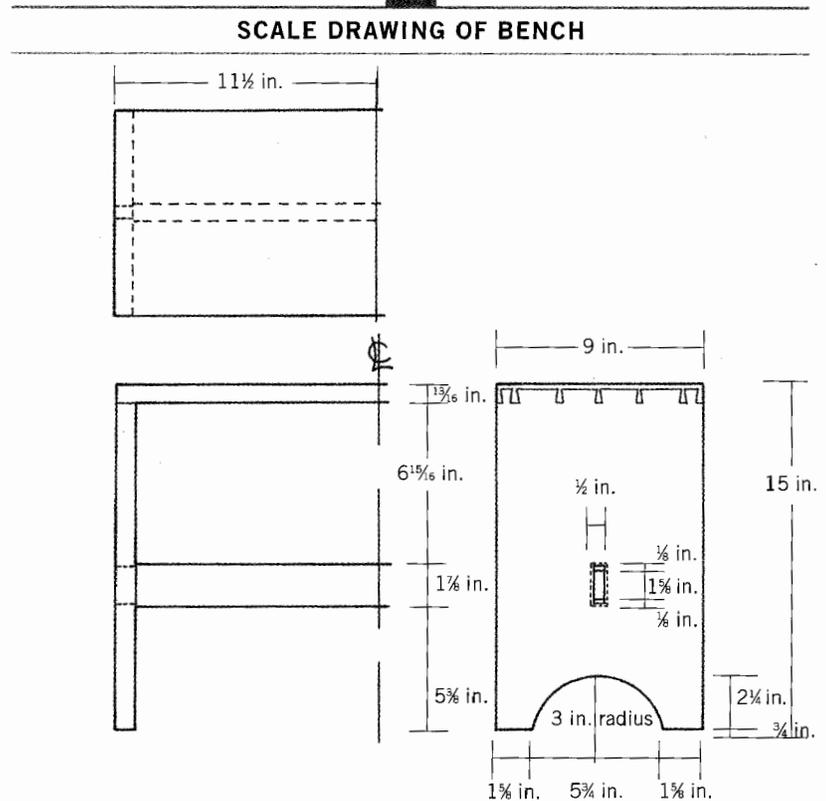


Begin with a sketch

Let's say you want to design a small bench to go by your fireplace. Set aside a half-hour or more of undisturbed time, and simply start sketching bench ideas with pencil and paper. Don't worry about drawing ability. You are the only person who has to understand your sketches. Don't stop to evaluate. Keep sketching new variations. If you get stuck, go off in a wildly different direction. After a while you should begin to see some interesting ideas. I sometimes need several sketching sessions to come up with an idea that I want to pursue.

Once you have created one sketch that is particularly appealing, the hard part is done. The rest of the design process consists of translating the sketch into reality by refining the concept and working out the details without sacrificing its charm.

First, decide on the bench's measurements. Examine existing benches as refer-



ences for scale and proportion. After a while, design and construction details that ensure function, strength, and durability can be induced from experience. In the meantime, the best way to learn is through observation.

Make a scale drawing

Make scale drawings of your design using a parallel-bar drawing board, a T-square, or even graph paper. An architect's rule makes it easy to work at scales from one-eighth to one-half of life size. Drawing at a scale where ¼ in. on paper equals 1 in. in real life is appropriate for most furniture, but a small piece such as this bench could also be drawn on a larger scale, such as ¼ in. to 1 in.

SMALL BENCH

