

Jefferson built his bed at Monticello that way originally. Finally, after a lot of hemming and hawing, Chris agreed to do it: a wonderful stroke, which makes the upstairs of the house beautiful, just right, and very sensible; filled with light, it is an inspiration to be there.

When we got ready to build the bed alcove, we made a variety of cardboard mockups to determine the size of the opening, the arch of the opening, the exact width of the bed, the soft edge between the mattress and the wooden platform, and the position of lights inside. The most criti-

cal thing was the exact position of the alcove in the wall. The view through the bed alcove into Chris's study depended on very slight movement up and down the room. And the strengthening of the part-octagon shape of the master bedroom also depended on the position of the bed alcove. Finally, it turned out that the opening needed a very broad set of boards — this showed up first in a small sketch, as when we were standing there a too narrow set of boards around the opening looked funny. The wide boards gave the bed its proper weight.



34 / THE KITCHEN FIREPLACE SHAPE

IN THE KITCHEN, A MAJOR NEW CENTER HELPED TO RESOLVE AWKWARDNESS AMONG EXISTING CENTERS.

We came to the kitchen fireplace. The Uphams had told us they wanted to bake pizza

in it, every night. That made sense. It became a kind of oven. All along, the kitchen had had a strange and awkward L-shape, already discussed earlier. I looked and looked, what to do, but couldn't make it just right. To resolve the two

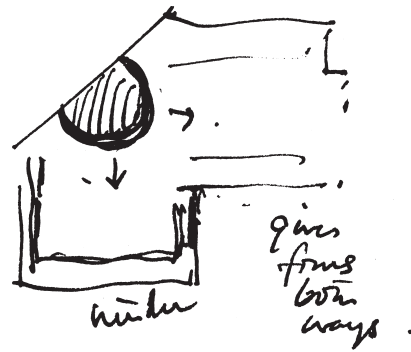


The kitchen mocked up in its entirety in cardboard, so we could see just how to make the kitchen fireplace. The idea of a cylinder had already occurred to me from seeing the room shape and recognizing its two lines of sight. Now we had to make the cylinder work, and to do that we had to have the full three-dimensional configuration, as it was going to be. We had to make many many versions before it all sat right.

parts of the room — to keep them separate, and yet unite them — it occurred to me, after looking and looking and looking, that a single great cylinder would have a relation to both and yet would give each one a better shape by itself. This sounded crazy, but when we made a small plasticine model of a cylindrical fireplace it looked rather good.

To check it, we built the fireplace in cardboard, in the room itself, with all the kitchen cabinets (coming later) in cardboard too, so we could judge how calm and simple it would be possible to make it.

It worked.



Position of kitchen fireplace as a cylinder: It gives a focus to both parts of the room, separates them, and joins them.



35 / THE KITCHEN FLOOR

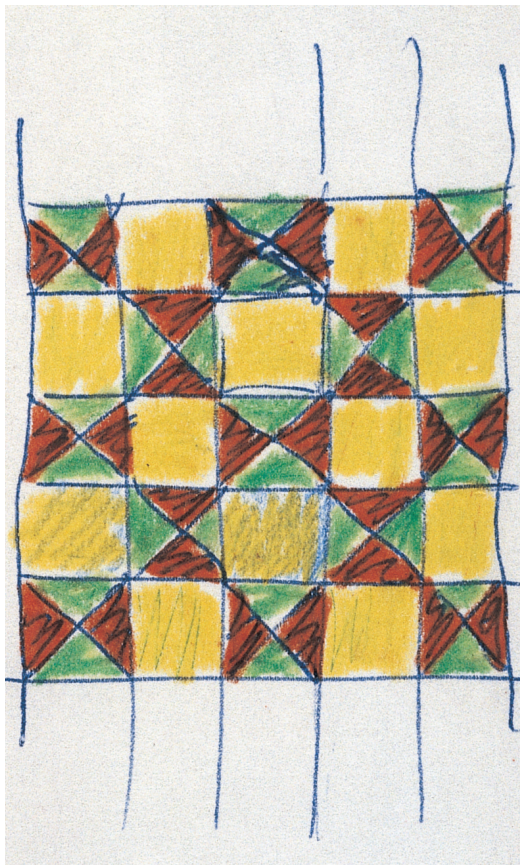
THE NEXT CENTERS, TO SUPPORT THE KITCHEN, WERE CENTERS MADE IN THE FLOOR.

We always had intended to build one of our terrazzo floors in the kitchen. To make the cost of it feasible, we were going to do the styrofoam work (where the pattern gets set) with help from apprentices. We would place the marble dust professionally. Chris Upham himself was then going to grind the floor.

Stephanie mentioned her hope for green and red and yellow. That night, I made a small sketch of red, yellow, and green triangles. Shawn Bradbury, then one of my apprentices, made full size paintings to check the color in position. It worked very well. We settled the scale. Finding the exact colors for the green, red, and yellow wasn't so easy.

The rest was just hard work.

But after all the color effort, when it came to the actual placing of the material, we had the wrong mix for the green. The green came out too dark. It ruined the design. Randy did dozens of experiments to get a sealer which made the green lighter. He then painstakingly applied that special lightening sealer to all the green triangles (several hundred of them); this brought the balance back, and it works fairly well.



My first colored sketch of the floor design: red, green, and yellow