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DANUBE CLASS

RUNABOUT

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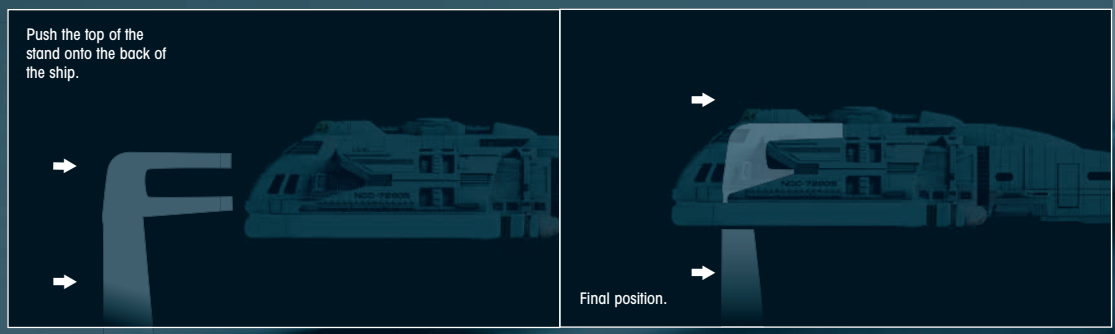

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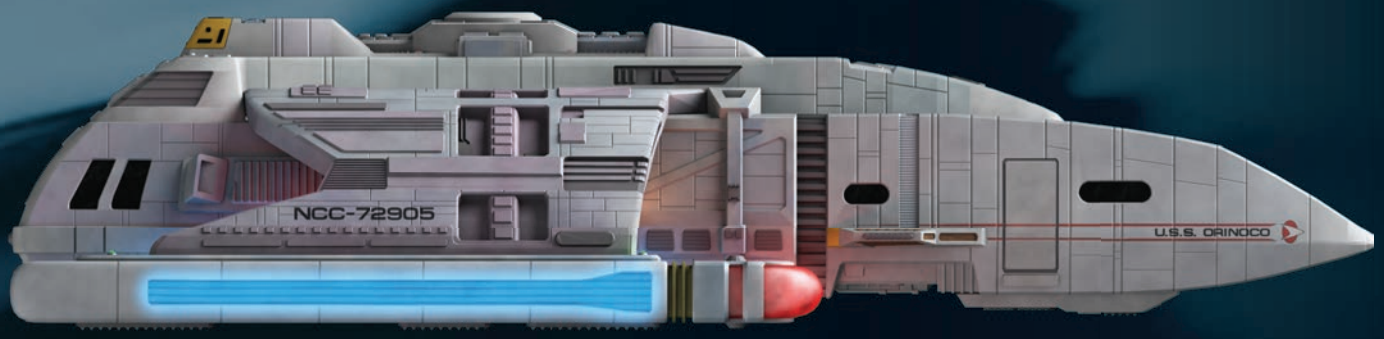
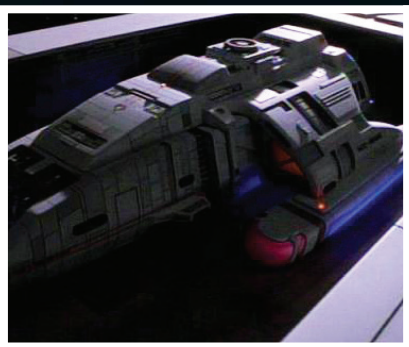
SPECIFICATION



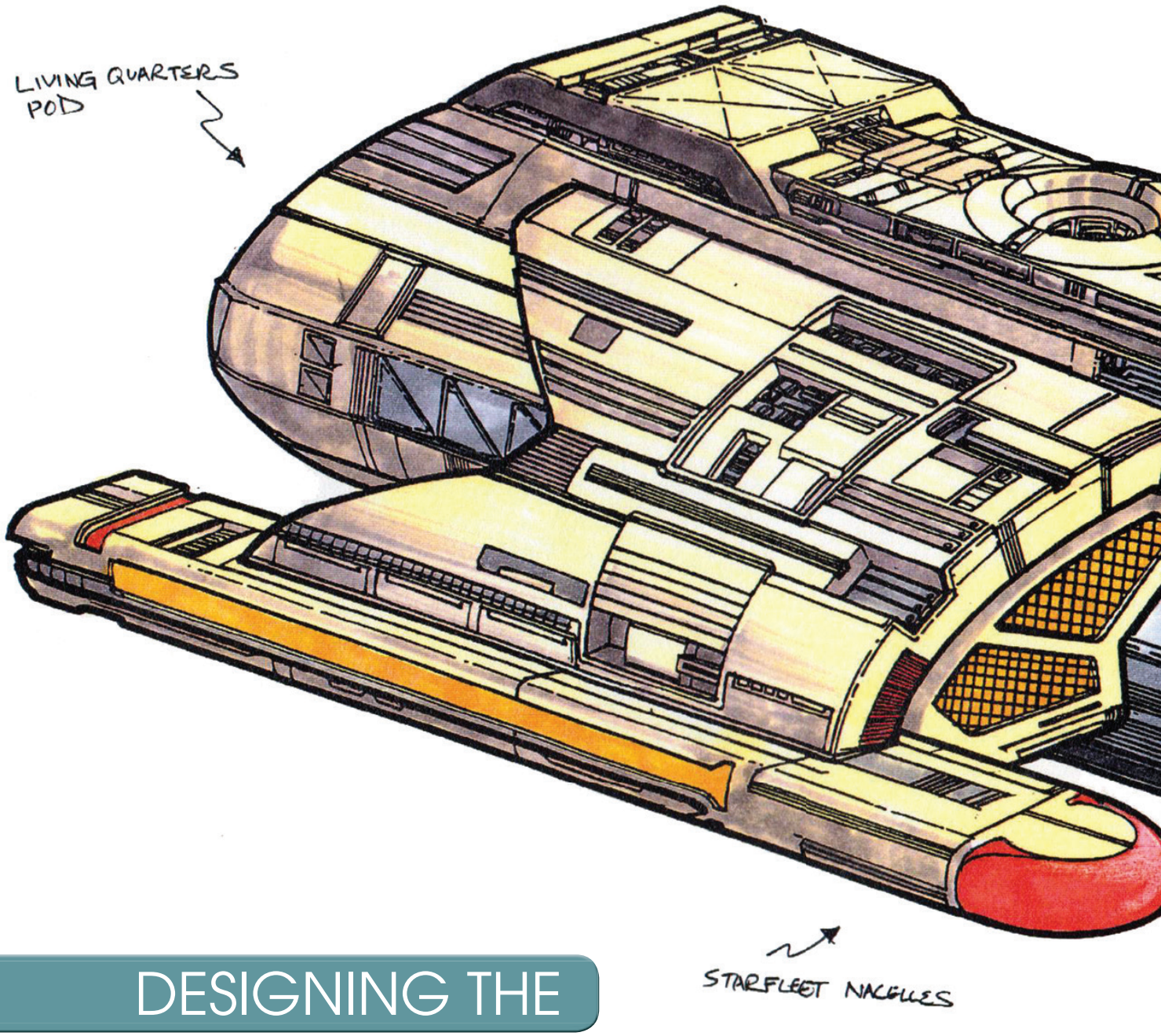
CLASS:	DANUBE
FIRST SEEN:	`EMISSARY'
LAST SEEN:	`WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND'
DESIGNED BY:	RICK STERNBACH
	JOE HODGES
	JIM MARTIN



RUNABOUT

The *Danube-class* runabout was a small ship that was designed for short-range missions.

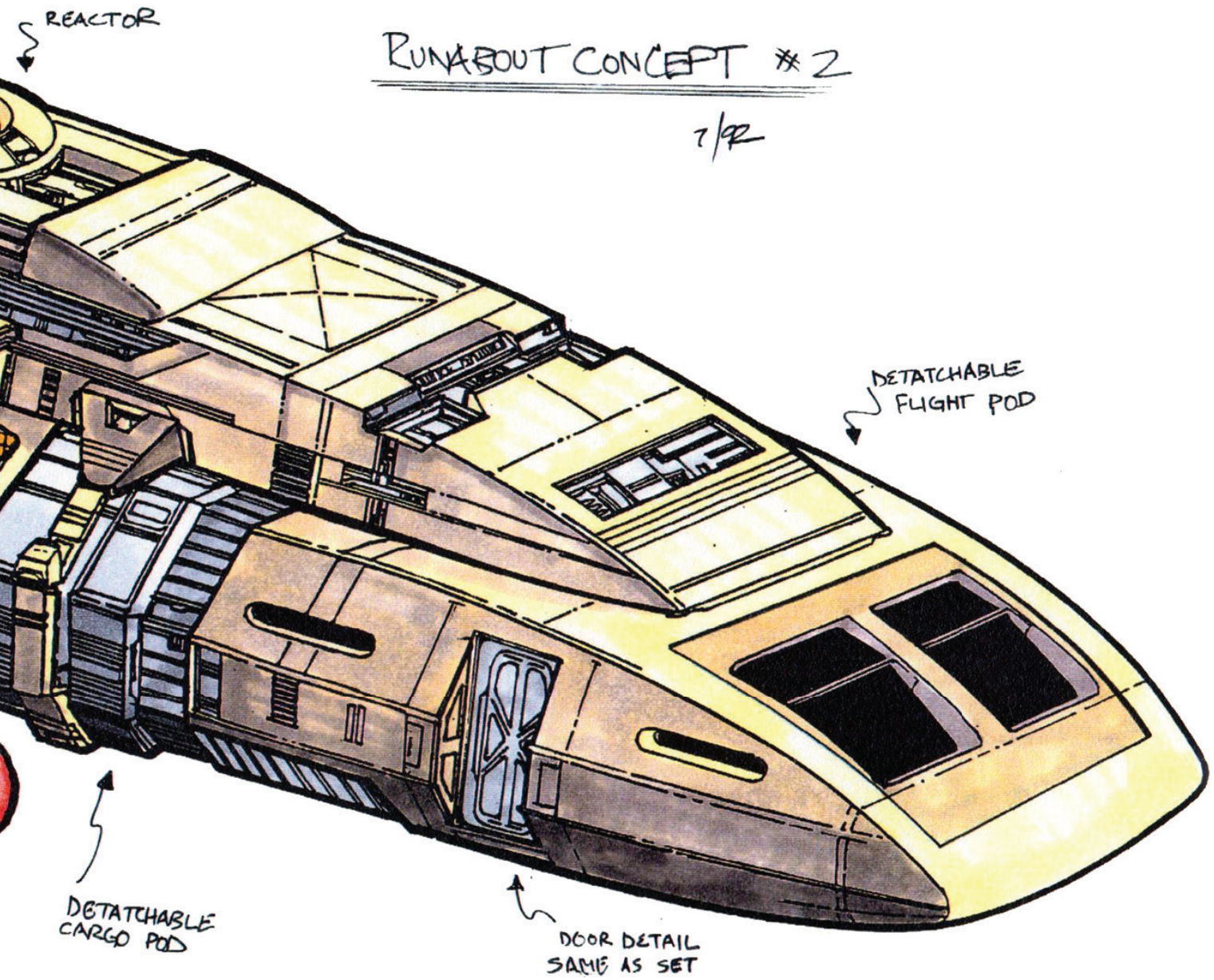
The *Danube-class* runabout was a short range Starfleet vessel that was created for limited interplanetary travel. It measured 18 meters long, and was designed to be piloted by a crew of two though it could accommodate more. It was fitted with an impulse engines and could achieve a top cruising speed of warp 4.7. They were armed with phasers and microtorpedoes. Vessels of this class were assigned to *Deep Space 9*, where they were often used to make short-range exploration missions to the Gamma Quadrant on the other side of the Bajoran wormhole.



DESIGNING THE RUNABOUT

DEEP SPACE NINE's runabouts gave illustrator Jim Martin his first chance to design a ship for STAR TREK.

When Michael Piller and Rick Berman came up with the concept for *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* they had the idea that aliens would come to the station, bringing their stories with them. As a result, the Starfleet crew would have no need of a spaceship. They did, however, decide to provide them with some small craft that could be used to travel to other planets and to make the foray into the Gamma Quadrant. The series bible describes these runabouts as "mid-sized… patrol ships" that are about 20-meters long, and have a crew of two, though they can be operated by a single pilot. It goes on to say that they provide cramped



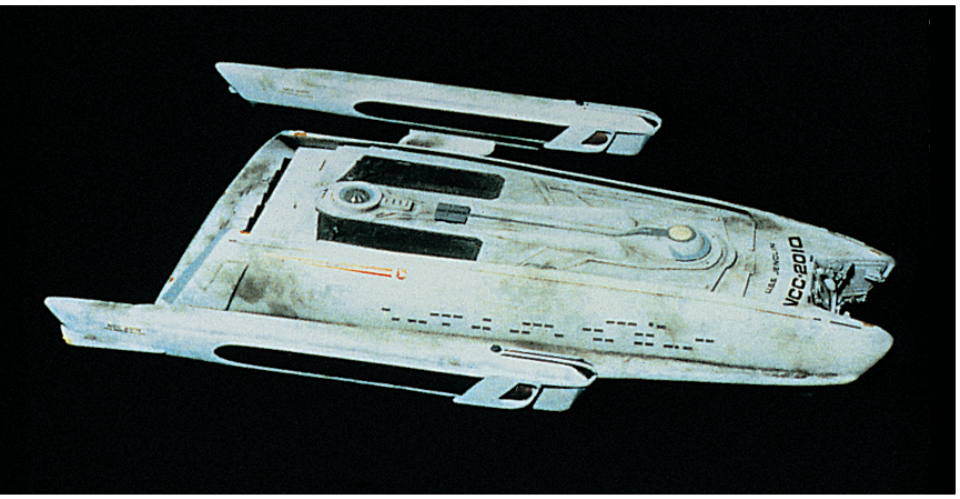
sleeping quarters for six people and that there is a meeting and dining room off the cockpit.

REJECTED OPTION

As illustrator Rick Sternbach remembers, the first thought the team had was that they could reuse the design for the executive shuttle that John Goodson had built for *STAR TREK VI*. "This model was an updated version of the original series shuttlecraft *Galileo,* with recognizable elements such as the forward windows, aft grille, protruding winglets, and side-opening doors." He goes on to say that the same model had been adapted to become the *Sydney-class U.S.S. Jenolan*, Scotty's ship in 'Relics.'

However, before long, the producers decided that they wanted a new design. At the time Sternbach was still working in the *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* art department, but contributing designs to the *DS9* art department,

▲ The final design that was submitted to the producers was drawn by Jim Martin, but was the result of a collaboration between him, Rick Sternbach and set designer Joe Hodges, under the guidance of production designer Herman Zimmerman

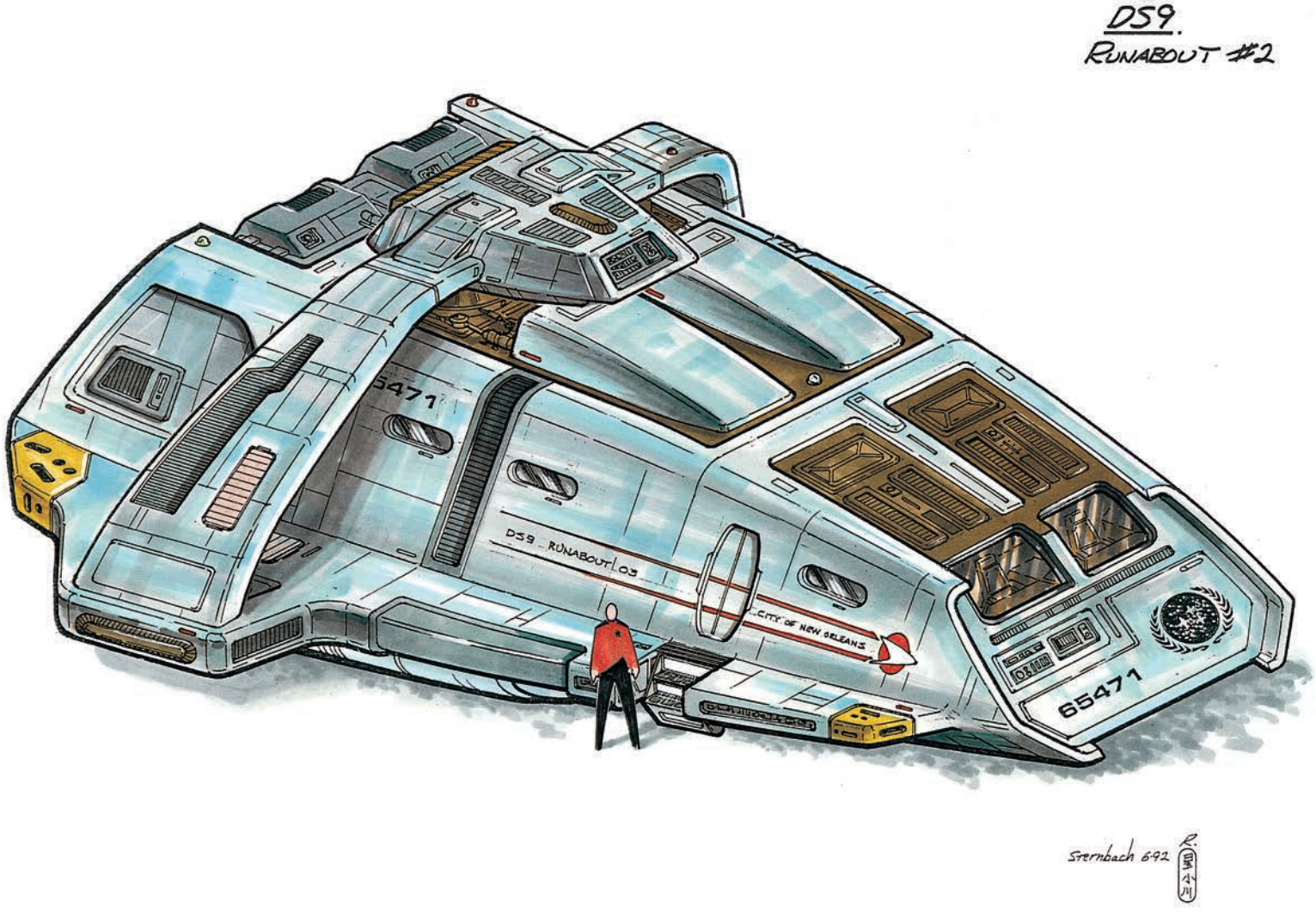


▲ The producers originally considered using the model of the executive shuttle, which had been modified to become a medium-sized transport for the *TNG* episode 'Relics,' when it had gained a pair of warp nacelles. The idea was rapidly abandoned, but the shape of the model influenced many of Rick Sternbach's early runabout concepts.

which was being headed up by Herman Zimmerman in a separate building.

Sternbach produced a series of drawings that took Goodson's ship as an inspiration. He bulked up the rear section of the ship to accommodate the living and meeting quarters that the series bible called for. "My earliest drawings reflect the major structural elements of his ship," he recalls, "in particular the forward windows, side windows, and entry doors. These would be the first pieces 'frozen' in the design process, since the cockpit set had to be finished and filmed before the miniature was completed."

When these early drawings arrived in the *DS9* art department, the feeling was that they were too "wedge like." Sternbach remembers that the word also came back from the producers that the



runabouts should have more prominent nacelles to make them instantly identifiable as Starfleet vessels.

Around this time he produced a series of drawings that extended the body and re-introduced nacelles, which he suggested could be attached in a variety of different ways.

MODULAR DESIGN

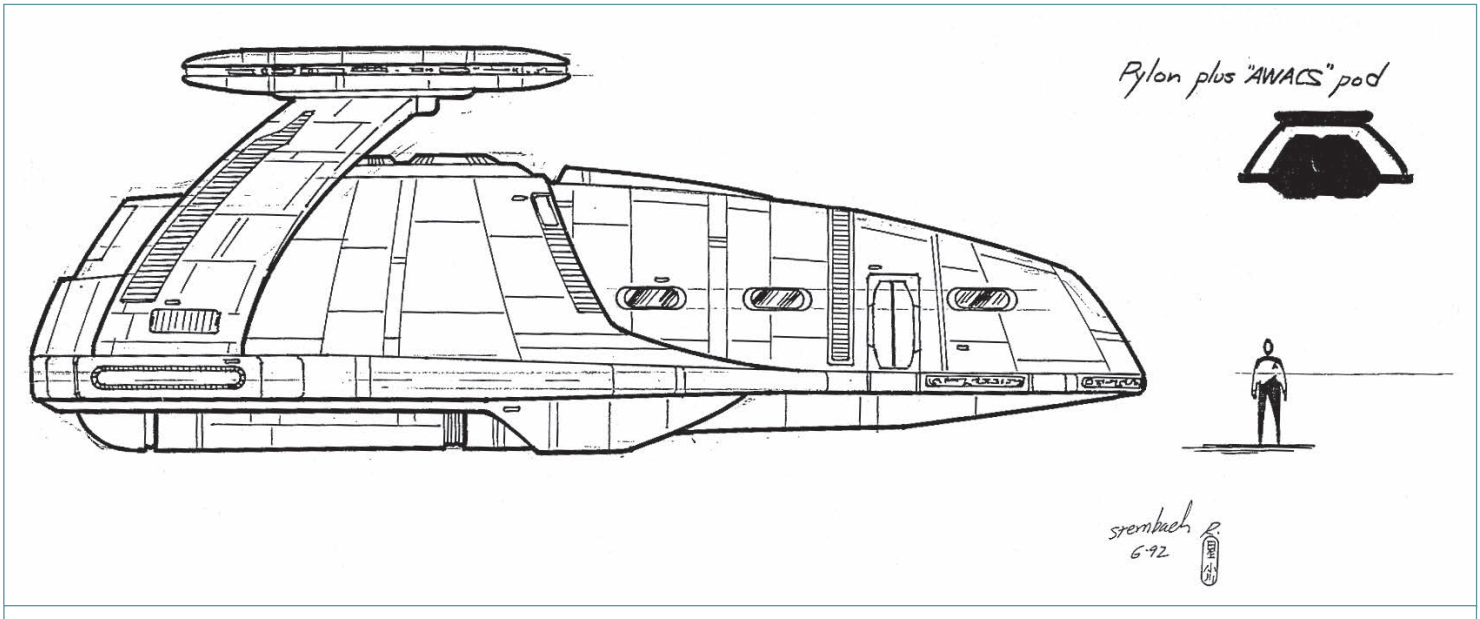
Meanwhile, the *DEEP SPACE NINE* art department started to pursue a different direction. Jim Martin, who at that point was the *DS9* art department PA, picks up the story "Rick was the lead illustrator working on both shows," Martin explains. "He started by doing some wedge-shaped ships. When they got to our art department, one of our set designers, Joe Hodges, wanted to do something different. He sketched out the concept of a forward module for the pilots, a spaceframe holding the nacelles, and another module in the back."

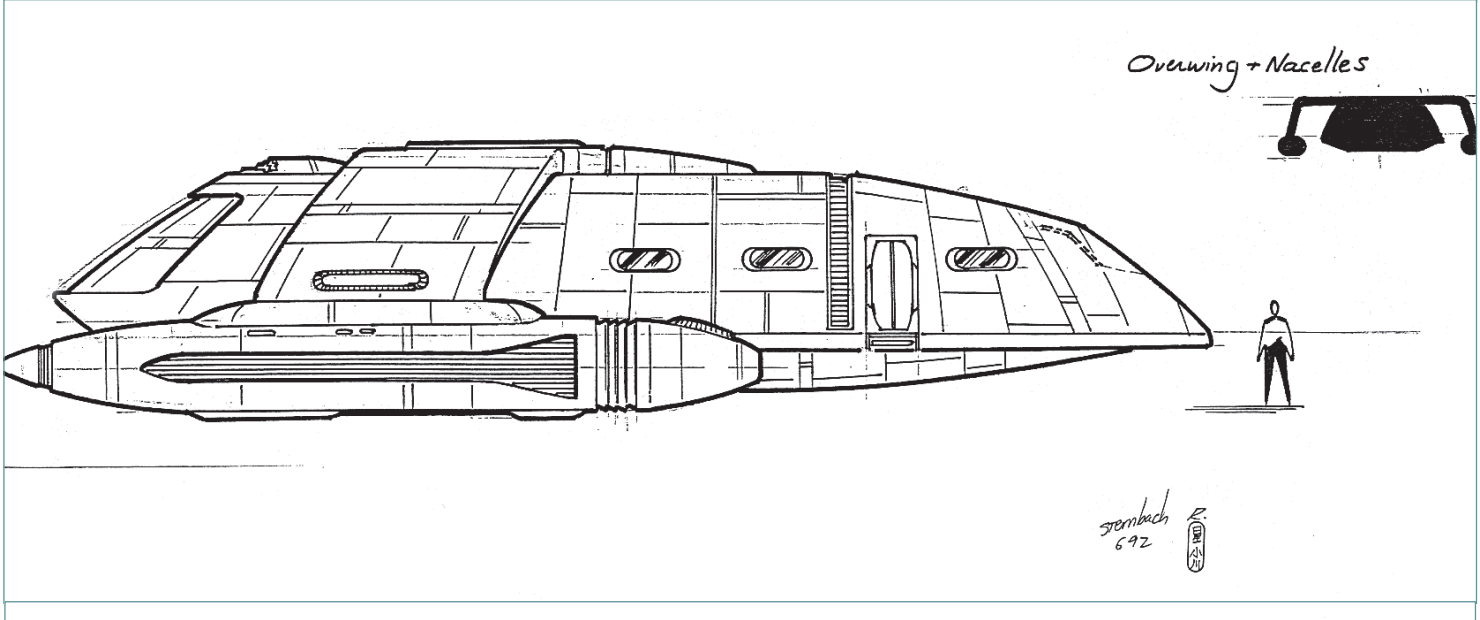
As Martin remembers, the *DS9* team started talking about the design of the Eagles from Gerry Anderson's 'Space 1999,' which also had a frame that could carry a variety of different modules.

Martin was an aspiring concept artist who would later become the show's lead illustrator. The runabout would be the first ship he would play a major role in designing for *STAR TREK*. "I asked if I could do some designs based on Joe's drawing," he recalls. "Herman, being a kind and generous boss, let me as the art department PA, expand on Joe's original idea and see what I could do with it."

Martin rapidly produced a color sketch that did exactly that. His version of the design consists of a

▲ Sternbach's earliest designs show very wedge-shaped ships that look like large shuttles. This wasn't exactly what Zimmerman and the producers were looking for, so Sternbach was asked to produce some alternatives that could immediately be identified as Starfleet ships.


Pylon plus "AWACS" pod
sternbach
6-92


Overwing + Nacelles
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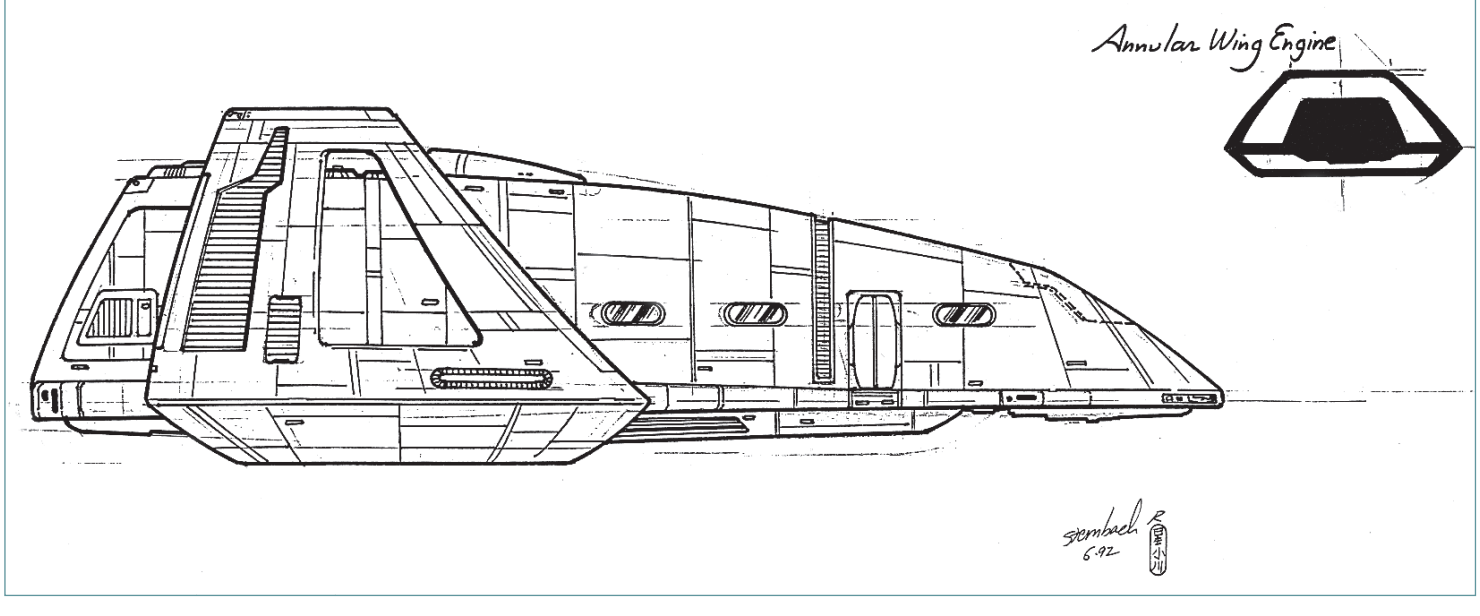
Annular Wing Engine
sternbach
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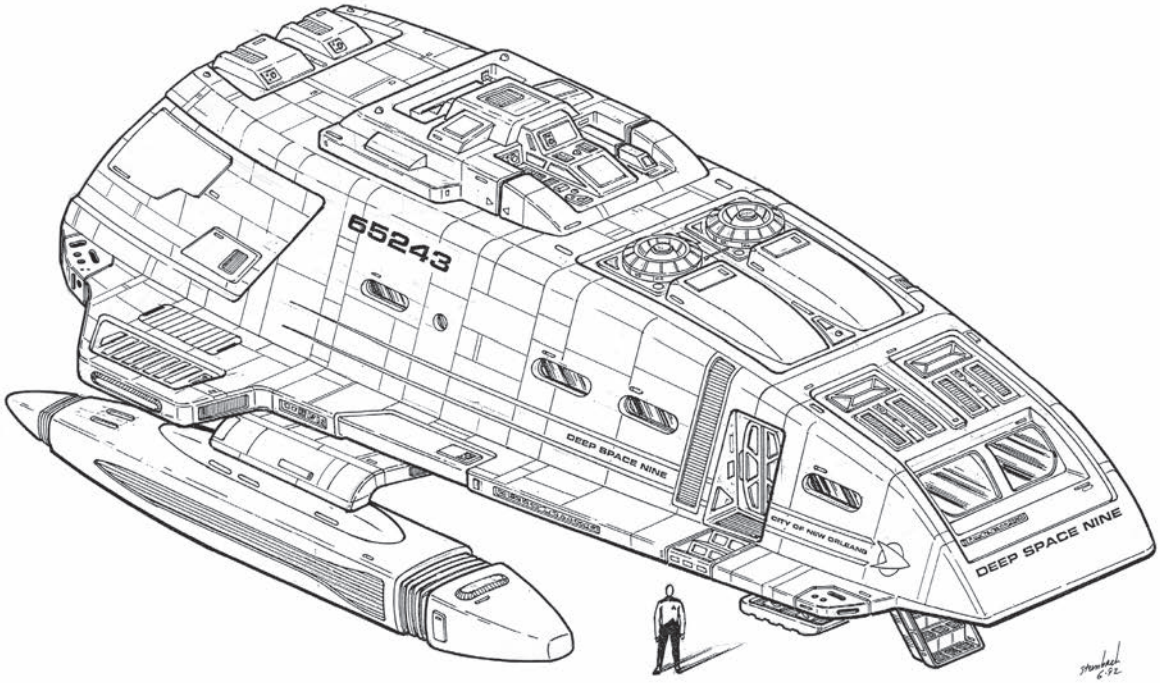


◀ The bible describes the runabouts as a symbol of the Federation's presence in the Bajoran system and the producers were keen to show recognizable warp nacelles.

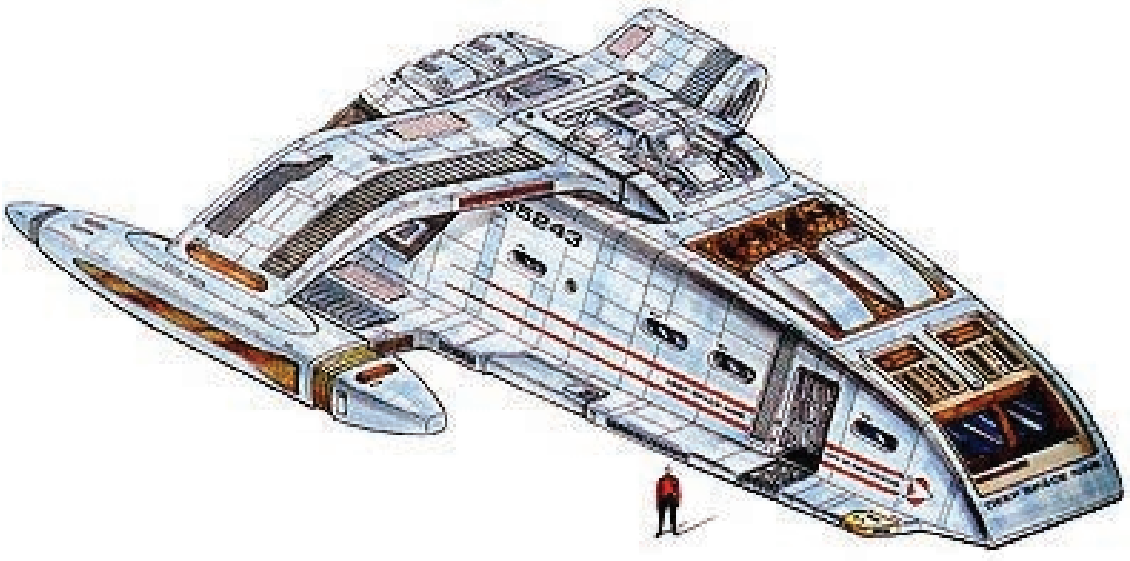
frame with a backbone that supports twin warp nacelles; a relatively compact forward cabin, that resembled a larger version of the standard shuttles, and an interchangeable rear module.

AWKWARD SHAPES

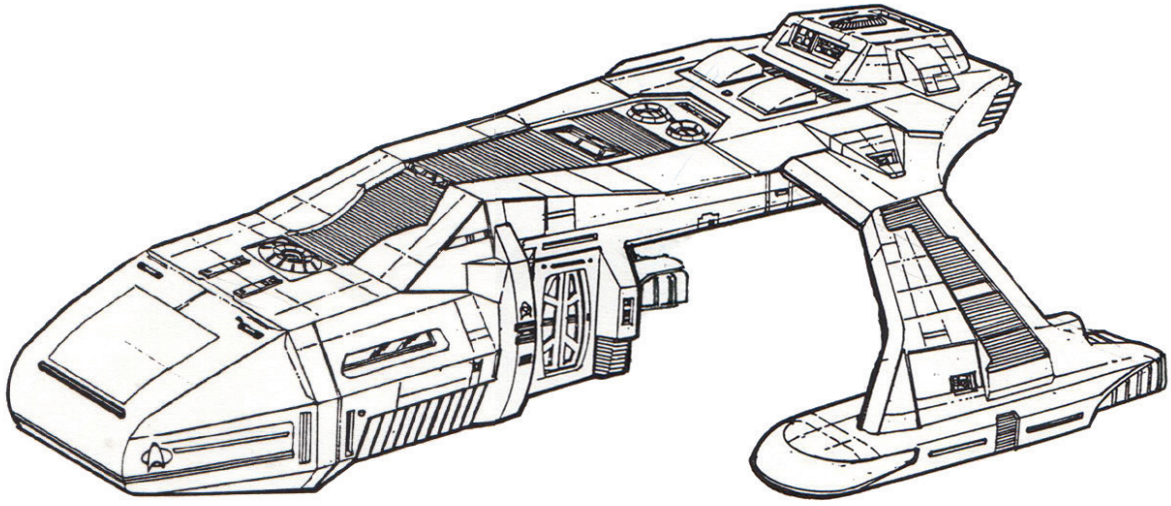
As he sketched, he found it particularly difficult to work out the best shape for the frame that held the different components, and how to attach the nacelles. "The pinch at the top of the arm that holds the top of the nacelles was a tough one. I remember thinking, 'How do I make this look good?' so I did some additional passes to try to figure out the design."

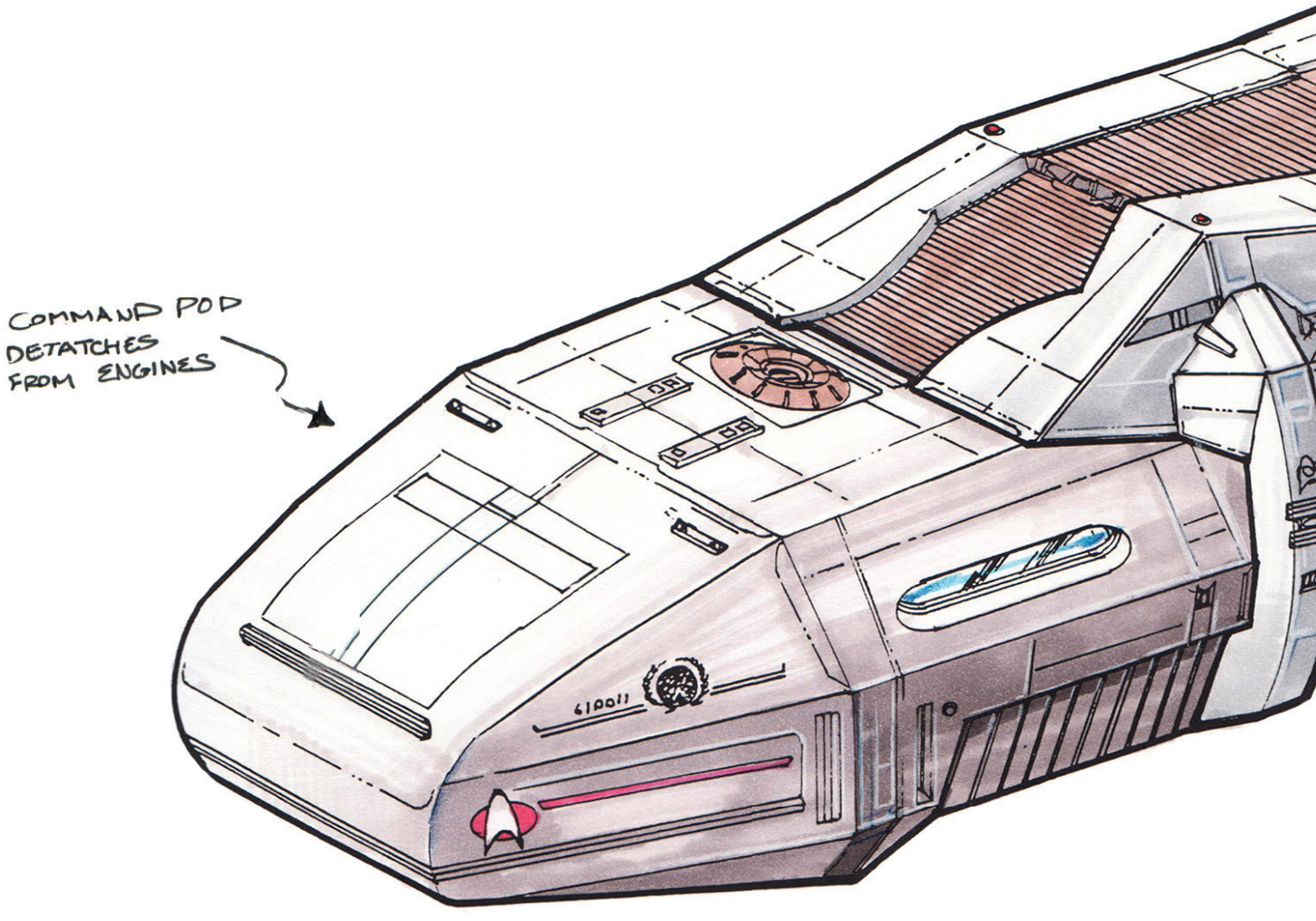
As these sketches show, Martin tried putting a platform under the nacelles that supported them at a right angle to the frame, and giving the pylons a more angular shape. As he worked on these designs, he started to slim the different modules in the middle down, making them more streamlined.

Excited that he had been given the chance to design a new ship, Martin also produced some alternative designs that had nothing to do with the design direction that Hodges had come up with.

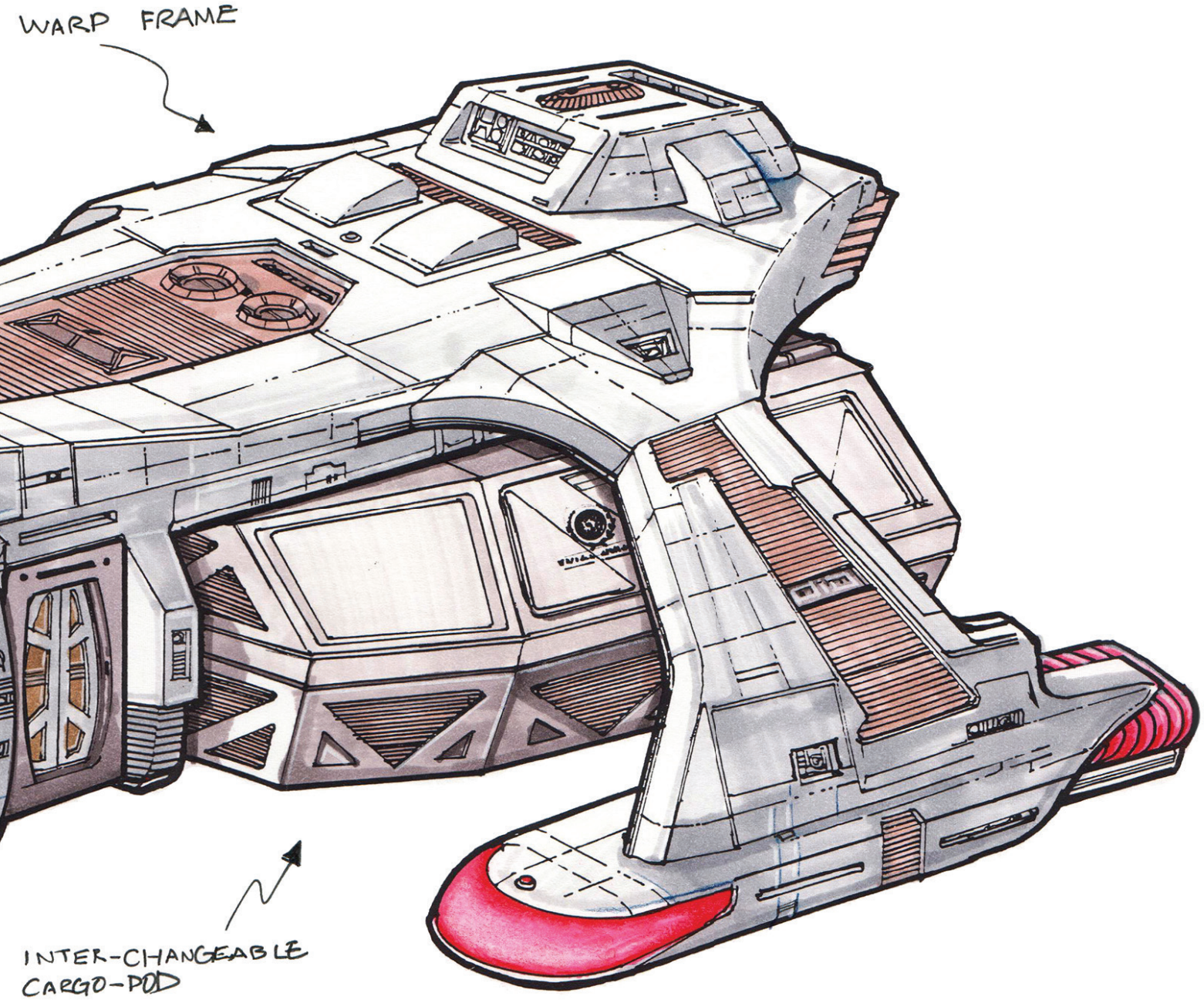


◀ This concept drawing shows the nacelles being supported from the side and by pylons that sweep down for above. This last element would prove important to the designs that followed.





▲ Set designer Joe Hodges suggested that the runabout could have a framework that supported a variety of different modules that could be used for different missions. He produced a simple sketch that showed the idea. Jim Martin, who was only a PA at the time, lobbied Zimmerman for the chance to develop the design further, which led to this sketch.



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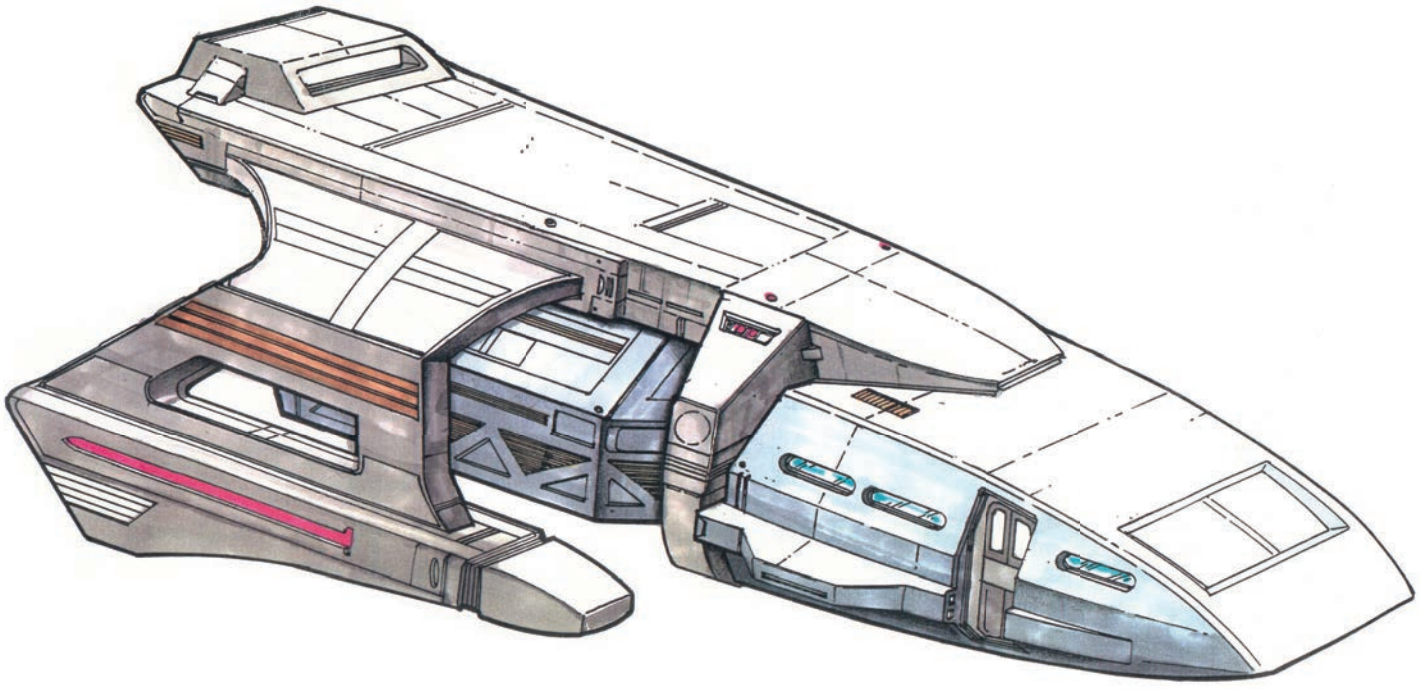
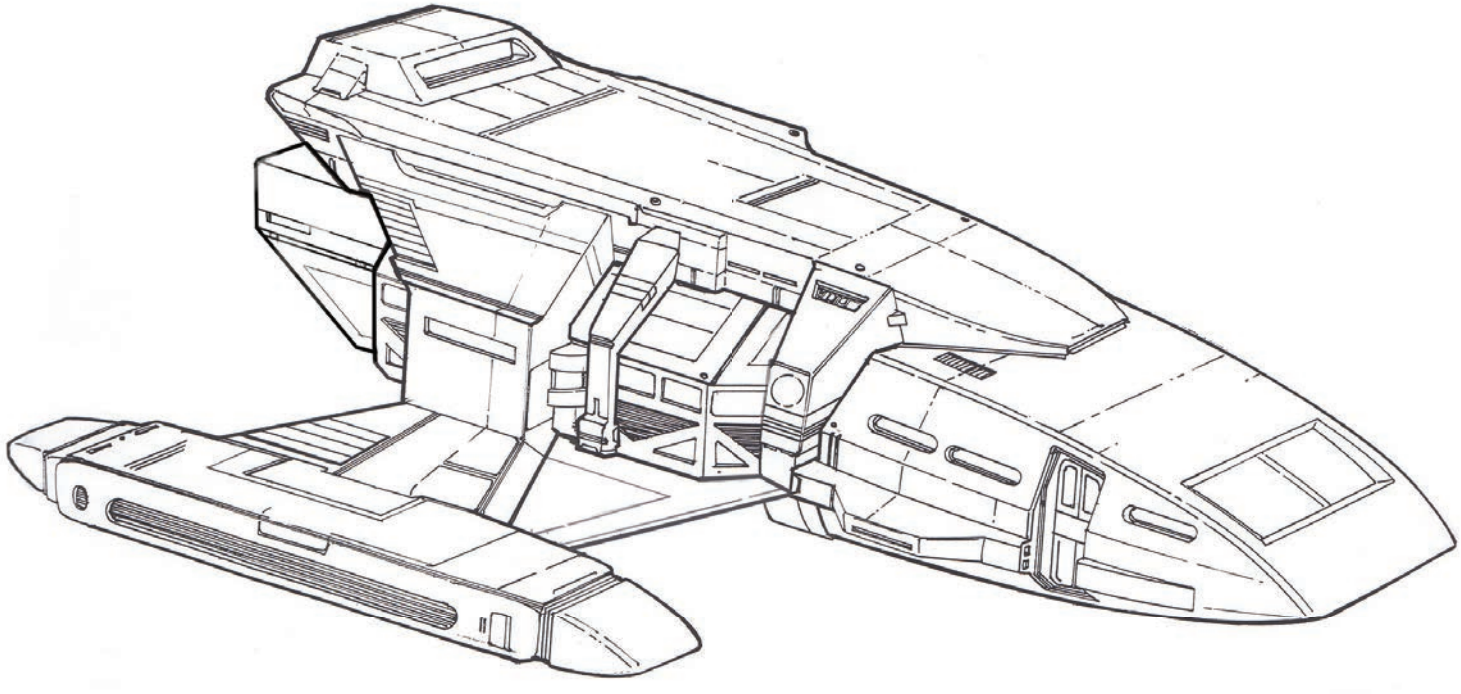


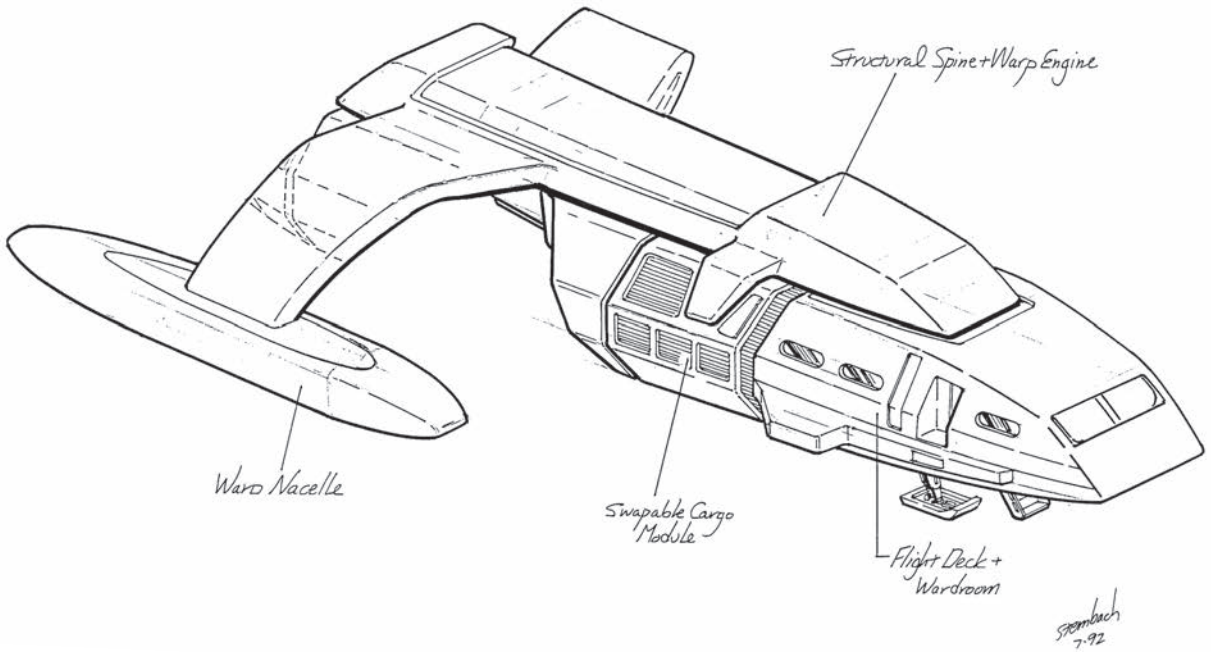
▲▼ One of the things that Martin struggled with was the best way to attach the nacelles to the backbone of the ship and he produced these drawings showing some alternative ideas.

One of these designs featured a nacelle-like element that sat above the ship in a position that would eventually be occupied by the mission pod.

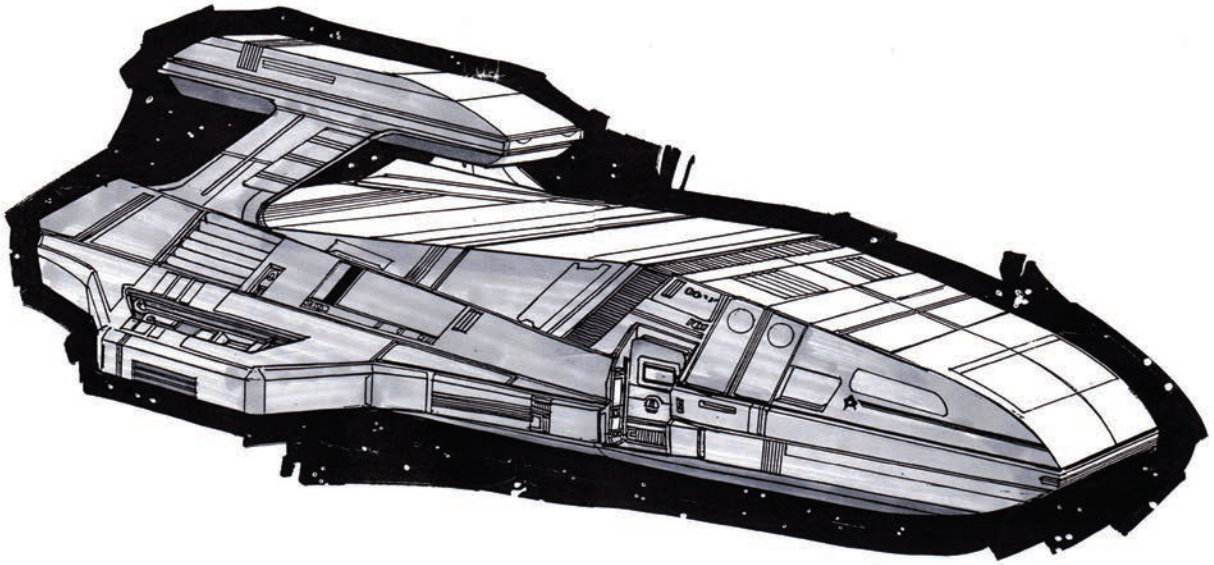
Although, Sternbach was still based in the TNG art department, he was still involved and was adding his considerable experience to the mix. "Rick would see our stuff and then he would take a pass at it to," Martin remembers. "He and I got together and talked about what he liked and what I liked and we started to produce drawings together. He took the drawing that I did and brought it more in line with Federation designs."

Picking up on the design direction that Hodges and Martin had established, Sternbach produced a sketch that gave the nacelle support pylons a much more curved design. At the same time, he

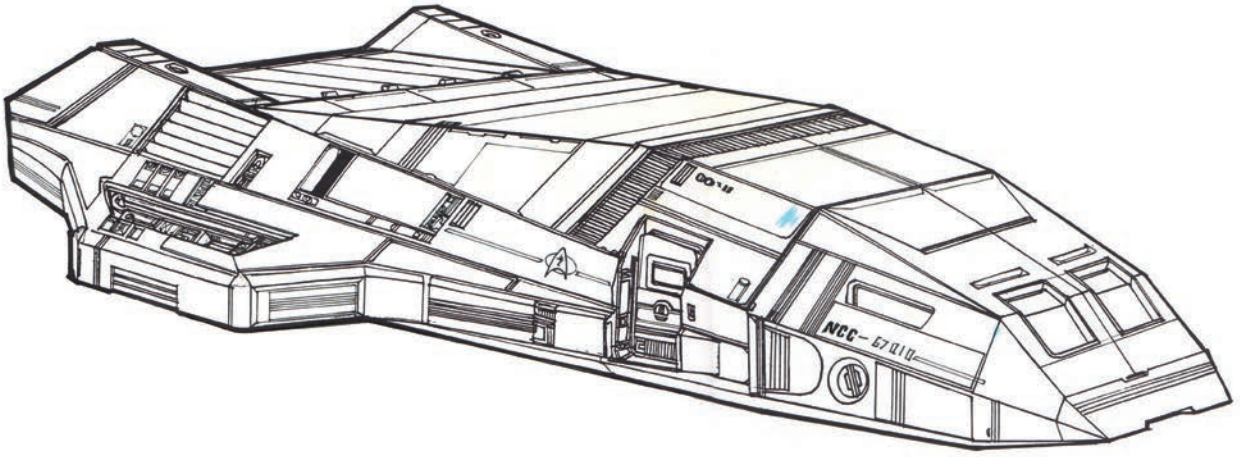


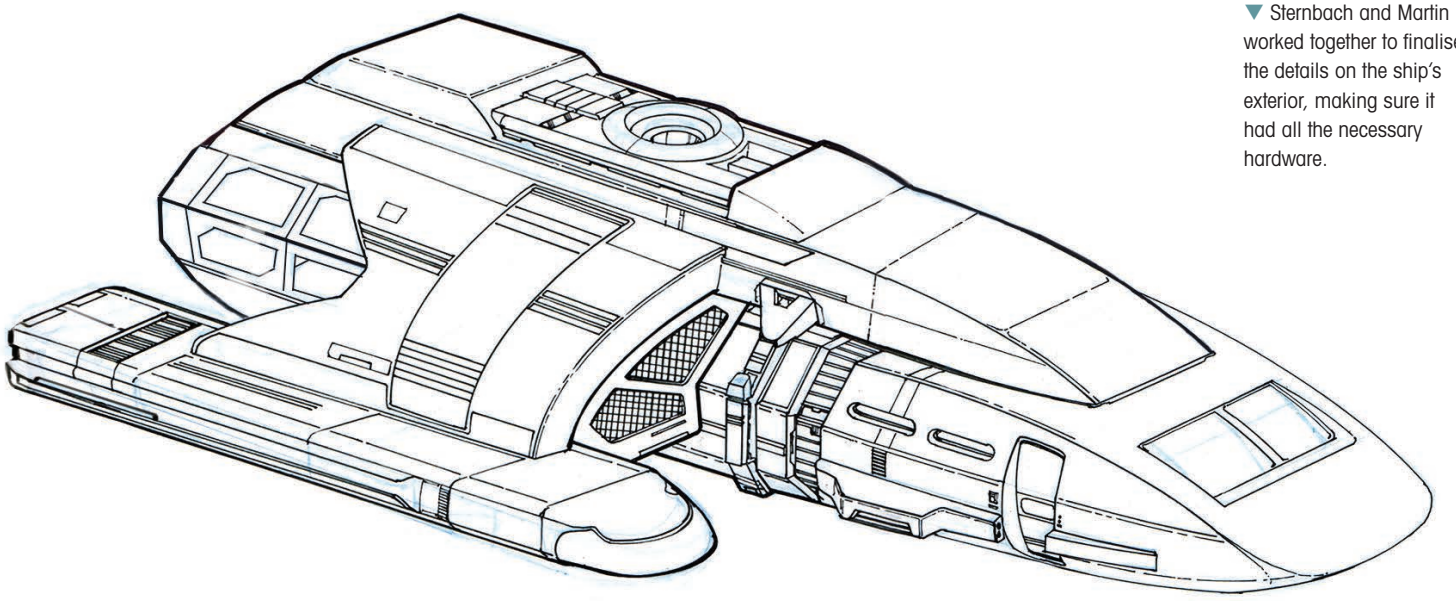


◀ Sternbach continued to be involved with the design process and produced more drawings that incorporated Hodges' suggestions.



◀ Because Jim Martin was excited to be given a chance to design a ship, he threw out some alternatives, in case there was something that caught Zimmerman's eye.





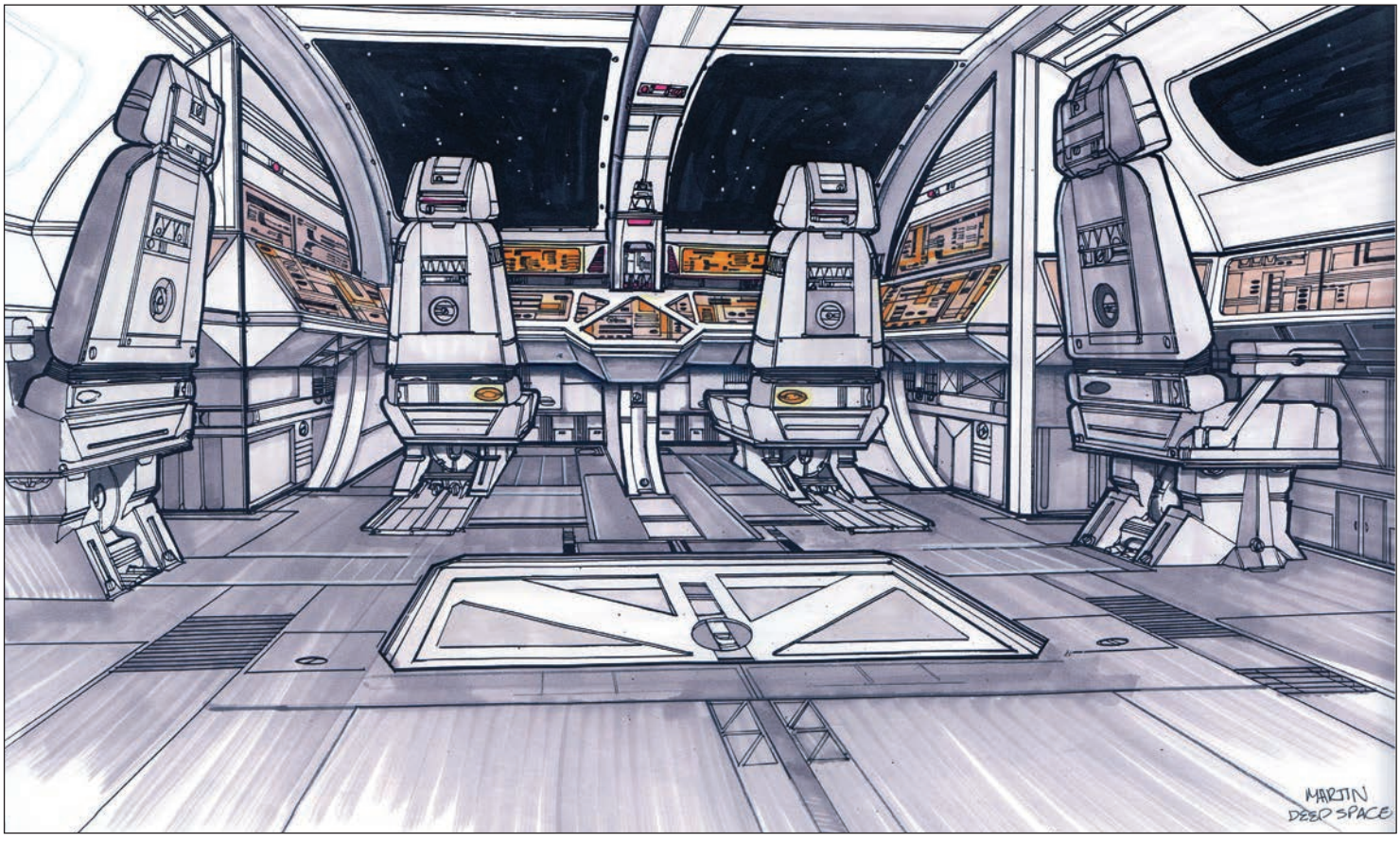
▼ Sternbach and Martin worked together to finalise the details on the ship's exterior, making sure it had all the necessary hardware.

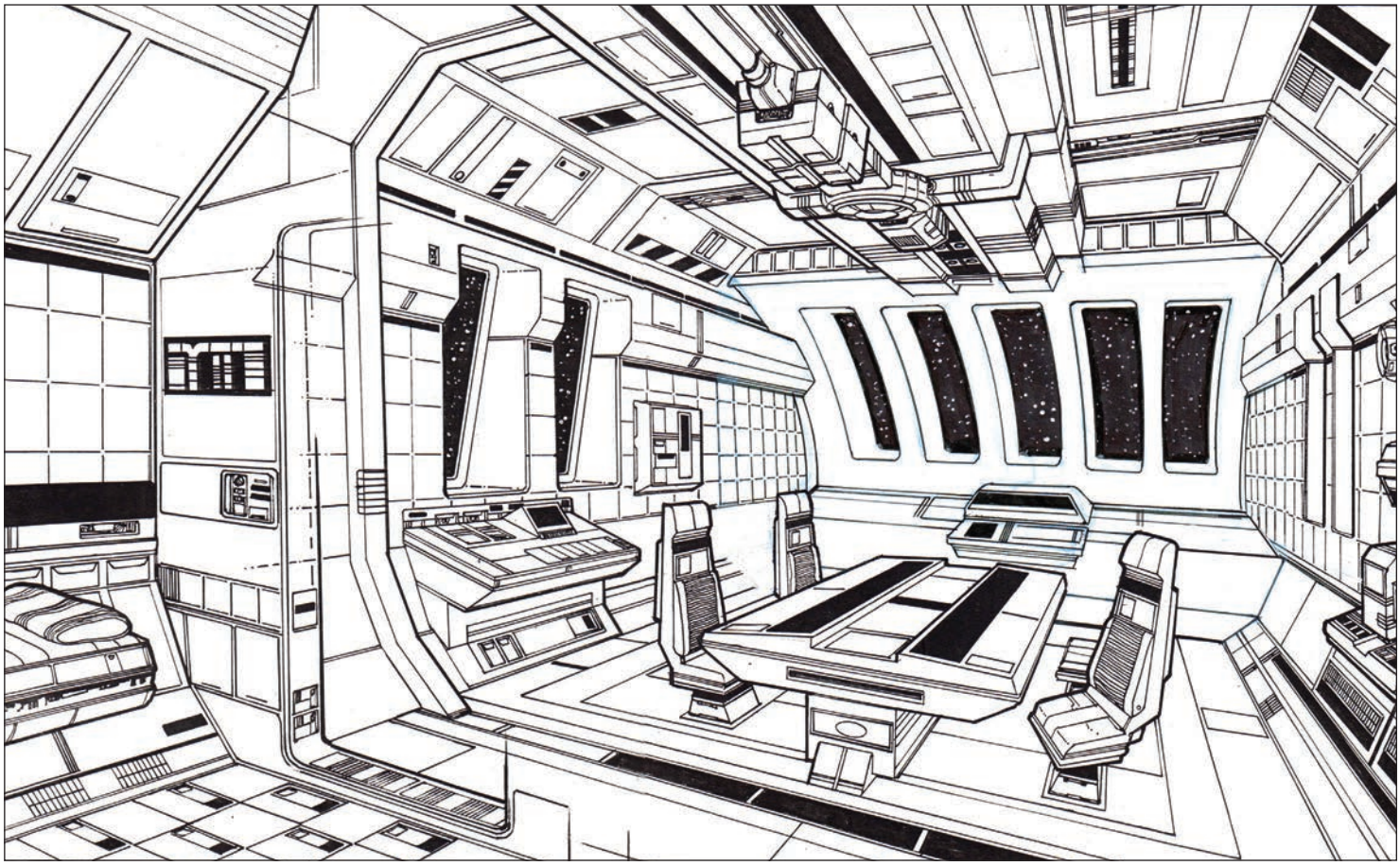
▼ Martin also produced drawings that showed the interior of the runabout. This shows the layout of the cockpit, which would fit inside all the designs that the team produced.

pushed the two modules Hodges had suggested further up the frame.

One of the biggest problems Sternbach could see was where to locate the runabout's impulse engines. In Martin's drawings he had put a module on the top of the frame at the back of the ship, but working together the two illustrators came up with a different way of solving the problem that also addressed Martin's concerns about the shape of the nacelle pylons.

"The intakes and exhaust nozzles could have been stuck on or embedded in a thick pylon,"





▲ Martin also worked up this drawing, which shows the rear compartment of the runabout. The distinctive windows instantly establish the scale and location of the room.

Sternbach explains, "but the better location turned out to be under a thinner, more aesthetically pleasing wing. With the impulse grilles set back, the wing retained its proportions, and the mass of the impulse system filled in an empty volume that might otherwise have made the runabout appear to be a flapping bird."

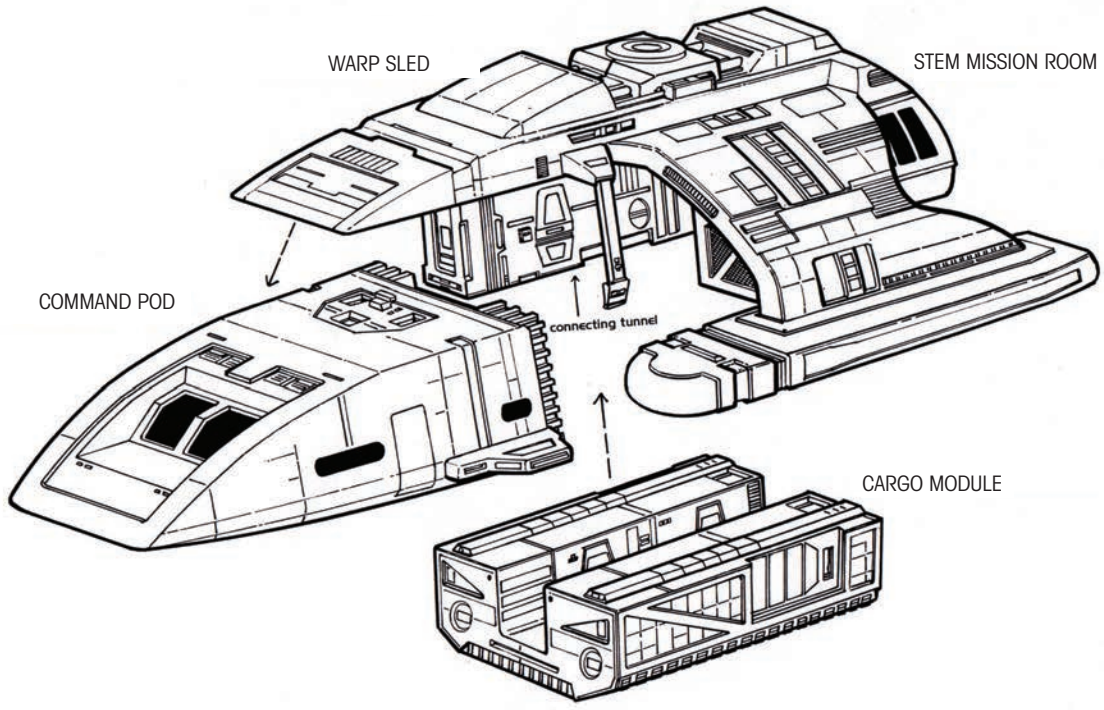
ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

Sternbach goes on to say that the two men also addressed the position of all the other systems that the ship was going to need. "The 'pancake' warp reactor was placed atop the backbone, with its matter and antimatter tankage and injectors. The pylons had a few areas trimmed out, and were given phaser strips, plasma conduits, and interesting plating, again part of the use of texture to convey scale. The command section, which we now imagined as an escape craft with its own limited propulsion system, had its nose streamlined. Sensor strips, transport emitters, and additional phasers were also spotted around."

Martin remembers that as the ship evolved, the different elements that Hodges had suggested became more and more streamlined and were blended together to the point where they could barely be distinguished form one another. "Joe had initially done a frame holding components, but as we worked on it, it evolved into more of a unibody design. "

Eventually, working under Sternbach's supervision, Martin produced a yellow sketch that showed an almost final version of the ship. Zimmerman presented this to the producers where it was approved. Sternbach now produced a set of plans for the modelmakers, refining the design even further as he did so. In particular he moved the nacelles lower so that they rested on the ground, making the model look more natural when it was sitting on the landing pads.

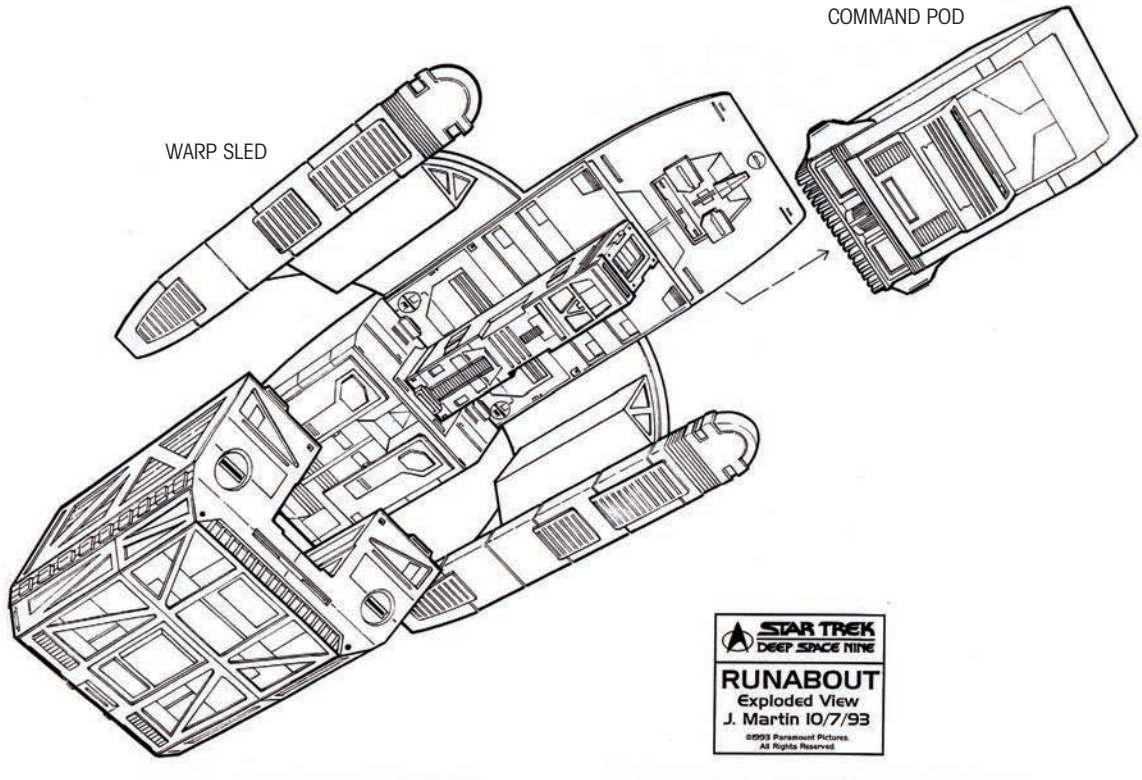
In the end, Hodges's idea that the ship would consist of a frame supporting different modules was never used in any of the stories, but for his own amusement, Martin produced a pair of sketches, which showed how the different components could fit together. By this stage, the runabout was conceived of as having three distinct modules: a command pod that contained the flight controls,



▶ This Jim Martin drawing shows how the different modules of the runabout connected to one another, with a central corridor running through the warp sled.

and could be ejected like a smaller shuttle; a warp sled that formed the backbone of the ship, with a "mission room" at the back; and an interchangeable cargo module. This last part was U-shaped and fitted around a corridor that ran through the middle of the warp sled, connecting all the different modules to one another. This, of course, was never actually shown on screen. "It was," Martin says, "just an idea."

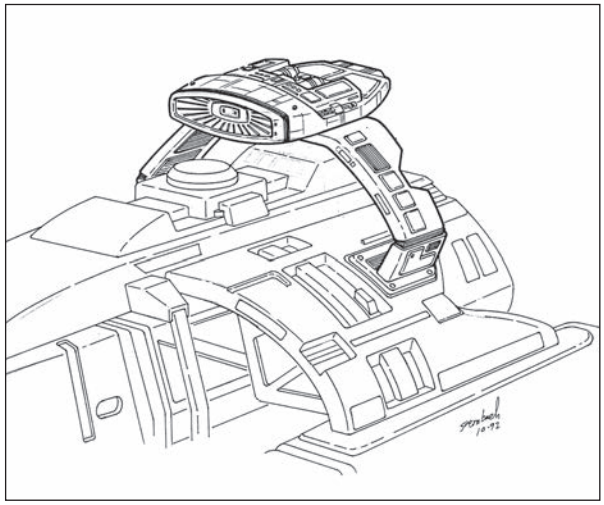
Martin was also responsible for producing concept drawings that showed the inside of the cockpit and the rear module, which he worked on



▶ The idea that the runabout would consist of different modules came from the art department and was never actually used by the writers.

◀ The physical model of the runabout was made by Tony Meininger. It had three mounting points for motion control photography, and interior illumination.

with Joe Hodges. He remembers that the goal was to make sure that the sets obviously belonged inside the model, "We were trying to rationalise what the interior might look like if it lined up with what we had done for the exterior. I remember that certain things were a given: for example, we knew what kind of chairs we were going to use, which had this cladding on the outside to make them look suitably Starfleet."



▲ The sensor pod was an optional extra that was designed to avoid confusion when an episode featured two different runabouts.

The task of building the filming miniature fell to Tony Meininger and his company Brazil Fabrications, who were also building the model of *Deep Space 9* itself. The model they produced was 19.5 inches long. Meininger also constructed a model of the landing pad that was in scale with the model of the runabout rather than the station itself.

In *DEEP SPACE NINE*'s second episode, 'Past Prologue,' the script called for two runabouts, one operated by Kira and the Bajoran terrorist Tahna Los and the other by Sisko and O'Brien. In order to make it clear which was which, the producers asked Sternbach to design a sensor pod that could be added to the top of Sisko's ship. The design he came up with could be removed and featured in eight episodes in total.

A CG version of the ship was eventually built by Digital Muse, who scaled it out to be 18.3 meters long. The original motion control model was sold at auction for a remarkable $33,600.

STAR TREK™