THE LOCAL ARCH

The concept of this give-back apartment in one of Attard’s dense zones, originated from an attempt to connect a residential building to a social hotspot. The final result consists of a duplex apartment, and three one bedroom apartments, all of which have access to a private terrace. The latter manifests an aquaponic farming system through which residents can obtain self-grown crops. This sustainable mode of farming is one of the ways in which ‘The Local Arch’ gives back to society, emphasising the increasing need for sustainable communities across our island. Moreover, the ground floor hosts several pet kennels for residents or non-residents to utilise temporarily, equipped with an adequate soundproof system. This further gives back to the public in a unique, yet valuable way. The volume is subdivided into two by a passage that allows the entry of natural light and passive ventilation throughout the entire building, making the most of all the natural elements that complement the corner site. The ground floor and roof garden which have separate entries for public access, transform the idea of an apartment block into a community space. This community is formed through social interactions between residents and non-residents, allowing the inhabitants to feel a sense of belonging not simply to their home but to the community. Going through the site instils a feeling of vivacity and belonging as there are no unclaimed corners or unnecessary zones. This ensures that the space available was utilised to the utmost extent. A vital consideration in such a limited area.

The design process came through the need to integrate modern elements to traditional styles. This was mainly done through the continuous use of arches that complement the conventional context that makes up the neighbourhood. At the same time, they make the block stand out, transforming this multi-purpose building into a social icon and a local landmark. An icon that depicts a distinct idea of ‘dwelling’. One which goes beyond the vital need for shelter but which also incorporates the need to cultivate social interaction in our daily, hectic schedule. It is imperative the we alter the idea of a multi-storey building as a mass of dwellings but rather, a space of opportunities to engage individuals actively and a mode of *giving back* to the local community.