

Furniture Arranging Guidelines

Diane Kinateder UVU Adjunct Faculty

Equipment needed

Floor plan at $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'0" scale

Furniture Template

Ruler (lined clear plastic) or Architect's Scale

Tracing paper

Pencils, Sharpie pens, highlighters

12' Measuring Tape

Masking or painter's tape

Furniture Catalog for furniture inspiration and measurements

Furniture arranging idea file

(Or--all of the above, except the tape measure, may be replaced by a computer and printer!)

Steps to Successfully Arrange Furniture

Step #1: Assess Scaled Floor Plan by Applying Principles and Elements of Design before arranging furniture.

1. What are the natural **focal points**? Is there a fireplace? View?
2. Has the **Golden Mean** been applied in order to divide zones in a room? Mark center of room—avoid placing a large piece of furniture centered on this area that equally divide room.
3. Are there pleasing room shapes, such as avoiding long narrow spaces?
4. Is there a pleasing balance in each room? Look at wall spaces, window and door placement, one side of the room to another. Will furniture arrangements need to be done to compensate for undesirable features?
5. What are natural and floor plan vistas?
6. Are there natural areas where furniture needs to be centered?
7. Locate on plan (or in room) electrical outlets, jacks, and lighting.

Step #2: Define Purpose

1. What is the purpose of the room?
2. What furniture pieces will accommodate room purposes?
3. Will there be TV in the room?

Step #3: Assess Traffic Lanes and Standard Clearances, place major furniture

1. Lay tracing paper over scaled floor plan and with a wide highlighter, mark all traffic lanes
2. Lay second tissue over floor plan and block in major (usually largest) furniture pieces
3. Do not block entrances and exits into rooms or furniture groupings
4. Large pieces need to be evenly distributed to keep room balanced
5. Mark standard clearances, such as around dining tables, conversation groupings, distances for correct TV viewing.

Note: Several layers of tracing paper can be used to create the final arrangement.

Standard Furniture Measurements

Below are some standard furniture measurements meant to be used as general guideline only.

Living Room

- 3 seat sofa – 35" D x 84" W
- Loveseat – 35" D x 60" W
- Armchair – 35" W x 35" D
- Coffee Table – 30" W x 48" L
- Square end table – 24" W x 24" L
- Rectangular end table - 24" W x 28" L

Dining Room

- Dining table w/1 leaf – 36" W x 72" L
- Side chair – 18" D x 18" W
- Arm chair - 18" D x 22" W

Bed Room

- Twin size bed – 39" W x 80" L
- Double bed – 54" W x 80" L
- Queen size bed – 60" W x 80" L
- Eastern king size bed – 78" W x 80" L
- California king size bed – 72" W x 82" L
- Chest of drawers – 30" W x 18" D
- Nightstand – 18" W x 18" D

Standard Clearance Guidelines

Spaces that need 36"-6' clearance:

1. Hallways (4' at least)
2. In front of clothes closets, dressers and chests of drawers
3. Any route where 2 people might pass each other
4. From the edge of a dining room table to a wall or stationary object.
5. Sides of bed you get in
6. 4' or more for stairways.

Spaces that need 16"-4' clearance:

1. Sides of beds used only for making the bed
2. Between sofas & coffee tables
3. 30" in routes where only one person will walk such as in front of tubs or through doorways.

Primary Conversation Areas:

1. 8-12 feet in diameter is ideal
2. Seats 4-6 people

Secondary Conversation Area:

1. Seating for just 1-3 people

Dining Area:

1. Allow 3 feet from the table edge for the person to be seated at the table and room behind for traffic.
2. Each person is allowed a minimum of 24 inches of seating room at the table.

Step #4: Arrange "secondary groupings"

These groupings "fill in" around the major furniture pieces to complete room.

1. Could include a writing desk and chair, occasional chairs and tables, plants, large accessories.
2. Use idea files for inspiration for these furniture pieces and groupings

Step #5: Final Furniture Arranging Design Hints and Checklist

1. Reassess the principles and elements of design after designing your scaled floor plan and birds eye, two dimensional furniture arrangements
2. Measure all clearances; do they meet the minimum clearances?
3. Are there any areas you need to “**pole vault**” into, such as a conversation grouping?
4. Are furniture pieces the correct scale for room and to each other?
5. Have you created pleasing negative and positive spaces?
6. Are large pieces evenly distributed to keep room balanced?
7. Do you have a variety of shapes—angular and curved?
8. Is there a pleasing distribution of furniture heights in room?
9. Are wood and upholstered pieces balanced by mixing soft and hard surfaces with rugs or tables covered in fabric?
10. Don't put all of the furniture around the wall. Here are some ideas to avoid **ring-around-the-room syndrome**.
 - a. Don't be afraid to place furniture on the diagonal if it looks and fits better in that position, but remember to place another piece of furniture on that same angle or perpendicular to the largest diagonal furniture piece.
 - b. A bookcase or armoire placed on the diagonal can camouflage an awkward nook or corner.
 - c. A conversation area placed on the diagonal in the middle of the room will add a sense of motion and interest
 - d. Pull your sofa away from the wall and put a long table behind it for the placing of interesting accessories or plants.
11. A conversation area can be softened by angling a chair towards the grouping.
12. Remember to include “companion” pieces. Pianos need benches, desk's chairs, chairs and sofas need nearby table or flat surfaces (to set beverages, etc.) dining bars need stools, end tables need lamps, beds need end tables, dining room tables need chairs, etc.
13. Area rugs can help to define spaces. Most are standard rectangular shapes. Furniture should be arranged to either have the front legs on the rug or totally off the rug.
14. Master bedrooms should have seating for two, such as a chair, loveseat or bench. Each person should have their own flat surface by their bed.
15. Place chairs angled toward the room when placed by a “view” window, and not with their backs to the room
16. Living/Entry combination rooms should create with the furniture arrangement a sense of “entry space”.
17. Double check door swing clearances and furniture placement.
18. **Do not ignore fireplaces!**
19. The approximate distance between the television and the seating should be three times the size of the screen. So a 42” TV should be a little over 10' from seating area.
20. If the TV is placed over a fireplace, do not have a raised hearth. TV viewing is optimal at eye level when seated.

Step 6: Final Presentation

1. Several layers of tracing paper may have been used to create the furniture arrangement. Make one final clean copy on tracing paper with fine lined black pen, such as a fine tip Sharpie marker
2. Copy final tracing/drawing on copy machine to achieve a crisp clear copy.
3. Mount on black paper for presentation.

Scaled Floor Plans and Furniture Arranging

Diane Kinateder, adjunct faculty UVU

Process of Design

In my design work, I always encourage clients to do the following.

- Establish a budget
- List needs of their interior spaces
- List wants of their interior spaces
- Create list of current furniture, immediate planned furniture purchases and long term furniture purchases
- Find a workable floor plan
- Arrange furniture in proposed floor plan
- Assess floor plan and furniture arrangement possibilities

Where to find floor plans:

Architects and designers, magazines, books, home shows, model homes, developers, internet, etc. Please note that most of these types of floor plans are printed at a scale to fit on the printed page.

Process to enlarge a floor plan to approximate ¼' scale?

Floor plans must be to scale. Since most furniture templates use ¼" = 1'0" scale, floor plans will need to be scaled to ¼" = 1'0". One of the best home furnishing templates is made by Staedtler and includes a 1/4" scale on one edge of the template. Make sure templates are labeled "home furnishings" and not architectural as it will include only bathroom fixtures, door swings, etc.

What is one "constant" in a residential floor plan?

Most standard kitchen counters (but not islands) are 24" deep. (Actual countertops are usually 25" deep to allow for counter overhang). At ¼" scale that means a standard kitchen counter would measure 1/2 inch deep on the floor plan.

Measure current floor plan counter depth and calculate how much plan needs to be enlarged for kitchen counter to measure 1/2" (or guesstimate!) If plan needs to be enlarged more than 200% (or larger than copier has the capability), make a copy at the largest percentage possible and then enlarge that copy.

Write down percentage increase of floor plan (or trust your memory). You will need to enlarge other areas of the floor plan that will not include the kitchen.

Measure counter from line of countertop front edge to wall. Do not include wall width in 1/2 inch measurement.

Most floor plans will not fit on an 8 ½" x 17" paper. Enlarge individual rooms or take floor plan to a copy center, such as Kinko's, to do a large format print (*usually only a few dollars, but make sure that the copy center knows that it's important that the kitchen counter measure exactly 1/2" deep*).

Floor plans that include room measurements can also be scaled using an architects ruler. Hint: look for a measurement divisible by 4.

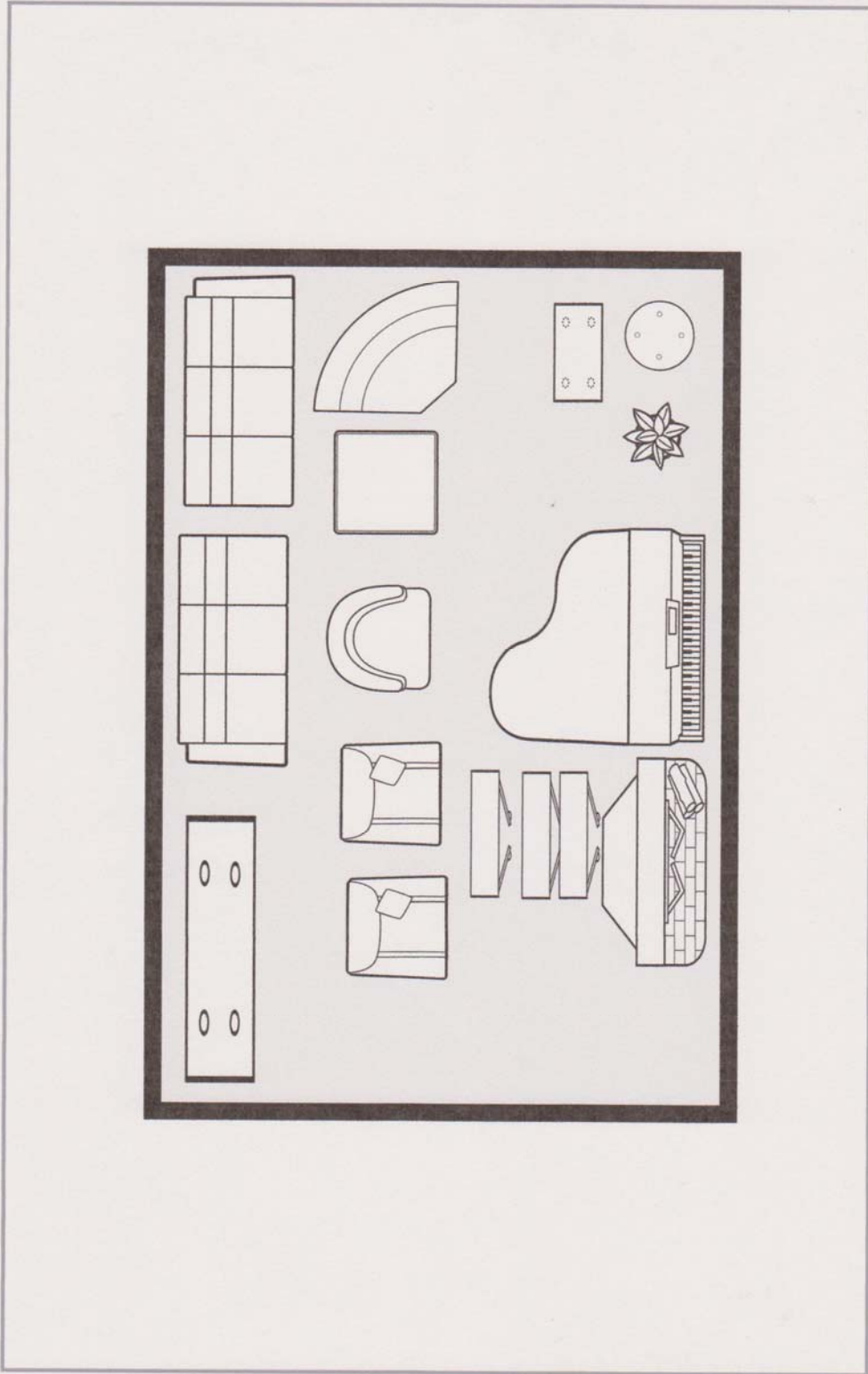
Note: *This method of enlarging a floor plan is ONLY used to assess interior spaces and possible furniture arrangements and not for building or bidding purposes.*

Computer generated furniture templates:

Furniture arranging can also be done on the computer using such websites as Better Homes & Gardens: <http://arrangearoom.bhg.com/arrangearoom/> or furniture companies such as Pottery Barn, Bassett and RC Willey have programs called "room planner". Many of these companies use a program called Icovia. Individual rooms can be measured and created using each company's furniture templates.

If you like the templates, but have an unusual shaped room, you might try just printing off the furniture templates that you want to use by dragging them into a large rectangular room shape. Set your scale to ¼" = 1'0". Print these and use with your drafted rooms.

You are now ready to place tracing (not tissue) paper over plan and begin furniture arranging layout possibilities.



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Living Room Furniture
Created by Diane Kinatader

This floor plan is a representation and should not be relied on exclusively. Measurements should be verified to ensure accuracy.

P O T T E R Y B A R N



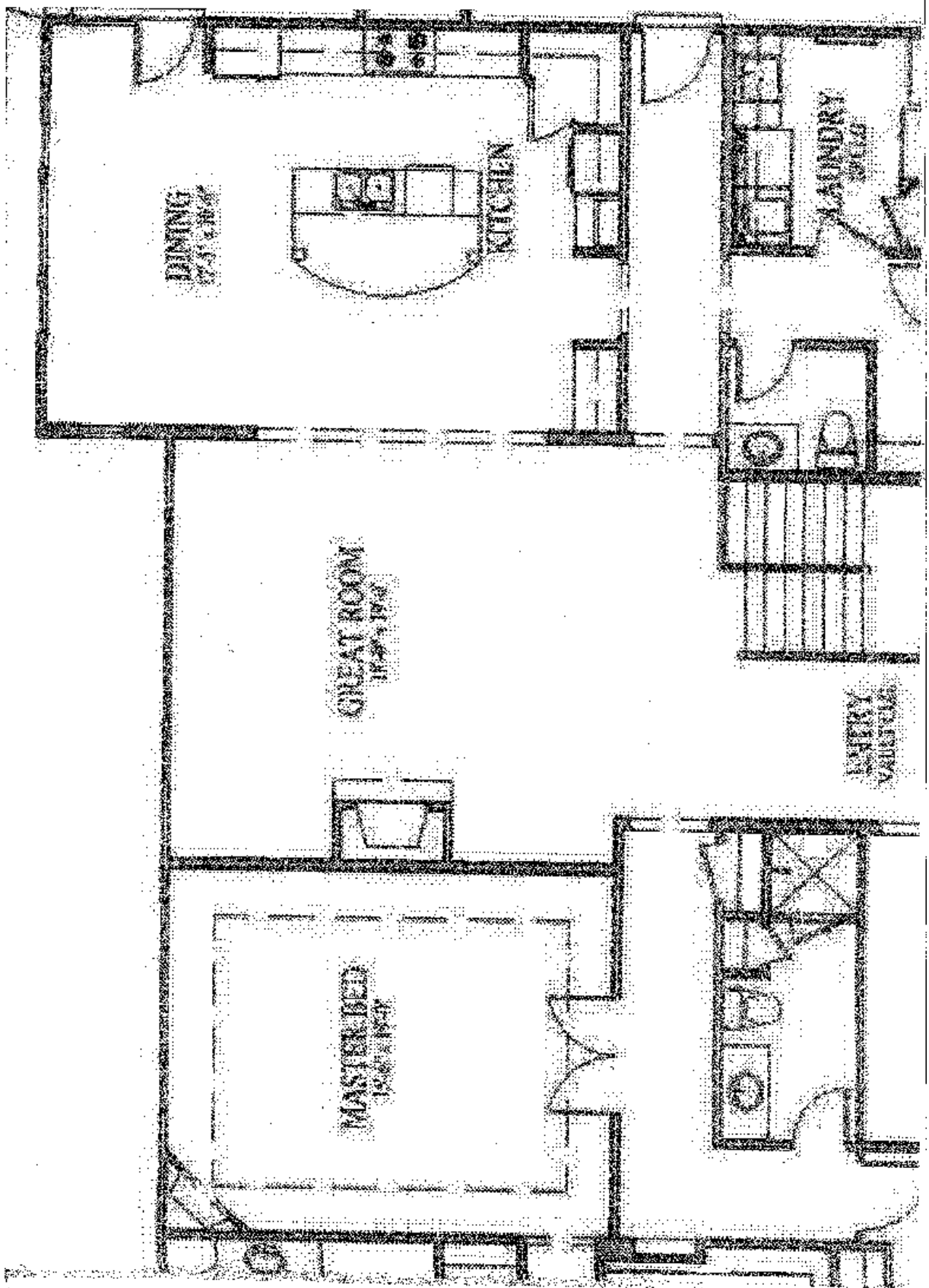
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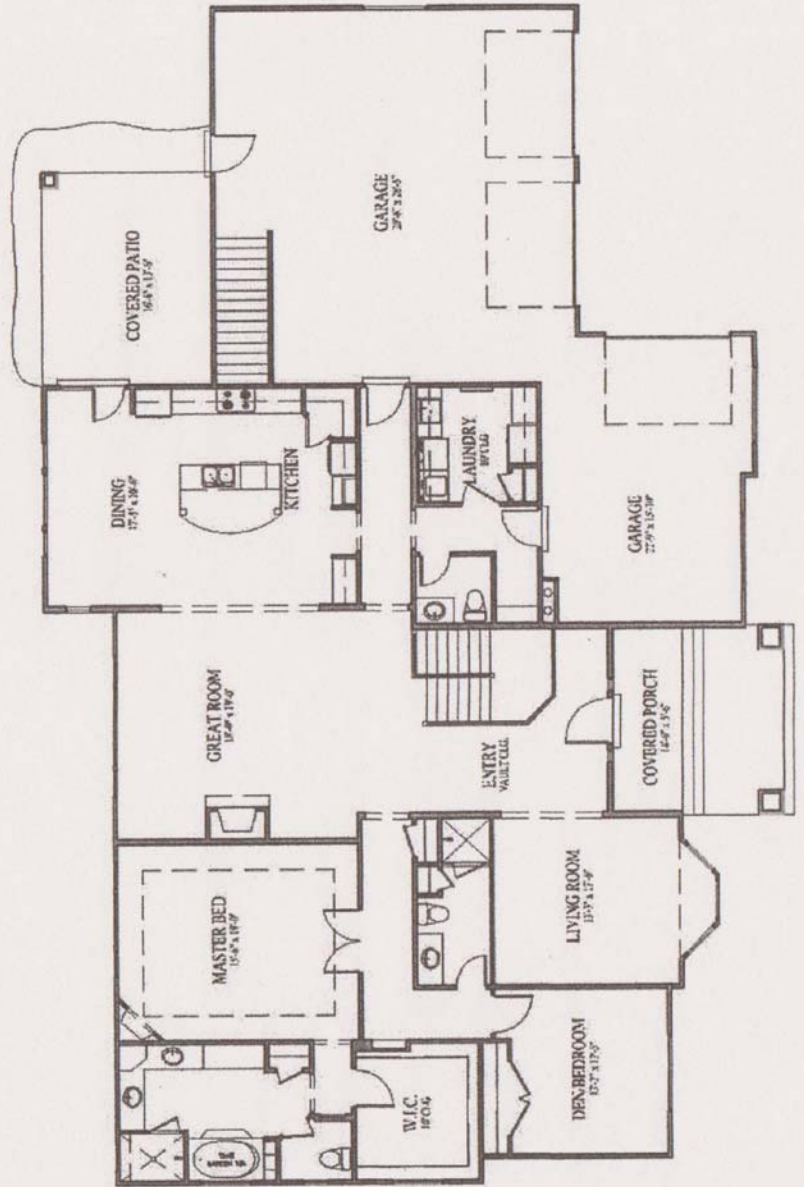


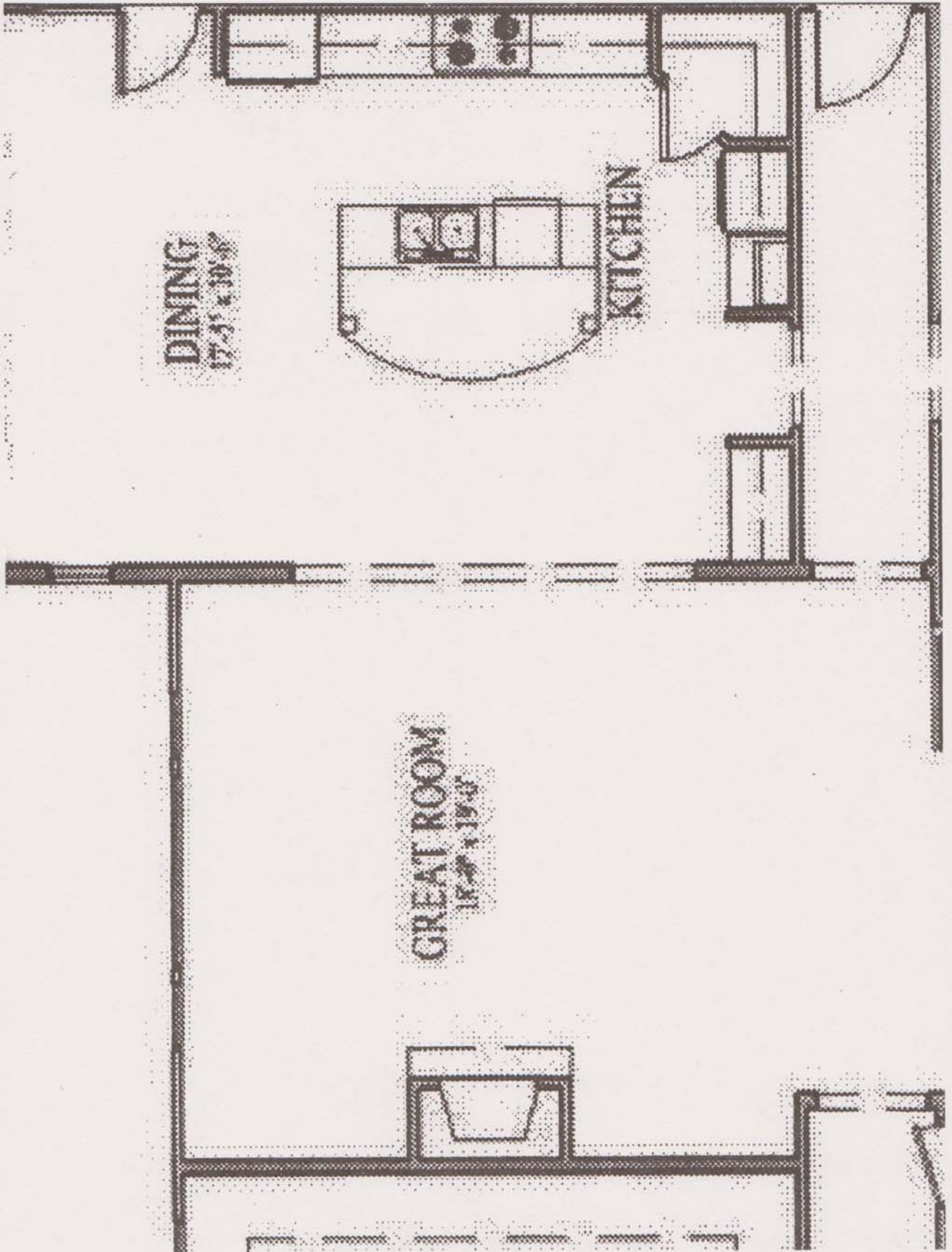
01-Living Room 22'x16'

This floor plan is a representation and should not be relied on exclusively. Measurements should be verified to ensure accuracy.

P O T T E R Y B A R N







DINING
17'-3" x 10'-0"

KITCHEN

GREAT ROOM
18'-0" x 19'-0"