

## PROJECT DECONSTRUCT – ideas &amp; techniques



# Mirrored bathroom cabinet

**Chris Grace** takes us through the stages he encountered when deciding to transform a hole-in-the-wall into a stylish bathroom cabinet

**W**hen I moved into my current house, which had been extended, I found there was a recess in the bathroom wall where there was once a window. The original outer skin of the wall had been bricked up and plastered over, but the inner hole had only been partially blocked up, leaving a small recess and shelf. This 'hole' cried out to be finished, so 'management' ordered a bathroom cabinet. On further investigation I found that the inner blocks used to reduce the size of the hole would come away cleanly revealing a bigger recess the size of the original window. Now there was

room to design a more interesting cabinet. Designs were submitted to the relevant authority and naturally, my wife Jean selected the one that included lots of cupboard space and mirrors. That's when the real fun started as I didn't really know how I would hang the doors to disguise the gap between the carcass and the edge of the recess, which would inevitably not be exactly square.

Luckily, work coincided with refitting the bathroom, which apparently needed an expert! So the tiler was instructed to leave a square hole and I was put to work on the cabinet.



The doors needed to fit neatly against the tiles

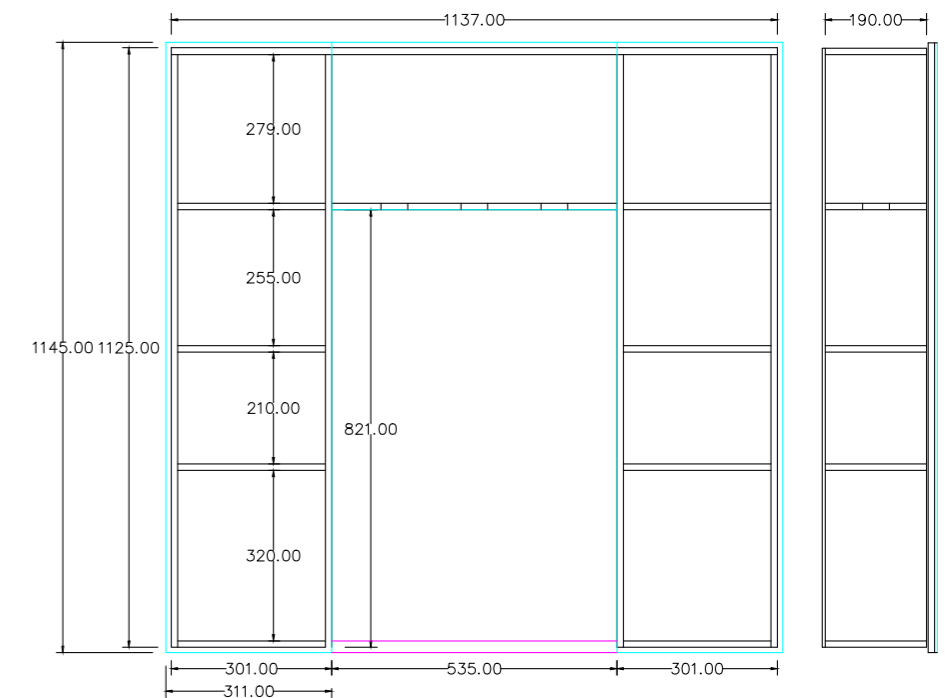
## Making the carcass

With some moisture-resistant MDF, work started on cutting all of the elements of the carcass, partitions and shelves on a tablesaw. As the outside of the carcass would be hidden in the recess, there was no need for fancy joints, so I simply butted the pieces together, pilot drilling, gluing and screwing. This was nice and easy as I only had to pay attention to the exact size and ensure that everything was kept square. The only element that would be visible is where the shelves meet the inner recess, which would require blind dowels.

The next step was to drill a hole from the recess into the loft through which a power cable could be connected and run down for the lights –another job for a specialist! Now, everything was ready for the installation of the cabinet. I carefully shimmed it out from the back of the recess, so that it was flush all the way around at the front and then secured it with four screws into the wall behind.

## Installing the doors

The doors needed to overlap the edges of the carcass to hide any small gaps between the cabinet and the walls. I did this using some offset



hinges. I calculated the size of the doors, then cut them and painted them. I took mine to my local glass supplier to have the mirrors fitted. When looking to install the doors, you need to be especially careful to select screws that will not go through and touch the glass. A mirror can also be fitted on the central recess. While I was waiting for the mirrors

to be fitted on the doors, I fitted the downlights into the pre-cut holes and wired them up to a standard bathroom pull cord. To do this, I threaded the cord through the panel that supported the lights. I took the precaution of putting a small piece of flexible pipe in the hole to resist chafing the cord, which has worked well!



Here you can see the detail of the corner blocks and hinges



The special lighting compartment



It has fitted nicely in the recess

## Choosing hardware

Once the mirrored doors were installed on the cabinet, I decided I needed to find a way to prevent the doors from opening beyond 90°. This could cause either distortion of the hinges, or worse, the breaking of mirrors or tiles, so I used chain stays. I also added magnetic catches to keep the doors closed. There is just enough room behind the doors to slip the tips of your fingers when you want to open the doors, so no handles are required. This keeps up the clean look I was aiming for.

## Disguising the windowsill

The final problem now was how to disguise the original windowsill at the bottom. Using an appropriate piece of wood, it was off to the tablesaw to size it correctly and then lots of routing to round over the front and cut a massive rebate underneath; this would hang over the edge of the hole the



**The door chain restraints**

same amount as the doors. Now, our cupboard is well-used and houses a variety of essential bathroom products and I'm even allowed one little corner for shaving cream. All these items are hidden away behind what appear to be mirrors mounted on the wall. The downlights above the central mirrored recess add interest and provide additional lighting. ■



**The mirror recess complete with lighting pull cord**



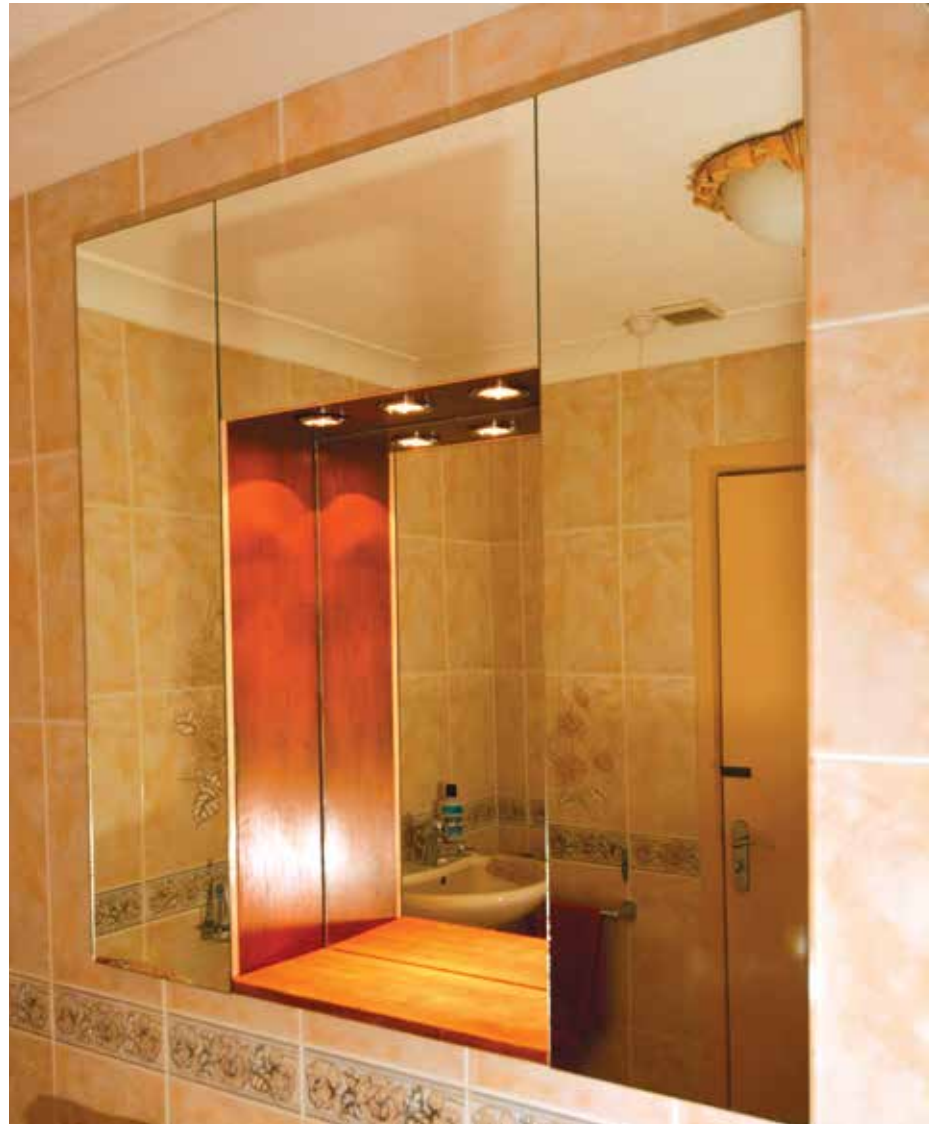
**The hinges used were slim and require no recessing**



**Ready for the sill to cover the exposed tile edges**



**The lipped sill profile; ready to push back to cover the tile edge**



**A nice neat looking job!**