



A Small Workshop for Cabinet Making

Cabinet Maker's and Restorer's Meeting

14 July 2018

A project which never ends

Why?

A workshop must be adaptable

- You tackle new projects
 - Often larger pieces
 - More complex
 - Using new techniques
 - Using new tools and machines
- But, what remains constant
 - The space available
 - Here lies the challenge of a small workshop
 - My workshop is 6 X 3 m

Type of space available

- Few people have the privilege of a custom workshop
 - Most have to use what is possible
 - Ideally a double garage, exclusively as a workshop
 - Some 'share' the workshop with their motor cars, requiring constant moving of equipment
 - Alternatively, you may be able to use a single garage space in a dedicated way
 - The smaller the space, more effort lies in optimising the layout and the choosing the right equipment.

Beyond size, what is needed?

- What are the 'fixed assets' of the workshop space
 - Access in and out
 - For handling raw timber planks
 - Completed projects
 - Ability to move key equipment outside
 - Lighting, both natural and added
 - Ceiling height and style of the rafters
 - Possibility of storage space?
 - Electrical reticulation

What equipment is likely in a Cabinet Makers Shop?

- Table saw
- Jointer (ideally 200mm or more)
- Thicknesser
- Band saw
- Router and Router table
- Drill press
- Workbench (Flat and solid)
- Hand tools

Is that all? Unlikely

- What about:
 - Sharpening equipment
 - Lathe
 - Chop saw
 - Dust collection system
 - Storage
 - For smaller power tools and hand tools
 - Wood
 - Other supplies
 - Jigs and, clamps, patterns, etc.

In a small workshop, the Workbench is essential as a multipurpose working space





You don't have the luxury of a separate assembly or clamping table, possible on a larger shop

But that is not all

- What about assembling and finishing your projects
- For a small workshop, you may be facing “Mission Impossible” without some careful thought and planning
 - The layout needs to be flexible
 - The equipment may need to be moveable
 - Some which can be folded up.
- An important element of the layout is **SAFETY**



At the limit!!



The size of equipment

- In a small workshop:
 - The size and capacity of the large power tools needs to fit the space
 - A large table saw, while attractive, would take up the whole central area.
 - A small combination machine may be the best option
 - A permanent router table may be first choice, but where will it fit?
 - A folding router table may be the only solution
 - Good well designed tool storage is a key
 - Placed conveniently to their point of use

A folding Router Table

Versatile and space saving



Generations of storage

Once, all my tools fitted
this cupboard

Later, this was seen as the answer



The size of equipment (Cont.)

- A combination Jointer and Thicknesser may be ideal, but heavy and difficult to move
 - In practice, a portable Thicknesser may be the best option as it can be moved outside to plane long planks
 - Back to access – is this possible with the door size in the room

Planning the Layout

- Examine the likely workflow, as this can influence the efficiency
- Generally a small workshop is harder to work in, and the layout is often modified to improve the ease of use. This flexibility from the outset.
- Well designed storage, in the optimum place, can greatly enhance the ease of use and reduce 'clutter'

2017 – Addition of tool storage cabinets



Tools are safe and available at the bench



Headaches

- Wood storage
 - For most projects, one tries to purchase all the wood at the outset.
 - Poor storage can become a safety hazard
- Project assembly
 - Once assembled, a project may occupy a significant portion of the small workshop
 - E.g. the carcass is complete but door need to be made and fitted
 - Is there other space that can be used?
 - This may also be essential for finishing





Do's and Don'ts

- If you are setting out, try to think ahead in establishing the workshop
 - Be careful in the equipment you choose
 - Too big and safety becomes a problem
 - Understand your needs
 - Too much equipment and you cannot work
 - Think of storage of all kinds (wood , tools, etc.)
- Think of your small workshop as a project in its own right
 - The more thought you apply, the better the working space you create
 - Understand your limits and work within them
 - Have fun!!!