

Multiple Gang Wall Outlet

Background of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to wall outlets of the type fitted to walls or to wall boxes in wall cavities behind plaster board for example, and to which electrical socket plates are mounted. The invention more particularly, although not exclusively, relates to a multiple plate
10 outlet.

Various plastics and metallic wall boxes are known in the art. These are designed to fit behind plasterboard or be cement rendered into a brick wall for example.

15 Electrical wiring enters the wall box from the side or behind and is connected to electrical socket plates which are generally screw-fixed to the wall box from the front. Where a pair of electrical outlets is desired these might be incorporated into a single standard sized socket
20 plate. Where three or more power outlets are required, a large external socket plate can be screw-fixed upon a standard-sized wall box, but such a large socket plate protrudes significantly from the wall.

25 Modern computer systems and home entertainment systems for example exploit in-wall cabling and socket plates of various types are known. For example, RCA video and

audio sockets, antenna outlet PAL and F-connector sockets, speaker banana plugs, and the like have been incorporated onto standard-sized socket plates which can be affixed to standard sized wall boxes. Some standard
5 sized socket plates have multiple sockets of various types. For example stereo RCA, video RCA and speaker banana sockets can be incorporated into a single plate. Some plates accept snap-in socket modules (having one type of socket thereon). Either way, these are limited
10 in number and configuration by the size of the standard socket plates.

A problem occurs where many outlets - especially outlets of various types - are required, as multiple wall boxes
15 must be installed and this can result in an unsightly multitude of side-by-side wall plates. The installation of multiple wall boxes is labour-intensive and costly.

Object of the Invention

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It is an object of the present invention to overcome or substantially ameliorate at least one of the above disadvantages and/or more generally to provide an improved multi-socket outlet of tidy appearance.

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Disclosure of the Invention

There is disclosed herein a combination comprising:

- 5 a wall box;
- an array of socket plates affixed to the wall box;
- and
- a plurality of fascia strips each connecting one
socket plate of the array to an adjacent socket plate.

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Preferably, the combination further comprises a plurality
of fascia plates fitted over each socket plate and each
comprising an aperture through which sockets of the
respective socket plates are presented.

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Preferably, each socket plate is rectangular and comprises
a recess at each corner and wherein each fascia strip
includes a pair of lugs, wherein one lug of the pair is
received by a recess of one socket plate and the other lug
20 of the pair is received by a recess of an adjacent socket
plate.

Preferably, each fascia strip comprises two pairs of lugs
- one pair at each end.

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Preferably, each socket plate is of standard form factor.

Preferably, the fascia plates have a smooth surface and the fascia strips have a smooth surface substantially contiguous with the smooth surfaces of the socket plates.

5 Brief Description of the Drawings

A preferred form of the present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to Fig. 1 which is a schematic parts-exploded perspective illustration of
10 a wall box and an array of socket plates, fascia plates and fascia strips.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

15 In the accompanying drawing there is depicted schematically a wall box 10 which would typically be formed as a plastics moulding. The wall box includes an array of bays 17 separated by partitions 16, each having a cable aperture 18 therethrough. The wall box 10 could
20 be cement rendered into a brick or concrete wall or alternatively fixed behind the plasterboard of a stud wall or partition.

Each bay 17 is of a shape, size and configuration known
25 of standard single wall plate wall boxes so that socket plates of standard form factor can be fitted. An array of such socket plates 15 is depicted in the figure.

These are rectangular in shape and include a recess 20 at each corner. The recess would ordinarily accept a screw to secure the socket plate to a wall box. Indeed the recesses 20 can still serve that purpose in the present invention but also serve a secondary purpose to be described.

Each socket plate 15 receives a fascia plate 11 which covers the unsightly apertures 20. Each fascia plate includes an aperture 12 through which the sockets of each socket plate are presented.

A plurality of fascia strips 14 is also provided. These fit in between the socket plates and present a cosmetic strip of neat appearance in between the adjacent fascia plates 11. Each fascia strip includes two pairs of lugs 19. These fit into the corresponding recesses 20 at the corners of each socket plate to attach the fascia strips prior to installation of the fascia plates 11. The leading edge of each partition 16 would typically be made flush with the front face of the wall box so as to seal the back periphery of the each socket plate and/or provide a firm backing for each fascia strip 14.

The depicted combination of features might simply be exploited for presenting a multitude of power outlets in a linear array. As an alternative, socket plates 15

having different types of sockets can be provided. For example, the first plate might include power outlet sockets and the second plate might include audiovisual sockets as described earlier.

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The end faces 21 of the wall box can be contoured as depicted or otherwise formed to enable end-to-end abutment of adjacent wall boxes in such manner as to prevent vertical misalignment between adjacent boxes.

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It should be appreciated that modifications and alterations obvious to those skilled in the art are not to be considered as beyond the scope of the present invention. For example, rather than simply providing a linear array of side-by-side socket plates, a two-dimensional array or "stack" of socket plates might be accommodated in a single wall box having rows and columns of individual bays. Furthermore, the partitions 16 could be omitted.

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CLAIMS:

1. A combination comprising:
 - a wall box;
 - 5 an array of socket plates affixed to the wall box;
 - and
 - a plurality of fascia strips each connecting one socket plate of the array to an adjacent socket plate.
- 10 2. The combination of Claim 1, further comprising a plurality of fascia plates fitted over each socket plate and each comprising an aperture through which sockets of the respective socket plates are presented.
- 15 3. The combination of Claim 1, wherein each socket plate is rectangular and comprises a recess at each corner and wherein each fascia strip includes a pair of lugs, wherein one lug of the pair is received by a recess of one socket plate and the other lug of the pair is received by a
20 recess of an adjacent socket plate.
4. The combination of Claim 3, wherein each fascia strip comprises two pairs of lugs - one pair at each end.
- 25 5. The combination of Claim 3, wherein each socket plate is of standard form factor.

6. The combination of Claim 2, wherein the facia plates
have a smooth surface and the facia strips have a smooth
surface substantially contiguous with the smooth surfaces
5 of the socket plates.