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T. E. JORDAN

2,289,198

SWITCH PLATE

Filed May 25, 1940

Fig.1.

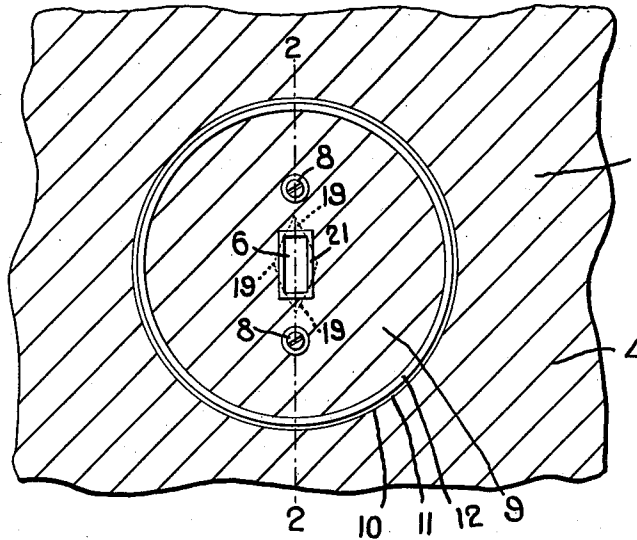


Fig.2.

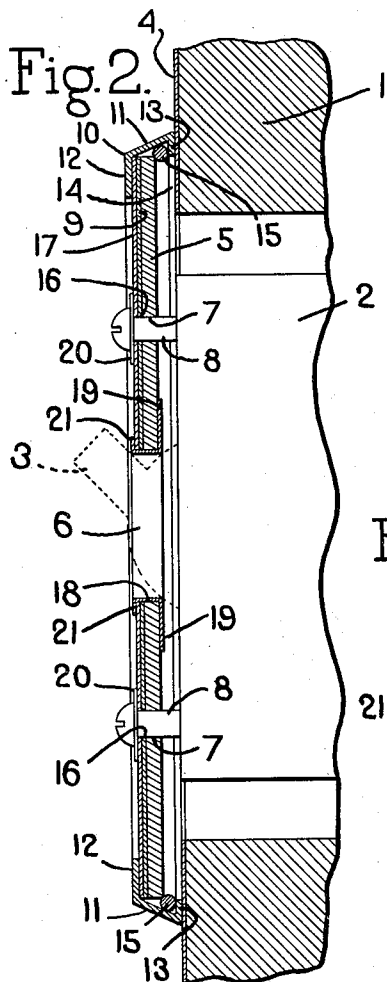


Fig.3.

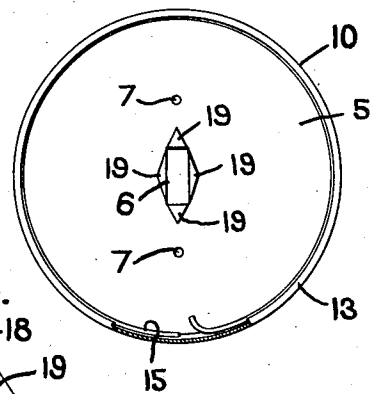
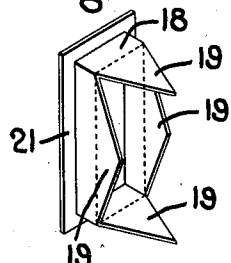


Fig.4.



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SWITCH PLATE

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2 Claims. (Cl. 220—24.2)

This invention relates to switch plates, such as are used in connection with wall switches of a house lighting system.

One of the objects of the invention is to provide a novel switch plate constructed with an interchangeable finish ply which forms the exposed face of the switch plate so that when a switch plate is installed in any room, a finish plate can be selected and used which will harmonize with or match the finish of the wall, thus making the presence of the switch plate on the wall relatively inconspicuous.

If, for instance, my improved switch plate is used in a room in which the walls are covered with wallpaper, then a section of the wallpaper might be used as the finish ply for the switch plate, in which case the exposed face of the switch plate would be formed by a section of the wallpaper which could be so selected that it will exactly match the pattern of the paper immediately surrounding the switch plate.

If, on the other hand, the wall is a painted wall, then a finish ply having a face painted to match the wall could be used, in which case the exposed face of the switch plate would blend into the wall so as to be quite inconspicuous.

An important feature of the invention is that by means of it a switch plate can be constructed to match the wall finish of any room, regardless of the character of such finish so that when the switch plate is in position, it will merge into the wall of the room in such a way as to be hardly discernible.

My improved switch plate comprises a foundation or backing plate having an opening or openings to receive the switch lever or the push buttons and also having screw-receiving openings to receive the attaching screws by which the switch plate may be attached to the switch box, and it also comprises a finish layer or ply which covers the front face of the backing plate and which is provided with an exposed surface that matches the surface of the wall, said plate and finish ply being mounted in an encircling frame which holds them in their assembled relation.

To prevent the finish layer within the frame from becoming soiled by repeated operation of the switch, I propose to cover said finish layer with a transparent protective layer such as Cellophane or Pliofilm, which can be readily washed and which is retained in position by the surrounding frame.

In order to give an understanding of the invention, I have illustrated in the drawing a selected embodiment thereof which will now be de-

scribed, after which the novel features will be pointed out in the appended claims.

In the drawing:

Fig. 1 is a fragmentary view showing a portion of the wall of a room with my improved switch plate applied thereto.

Fig. 2 is an enlarged section on the line 2—2, Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a rear view of the switch plate.

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the lining for the opening in the switch plate through which the switch lever extends.

In the drawing, 1 indicates the wall of a room in which is located a suitable box 2 containing a switch that controls a lighting circuit and which is actuated by the switch lever 3, shown in dotted lines, Fig. 2. The wall 1 is shown as covered with wallpaper 4.

My improved switch plate comprises a backing plate 5, preferably metal, which is formed with an opening 6 through which the switch lever 3 extends, and is also formed with screw-receiving openings 7 to receive the attaching screws 8 by which the switch plate is attached to the switch box 2.

Associated with this backing plate 5 is a finish layer or ply 9 which covers the front face of the backing plate 5. Said layer 9 is preferably of the same material as the finish for the wall 1 of the room. If the wall 1 is covered with wallpaper 4, then the ply 9 will be a piece of the wallpaper 4.

The backing plate 5 and finish layer 9 are held in assembled relation in a suitable frame 10 which encircles said plate and layer.

The backing plate 5, the finish layer 9 and the encircling frame 10 may have any suitable shape, that herein shown being circular, although it will be understood that if desired, the backing plate, the finish layer 9 and the frame 10 may be rectangular in shape without departing from the invention.

The frame 10 is preferably a metal frame, although it may be made of some suitable plastic. Said frame 10 is made with the body portion 11, which is herein illustrated as being inclined to provide a frame with a bevel face, and with a supporting flange 12 extending inwardly from the outer edge of the body 11, said supporting flange 12 furnishing an annular seat against which the peripheral portion of the finish layer 9 and backing plate 5 may rest. At the inner side of the frame 11 it is provided with a short inwardly directed flange 13 which surrounds an opening of a size to permit the finish layer 9 and backing

plate 5 to be placed in the frame. This layer and plate are removably held in the frame by means of a split spring locking ring 15 which can be sprung into place between the retaining lip or flange 13 and the corner of the backing plate 5, as best seen in Fig. 2.

The finish layer 9 will be formed with an opening or openings which register with the opening or openings 6 through the backing plate and such finish layer will also be formed with openings 16 registering with the screw-receiving openings 7, so that the attaching screws 8 may be inserted into place through the finish layer 9, as shown in Fig. 2.

Inasmuch as the continued operation of the switch lever 3 is likely to soil the surface of the finish layer 9 immediately surrounding said switch lever, I propose to cover the finish layer 9 with a protective sheet 17 of transparent material. This protective sheet may be glass, or may be Cellophane or Pliofilm, or any other suitable transparent material which can be readily washed.

I will preferably provide a suitable lining 18 for the hole or holes 6 through the backing plate, finish layer, and protective sheet. This lining may be made of any thin metal which can be readily bent, and it is formed with a body portion that extends through the opening 6, with the flange portion 21 which surrounds the opening 6 on the outer face of the switch plate and provides a finish to said opening, and with locking portions 19 that are bent outwardly against the inside face of the backing plate 5, thereby to lock the lining member in position.

I will also preferably provide suitable washers 20 or their equivalent beneath the heads of the screws 8 thereby to add to the finished appearance of the wall plate.

In preparing a wall plate embodying my invention for use in a room which is wallpapered, a piece of wallpaper will be selected and used as the finish layer 9, the portion of the wallpaper to be thus used being so selected and so positioned on the backing plate 5 that when the wall plate is attached to the wall, the pattern on the finish layer 9 will match exactly the pattern of the wallpaper immediately surrounding the switch plate. Thus when the switch plate is attached to the wall, the pattern of the wallpaper will be unbroken except for the frame 10. This frame is relatively narrow and does not appreciably mar the finished appearance of the room.

In Fig. 1, the inclined lines on the wallpaper are illustrative of the pattern thereof, and it will be noticed that the inclined lines on the finish layer 9 match exactly those on the wallpaper surrounding the wall plate.

If the wall is a painted wall, then a finish ply or layer of sheet metal or wood or any other material may be used which has a painted surface matching exactly the painted surface of the room.

Where the wall is a painted wall, it will be possible to omit a special separate layer 9 for the finish layer and to paint the exterior surface of the backing plate 5 so as to match the painted surface of the wall. In such case, the coating of paint on the backing plate 5 provides the finish layer which covers the outer face of the backing plate. In either event, it is preferable to use the protective sheet 17 so as to keep the finish layer from being soiled by repeated operation of the switch.

Instead of using a finish layer which matches the finish of the wall, it is possible with my invention to employ a finish layer which has some picture or design which is appropriate to the use to which the room is being put. For instance, if the room in which my improved switch plate is being used is a child's room or a play room, and the walls are painted walls, it would be possible to employ for the finish ply 9 a sheet having thereon some Mother Goose picture or some other picture which is appropriate to a child's room and which would present an appeal to the child. Since the finish ply 9 is separate from the backing plate 5, the finish layers or plies are interchangeable so that whenever a room is redecorated, and the finish is changed, it will be possible to exchange the finish layer formerly used in the room for another finish layer which matches the new finish which is applied to the wall during the redecorating operation.

Since the backing plate and the finish layer, as well as the protective sheet, are separable from the frame 10, said frame, backing plate, split ring 15, protective sheet 17 and attaching screws 8 may be delivered to the party installing the switch plate on any job, and he will then use for the finished layer 9 a sheet which matches the section of the room. If the room is one having a wallpaper finish, then the party installing the switch plate will cut out from the roll of wallpaper a section 9 of a size to fit within the frame and having thereon a portion of the pattern which exactly matches the portion of the wallpaper pattern surrounding the switch plate. This finish layer is then assembled with the backing plate and protective layer in the frame 10 and the split ring 15 is placed in position, thus providing a switch plate unit which is ready to be attached to the switch box and which has a face that matches exactly the wallpaper of the room.

If the room has a painted wall, then the party installing the switch plate will secure a thin ply of suitable material which is painted the proper color and will assemble this in the frame 10 with the other parts of the switch plate unit, thereby providing a distinctive switch plate unit which matches the wall finish.

My invention makes it possible to have switch plates of individual distinctive design for each room of the building, and yet all the elements of the switch plate except the finish layer are standard for all switch plates, the finish layer being the only interchangeable element.

I claim:

1. A switch plate comprising a backing plate having an aperture for the switch-operating lever and other apertures for the attaching screws, an interchangeable finish layer separate from the backing plate and covering the front face thereof, a frame encircling the backing plate and finish layer and in which they are removably retained, said frame having an inwardly extending retaining lip at its back side, and a split spring ring situated between said lip and the peripheral edge of the backing plate for removably retaining the latter and the finish layer in position in the frame.

2. A switch plate comprising a backing plate, an interchangeable finish layer separable from the backing plate and covering the front face thereof, a frame encircling the assembled backing plate and finish layer and having a side wall which inclines outwardly from the front of the frame to the back thereof and also having a supporting flange extending inwardly radially from

the front edge of the side wall and providing an annular seat against which the peripheral portion of the finish layer and the backing plate may rest and further having a retaining lip extending inwardly radially from the back edge of the side wall, which retaining lip encircles an opening of a size to permit the backing plate and finish layer to be passed therethrough, and a split spring ring confined between said retaining lip and the rear peripheral corner of the backing

5 plate and serving to retain the latter and the finish layer in place, said finish layer being removable from the frame and interchangeable with other finish layers, whereby a finish layer may be employed which matches or harmonizes with the wall finish on the portion of the wall immediately surrounding the switch plate when the latter is installed.

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