



Freddie Side Table

About Me

I'm Megan Joyce, a furniture and product designer who believes that combining craftsmanship with contemporary design can create work that is not only visually engaging but also deeply rooted in quality and purpose.

My practice centres on material exploration and sustainability. By understanding materials I can make informed, creative choices, while still designing for longevity reduces waste.

Every object I create is intended to be both functional and expressive, balancing usability with visual impact.

As a designer-maker, I value the hands-on process, finding the most reward in seeing an idea evolve from sketch to a refined, physical product.



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Freddie Side Table



The purpose of the Freddie Side Table project is to celebrate the natural beauty and diversity of timber through thoughtful design.

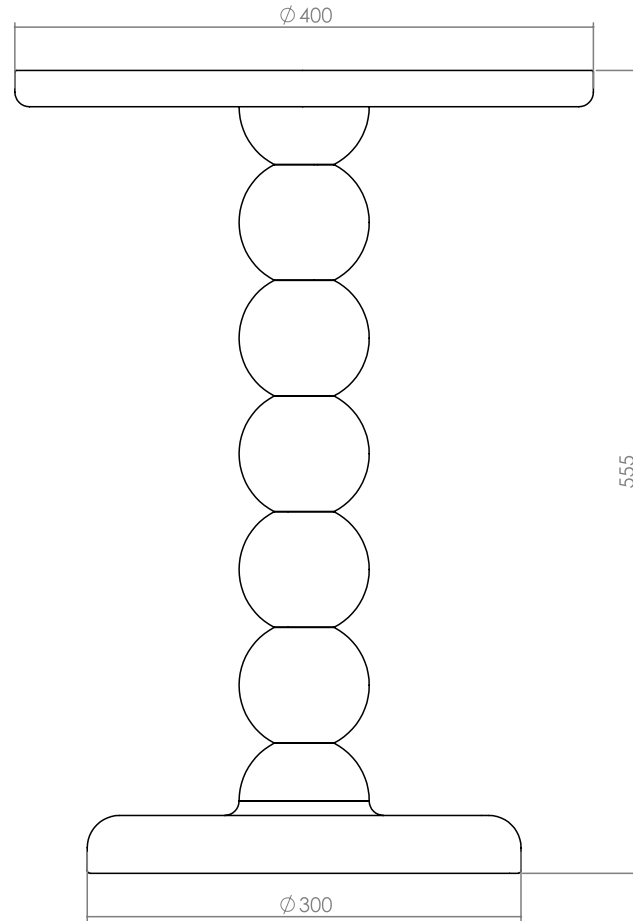
By combining multiple wood types in a sculptural column of spheres, the piece draws attention to the unique grain, colour, and character of each species.

Designed for Benchmark, the table reflects the brand's commitment to using solid timber not only for its durability but also to showcase its rich aesthetic qualities.

Manufacture

Crafted using a blend of modern and traditional woodworking techniques, this side table showcases both precision and craftsmanship.

The top and base are CNC machined from solid timber for accuracy and consistency, while the central column features individually hand-turned wooden spheres. Each part is carefully sanded and assembled by hand to ensure a refined finish. A final coat of satin wood oil enhances the grain and provides a durable, long-lasting surface.



Materials



There's range of timber combinations, including mixed hardwoods for a vibrant, varied aesthetic, as well as single timber versions in Ash, Oak, or Walnut for a more refined and cohesive look, with bespoke timber options on request.

02.

Brief

Design a small piece of furniture that embraces and showcases the beauty of solid wood whilst still having a focus on function as well as sustainability



Designed for Benchmark, this side table showcases the natural beauty of solid wood while maintaining a strong focus on functionality and sustainability.

Its clean, contemporary form fits seamlessly into modern interiors, aligning with Benchmark's values of quality, simplicity, and environmental responsibility.

03.

Context

Why Benchmark ...

I chose to design for Benchmark because their core beliefs around timber furniture, craftsmanship, and sustainability closely align with my own values as a designer.

Out of the three companies offered for our Commercial Collaboration Project Benchmark were the best fit for me, offering the most meaningful opportunity to explore ideas that reflect my design identity.

Benchmark's commitment to natural materials and long-lasting, responsible design made this collaboration both inspiring and relevant to my personal practice.

Who is Benchmark ?

Benchmark is a British furniture company known for its commitment to craftsmanship, sustainability, and timeless design. With every piece, they champion the natural beauty of solid wood and aim to create furniture that lasts for generations.

Their work blends modern simplicity with material honesty, reflecting a deep respect for traditional making processes, while actively embracing innovation and environmental responsibility.



Maiden Stool

This stool reflects Benchmark's commitment to simplicity and craftsmanship. Turned from solid green wood before drying, its clean lines reveal natural cracks and timber's beauty. Versatile in use, it serves as both seat and accent, embodying sustainable, timeless design.



Jack Dining Table

This dining table reflects Benchmark's commitment to craftsmanship and sustainability. Its striking pedestal base and refined top highlight the natural beauty of solid timber. Available in fumed oak, whitened oak, or clear-oiled walnut, it's a timeless, functional centrepiece.

Timber Selection



White Ash

- Light, creamy tone with bold, straight grain
- Strong and durable with good shock resistance
- Ideal for both modern and rustic styles



Red Oak

- Warm, reddish hues with prominent grain
- Tough and widely used for its strength
- Works well in traditional and transitional spaces



Maple

- Pale, smooth hardwood with subtle grain
- Durable and easy to finish
- Great for clean, contemporary designs



White Oak

- Classic golden-brown tones with varied grain
- Dense and durable with a timeless feel
- Suits a wide range of design styles



Cherry

- Warm reddish-brown tones that deepen over time
- Fine, smooth grain with natural lustre
- Perfect for timeless, elegant designs



Brown Oak

- Rich, dark tones with striking character
- Created by natural aging or fungal activity
- Adds warmth and uniqueness to any piece

Sustainability

The timbers in my project are durable hardwoods from sustainably managed forests. Their strength and wear resistance reduce replacements and support circular design.

Solid timber also allows for repair and refinishing, extending the product's life and cutting waste.

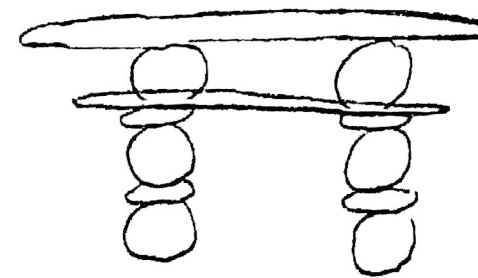
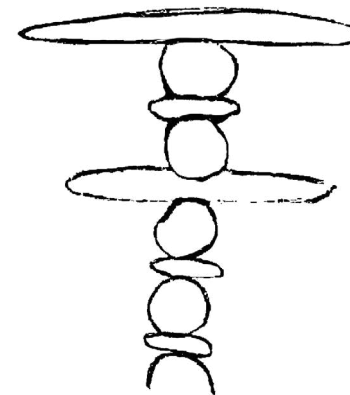
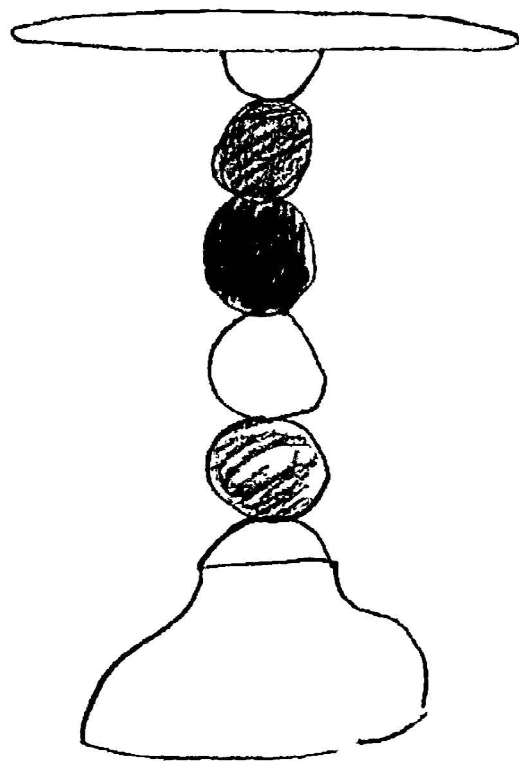


Walnut

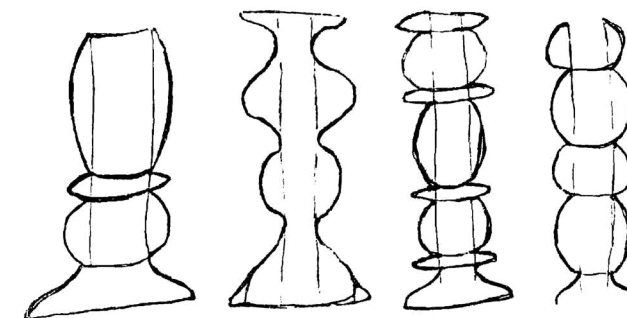
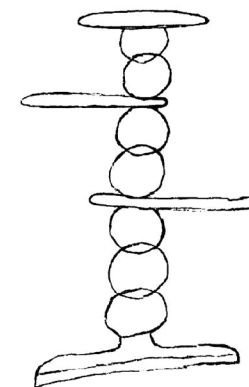
- Deep chocolate tones with smooth, flowing grain
- Strong yet easy to work with
- Known for its luxurious, high-end appeal

04.

Development



My initial sketches explored a range of forms that balanced clean lines with a focus on function, aiming to reflect Benchmark's aesthetic and values.



I was particularly drawn to woodturning as a way to highlight natural wood grain, which informed much of my early concept development.

These quick iterations helped me refine ideas around proportions, structure, and joinery, shaping a design that feels both contemporary and practical.



Two Level Side Table

- Cardboard model used to explore proportion, structure, and overall form
- Helped assess the relationship between base, column, and tabletop
- Led to the decision to remove the shelf layer due to poor balance and limited functionality



Multilevel Plant Stand

- Explored balance and form, but the proportions felt too delicate for practical use
- Turned elements created visual interest, but lacked structural stability at scale
- The multi-level concept proved difficult to execute functionally, leading me to move in a different direction



Coffee Table

- Cardboard model tested form and a more functional second-tier layout
- Turned legs sat too low when scaled to standard coffee table height
- Double-column base appears too visually heavy, affecting balance and appeal

Initial Product Options

To help determine the direction of my project, I created full-scale cardboard models of three different product types: a side table, a plant stand, and a coffee table.

This hands on exploration allowed me to evaluate the proportions, functionality, and presence of each design in real space, ultimately guiding my decision on which concept to develop further.



Column Options

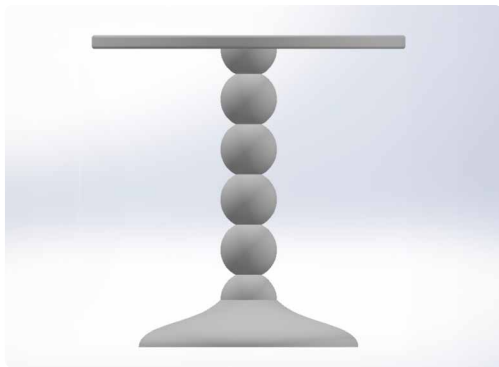
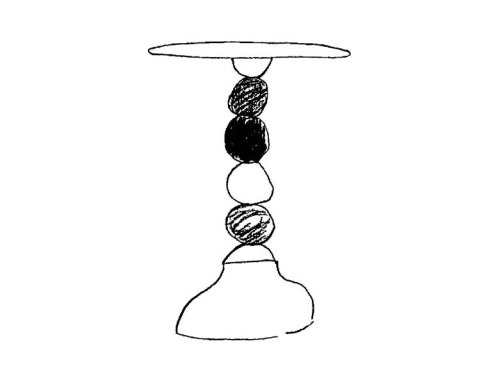
Explored a range of central turned column options using both physical and digital methods.

Initial trials in paper and cardboard allowed for quick testing of form and proportion, while CAD and SolidWorks models offered precision and a better understanding of scale and structure.

This combination of approaches helped me evaluate the visual impact and feasibility of each option, ultimately guiding more informed design decisions.

Development Justification

This timeline shows the form development of the Freddie Side Table through a series of physical and digital models. Each stage focused on testing proportions, material combinations, and structural stability, gradually refining the design into its final form.



Initial Cardboard Model

Cardboard model used to test proportions.
Second level removed due to limited function.

Different Tone Ideation

Initial sketch exploring how varied wood tones could create visual interest.

Initial CAD Form

CAD model used to quickly and accurately test overall form and proportion.

Wood Tone Trials

CNC'd a full-scale foam model to test proportions, then painted to explore wood tone combinations.

Finalised Dimensions

These proportions were finalised for their visual cohesion and physical balance.

Final Product

Increasing the number of spheres allowed for a richer display of wood tones.



Timber Choices & Customisation

The Freddie Side Table is available in a range of solid timbers, offering flexibility in tone and character.

Whether arranged from light to dark or dark to light, the varied wood species highlight natural grain patterns and create visual rhythm through contrast. Fully single-timber versions are also available for a more uniform look, along with bespoke options upon request.

This range allows each piece to be tailored to different interior styles while celebrating the natural beauty and individuality of real wood.

05.

Evaluation



Aesthetics & Functionality

The Freddie Side Table balances clean, minimal geometry with warm, natural materials.

Each wood was chosen to highlight its unique tone and grain, creating visual interest through contrast.

The turned spheres form a distinctive central column, while a concealed metal rod runs through the stand to ensure strength and structural stability.

Every design decision, was made with everyday function in mind, ensuring the piece remains both visually engaging and practically usable.



Market Considerations

Designed for Benchmark, the Freddie Side Table reflects the brand's commitment to timeless, well-crafted furniture made from sustainable materials.

Aimed at a high-end, design-conscious audience, it appeals to those who value natural materials, quality, and longevity.

Its clean aesthetic fits a range of interiors, from modern homes to boutique commercial spaces. The design allows for customisation, such as single-timber options or bespoke wood combinations, making it versatile for both retail and contract markets while staying true to its original concept.



Sustainability

Sustainability was considered throughout the design of the Freddie Side Table. Using solid wood ensures durability and repairability, helping to extend the product's lifespan.

The central threaded bar system allows the table to be easily disassembled, making maintenance and replacement of parts simple and supporting circular design principles.

The turned timber spheres are made from small sections of wood, which can be sourced from offcuts to minimise waste.

A natural Osmo oil finish was chosen for its low-toxicity and ecofriendly properties, enhancing the grain while protecting the surface responsibly.



Embracing the Grain,
Celebrating the
Timber

Thank You

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