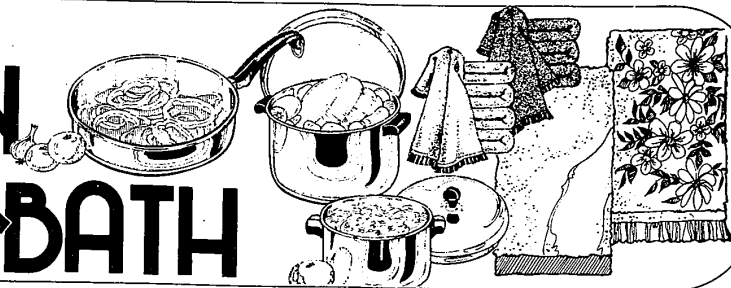
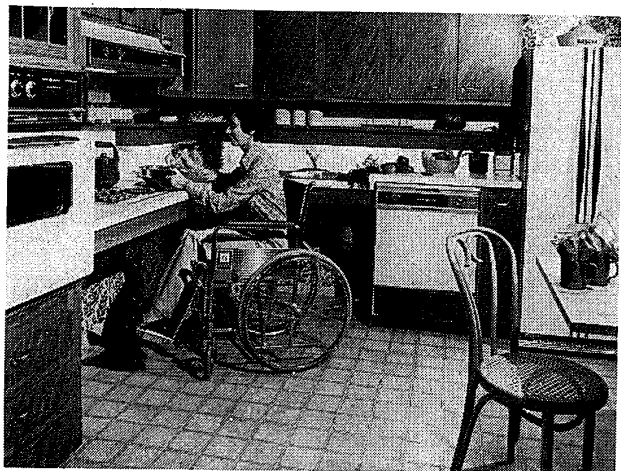


KITCHEN & BATH



A kitchen designed for the handicapped



Kitchen for the handicapped—According to its designer, Bill Ketcham, CKD, General Electric's Kitchen Designer Manager, major features of kitchen include installation of control switches at the front of

the counter, extensive countertop lighting, and limited base cabinets, so a wheelchair can roll up to the counters—including the sink area.

One of the nation's leading appliance manufacturers has designed a "Kitchen for the handicapped," formulated with the needs of the ambulatory and visually handicapped in mind.

William J. Ketcham, CKD, kitchen design manager for General Electric and designer of the kitchen, feels the concept of the kitchen is very timely, as the word "handicapped" today is much more all-encompassing.

The public is becoming more aware of the handicaps imposed by birth defects and such crippling diseases as polio and multiple sclerosis. Moreover, more than two million persons are blind or visually handicapped.

Advances in medical science are helping to keep people alive longer, and the natural increase in the nation's median age means an ever-increasing percentage of the population over 65. Americans over 65 now number 23 million, and by the year 2000 their number will swell to almost 32 million, one out of every six Americans.

Factors like these generated the idea of a "handicapped" kitchen, Ketcham said. "The design takes into consideration the homemaker whose movement is limited or who is confined to a sitting position. My thinking was to come up with a kitchen that was first of all functional, and to show how it could be built with contemporary styling while controlling costs."

The L-shaped kitchen is modified in the sink area and cooking center. The countertop is lower. There are no base cabinets (except beneath the wall oven and the tray cabinet between the dishwasher and refrigerator), so a wheelchair can roll up to and under the counters. A shallow-bowl sink with rear drain and single-control faucet also permits a straight-on approach and leg room under the counter and sink area.

For those who may find it difficult to

reach controls, switches for the food waste disposer, hood fan and light are installed at the front of the counter, along with a switch for fluorescent countertop lighting.

While providing ample storage space, the cabinet design and location also are more functional for a homemaker with limited activity. There are easy-grip handles, and open shelving helps make cooking and serving utensils easy to reach. Items in the storage area above the wall oven can be reached from a sitting position, and the shelf around the counter also provides convenient storage for smaller items.

Ketcham points out that while such a kitchen can assist many handicapped persons to become more self-

dependent, necessary modifications are not major tasks. For example, the cabinets by Scheich are stock units and the appliances are standard General Electric models. The only cabinet modification necessary was one to allow the wall oven to be installed at a lower-than-usual height, and several manufacturers produce the shallow sink and elbow products.

Appliance, use-and-care manuals on all products now made by GE and Hotpoint are available on tape cassettes for the visually handicapped. They are obtainable from the Center for Consumer Products Recordings, Associated Blind of Kentucky, P.O. Box 306, Louisville, Ky. 40201. Requests should indicate product, brand, model number and year purchased, if known.

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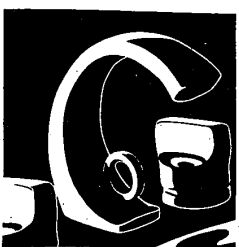
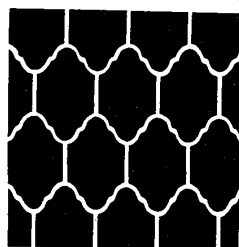
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