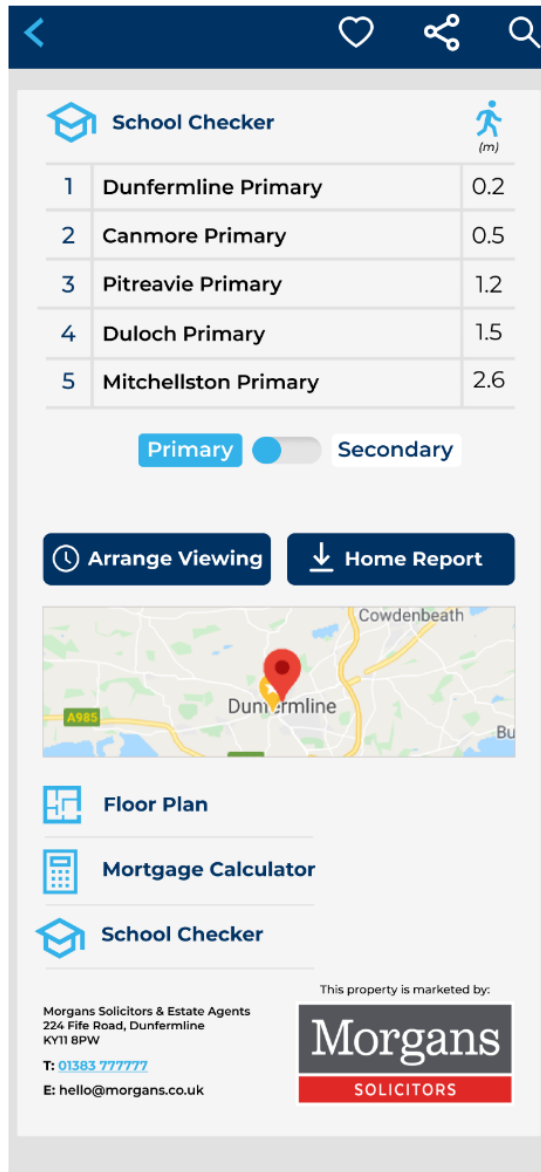
Search Bar

A simple overlay appears when using the magnifying glass search button allowing users to customise their search terms without feeling overwhelmed with options.

Sign-In

Sign in screen for users to encourage them to make an account which will store their personal details and makes contacting estate agents, favouriting properties and downloading the home report simple

School Checker

1	Dunfermline Primary	0.2
2	Canmore Primary	0.5
3	Pitreavie Primary	1.2
4	Duloch Primary	1.5
5	Mitchellston Primary	2.6

Primary / Secondary

Arrange Viewing   Home Report

Floor Plan

Mortgage Calculator

School Checker

This property is marketed by:

Morgans Solicitors & Estate Agents
224 Fife Road, Dunfermline
KY11 8PW
T: 01383 777777
E: hello@morgans.co.uk

Morgans
SOLICITORS

Added a school checker which I felt was an important feature for users who have children of school age to give them an idea of the local schools for their children both primary and secondary. Like the persona above suggests, education is a vital component in the house hunting process for families and giving this extra information using a button adds a layer of convenience for these particular users without taking away the experience of other users.

Again as a matter of convenience for users, I felt that a mortgage calculator would be a good addition for a quick way to work out the users finances based on the house price (deposit amount, cost per month etc.)

Quick access to the floor plan of the selected property was something I noted being hard to find and not always in the main carousel of house images. So I incorporated this as an overlay to check if that bedroom is a bedroom or just a big cupboard...

Contact information about the estate agent marketing the property was added underneath to allow the user to call the agent or send an e-mail for anything other than arranging a viewing.

Results

Overall, redesigning the UI as well as focusing on the UX of the app was an interesting process trying to balance the different elements and achieve a consistency in which I believe this was achieved.
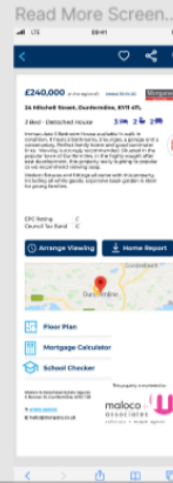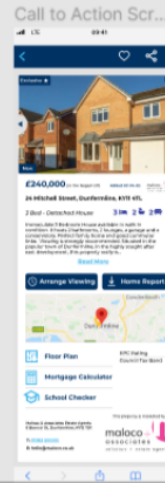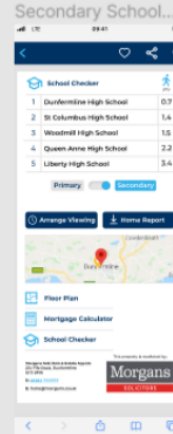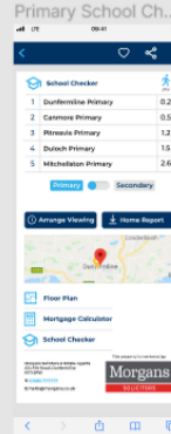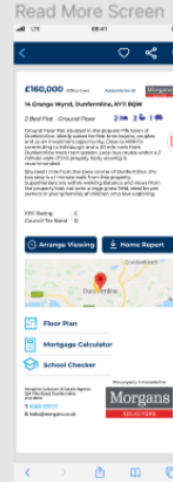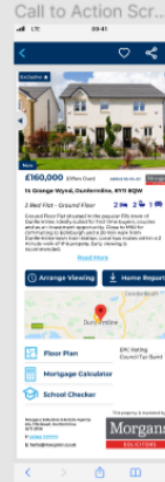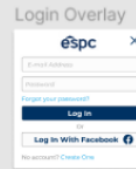
One of the goals was to modernise the UI, and with the use of simple icons and utilising brand colours, it feels like it can stand up against its competitors in the house search

Highlighting exclusivity in different forms throughout the app; in the overlay and in the search bar's search terms; as well as encouraging users to sign up for an ESPC account through the favourited property feature, arrange a viewing and download home report call to action buttons would also require users to be signed with saved details, e-mail address for home report to be sent to and contact info for estate agents. Signing in once would make all these processed faster and more convenient for users.

The discussed implementations would likely increase the number of accounts and combined with the modern intuitive UI and features, would increase the retention rate of users.

Screens

Figma

Search Bar · Login Overlay · Floor Plan Overlay · Floor Plan Overla... · Map View

Colour Schem/Font

Montserrat Bold
Montserrat Semi-Bold
Montserrat Medium
Montserrat Medium Italic

#003263 #33B2E9

On startup 1 · On startup 2 · Home Search Scr...

Call to Action Scr... · Read More Screen · Primary School Ch... · Secondary School...

Call to Action Scr... · Read More Screen...

Lessons Learned + Constructive Criticism

is it perfect?!

Of course not. Nothing is, there are some improvements that could be made and felt it important to highlight these, take a step back and discuss/analyse these imperfections in a constructive way in which I can then return to and improve/amend in future iterations

As mentioned previously, the favourite icon on the individual properties screen is used in this different orientation to allow users to easily favourite the property with their thumb however it could be argued that aesthetically its a little strange and this was precisely the feedback I received from a few friends I shared this redesign with. Therefore the positioning of this could be adjusted in future iterations.

£160,000 (Offers Over)   Added 05-04-20   Morgans SOLICITORS

14 Grange Wynd, Dunfermline, KY11 8QW

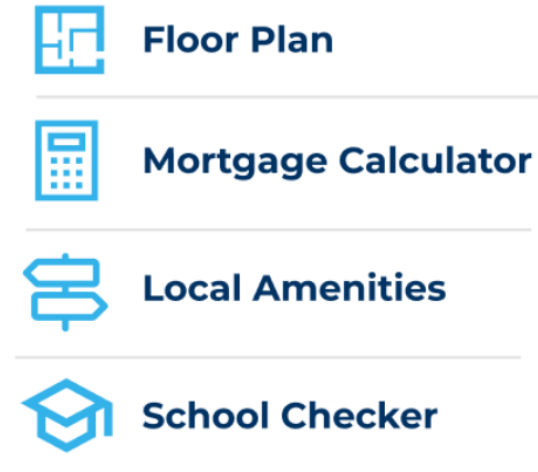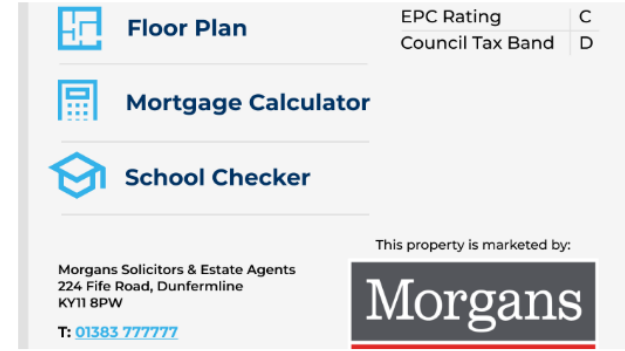*2 Bed Flat - Ground Floor*   2 🛏 2 🛁 1 🛋

Ground Floor Flat situated in the popular Fife town of Dunfermline. Ideally suited for first time buyers, couples and as an investment opportunity. Close to M90 for commuting to Edinburgh and a 20 min walk from Dunfermline town train station. Local bus routes within a 2 minute walk of this propety. Early viewing is recommended.
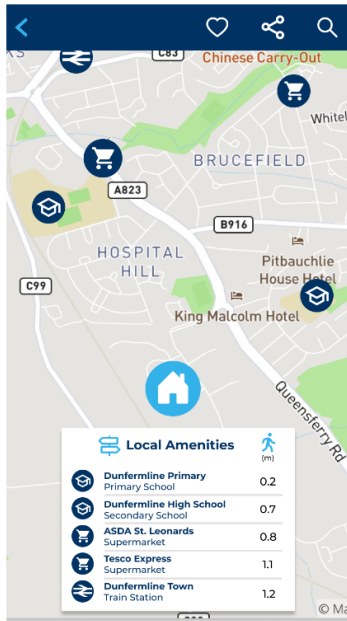
Read More

The light blue colour used, as much as it has tried to be used at a larger scale (eg. school checker icon etc.) there is a bit of a lack of contrast between this blue and the white background (2.41:1) which may make it difficult for certain users to view smaller text elements. In future iterations, the use of a different colour or just the deep blue colour of the ESPC branding could be used alternatively.

Future iterations could include the map which could include schools, public transport and other local amenities as map markers to show users who are moving to a new area for example, what is closeby to the featured property and would be a feature which would benefit a lot of users as these things are all considerations users make in the process and would improve the overall experience.

Floor Plan

Mortgage Calculator

School Checker

EPC Rating — C
Council Tax Band — D

Morgans Solicitors & Estate Agents
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This property is marketed by:

Morgans

Floor Plan

Mortgage Calculator

Local Amenities

School Checker

A few weeks later...

I discovered that the current ESPC app allows you to view properties using a map similar to this (search feature) which is a neat little function for a more visual experience. By clicking on the different house icons you can view the essential information on that property and tap further for the full property breakdown.
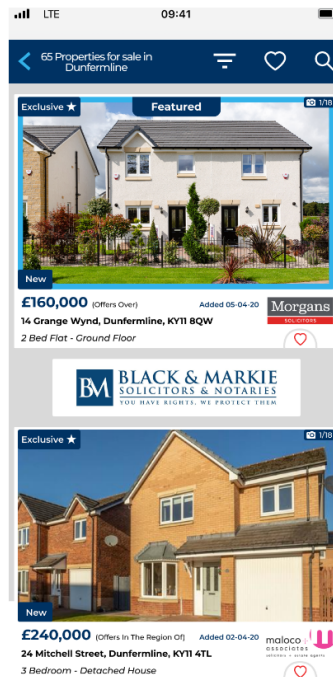
Added the UI of the local amenities feature that I thought would be beneficial for users moving to a new area but understand this may be hard to implement
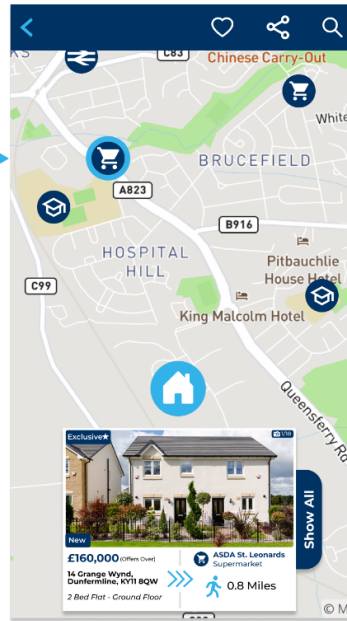
When selecting the icons on the map; as in the trolley icon in this case; this allows the user to see name of the local amenity as well as its distance from the currently viewed property.

I also imagined a property being 'featured' on the ESPC website which would be listed first. I added a simple featured tag as on overlay on the image as well as using the complimentary light blue to add a highlight to this property, could perhaps also be done to exclusive properties to really drive home the exclusivity goal I was aiming for.

Furthermore, I added a space in between the properties for an advertisement space that ESPC could utilise for local estate agents, solicitors etc. to use to promote their businesses to users of the ESPC app.

Case Study: eŝpc

Thanks for reading!

Feel free to contact me for more information or
to discuss this case study further.

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