

DarkHeart Brewing

UNIFIED UX DESIGN REVIEW

USABILITY AUDIT

WCAG 2.2 AA

NN/G HEURISTICS



Review Scope & Method



Scope

Pages reviewed across desktop & mobile walkthrough:

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Brewery](#)[Menu / Beers on Tap](#)[Events](#)[Shop](#)

Frameworks Applied

Three evaluation lenses applied across all pages:

- NN/g Usability Heuristics — 10 heuristics, 60 items
- WCAG 2.2 Level AA — all 56 success criteria
- Nielsen's Heuristics punch list — severity scoring



Method

Heuristic walkthrough of all public-facing pages — no authentication required. Content and structure mapped to **specific WCAG success criteria**, each finding scored by severity (Critical · High · Medium · Quick Win). No automated tooling; findings are expert judgment.



Known Limits

[VERIFY](#)

Findings at a Glance

3

3

HIGH-SEVERITY ISSUES

Placeholder text, thin menu page, conflicting hours and address

4

4

MEDIUM-SEVERITY ISSUES

Navigation gaps, weak booking path, events on social only

3

3

LOWER-PRIORITY ISSUES

Contrast, alt text, heading structure

14

14

WCAG ISSUES LOGGED

4 critical · 6 high · 3 quick wins

20

20

NN/G HEURISTIC FAILS

Across 10 heuristics, 22 applicable items, 36% pass rate

4

4

BROKEN USER JOURNEYS

Tap list, hours, events, membership — all dead ends

! **The headline:** the site's basics work, but the two pages a visitor needs most — **what's on tap** and **when you're open** — are the least reliable.

Unfinished Content on Key Pages

HIGH SEVERITY

01

Placeholder text is live

WCAG U · SC 3.1.5

The Menu page carries a live block of **Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet** filler beneath its About copy, visible to every visitor. Signals an abandoned site right where people decide to visit.

02

Beers on Tap is a dead end

NN/G H4 · H6 FAIL

The nav link renders as a heading plus ***No growler fills** footnote — no beer list. The site's most-visited link goes nowhere. Visitors arrive expecting a menu and find only a bare heading.

03

Two competing beer pages

WCAG O · SC 2.4.5

The real **18-beer tap list** lives at an unlinked **?page_id=** URL, while the nav Beers on Tap page is empty. Visitors following the nav land on the wrong one — the content exists but is effectively hidden.

04

Trust cost

BRAND IMPACT

Unfinished copy reads as an abandoned site and undercuts an otherwise strong brand voice. Every unresolved placeholder gives visitors a reason to doubt the accuracy of everything else on the page.

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FIX

Delete the Lorem ipsum block from the Menu page. **Merge** Menu content into the Beers on Tap page and redirect the orphaned **?page_id=** URL. **Add** the unified page to the primary navigation.

Usability Slide 4

WCAG U Slide 6

Conflicting Hours & Location

• HIGH SEVERITY

Three sources, three answers — the single most common reason a visitor arrives to a closed door.



WHAT THE SITE SAYS

- 1 **About Us page:** Open **Tuesday–Sunday**, Tuesday listed 4–8 pm.
- 2 **Brewery page:** "We are currently open **Wednesday through Sunday**" — one day short of the About page.
- 3 **Header:** **Sacramento CA** — but the address is **7110 Auburn Blvd, Citrus Heights**.

vs



WHAT THIRD PARTIES SAY

- 1 **MapQuest:** Older **Sacramento address** on Auburn Blvd with **different daily hours** — outdated third-party data fills the gap.
- 2 **No exact hours** published on the homepage or footer — visitors must guess or rely on stale listings elsewhere.
- 3 **Site disclaimer:** "Hours are subject to change and may be extended" — **telling visitors the published hours can't be trusted**.



RECOMMENDED FIX

WCAG SC 3.2.4

Navigation & Information Architecture

 MEDIUM SEVERITY



Hidden Pages

NN/g H4 · 2 Fails

?page_id=



Unlabeled URLs

Pages resolve to [REDACTED]-style addresses rather than readable paths, hurting sharing and search discoverability.



Content Duplication

About copy, tap lists and the welcome blurb repeat across Home, About Us, Brewery and Menu with small variations. NN/g H4 · 3 Fails



No Plan-a-Visit Page

Hours, address, parking, and food options are scattered across three separate pages instead of one unified Visit destination.



Captain's Log — Promised but Missing

Referenced in homepage body copy as a navigable destination with no link, no nav entry, and no page. Sets a user expectation the site cannot fulfill. NN/g H4 · 1 Fail



FIX | Add Brewery, Menu, and Shop to the primary header nav. · Create a single unified Visit page consolidating hours, address, parking, and food info. · Give all pages readable, human-friendly URLs.

Mobile Experience & Conversion Paths

 MEDIUM SEVERITY

WCAG SC 2.5.8

Four friction points blocking real visitors from taking action



Long Single-Column Stacking

MOBILE LAYOUT

The homepage repeats the About blurb, brewer bios, and testimonial *before* hours or address — excessive scrolling for the one fact people need on mobile. Critical info is buried below decorative content.

 Hours & address should appear in the first viewport on mobile



Tap Targets Not Optimized

WCAG SC 2.5.8

Phone number and address are plain text — not  or tap-for-directions links. Social icons measure below the 24×24 px minimum. Every missed tap is a lost conversion on mobile.



tel: link needed



tap-for-directions needed



icons < 24×24 px



Reservations Path Broken

DEAD-END JOURNEY

Reservation form has no confirmation of response time. Private-event pricing buried in paragraph prose — no structured offer. **No online path to Keg Club (\$50) signup** — visitors who want to join have no way to do so digitally.

 Every conversion attempt ends at a dead end



Memberships Fragmented

CONVERSION GAP

MugClub, Keg Club (\$50), and Captain's Club are mentioned across *different pages* with no single destination explaining benefits or how to join. Visitors interested in membership have no clear next step.

MugClub

Keg Club \$50

Captain's Club

→ 0 unified pages



FIX

• Wrap phone in tel: link • Add tap-for-directions to address • Pad all social icons to 24×24 px minimum

•  Create unified Join page



Hours first on mobile

Visual Hierarchy & Accessibility Polish

⚠️ LOWER PRIORITY

WCAG 2.2 AA

NN/g H8

01



SC 1.4.3

SC 1.4.11

Dark-on-dark treatments in the brand's night palette risk falling below the **4.5:1 AA ratio**. Cream and muted grey on near-black is the most common web failure — **79% of homepages** fail this criterion. Requires a live browser pass with a contrast analyser to confirm exact ratios.

02



NN/g H8 · 2 Fails

Old English/gothic typeface applied at **equal visual weight** to H1s, H2s, and body callouts — no functional typographic hierarchy exists. Every tier looks the same, removing a key wayfinding signal for users scanning the page.

03



SC 1.1.1

Tap photos, brewer portraits, and event graphics have **no confirmed alt attributes**. Screen readers cannot describe the content — images are either skipped entirely or announced by filename. Informative images need descriptive alt; decorative images need empty alt="".

04



Schema.org

Hours, address and phone are **not marked up as structured data**. Search engines and map apps fall back on stale third-party records — the root cause of the MapQuest discrepancy. Adding `LocalBusiness` schema takes <1 hour.



These are polish items — resolve the high-severity content issues first.

WCAG 2.2 AA — Where the Site Stands

Evaluated against all 56 Level AA criteria, organized by POUR.

P Perceivable

PRINCIPLE 1

AT RISK

Dark palette invites contrast failures Unlabelled imagery — no alt text confirmed Symbol-only footnotes (asterisk without key)

3

O Operable

PRINCIPLE 2

AT RISK

Key pages missing from primary navigation No reliable path to hours or tap list Phone number not a  link

3

U Understandable

PRINCIPLE 3

AT RISK

Live Lorem ipsum placeholder on Menu page Conflicting city — Sacramento vs. Citrus Heights Hours vague, undated, and contradictory

3

R Robust

PRINCIPLE 4

PARTIAL

Theme provides skip link and semantic base ✓ Heading order and landmark structure need verifying Page-builder sections may emit skipped levels

2

Perceivable — P

WCAG 2.2 AA · 3 issues logged · Perceivability of all UI information and operation



• CRITICAL

The dark palette invites contrast failures

Cream and muted grey on near-black puts body copy, captions and brass links close to the **4.5:1 floor**. Low contrast is the most common failure on the web — **79% of homepages** fail this criterion.

✓ Fix: SC 1.4.3 / 1.4.11

Measure every color pair — text → 4.5:1 · controls → 3:1



• HIGH

Imagery carries no text alternative

Page content returns headings and prose but **no descriptions** for tap photos, brewer portraits or event graphics. Screen readers encounter silent voids where meaningful content should be.

✓ Fix: SC 1.1.1

Descriptive alt for informative photos · empty alt="" for decoration



• HIGH

The tap list leans on an asterisk

"**No growler fills**" is signalled only by ***** with the key far below. Symbol and position alone are **not perceivable** when the list is read linearly by assistive technology.

✓ Fix: SC 1.3.3 / 1.3.1

State the restriction in text · or mark the list as a real semantic table

Operable — 0

WCAG 2.2 AA · Navigation, findability & interaction targets

3

ISSUES
LOGGED

1 CRIT

CRITICAL
FINDING

SC 2.4.5 · 2.5.8 · 2.4.7 · 3.2.3

01

CRITICAL

Tap list missing from navigation

Beers on Tap renders as a bare heading with no content. The real 18-beer menu sits at an unlinked `<page_id>` URL invisible to navigation. The site's most-wanted content is effectively unreachable through any standard path.

FIX Merge the beer list into Beers on Tap, give every page a nav entry and readable URL. SC 2.4.5

SC 2.4.5

02

HIGH

Brewery page is orphaned

Hours, game night, trivia, outside-food guidance and the \$50 Keg Club all live on a page reachable only by direct link. A visitor asking "*are they open tonight?*" never finds it — the page doesn't appear in navigation or footer at any entry point.

FIX Surface hours and events in both header and footer. SC 2.4.5SC 3.2.3

SC 3.2.3

03

MEDIUM

Phone and social targets need a size check

Small icon links and plain-text phone numbers are classic target-size and focus-visibility failures on this theme. Tap targets below 24×24 px and invisible focus rings lock out keyboard and mobile users alike — two of the most common mobile accessibility failures across the web.

FIX Use telephony, pad icons to 24×24 px, maintain a visible focus ring. SC 2.5.8SC 2.4.7

SC 2.5.8

SC 2.4.7



Understandable

WCAG 2.2 AA · POUR Category

POUR · U



CRITICAL

Placeholder Lorem ipsum is live on the site

01

A block of **Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet** is published beneath the About copy on the Menu page. It is unreadable to everyone and signals an unmaintained site exactly where visitors decide whether to drive over.

FIX SC 3.1.5 — Delete the placeholder or replace it with the real brewery story.



HIGH

The site contradicts itself on location

02

The header reads **Sacramento CA** while the address is **7110 Auburn Blvd, Citrus Heights**. For a taproom whose job is getting people through the door, that is a conversion problem first.

FIX SC 3.2.4 — Use one location string sitewide and link the address to a map.



HIGH

Hours are vague, undated, and hard to trust

03

The site says only **Wednesday through Sunday, subject to change**. Exact hours appear on third-party listings only. Live event news lives on Instagram rather than the Events page.

FIX SC 3.1.5 / 3.2.3 — Publish exact hours in the footer and mirror events onto the site.

1 CRITICAL

SC 3.1.5 — Placeholder text on live page

2 HIGH

SC 3.2.4 / 3.2.3 — Location clash · Vague hours



WCAG 2.2 AA · Understandable



WHAT'S WORKING

PASS

Skip link present

The Neve theme ships a working *Skip to content* link, a declared page language, real heading elements, and descriptive page titles. The structural groundwork for AA conformance is in place.

✓ Skip link

✓ lang attr

✓ Page titles

PASS

Semantic base

Valid HTML structure from WordPress. Language attribute set. Page titles are descriptive and unique. The theme's semantic foundation is a solid starting point for full AA remediation.

✓ Valid HTML

✓ WordPress base



WHAT NEEDS VERIFYING

HIGH

Heading order and landmarks

Page-builder sections routinely emit stacked headings with skipped levels and no `main` or `nav` landmarks. The About text repeats verbatim across pages, hinting at duplicated blocks rather than intentional structure.

Fix → SC 1.3.1 – audit heading outline per page; one H1, proper landmark structure

MEDIUM

No form, no online conversion path

No contact form, mailing-list signup, or Keg Club enrollment exists on the site. Every task ends at "call us" or "follow us" — dead ends for users who can't or won't pick up the phone.

Fix → SC 3.3.2 / 3.3.7 – label every field, describe errors in text, never re-ask known data

Four Broken Journeys

Four journeys a visitor actually attempts — and where each one breaks.



What's on tap tonight?

• BREAKS

- The linked nav page is empty — just a heading. No beer list.
- The real 18-beer list sits at an **unlinked ?page_id= URL** — unreachable via nav.
- Content is undated — freshness is unknowable even if found.



Are they open right now?

• BREAKS

- No hours on the homepage or footer — the first place every visitor looks.
- Exact times live on **MapQuest**, not the site itself.
- Three sources — About, Brewery page, third parties — give three different answers.



What's happening this weekend?

• PARTIAL

- Recurring nights are described in prose — trivia, game night — so context exists.
- Live bookings, music, and open-mic appear **only on Instagram** — not the Events page.
- The site looks quiet even when the calendar is full.



How do I join the Keg Club?

• BREAKS

- A **\$50 paid membership** is announced with no form and no price page.
- No way to sign up online — the conversion path is a complete dead end.
- MugClub, Keg Club, and Captain's Club scattered across pages with no unified Join path.



Accessibility fixes and conversion fixes are the same fixes here.

NN/g Heuristics Scorecard

All 10 heuristics evaluated — 22 applicable items — 36% pass rate on applicable items

#	HEURISTIC		RATING	PASS ✓	FAIL ✗
H1			NEEDS WORK	1	1
H2			NEEDS WORK	2	2
H3			NEEDS WORK	0	1
H4			NEEDS WORK	2	4
H5	Error Prevention 0 applicable — static site		N/A	—	—
H6			NEEDS WORK	1	2
H7			NEEDS WORK	0	2
H8	Aesthetic and Minimalist Design		CRITICAL	1	5
H9			NEEDS WORK	0	1
H10			NEEDS WORK	0	2
TOTALS			22 applicable items	7	20

✓ 7 Pass

✗ 20 Fail

— 33 N/A

PASS RATE36% pass rate

Critical Finding — H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design

1



Live Lorem ipsum placeholder

SEVERITY (4)

Published beneath About copy on the Menu page — visible to every visitor. **Signals an abandoned site.** Must fix before any other design work.

2



No primary CTA on homepage

SEVERITY (2)

Users land with **no guided next step** after the hero. No hours surfaced. No 'plan your visit' direction. Visitors are left to self-navigate.

3



Typography hierarchy collapsed

SEVERITY (2)

Old English/gothic decorative font applied at equal weight to H1, H2, and body callouts. **All tiers visually identical** — no scannable structure.

4



Sections bleed edge-to-edge

SEVERITY (2)

Amber/brown sections fill edge-to-edge with no padding variation. **Sections bleed into one another** with no visual breathing room or clear transitions.

5



Decorative portraits dominate functional content

SEVERITY (2)

Two large AI-generated pirate portraits with ornate borders occupy center-page, **given more visual mass than any functional element** on the page.

H8 SCORE

5

Fails

CRITICAL

5 Fail

1 Pass

83% fail rate — worst-scoring heuristic in the audit

✓ PASS

Age Gate Modal

Clean execution — logo, one question, two buttons.

Nothing extraneous. A model of minimalist design within an otherwise noisy site.

WHY H8 MATTERS MOST

H8 violations directly reduce trust and usability. When decorative elements outweigh functional ones, visitors can't find what they came for — and leave.

H4

Consistency & Standards 4 Fails ·

Needs Work

- 1 Shop absent from primary nav — footer only **FAIL**
Shop page is orphaned; unreachable from the main navigation. Violates navigation consistency across all pages.
- 2 Typography applied inconsistently across heading levels **FAIL**
Decorative Old English font used at equal weight for H1, H2, and body callouts — all tiers visually identical.
- 3 Beers on Tap uses passive Google Slides iframe **FAIL**
No other page uses this pattern — breaks consistency with all other content presentation across the site.
- 4 About copy duplicated verbatim across 4 pages **FAIL**
Identical text across Home, About Us, Brewery, and Menu undermines credibility and confuses content hierarchy.

H6

Recognition Rather Than Recall 2 Fails ·

Needs Work

- 1 Asterisk-only "No growler fills" footnote **FAIL**
Symbol and position require recall — users must remember to look for the key below. [WCAG SC 1.3.3](#)
- 2 Beers on Tap is a passive auto-advancing iframe **FAIL**
19 beers visible only by waiting for the slideshow to advance. Users cannot browse freely — content requires recall of what they glimpsed.
- 3 **Brewery, Menu & Shop hidden from nav**
Users must recall or stumble upon these pages by accident — direct navigation is not available.



H2

Match Between System and Real World — 2 Fails

- **Captain's Log** named in homepage body copy but never linked, no nav entry, no page — a phantom destination.
- **Sacramento vs. Citrus Heights** conflict persists statewide — header city contradicts the actual street address throughout.



Effort vs. Impact — Priority Matrix

Every logged issue plotted by fix cost vs. visitor return. **Top-left quadrant pays for itself immediately.**

✓ DO NOW

- 1 Delete the Lorem ipsum block
- 2 Fix the Sacramento / Citrus Heights clash
- 3 Publish exact hours in the footer
- 4 Make the phone number a tel: link
- 5 Merge the Menu into Beers on Tap

📁 PLAN & FUND

- 6 Add every live page to the navigation
- 7 Write alt text across the media library
- 8 Run a contrast pass on the palette

⚠️ FILL IN

- 9 Fix heading order and landmarks
- 10 Keyboard and screen-reader walkthrough

🕒 DEFER

No items in this sprint.
Revisit after Phase 2.

LOW EFFORT →

← HIGH EFFORT

⚠️ The first five are content corrections requiring no redesign
— resolvable in a single afternoon.

DO NOW

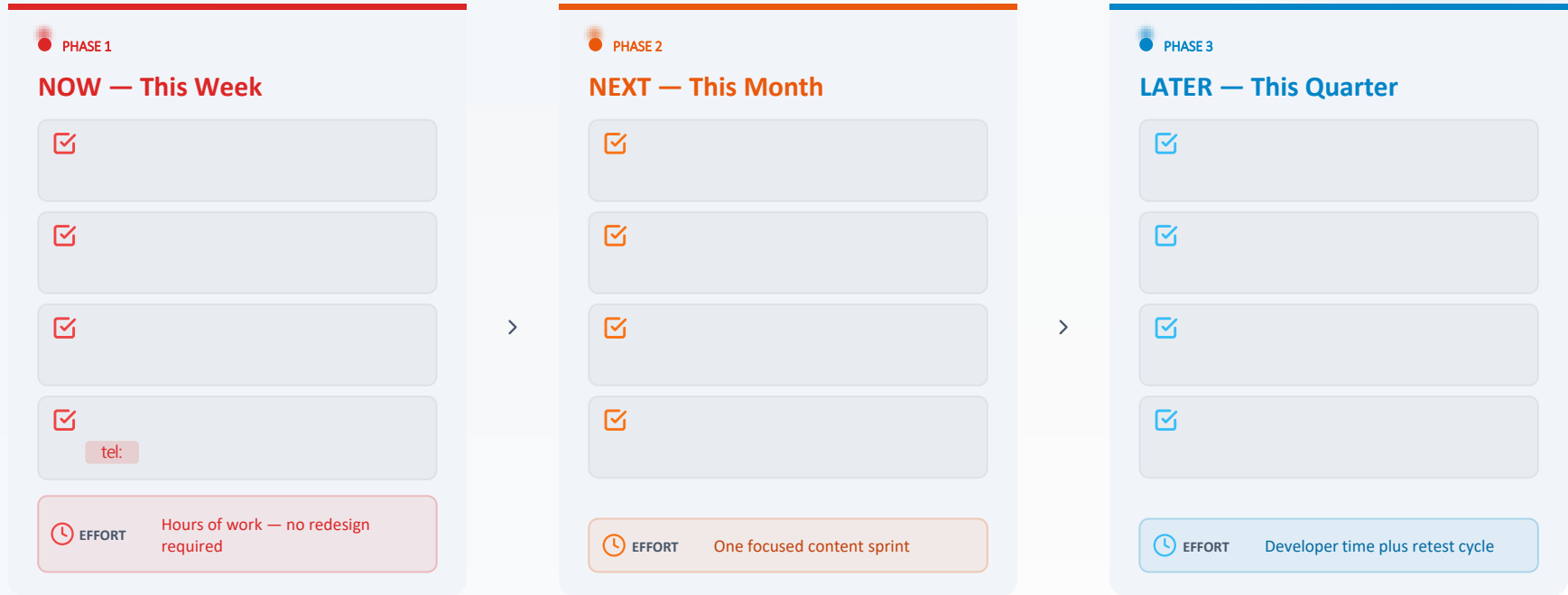
PLAN & FUND

FILL IN

DEFER

Remediation Roadmap

What to do, in what order.



The Bottom Line

NN/G PASS RATE

36%

WCAG ISSUES

14

CRITICAL

4

1

Nothing here needs a rebuild.

The four highest-impact fixes — **publish the tap list**, **publish the hours**, **remove the placeholder copy**, **settle the city** — are edits, not engineering.

2

Accessibility and conversion failures are the same failures.

Every broken user journey is also a WCAG violation. **Fixing one fixes the other.**

3

The brand voice is an asset.

The pirate theme is strong, warm, and distinctive. The problem is **execution and content completeness**, not identity.

4

36% pass rate on applicable NN/g heuristics.

20 fails across 22 applicable items — concentrated in **H8 (design)**, **H4 (consistency)**, and **H6 (recognition)**.

5

WCAG 2.2 AA conformance: Not currently met.

14 issues logged across POUR. **4 critical.** Recommended next step: a one-hour browser pass with a keyboard and screen reader to confirm the verify items.

! NOT MET



The site is close. **The gap is content, not code.**

DARKHEART
BREWING · UX REVIEW



DARKHEART BREWING



UX Design Review · August 2026

Prepared by **Chris Hanson**

SRC 1 Usability Heuristic Walkthrough — darkheartbrewing.com, Desktop & Mobile

SRC 2 WCAG 2.2 AA Audit — Heuristic review mapped to 56 success criteria

SRC 3 NN/g 10 Usability Heuristics Punch List — 60 items, 10 heuristics



The site is close. The gap is content, not code.