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Cabinets

Proprietary kitchen cabinets abound in many guises to suit different tastes and budgets.
The advantage for the client is that they can see the product either illustrated in glossy catalogues or displayed in showrooms.
Another advantage of using proprietary cabinets is that although the ordering time may be lengthy, the fitting on site can be done reasonably quickly providing the demolition of any previous fittings has been undertaken along with the preparation of water, waste, heating and electrical services.

However, the cost of most ready-made fitted kitchens is generally exorbitant and often a 'rip-off'.
What the client pays for is the door and drawer fronts which, at the cheapest, will be melamine faced chipboard (MFC) and at the most expensive will be solid oak panels/stainless steel/solid gloss acrylic/satin aluminium roller shutters.

Most often, carcasses are made of standard 15 or 18 mm MFC. These can be bought separately and bespoke door and drawer fronts fitted separately.
Door fronts can be as cheap as 18 mm MDF hung and painted by the contractor on site.

Cabinets made of steel are also available and are particularly suitable where good hygiene is essential as they are impervious to water and insect damage. They are also fire resistant and can be a durable choice for domestic kitchens.
They are made of stainless steel or zinc coated steel finished in various polyester powder colours.

Kitchen manufacturers will often include a design service within their price, but where an architect is employed, this service will be redundant which results in the client paying more than is necessary.

Where the client desires purpose-made specially designed cabinets, the cost will inevitably be considerably higher than factory made units.

Cabinet sizes

The *British Standard range of kitchen cabinets* is based upon multiples of 100 mm.

Most proprietary European manufacturers conform to these dimensions, given here in millimetres:

Lengths of units:

base units	300, 400, 500, 600, 1000 and 1200
sink units	1000, 1200, 1500 and 1800
wall units	300, 400, 500, 600, 1000 and 1200
tall units	500 and 600

Heights* above finished floor level:

top of highest unit	1950–2250
highest shelf for general use	1800
underside of wall unit	1350
top of worktop	850, 870 and 920
underside of worktop	820, 870 and 920
top of plinth	100 (80 min)

* In practice the height dimensions are more typically as shown in section on p. 147.

Depths (front to back):

worktops	600
base units	600
sink units	600
tall units	600
wall units	300
toe recess	50 min (from front edge of worktop)

WALL UNITS


Open shelves at end


Open shelves


Single door


Double door


Glass door


Roller shutter


Two door corner


Diagonal corner


Corner

BASE UNITS


Single door


Double door


Single door under-sink


Double door under-sink


Housing for oven


Tray/towel slot


Single door and drawer


Double doors and drawers


Pull-out door


Three drawers


Four drawers


Four wide drawers


1/2 circle carousel in corner

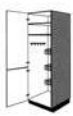

3/4 circle carousel in corner


Full circle carousel in diagonal corner


Diagonal corner

TALL UNITS


5 shelves


Broom cupboard


Pull-out larder


Housing for oven/fridge


Housing for ovens/fridge


Housing for tall fridge

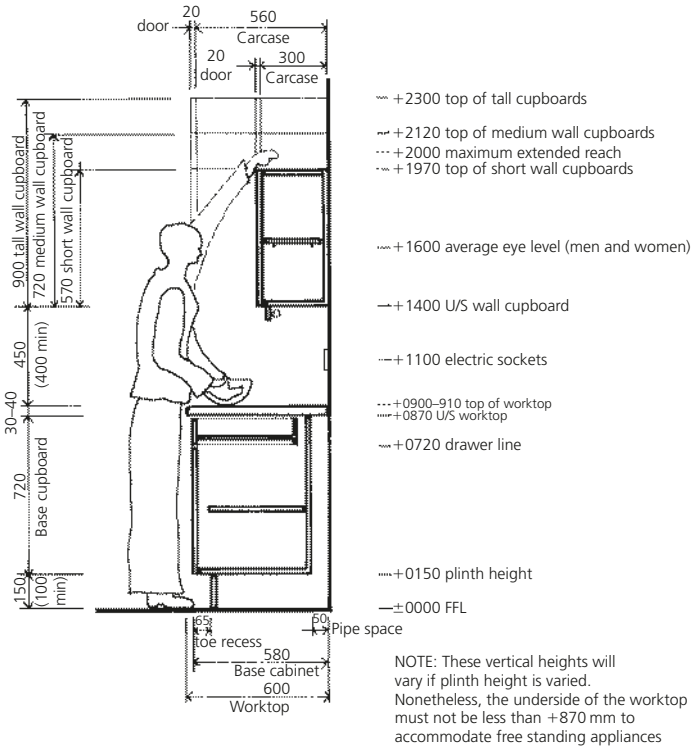
TYPICAL WIDTHS

Wall units : 300, 400, 500, 600, 800, 1000, diagonal corner 600 × 600
Base units : 300, 400, 500, 600, 800, 1000, diagonal corner 900 × 900
Tall units : 300 pull-out larder, 500, 600

LESS COMMON WIDTHS

Wall units : 450, 700, 900, 1100, 1200
Base units : 150 (open), 450, 900, 1100, 1200
Tall units : 400, 450

Kitchen cabinets – summary of basic types



Typical cabinet detail dimensions

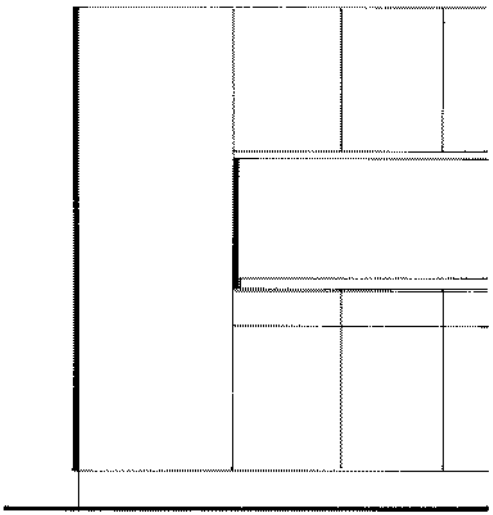
Setting-out dimensions

When planning a kitchen layout, allow for tolerance in dimensions. Even in new buildings, corners may not be absolutely square nor plaster finishes completely flat.

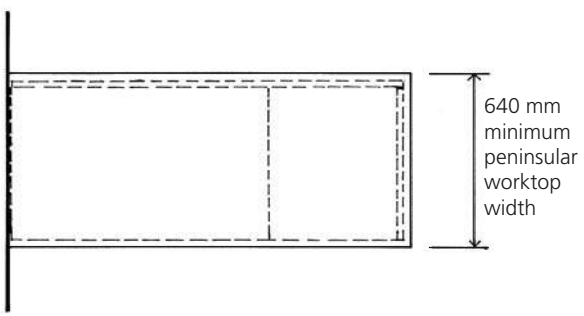
When laying out a kitchen within existing buildings and where the dimensions are not convenient for standard units, leftover space may usefully accommodate a tray slot or a pull-out towel rail. This will be cheaper than specifying a cabinet of a non-standard width.

Dimensions to watch on plan

When using a 1000 mm wide corner base unit, a *corner post* is generally needed. This post is usually L-shaped, 60 × 60 mm. Check with the manufacturer whether any extra millimetres need to be added to the worktop length to accommodate the post. See illustration on p. 36.



ELEVATION of cabinets showing side panels (matching door fronts) covering exposed carcase sides at end of tall unit and where tall unit abuts a worktop



PLAN of peninsular worktop showing side panels (matching door fronts) covering exposed carcase sides at end and back

Where drawers are at right angles to one another in a corner, check that when one drawer is opened it does not foul on the handle of the other. This can happen where long linear handles, such as D handles are used.

Standard 600 mm deep worktops project 40 mm in front of most carcases. This means the worktop will project from 19 to 25 mm in front of the cabinet doors depending on the thickness of the doors which can vary from 15 mm for cheap MFC to 21 mm, say, for solid oak panelled doors.

Where a single bank of cabinets is placed under a *peninsular worktop*, a back panel and a side panel to match the doors will be needed. This means the depth of the peninsular worktop must be at least a non-standard depth of 640 mm.

Where a base unit abuts a tall unit, the *carcase side* of the tall unit will be exposed above the worktop. If the sight of white melamine faced chipboard is not desirable then a full length panel matching the door fronts can be inserted. Similarly, a tall cupboard at the end of a run may need a full length panel to cover the exposed side of the carcase. This will add an extra 15–21 mm on plan, depending on door thickness.

Dimensions to watch on section

Worktops are generally 30–40 mm thick. This dimension of 10 mm will not affect the overall height of the cabinets but will affect the distance between the top of the worktop and the underside of any wall cupboards.

Cabinets are supported on *adjustable legs* behind a plinth board. These will affect the overall height of the cabinets.
They are normally available in three sizes: 100, 120 and 150 mm.
This latitude allows the height of the worktop to be adjusted to suit the client.

Carcase construction

Carcases are made from 15 or 18 mm thick melamine faced chipboard (MFC) with all exposed edges lipped with melamine tape. Cheaper ranges will be made from 15 mm MFC and may have hardboard rather than MFC backs.
Carcases can be supplied *rigid* or *packed flat*, the latter being cheaper to buy, but may cost more for the contractor to assemble.

Base units have MFC or hardboard backs set in 50 mm to allow for pipe runs.

Drawers, which may be plastic, wooden or have metal sides are generally supplied fully assembled together with metal runners.

Shelves are usually supported on adjustable socket and peg shelf supports. Tall 'larder' cupboards may have one fixed centre shelf for rigidity.

Doors, if supplied, will normally be fitted with 90° concealed hinges which can be adjusted to align the doors correctly.

Plinth boards can be attached to plates with clips which clip on to the adjustable legs supporting the cabinets.

Free-standing cabinets

Free-standing, ready-made kitchen cabinets can be bought from shops and furniture warehouses. These have the benefits of fast delivery and being transportable, should the clients wish to take them on to their next home.
Otherwise the disadvantages are lack of flexible planning and impractical and unhygienic gaps between units.

There is, of course, the vogue for having a kitchen with completely free-standing cupboards and appliances, harking back to large nineteenth century kitchens with a cooking range, a

big dresser and a large central wooden table. This is coupled with the idea of not wanting the kitchen to look too 'streamlined' or 'minimalist'.

However, for sheer efficiency and for cooking in a hygienic environment, there is nothing to beat the continuous worktop with appliances built into cabinets above a continuous plinth. Also, the exposed legs of free-standing units make the area underneath inaccessible and difficult to clean, which all too soon becomes colonised by undesirable creatures.

Cabinet accessories

Whether cabinets are bought off-the-peg or purpose-built or assembled from standard carcases with purpose-made doors, some of the accessories which go inside the cabinets are certainly worth considering. These can be bought from specialist kitchen hardware suppliers. The number of items is endless but they can be summarised as:

Support fittings

Adjustable feet, long legs for table/peninsular worktops, cabinet and worktop support brackets, internal shelf supports, wall cabinet hangers, worktop connection fittings, brackets for small microwave oven and TV.

Hardware

Hinges, door flap and lift-up fittings, door and drawer handles, knobs and continuous pulls, catches, stays, worktop edging, cornice profiles.

Drawers

Moulded plastic drawers, wooden drawers, metal drawer sides, runners, dividers, insert trays.

Shelves and baskets

Wirework baskets, wicker baskets, shelves, pull-out larder shelving, pull-out column shelving, wine racks, carousel shelves for corner cupboards.

Rails

Midway rail systems for hanging various attachments, such as utensil rack, spice rack, knife block, roll holder, book rest.

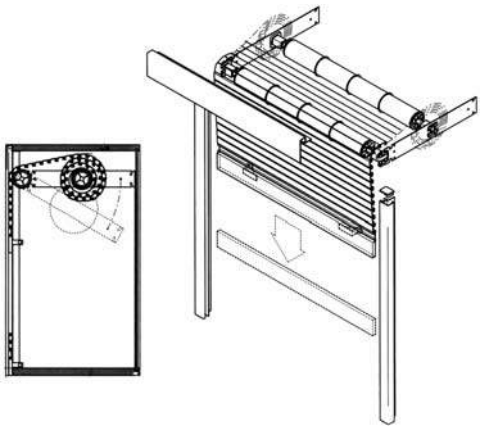
Waste bins

Door-hung bins, bins in various combinations sliding out on runners, foot-operated door opener for bin cabinet.

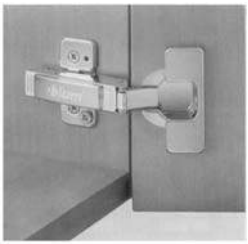
Miscellaneous

Telescopic towel rail, folding steps, first aid cabinet, radio designed to fit under standard wall cabinet.

Sources: Blum, Häfele, Isaac Lord, Woodfit

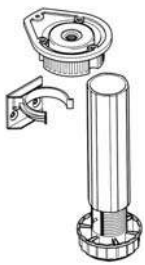


ROLLER SHUTTER CABINET DOOR 'Tambour' system in aluminium coated plastic suitable for 500 and 600 mm wide cabinets 720 or 1210 mm high



LIFT-UP SPRING HINGE for flaps of top boxes of cabinet tall units

CONCEALED HINGE for standard cabinet lay-on doors. 120° opening angle with spring closing mechanism. Similar hinges for 100°, 107° and 170° opening

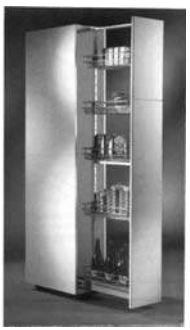


ADJUSTABLE PLINTH FOOT with clip and bracket for fixing to plinth board

Cabinet door and support fittings

'MAGIC' CORNER UNIT optimises space in 1000 mm corner base units.
Door pulls out first set of trays and then swings sideways which moves the second set of trays out from blind corner

PULL-OUT BASKETS. Chrome plated wire baskets for 400–1000 mm wide base units



PULL-OUT LARDER. Centre-mounted, height adjustable wire baskets for 300, 500 and 600 mm wide tall units

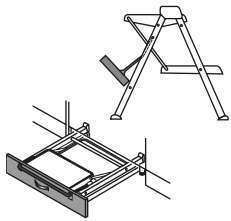
CAROUSEL TRAYS. $\frac{1}{2}$ round chrome wire trays for 900 and 1000 mm wide corner base units

CAROUSEL TRAYS. $\frac{3}{4}$ circle chrome wire trays for 900 × 900 mm corner base unit

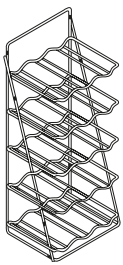
Wire shelving for cabinet interiors

GLASS RACK for fitting inside 500 mm wide tall or wall units

FIRST AID CABINET lockable 260 × 182 × 245 w

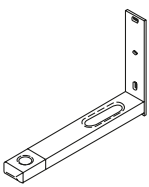


STEP STOOL for storing in plinth space 390 w × 390 d × 385 h unfolded 390 w × 95 d × 465 w folded



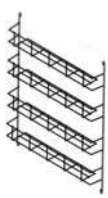
WINE RACK for 300 mm wide base unit

SLIDING TOWEL RAIL in chrome for side or top fixing under worktop - L or R hand 480 l (closed) × 102 w × 36 w



MICROWAVE WALL BRACKETS adjustable 330–460 mm

ROLL HOLDER for cling film foil and paper towels 352 w × 150 d × 305 w



SPICE RACK for door interiors 395 w × 55 d × 500 h

CUTLERY INSERT two tier in white plastic for 500 mm wide drawer

Cabinet and wall-hung fittings