

ARCHITECT LAYOUT ISSUES		<p style="text-align: center;"> bruce@bkwood.com BRUCE KRANZLER / CABINETMAKER P O BOX 66 TOMALES, CA 94971 707-878-2389 / 415-454-81001 </p>
PROBLEMS		SOLUTIONS
FITTING CABINET TO STRUCTURE:		
BASEBOARD	NONSTANDARD	<p>If the baseboard in the room is taller than the toe kick under the cabinets it can conflict with narrow scribe strips at the wall and cause clearance issues. Cabinetmaker should factor in wide enough trim strips to accommodate tall bases and ideally there would be a note of warning.</p>
SCRIBE STRIPS AT WALL	MY OPINION: 3/4" MINIMUM	<p>The scribe strips used in careful installations should be close to equal. Their size is open to argument but I've found that anything less than 3/4" is too narrow. The problem is the variation in framing and sheetrock. I've had dimensions down to 1/4" called out by architects. This may seem more precise but it highlights variations in the wall. A 1/8" variation is 50% of the reveal in this case. If the walls are very far off plumb or bowed it might make sense to widen them up to 1 or even 2 inches. In special circumstances (hinge side of refrigerator) it might be necessary to go out to 4" off the wall. High base boards that are thick or heavy trim also pose a problem with clearances. Take cabinet door swing clearance into account.</p>
CEILING GROSSLY UNEVEN	KERF / PAINT SOLUTION	<p>A wildly uneven ceiling can be made to look OK at the cabinet line with this trick. Use a sufficiently wide piece of trim, (from stock that matches the cabinets) to account for the differences in the ceiling and the top trim on the cabinet. Run a saw kerf down from the edge enough to equal the differences in the ceiling, Scribe the top part of the trim to account for the ceiling irregularities. Paint the top half to the trim the ceiling color and finish the bottom half the same as the cabinets. You end up with a level and straight cabinet line.</p>
GROSSLY UNEVEN FLOORS	ALWAYS START AT THE HIGH POINT OF THE KITCHEN, NEVER CUT DOWN BASES TO EVEN THINGS OUT IF IT RESULTS IN A LOWER COUNTER HEIGHT THAN 36" (APPLIANCES ARE SET FOR THIS HEIGHT.)	<p>Door openings provide a break that allows you to change levels setting one cabinet run below the other. As long as there isn't a continuous detail this works. You won't pick up even 3/4" across a door way if you aren't looking for it. This enables you to account for large differences in uneven floors in remodels without having extreme differences in counter heights around the room. I have in certain instances proportionally adjusted the height of the cabinet box so as to preserve the base height dimension but you still end up with vast differences in counter height so you're better off changing the elevation of the run of cabinets from one side of the room to the other if possible. It's important to clue the other trades involved, tile setters for instance want to set a level line all around the room and you have to tell them to change elevation at the break.</p>

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APPLIANCE ISSUES:		
APPLIANCE HEIGHT	DISHWASHERS WINE COOLERS REFRIGERATORS, ETC.	Dishwashers, being predictable in size for years have a few new curves to throw. Apart from the slight variation in width from American to European models there is a difference in height. The Euro models go almost 2" lower. An Important difference if thick counters at standard counter height (36") are called out. Other appliances will vary so check minimum heights carefully and be particularly cautious of thick counter tops in this regard.
EXTRA DEEP APPLIANCES	DISHWASHERS UNDERCOUNTER APPLIANCES GLOBAL EFFECT	These things can really create a problem with layout. There are some newer models that require an extra inch of space front to back when you spec the cover panel. There is an asterisk in a double ot font with a note to inform you of this fact. Fact is, dishwashers always took up all of the available space in a standard cabinet so this is serious. It not only effects the run of cabinet that the dishwasher is in but the adjacent runs too if everything has to be shifted over an inch. Always keep in mind the global effect this can have on a layout. Worthy of a note on the drawings certainly.
MICROWAVES		Require space for venting, extra depth (15",16"), electrical box. Verify how this is going to lay out. It might be good to order these last thing there is a wide size range. If they are too tightly fit they will burn out prematurely. These can be set into stud wall and flushed out with upper cabinets. It might be good to order this appliance last because they often have to be set into odd locations and layouts can change just enough for them to present a problem in a tightly designed kitchen.
REFRIGERATORS		Standard refrigerators can be much deeper than standard base cabinet and built in units can vary greatly in their built-in-ness. Sub Zero's newer invisible units require an extra inch with a cover panel. GE requires a 4" side space on the hinge side, some give the dimension of the unit while not mentioning the half inch hinge on top (obviously fashioned from anti matter) Some of them wont allow the door to open in a tight cabinet, "would you like your fridge installed with the door open or closed?" Be real careful around refrigerators they have a mean bite!
COUNTER ISSUES:		

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COUNTERS	EXTRA THICK (1 3/4" OR MORE)	Be careful of undercounter appliance clearances. Refrigerators, dishwashers, wine coolers, etc. European dishwashers will crank down lower than domestic ones.
	HANG DOWN : IF THE EDGE OF THE COUNTER IS BUILT UP HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE CABINET (PDF)	As simple as this is it can sure cause headaches. I'm referring to the edge detail of the countertop. Is it built up to 1 1/2" on the edge? Does it hang down on the cabinet box? Very important questions to have answered. Top drawers are dimensioned and set on the basis of this. Once a decision is made don't change it. (See PDF "DETAILS")
	OVERHANGS ARE NECESSARY , KERFS (DRIP)	Counter overhangs are necessary to keep water off the cabinet face. Rolled edges can overhang and still direct water back to the face of the door as it follows the surface around and drips off underneath. It is wise to specify a kerf on the underside of the counter that causes the water to drip in front of the doors. This can also be a problem with 3/4" counter tops with no build up, the water tends to follow around and drip underneath. This can wreak havoc with veneers and should be addressed at least in front of sinks.
	TYPE	What are the counters made of? This can be important to the cabinetmaker. For instance, if they are tile or stone you would be wise to omit a flip-out tray in front of the sink. It needs the support of a solid apron for strength certain heavy materials need extra support (see "cantilever" below).
	PLASTIC / CORIAN	Corian wants an airspace under their plastic and I've never been sure why but 1/4" strips should suffice without unduely raising the counter tops. Let the cabinetmaker know ahead though because drawer fronts are cut to fit close.
COUNTERS	LARGE END PANELS PROVIDE GOOD STOP	Refrigerator panels and pantry cabinets provide good end stops for counters if they are held out from the base cabinets an inch and a half or so.
COUNTERS	ELEVATED BAR ABOVE SINK	Watch out for clearance with large faucet and the overhang of an elevated bar.
COUNTER SUPPORT	"L" BRACKET	Many kitchens have raised bar. Supporting the overhang is always a problem. Modern cabinets look better without hokey corbles supporting them. L brackets are unsightly and inherently weak. Unless, that is, you make them long and fasten them on the back side of the bar support, not on the face of the bar. It is much stronger and very clean. Why did it take so long for me to figure it out? You can inset them into the bottom side of a wooden top too. 1/2" steel strap 1 1/4" wide works well.

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CANTILEVER SUPPORT FOR WIDE OVERHANGS	FLAT BRACKET	Heavy steel strap (1/2" thick, 1 1/4 wide 24" long +/-) routed into a sub top of an island can support a cantilevered overhang. The weight of the top goes a long way to securing it too.
BASE CABINETS	CABINET END CARRIED TO FLOOR	Base cabinet ends can carry to the floor or have a kick. Carrying them to the floor is more formal looking but they are more prone to getting banged up. Also they are more difficult to seal to the finish floor, usually requiring a "shoe" or small trim piece to cover the gap.
	TOE KICK BASE	In baths I would suggest a toe kick due to mopping, and general abuse. Better for high use areas where mopping and moisture are a concern.
CORNERS ON BASE CABINETS	MINIMUM 2"	Many times these returns at corners are left out in the drawing and they effect layout, stealing space from drawers and doors and crowding the layout. You need a minimum of 1 1/2" to clear drawer pulls on the run of cabinets that are perpendicular. Sometimes it is necessary to scribe these where they meet or the walls force the cabinets out of square in plan.
PLUMBING		
	ISLANDS (VENT LOOPS)	Good idea to draw this in so it isn't missed
	UNDER SINK ROLL OUTS POSITIONING TO CLEAR ROLLOUT	If you want an under sink roll out make sure to let the plumber know on the drawing otherwise it will be missed unless the cabinetmaker catches it.
ELECTRICAL		
	ISLANDS	Good idea to show boxes. Some municipalities are stricter than others.
	OVER COUNTER UNDER CABINET LIGHTING	Hold these to front of upper cabinet. They won't show from out in the room. Cabinetmaker needs the spec for light cavity. Remember, too much space raises the bottom shelf. 1 1/2" is usually enough.
	SHOW OUTLETS IN ELEVATION	Often outlets aren't shown on islands and pose a problem at the last minute. The electrical feeds need to be provided for too

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VENTS	DRAWING	It would be a great idea to draw these in because they are often not installed when the room is measured and if the contractor doesn't mention it they can be an unwelcome surprise come installation time.
FLIPPER DOORS GENERAL	CLEARANCE, CLEARANCE CLEARANCE!	This is the usual option for covering wide screen TVs. To make it work you either need a ridiculous amount of depth (defeating the idea of a flat screen) or bifold doors. Even then it can require 20" of depth in the cabinet, (roughly 5" more than the width of the door.) Side clearance is the other issue. You need to account for the two doors and hinge clearance, roughly 2", the hinge itself roughly 1", and the door pull 1 1/4". This can all add up to 9" clearance beyond the width of the TV.
WIDE SCREEN TV	ENTERTAINMENT UNIT	See above