



Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11) **EP 0 730 421 B2**

(12) **NEW EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION**

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the opposition decision:

02.01.2003 Bulletin 2003/01

(45) Mention of the grant of the patent:

28.10.1998 Bulletin 1998/44

(21) Application number: **95903019.8**

(22) Date of filing: **22.11.1994**

(51) Int Cl.7: **A47B 77/02**

(86) International application number:
PCT/NL94/00295

(87) International publication number:
WO 95/014408 (01.06.1995 Gazette 1995/23)

(54) **A METHOD FOR IMPROVING A WORKING TOP AND A COVERING TOP TO BE USED THEREBY**
VERFAHREN ZUR VERBESSERUNG EINER ARBEITSFLÄCHE UND ABDECKFLÄCHE HIERFÜR
PROCEDE DE REFECTION D'UN PLAN DE TRAVAIL ET PLAN DE REVETEMENT MIS EN
OEUVRE PAR CE PROCEDE

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH DE DK ES FR GB GR IE IT LI LU MC NL
PT SE**

(30) Priority: **23.11.1993 NL 9302023**

(43) Date of publication of application:
11.09.1996 Bulletin 1996/37

(73) Proprietor: **ALMANOVA WERKMEUBEL
INDUSTRIE B.V.**
5061 KM Oisterwijk (NL)

(72) Inventor: **KERS, Evert Jan Marinus**
NL-5061 KM Oisterwijk (NL)

(74) Representative: **Fieret, Johannes, Ir. et al**
Algemeen Octrooibureau,
World Trade Center,
P.O. Box 645
5600 AP Eindhoven (NL)

(56) References cited:

DE-U- 8 533 438	DE-U- 8 700 245
GB-A- 822 960	GB-A- 2 094 140
US-A- 2 688 523	US-A- 2 981 580
US-A- 3 554 140	US-A- 3 583 337
US-A- 3 606 508	US-A- 4 073 384
US-A- 4 091 155	US-A- 5 348 384

EP 0 730 421 B2

Description

[0001] The invention relates to a method for improving a working top in an existing kitchen.

[0002] The average life of a common so-called built-in kitchen is around fifteen years. Because of the intensive use that is made of it the working top is generally the part that is first considered for renewal, especially due to wear and damage, whilst in many cases the working top itself no longer meets the requirements that are currently made of such a working top. Also from an optical point of view the working top is generally dated after some time.

[0003] An embodiment of such a known working top is known from US-A-2,981,580. As disclosed in said patent a working top could consist of a sub-structure of plywood or the like covered by a single thin sheet of plastic or the like.

[0004] Replacing a working top by a new one is a difficult and costly affair, however. In many cases the tiles fitted on the wall part above the working top must be removed first. Then the closely fitting, tailor-made working top must usually be sawn into pieces and/or parts of the kitchen cabinets under the working top have to be removed. When subsequently a new working top is fitted, new tiles will have to be set and finished.

[0005] In view of the cost involved and the attendant inconvenience the replacement of a working top is usually delayed as long as possible, and possibly it is even decided to replace the built-in kitchen as a whole, whilst generally it would suffice to replace the working top and the hotplate and/or sink (combination) mounted therein.

[0006] The complete replacement of the built-in kitchen in such a case constitutes an unnecessary waste of materials, whilst furthermore the discharge of the old built-in kitchen in the form of waste may become increasingly costly in the future.

[0007] According to the invention on top of the existing working top there is fitted a rigid unitary covering top as described in claim 1.

[0008] Various embodiments of the method of claim 1 are specified in the dependent claims 2 and 3.

[0009] By using the method according to the invention a prefabricated covering top can be fitted over the existing working top in a simple and quick manner, whilst unnecessary structural disturbance can be avoided thereby. The working top can be readily adapted to the dimensions of a new hotplate and/or sink (combination) which may be fitted as well. Because of the simple manner in which a new covering top can be fitted it is furthermore readily possible to adapt the colour of the working top according to current tastes and fashion, without high costs being involved.

[0010] The widths of usual working tops generally range from 550 to 620 mm. Starting from a covering top having a width of ± 640 mm, the width of the covering top is according to the invention adapted to the width of the existing working top. This makes it possible to use

a standard covering top for a wide variety of kitchens.

[0011] From German Gebrauchsmuster DE-U-85 33 438.3 a loose working board is known, which is to be placed on top of a working top. This working board is for example used for cutting vegetables, meat and the like, so that these activities can be performed without damaging the working top thereby. Two opposed longitudinal edges of the working top are fitted with strips, whereby one strip will abut against a wall or the like extending above the working top, whilst the other strip will abut against one end of the working top when being used. An indication with regard to improving a working top cannot be derived from said publication, however.

[0012] The invention will be explained in more detail hereafter with reference to the accompanying Figures.

[0013] Figure 1 is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of a covering top to be provided on top of an existing working top.

[0014] Figure 2 is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the rear wall of the covering top, with a section being mounted thereon and a vertically upright cover wall being placed in said section.

[0015] The covering top 1 illustrated in Figure 1 is at its front side provided with a covering edge 2 projecting under the covering top. Near the transition between the horizontal top part and the covering edge 2 an elevation 3 is provided, as a result of which water present on the covering top is prevented from flowing from the covering top, which is made in one piece, when the covering top is being used.

[0016] Preferably the upper side of the covering top is formed by an upper plate 4 consisting of a laminate of plastic material compressed under high pressure, which is bonded to a ± 5 mm thick fibreboard 5 of a water-repellent quality. At its bottom side the covering top 1 is covered by a water-repellent top layer 6.

[0017] The material of the upper plate 4 may be supplied in various colours, structures and material imitations, so that the appearance of the covering top can be readily adapted to changing tastes and fashions.

[0018] The total thickness of the layers 4, 5 and 6 is ± 8 mm, whilst the covering edge 2 extends over a height of ± 42 mm under the horizontally extending part of the covering top, so that the total height b of the covering top is ± 52 mm.

[0019] The width of the usual working tops generally ranges from 550 to 620 mm. Consequently a width a of ± 640 mm is preferred for the covering top. Starting from a standard covering top of this type the width of the covering top can be readily adapted to the size of the existing working top to be covered.

[0020] A covering top of this type, which is illustrated in Figure 1, is factory-made to standard lengths or to size, but it may also be made to size by professionals or by do-it-yourselfers in accordance with the existing working top to be covered. If made to size, the covering top may for example be fixed to the existing working top by means of a cement, whereby the covering edge 2

covers the front edge of the existing working top. Any openings for the sink (combination), hotplate and the like can likewise be readily provided in the working top. The upper plate 4 of the covering top can be maintained and cleaned in a simple manner when using the material referred to above. Furthermore the use of water-repellent fibreboard and the water-repellent top layer 6 will render the new covering top substantially insensitive to the action of moisture.

[0021] In an efficient embodiment of the method for fitting a new covering top use is made of section 7 shown in Figure 2, which comprises a vertically upright web 8 joined by a horizontal leg 9 at its bottom edge. A leg 10 extending parallel to the horizontal leg 9 joins said web at some distance above said leg 9. At its end remote from said web the leg 10 is provided with a nose 11 projecting above the leg 10. Section 7 may be moved onto a rear edge of the covering top 1 directed towards a wall in the manner illustrated in Figure 2, such that said rear edge of the covering top will come to lie between the two legs 9 and 10, whilst the web 8 will for example abut against existing tilework or another wall finish.

[0022] The bottom end of a covering wall 12 may then be placed between said web 8 and the projecting nose 11 in order to cover existing (dated) tilework or the like. The covering wall 12 may thereby be made of the same material and have the same colour as the covering top 1.

[0023] It will be apparent that by using the above-described construction the part of an existing kitchen that generally becomes dated or is damaged soonest, i.e. the working top, can be given a new appearance in a simple manner, as a result of which the life of the entire built-in kitchen can be extended considerably.

Claims

1. A method for improving a working top in an existing kitchen, **characterized in that** on top of the existing working top there is fitted a rigid unitary covering top (1) with a front side and a back side, the covering top (1) forming an integral structure and comprising a horizontal part (4-6) having a rear edge at the back side of the covering top, to be directed towards a wall, a covering edge (2) at the front side and a water barrier (3) provided near the transition between said horizontal part (4-6) and said covering edge (2) whereby the covering top (1) is fitted in such a way, that the horizontal part (4-6) of said covering top (1) extends over at least substantially the entire upper surface of the working top and a covering edge (2) of said covering top (1) engages over the front edge of the existing working top, whereby the covering top (1) is attached to the working top by means of a suitable adhesive.
2. A method according to claim 1, **characterized in that**, starting from a covering top (1) having a width

of substantially 640 mm, the width of the covering top (1) is adapted to the width of the existing working top.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** a section (7) is fitted over the rear edge of the covering top (1) directed towards a wall when the covering top (1) is being installed, and **in that** a bottom end of an upright covering wall (12) is placed in a recess provided in the section (7) on the covering top (1).

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zum Verbessern einer Arbeitsfläche einer vorhandenen Küche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** auf die Oberseite der vorhandenen Arbeitsfläche eine starre einheitliche Abdeckung (1) mit einer Vorderseite und einer Rückseite gebracht wird, wobei die Abdeckung (1) eine integrale Struktur bildet und einen horizontalen Teil (4 bis 6), der eine zu einer Wand zu richtende Hinterkante an der Rückseite der Abdeckung besitzt, ein Eckabdeckteil (2) an der Vorderseite und eine Flüssigkeitsbarriere (3), die nahe dem Übergang zwischen dem horizontalen Teil (4 - 6) und dem Eckabdeckteil (2) vorgesehen ist, aufweist, wobei die Abdeckung (1) derart angepasst wird, dass der horizontale Teil (4 - 6) der Abdeckung (1) sich zumindest im Wesentlichen über die gesamte obere Fläche der Arbeitsfläche erstreckt und ein Eckabdeckteil (2) der Abdeckung (1) sich über die Frontkante der vorhandenen Arbeitsfläche erstreckt, wobei die Abdeckung (1) mit der Arbeitsfläche mittels eines geeigneten Klebmittels fest verbunden wird.
2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** ausgehend von einer Abdeckung (1), die eine Breite von etwa 640 mm aufweist, die Breite der Abdeckung (1) an die Breite der vorhandenen Arbeitsfläche angepasst wird.
3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** ein Abschnitt (7) über die Hinterkante der Abdeckung (1), die zur Wand hin gerichtet ist, gebracht wird, wenn die Abdeckung (1) aufgebracht wird, und dass ein bodenseitiges Ende einer aufrechten Abdeckwand (12) in einer Ausnehmung, die in dem Abschnitt (7) auf der Abdeckung (1) vorgesehen ist, angeordnet wird.

Revendications

1. Procédé de réflexion d'un plan de travail dans une cuisine existante, **caractérisé en ce que** sur le dessus du plan de travail existant est ajusté un plan de

revêtement unitaire rigide (1) formant une structure d'un seul tenant et comprenant une pièce horizontale (4 à 6) ayant un bord à l'arrière du plan de travail pour diriger vers une paroi, un bord de revêtement (2) sur le devant et une barrière contre l'eau (3) prévue près de la transition entre ladite pièce horizontale (4 à 6) et . ledit bord de revêtement (2), le plan de revêtement (1) étant ajusté de telle manière que la pièce horizontale (4 à 6) dudit plan de revêtement (1) s'étend sur au moins substantiellement toute la surface supérieure du plan de travail et qu'un bord de revêtement (2) dudit plan de revêtement (1) vient en prise sur le bord avant du plan de travail existant, le plan de revêtement (1) étant fixé au plan de travail au moyen d'un adhésif approprié.

5

10

15

2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, **caractérisé en ce que**, en partant d'un plan de revêtement (1) ayant une largeur substantiellement de 640 mm, la largeur du plan de revêtement (1) est adaptée à la largeur du plan de travail existant.

20

3. Procédé selon la revendication 1 ou 2, **caractérisé en ce qu'**un section (7) est ajustée sur le bord arrière du plan de revêtement (1) dirigée vers une paroi lorsque le plan de revêtement (1) est installé, et **en ce qu'**une extrémité inférieure d'une paroi de revêtement droite (12) est placée dans un creux prévu dans la section (7) sur le plan de revêtement (1).

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

