SPACES THAT HEAL

DESIGN FOR SOCIAL REGENERATION

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Systems Design | KDA 309
Design Project | AT2

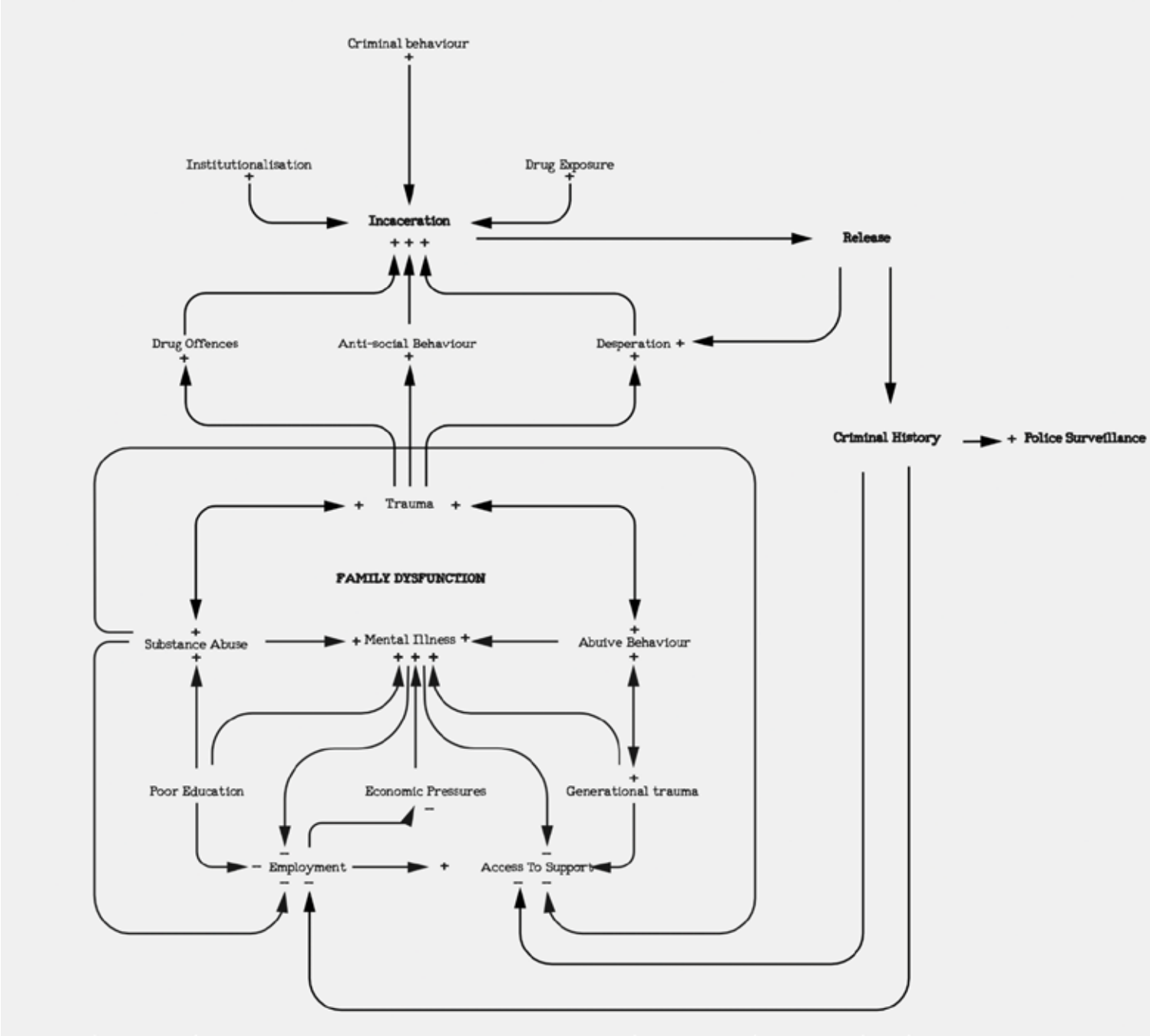
ALDERMASTON DEMONSTRATIONS | DON MCCULLIN

THE PROBLEM

In 2024, 60% of prisoners were re-incarcerated, exposing critical flaws in Australia's corrective system.

Research shows that family dysfunction plays a major role in the development of antisocial behavior, leaving individuals to struggle socially—whether in school, their careers, or with the law.

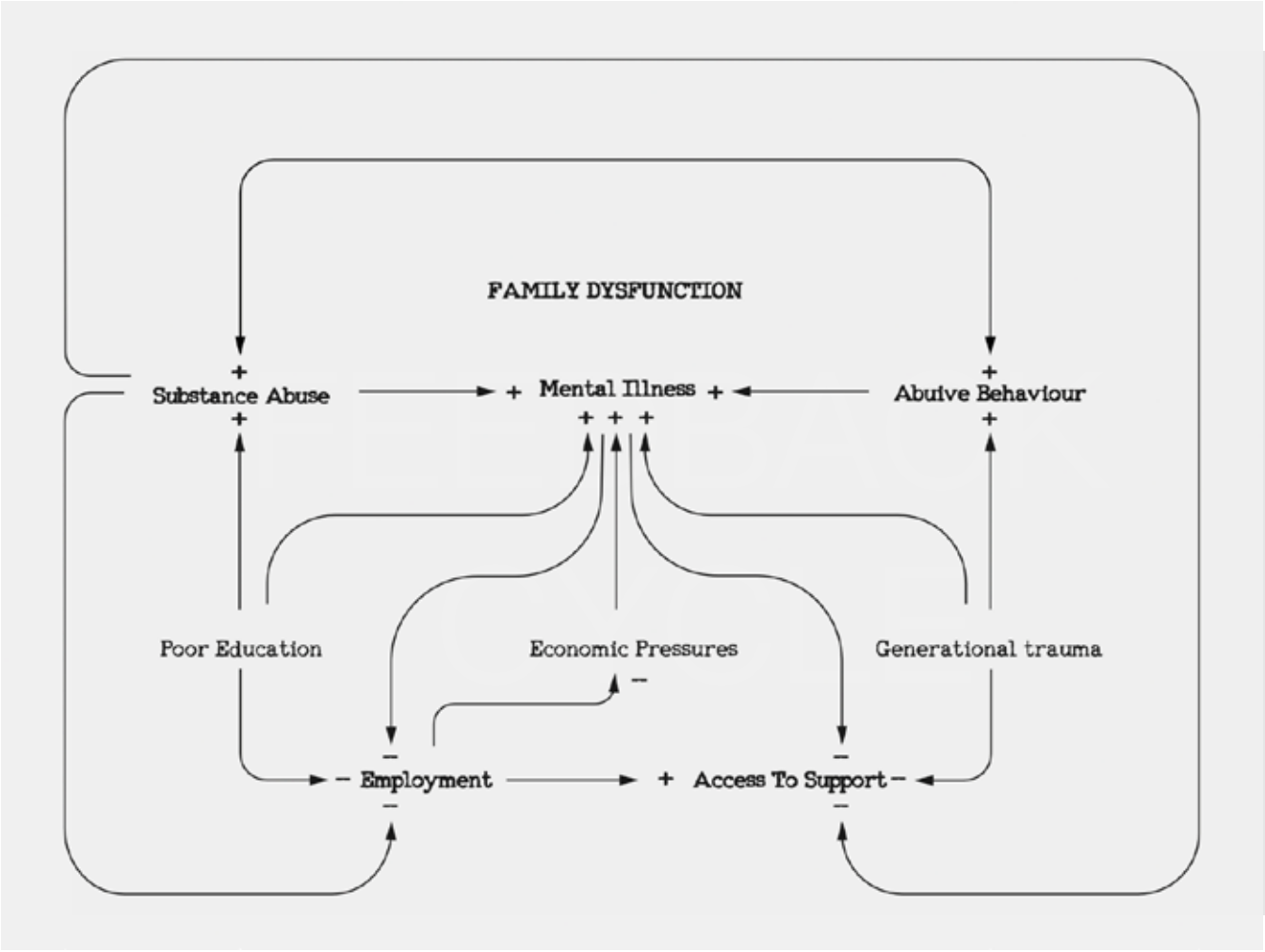
When a person's home life is unstable, rehabilitation often fails, trapping them in cycles of dysfunction instead of breaking it.


Criminal behaviour
Institutionalisation
Drug Exposure
Incaceration
Release
Drug Offences
Anti-social Behaviour
Desperation
Criminal History
Police Surveillance
Trauma
FAMILY DYSFUNCTION
Substance Abuse
Mental Illness
Abuive Behaviour
Poor Education
Economic Pressures
Generational trauma
Employment
Access To Support

SOLUTION

Fixing the roof won't help when the walls are crumbling.

Ensuring strong support within the family home will shape future generations into resilient, educated, empowered, and connected individuals, strengthening Australia's social foundation.



Unity,

trust,

wellbeing,

prosocial behaviour

belonging,

identity,

connection,

ownership,

autonomy,

SOCIAL

safety,

REGENERATION

Social regeneration revitalizes communities by strengthening connections, fostering resilience, and empowering individuals to thrive collectively.

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

An empowered individual gains ownership, identity, autonomy, and security, fostering self–esteem, belonging, and meaningful

FOR THE FAMILY

Strengthening family relationships fosters stability, support, and shared identity, promoting prosocial behavior, communication, and growth while breaking dysfunctional cycles.

FOR THE COMMUNITY

Social regeneration empowers individuals to engage with optimism, driving collective action, local initiatives, and shared spaces that strengthen connections and curb antisocial behavior.

BRIEF

SPACES THAT HEAL |
DESIGNING FOR SOCIAL REGENERATION

This project Explores how domestic spaces can drive social regeneration within families. Disrupting cycles of dysfunction through intentional design. The project highlights key design elements in personal and communal environments, creating a scalable framework for future housing—enhancing social well-being, efficiency, and sustainability.

TARGET AUDIENCE:
Future Australian single parent households.

DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNAL SPACE

Areas intentionally designed to foster connection and shared experiences within the household. Kitchens, dining rooms, and living spaces serve as the heart of the home, where family members gather, interact, and engage in daily life together.

PERSONAL SPACE

Spaces dedicated to an individual within the household, offering privacy, comfort, and self–expression. Bedrooms, for example, serve as personal retreats where occupants can relax, recharge, and maintain their own sense of identity.

PHYSICAL LIMITATION

The design solutions will be confined to a 16m^2 floor plan to encourage greater spatial efficiency. This approach prioritizes strategic space utilization, requiring the integration of multi–functional elements, vertical storage, and adaptable layouts to maximize usability within a compact footprint.

PRINCIPLES

THE STEEL TOWN | CONSETT | 1974 DON MCCULLIN

TRAUMA INFORMED DESIGN

Trauma–informed design creates spaces that promote safety, empowerment, and emotional healing by considering the impact of trauma.

SYSTEMS DESIGN

Whole Systems Thinking:
Considering how the design exists within the greater ecological, social and economic environment to ensure long–term resilience.

REGENERATIVE DESIGN

A Positive Impact Beyond Neutrality:
Instead of reducing harm, the design should seek to restore ecosystems, improve biodiversity, and strengthen communities.

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

Ensuring key stakeholders have an involvement within the design process to ensure their needs are met

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

Integrating visibility into design to enhance safety, passive security, and community oversight.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Designing through shared input, fostering teamwork, co-creation, and diverse perspectives.

UNRESTRICTED MOVEMENT

Removing barriers to ensure seamless navigation, freedom of access, and dynamic spatial flow.

ELIMINATION OF HIERARCHY

Flattening power structures to encourage equal participation, accessibility, and open dialogue

INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Creating spaces that accommodate all users, prioritizing accessibility, diversity, and equitable experiences.

TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

Establishes ownership through design, fostering safety and community pride.

INFLUENCES

PRIMARY INFLUENCES:

BOOK | DESIGNING OUT CRIME: CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | SUZANNE GEASON & PAUL R WILSON

This project examines how principles from Designing Out Crime can be applied to foster social regeneration in domestic spaces. Key principles include Natural Surveillance and Territorial Reinforcement, which promote safety, trust, and positive social behavior.

HISTORICAL | MUSEUM OF LIVING COMMUNISM | BUCHAREST

The Museum of Living Communism has sparked deeper exploration into how housing can reflect societal beliefs. This reference has influenced my design philosophy and guided my approach to the project.

SECONDARY INFLUENCES:

ARTIFACT | THE LAZY SUZANNE

BOOK | SENSE-HACKING | CHARLES SPENCE

LECTURE | THE ART OF JAPANESE GARDENS | KATHLEEN OLIVE

MUSEUM OF LIVING COMMUNISM | BUCHAREST

CODESIGN

AN ONGOING CONVERSATION

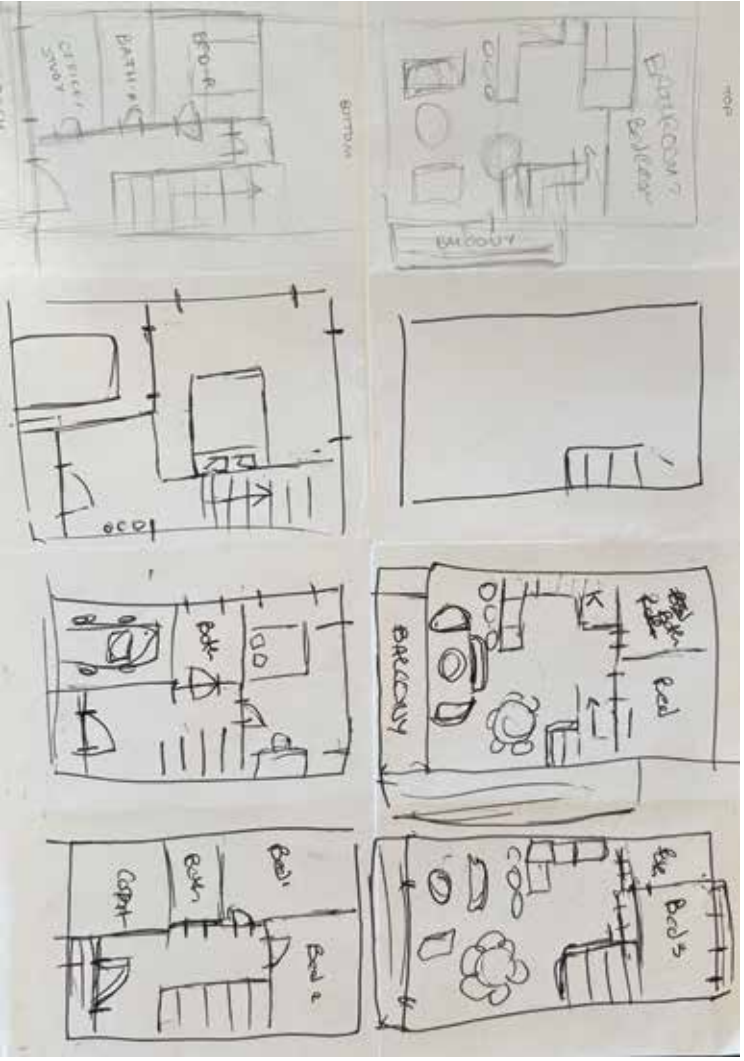
Psychological Safety
Physical Safety
Accessibility

ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTOR

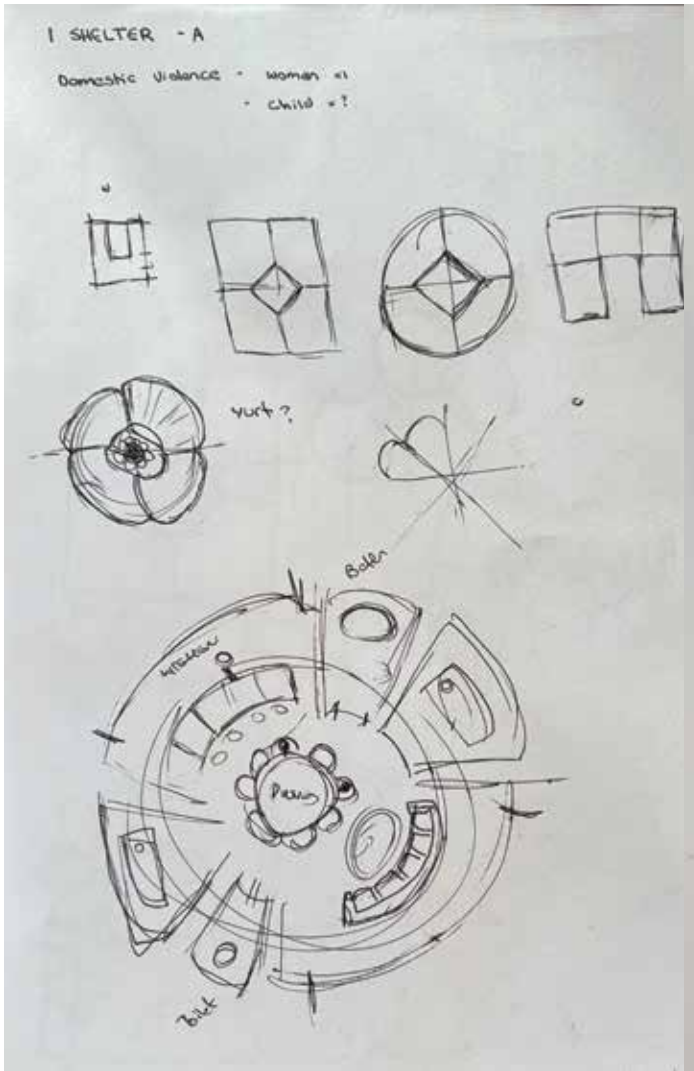
Domestic Violence Survivor,

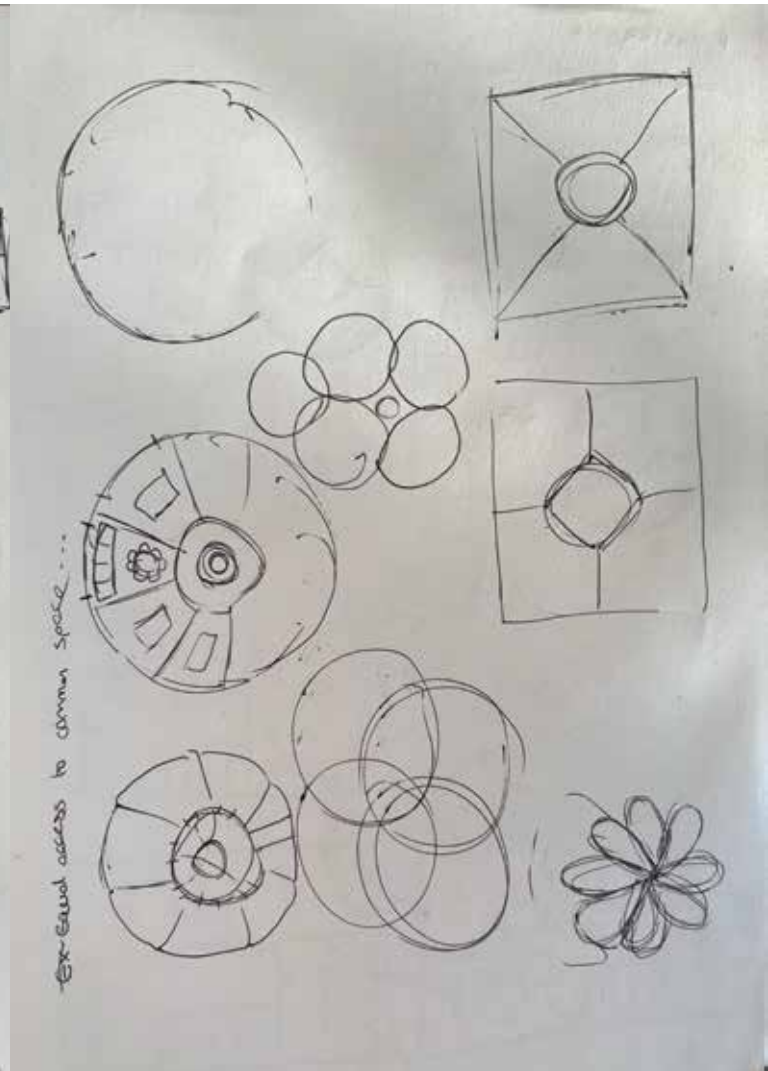
JULIE DOMBROWSKI

Forensic Psychologist,



COMMUNITY?


1 SHELTER - A
Domestic violence - woman =1
- child =?
yurt?
Bath
Bed


Ex-Equal access to common space...

COMMUNAL SPACE

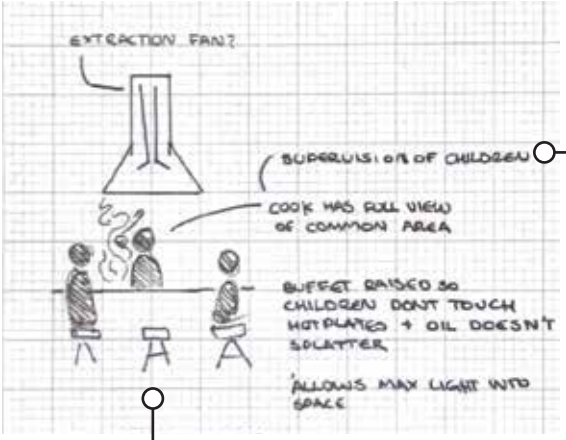
KITCHEN/DINING

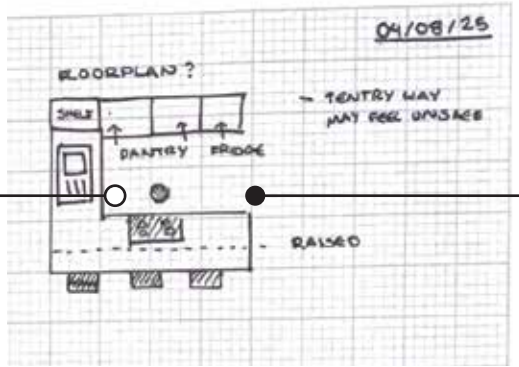
COMMUNAL SPACE

Areas intentionally designed to foster connection and shared experiences within the household. Kitchens, dining rooms, and living spaces serve as the heart of the home, where family members gather, interact, and engage in daily life together.

SKETCHES

KITCHEN





INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Connecting the stove to the buffet invites the cook into the social space, fostering interaction and reducing feelings of isolation or inequity in household tasks.

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

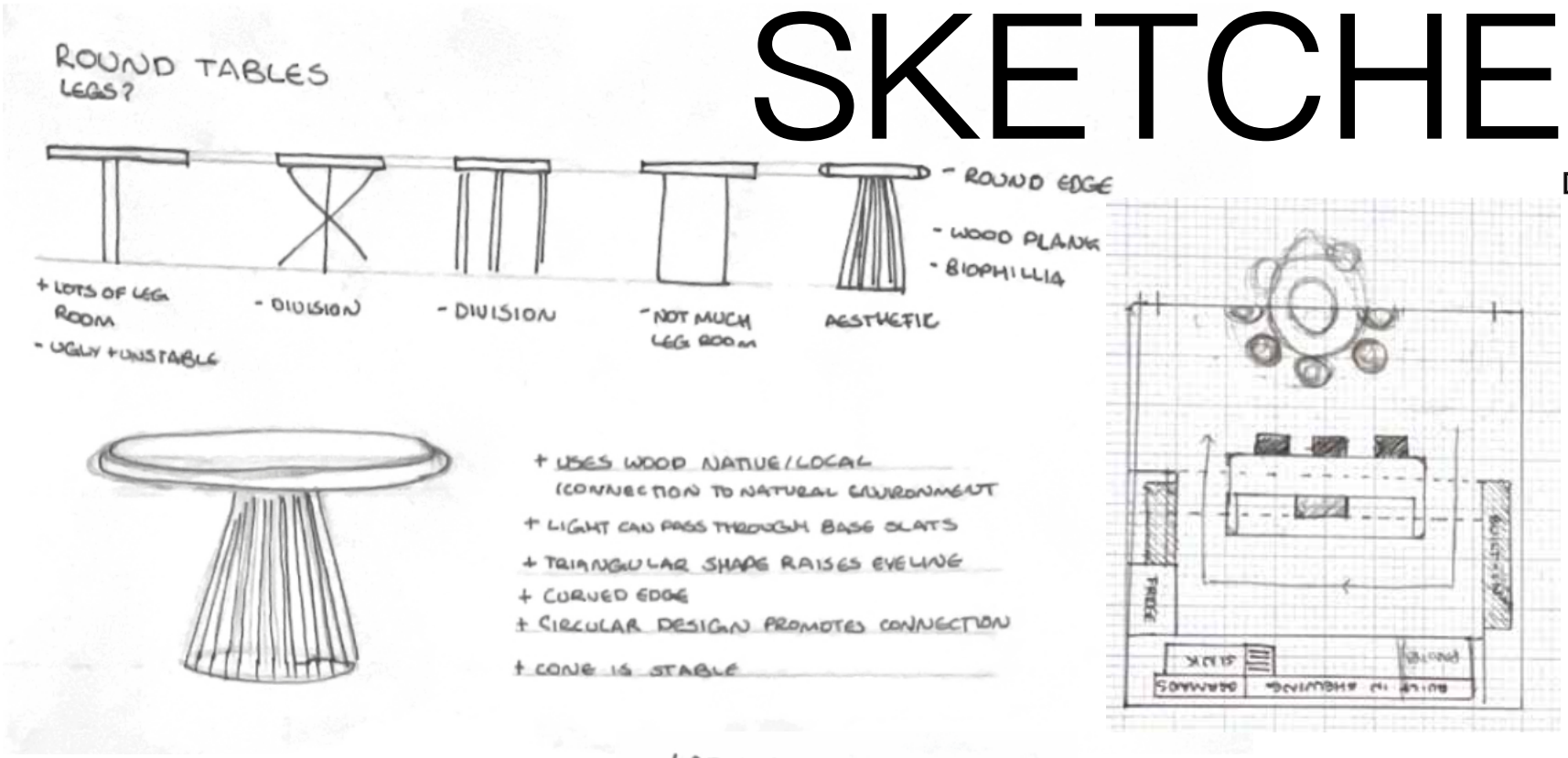
The open layout allows the cook to oversee all activity in the common area, ensuring engagement and safety—an essential feature in a single-parent household.

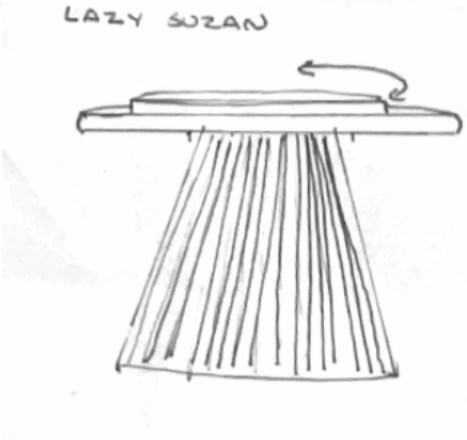
FEEDBACK

Anonymous Contributor (Domestic Violence Survivor): Having only one entry point to the kitchen can create a sense of entrapment and insecurity.

SKETCHES

DINING





ELIMINATION OF HIERARCHY

Eliminating hierarchical seating, round tables foster equality and open interaction, preventing power imbalances in family dynamics. Their soft, organic shape naturally creates a welcoming atmosphere, reinforcing social connection and reducing tension in shared spaces.

INCLUSIVE DESIGN

A Symbol of Inclusive Design By ensuring equal access to food and shared resources, the lazy Susan fosters connection, participation, and equity, breaking down barriers in communal dining spaces.

REVISION

KITCHEN

Integrating multiple points of entry has enhanced navigability and fostered a greater sense of comfort within the space. However, this approach also necessitates a more strategic use of available square footage, as additional circulation pathways require careful spatial planning. To optimize functionality without compromising accessibility, this design will explore vertical storage solutions, leveraging overhead space to improve efficiency.

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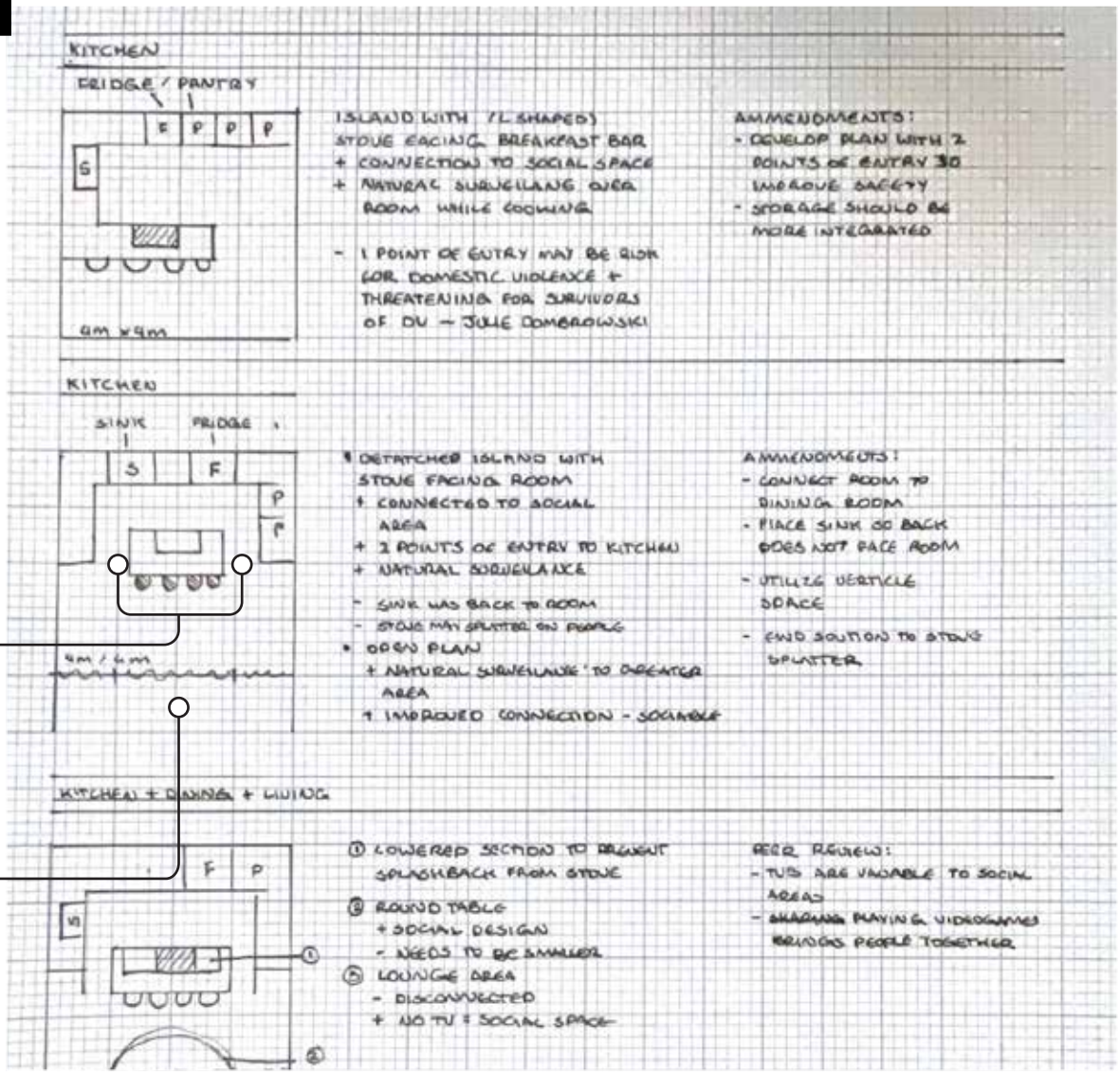
ACCESSIBILITY & UNRESTRICTED MOVEMENT

The kitchen island helps prevent entrapment, creating a more accessible and supportive space for trauma survivors.

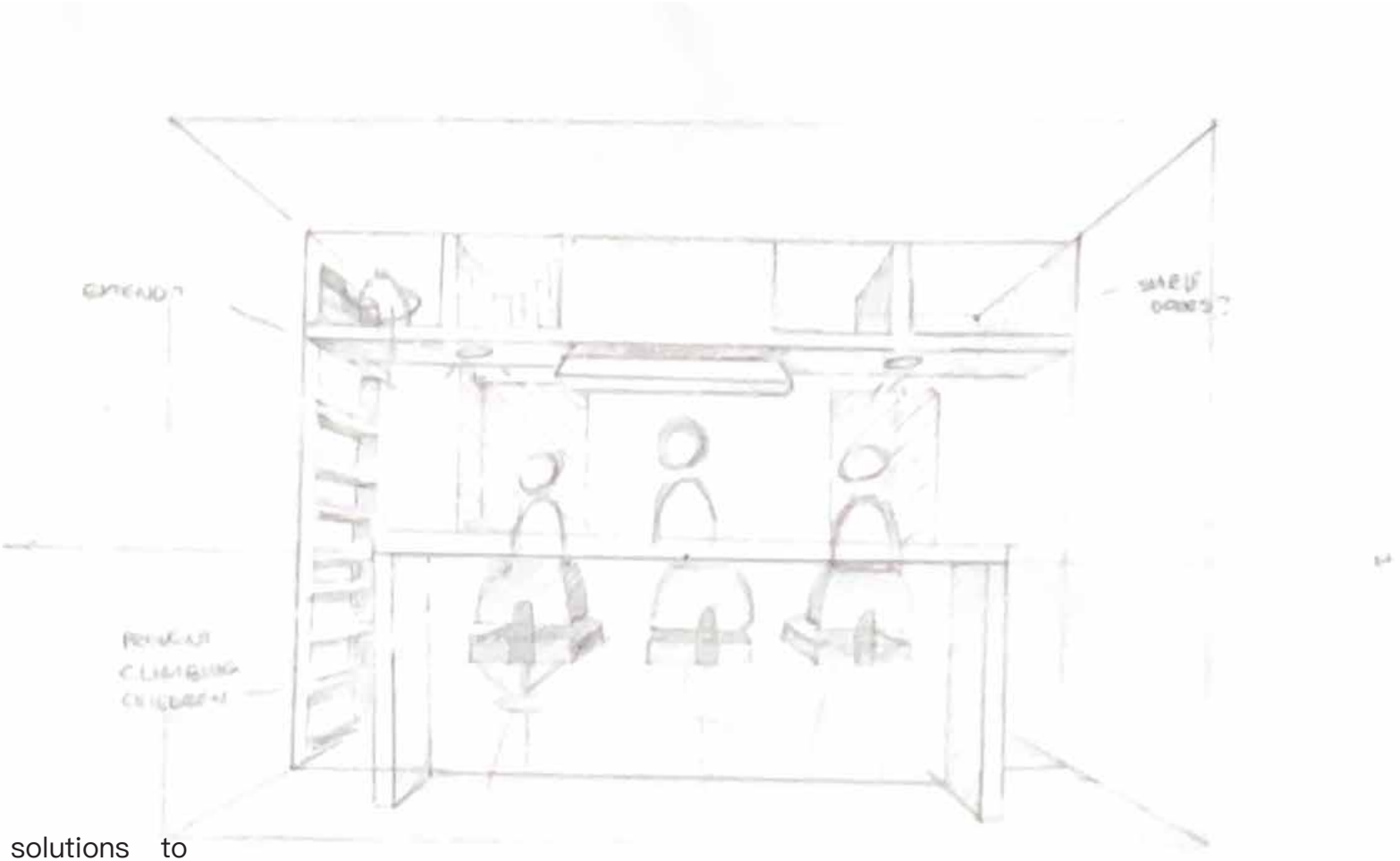
EXPANDING NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

Connecting the kitchen to the dining and lounge area expands sightlines, strengthening natural surveillance and fostering a safer, more connected environment.



REFINEMENT

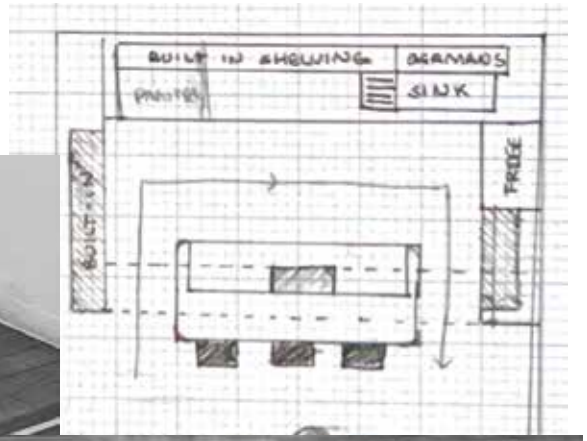
KITCHEN



SPACE OPTIMISATION

Utilizing vertical storage solutions to allow for passageways on both sides of the kitchen island, improving accessibility, functionality and flow.

PROTOTYPING



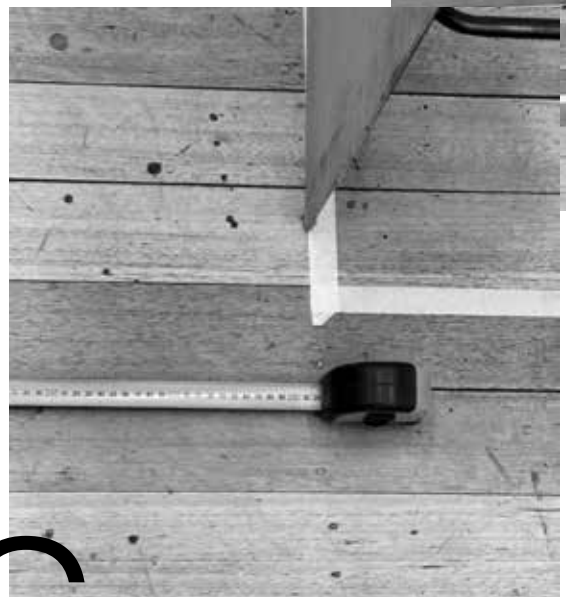
TAPE MAPPING

A tape mapping technique was used to validate the functionality of the floor plan and ensure compliance with Australian sizing standards. Through this process, it became clear that incorporating an island bench would be challenging, as the 900mm recommended passageway clearance would significantly limit the available space for the bench.

TESTING

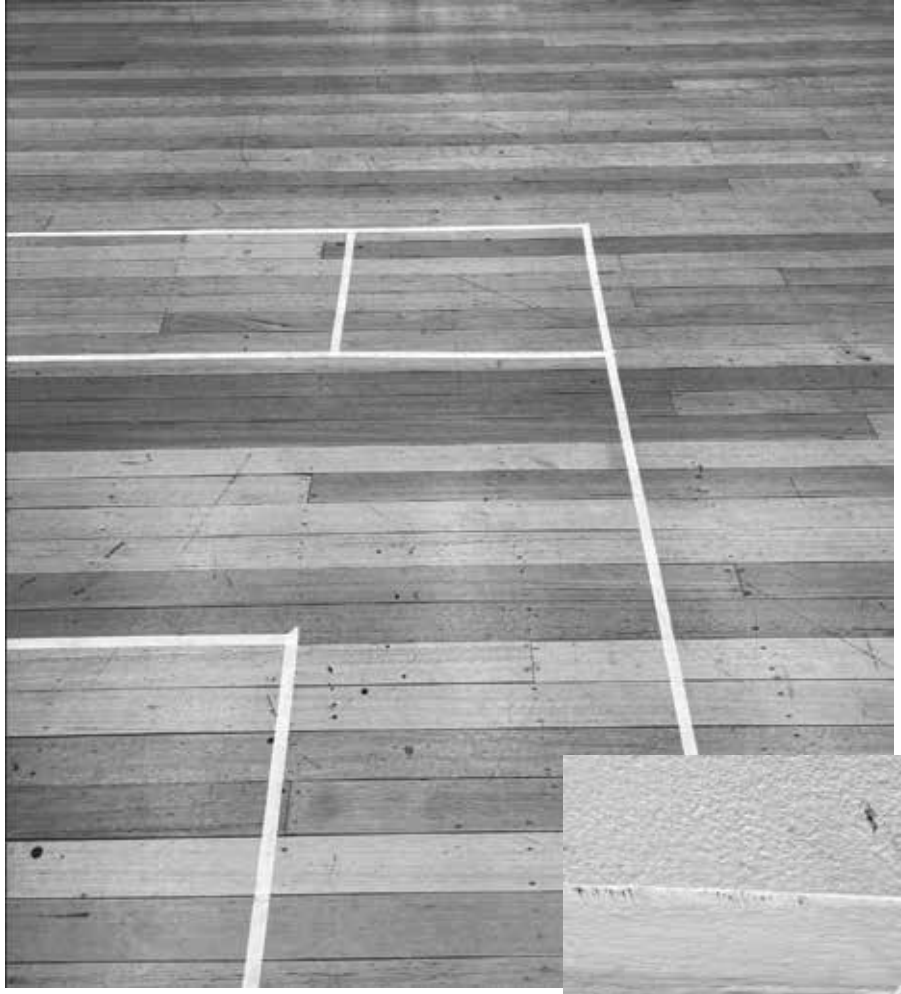
NOTE

A minimal 850mm passageway clearance is recommended for wheelchair accessibility. Future design revisions aimed at improving inclusivity would need to adjust this layout to accommodate mobility needs while maintaining functionality and spatial efficiency.



FINDINGS

A classmate assisted in testing whether the 900mm passageway clearance could be reduced. The evaluation found that a 700mm gap still allowed for comfortable movement; however, additional distance was required between the back bench and the island to maintain functionality.



FINDINGS

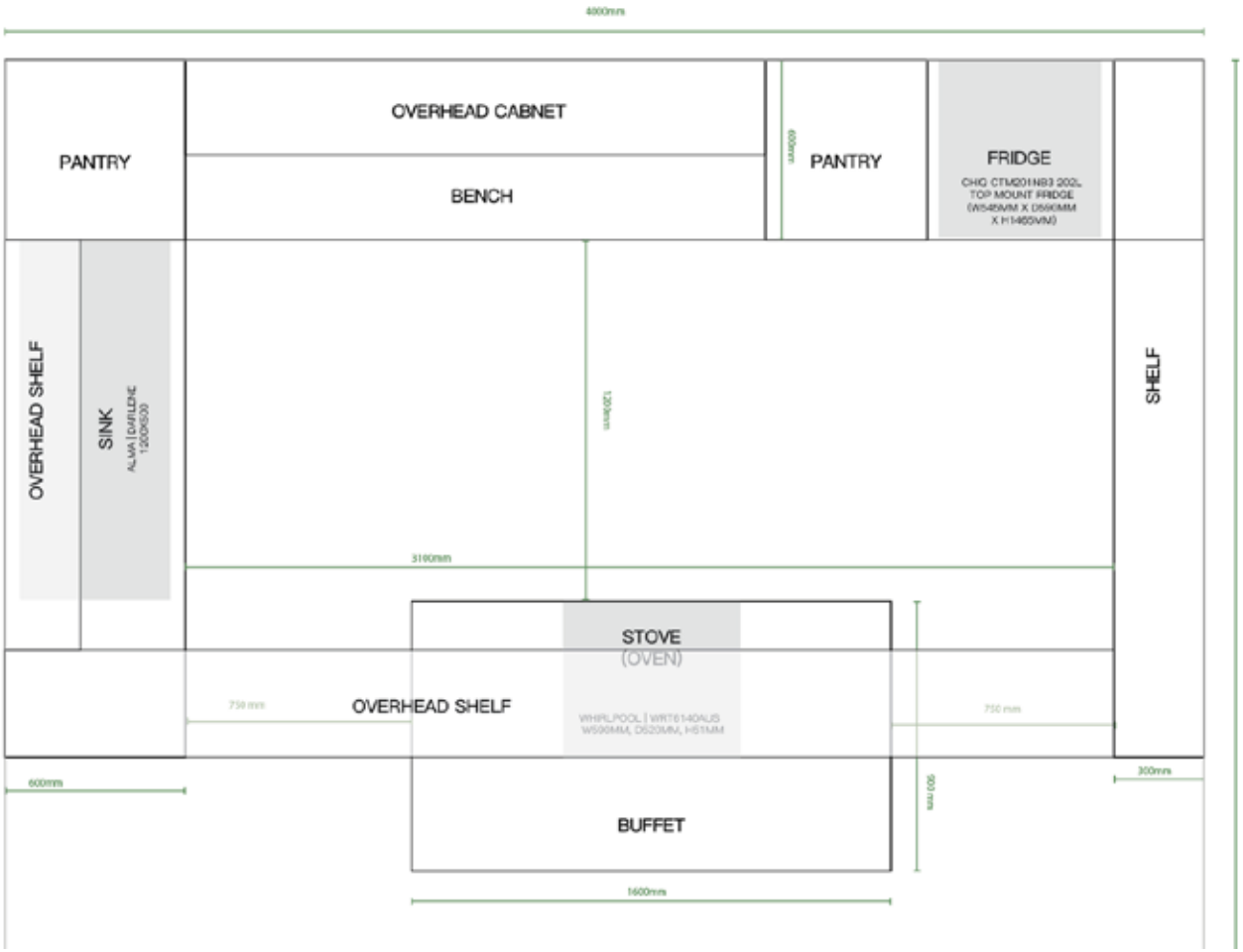
Tape mapping was utilized to assess standard shelving depth requirements, ensuring spatial accuracy and functionality before finalizing design decisions. This approach helped visualize usability and refine storage efficiency within the available footprint.

PROTOTYPING

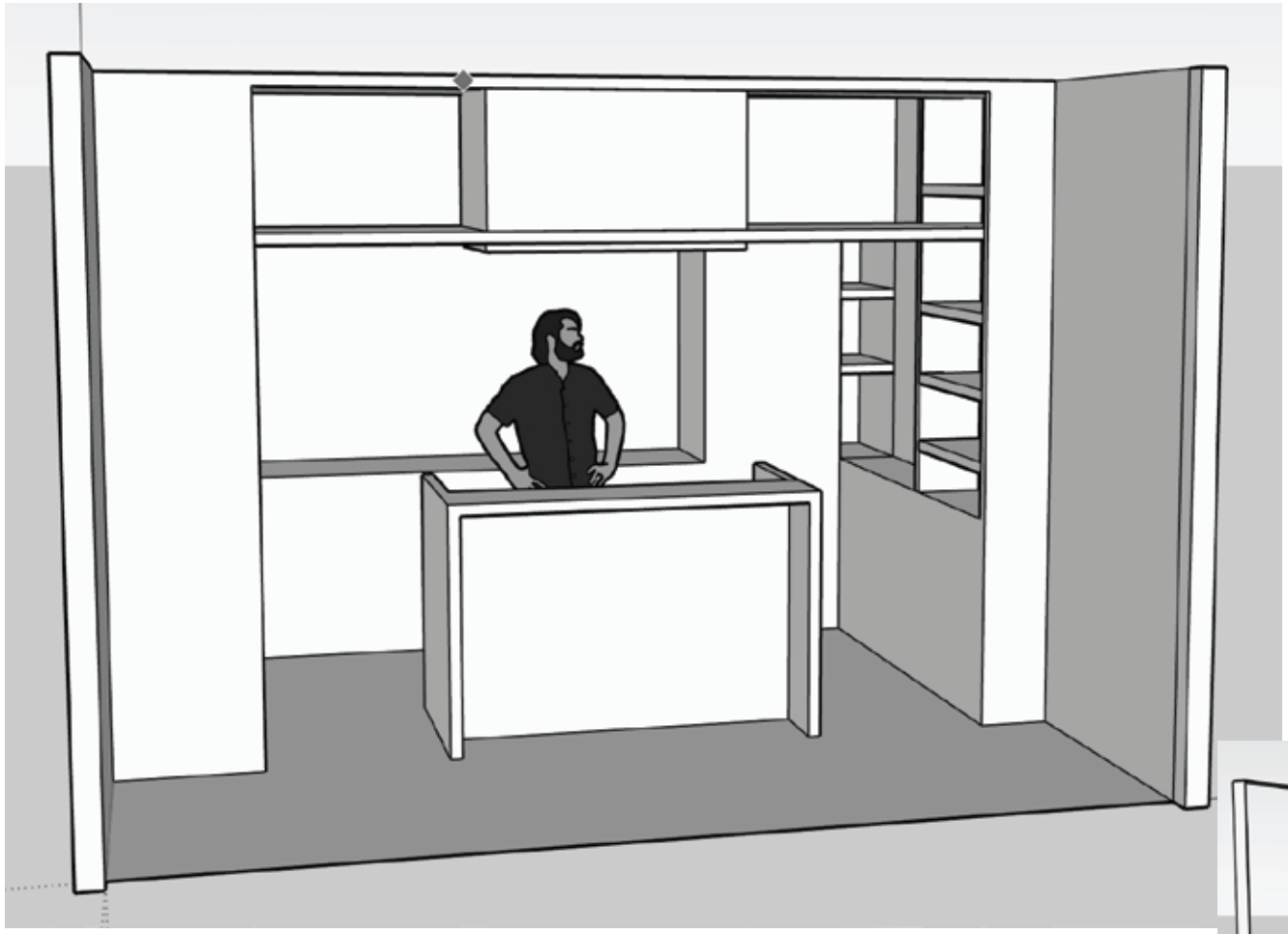
PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT

Pedestals, stools, and scrap board were used to construct a prototype round table, testing dimensions to determine the optimal size for comfortably seating five individuals while maintaining accessibility and functionality. Let me know if you'd like any refinements!

PROTOTYPING



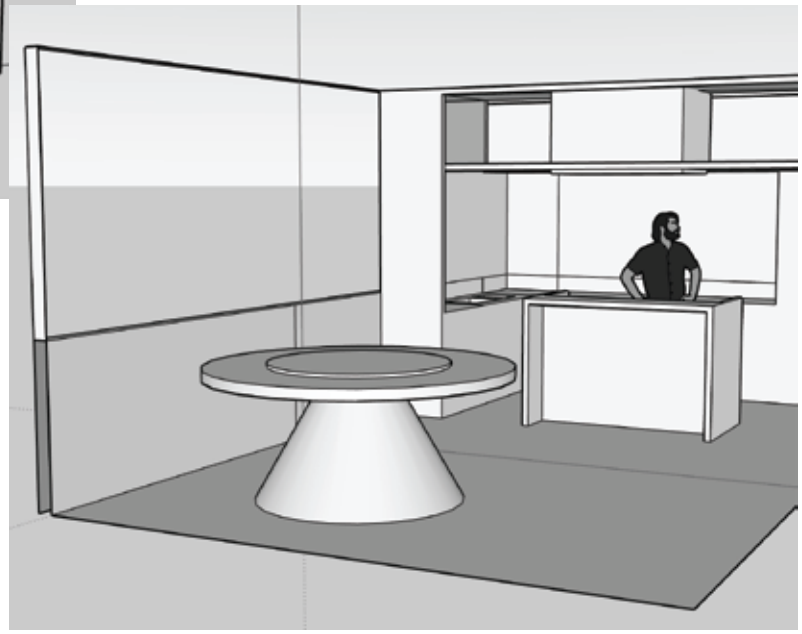
The floor plan was meticulously laid out and refined using Illustrator to ensure precision. Cost-effective white goods were incorporated to maintain feasibility and practicality in the design.



PROTOTYPE

SKETCHUP

Visualizing the Design in SketchUp: The design was illustrated in SketchUp, providing a clear spatial representation and allowing for refinement of layout, proportions, and functionality within the given constraints.



PERSONAL SPACE

BEDROOM

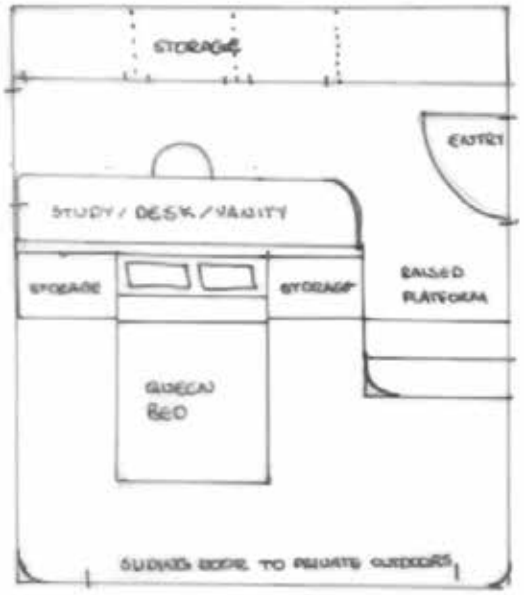
PERSONAL SPACE

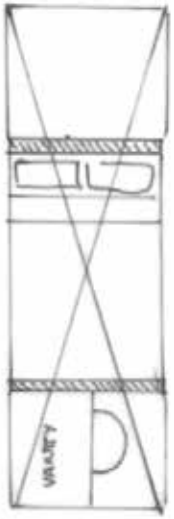
Spaces dedicated to an individual within the household, offering privacy, comfort, and self-expression. Bedrooms, for example, serve as personal retreats where occupants can relax, recharge, and maintain their own sense of identity.

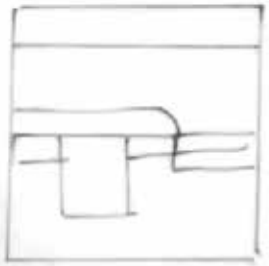
wardrobe
Space-curtain
raised platform
seat
seat
DESK
Bookshelf
Platform extended /
Bed
window / sliding door

SKETCHES

PLATFORM







CONSIDERATIONS

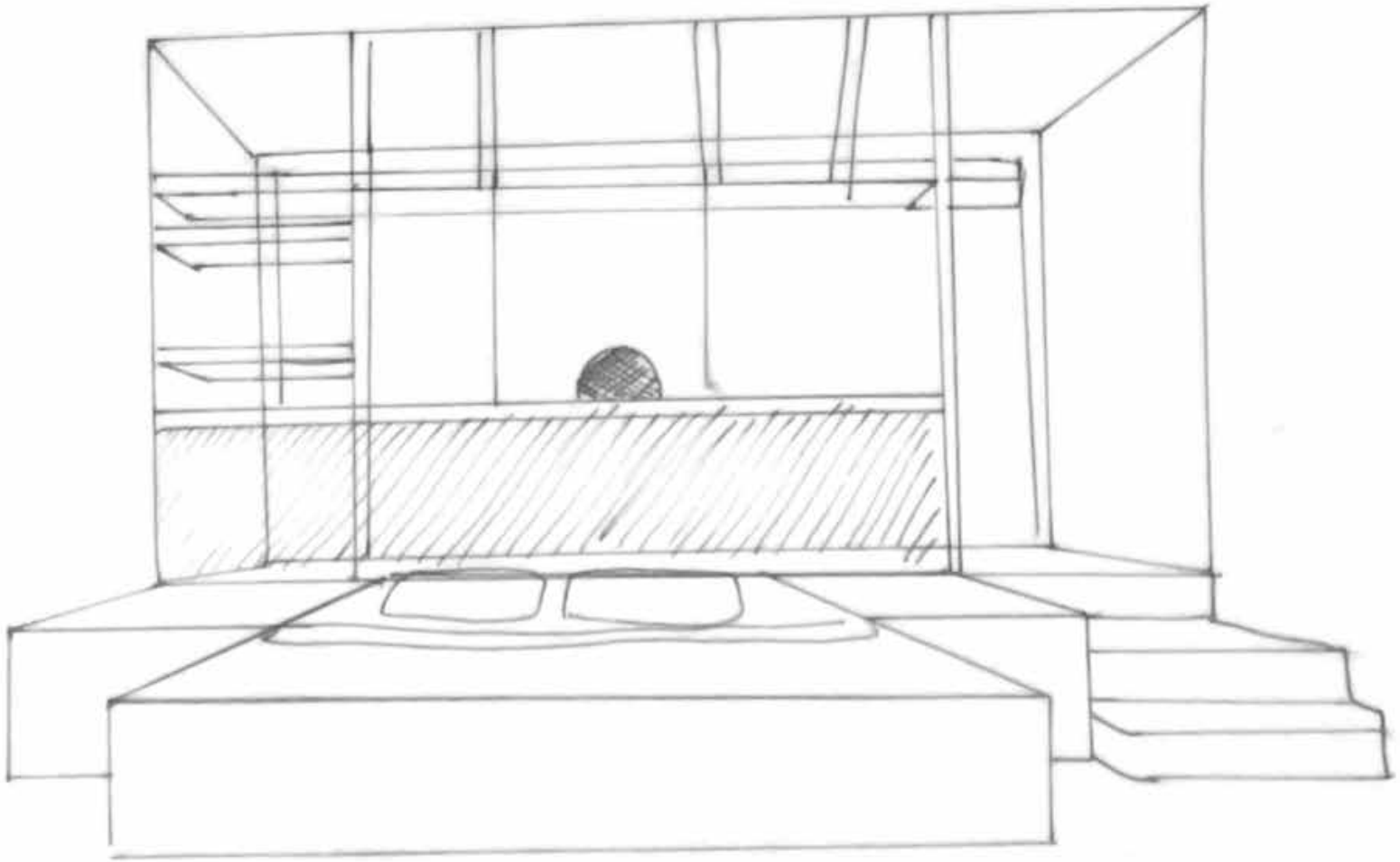
In this floor plan, the wardrobe was positioned along the upper platform's wall. However, further refinement revealed that this exceeded the 4m × 4m allowance, necessitating a reconsideration of its placement to maintain spatial efficiency without compromising functionality.

TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

Defining Spatial Boundaries Through Platforms Platforms establish clear territorial divisions within the bedroom, separating the sleeping area as a dedicated retreat. The lowered section enhances relaxation, while the raised workspace remains connected to the rest of the building, reinforcing distinct functional zones.

BIOPHILIA

Blending Built Spaces with Natural Forms The platform softens the bedroom's hardscape, mimicking the organic unevenness found in natural landscapes. This design choice enhances comfort and fluidity, creating a more grounded and serene living environment.



BUILT IN APPROACH

TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

Built–in display shelving fosters personalization and connection, giving occupants a tangible sense of ownership over their space. This integration strengthens territorial identity, transforming the environment into a reflection of the individual.

SUSTAINABILITY

Built–in furniture minimizes overproduction, extending its lifespan and encouraging maintenance over replacement. This approach fosters a culture of resource efficiency, reducing waste while supporting long–term sustainability.

FUNCTIONALITY

Seamlessly integrating furniture into the built environment enhances spatial efficiency and usability, ensuring essential furnishings are accessible—especially crucial for emergency housing and cost–sensitive living solutions.

TAPE MAPPING

A tape mapping technique was used to validate the functionality of the floor plan and ensure compliance with Australian sizing standards. Through this process,

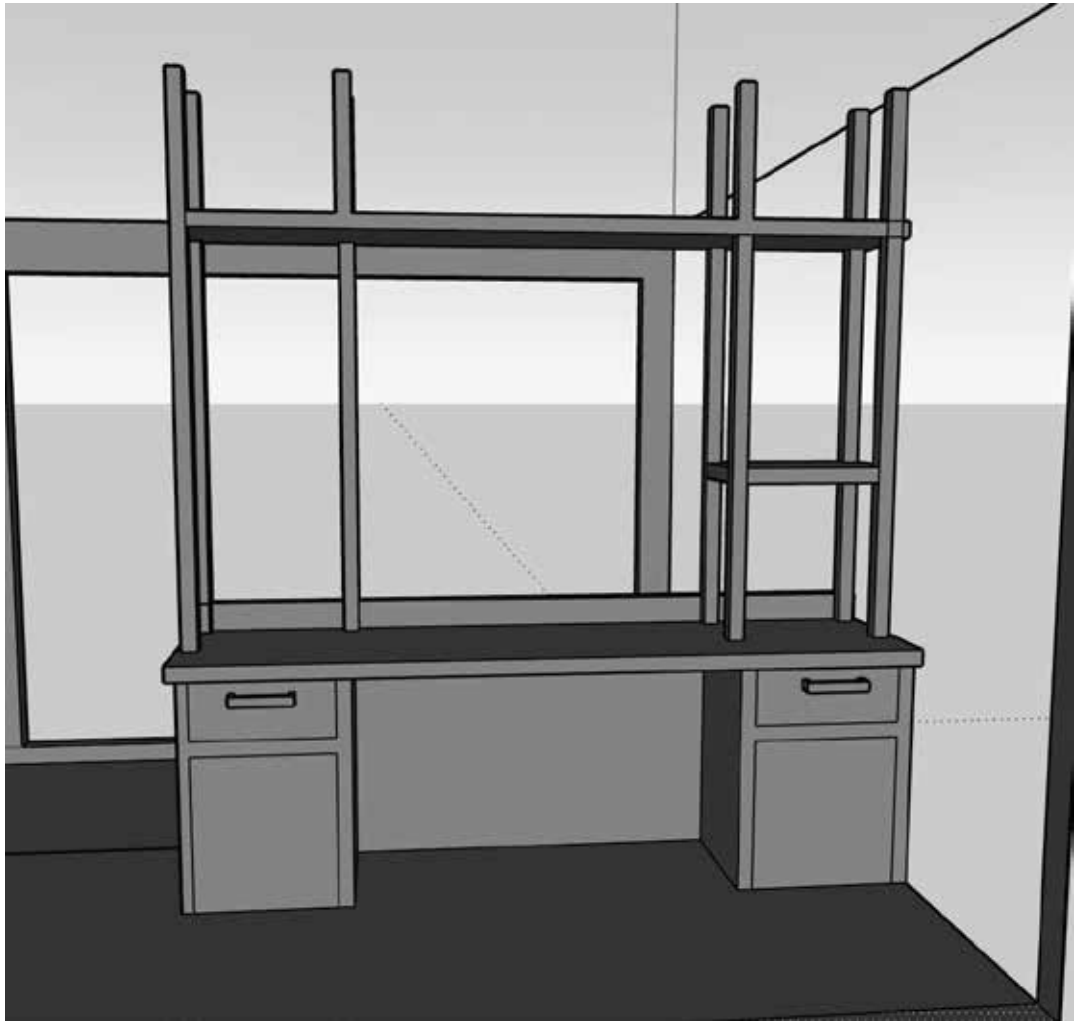
PROTOTYPING

OFF THE WALL

Refining Bedroom Layout for Efficiency The initial design featured two bedside tables, but space constraints limited the integration of a built–in wardrobe. Keeping the bed off the wall also felt inefficient—a concern echoed by classmates—prompting a reconsideration of spatial allocation to enhance functionality.

ON THE WALL

By shifting the bed against the wall, enough room was freed up to integrate a built–in wardrobe, improving both functionality and spatial efficiency without compromising comfort.



PROTOTYPE

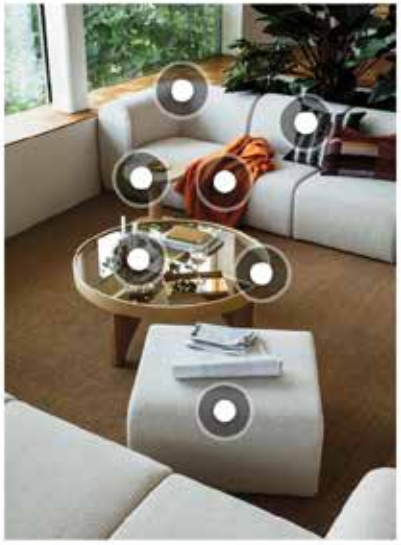
CAD

SKETCHUP

Visualizing the Design in SketchUp: The design was illustrated in SketchUp, providing a clear spatial representation and allowing for refinement of layout, proportions, and functionality within the given constraints.

CATALOGUE

IKEA CATALOGUE:



FUTURE

A Catalogue for Social Regeneration The project will be presented as a comprehensive design catalogue, showcasing solutions that promote social regeneration through spatial efficiency, inclusivity, and sustainability. This collection will serve as a guide for fostering connected, equitable living environments.

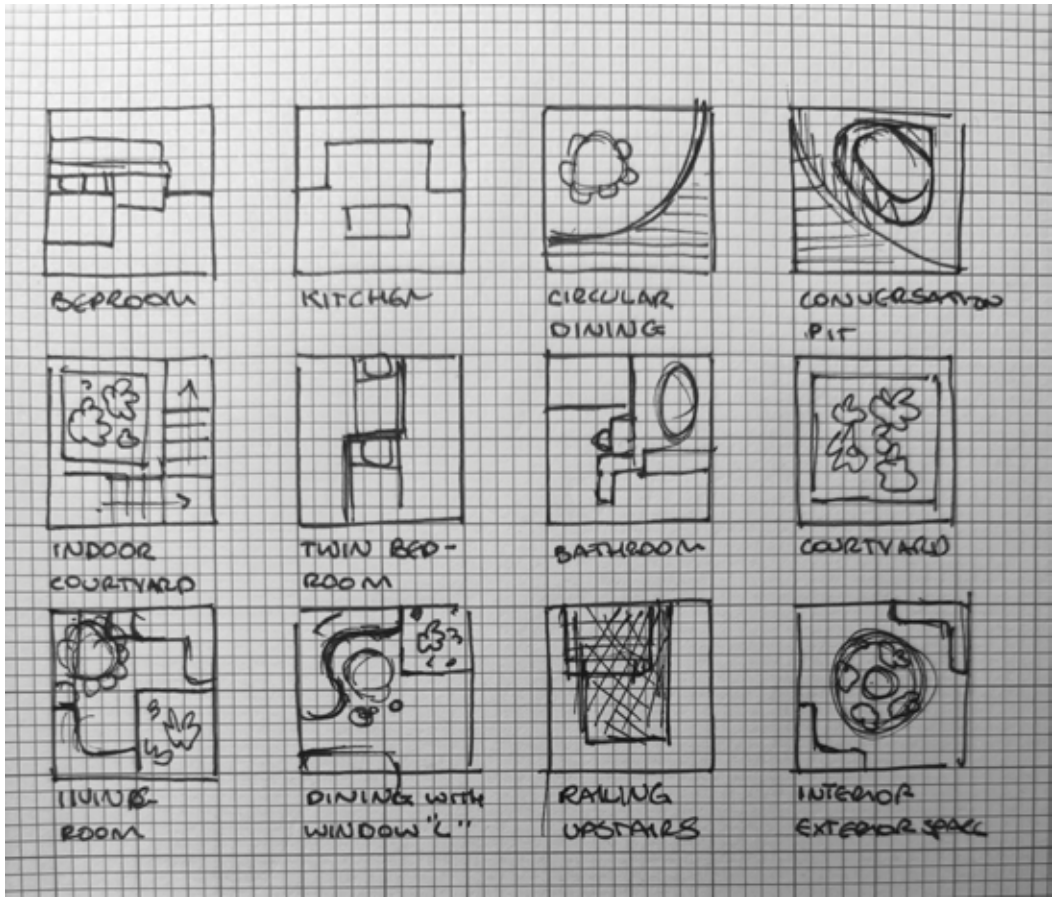
REFLECTION

Through this project, I've gained valuable insights—most notably, the importance of a clear, contained brief. The initial lack of direction made planning difficult, reinforcing how essential structure is in design.

With no prior architecture experience, the learning curve was steep, but pushing myself into unfamiliar territory has been rewarding. While I successfully developed two domestic spaces, a future iteration would focus on modularity to further enhance adaptability.

Next steps include two physical models and a design catalogue, outlining the significance of each asset within the home and reinforcing its role in fostering sustainable, functional living.

MODULARITY



FUNCTIONALITY

Exploring Modularity in Regenerative Design During the conceptualisation phase, I considered modularity as a strategy to support my regenerative design goals. By integrating adaptable elements, the design could evolve with user needs, reducing waste and promoting sustainability. While this concept wasn't fully realized, it remains a compelling direction for future refinement.