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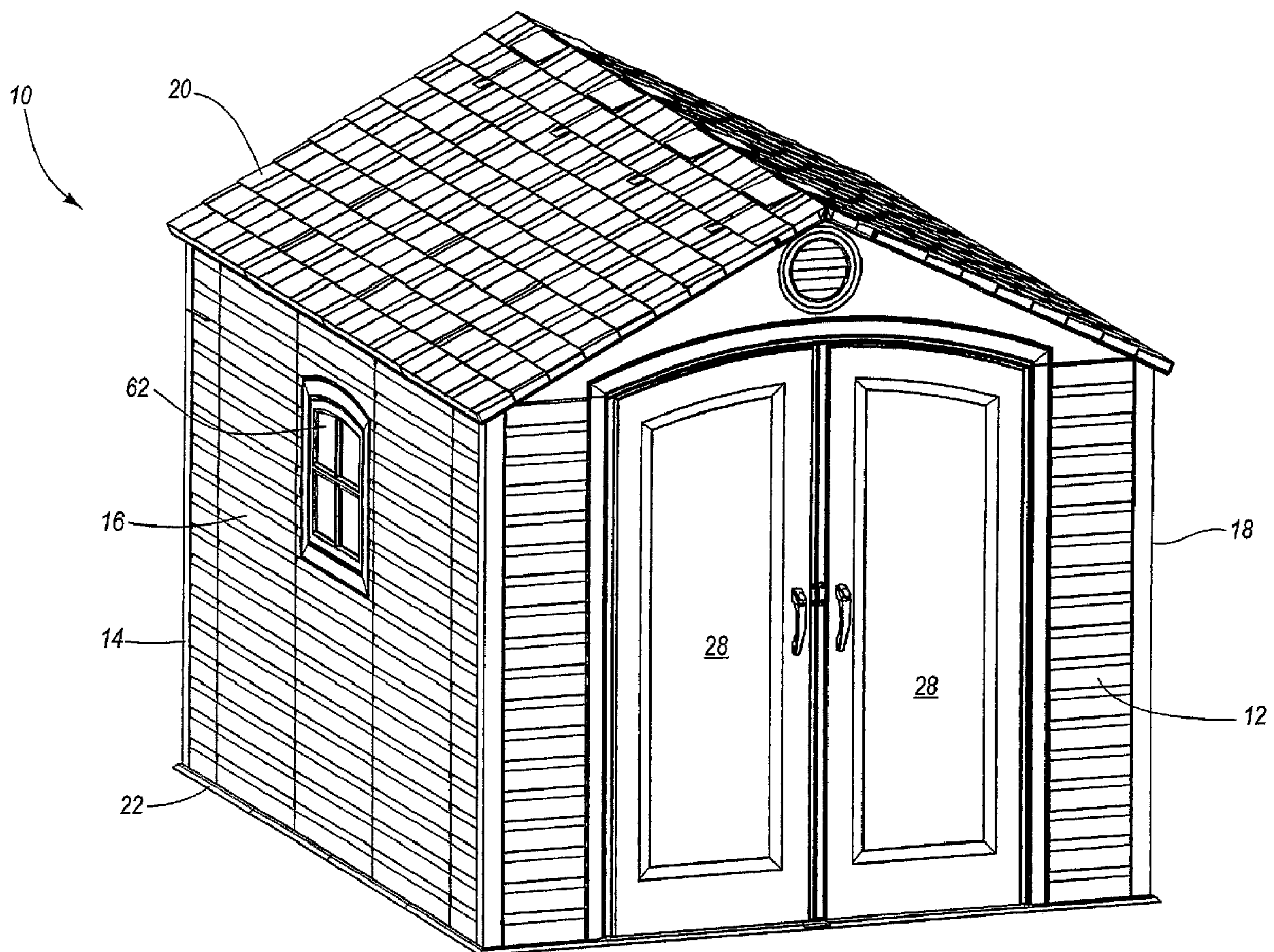
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(54) Title: PACKAGING SYSTEM FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A modular enclosure may include a number of interlocking components, such as panels, that may be interconnected to form sidewalk, roof and/or floor. In particular, the modular enclosure may consist of a shed and the shed may be packaged within a

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container. For example, the shed may constructed from a number of outer wall panels and corner panels. The corner panels preferably include a living hinge that allows the corner panel to be moved between a generally planar position and an angled position. Advantageously, the wall panels and the corner panels may be capable of being stacked within the container to facilitate packaging of the shed when the corner panels are in the generally planar position.

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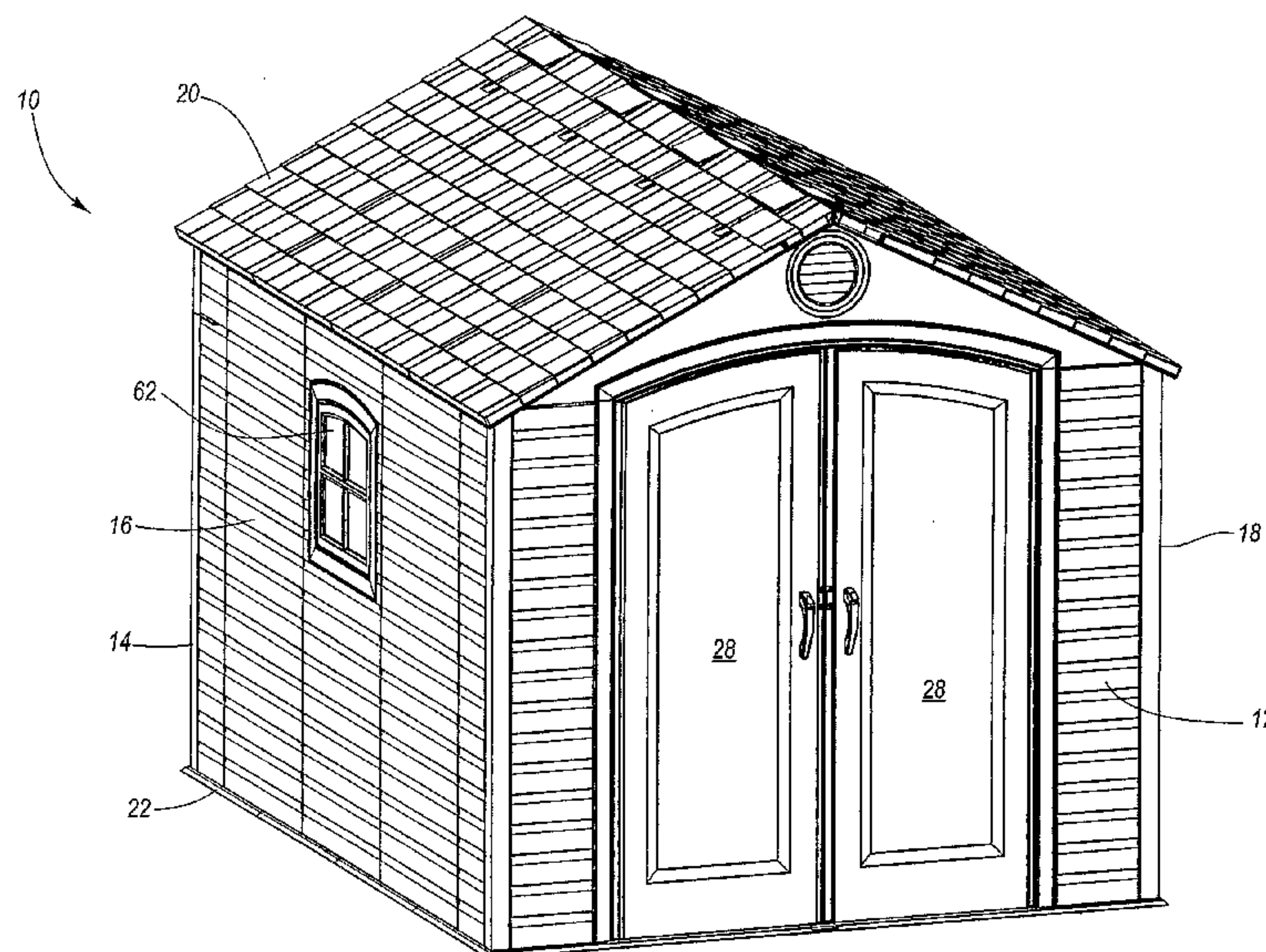
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(54) Title: PACKAGING SYSTEM FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE



(57) Abstract: A modular enclosure may include a number of interlocking components, such as panels, that may be interconnected to form sidewalk, roof and/or floor. In particular, the modular enclosure may consist of a shed and the shed may be packaged within a container. For example, the shed may be constructed from a number of outer wall panels and corner panels. The corner panels preferably include a living hinge that allows the corner panel to be moved between a generally planar position and an angled position. Advantageously, the wall panels and the corner panels may be capable of being stacked within the container to facilitate packaging of the shed when the corner panels are in the generally planar position.

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PACKAGING SYSTEM FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[002] The invention generally relates to enclosures and, in particular, to modular enclosures.

Description of Related Art

[003] Many types of enclosures are used for storing various items such as tools, machines, lawn care equipment, recreational equipment, athletic equipment, supplies and the like. Conventional storage enclosures often include walls, a door, a floor and a roof. The walls, door, floor and roof of typical storage enclosures often include one or more parts that are interconnected. The walls, door, floor and roof may then be attached to form the enclosure.

[004] A well known type of storage enclosure is a shed. Conventional sheds are typically relatively small structures that may be either freestanding or attached to another structure, and sheds are often used for storage and/or shelter. Disadvantageously, conventional sheds often require a substantial amount of time, labor, skill and effort to build and construct. Conventional sheds may include one or more windows or vents to allow light and air to enter the shed. The windows and vents of many conventional sheds, however, often require a number of interconnected components and are difficult to manufacture and install. Additionally, many conventional sheds are difficult to repair, modify, change or rearrange because the sheds may be difficult or impossible to disassemble or dismantle. Accordingly, it is often impractical or unfeasible to move or reconfigure many conventional sheds.

[005] Conventional sheds are often constructed from wood. Wooden sheds, however, are relatively heavy and require a large amount of time to construct and assemble. In particular, wooden sheds are frequently constructed from a large number of support beams, trusses, sidewalls and roof panels that are connected by a large number of screws or bolts. These numerous parts typically increase the costs of the shed and require a large amount of time and effort to construct the shed. In addition, wooden sheds typically deteriorate over time and often require continual maintenance. For example, conventional wooden sheds may be damaged by rotting or otherwise deteriorating when exposed to the elements. In addition, the wood may warp or decay over time. In order to help protect the wood from being damaged, conventional sheds must be periodically painted, stained or otherwise finished. Undesirably, this may result in significant maintenance costs.

[006] Known sheds may also be constructed from metal. For example, the roof and walls of conventional metal sheds may be constructed from sheet metal. Disadvantageously, the sheet metal is often flexible and easily damaged. In particular, the sheet metal walls may be damaged by forces being applied to either the inner or outer walls of the shed. In particular, this may cause the walls to undesirably bow inwardly or outwardly and, in some circumstances, may create an opening in the wall. Significantly, the damaged sheet metal may be more susceptible to rust or corrosion and the damaged sheet metal may be very difficult to repair or replace. In addition, conventional metal sheds often require a plurality of screws or bolts to assemble the shed, which may increase manufacturing costs and the time required to assemble the shed. Moreover, metal sheds often have a tendency to rust and deteriorate over time, especially when exposed to the elements. Thus, metal sheds may have to be painted or otherwise protected from rusting or oxidation.

[007] The materials used to construct conventional sheds are often heavy and bulky. For example, many conventional sheds have a length of 8 to 12 feet (2.4 to 3.7 meters), and a width of 8 to 12 feet (2.4 to 3.7 meters). In particular, known sheds are often 8 feet by 8 feet (2.4 by 2.4 meters), 8 feet by 10 feet (2.4 by 3 meters), 8 feet by 12 feet (2.4 by 3.7 meters), 10 feet by 12 feet (3 by 3.7 meters) or 12 feet by 12 feet (3.7 by 3.7 meters). Thus, the components used to constructed these sheds are often elongated and may have a length of 6 feet (1.8 meters) or more and a width of 2 feet (0.6 meters) or greater. Accordingly, many of the components are large and bulky. In addition, if these components are constructed from wood or metal, then the components may be very heavy. Thus, the components of conventional sheds may be large, awkward, heavy and generally unwieldy.

[008] Many conventional sheds are shipped in an unassembled configuration because of their large size in the assembled configuration. The weight of the components, however, may result in significant shipping expenses and those expenses may be compounded every time the shed is transported or shipped. For example, there may be significant costs when the manufacturer ships the shed to the retailer, which the consumer may ultimately have to pay. Many consumers may have to pay more to have the shed delivered from the retailer because of the weight of the packaging. In addition, many consumers may be unwilling or unable to purchase these conventional sheds because they have no practical way of taking the shed home. Specifically, many consumers are unable to lift or move the packaging of many conventional sheds. In particular, the consumer may also have to rent or borrow a forklift to load and unload the shed from the vehicle. Accordingly, these large costs and difficulties in transportation may discourage many potential consumers from purchasing conventional sheds.

[009] In addition to conventional sheds being constructed from heavy and bulky materials and components, conventional sheds are often shipped in very large and heavy boxes. These gigantic shipping boxes often will not fit in a typical retail consumer's vehicle. Accordingly, the consumer may have to rent or borrow a vehicle, such as a truck, to take the shed home.

[010] In greater detail, a conventional shed having a width of 10 feet (3 meters), a length of 8 feet (2.4 meters) and a height of 7 feet (2.1 meters) that is constructed from polyvinylchloride (PVC) plastic is shipped in a box having a length of 96 inches (2.4 meters), a width of 48 inches (1.2 meters) and a height of 36 inches (0.9 meters). Thus, the packaging has a volume of 96 cubic feet (2.7 cubic meters). Another known shed, which is constructed from blow-molded and injection-molded plastic, has a width of 7 feet (2.1 meters), a length of 7 feet (2.1 meters) and a height of 8 feet (2.4 meters) is shipped in a box that has a length of 78 inches (2 meters), a width of 48 inches (1.2 meters) and a height of 32 inches (0.8 meters). This packaging has a volume of 69.3 cubic feet (2 cubic meters). Still another known shed, which is constructed from roto-molded plastic and plastic coated aluminum, has a width of 7 feet (2.1 meters), a length of 7 feet (2.1 meters) and a height of 8 feet, 8 inches (2.6 meters) is shipped in a box that has a length of 100 inches (2.5 meters), a width of 55 inches (1.4 meters) and a height of 50 inches (1.27 meters), and this packaging has a volume of 159.1 cubic feet (4.5 cubic meters) and a weight of 540 pounds (245 kilograms) including the packaging. Still yet another known shed, which is constructed from injection-molded plastic, has a width of 7 feet (2.1 meters), a length of 7 feet (2.1 meters) and a height of 7.5 feet (2.3 meters) is shipped in a box that has a length of 96 inches (2.4 meters), a width of 48 inches (1.2 meters) and a height of 46 inches (1.17 meters). This packaging has a volume of about 69.3 cubic feet (1.9 cubic

meters) and a weight of 350 pounds (159 kilograms) including the packaging. A further known shed that is constructed from blow-molded plastic has a width of 7 feet (2.1 meters), a length of 15.5 feet (4.7 meters) and a height of 6.5 feet (2 meters) is shipped in a box that has a length of 96 inches (2.4 meters), a width of 48 inches (1.2 meters) and a height of 48 inches (1.2 meters), and this packaging has a volume of 128 cubic feet (3.6 cubic meters) and a weight of 548 pounds (249 kilograms) including the packaging. Another conventional shed is constructed from roto-molded plastic and it has a width of 5.5 feet (1.7 meters), a length of 6 feet (1.8 meters) and a height of 6.5 feet (2 meters). This known shed is shipped in packaging having a length of 77 inches (1.96 meters), a width of 38 inches (0.96 meters), a height of 12 inches (0.3 meters) and a weight of 248 pounds (112 kilograms). Still another conventional shed is constructed from extruded polypropylene and it has a width of 8 feet (2.4 meters), a length of 6 feet (1.8 meters) and a height of 7 feet (2.1 meters). This shed is shipped in packaging having a length of 78 inches (2 meters), a width of 30 inches (0.76 meters), a height of 33 inches (0.84 meters) and a weight of 318 pounds (144 kilograms). Yet another conventional shed is constructed from thermo-formed ABS plastic and it has a width of 8 feet (2.4 meters), a length of 8 feet (2.4 meters) and a height of 6 feet (1.8 meters). This shed is shipped in packaging having a length of 66 inches (1.68 meters), a width of 39.5 inches (1 meter), a height of 15 inches (0.38 meters) and a weight of 325 pounds (147 kilograms). Accordingly, the size and weight of many known sheds is substantial, which may greatly complicate and increase the costs of shipping.

[011] Because conventional sheds are shipped in boxes that have such a large size and volume, fewer sheds may be shipped in standard shipping containers or in commercial trailers. Accordingly, the shipping costs per shed (such as, from a

supplier to a retailer) can be significantly increased. Also, because these packaged sheds are so large and heavy, many shippers may find it difficult to efficiently deliver the sheds and may refuse to ship the sheds. In addition, because many conventional packaged sheds are so large and heavy, they typically must be shipped to consumers using freight shippers, which may charge even more for these heavy, large and awkward boxes. In some instances, this cost may be simply too large for a customer to justify the purchase.

[012] Known storage sheds are also typically constructed of a variety of awkwardly shaped components, which can be difficult to ship and can be susceptible to damage if shipped. In order to ship and protect these awkwardly shaped components, large amounts of packaging materials may be required. The packing material, however, takes additional space in the packaging and the packing material increases the shipping costs. In addition, because the components may be awkwardly shaped, custom packing materials may be required and the packing material may be irreparably damaged during shipping. Thus, the packing material may not be reusable and may create a significant amount of waste. Further, it may require a significant amount of time to prepare these awkward components for shipping, and this may increase labor costs and decrease manufacturing efficiency. Finally, the awkwardly shaped components often consume a large amount of area, which may increase the overall volume required to ship the shed and that may correspondingly increasing shipping costs.

[013] Conventional sheds are also often constructed from a variety of interconnected components that form a number of joints or seams. Disadvantageously, these seams or joints are often susceptible to leaks. For example,

the seams or joints may allow water to enter the shed and the water can damage whatever is stored within the shed.

[014] In addition, many sheds are subjected to a variety of adverse weather conditions and some conventional sheds may be damaged if they are constructed from weak materials or poorly assembled. For example, conventional sheds may be damaged by heavy winds. Known sheds may also have a flat or slightly sloped roof, which may allow snow to collect on the roof. Undesirably, the snow may damage the roof and, in extreme circumstances, may cause the roof to collapse. The flat roofs may also allow water and other objects to collect on the roof, which may damage the roof and/or leak through the roof and into the shed.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[015] A need therefore exists for an enclosure that eliminates the above-described disadvantages and problems.

[016] One aspect is an enclosure that may be constructed from a number of components. At least some of the components may be interchangeable and the enclosure may be a modular enclosure.

[017] Another aspect is an enclosure that may be part of a kit. The kit, for example, may include a number of components that may be interchangeable and/or interconnected. The components may also be part of a group and/or be available individually or separately.

[018] Still another aspect is an enclosure that may include one or more components that may be interconnected to form a structure. The structure may include walls, roof, floor, etc. and these components can be connected. Preferably, the components can be relatively quickly and easily connected and disconnected. Advantageously, this may allow the components to be easily reconfigured, repaired and/or replaced. In addition, this may allow the structure to be easily moved, reused and the like.

[019] Yet another aspect is an enclosure that may be used in a variety of different situations and environments. For instance, the enclosure may be used for storage and/or to protect items from the elements. In particular, the enclosure may be a shed, but it will be appreciated that the enclosure may have a much wider applicability and may be used for a number of different purposes. Thus, while the enclosure may be illustrated and described in connection with a shed, the enclosure could have other suitable arrangements, configurations, designs, purposes and the like.

[020] A further aspect is an enclosure, such as a shed, that may be at least partially constructed from relatively lightweight materials such as blow-molded plastic. The blow-molded plastic components may be constructed from polyethylene with ultraviolet (UV) additives or inhibitors, if desired, but other suitable plastics and materials may be used to construct the shed. Advantageously, the blow-molded plastic components may provide superior weathering and durability because, for example, the blow-molded plastic may be able to withstand the elements and it is generally impact resistant. In addition, the blow-molded plastic components may be easy to clean and virtually maintenance free. For example, painting and finishing of the blow-molded plastic is not required. Further, the blow-molded plastic may include two walls that are separated by a distance. The double walls may create air pockets that help insulate the shed. Further, blow-molded plastic generally does not rust or otherwise deteriorate over time, and the blow-molded plastic is rodent and insect resistant. Thus, constructing at least a portion of the shed from blow-molded plastic may allow the shed to be used in a wide variety of situations and environments.

[021] A still further aspect is a shed that is at least substantially constructed from blow-molded plastic. Advantageously, at least a portion of the walls, roof, floor and/or doors may be constructed from blow-molded plastic. The gables, corners and other portions of the shed may also be constructed from blow-molded plastic. Significantly, the blow-molded plastic components may include finished interior and exterior surfaces. For example, the exterior surface could include one design or pattern and the interior surface could include another design or pattern. Advantageously, the patterns on the opposing surfaces may include discrete points of intersection and depressions, which may be sized and configured to increase the

strength and/or rigidity of the components, may be located at those points. In particular, because the patterns may extend inwardly, that may decrease the size and/or height of the depressions located at the points of intersection.

[022] Another aspect is a shed that may be constructed from lightweight materials so that the shed can be easily transported and shipped. In addition, the shed is preferably constructed from lightweight materials so that a consumer can transport the shed and more easily assembly the shed.

[023] Yet another aspect is a shed that may be sized and configured to be shipped and transported in relatively small sized packaging. Desirably, the components of the shed are sized and configured to fit within a limited area so that the size of the packaging is decreased or minimized. For example, a shed with a length of about 10 feet (3 meters), a width of about 8 feet (2.4 meters) and a height of about 8 feet (2.4 meters) is preferably sized and configured to fit within one package that is about 94 inches (2.38 meters) in length by about 31 inches (0.8 meters) in width by about 12 inches (0.3 meters) in height and a second package that is about 72 inches (1.8 meters) in length by about 31 inches (0.8 meters) in width by about 12 inches (0.3 meters) in height. This significantly decreases the size of the packaging in comparison to the packaging of conventional sheds.

[024] Still another aspect is a shed that may include components constructed from plastic, such as high density polyethylene, and the plastic components may provide sufficient strength and rigidity to allow a strong and sturdy structure to be created. As discussed above, various components of the shed may be constructed from blow-molded plastic, but other processes such as injection molding, rotary molding, compression molding and the like may also be used to construct the various components of the shed. Advantageously, the blow-molded plastic components are

desirably designed to create rigid, high-strength structures that are capable of withstanding repeated use and wear. Significantly, the blow-molded plastic components may be easily manufactured and formed into the desired size and shape. In addition, the blow-molded plastic components can form structural elements of the shed to minimize the number of parts required to construct the shed. Further, the blow-molded plastic components may be easily interconnected and disconnected, and the blow-molded plastic components may be simply and easily assembled and/or disassembled with minimum effort and tools. It will be appreciated that frames, braces, other support members, fasteners and the like may also be used to support and construct the shed, if desired.

[025] Advantageously, the shed may be relatively simple to manufacture because one or more of the components constructed from blow-molded plastic. In addition, one or more features may be integrally formed in the blow-molded plastic components, such as a window or window frame. The blow-molded plastic components may be strong and lightweight because the components may include two opposing walls that are spaced apart by a relatively small distance. In addition, the blow-molded plastic components may include one or more depressions, connections or tack-offs that may interconnect the opposing surfaces and these depressions may further increase the strength of the components. Further, the blow-molded plastic components can desirably be formed in various shapes, sizes, configurations and designs, which may allow an attractive and functional shed that is available in a variety of configurations and sizes to be constructed.

[026] Another aspect is a shed that may be quickly and easily assembled, which may reduce manufacturing and labor costs. For example, this may allow the manufacturer to quickly and easily assemble the shed. In addition, this may allow the

manufacturer to ship the shed in an unassembled configuration and the consumer may quickly and easily assembly the shed. Advantageously, shipping the shed in the unassembled configuration may reduce manufacturing and shipping costs.

[027] Yet another aspect is a shed that may contain one or more different types of connections between various components. For example, one or more of the walls may include a living hinge and that may allow the corners of the shed to be formed. In addition, the roof top or cap, skylights, door, gables and/or shelves may also include one or more living hinges. Advantageously, the living hinges may allow the shed to be quickly and easily assembled. In addition, the living hinges allow these components to be moved between a generally flat or planar position and a folded or angled position. Significantly, these components may be efficiently packed and shipped in the generally planar configuration, which may significantly decrease the size of the packaging. The living hinges are also generally impervious to the elements, such as wind or rain, which may increase the potential uses of the shed. Further, the living hinges may increase the strength and/or rigidity of the structure and/or the connection of the various components.

[028] Still another aspect is a shed that may include one or more skylights. The skylights are preferably located in the roof of the shed and, in particular, in the roof cap. The skylights are preferably constructed from injection molded plastic and, as discussed above, the skylights may include a living hinge. The skylights may be permanently fastened to the shed or at least a portion of the skylights may be selectively attached to the shed to form a vent or opening.

[029] A further aspect is a shed that may include one or more doors that are preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic. The doors may include a rod or tube that preferably extends that entire length of the door to provide an upper and

lower pivot point. Advantageously, the rod or tube may also increase the strength and/or rigidity of the door. The door may also include an outwardly extending flange or projection, which may be positioned proximate the rod or tube, that may help create a seal for the door.

[030] A still further aspect is a shed that may include a door handle that allows the door to be more easily opened and closed. The handle may also allow the door to be locked, if desired. The handle may be connected to a metal strip or member that is located proximate the outer edge of the door. The metal strip may extend the length of the door and it may reinforce and/or stiffen the door. In addition, the metal strip may increase the mass or weight of the door, which may allow the door to be more easily opened and closed. The increased mass or weight may also improve the feel of the door when it is being opened or closed. The door may also include an end piece and the metal strip may be disposed between the end piece and the door.

[031] Another aspect is a shed that may include a plurality of panels that are interconnected. For example, the shed may include one or more floor panels, wall panels and/or roof panels that are interconnected. Preferably, the floor panels, wall panels and/or roof panels are connected to adjacent floor panels, sidewalls and/or roof panels, respectively, with one or more overlapping portions to help securely connect the panels or walls. In particular, the panels may include one or more extensions, flanges, projections, protrusions, etc., that extend outwardly from one panel and overlap with one or more receiving portions, notches, grooves, openings, etc. in the adjacent panel. Advantageously, this may allow the panels to be interconnected. The overlapping portions may be connected by fasteners, such as screws or bolts, or adhesives to help secure the panels together. Significantly, the overlapping portions

may help prevent rain, snow, sunlight, foreign objects and the like from undesirably entering the shed.

[032] Yet another aspect is a shed that may include interconnected floor panels, interconnected wall panels and interconnected roof panels. Desirably, the connections between adjoining floor panels are not aligned with the connections of adjoining wall panels. In addition, the connections of the adjoining wall panels are not aligned with the connections of the adjoining roof panels. Thus, the connections of the floor panels are preferably offset from the connections of the wall panels, and the connections of the wall panels are preferably offset from the connections of the roof panels. The floor panel connections are preferably offset from the wall panel connection by a distance, and the wall panel connections are preferably offset from the roof panel connection by a distance, but it will be appreciated that these connections may also be aligned at different angles or otherwise offset. Advantageously, the offset connections may allow a strong and sturdy shed to be constructed. Additionally, the connections of the floor panels may be generally vertically aligned with the connections of the roof panels, but these connections may also be offset. Further, the offset connections may allow the size of the shed to be changed while still allowing a strong and rigid shed to be constructed.

[033] Still another aspect is a shed that may include one or more floor panels, wall panels and/or roof panels, and one or more of these panels may be reinforced. For example, the floor, wall or roof panels may be constructed from blow-molded plastic and one or more reinforcing members may be disposed within the panels. Advantageously, the reinforcing members may increase the strength and/or rigidity of the panels. In addition, the reinforcing members may be encapsulated within the panels, which may protect the reinforcing members from the elements.

[034] A further aspect is a shed that may include sidewalls that are directly connected to the floor. For example, the sidewalls may contain one or more protrusions or projections and the floor may include one or more openings or receiving portions. The projections may be inserted into the receiving portions to securely connect the sidewalls to the floor. Advantageously, this may allow the sidewalls to be connected to the floor by a friction, interference and/or snap fit connection, if desired. The sidewalls and floor may also be connected by one or more fasteners, such as screws or bolts, if desired.

[035] A still further aspect is a shed that may include a roof that is directly connected to the sidewalls. Preferably the roof is connected to the sidewalls so that there is an overhang of the roof to the sidewalls. Advantageously, this may allow water to run off the roof to the ground without contacting the sidewalls, which may help prevent water leaks and the water from marring or damaging the sidewalls. The roof and sidewalls may be connected, for example, by one or more interlocking pieces such as a tongue and groove arrangement. The roof and sidewalls may also be connected by one or more fasteners, such as screws or bolts, if desired.

[036] Yet another aspect is a shed that may include a gable and the gable may be connected to the sidewalls and the roof. In particular, the gable may be connected to the sidewalls and/or roof by one or more interlocking pieces such as a tongue and groove arrangement. The gable may also be connected to the sidewalls and/or roof by one or more fasteners, such as screws or bolts, if desired. The gable may also be connected to the sidewalls and/or roof by one or more tabs. The tabs, for example, may be formed as part of the gable and may be pivotally attached to the gable by a living hinge. The tabs could be connected to the sidewalls or roof by a fastener such as a screw or bolt.

[037] A further aspect is a shed that may include roof trusses constructed from metal. In particular, the shed may include trusses that are constructed from metal and have a generally A-frame type configuration. Advantageously, the metal roof truss may be used in connection with panels constructed from blow-molded plastic to create a strong and durable roof. The roof truss may assist in connecting the roof panels to the shed and the truss may be sized and configured to allow any water or moisture that passes between the roof panels to be drained from the shed.

[038] A still further aspect is a shed that may include a roof cap that is disposed at the top of the roof. The roof cap is preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic and it may include a living hinge that allows a portion of the roof cap to be disposed on each side of the roof. Advantageously, the roof cap may help prevent water or moisture from entering the shed. The roof cap may also include one or more openings that are sized and configured to allow skylights to be attached to the shed.

[039] Yet another aspect is a shed that may include one or more windows. The windows, for example, may be for aesthetic reasons and/or to allow light to enter the shed. The windows may include a frame that is integrally formed in a sidewall of the shed and the frame may include opposing grooves or slots into which a polycarbonate or acrylic sheet may be disposed. Preferably, the polycarbonate or acrylic sheet is slidably disposed within the grooves or slots to allow the window to be opened and closed. The window may also include a locking mechanism to lock the window and the window may be sized and configured to allow it to be partially opened, if desired.

[040] Still another aspect is a shed that may allow pegboard, tool holders and the like to be attached. For example, the shed may include one or more receiving portions that are sized and configured to allow attachment members to be attached. The attachment members may be constructed from plastic, such as injection molded

plastic, and attachment members may include a base that is sized and configured to be attached to the receiving portions. If desired, the attachment members may be attached to the receiving portions by a friction, interference or snap fit.

[041] Another aspect is a shed that may include one or more shelves. For example, a shelf may be attached to the rear wall of the shed and the shelf may extend from one sidewall to the opposing sidewall. Advantageously, if the shelf extends from one sidewall to the opposing sidewall, then the shelf may be connected to the sidewalls and/or the rear wall, which may increase the strength and/or rigidity of the shed. A shelf may also be connected to a corner, and that may further increase the strength and/or rigidity of the shed. The shelves, however, could be attached to any desired portion of the shed. In addition, the shelves may include living hinges that allow the shelves to be securely attached to the shed.

[042] Yet another aspect is a shed that may include one or more vents. The vents preferably allow air to circulate within the shed and the vents may be constructed from injection molded plastic. The vents may be connected to any suitable portions of the shed, such as the gables, and the vents may be quickly and easily connected to an opening that is integrally formed in the gable. Advantageously, the vents may be connected to the gables by a friction, snap or interference fit, and/or the vents may be connected to the shed by fasteners or adhesives, if desired. The vent may also include a screen or other type of partition to help prevent foreign objects from undesirably entering the shed.

[043] Another aspect is a packaging system for a shed that may include a container; at least two wall panels that are sized and configured to form at least a portion of one or more outer walls of the shed; and at least two corner panels, each of the corner panels including a living hinge that allows the corner panel to be moved

between a generally planar position and an angled position, each of the corner panels forming a corner of the shed when the corner panel is in the angled position. The wall panels and the corner panels are preferably capable of being stacked within the container to facilitate packaging of the shed when the corner panels are in the generally planar position. Desirably, the wall panels and the corner panels are constructed from blow-molded plastic; and the living hinge is integrally formed with the corner panels as part of a unitary, one-piece structure during the blow-molding process.

[044] Advantageously, the height and the width of the wall panels may be generally equal to the height and the width of the corner panels when the corner panels are in the generally planar configuration. In particular, the wall panels and the corner panels, in the generally planar configuration, may have a height of about 72 inches and a width of about 30 inches. In addition, each of the wall panels and each of the corner panels have a maximum thickness of about 0.75 inches in order to minimize the size of the container. Further, eight wall panels and four corner panels may be packaged together within a container having a length of about 72 inches, a width of about 31 inches and a height of about 12 inches.

[045] Yet another aspect is a shed packaging system that may include a container; an elongated first panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the first panel being constructed from blow-molded plastic and including an outwardly extending lip that is integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece construction, the first panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container; a first storage area at least partially defined by the first panel and the outwardly extending lip, the first storage area being sized and configured to receive one or more other components of the shed when the first panel is disposed within the container in order

to decrease the size of the container; an elongated second panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the second panel being constructed from blow-molded plastic and including an outwardly extending lip that is integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece construction, the second panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container; and a second storage area at least partially defined by the second panel and the outwardly extending lip, the second storage area being sized and configured to receive one or more other components of the shed when the second panel is disposed within the container in order to decrease the size of the container.

[046] Significantly, the first panel may be disposed proximate the lip of the second panel when the first and second panels are disposed within the container so that the first storage area is disposed proximate the second storage area to facilitate packaging of the shed. In addition, the first panel and the second panel may be generally aligned in the same plane within the container. Further, the shed may have a width of approximately eight feet, a length of approximately ten feet and a height of approximately eight feet; and the shed may be packaged within a container having total outside dimensions less than or equal to a length of approximately ninety-six inches, a width of approximately thirty-one inches and a height of approximately twenty-four inches. The shed may also have a volume of approximately four hundred and eighty cubic feet, and the shed may be packaged within a container having a total outside volume less than or equal to approximately forty-two cubic feet. Additionally, the ratio of a volume of the shed to a volume of the container may be approximately twelve or less.

[047] Still another aspect is a shed packaging system that may include a container; a roof cap constructed from blow-molded plastic that is sized and configured to be disposed within the container; and a cavity formed in the roof cap

that is sized and configured to receive other components of the shed when the roof cap is disposed within the container in order to minimize the size of the container.

[048] A further aspect is a shed packaging system that may include a container; an elongated first panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the first panel being constructed from blow-molded plastic and including an alignment member that is integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece construction, the first panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container; and an elongated second panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the second panel being constructed from blow-molded plastic and including an alignment member that is integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece construction, the second panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container. The alignment member of the first panel and the alignment member of the second panel may be sized and configured to align the first panel with the second panel when the first panel and the second panel are disposed within the container.

[049] These and other aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[050] The appended drawings contain figures of preferred embodiments to further clarify the above and other aspects, advantages and features of the present invention. It will be appreciated that these drawings depict only preferred embodiments of the invention and are not intended to limit its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[051] Figure 1 is a front perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a shed;

[052] Figure 2 is a rear perspective view of the shed shown in Figure 1;

[053] Figure 3 is an exploded, front perspective view of the shed shown in Figure 1;

[054] Figure 4 is an exploded, rear perspective view of the shed shown in Figure 1;

[055] Figure 5 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a connection of two panels;

[056] Figure 6 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary embodiment of a connection of two panels;

[057] Figure 6A is an enlarged perspective view of a portion of the two panels shown in Figure 5, illustrating an exemplary pattern on one side of the panel and an exemplary pattern on the other side of the panel;

[058] Figure 7 is an enlarged perspective view of a portion of the panels shown in Figure 6, illustrating a reinforcing member disposed within one of the panels;

[059] Figure 8 is perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary corner panel with a living hinge, illustrating the corner panel in a generally planar configuration;

[060] Figure 9 is another perspective view of the corner panel shown in Figure 8, illustrating the corner panel in a folded or angled configuration;

[061] Figure 10 is an enlarged perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating exemplary connectors that may be used in connection with the shed;

[062] Figure 11 is an enlarged perspective view of one of the connectors shown in Figure 10;

[063] Figure 12 is a perspective view of a pegboard connected to a panel using at least one of the connectors shown in Figure 10;

[064] Figure 13A is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary shelf;

[065] Figure 13B is another perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating another exemplary shelf;

[066] Figure 14 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary roof truss;

[067] Figure 15 is a perspective view of a portion of the roof truss shown in Figure 14, illustrating an exemplary bracket that may be used in connection with the truss;

[068] Figure 16 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary a connection of a pair of roof panels to a portion of the roof truss shown in Figure 14;

[069] Figure 17 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary connection of a wall panel to the roof panels shown in Figure 16;

[070] Figure 18 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary connection of a pair of roof cap portions to a roof panel;

[071] Figure 19 is another perspective view of the connection of the roof cap portions and roof panel shown in Figure 18;

[072] Figure 20 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary connection of a pair of roof cap portions;

[073] Figure 21 is another perspective view of the connection of the roof cap portions shown in Figure 20;

[074] Figure 22 is perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary skylight including a living hinge in a generally planar configuration;

[075] Figure 23 is another perspective view of the skylight shown in Figure 22, illustrating the skylight in the generally planar configuration;

[076] Figure 24 is yet another perspective view of the skylight shown in Figure 22, illustrating the skylight in a folded or angled configuration;

[077] Figure 25 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary connection of the skylight to the roof cap portions;

[078] Figure 26 is another perspective view of the connection of the skylight to the roof cap portions shown in Figure 25;

[079] Figure 27 is an enlarged perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating a vent;

[080] Figure 28 is a bottom view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary floor panel;

[081] Figure 29 is a side view of the floor panel shown in Figure 28;

[082] Figure 30 is a top view of the floor panel shown in Figure 28;

[083] Figure 31 is an enlarged bottom view of a portion of the floor panel shown in Figure 28, illustrating a plurality of depressions formed in the lower surface and extending towards the upper surface;

[084] Figure 32 is an enlarged top view of a portion of the floor panel shown in Figure 28, illustrating a pattern on the upper surface;

[085] Figure 33 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary door panel;

[086] Figure 34 is a top view of the door panel shown in Figure 33;

[087] Figure 35 is a perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary mechanism for securing the door in a closed position;

[088] Figure 36 is perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary mechanism for securing the door in a closed position;

[089] Figure 37 perspective view of a portion of the shed shown in Figure 1, illustrating an exemplary door handle;

[090] Figures 38-46 are perspective views illustrating exemplary arrangements for packaging various components of the shed shown in Figure 1 within a container;

[091] Figure 47 is a block diagram of a left side view of a shed, illustrating an exemplary configuration of the roof caps, roof panels, corner panels, wall panels and floor panels;

[092] Figure 48 is a block diagram of a right side view of a shed, illustrating an exemplary configuration of the roof caps, roof panels, corner panels, wall panels and floor panels;

[093] Figure 49 is a block diagram of an exemplary embodiment of an extension kit;

[094] Figure 50 is a block diagram of a left side view of the shed shown in Figure 47, illustrating a use of the extension kit shown in Figure 49 to enlarge the size of the shed;

[095] Figure 51 is a block diagram of a right side view of the shed shown in Figure 50;

[096] Figure 52 is a block diagram of a left side view of the shed shown in Figure 47, illustrating the shed contracted in position;

[097] Figure 53 is a block diagram of a right side view of the shed shown in Figure 52; and

[098] Figure 54 is a block diagram of an exemplary embodiment of the components of the shed shown in Figure 47.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0099] Before describing preferred and other exemplary embodiments in greater detail, several introductory comments regarding the general applicability and scope of the invention may be helpful.

[0100] First, the following detailed description of preferred and other exemplary embodiments is generally directed towards an enclosure such as a storage enclosure. It will be appreciated that the storage enclosure may be used to temporarily and/or permanently store a variety of items, objects, devices and the like depending, for example, upon the intended use of the enclosure. The principles of the present invention, however, are not limited to storage enclosures. It will be understood that, in light of the present disclosure, the enclosures disclosed herein can have a variety of suitable shapes, arrangements, configurations and the like; and that the enclosures can be used for a variety of different functions, purposes and uses.

[0101] Second, the enclosures discussed in more detail below and shown in the accompanying figures are illustrated in connection with exemplary and preferred embodiments of a shed. It will be appreciated that the shed can have a wide variety of suitable arrangements and configurations. It will also be appreciated that the enclosure does not have to be a shed and the enclosures can be other types of structures, storage devices, units, enclosures, boxes, bins, containers, recreational equipment enclosures, organizers and the like. In addition, the size and dimensions of the shed and its various components can be varied depending, for example, upon the intended use and/or desired purpose of the shed.

[0102] Third, the particular materials used to construct preferred and exemplary embodiments of the shed are illustrative. For example, as discussed in greater detail below, blow-molded plastic is preferably used to construct various portions of the shed,

such as floor panels, wall panels, door panels and/or roof panels. It will be understood, however, that other materials can be used such as thermoplastics, resins, polymers, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polyurethane, nylon, composites and the like. It will also be understood that other suitable processes may be used to construct these various components, such as extrusion molding, injection molding, vacuum molding, rotational molding and the like. Further, it will be understood that these and other components of the shed can be made from other materials such as metal (including steel, aluminum, etc.), wood and the like.

[0103] Further, to assist in the description of the shed, words such as upper, lower, top, bottom, front, back, right and left are used to describe the accompanying figures. It will be appreciated, however, that the shed can be located in a variety of desired positions, angles and orientations. A detailed description of the shed now follows.

[0104] As shown in Figures 1 and 2, an exemplary embodiment of the shed 10 includes a front wall 12, a rear wall 14, a left sidewall 16 and a right sidewall 18. The shed 10 also includes a roof 20, a floor 22 and doors 28. As shown in the accompanying figures, the edges of the roof 20 may overhang the left and right sidewalls 16, 18. Advantageously, this may allow rain to run off the roof without contacting the sidewalls. In addition, the edges of the roof 20 may overhang the front and rear walls 12, 14, which may also allow rain to run off the roof without contacting the front or rear walls. Further, the floor 22 may extend beyond the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 and the outer edges of the floor may be generally aligned with the edges of the roof 20, if desired. All or a portion of the roof 20 may also extend beyond the outer edges of the floor 22 or, if desired, the floor may extend beyond the edges of the roof. The walls 12, 14, 16, 18; roof 20; and floor 22 may also be generally aligned and/or spaced apart depending, for example, upon the intended use or purpose of the shed 10.

[0105] As discussed in greater detail below, the shed 10 may be a modular structure with a number of connected and/or interlocking components. The components, for example, may be connected by a snap-fit, interference and/or friction fit; and the components may be connected by one or more connectors or fasteners, such as screws and bolts. The modular structure may allow the same components to be used to form different parts of the shed 10. For example, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18; roof 20 and/or floor 22 may be formed from a number of panels and one or more of the panels may be interchangeable. This may allow the shed 10 to be more easily constructed and it may reduce the number of molds required to make the components. Advantageously, this may also allow the shed 10 to be quickly and easily assembled without a large number of parts or tools. In addition, the modular components may allow the shed 10 to be made with larger or smaller dimensions using generally the same components. This may significantly increase the potential uses of the shed 10.

[0106] The shed 10 may also provide a relatively inexpensive enclosure that may be efficiently manufactured, shipped, stored, displayed, transported and the like. The shed 10 may also be sold as a kit or as an assembled structure. In addition, the shed 10 may include components that are sold separately, which may allow a consumer to repair, replace, reconfigure and/or modify the shed. The shed 10 may also be sold according to specified dimensions, but the dimensions may be changed to expand or contract the shed. The shed 10 may also be sold with an expansion kit that is sized and configured to increase the size of the shed.

[0107] As shown in the accompanying figures, the walls 12, 14, 16 and 18 may include a pattern or design. For example, the outer surfaces of the walls 12, 14, 16 and 18 may have textured surfaces and/or the walls may have a pattern that includes blocks, slats, siding and the like. In particular, the front right and front left corners of

the shed 10 may include blocks that extend from the floor 22 to the roof 20, and blocks may extend along the left and right sidewalls 16, 18 of the shed. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the shed 10 can include other suitable patterns and designs to create the structure. For example, as seen in Figures 1 and 2, the outer surfaces of the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may include a generally horizontal pattern that creates the appearance of slats or siding.

[0108] As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the shed 10 is constructed from a number of components that are interconnected to form the shed. In particular, as described in greater detail below, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 of the shed 10 can be constructed from a number of interconnected panels. Additionally, the roof 20 may include a number of interconnected panels and the floor 22 may also include a number of interconnected panels. It will be appreciated that the number of components used to form the walls 12, 14, 16, 18; roof 20; and floor 22 may depend, for example, upon the size and configuration of the shed 10.

[0109] Significantly, the various components may allow the shed 10 to be relatively quickly and easily assembled. This may allow, for example, the manufacturing costs of the shed 10 to be decreased. This may also allow the shed 10 to be shipped in an unassembled configuration and the consumer may be able to quickly and easily assemble the shed. Advantageously, shipping the shed 10 in an unassembled configuration may reduce shipping costs and increase the potential uses of the shed. In addition, as discussed in greater detail below, the components of the shed 10 are preferably generally lightweight and that may also reduce shipping costs and facilitate transportation or shipping of the shed. Further, as discussed in greater detail below, various components of the shed 10 may be sized and configured to minimize the size and shape of the packaging. This may greatly decrease the size of

the packaging, which may considerably decrease shipping costs and allow, for example, the consumer to readily transport the shed 10.

[0110] Further, while the shed 10 may be shown in the accompanying drawings as having a general size and configuration, it will be appreciated that the shed may be larger, smaller or have other suitable dimensions. In addition, as discussed below, the length of the shed 10 may be increased or decreased, which may significantly expand the potential uses and functionality of the shed.

[0111] Various exemplary features and aspects of the shed 10 will now be discussed in more detail. It will be appreciated that the shed 10 does not require all or any of these exemplary features and aspects, and the shed could have other suitable features and aspects depending, for example, upon the intended design, use or purpose of the shed.

Wall Panels & Corner Panels

[0112] As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may include a number of panels that are interconnected. In particular, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may include a number of modular panels and one or more of these modular panels may be interchangeable. For example, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may be constructed from wall panels 24a-h and corner panels 26a-d. These wall panels 24a-h and corner panels 26a-d may be used to construct a shed with a generally rectangular configuration. It will be appreciated, however, that shed could have other suitable configurations such as square, polygonal, triangular, circular and the like. In addition, as discussed in greater detail below, the roof 20 may be constructed from a number of roof panels, the floor 22 constructed from a number of floor panels, and the doors 28 may be constructed from a number of door panels.

[0113] In greater detail, the rear wall 14, the left sidewall 16 and the right sidewall 18 may have a generally similar construction in that they may be primarily constructed from wall panels 24 and corner panels 26. For example, the right sidewall 18 may be formed from a portion of the front right corner panel 26a, three wall panels 24a, 24b, 24c, and a portion of the right rear corner panel 26b. The rear wall 14 may be constructed from another portion of the right rear corner panel 26b, two wall panels 24d, 24e, and a portion of the left rear corner panel 26c. Similarly, the left sidewall 16 may be constructed from another portion of the left rear corner panel 26c, three wall panels 24f, 24g, 24h, and a portion of the left front corner panel 26d.

[0114] Each of the wall panels 24a-h preferably has a generally rectangular configuration with a height of about 6 feet (1.8 meters) and a width of about thirty inches 30 inches (0.76 meters) to create a shed 10 with a minimum height of about 6 feet (1.8 meters), a length of about 10 feet (3 meters), and a width of about 8 feet (2.4 meters). Advantageously, manufacturing and assembly of the shed may be greatly simplified because each of the wall panels 24a-h may have the same size and configuration. It will be appreciated that the wall panels 24 could have other suitable sizes and configurations depending, for example, upon the size and/or intended use of the shed. In particular, the panels could be larger or smaller to create a shed of different dimensions and, as discussed below, additional or fewer panels may be used to change the size of the shed.

[0115] The corner panels 26a-d desirably include a first portion that is separated by a second portion by a living hinge. Preferably, the living hinge extends from the top to the bottom of the corner panels 26 and it allows the first and second portions to move relative to each other. For example, the living hinge may allow the corner panels 26 to be positioned in a generally flat, planar configuration, which may

facilitate shipping. The living hinge may also allow the corner panels 26 to be disposed at an angle to form, for example, a corner of the shed 10. In particular, the living hinge preferably divides the corner panels 26 in half and it allows the corner panels to form a ninety degree or right angle. Significantly, if the living hinge extends the entire length of the corner panel 26, that may help prevent water and foreign objects from undesirably entering the shed 10. In addition, the living hinge may allow a strong and sturdy connection of the first and second portions of the corner panels 26 to be created. It will be appreciated that the corner panels 26 may also include one or more living hinges, which may extend along all or just a portion of the length of the corner panels, and the corner panels could be disposed at other suitable angles. It will also be appreciated that the corner panels 26 do not require living hinges and the corner panels may have other suitable configurations, arrangements, connections and the like.

[0116] Each of the corner panels 26a-d preferably have the same general configuration, which may help create a modular structure. For example, the corner panels 26a-d may have a generally rectangular configuration with a height of about 6 feet (1.8 meters) and a width of about thirty inches 30 inches (0.76 meters) when the panels are in the generally flat, planar configuration. Advantageously, this flat, generally planar configuration may facilitate shipping, transport and/or storage of the shed 10 because the corner panels 26 may be shipped and stored in the generally planar configuration and then simply bent into the desired position for assembly of the shed. In addition, because the corner panels 26 may have generally the same size and configuration as the wall panels 24 in the planar configuration, that may allow the shed to be easily shipped, transported and/or stored. In particular, this may allow the wall panels 24 and corner panels 26 to be stacked and/or positioned adjacent to each

other within the packaging. It will be appreciated, however, that the wall and corner panels 24, 26 may be shipped in any desired configuration.

[0117] As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the wall panels 24 may be connected to a corner panel 26 and/or another wall panel. Advantageously, the same type of connection configuration may be used to connect the wall panels 24 and/or corner panels 26. For example, the left side of each wall panel 24a-h may have generally the same configuration and the right side of each wall panels 24a-h may have generally the same configuration so that the wall panels 24 can be used interchangeably. In addition, the left side of each corner panel 26a-d may have generally the same configuration and the right side of each corner panel 26a-d may have generally the same configuration so that the corner panels 26 can be used interchangeably. Such a construction may simplify the manufacturing and assembly of the shed 10. Additionally, the left side of each wall panels 24a-h may have generally the same configuration as the left side of each corner panels 26a-d, and the right side of each wall panels 24a-h may have generally the same configuration as the right side of each corner panels 26a-d, which may allow the wall and/or corner panels to be used interchangeably. Further, the right and left sides of the wall and/or corner panels 24, 26 may be generally mirror images and/or include complementary features that allow the panels to be readily connected and disconnected. It will be appreciated, however, that the wall panels 24 and/or corner panels 26 may also have other suitable configurations and arrangements, and the panels do not have to be interchangeable or have the same general configuration.

[0118] The wall panels 24a-h and/or corner panels 26a-d preferably are securely connected to allow a strong and sturdy shed 10 to be constructed. Advantageously, the secure connection of the panels 24, 26 may help prevent inadvertent separation of

the panels and may enhance the structural integrity of the shed 10. In addition, a tight-fit between the panels 24, 26 may help prevent water and/or air from undesirably entering the shed 10. Further, the secure connection of the panels 24, 26 may prevent undesirable movement of panels and other portions of the shed 10.

[0119] As shown in Figures 5, 6 and 7, the connection of the walls panels 24 and/or corner panels 26 may include overlapping portions. The overlapping portions may extend along all or just a portion of the connection between the panels 24, 26, and the panels may be connected by one or more overlapping portions. That is, for example, two adjacent panels 24, 26 may be connected by a single overlapping portion or multiple overlapping portions depending, for example, upon the intended design and/or use of the shed 10.

[0120] In greater detail, as shown in Figure 7, the wall panels 24a, 24b are used to illustrate an exemplary embodiment of the connection between two adjacent wall panels and this same general configuration may be used to connect other wall and corner panels 24, 26. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate, however, that this type of connection does not have to connect all the wall and corner panels 24, 26 and that other suitable types of connections and connectors may also be used.

[0121] The wall panel 24 may include an inner surface, an outer surface, a top portion, a bottom portion, a left side and a right side. The top portion of wall panel 24a may be substantially flat but, if desired, the inner surface can have a different height than the outer surface. A mating interface is provided on the left side of the wall panel 24a and the right side of the wall panel 24b. For example, as shown in Figure 7, the left side of the wall panel 24a may include one or more connectors, which may include an extension or flange 34 that is generally aligned with and flush with the outer surface of wall panel 24a. The extension 34 may include a connecting

member, which may include an enlarged portion 34a, and an extension, such as a neck portion 34b. In addition, the right side of the wall panel 24b may include one or more connectors, which may include an extension or flange 36 that is generally aligned with and flush with the inner surface of the wall panel 24b. The extension 36 may include a connecting member, which may include an enlarged head portion 36a and an extension, such as a neck portion 36b.

[0122] As shown in Figures 5, 6 and 7, the extensions 34, 36 may overlap and mate together to connect the panels 24a, 24b. In particular, the enlarged head portion 34a of the extension 34 may fit within the neck portion 36b of the extension 36 and the enlarged head portion 36a of the extension 36 may fit within the neck portion 34b. Advantageously, these extending portions and receiving portions may allow the panels 24a, 24b to be rigidly connected and help prevent the panels from inadvertently separating. In addition, these extensions or flanges may interlock to secure the panels 24a, 24b together. Further, the extensions or flanges may be sized and configured to allow the panels 24a, 24b to be connected by a friction, interference or snap fit.

[0123] The panels 24a, 24b may also include other features that facilitate attachment of the panels. For example, the extensions 34, 36 may include one or more detents, ribs, projections and the like that may help connect and/or align the panels. In addition, the panels may include beveled and/or rounded surfaces to facilitate connection of the panels.

[0124] Advantageously, the overlapping portions, such as the extensions 34, 36, do not extend beyond a plane generally aligned with the inner or outer surfaces of the panels 24a, 24b. This allows the panels 24a, 24b to be connected so that the inner and outer surfaces of the panels are generally aligned. While the panels 24a, 24b preferably include complimentary overlapping portions that allow the panels to be

securely connected and the inner and outer surfaces of the panels to be generally aligned, the panels could be connected in any suitable manner or arrangement.

[0125] As shown in Figures 6 and 7, the extension 36 on the wall panel 24b may include one or more portions 37 that are sized and configured to allow a fastener, such as a screw, to connect the panels 24a, 24b. In particular, the portions 37 of the wall panel 24a may include a screw boss that is sized and configured to receive a screw. Advantageously, the mechanical fastener may secure the wall panels 24a, 24b together. It will be appreciated that any number of screw bosses and screws may be used to connect the panels 24a, 24b, but screw bosses and/or screws are not required.

[0126] Additionally, as seen in Figures 6 and 7, the bottom portion of the wall panels 24a, 24b may include outwardly extending protrusions 38. The outwardly extending protrusions 38 may include a locking portion 38a that is formed on the inner and/or outer surfaces of the protrusion. The locking portion 38a may have a generally tapered configuration and it may extend outwardly from the side of protrusion 38. The locking portion 38a may also include an outwardly extending lip or edge, which may be spaced apart from the bottom of the protrusion 38. As will be discussed in more detail below, the protrusion 38 and locking portion 38a may assist in connecting the wall panels 24a-h to the floor 22.

[0127] One of ordinary skill in the art will understand that the wall panels 24a-h and the corner panels 26a-d, and the interconnection of these panels, may have other suitable configurations, arrangements, features and the like. Additional embodiments and disclosure regarding wall panels, corner panels and the interconnection of these and other components is disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONSTRUCTING A MODULAR ENCLOSURE, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0210761 A1.

Blow-Molded Plastic

[0128] The wall panels 24 and corner panels 26 are preferably constructed from a lightweight material such as plastic. In addition, other portions of the shed 10, such as the roof 20, floor 22 and doors 28, may also be constructed from a lightweight material such as plastic. In particular, these and other components may be constructed from high density polyethylene and these components are desirably formed by a blow-molding process. Importantly, blow-molding may allow strong, lightweight, rigid and sturdy components to be quickly and easily manufactured. In particular, the blow-molded components may include a hollow interior portion that is formed during the blow-molding process, which may allow a lightweight component to be manufactured. Advantageously, this may allow the shed 10 to have significantly lighter weight than conventional sheds constructed from wood or metal. In addition, constructing the shed 10 from blow-molded plastic may allow the shed to be constructed from less plastic than conventional plastic shed, which may save manufacturing costs and reduce consumer costs. The blow-molded plastic may also include ultraviolet (UV) inhibitors that help prevent the plastic from deteriorating when exposed to sunlight. It will be appreciated that other suitable plastic, materials and/or processes may also be used to construct these and other components depending, for example, upon the particular design and use of the shed 10.

[0129] The shed 10 may also be constructed from blow-molded plastic because this may allow the shed to be economically manufactured. In addition, the blow-molded plastic may allow the shed 10 to be readily produced because, among other

reasons, the components may be quickly manufactured and the blow-molded plastic components may be created with a variety of suitable shapes, sizes, designs and/or colors depending, for example, upon the intended use of the shed. Further, the blow-molded plastic components may be durable, weather resistant, generally temperature insensitive, corrosion resistant, rust resistant and generally do not deteriorate over time. Thus, the blow-molded plastic may allow a long-lasting and durable shed 10 to be constructed.

[0130] Advantageously, the blow-molded plastic components may include finished interior and exterior surfaces. For example, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may include an outer surface that has a particular design or pattern such as blocks. The outer surfaces of the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may also be textured or include designs that create the appearance of wood, siding, bricks, stone, stucco and the like. For example, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may include a generally horizontal pattern that creates the look of siding or slats. In addition, the interior surfaces of the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 may include a particular pattern or design such as a grid, network, lattice, web or other desired type of pattern or design. Significantly, these designs or patterns may be integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece structure during the manufacturing process.

[0131] The blow-molded plastic components of the shed 10 may also include one or more depressions, indentations or the like, and these depressions may be sized and configured to increase the strength and/or rigidity of the component. These depressions, which may also be known as “tack-offs,” preferably cover at least a substantial portion of the components and the depressions may be arranged into a predetermined pattern. The depressions, for example, may be formed in one surface and extend towards an opposing surface. The ends of the depressions may contact or

engage the opposing surface and/or the ends of the depressions may be spaced apart from the opposing surface. Advantageously, the depressions may help support the opposing surface and/or increase the structural integrity of the component. In addition, the depressions may be closely spaced in order to increase the strength and/or structural integrity of the component. Further, the depressions may be spaced or positioned into a generally regular or constant pattern so that the component has generally consistent properties. It will be appreciated that the depressions may have a variety of suitable configurations and arrangements. For instance, additional information regarding other suitable configurations and arrangements of the depressions is disclosed in Assignee's U.S. Patent No. 7,069,865, entitled HIGH STRENGTH, LIGHT WEIGHT BLOW-MOLDED PLASTIC STRUCTURES, which was filed on April 8, 2003; and U.S. patent application entitled HIGH-STRENGTH, LIGHTWEIGHT BLOW-MOLDED PLASTIC STRUCTURES, which was filed on March 9, 2005, and published as US 2006/0230989 A1.

[0132] The depressions may also be positioned on opposing surfaces of various components of the shed 10, if desired. For example, one or more depressions may be formed on a first surface and these depressions may extend towards the second, opposing surface. In addition, one or more depressions may be formed on the second surface and these depressions may extend towards the first surface. These depressions on the first and second surfaces may be generally aligned and the ends of the opposing depressions may touch or engage. Significantly, this may create depressions that may contact and support the opposing surface, but the depressions have a smaller size and/or height than conventional depressions because the

depressions do not span the entire distance between the opposing surfaces. In contrast, the depressions on the opposing surfaces only span a portion of the distance separating the opposing surfaces.

[0133] In greater detail, as best seen in Figures 5, 6, and 6a, a design or pattern may be disposed on both the inner surface and the outer surface of the exemplary wall panel 24a. While the design or pattern is illustrated in connection with the exemplary wall panel 24a, it will be appreciated that other components of the shed 10, such as the other wall panels 24, the corner panels 26, the door panels 28, the roof panels 72, the roof cap portions 74, 76, the floor panels 138, 140, the gables 114, 116 and the like may also include similar features and designs. At least a portion of each design or pattern preferably extends towards the opposing surface. Importantly, these designs or patterns may be specifically arranged to facilitate creating points of intersection between the designs or patterns. Advantageously, these points of intersection may allow depressions or contact points to be created, which may allow the strength and/or rigidity of the panel to be increased. In particular, the design or pattern on one surface of the panel may have a first orientation, such as horizontal, and the design or pattern on the other surface may have a second orientation, such as vertical. The points of intersection are located where the patterns or designs on the opposing surfaces meet or are positioned proximate to each other. Significantly, the designs or patterns may be particularly configured to allow depressions to be positioned at the points of intersection. Advantageously, the points of intersection may allow the depressions to be quickly and easily created. In addition, this may also allow the depressions to be hidden or concealed because they may be disposed within the pattern, which may improve the aesthetics and/or design of the shed. Further, this allows depressions to be formed on both or only one side of the panel.

[0134] For example, as shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6A, the outer surface of the exemplary wall panel 24a may include a first pattern 31a and the first pattern may be disposed in a generally horizontal orientation, for example, to create the appearance of siding or horizontal wood panels. The inner surface of the exemplary wall panel 24a may include a second pattern 31b and the second pattern, for example, may be disposed in a generally vertical orientation, such as a grid or vertical panels. Desirably, at least a portion of the first pattern 31a extends towards the inner surface of the wall panel 24a and at least a portion of the second pattern 31b extends towards the outer surface of the wall panel. The first pattern 31a and the second pattern 31b preferably include one or more locations where the patterns overlap or intersect. Advantageously, the points of intersection between the first pattern 31a and the second pattern 31b may be separated by a smaller distance than the distance separating the inner and outer surfaces of the wall panel 24a because of the extending patterns.

[0135] Advantageously, all or at least a portion of one or more of the depressions 33 may be located where the patterns intersect to minimize the size of the depressions. In particular, because at least a portion of the patterns extend towards the opposing surfaces, the points of intersection may minimize the distance separating the opposing surfaces. Significantly, this may allow the depressions to be smaller in size because the distance between the opposing surfaces is decreased. Because the depressions have a smaller length and/or size, less plastic material and/or less stretching of the plastic material may be required to create the depressions. Accordingly, this may allow the panel to be constructed with thinner walls. Importantly, if the panels are created with thinner walls, then less plastic material may be used to create the walls and that may decrease the cost of the panels.

[0136] The patterns or designs on the opposing surfaces are preferably sized and configured to allow the depressions to be closely spaced, which may allow panels with increased strength and/or structural integrity to be created. In addition, these patterns or designs may be sized and configured to allow the depressions to be separated by a generally constant distance so that the panels have generally uniform characteristics. It will be appreciated that the panels may also have other suitable designs and configurations, including angled, random, systematic and the like, depending, for example, upon the intended aesthetics or purpose of the panel and/or shed. As discussed in greater detail below, disposing the depressions at the points of intersection between the patterns formed in the opposing surfaces and reinforcing the panels with one or more reinforcing members may significantly increase the strength and/or structural integrity of the panels. This may also allow the panels to be constructed with thinner outer walls and a reduced amount of plastic material.

[0137] Because the patterns and depressions may be integrally formed in the panels during the manufacturing process, this may allow the shed to be quickly and easily manufactured. In addition, because features such as the living hinge may be integrally formed during the manufacturing process, blow-molded plastic is preferably used to construct various components of the shed 10. Further, if the living hinge is integrally formed during the manufacturing process, it may reduce the steps and time required to assemble the shed.

[0138] One skilled in the art, however, will appreciate that the components do not have to be constructed from blow-molded plastic and other suitable materials and/or processes can be used to construct the various components depending, for example, upon the intended use of the shed 10. Thus, some or all of the components could also be constructed from other materials with suitable characteristics, such as wood, metal

and other types of plastic. Additionally, all the components do not have to be constructed from blow-molded plastic and some or all of the components could be constructed from injection molded plastic, extrusion molded plastic, and the like.

[0139] Various components of the shed 10 may also include reinforcements that may be sized and configured to increase the strength and/or rigidity of the shed. For example, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18, which are preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic panels, may include reinforcements to increase their strength and/or rigidity. In particular, the blow-molded plastic panels may include one or more reinforcing members that have different capabilities or characteristics than the panels. For instance, the reinforcing members may have different strength, resilience, compression and/or tension capabilities than the panels, which may allow the panel to be reinforced. Advantageously, the reinforced panel may have greater strength, rigidity, impact resistance, resilience and/or ability to prevent deformation. In addition, the reinforcing members may be arranged or configured to maximize the strengths or characteristics of the reinforcing members.

[0140] For example, as seen in Figure 7, the exemplary wall panel 24a may be reinforced by a reinforcing member 41. The reinforcing member 41 is preferably disposed within a receiving portion that is formed inside of the wall panel 24b and it is sized and configured to support the reinforcing member in a desired position. For example, as seen in Figure 7, the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed at an angle to maximize the desirable characteristics of the reinforcing member. In particular, the reinforcing member 41 may be sized and configured to be disposed between one or more alignment portions, such as a groove 32, and an outer edge of the panel 24a. As discussed above, the panel 24a may include one or more connectors, which may include the neck portion 36b of the extension 36, which may facilitate connection of

the wall panel 24a to another wall panel and/or a corner panel. Thus, the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed between the groove 32 and the extension 36. In addition, the reinforcing member 41 may have a width that is greater than the distance between the inner surface and the outside surface of wall panel 24b so that the reinforcing member is disposed at an angle with respect to the inside surface and the outside surface. Advantageously, angling the reinforcing member 41 in this manner can maximize the strength and characteristics of the reinforcing member. It will be appreciated, however, that the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed in any desired portion of the wall panel 24a and at any desired angle or orientation depending, for example, upon the characteristics of the reinforcing member and/or the intended use of the shed 10.

[0141] As shown in Figure 7, the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed near an edge of the wall panel 24b, which may facilitate connection of the wall panel to another structure. It will be understood that each of the wall panels 24a-h may include one or more reinforcing members and other portions of the shed, such as the roof 20, may also include reinforcing portions if desired. While the reinforcing members 41 may be disposed near the edges of the panels, it will be appreciated that the reinforcing members may be disposed in any suitable position, angle, orientation and the like.

[0142] The reinforcing member 41 is preferably connected to the exemplary wall panel 24a by cutting an opening or slit into an end of the panel and inserting the reinforcing member into the receiving portion formed inside the panel. The reinforcing member 41 is preferably an elongated structure that extends generally the length of the panel, but the reinforcing member could have any suitable size and configuration. Advantageously, after the reinforcing member is inserted into the

panel 24b, the blow-molded plastic may recover and close the opening. Thus, the reinforcing member 41 may be enclosed or encapsulated within the panel 24b. Therefore, the panel 24b may help protect the reinforcing member 41 from damage. Because the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed within the wall panel 24b, it does not have to be finished and it is not exposed to the elements. It will be appreciated, however, that all of a portion of the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed outside of the wall panel 24b. Further, while mechanical fasteners are not required to connect the reinforcing member 41 and the panel 24b, mechanical fasteners may be used if desired.

[0143] The reinforcing member 41 is preferably an elongated member that is constructed from metal. Advantageously, the reinforcing member 41 may be a thin, flat, generally planar metal strip, such as a sheet metal strip, that is relatively simple to cut and form. It will be appreciated that the reinforcing member 41 could also have other suitable configurations such as cylindrical, tubular, T-shaped, L-shaped, V-shaped, corrugated and the like. The reinforcing member 41 may also be constructed from other materials with suitable characteristics such as other types of metals, plastics, composites, wood, etc. Further, while the reinforcing member 41 may be disposed at an angle, such as 45 degrees, the reinforcing member could be disposed in any suitable position and/or orientation.

[0144] Additional information regarding structures constructed from blow-molded plastic and reinforcing members for blow-molded plastic structures is disclosed in Assignee's U.S. Patent No. 7,210,277, entitled PARTITION SYSTEM.

Corner Panels

[0145] As discussed above, the shed 10 includes four corner panels 26a-d, which are preferably construed from blow-molded plastic and include a living hinge. In greater detail, as shown in Figures 8 and 9, the exemplary corner panel 26 may include a first portion 42a and a second portion 42b disposed about the living hinge 42. The living hinge 42 allows the corner panel 26 to be positioned between a first position as shown in Figure 8 in which the first portion 42a and second portion 42b have a generally flat, planar configuration and a second position as shown in Figure 9 in which the first portion 42a and second portion 42b are disposed at an angle about the living hinge 42. Advantageously, when the corner panel is in the first, generally planar configuration, that may facilitate packing, shipping and transportation of the shed 10.

[0146] As shown in Figures 8 and 9, the corner panel 26 can be constructed in a similar manner and configuration as the wall panel 24. For example, the corner panel 26 may include an inner surface, an outer surface, a top portion, a bottom portion, a left side and a right side. The living hinge 42, for example, may be positioned proximate the outer surface and the living hinge may include a first inner surface 43a and a second inner surface 43b that are disposed at an angle. Preferably, the first inner surface 43a and the second inner surface 43b are disposed at approximately a 45 degree angle relative to the outer surface so that when the corner panel 26 is folded into the second angled position, the first and second inner surfaces 43a, 43b may abut or be positioned proximate to each other. Advantageously, the first and second inner surfaces 43a, 43b may help position the corner panel 26 at the desired angle in the second position. It will be appreciated that the corner panel could also be disposed at

other suitable angles and, accordingly, the first and second inner surfaces 43a, 43b may be disposed at other desired angles.

[0147] As best seen in Figure 8, the left side and the right side of the corner panel 26 may include extensions 34, 36 that are sized and configured to allow the corner panel to be attached to the adjacent wall panels. As discussed below, the corner panels 26 may also be sized and configured to be connected to the doors 28. In addition, as also discussed below, the bottom portion of the corner panels 26a-d may include protrusions 38 that are sized and configured to be connected to the floor 22. Further, although not shown in Figures 8 and 9, the corner panels 26 may include one or more reinforcing members.

Shelf

[0148] As shown in the accompanying figures, the shed 10 may include one or more shelves. For example, as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 13B, the shed 10 may include a shelf 56 that is located proximate the rear wall 14 of the shed. The shelf 56 is preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic and it may include one or more extensions that are sized and configured to facilitate attachment of the shelf to the shed 10. In particular, the shelf 56 may include a first extension disposed on the right side of the shelf and a second extension disposed on the left side of the shelf. The first and second extensions are preferably integrally formed as part of the shelf 56 by living hinges and the extensions can be attached to desired portions of the shed, such as the inner surfaces of wall and/or corner panels 24, 26, by one or more fasteners. Significantly, because the shelf 56 may be attached to opposing walls of the shed 10, that may increase the strength and structural integrity of the shed.

[0149] The shelf 56 may also include one or more extensions disposed on the rear portion of the shelf to allow the shelf to be attached to the rear wall of the shed. Advantageously, the extensions and living hinges allow the shelf 56 to be securely connected to the shed 10 and the extensions may extend upwardly and/or downwardly depending, for example, upon the intended use of the shelf. Significantly, the living hinges allow the shelf 56 to be shipped in a generally flat, planar configuration and then the extensions can be disposed at an angle when the shelf is attached to the shed. In addition, the extensions may include one or more screw bosses so that the shelf 56 can be attached to the shed 10 via screws or other suitable fasteners.

[0150] In greater detail, as shown in Figure 13B, the shelf 56 may include a top surface, a bottom surface (not shown), a front side, a rear side, a left side and a right side (not shown). The shelf 56 may also include a left extension 60a, a rear extension (not shown) and a right extension (not shown), which extensions are preferably connected to the shelf 56 by living hinges located on the left side, the rear side and the right side. The shelf 56 is preferably sized and configured so that the outer perimeter of shelf fits snugly within inside perimeter of shed 10 and one or more screw bosses can be formed in the left, rear and right extensions so that shelf can be attached to shed via screws. The shelf 56 may also one or more reinforcing member, as described above, if desired.

[0151] Likewise, as shown in Figure 13A, one or more shelves 57 may include a top surface, a bottom surface (not shown), a front side, a left rear side, and a right rear side. The shelf 57 may also include a left rear extension 60b and a right rear extension 60c, which extensions are preferably connected to the shelf 57 by living hinges located on the left rear side and the right rear side. The shelf 57 is preferably sized and configured so that the outer perimeter of shelf fits snugly within inside

perimeter of shed 10 and one or more screw bosses can be formed in the extensions 60b, 60c so that shelf can be attached to shed via screws. The shelf 57 may also one or more reinforcing member, as described above, if desired.

[0152] One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the shelves can have a variety of suitable configurations and arrangements. For example, the shelves may include one or more features disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled MODULAR ENCLOSURE WITH LIVING HINGES, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0223652 A1.

Window

[0153] As shown in Figure 1, the shed 10 may also include a window 62. The window 62 is preferably located in one or more of the wall panels 24a-h depending, for example, upon the intended design and/or appearance of the shed 10. Advantageously, the window 62 may provide light and/or ventilation for the shed 10. Preferably, the window 62 is disposed in a wall panel 24 that is generally the same as the other wall panels and the window preferably does not include any outwardly extending projections that would interfere with the packaging, shipping or transportation of the shed 10. In addition, the window 62 is preferably relatively easy to manufacture and straightforward to install.

[0154] For example, as seen in Figures 1 and 3, the window may include a frame that is integrally formed in one of the panels 24 and surrounds an opening. The frame may include one or more decorative or aesthetic portions that may improve the appearance of the window 62. The frame may also include one or more cross-members that extend across part of the opening. The frame may also include grooves

or slots that are disposed on opposing sides of the opening and which are sized and configured to receive the window. The window is preferably a transparent or translucent member that allows at least some light to pass through. The window is also preferably constructed from a relatively flexible, strong and impact resistant material such as acrylic or polycarbonate. Advantageously, the window may be constructed using a wide variety of techniques and methods, such as injection molding, rotary molding, compression molding and the like. In addition, the window may include a first portion and a second portion connected by a living hinge, for example, to permit the window to be moved between an opened or angled position and a closed or generally flat position. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the window may be constructed from other suitable materials, including glass, and processes, if desired, and the shed does not require windows.

[0155] In greater detail, the window is preferably disposed within the grooves and the window may be removable if desired. In addition, the window may be slidable within the grooves to allow the window to be opened or closed. The window may also include one or more stops, detents and the like which may hold the window in the open, closed or partially open positions. The window may also include an optional locking member that secures the window in the closed or partially open position. The locking member may simply include a bracket that is attached to the panel or window frame and is movable between an unlocked position and a locked position. When the locking member is in the locked position, the window may not be opened. On the other hand, when the locking member is in the unlocked position, the window may be freely opened.

[0156] Advantageously, the frame may be integrally formed in the panel 24 as part of a unitary, one-piece structure. In addition, the frame may not extend

outwardly from either the inner or outer surfaces of the panel, which may facilitate stacking and manufacturing of the panels. Further, the consumer may easily install and remove the window, and the window can be locked if desired. Additional information regarding these and other aspects of a window with suitable features is disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled MODULAR ENCLOSURE WITH LIVING HINGES, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0223652 A1.

Pegboard

[0157] The shed 10 may also include other features, if desired. For example, the shed 10 may include one or more features that allow items to be attached to the shed. In particular, the shed 10 may include one or more attachment portions that allow pegboard 53 to be attached to a portion of the shed such as a wall panel. It will be appreciated that this feature may be extremely useful since pegboards are commonly used inside sheds to allow various items, such as tools, to be stored.

[0158] For example, as shown in Figures 10, 11 and 12, the exemplary wall panel 26 may include a plurality of depressions 48 on the inner surface of the wall panel 26, and the depressions may include a bottom surface and a sidewall. The sidewall of the depressions 48 may be slightly curved inward nearest the inner surface of the wall panel 26, and the depressions 48 can include one or more access regions. As shown in Figures 10, 11 and 12, a connecting member 52 is preferably sized and configured to be connected to one or more of the depressions 48. The connecting member 52 may include a base 54a with two outwardly extending projections 54b, 54c. The first projection 54b may include a screw boss that is sized and configured to receive a

fastener such as a screw and the second projection 54c may be sized and configured to help align and position the pegboard 53.

[0159] The base 54a is preferably sized and configured to be received and retained within one or more of the depressions 48. In particular, because the sidewall of the depressions may be slightly curved inward, the area of sidewall nearest inner surface of the wall panel 26 may be smaller than the area of the bottom surface of the depressions. Because the wall panel 24 is preferably formed of plastic, the sidewall of the depressions 48 may expand as the base 54a is pushed into the depression 48 and then the sidewall may contract after the connecting member 52 is inserted. Thus, the connecting member 52 may be received and retained within the depression 48 by a snap, interference or friction fit. The connecting member 52 can be removed by inserting a tool (e.g., a screw driver) into the access region of the depression 48 and applying force to the underside of base 54a. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the connecting member 52 may be attached to any desired portion of the shed 10 and it may be attached in any suitable manner.

[0160] As illustrated in Figure 12, the connecting members 52 may allow pegboard 53 to be attached to the shed 10. In particular, one or more connecting members 52 may be attached to an inner surface of a wall panel and the second projections 54c may be used to position and align the pegboard 53. Specifically, the projections 54c may be inserted into holes in the pegboard 53 to correctly position the pegboard and fasteners can then be inserted through the pegboard and attached to the screw bosses formed in the projection 54b. The connecting members 52 are preferably constructed from injection molded plastic, but the connecting members can be formed from other suitable processes, such as rotary or compression molding, and other materials, such as metal. While the connecting members 52 are preferably

separate components that are selectively attached to the shed 10, one or more connecting members may also be integrally formed as a unitary part of the shed.

Roof Assembly

[0161] Turning back to Figures 3 and 4, the roof 20 of the shed 10 will now be discussed in further detail. The roof 20 may include a plurality of trusses 64, and as shown in Figure 14, each truss may include a pair of support beams 66 that are connected at one end by a bracket 68. The support beams 66 are preferably elongated structures and each of the support beams may include a channel. A cross beam 70 or rafter is connected proximate the midsection of the pair of support beams 66 to form a generally A-frame type truss system. A bracket 69 may connect the bracket 68 and the cross beam 70, as shown in Figures 14 and 15. The support beams 66 and cross beams 70 are preferably constructed of metal (such as steel) and these beams can be powder coated, galvanized, or otherwise processed to reduce or minimize corrosion. It will be appreciated that these beams could also be constructed from other materials with suitable characteristics.

[0162] As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the roof 20 preferably has a modular construction with a plurality of roof panels 72 and roof caps 74, 76. For example, as shown in the accompanying figures, the roof 20 may include lower roof panels 72a-h, end roof cap portions 74a, 74b, and intermediate roof cap portions 76a, 76b, 76c. The roof panels 72 and roof caps 74, 76 are preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic, but these components could also be constructed from other materials and processes with suitable characteristics.

[0163] In greater detail, the roof 20 may include lower roof panels 72a-h and each lower roof panel may include an inner surface, an outer surface, a top portion, a

bottom portion, a left side and a right side. The lower roof panels 72a-h may also include a lip 80 that extends outwardly away from the inner surface and is formed on one or more sides of the lower roof panel. The lip 80 may be formed on the outer periphery of selected lower roof panel 72a-h to create a thicker edge, which may create the appearance of thicker roof. The lip 80 may include a hollow interior portion that is formed during the manufacturing process. Advantageously, the lower roof panels 72 and the lip 80 are constructed from blow-molded plastic, which may be integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece structure. The lower roof panels 72a-h can include a textured surface or pattern on the outer surface to imitate, for example, shingles. In addition, the outer surface of the lower roof panels 72a-h and/or the lip 80 may also have a textured surface or pattern, such as shingles. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the shed 10 could have a variety of suitable designs and configurations.

[0164] As shown in Figure 3, the lower roof panels 72a-h may include a depression or recess 82 formed on the top portion of the outer surface. As shown in Figures 3, 18 and 19, the depression 82 is preferably tapered and the depressions may be used to receive a portion of a pair of roof cap portions 74, 76. Advantageously, because the lower roof panels 72a-h may have generally the same or identical shape and configuration, the lower roof panels may be used interchangeably. As discussed above, the lower roof panels 72 may include one or more depressions that may be sized and configured to increase the strength and/or rigidity of the roof panels, such as depressions 81 shown in Figure 18. In particular, the pattern on the outer surface of the lower roof panels 72 may create the appearance of shingles and the pattern on the inner surface of the lower roof panels may be sized and configured to allow the depressions 81 to be formed in the pattern so that the size of the depressions may be

minimized. In addition, as discussed above, the lower roof panels 72 may include one or more reinforcing members, if desired.

[0165] Similarly, the roof cap portions 74, 76 may include one or more depressions that may be sized and configured to increase the strength and/or rigidity of the roof cap portions, such as depressions 81 shown in Figure 44. In addition, the roof cap portions 74, 76 may include one or more reinforcing members, if desired. Further, as discussed above, the roof cap portions 74, 76 and/or the roof panels 72 may include a pattern on one side and another pattern on the other side, and one or more depressions may be positioned where the patterns overlap or intersect.

[0166] The roof 20, as seen in Figure 3, may include a roofline that is formed from the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b and the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c. The end roof cap portions 74a, 74b and the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c are preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic. It will be appreciated that the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b can be substantially mirror images of each other and the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c can also be substantially mirror images of each other. It will be understood, however, that the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b and/or the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c do not have to be mirror images, respectively, and these portions may have other suitable designs and configurations.

[0167] Advantageously, the end roof cap portions may include a first portion and a second portion that are joined together by a living hinge. For example, the end roof cap portion 74a may include a first portion 83a and a second portion 83b that are joined together by a living hinge 84. As such, the end roof cap portion 74a can be selectively positioned between a generally flat, planar position that may facilitate packaging and an angled or use position. In addition, the end roof cap portion 74a may include a top surface, a bottom surface, a front side, a back side, a left side and a

right side. The top surface of the end roof cap portion 74a can be textured to imitate shingles. Additionally, a space may be located between the first and second portions 83a, 83b, and the end roof cap portion 74a may have a generally C-shaped configuration. The space may be configured to assist in installing an optional skylight in roof 20. However, it will be appreciated that a skylight is not necessary, in which case, the end roof cap portion 74a can be configured without the space.

[0168] The roof 20 may also include an intermediate roof cap portion, such as the intermediate roof cap portion 76a, may include a first portion and a second portion joined by a living hinge. For example, the end roof cap portion 76a, may include a first portion 91a and a second portion 91b that are joined together by a living hinge 92. Thus, the intermediate roof cap portion 76a can be selectively positioned between a generally flat, planar position that may facilitate packaging and an angled or use position. The intermediate roof cap portions 76 may also include an inside surface, an outside surface, a front side, a back side, a left side and a right side. Desirably, the outside surface of the intermediate roof cap portions 76 is textured to imitate shingles so that it matches the other portions of the roof 20. The intermediate roof cap portions 76 may also include one or more spaces located between the first portion and second portion, and the intermediate roof cap portions may have a generally H-shaped configuration. The spaces may be sized and configured to assist in installing an optional skylight in the roof 20. It will be appreciated that the skylight is not required and the intermediate roof cap portion 76 can be configured without the spaces.

[0169] As shown in Figures 20 and 21, the end roof cap portions 74 and the intermediate roof cap portions 76 preferably include one or more extensions, such as extensions 88, which may overlap and interconnect with other extensions. For example, an extension of an end roof cap portion 74 may engage or be connected to

an extension of an intermediate roof cap portion 76. Also, the extensions of an intermediate roof cap portion 76 may engage or be connected to extensions of two intermediate roof cap portions, or the extensions of an intermediate roof cap portion may engage or be connected to extensions of an end roof cap portion 74 and an intermediate roof cap portion 76.

[0170] As shown in the accompanying figures, the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b, the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c and the lower roof panels 72a-h can be connected to form the roof 20. For example, the roofline of the roof 20 may be formed by joining the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b and the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c. As shown in Figure 3, the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b are disposed on the ends of the roof 20 while the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c are disposed towards the middle portion of the roof. The extensions of end roof cap portions 74a, 74b may engage or be connected to extensions of intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c, respectively, in an interlocking and/or overlapping configuration. The extensions of the intermediate roof cap portion 76b may engage or be connected to the other extensions of the intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c in an interlocking and/or overlapping configuration. Additionally, one or more mechanical fasteners, such as screws, rivets or the like, may also be used to secure the various portions of the roof 20, such as the roof cap portions 74, 76.

[0171] It will be appreciated that the roof 20 can have other suitable configurations and arrangements. For example, all or a portion of one intermediate roof cap portion may be placed adjacent to all or a portion of another intermediate roof cap portion or to all or a portion of an end roof cap portion. As shown in Figures 3, 18 and 19, these adjacent portions may be sized and configured to fit in the tapered depression 82 formed on the top side of lower roof panels 74 -- which may form a

joint between the roof panel, the intermediate roof cap portion, and the end roof cap portion (or other intermediate roof cap portion). These adjacent portions may form at least a part of the engaged or connected extensions that are discussed above, and these portions may help provide a more water-tight configuration. Further, because the tapered depression 82 or other portion of the lower roof panel 72 may be disposed underneath the lower portion of the seam between the extensions 88 of adjacent cap portions 74, 76, water leaving that seam may advantageously be guided to the top surface of the lower roof panel to run off the roof 20. For example, an extension 88 of a cap portion 74, 76 may include a channel, groove, or other recessed portion that may help guide any water entering the seam between the cap portions.

[0172] The roof truss 64 may be sized and configured to assist in connecting the roof panels to the shed 10, and the truss may be sized and configured to allow any water or moisture that passes between the roof panels to be drained from the shed. For example, as shown in Figure 17, an exemplary support beam 66 of a truss 64 may have a channel that is sized and configured to receive at least a portion of the lower roof panels 72a and 72b. In particular, the support beam 66 may help connect the lower roof panels 72a, 72b. Additionally, at least a portion of the lip 80 of the lower roof panel 72a and at least a portion of the lip of the lower roof panel 72b may be disposed within the channel of the support beam 66. Because the channel and/or other portions of the support beam 66 may be disposed underneath the seam between the lower roof panels 72a, 72b, any water or moisture penetrating the seam may be collected within the channel. Advantageously, as discussed below, because the truss 64 and the lower roof panels 72a, 72b preferably extend to and beyond the outer walls of the shed 10, the water or moisture may be transported out of the interior portion of the shed. While the support beam 66 may have a generally U-shaped configuration

that defines at least a portion of the channel, it will be appreciated that the truss and support beam may have other suitable shapes, sizes and configurations.

[0173] As shown in the accompanying figures, the roof 20 may be connected to one or more wall panels 24. For example, as shown in Figure 17, the wall panels 24 may include one or more screw bosses 39 that are sized and configured to receive a screw or other fastener to connect the wall panels to the roof (or to other portions of the shed, such as the gables 114, 116 discussed below). The wall panels 24 preferably include a receiving portion or opening 40 that is sized and configured to receive and/or be connected to at least a portion of the truss 64 and/or lower roof panel 72. In particular, as shown in Figure 17, the opening 40 may be sized and configured to receive at least a portion of the support beam 66 or other portion the truss 64, at least a portion of the lip 80 of the lower roof panel 72a and at least a portion of the lip 80 of the lower roof panel 72b. This may allow the truss 64, the lower roof panel 72a, the lower roof panel 72b and the wall panel 24h to be securely connected, which may allow a strong and stable shed 10 to be created.

[0174] Advantageously, the roof 20 of the shed 10 may be cost effective because it may be constructed from a plurality of blow-molded panels that may be part of a modular construction. In addition, the blow-molded panels may be strong, lightweight and relatively rigid. The roof 20 may also be constructed with a pitch of about 6:12, which may allow water and snow to quickly and easily run off the roof. Further, the roof may be quickly and easily assembled because it is constructed from a relatively few parts that may be quickly and easily connected.

[0175] One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the roof 20 may have other suitable shapes, sizes and configuration depending, for example, upon the intended use and/or design of the shed 10. Additional information and other features

of a roof 20 that may be used in connection with the shed 10 are disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled ROOF SYSTEM FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0210765 A1.

Skylight

[0176] As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the roof 20 can include one or more skylights. Advantageously, the skylights may reduce the need for artificial light. In addition, the skylights may be configured to provide ventilation for the shed 10. Further, the skylights may be positioned on the roof line so that light may be equally distributed throughout the shed 10. While the skylights are preferably constructed from transparent or translucent materials, the skylights could also be constructed from opaque materials. It will also be appreciated that the shed 10 may include any desired number of skylights, but skylights are not required.

[0177] In greater detail, as shown in Figures 20 and 21, when the roof cap is formed by joining end roof cap portions 74a, 74b and intermediate roof cap portions 76a-c, the openings or spaces in the cap portions may form apertures 100 in the roof cap. These openings are preferably sized and configured to receive a skylight 102, as shown in Figure 22-26. Preferably, the spaces in end roof cap portions 74 and intermediate roof cap portions 76 have similar configurations so that resulting apertures 100 are similar in size along the roof cap. Thus, the same size and configuration of the skylight 102 can be used, which may reduce the cost of manufacturing. It will be understood, however, that the skylights 102 could have any suitable size and configuration, and the different skylights could have different sizes and configurations.

[0178] As shown in Figures 22, 23 and 24, the skylight 102 may include a first portion 104a and a second portion 104b that are connected by a living hinge 106 that allows the skylight to be selectively moved between a generally flat, planar position (as shown in Figures 22 and 23) that may facilitate packaging and an angled, use position (as shown in Figure 24). The skylight 102 preferably includes a top surface, a bottom surface, a front side, a back side, a left side and a right side. A number of features may be formed on the bottom surface of skylight 102 to assist in connecting the skylight to roof 20. For example, the skylight 102 may include a plurality of ribs 110 that extend generally downwardly from the bottom surface of skylight. The ribs 110 are preferably positioned along the edge of the skylight 102 and the ribs may generally correspond to the size of aperture 100. The skylight 102 may also include a plurality of projections 112 that extend generally downwardly from the bottom surface of skylight. As shown in Figure 23, some of the projections 112 can be formed on or along the living hinge 106. As shown in Figures 25 and 26, some of the projections 112 can also be sized and configured to be disposed in apertures 101a formed at or near the spaces on end roof cap portions 74 or intermediate roof cap portion 76. In addition, some of the projections 112 that are formed on or along the living hinge 106 can be disposed in apertures 101b formed on the living hinges of the end roof cap portions 74 or the intermediate roof cap portions 76.

[0179] When the skylight 102 is being attached to the roof 20, as shown in Figures 25 and 26, the skylight 102 may be positioned over the aperture 100 and at least partially inserted into the aperture so that the ribs 110 engage the sides of the aperture. The ribs 110 may be spaced apart slightly more than the perimeter of the aperture 100 so that the skylight 102 may be held within the aperture by a friction, snap or interference fit. The projections 112 may then be disposed in corresponding

apertures 101. If desired, the one or more mechanical fasteners, such as screws, may then be used to secure the skylight 102 to the roof 20. On the other hand, all or a portion of the skylight 102 may be held by a friction, snap or interference fit to allow the skylight to be opened or closed. Advantageously, this may allow the skylight 102 to be used as a vent. One skilled in the art will appreciate that the skylight 102 can be attached to the roof 20 in any suitable manner and the skylights may be permanently or selectively attached to the roof.

[0180] As shown in the accompanying figures, the skylight 102 preferably has a substantially rectangular configuration, but it will be appreciated that the skylight may have any suitable configuration such as circular, oval, polygonal and the like. It will also be appreciated that the spaces formed in the end roof cap portions 74 and the intermediate roof cap portions 76 could have a different configuration and arrangement depending upon the size and configuration of the skylight.

[0181] The skylight 102 is preferably constructed from a relatively strong and durable material such as plastic. The plastic skylights 102 are preferably constructed by an injection molding process and the living hinge 106 is preferably integrally formed in the skylight, which may help create a watertight seal. It will be understood, however, that the skylight 102 could be constructed from other materials and processes with suitable characteristics.

[0182] The skylight 102 may also have other features and configurations, such as disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled MODULAR ENCLOSURE WITH LIVING HINGES, filed on March 28, 2005, published as US 2005/0223652 A1.

Gables

[0183] Returning back to Figures 3 and 4, the shed 10 may also include one or more gables. In particular, the shed 10 may include a front gable 114 and rear gable 116, and these gables may form part of the roof 20. The front and rear gables 114, 116 are preferably constructed from panels and the panels may have generally the same construction as the wall and/or roof panels. For example, the gables 114, 116 may be constructed from blow-molded plastic, include one or more depressions that are sized and configured to increase the strength and/or rigidity of the gables, and include one or more reinforcing members. In addition, the front and rear gables 114, 116 preferably have a generally triangular shaped configuration that extends between the right sidewall and the left sidewall. Further, the front gable 114 preferably extends between the front wall and the roof 20 and the rear gable 116 preferably extends between the rear wall and the roof. It will be appreciated that the gables 114, 116 may have other suitable arrangements, configurations and characteristics depending, for example, upon the size, configuration and intended use of the shed 10.

[0184] As shown in Figure 3, the front gable 114 may include a front surface, a rear surface, a top left portion, a top right portion, a bottom left portion, a bottom right portion and a central bottom portion. The central bottom portion of the front gable 114 is preferably sized and configured to conform to the shape of the doors 28. In particular, the central bottom portion of the front gable 114 may include a curved portion that is sized and configured to facilitate the doors 28. Additionally, the top left portion and the top right portion of the front gable 114 are preferably sized and configured to conform to the shape of the roof 20. The top left portion and the top right portion of the front gable 114 may include one or more protrusions that, as explained in further detail below, are sized and configured to assist in connecting the

front gable 114 to the roof 20. In addition, the bottom left portion and the bottom right portion of the front gable 114 may include one or more protrusions that, as explained in further detail below, are sized and configured to assist in connecting the front gable 114 to the corner panels 26a, 26d. Further, the front gable 114 may include an aperture 124 that is sized and configured to receive a vent 126. Also, the front gable 114 may include one or more door stops 115 that are sized and configured to contact, engage and/or abut at least a portion of the door panels 28 to help secure the door panels in a closed position and/or to help restrict the movement of the door panels. The door stops 115 are preferably integrally formed in the front gable 114 as a unitary construction during the manufacturing process, but the door stops may be connected to the front gable or other suitable portion of the shed 10. While the vent 126 may increase circulation of the air within the shed 10, the vent is not required.

[0185] Additionally, as shown in Figure 3, the front gable 114 may consist of a single panel that extends substantially from the left sidewall 16 to the right sidewall 18. Advantageously, because the front gable 114 may consist of a single panel, that may facilitate assembly of the shed 10 and help create a strong and sturdy shed. It will be appreciated, however, that the gable 114 may consist of two or more parts and it may have other suitable designs and configurations.

[0186] As shown in Figure 4, the rear gable 116 may include a front surface, a rear surface, a top left portion, a top right portion and a bottom portion. The bottom portion of the rear gable 116 is preferably sized and configured to conform to the shape of the rear wall 14. The top left portion and the top right portion of the rear gable 116 are preferably sized and configured to conform to the shape of the roof 20. In addition, the top left portion and the top right portion of the rear gable 116 may include one or more protrusions that are sized and configured to assist in connecting

the rear gable 116 to roof 20. The bottom portion may also include one or more protrusions that are sized and configured to assist in connecting the rear gable 116 to the rear wall 14. Further, the rear gable 116 may include an aperture 134 that is sized and configured to receive a vent 136, but the aperture and vent are not required. Also, the rear gable 116 may include one or more extensions 117 sized and configured to mate with and/or be received into corresponding channels 40 in the wall panels 24d, 24e.

[0187] Figure 4 illustrates that the rear gable 116 can be formed from two parts 116a, 116b that may be interconnected. For example, the rear gable 116 may be formed with two generally identical portions that are mirror images of each other. In addition, a portion of the aperture 134 may be formed in one portion of the rear gable 116 and another portion of the aperture may be formed in the other portion of the rear gable. Advantageously, forming the rear gable 116 in two pieces may facilitate packaging of the shed 10, discussed further below.

[0188] One or more protrusions (not shown) can be used to connect the front and rear gables 114, 116 to the lower roof panels 72a, 72d, 72e, 72h. In greater detail, the protrusions are preferably connected to the front and rear gables 114, 116, respectively, by living hinges. Advantageously, the living hinges allow the protrusions to be moved between a generally planar, flat position that may facilitate shipping and an angled, use position that may facilitate attachment of the gables 114, 116 to the lower roof panels 72a, 72d, 72e, 72h. In particular, when the protrusions are folded into the used position, the protrusions can be disposed adjacent or next to the bottom surface of lower roof panels 74. The protrusions can then be attached to the lower roof panels 74 by any suitable type of connection, such as mechanical fasteners. The protrusions may comprise, for example, flaps having a generally

rectangular configuration. Further, additional protrusions 122, 132 formed on the bottom portions of the gable 114, 116 can be connected to the corner panels 26a-d by any suitable type of connection, such as mechanical fasteners. Preferably, the protrusions 122, 132 may have a smaller thickness than the corner panels 26a-d so that the bottom portions of the front gable 114 and the rear gable 116 can rest on the top of the wall panels 24d, 24e and/or the corner panels 26a-d. If desired, the front and rear gables 114 and 116 may include one or more screw bosses so that the front and rear gables can be attached to the lower roof panels 74, wall panels 24d, 24e, and/or the corner panels 26a-d using screws or other suitable fasteners. Further, the wall panels 24d, 24e may also include one or more portions 39 that may include screw bosses sized and configured to receive a screw or other fastener to connect so that the wall panels to the rear gable 116. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the gables 114, 116; walls 12, 14, 16, 18; the protrusions of the gables; and roof 20 may have other suitable arrangements and configurations to allow the shed 10 to be formed and assembled.

[0189] As discussed above and shown in Figures 1-4, the front gable 114 can include the vent 126 disposed within the aperture 124. The vent 126 may include an outer edge and a plurality of slats. The vent 126 can also include a rib that extends outwardly from the bottom surface, if desired. The vent 126 can be constructed from extrusion molded plastic, for example, and the vent is preferably removable to allow it to be repaired and/or replaced. For example, the vent 126 could be secured to the aperture 124 by snap, friction or interference fit. The vent 126 can also be secured to the aperture 124 by mechanical fasteners such as screws. In addition, the front portion of the aperture 124 can include a recess or depression that is sized and

configured to receive the outer edge of the vent 126, which may allow the outer surface of the vent to be generally aligned with the outer surface of the gable.

[0190] It will be appreciated that the gables 114, 116 could also have other suitable configurations and arrangements depending, for example, upon the intended use of the shed 10. The gables 114, 116 may also other suitable features, such as the features described in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled ROOF SYSTEM FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0210765 A1.

Floor

[0191] As discussed above, the shed 10 preferably includes a floor 22 and the floor may provide a base or foundation for the shed. The floor 22 may also help position various components of the shed 10, such as the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 and doors 28. In addition, the floor 22 may increase the potential uses of the shed 10 and it may allow the shed to be used in a wide variety of situations and environments. Further, the floor 22 may include one or more floor panels and the floor panels may be interchangeable. This may allow the floor 22 to be part of a modular construction and, as discussed in greater detail below, the floor panels may have generally the same size and configuration as the wall panels and/or roof panels, which may facilitate manufacturing, shipping and transport of the shed. The floor panels may also have the same type of construction and/or structure as the as the wall panels and/or roof panels, which may also facilitate manufacturing of the shed.

[0192] In greater detail, as seen in Figures 3 and 4, the floor 22 preferably has a modular construction including end floor panels 138a, 138b and intermediate floor panels 140a, 140b. Each of the floor panels 138, 140 may include a top portion, a

bottom portion, a front side, a rear side, a left side and a right side. As shown in Figures 28, 29 and 30, each of the end floor panels 138a, 138b may include a plurality of receiving portions 144 that are preferably sized and configured to allow, for example, the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 to be connected to the floor 22. Desirably, the receiving portions 144 are formed along three of the sides of the end floor panels 138a, 138b. In greater detail, the end floor panels 138a, 138b may include receiving portions 144 that are disposed along the left side, the right side and either the front side or the rear side. Similarly, the intermediate floor panels 140a, 140b may include such receiving portions 144 formed along two of their sides, in particular, the left side and the right side.

[0193] The sides of a floor panel without the receiving portions 144 may be sized and configured to be connected to an adjacent floor panel. In particular, the side of the end floor panels 138 without the receiving portions 144 may include a plurality of outwardly extending portions or protrusions that are sized and configured to be attached to an intermediate floor panel 140, and the sides of the intermediate floor panel 140 without the receiving portions 144 may also include a plurality of outwardly extending portions or protrusions that are sized and configured to be attached to an intermediate floor panel 140 or an end floor panel 138. For example, as shown in Figures 28-30, the end floor panels 138 may include one or more inwardly extending or recessed portions 147 sized and configured to contact, engage, and/or overlap corresponding protrusions of an intermediate floor panel 140, and the end floor panels may include one or more protrusions 146 sized and configured to contact, engage, and/or overlap corresponding inwardly extending or recessed portions of an intermediate floor panel. Similarly, an intermediate floor panel 140 may include one or more inwardly extending or recessed portions sized and configured to contact,

engage, and/or overlap corresponding protrusions of a pair of adjacent floor panels 138, 140, and the pair of floor panels may include one or more protrusions sized and configured to contact, engage, and/or overlap corresponding inwardly extending or recessed portions of the intermediate floor panel. As shown in Figures 28-30, the protrusions 146 and the recessed portions 147 of a floor panel 138, 140 preferably alternate, and the protrusions are preferably flush with the bottom surface of the floor panels. In one embodiment, rather than alternating, the protrusions 146 and the recessed portions 147 of a floor panel 138, 140 may be generally aligned, and the protrusions may be alternately flush with top surface or bottom surface of the floor panel. When the two adjacent floor panels are connected by the overlapping and/or corresponding portions, the floor panels may be securely connected. In particular, the floor panels may be connected by a snap, friction or interference fit, or other suitable type of connection. Additionally, if desired, the connection can be reinforced by using, for example, mechanical fasteners such as screws.

[0194] The bottom surface of end floor panels 138 and the intermediate floor panels 140 may include a plurality of depressions, such as depressions 149 shown in Figure 28 and 31. As discussed above, the depressions may be sized and configured to increase the strength and/or rigidity of the floor panels 138, 140. In particular, the depressions preferably cover substantially the entire bottom surface of the floor panels 138, 140 so that the panels have generally the same characteristics. It will be appreciated that the depressions may provide an integral support structure to the upper surface of the floor panels 138, 140 and the ends of the depressions may contact or engage the upper surface of the floor panels. On the other hand, the ends of the depressions may also be spaced apart from the upper surface of the floor panels 138,

140. In addition, the depressions are preferably closely spaced in a predetermined pattern or array.

[0195] As discussed above, while it was previously believed that structures constructed from blow-molded plastic were made stronger by making the walls thicker and/or adding reinforcement structures such as ribs. The increased number of closely spaced depressions, however, provides the surprising and unexpected result that a stronger structure may be created without increasing the wall thickness or adding reinforcement structures such as ribs. In fact, the plurality of closely spaced depressions may allow the structures to be constructed with thinner walls. In addition, the plurality of closely spaced depressions may increase the strength and structural integrity of the structure despite forming disruptions in the continuity of bottom surface of floor panels 138, 140 and less plastic can be used to make the structure even though the plurality of depressions are formed in the structure. The costs of manufacturing and transportation may be decreased because less plastic may be used to construct the floor panels 138, 140 and the panels may allow a lighter weight shed to be constructed.

[0196] In particular, the plurality of closely spaced depressions may allow the thickness of the floor panels 138, 140 to be decreased. For example, the floor panels 138, 140 may now have a thickness of about 0.75 inches (1.9 centimeters) and still have the required strength and structural integrity. Additionally, as discussed above, one or both sides of the floor panels 138, 140 may include designs or patterns that allow the height and/or size of the depressions to be decreased. For example, one side of the floor panels 138, 140 may include a pattern and the other side of the floor panels may have a different pattern. The patterns are preferably sized and configured to include a number of points of intersection where the opposing surfaces are more

closely spaced than other portions of the panels 138, 140. Advantageously, this may allow depressions to be located at the points of intersection of the patterns and the depressions may have a smaller size and/or height because the distance separating these points may be smaller. Because the depressions have a smaller size and/or height, that may allow the floor panels to be constructed with a thickness of about 0.75 inches (1.9 centimeters) or less.

[0197] The floor panels 138, 140 are preferably sized and configured to be directly connected to the walls 12, 14, 16, 18. As discussed above, the wall panels 24a-b and the corner panels 26a-d may include a number of outwardly extending protrusions 38 that are sized and configured to connect the wall panels to the floor panels 138, 140. In particular, as shown in the accompanying figures, exemplary wall panels 24a, 24b are joined together and connected to exemplary floor panel 140a. The protrusions 38 extending outwardly from the wall panels 24a, 24b are at least partially disposed within the receiving portions 144 formed in the floor panels 138, 140. Advantageously, the interconnection between the floor panels 138, 140 and the wall panels 24 or the corner panels 26 can be made by snap, interference or friction fit. In addition, as discussed above, the protrusions 38 can include one or more locking portions 38a and the receiving portions 144 can have a smaller opening or inwardly extending lip. The locking portions 38a and the opening or inwardly extending lip are preferably sized and configured so that as the protrusions 38 are being inserted into the receiving portions 144, the opening or inwardly extending lip may move, deform or deflect slightly to allow the protrusion to be inserted into the receiving portion. When the protrusion 38 is fully disposed within the receiving portion 144, the locking portions 38a may help prevent the wall or corner panel 24, 26 from being inadvertently removed from the floor panel 138, 140. Advantageously, the various

protrusions 38, locking portions 38a, receiving portions 144 and the like may allow the components to be connected in a modular or interchangeable manner.

[0198] One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the floor 22 and the interconnection of the walls 12, 14, 16, 18 and the floor could have other suitable arrangements and configurations.

Offset Configuration

[0199] As shown in Figures 1-4 and in Figures 47 and 48, the connection of the floor panels 138, 140 may be offset from the connection of wall panels 24 and/or the connection of wall panels 24 and corner panels 26. This configuration can assist making a strong and sturdy shed 10 because the connections or seams formed by joining adjacent floor panels 138, 140 and the connections or seams formed by joining adjacent wall panels 24 (and/or a wall panel 24 and a corner panel 26) are not aligned. In addition, as seen in Figures 1-4 and in Figures 47 and 48, the connection of the roof panels 72 may be offset from the connection of wall panels 24 and/or the connection of wall panels 24 and corner panels 26. Preferably, the connection of the floor panels 138, 140 and the connection of the roof panels 72 are generally vertically aligned and these connections are offset or spaced apart from the connection of the wall panels 24 to wall panels 24 or corner panels 26. Advantageously, this may allow a strong and sturdy shed 10 to be constructed.

[0200] Significantly, the offset or spaced apart connection between the floor panels 138, 140 and the panels 24, 26; and the offset or spaced apart connection

between the roof panels 72 and the panels 24, 26 may be created by the corner panels 26. As discussed above, the corner panels 26 desirably include a living hinge, which may bisect the panel in half. Thus, the corner panel 26 preferably has one-half the width of a wall panel 24. The wall panels 24, roof panels 72 and floor panels 138, 140, preferably have generally the same width. Therefore, when the shed 10 is assembled, the corner panels 26 with the living hinges cause the connection of the wall panels 24, 26 to be offset from the connection of the roof panels and floor panels. This offset configuration can assist to strengthen the interlocking connections formed between wall panels 24, corner panels 26, roof panels 72, and floor panels 138, 140. Further, this offset configuration may increase the structural integrity of the shed 10 by staggering the locations of the connection of the panels. The shed 10, however, may be relatively easy to assembly, manufacture and ship because the wall, corner, roof and floor panels may have generally the same dimensions when the corner panels are disposed in the flat, planar configuration.

[0201] The size and configuration of the shed 10 may also be changed, if desired. For example, the shed 10 may have specified dimensions, but the dimensions may be changed to expand or contract the size of the shed. In particular, an expansion kit may be used to change the size and configuration of the shed 10. Advantageously, this may allow the shed 10 to be sold with one size and expansion kits may also be sold to allow the size and configuration of the shed to be changed. This may greatly enhance the potential uses of the shed 10.

[0202] For example, the shed 10 may have a first size as shown in Figures 47 and 48 and the shed 10 may be expanded to the size shown in Figures 50 and 51 using an expansion kit 200. In particular, as shown in Figure 49, the expansion kit 200 may include a wall panel 24i, a wall panel 24j, an intermediate roof cap portion 76d, an

intermediate floor panel 140c, a lower roof panel 72i and a lower roof panel 72j. As shown in Figures 50 and 51, the expansion kit 200 may be used to provide, for example, a longer shed 10. The expansion kit 200 may also include a truss, one or more fasteners, and/or other components suitable for expanding the size of the shed 10. Also, the size of the shed 10 shown in Figures 47 and 48 may be contracted to the size shown in Figures 52 and 53 by removing various components, such as those shown in Figure 54. Thus, it will be understood that the shed 10 may have a variety of suitable sizes and configurations.

[0203] It will be appreciated that the shed 10 may have other suitable arrangements and configurations. For instance, the shed 10 may include one or more of the features disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled MODULAR ENCLOSURE WITH OFFSET PANELS, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0223655 A1.

Door Assembly

[0204] The shed 10 preferably includes a door assembly which, as discussed above, may include one or more doors 28. For example, as shown in Figures 1 and 3, the shed 10 may include two doors 28 and each door may include a door panel 28a, 28b. However, it will be appreciated that the shed 10 can include any suitable number of doors and door panels. Advantageously, the door panels 28a, 28b may have similar characteristics and constructions as the floor panels, wall panels and/or roof panels. In particular, the door panels 28a, 28b are preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic and the door panels may include one or more reinforcing members.

Additionally, the door panels 28a, 28b may include one or more depressions that may be sized and configured to increase the strength and/or structural integrity of the door panels. Further, one or both sides of the door panels 28a, 28b may include a pattern or design. Preferably, both sides of the door panels 28a, 28b include patterns or designs and the patterns are sized and configured so that a number of points of intersection are formed between the patterns and depressions can be disposed at these points of intersection. Significantly, as discussed above, locating one or more depressions at these points of intersection may minimize the size of the depressions and that may allow door panels 28a, 28b to be constructed with less plastic and/or lighter weight.

[0205] As seen in Figures 33 and 34, the door panel 28a will now be discussed in greater detail. It will be appreciated that the door panel 28b preferably has a generally similar configuration and construction. The door panel 28a preferably has a generally rectangular configuration with a front side, a rear side, a top portion, a bottom portion, an outer portion and an inner portion. As shown in Figures 1 and 4, the top portion of the door panel 28a, however, may be curved to form an arched door. Consequently, the bottom center portion of the front gable 114 may have a complimentary curved configuration that corresponds to the top portion of the door panel 28a. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the door 28 and door panel 28a may have other suitable configurations, designs and arrangements depending, for upon, upon the intended aesthetics or uses of the shed 10.

[0206] As shown in Figures 33 and 34, the door panel 28a may include a hinge portion 152 that is sized and configured to allow the door 28 to open and close. The hinge portion 152 is preferably integrally formed with the door panel 28a, but it will be appreciated that the hinge portion can also be a separate component and/or

separately constructed. The hinge portion 152 preferably includes an elongated receiving portion 153 that is sized and configured to receive a hinge member 154. The hinge member 154 is preferably a hollow or solid metal rod that has a length approximately equal to or slightly greater than the height of the door panel 28a. It will be appreciated that the hinge member 154 may also include one or more components and the hinge member could have other suitable shapes and configurations. Preferably, the hinge member 154 is pivotally connected to the shed 10 to allow the door panel 28a to be opened and closed. For example, the lower end of the hinge member 154 can be disposed in an aperture or recess formed in the top surface of the floor panel 138 and the upper end of the hinge member can be disposed in an aperture or recess formed in the bottom portion of the front gable 114. Thus, the door panel 28a can pivot about the hinge member 154 and/or the hinge member may be pivotally connected to the shed 10.

[0207] The door panel 28a may also include an outwardly extending flange or barrier 156. The flange 156 preferably extends outwardly from the hinge portion 152 and it is preferably an elongated thin strip of plastic that extends along the length of the hinge portion. Advantageously, the flange 156 may help prevent water or foreign objects from entering the shed 10. In particular, the flange 156 is preferably generally aligned with in the door panel 28a and when the door 28 is in the closed position, the flange is preferably generally flush with the inner surface of the corner panel 26d. The inner surface of the corner panel 26d may include a recess or indentation so that the flange 156 is generally parallel to the inner surface. Thus, when the door panel 28a is closed, the flange 156 may cover the opening or the seam disposed between the corner panel 26d and the door panel. Accordingly, the flange 156 may act as a seal to prevent water or other objects from undesirably entering the shed 10. Preferably, the

flange 156 and the hinge portion 152 are integrally formed with the door panel 28a as part of a one-piece construction so that the connection is waterproof. It will be appreciated, however, that the flange 156 does not have to be a unitary part of the hinge portion 152 or the door 28. It will also be appreciated that the flange 156 may have other suitable shapes and configurations, and the flange is not required.

[0208] Advantageously, the hinge member 154 may help reinforce and strengthen the door panel 28a. In addition, as discussed above, the door panel 28a may include one or more reinforcing members. In particular, one side of the door panel 28a may be reinforced by the hinge member 154 and the other side may be reinforced by another reinforcing member (not shown). Desirably, the reinforcing member (not shown) is a metal strip that is disposed along the outer surface of the door panel 28a. Advantageously, if the reinforcing member (not shown) is disposed on the outer surface of the door panel 28a, it may create the appearance of a stronger and more rigid door. In addition, the exposed reinforcing member (not shown) may allow the door 28 to be more securely closed and the increased weight may create a door with a more rigid feel. As discussed above, the reinforcing member (not shown) preferably has different characteristics than the door panel 28a and the reinforcing member may be sized and configured to increase the strength and rigidity of the door panel. It will be appreciated that all or a portion of the reinforcing member (not shown) may also be disposed within the door panel 28a and the reinforcing member may have other suitable arrangements and configurations.

[0209] As shown in Figure 34, the inner portion of the door panel 28a can include an outwardly extending protrusion 158. The protrusion 158 is preferably an elongated member that extends along at least a portion of the length of the door panel 28a. The protrusion 158 may be sized and configured to contact, engage or interlock with other

structures. In particular, the protrusion 158 may include an enlarged head that forms part of an interlocking mechanism. It will be appreciated that the protrusion 158 may have other suitable shapes and configurations, and the protrusion is not required.

[0210] The doors 28 may include a mechanism that allows the doors to be secured in the closed position and a handle that allows one or more of the doors to be more easily opened and closed. For example, as seen in Figures 35-37, a first frame 160 may be connected to the protrusion 158 on the door panel 28a. The first frame 160 may include a groove 162 that is sized and configured to interlock with the protrusion 158. The first frame 160 may also include an elongated protrusion 164. In addition, the first frame 160 may include an elongated recess or indentation 166. Preferably, the elongated protrusion 164 is generally aligned with the rear portion of the first frame 160 and the elongated recess is generally aligned with the front portion of the first frame.

[0211] As seen in Figures 35-37, the door panel 28b may include a second frame 168 that is sized and configured to be connected to the first frame 160. The second frame 168 may also include a groove 162 that is sized and configured to interlock with the protrusion 158 of the door panel 28b. The second frame 168 may also include an elongated recess or indentation 172. Additionally, the second frame 168 may include an elongated protrusion 174.

[0212] The first frame 160 and the second frame 168 preferably have matingly engageable surfaces. That is, the protrusion 164 formed on the first frame 160 is preferably sized and configured to be disposed in the recess 172 on the second frame 168. Similarly, the protrusion 174 on the second frame 168 is preferably sized and configured to be disposed in the recess 166 on the first frame 160. Significantly, the first frame 160 and the second frame 168 may be sized and configured to strengthen

the inner portions of the door panels 28a, 28b. In addition, a reinforcing member may be partially or completely disposed in protrusion 164.

[0213] As shown in Figures 35 and 36, a latch may be used to secure the doors 28 in the closed position. The latch may include an elongated locking member 176, such as a metal bar, that is disposed between the protrusion 158 and the second frame 168 of the door panel 28b. Preferably, the locking member 176 has a length that is approximately equal to or greater than the length of the door panel 28b. A catch or securing portion 178 may be disposed at the upper end of the locking member 176. The catch or securing portion 178 preferably has a generally hook-shaped configuration that is sized and configured to help secure the door 28 in the closed position. The lower end of the locking member 176 is preferably sized and configured to be disposed in an opening or recess when the door 28 is in the closed position. In particular, as discussed in further detail below, the lower end of the locking member 176 may be tapered or angled to help position the end of the bar in the opening or recess. The locking member 176 is preferably constructed from steel and it preferably has a generally square or circular cross-section. It will be appreciated, however, that the locking member 176 may have other suitable configurations and arrangements, and the bar may be constructed from other suitable materials such as aluminum, plastics, composites and the like. Advantageously, the locking member 176 can also help reinforce the door 28 and/or increase the weight of the door so that it has a more solid feel.

[0214] As shown in Figure 36, the latch may include a receiving member 180 that is connected to one of the end floor panels 138a. The receiving member 180 may include a body portion 182a, a ramp portion 182b that extends downwardly from the body portion, an aperture or recess 182c formed in the body portion and two edges

182d that extend downwardly and outwardly from the body portion. The receiving member 180 can be connected to the end floor panel 138a via the edges 182d and the receiving member is preferably positioned so that the lower end of the locking member 176 is disposed in the aperture or recess 182c when the door panel 28b is closed.

[0215] When the door 28 is being closed, the lower end of the locking member 176 may contact the ramp portion 182b of the receiving member 180 and the ramp portion causes the locking member to be raised. When the locking member 176 is raised, the securing portion 178 at the upper end of the metal bar is able to engage a locking portion, such as a metal bar or rod (not shown), disposed near the lower portion of the front gable 114. When the door 28 is fully closed, the lower end of the locking member 176 then falls into the aperture 182c and the securing portion 178 engages the locking portion. Thus, the upper and lower ends of the locking member 176 may be securely held in a fixed position when the door 28 is closed. Advantageously, the locking member 176 may prevent inadvertent opening of the doors 28.

[0216] To open the door 28, the locking member 176 is lifted upward to disengage the securing portion 178 from the locking portion and the lower end of the bar is lifted from the aperture or recess 182c. The door 28 can then be opened and the locking member 176 may slide along the ramp portion 182b of the receiving member 180. Advantageously, when the locking member 176 is not lifted upwardly, the securing portion 178 may engage a top portion of the door panel 28.

[0217] A handle assembly 186 may be used to assist in opening and closing the doors 28. For example, as seen in Figure 37, the handle assembly 186 can be generally disposed on the door panel 28b, and the door panel 28b can include a recess

or opening so that at least a portion of the locking member 176 may be accessed. This may allow the handle assembly 186 to be connected to the locking member 176. In greater detail, the handle assembly 186 may include a handle member 187 and a panel 188, which can be disposed proximate the recess or opening. The panel 188 may be used to seal off the space formed by the recess or opening in the door panel 28b. The panel 188 may also include a slot 189 and a locking portion 190 that extends outwardly from the panel. As shown in Figure 37, the locking portion 190 may receive at least a portion of handle member 187, which may be secured using, for example a lock. As shown in the accompanying figures, the handle member 187 may be at least partially disposed in the slot 189, and the movement of the handle member may control the movement of the locking member 176. In particular, upward movement of the handle member 187 may also cause the locking member 176 to move upwardly and downward movement of the handle member may cause the locking member to move downwardly. Thus, handle member 187 may be used to move the locking member 176, which may facilitate opening and closing of the door 28. In addition, the handle member 187 may be moved between a locked position in which it secures the door 28 in a locked position and an unlocked position in which the door can be opened or closed.

[0218] It will be appreciated that the door, handle and locking mechanism may have other suitable shapes, configurations and arrangements. In addition, the door, handle and locking mechanism may have other features, such as disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled DOOR ASSEMBLY FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0223655 A1.

Packaging

[0219] Advantageously, the various components of the shed 10 may be sized and configured to be compactly packaged in one or more shipping boxes or other containers. For example, many of the components may have generally similar dimensions to facilitate packaging. In addition, some of the components may include one or more cavities or recesses in which other components of the shed 10 may be disposed. In particular, one or more of the panels may include an outwardly extending lip and the lip may help define a cavity or recess in which other components may be disposed. A number of the components may also be sized and configured to permit the components to be packaged in substantially uniform layers. For instance, many of the components may have substantially the same height and/or thickness to facilitate packaging of the shed 10.

[0220] As discussed above, various components may also include one or more living hinges that allow the components to be stored or packed in a generally flat or planar configuration. Significantly, this may minimize the size of the required packaging. In addition, the relatively small size of the packaging may allow the shed 10 to be more easily transported and stored. The relatively small size packaging may also facilitate the consumer transporting and moving the shed 10, such as from the store to the person's home or office

[0221] In particular, the shed 10 is preferably sized and configured to be packaged within two packages. One of the packages may include the wall panels 24a-h and the corner panels 26a-d. The other packaging may include all of the other components of the shed 10. Advantageously, if the shed 10 has a width of approximately 8 feet (2.4 meters), length of approximately 10 feet (3 meters) and height of approximately 8 feet (2.4 meters), then it may be packaged within a first package that is about 72 inches

(1.8 meters) by about 31 inches (0.8 meters) by about 12 inches (0.3 meters) and a second package that is about 94 inches (2.38 meters) by about 31 inches (0.8 meters) by about 12 inches (0.3 meters). In addition, the total weight of the shed, including the packaging, is approximately 450 pounds (204 kilograms).

[0222] In greater detail, the shed 10 may have dimensions of approximately 94 inches in width (2.38 meters), 118 inches (3 meters) in length and a height of 96 inches (2.4 meters). This may allow the shed to have an interior width of approximately 90 inches (2.3 meters), length of approximately 114 inches (2.9 meters), a minimum height of approximately 70 inches (1.77 meters) and a maximum height of approximately 94 inches (2.38 meters). This may create a shed 10 with about 71.3 square feet (6.62 square meters) and 486.9 cubic feet (13.79 cubic meters). As discussed above, the shed 10 may be packaged within a first package that is about 72 inches (1.8 meters) by about 31 inches (0.8 meters) by about 12 inches (0.3 meters) and a second package that is about 94 inches (2.38 meters) by about 31 inches (0.8 meters) by about 12 inches (0.3 meters). Accordingly, the packaging efficiency of the shed 10 having the above dimensions is about 11.79 (which is the ratio of the shed volume to the packaging volume).

[0223] As discussed above, the shed 10 is preferably packaged into two packages. The first package includes the wall panels 24a-h and the corner panels 26a-d. The wall panels 24a-h and the corner panels 26a-d preferably have generally the same dimensions so that, during packaging, the corner panels and wall panels can be stacked on top of each other. For example, the wall panels 24 are preferably about 72 inches (1.8 meters) in length, about 30 inches (0.76 meters) in width and about 0.75 inches (1.9 centimeters) thick; and the corner panels 24 are about 72 inches (1.8 meters) in length, about 30 inches (0.76 meters) in width and about 0.75 inches (1.9

centimeters) thick. Because the thickness of the wall panels 24 and the corner panels 26 has been reduced to about 0.75 inches (1.9 centimeters), the size of the packaging to be minimized.

[0224] The other components of the shed are preferably disposed in the second package. Advantageously, the other components are disposed in a number of layers, which may facilitate packaging and assembly of the shed 10. One of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the order and sequencing of the layers may be varied. Accordingly, while an exemplary embodiment of placing the components is described in detail below, the shed 10 may also be packaged in other suitable arrangements and configurations.

[0225] For example, as seen in Figure 38, the second package may include the four floor panels 138, 140 stacked in a horizontal position. As seen in Figure 39, two lower roof panels 72a, 72b are then positioned next to each other and stacked on the floor panels 138, 140. As discussed above, the lower roof panels 72a, 72b preferably include a lip 80 disposed on three sides. The sides of the lower roof panels 72a, 72b without the lip 80 are preferably placed facing each other to form at least a portion of a cavity or storage area. Advantageously, various components may be stored within the cavity and that may further minimize the size and volume of the packaging. For example, as shown in Figure 40, a door panel 28a, the corner shelf 57, the vent 126 and the front gable 114 may be placed in the storage area formed by lower roof panels 72a, 72b. The two pieces of the rear gable 116 may then be placed in generally the same layer and adjacent to the front gable 114. Importantly, this allows the gables 114, 116 to be positioned in a generally rectangular configuration. Such a generally rectangular configuration may also be used to more efficiently manufacture the gables 114, 116. For example, the gables 114, 116 may be molded as a layer in a generally

rectangular configuration using a blow molding or other process, which may advantageously help reduce the number and/or size of the molds used to manufacture the gables 114, 116. As shown in Figure 41, another set of the lower roof panels 72c, 72d are then stacked on top of the gables 114, 116 and the lips 80 preferably face downwardly to generally enclose the components positioned between the lower roof panels 72a-d. That is, the bottom portions of the lips 80 of the lower roof panels 72a-d are generally positioned adjacent to each other to form the cavity that may receive at least the door panel 28a, the corner shelf 57, the vent 126, the front gable 114 and the rear gable 116. Significantly, this configuration may help minimize the size and volume of the packaging.

[0226] As shown in Figure 42, a third layer of the lower roof panels 72e, 72f are preferably positioned next to each other and stacked on the floor panels 138, 140. As discussed above, the lower roof panels 72e, 74f preferably include a lip 80 disposed on three sides and the sides of the lower roof panels without the lip 80 are preferably placed facing each other to form at least a portion of a cavity or storage area. Significantly, this may create another cavity or storage area in which various components may be stored. For example, as shown in Figure 43, the other door panel 28b, another corner shelf 57, the vent 136, a light (which is preferably battery powered), the first door handle, the second door handle, the door handle lever, the locking mechanism for the door, the door latch, the door latch cover plate, the deadbolt from the door, one or more pegboard attachments and one or more pieces of pegboard may be placed inside the storage area. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that these and other components may be arranged differently within the packaging depending, for example, upon the intended size and configuration of the packaging.

[0227] Figure 44 illustrates that additional components may be stacked on these components. For example, the end roof cap portions 74a, 74b, the intermediate roof cap portions 76a, 76b, and the support beams 66 may be stacked on top of the other components. Also note that the extensions of the cap portions 74, 76 may be coupled to help provide a more secure package. As shown in Figure 45, a fourth layer of the lower roof panels 72g, 72h may be stacked on or above these components. Preferably the lip 80 of the lower roof panels 72g, 72h extends downwardly towards the lip of the lower roof panels 72e, 72f to create the storage area and generally enclose the components positioned between the lower roof panels 72e-h. That is, the bottom portions of the lips 80 of the lower roof panels 72e-h are generally positioned adjacent to each other to form the cavity that may receive the door panel 28b, the other corner shelf 57, the vent 136 and various components of the roof. Advantageously, this cavity or storage area may also include one or more hardware bags that may include items such as fasteners. Also, as shown in Figure 45, the lower roof panels 72g and 72h may be spaced apart a distance to form a gap with at least a portion of the end roof cap portions 74 (such as the lips of the end roof cap portions) extending between the gap, which may help minimize the size and volume of the packaging.

[0228] As shown in Figure 46, the rear shelf 56 may be stacked on the lower roof panels 72e, 72f and the third intermediate roof cap portion 76c may also be stacked on the lower roof panels. In addition, the skylights 102 may be stacked on the lower roof panels 72e, 72f. As shown in the accompanying figures and discussed above, various portions of the roof (such as the front roof cap member, the center roof cap members and the rear roof cap member) preferably include a living hinge that is sized and configured to permit the roof cap members to lay substantially flat for shipping and packaging, and also to be folded into an angled configuration for constructing the

shed. In addition, the front roof cap member, the center roof cap members and the rear roof cap member preferably include one or more skylight receiving portions. Advantageously, one or more hardware bags may be positioned within the skylight receiving portions.

[0229] Figure 46 also shown that one or more skylights, shelves, door edges, door hinges, shelf supports, roof trusses, roof channels and/or components of the door or latch assembly may be stacked in a compact manner or layer. Significantly, arranging the components of the shed 10 in this configuration may significantly minimize the size and volume of the packaging. It will be appreciated that the shed 10 may also be packaged in other suitable arrangements and configurations. For example, the shed 10 may be packaged as disclosed in Assignee's co-pending U.S. patent application entitled PACKAGING SYSTEM FOR A MODULAR ENCLOSURE, filed on March 28, 2005, and published as US 2005/0210766 A1.

[0230] Although this invention has been described in terms of certain preferred embodiments, other embodiments apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art are also within the scope of this invention. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is intended to be defined only by the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A packaging system for an enclosure that is sized and configured to facilitate shipping and storage of the enclosure, the packaging system comprising:

a container including a length and a width;

at least two generally planar wall panels constructed from plastic that form one or more outer walls of the enclosure, each of the wall panels having a height substantially equal to an interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to an interior width of the container; and

at least two corner panels constructed from plastic that form two or more corners of the enclosure, the corner panels including a living hinge disposed between a first portion and a second portion of the corner panel, the living hinge allowing the corner panel to be moved between a first position in which the corner panel is disposed in an angled position and second position in which the corner panel is disposed in a planar configuration, each of the corner panels having a height substantially equal to the interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to the interior width of the container when the corner panels are in the second position;

wherein when the wall panels and the corner panels in the second position are stacked within the container, the wall panels and the corner panels are disposed in multiple aligned layers and an outer perimeter of the wall panels and the corner panels substantially aligned; and

wherein when the wall panels and the corner panels in the second position are stacked within the container, a first side of the wall panels and the corner panels

are disposed adjacent to a first inner surface of the container, a second side of the wall panels and corner panels are disposed adjacent a second inner surface of the container, a first end of the wall panels and corner panels are disposed adjacent to a third inner surface of the container and a second end of the wall panels and corner panels are disposed adjacent to a fourth inner surface of the container.

2. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the enclosure has a width of approximately eight feet, a length of approximately ten feet and a height of approximately eight feet; and

wherein the container has a length generally equal to or less than approximately ninety-six inches, a width generally equal to or less than approximately thirty-one inches and a height generally equal to or less than approximately twenty-four inches.

3. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the enclosure in an assembled position has a volume of approximately four hundred and eighty cubic feet; and

wherein the container has a volume generally equal to or less than approximately forty-two cubic feet.

4. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein a ratio of a volume of the enclosure in an assembled position to a volume of the container is generally equal to or less than approximately twelve.

5. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the first portion and the second portion of the corner panels are disposed at generally a right angle when the corner panels are in the first position.

6. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the wall panels and the corner panels are constructed from blow-molded plastic;

wherein each of the wall panels and the corner panels include an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior portion that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure; and

wherein the living hinges are integrally formed with the corner panels as part of the unitary, one-piece structure during the blow-molding process.

7. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the wall panels and the corner panels are sandwiched together in a parallel configuration within the container.

8. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein each of the wall panels have a maximum thickness of about 0.75 inches or less in order to minimize the size of the container; and

wherein each of the corner panels have a maximum thickness of about 0.75 inches or less when the corner panels are in the second position in order to minimize the size of the container.

9. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the corner panels include a bottom portion and an upper portion; and

wherein the living hinges extend at least substantially from the bottom portion to the upper portion of the corner panels.

10. The packaging system as in Claim 1, wherein the wall panels have a height of about 72 inches or less, a width of about 30 inches or less and a thickness of about 1.0 inches or less;

wherein the corner panels have a height of about 72 inches or less, a width of about 30 inches or less and a thickness of about 1.0 inches or less when the corner panels are in the second position;

wherein the container has a length of about 72 inches or less, a width of about 31 inches or less and a height of about 12 inches or less; and

wherein at least eight wall panels and at least four corner panels are capable of being packaged within the container.

11. A packaging system for an enclosure that is sized and configured to facilitate shipping and storage of the enclosure, the packaging system comprising:

a container including a length and a width;

a first panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the first panel being constructed from blow molded plastic and including an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior that are integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure, the first panel including outwardly extending lip that is integrally formed as part of the unitary, one-piece structure, the first panel having a height substantially equal to an interior length of the container

and a width substantially equal to an interior width of the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed;

a first cavity at least partially defined by the inner surface of the first panel and an inner surface of the outwardly extending lip;

a second panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the second panel being constructed from blow molded plastic and including an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior that are integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure, the second panel including outwardly extending lip that is integrally formed as part of the unitary, one-piece structure, the second panel having a height substantially equal to the interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to the interior width of the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed; and

a second cavity at least partially defined by the inner surface of the second panel and an inner surface of the outwardly extending lip;

wherein when the first panel and the second panel are stacked within the container in aligned layers, an outer perimeter of the first panel is substantially aligned with an outer perimeter of the second panel;

wherein when the first panel and the second panel are stacked within the container, a lower surface of the lip of the first panel contacts and abuts a lower surface of the lip of the second panel;

wherein the first cavity and the second cavity form a storage area sized and configured to receive one or more other components of the enclosure when the first panel and the second panel are disposed within the container; and

wherein when the first panel and the second panel are stacked within the container, a first side of the first panel and the second panel are disposed adjacent to a first inner surface of the container, a second side of the first panel and the second panel are disposed adjacent a second inner surface of the container, a first end of the first panel and the second panels are disposed adjacent to a third inner surface of the container and a second end of the first panel and the second panel are disposed adjacent to a fourth inner surface of the container.

12. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the lip of the first panel engages the lip of the second panel when the first panel and the second panel are disposed within the container.

13. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the first panel and the second panel are spaced apart by a distance equal to the height of the lip of the first panel and the lip of the second panel.

14. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the first panel and the second panel are generally aligned in parallel planes when the first panel and the second panel are disposed within the container.

15. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the first panel and the second panel form at least a portion of the roof of the shed.

16. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the first cavity and the second cavity have generally the same height, width and thickness.

17. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the outwardly extending lip of the first panel includes a hollow interior that is in direct communication with and integrally formed with the hollow interior of the first panel; and

wherein the outwardly extending lip of the second panel includes a hollow interior that is in direct communication with and integrally formed with the hollow interior of the second panel.

18. The packaging system as in 11, wherein the enclosure has a width of approximately eight feet, a length of approximately ten feet and a height of approximately eight feet; and

wherein the container has a length generally equal to or less than approximately ninety-six inches, a width generally equal to or less than approximately thirty-one inches and a height generally equal to or less than approximately twenty-four inches.

19. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the enclosure in the assembled position has a volume of approximately four hundred and eighty cubic feet; and

wherein the container has a volume generally equal to or less than approximately forty-two cubic feet.

20. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein a ratio of a volume of the enclosure in an assembled position to a volume of the container is generally equal to or less than approximately twelve.

21. The packaging system as in Claim 11, wherein the first panel and the second panel form at least a portion of the roof of the enclosure.

22. A packaging system for an enclosure that is sized and configured to facilitate shipping and storage of the enclosure, the packaging system comprising:

a container; including a length and a width

a first panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the first panel being constructed from blow molded plastic and including an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure, the first panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed, the first panel having a height substantially equal to an interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to an interior width of the container;

a second panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the second panel being constructed from blow molded plastic and including an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure, the second panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed, the second panel having a height substantially equal to an interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to an interior width of the container;

a corner panel constructed from plastic that is sized and configured to form at least a portion of a corner of the shed, the corner panel including a living hinge that allows the corner panel to be moved between a first position in which the corner panel forms at least a portion of a corner of the shed and a second position that facilitates shipping and storage of the shed, the corner panel being disposed in a generally planar configuration in the second position, the corner panel having a height substantially equal to the interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to the interior width of the container when the corner panels are in the second position; and

a roof section that is constructed from blow-molded plastic and includes a living hinge that connects a first portion and a second portion of the roof section, the living hinge being sized and configured to allow the roof section to be moved between a first position in which the roof section forms at least a portion of a roof of the shed and a second position that facilitates shipping and storage of the shed;

wherein the first panel, the second panel, the corner panel and the roof section are capable of being stacked within the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed when the corner panel is in the second position;

wherein the height of the first panel is generally equal to the height of the second panel and the height of the corner panel; and

wherein the width of the first panel is generally equal to the width of the second panel and the width of the corner panel when the corner panel is in the second position.

23. The packaging system as in Claim 22, further comprising a cavity formed in the roof section that is sized and configured to receive other components of the shed when the roof section is disposed in the second position and the roof section is disposed within the container.

24. A packaging system for a shed that is sized and configured to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed, the shed packaging system comprising:

a container including a length and a width;

a first panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the first panel being constructed from blow molded plastic and including an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure, the first panel having height substantially equal to an interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to an interior width of the container;

a first alignment member that is integrally formed with the first panel as part of the unitary, one-piece structure, the first panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed;

a second panel that forms an exterior portion of the shed, the second panel being constructed from blow molded plastic and including an inner surface, an outer surface and a hollow interior that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process as part of a unitary, one-piece structure, the second panel having a height substantially equal to an interior length of the container and a width substantially equal to an interior width of the container;

a second alignment member that is integrally formed with the second panel as part of the unitary, one-piece structure, the second panel being sized and configured to be disposed within the container to facilitate shipping and storage of the shed; and

a corner panel constructed from plastic that is sized and configured to form at least a portion of a corner of the shed, the corner panel including a living hinge that allows the corner panel to be moved between a first position in which the corner panel forms at least a portion of a corner of the shed and a second position that facilitates shipping and storage of the shed, the corner panel being disposed in a generally planar configuration in the second position, the corner panel having a height and a width;

wherein the first alignment member and the second alignment member are sized and configured to align the first panel and the second panel when the first panel and the second panel are disposed within the container;

wherein the height of the first panel is generally equal to the height of the second panel and the height of the corner panel; and

wherein the width of the first panel is generally equal to the width of the second panel and the width of the corner panel when the corner panel is in the second position.

25. The shed packaging system as in Claim 24, wherein the first panel forms at least a portion of a door to the shed and the second panel forms at least a portion of a roof of the shed.

26. The shed packaging system as in Claim 24, wherein the first alignment member includes at least one outwardly extending portion and the second alignment member includes at least one receiving portion that is sized and configured to receiving the outwardly extending portion of the first alignment member when the first panel and the second panel are disposed within the container.

27. The shed packaging system as in Claim 24, further comprising an outer perimeter of the wall panels and an outer perimeter of the corner panels when the corner panels are in the second position, the outer perimeter of the wall panels being generally aligned with and disposed in the same plane with the outer perimeter of the corner panels when the wall panels and corner panels are stacked within the container.

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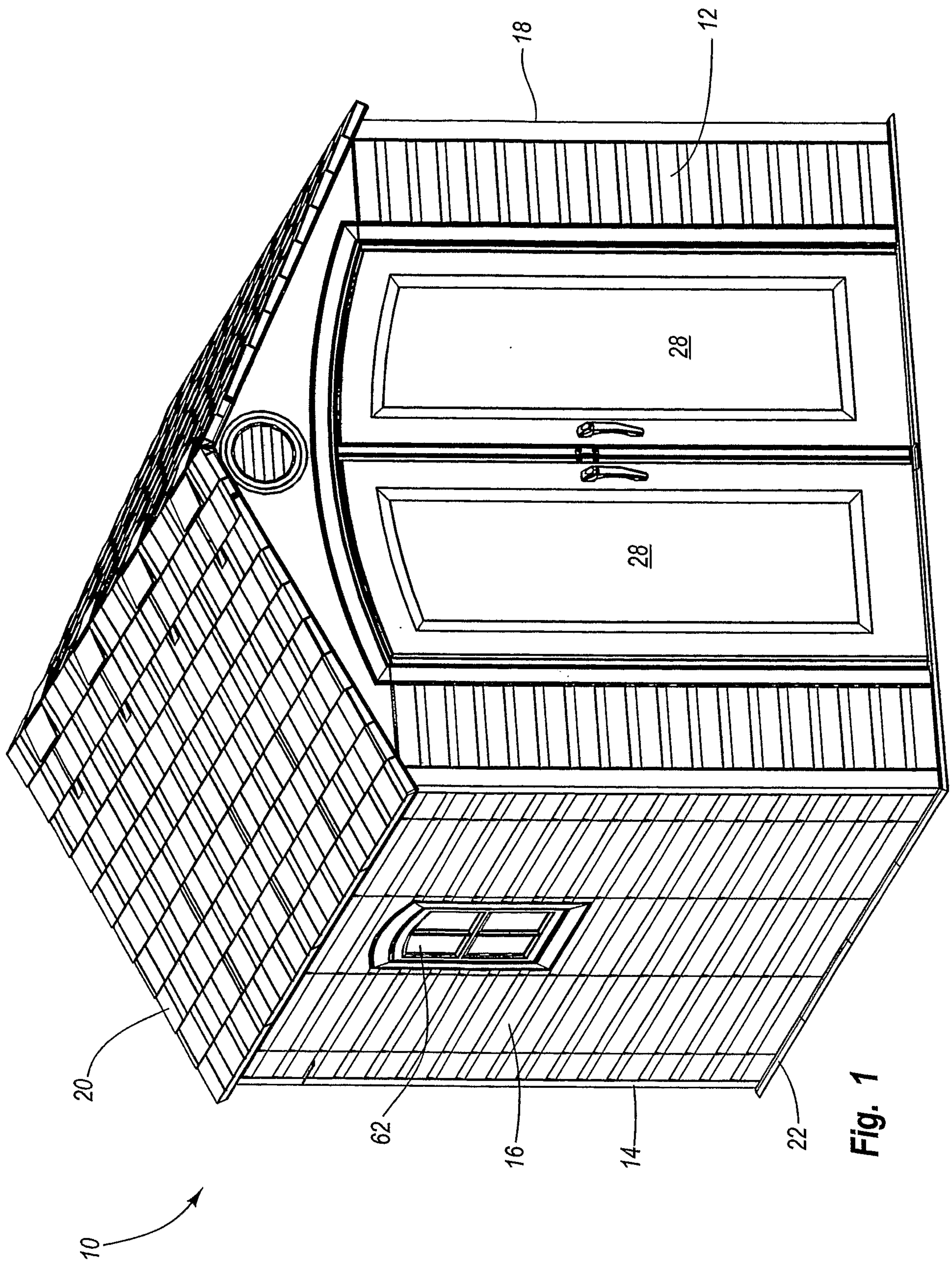


Fig. 1

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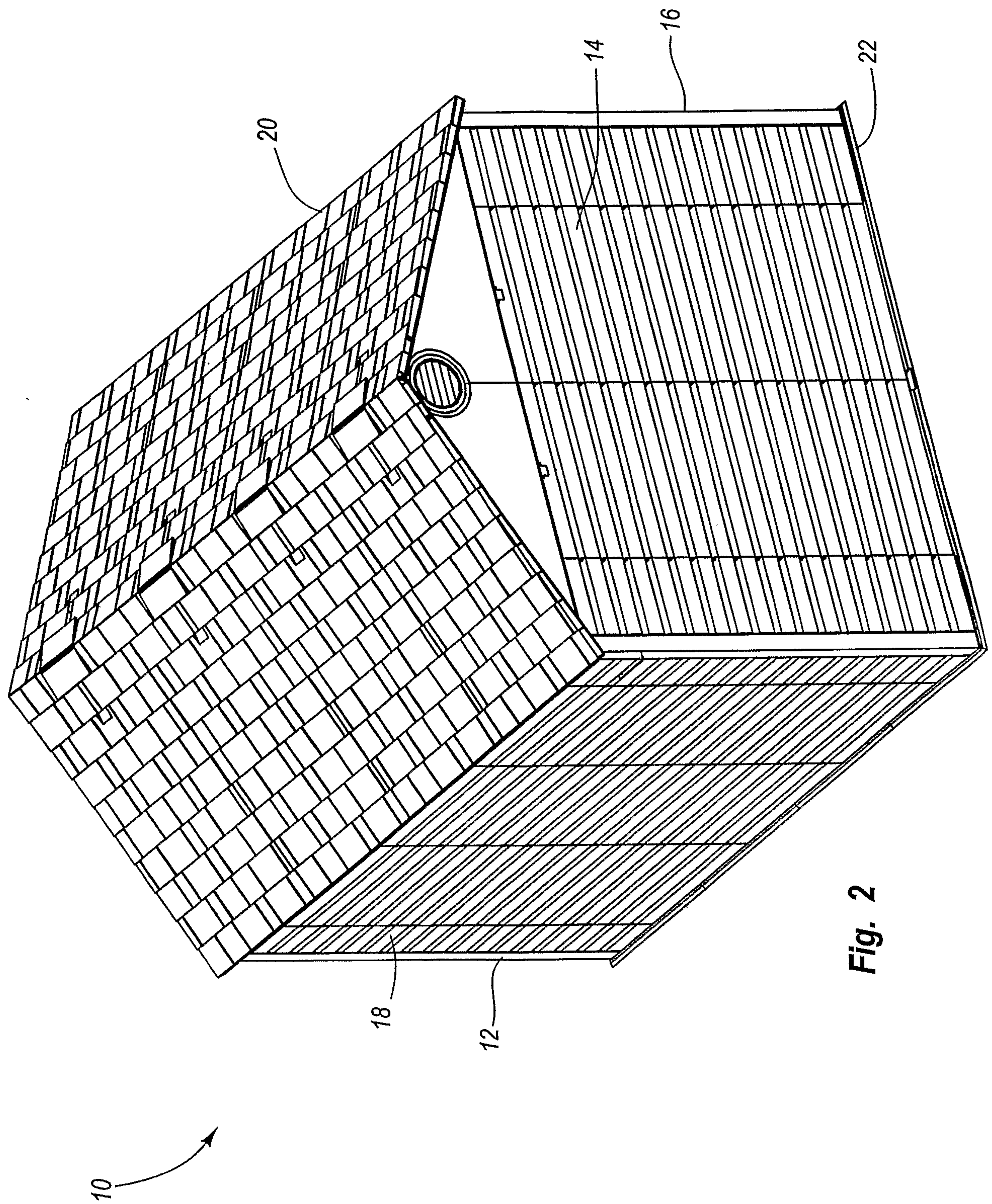


Fig. 2

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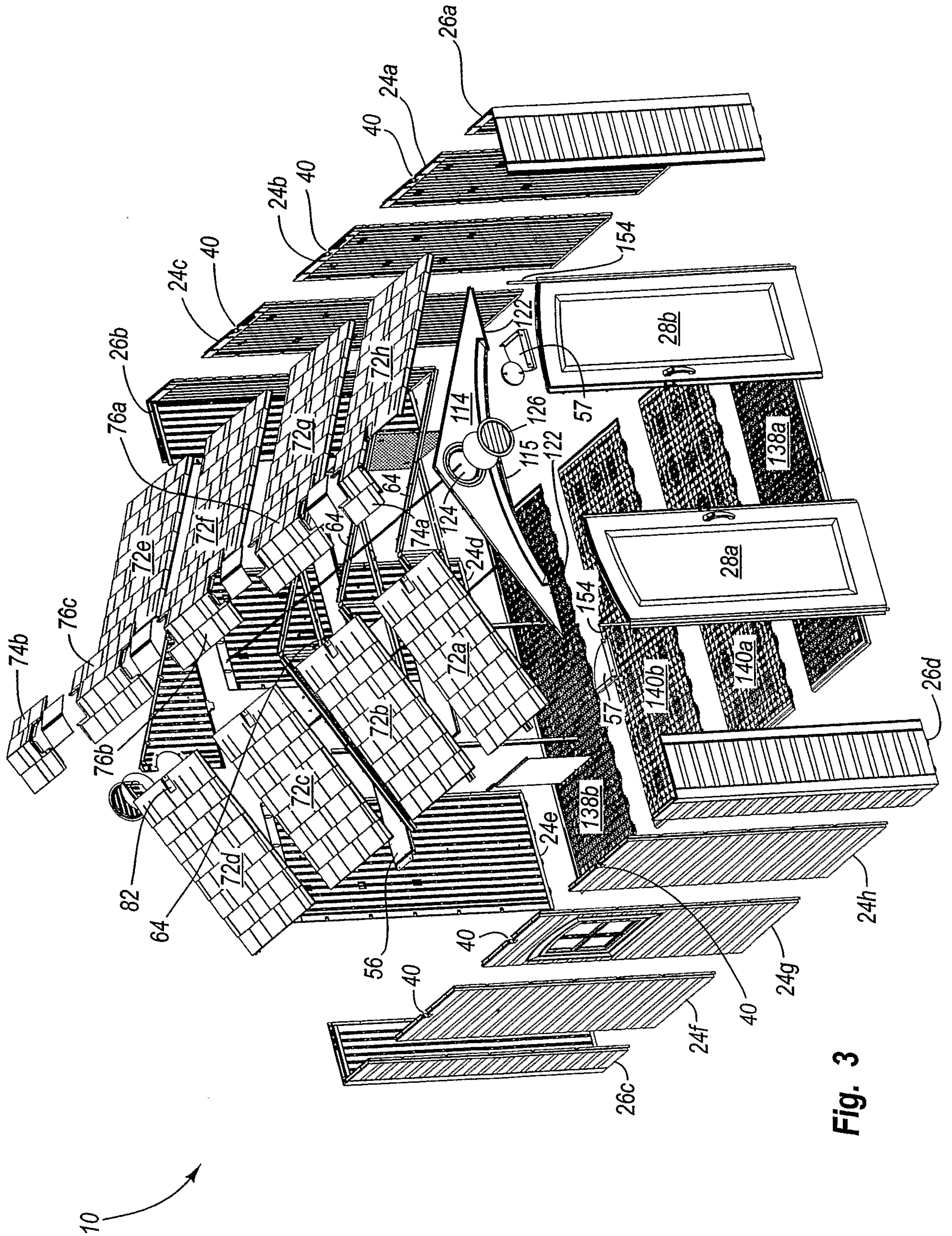


Fig. 3

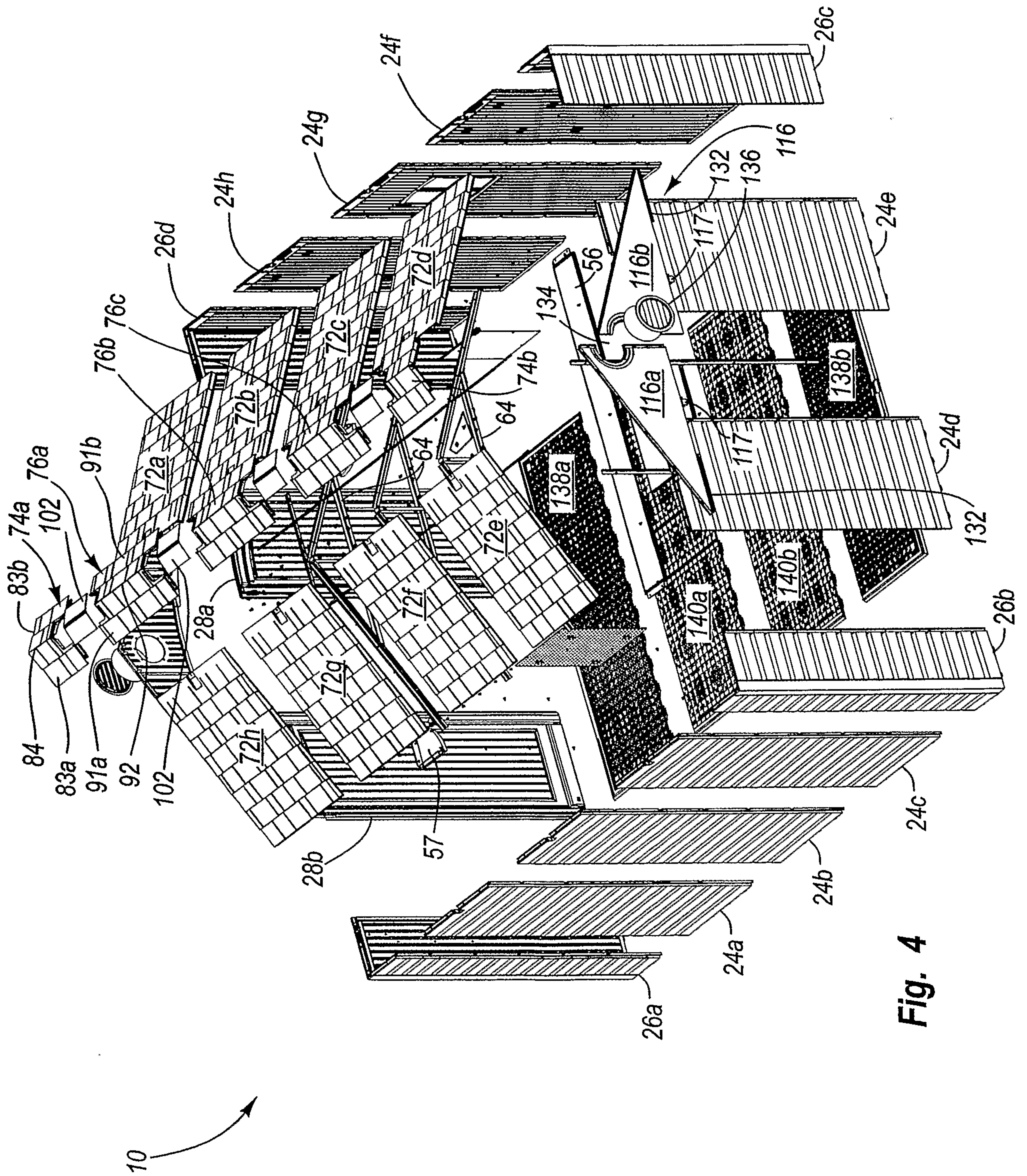


Fig. 4

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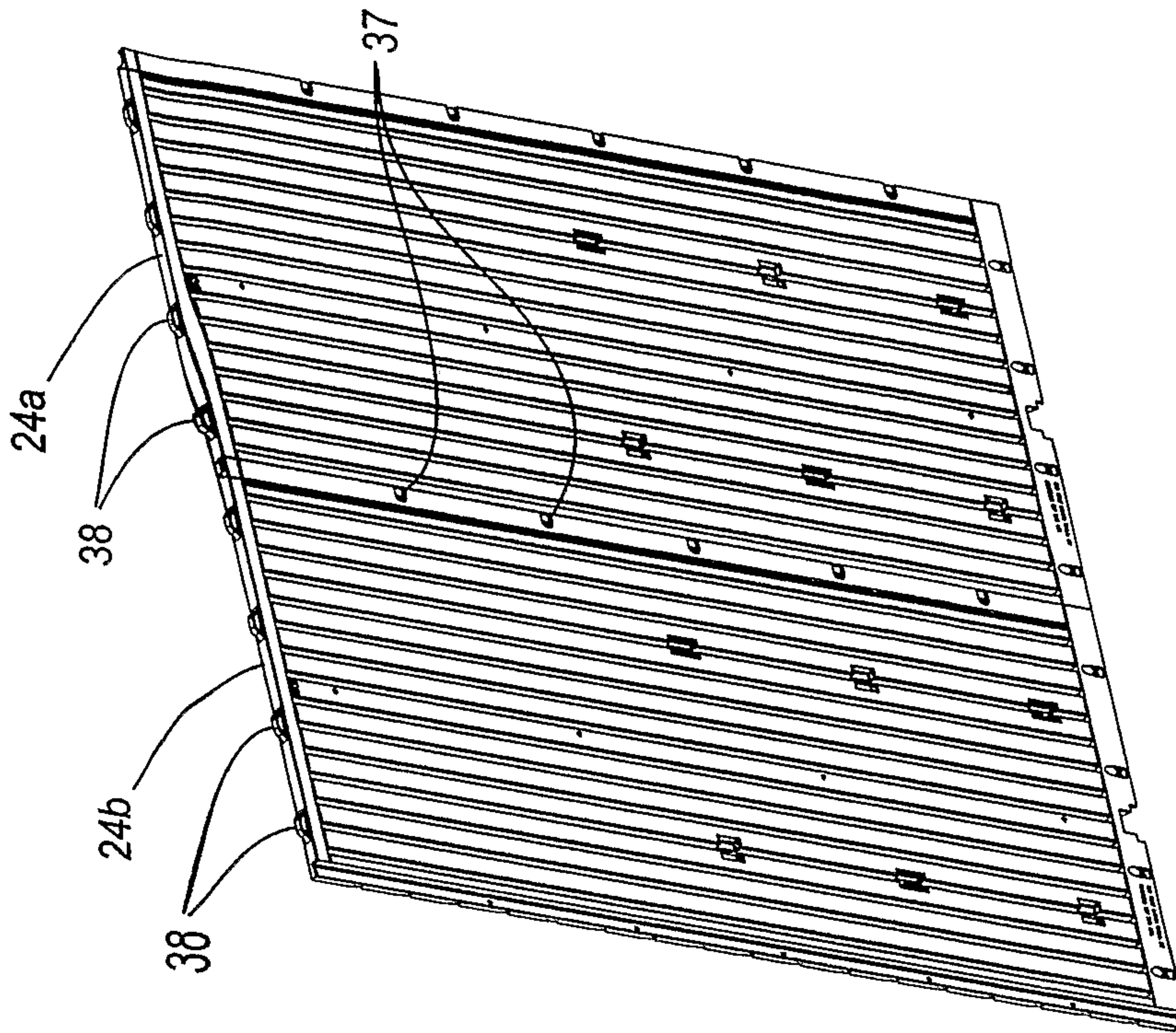


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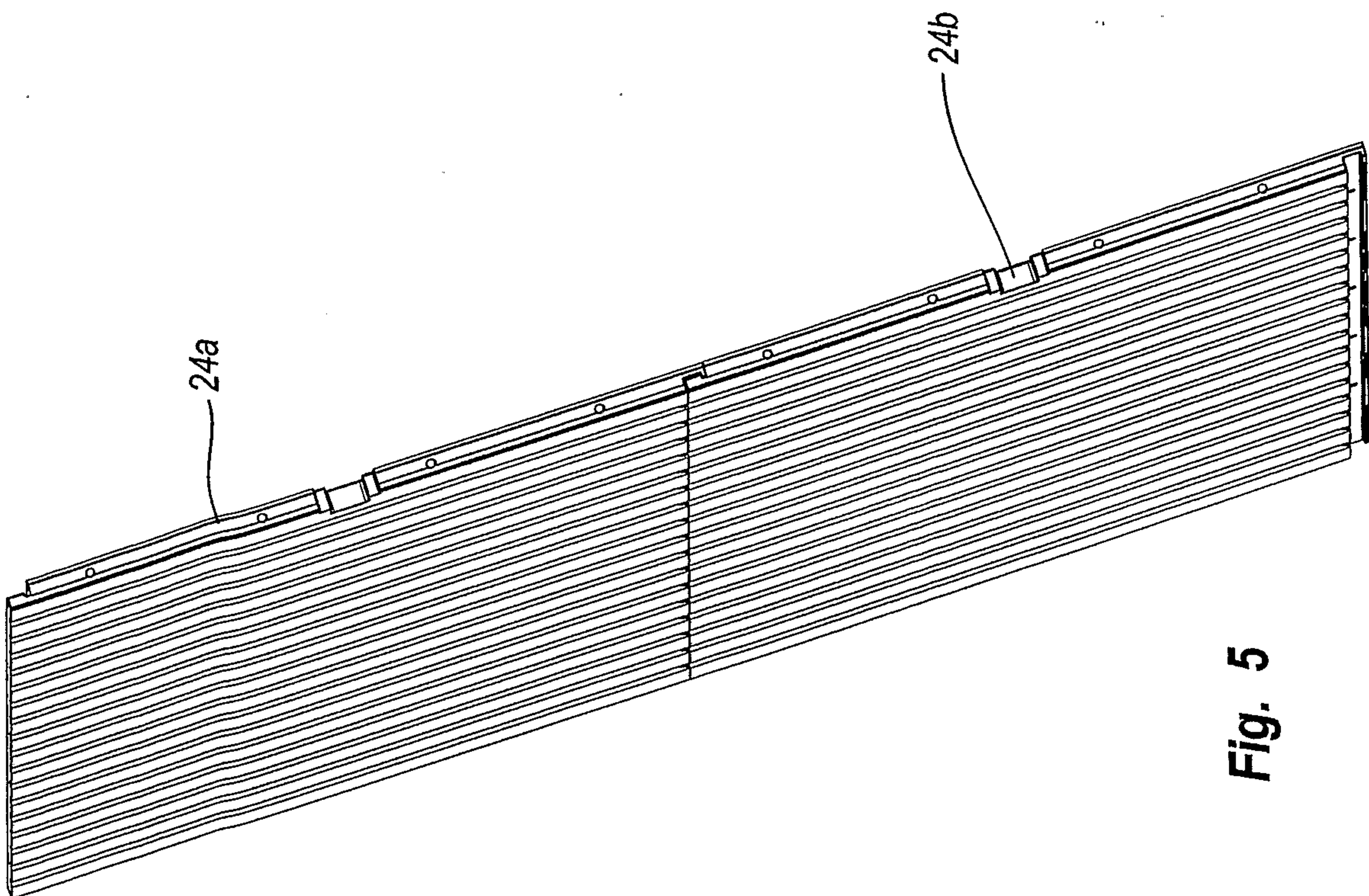
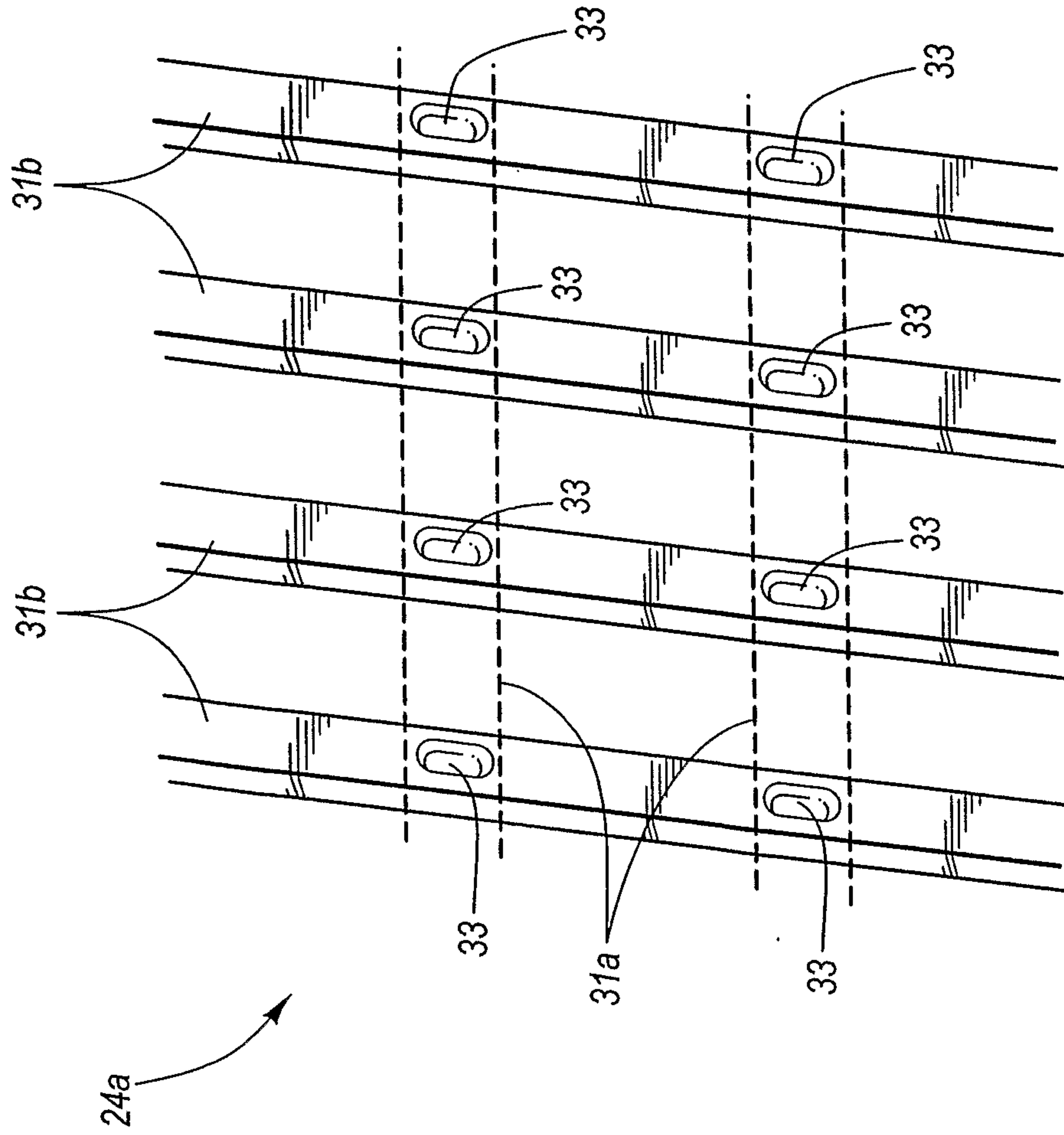


Fig. 5

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**Fig. 6A**

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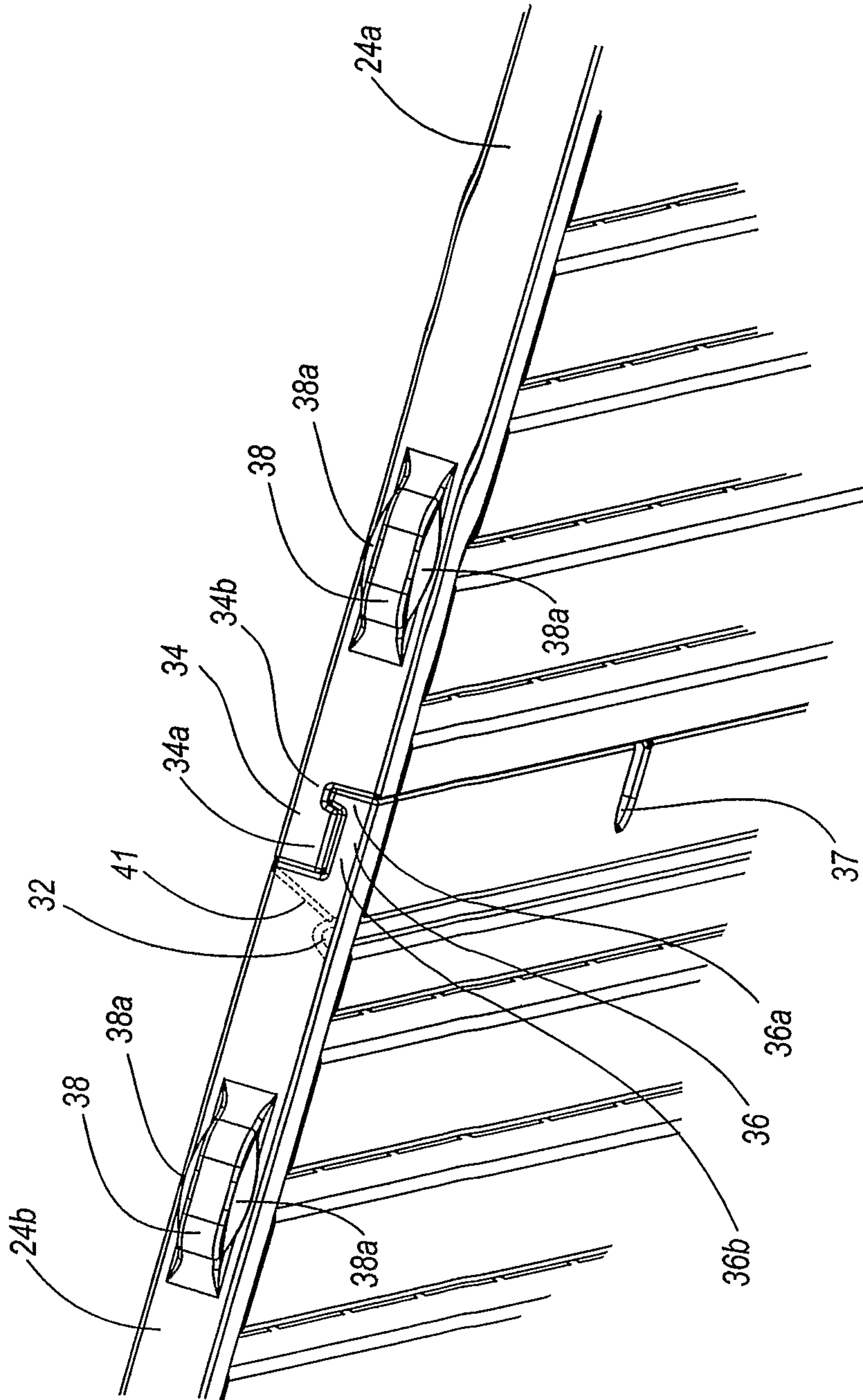


Fig. 7

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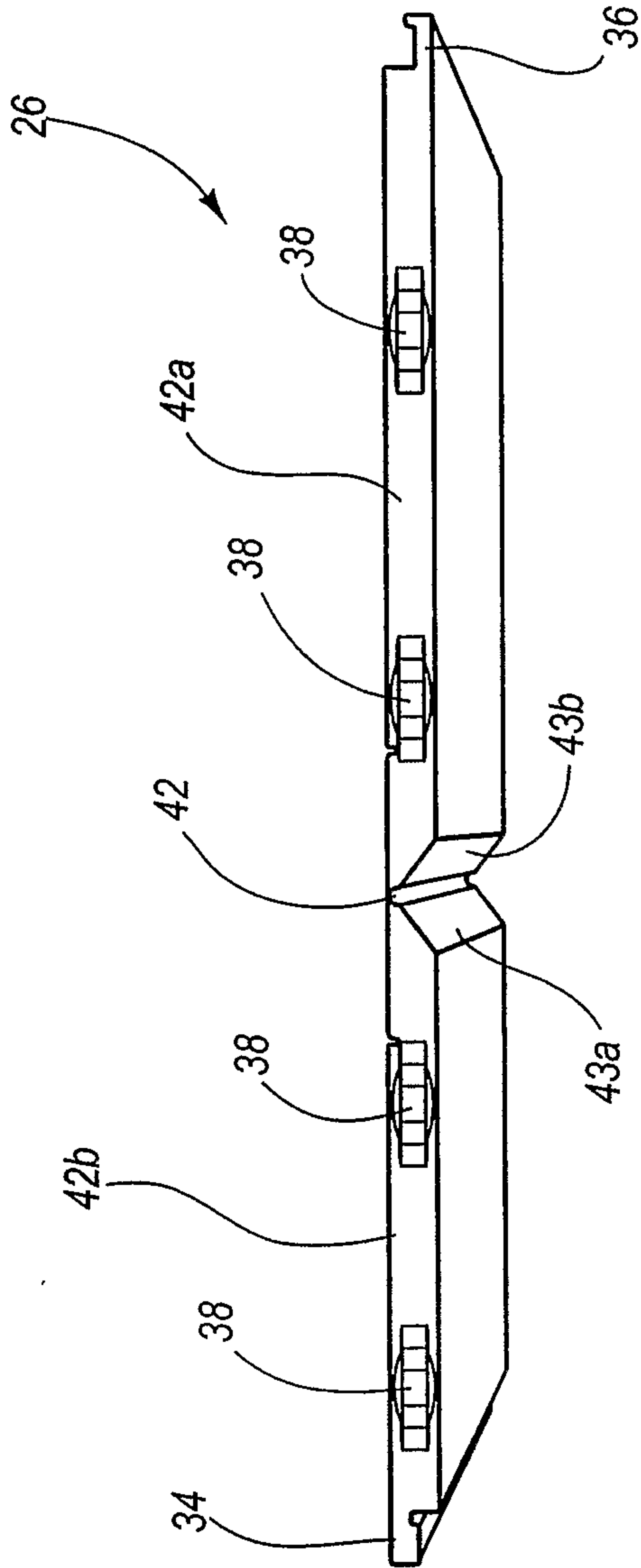


Fig. 8

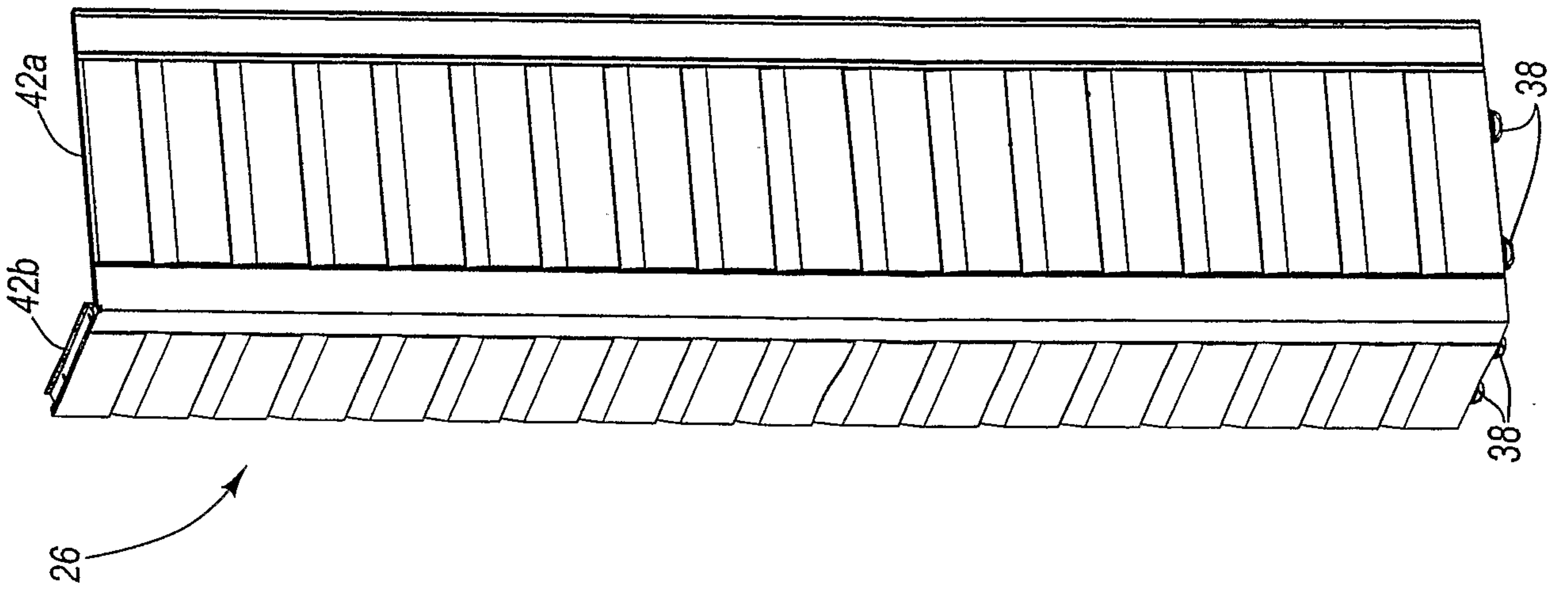


Fig. 9

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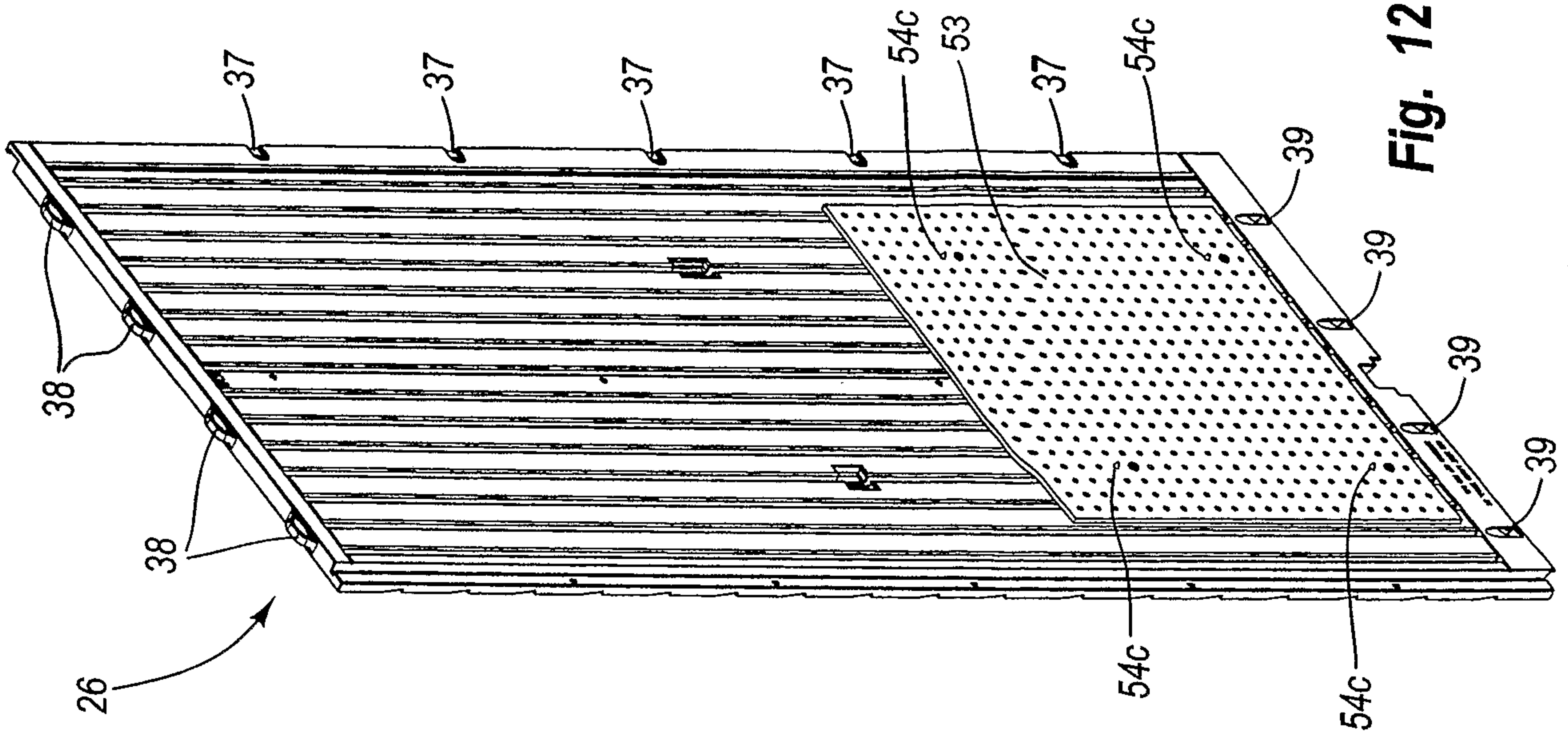


Fig. 12

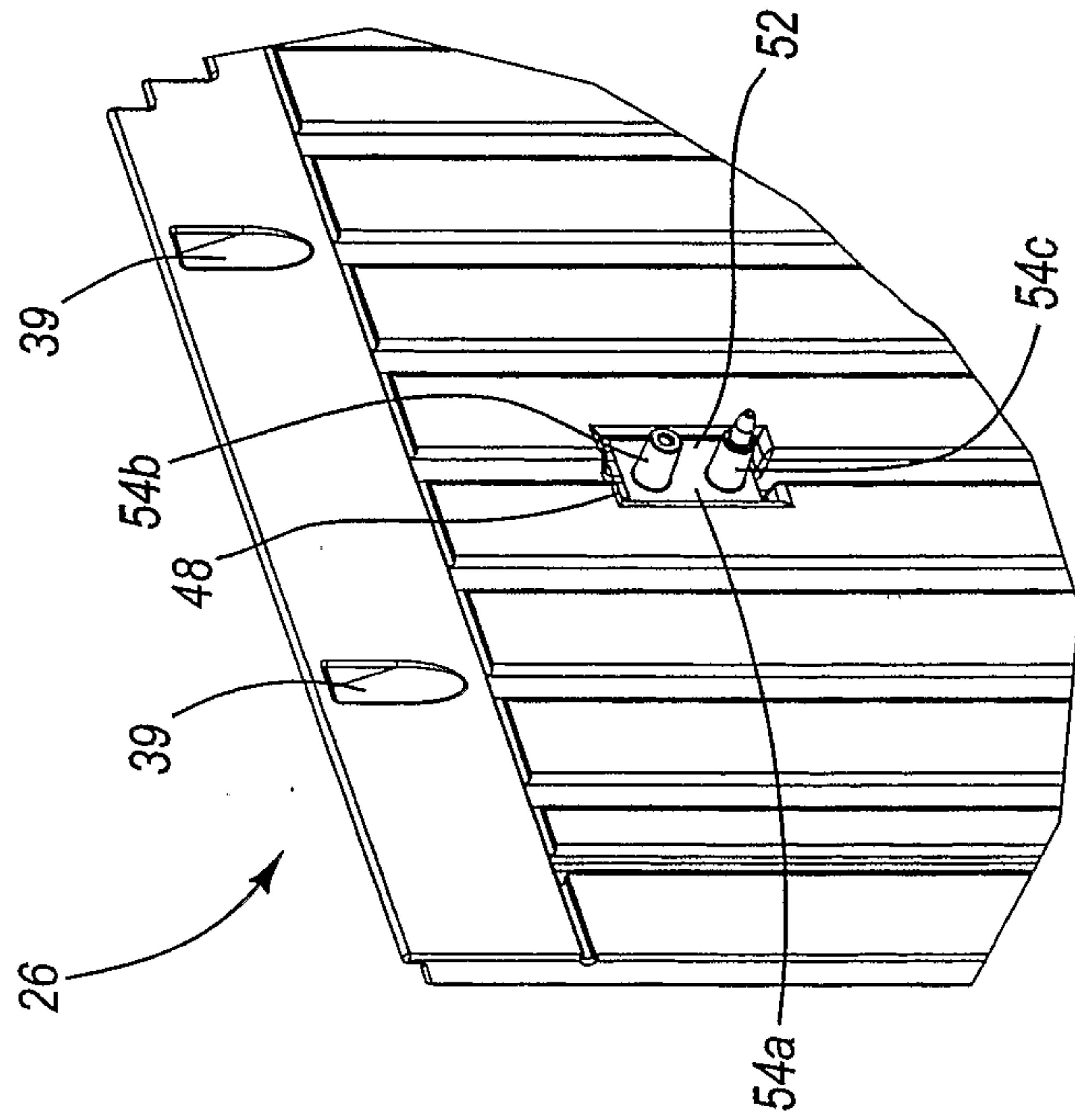


Fig. 11

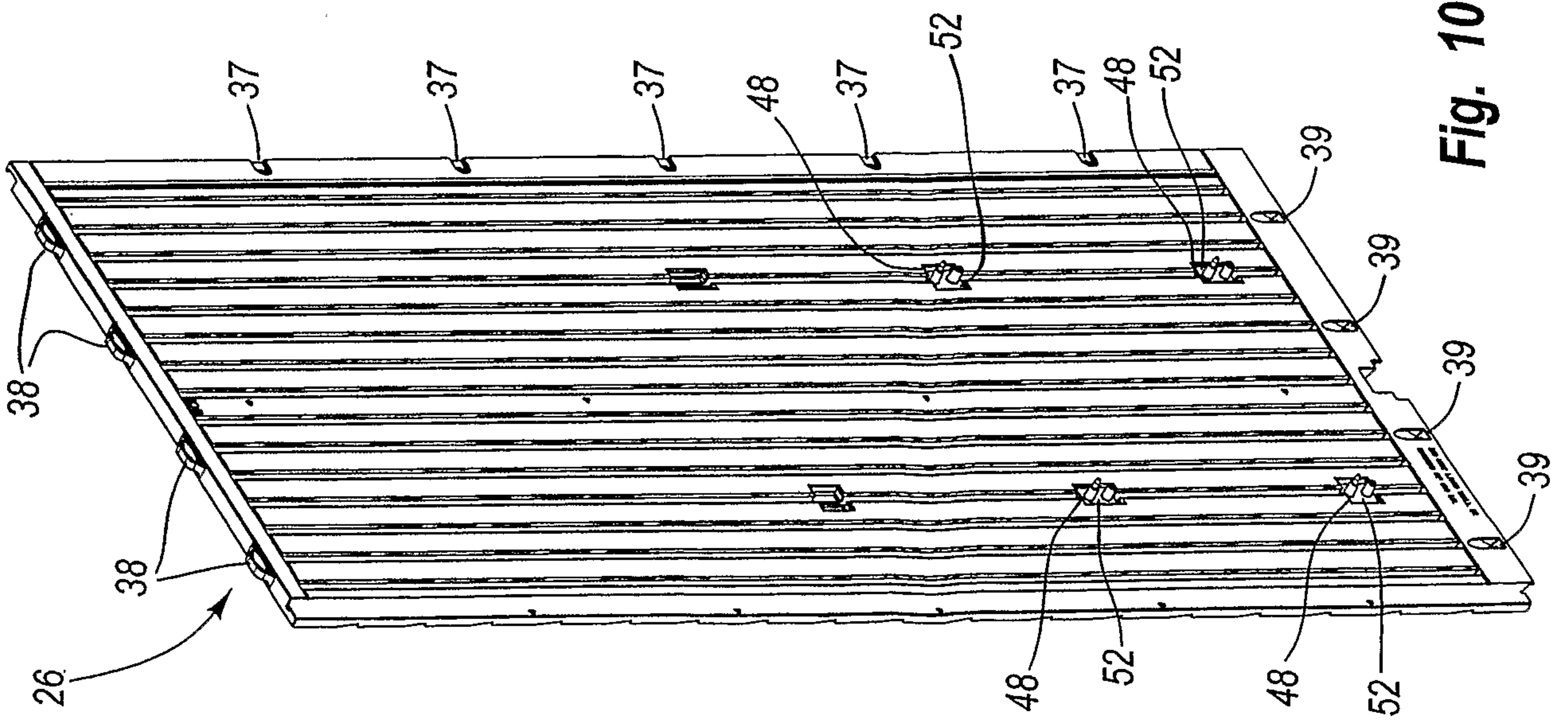


Fig. 10

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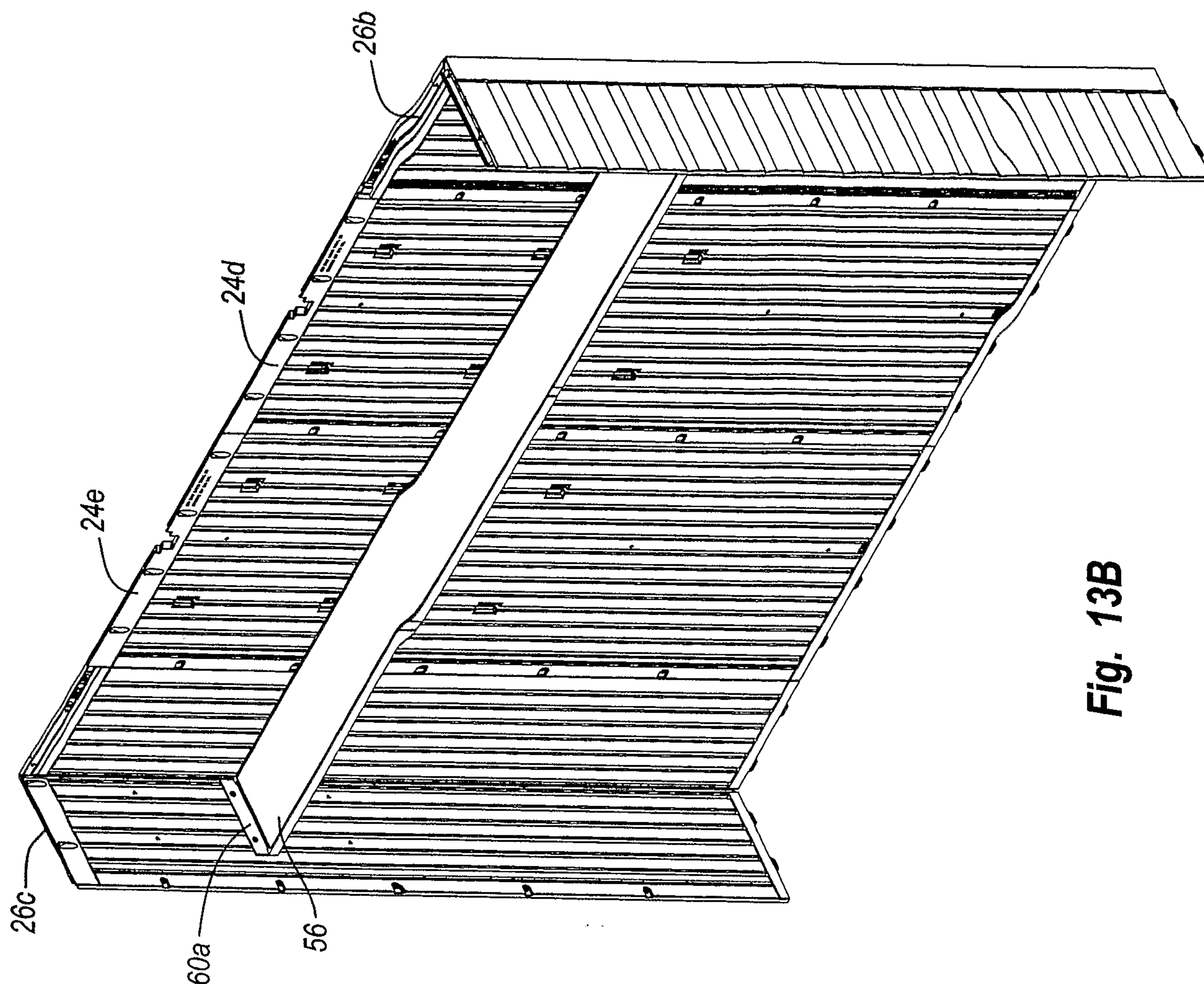


Fig. 13B

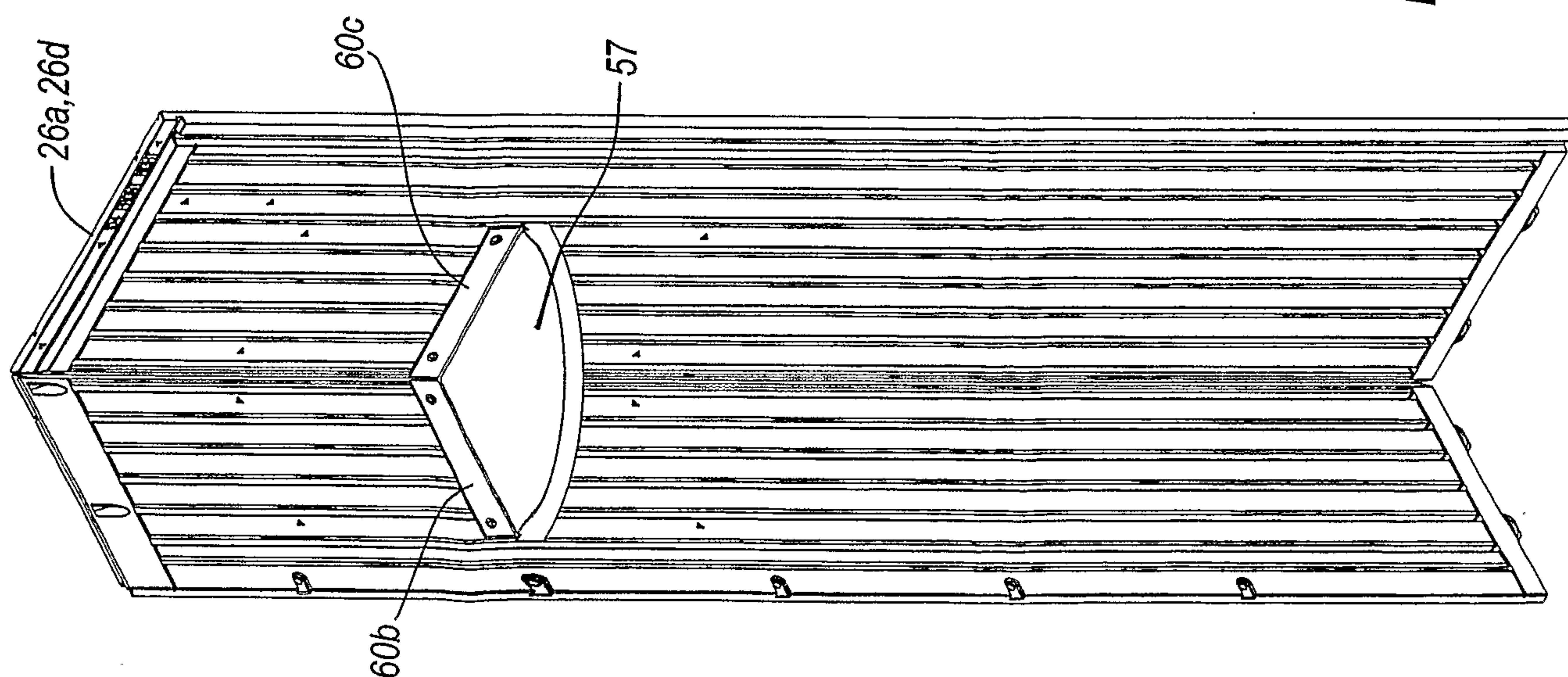


Fig. 13A

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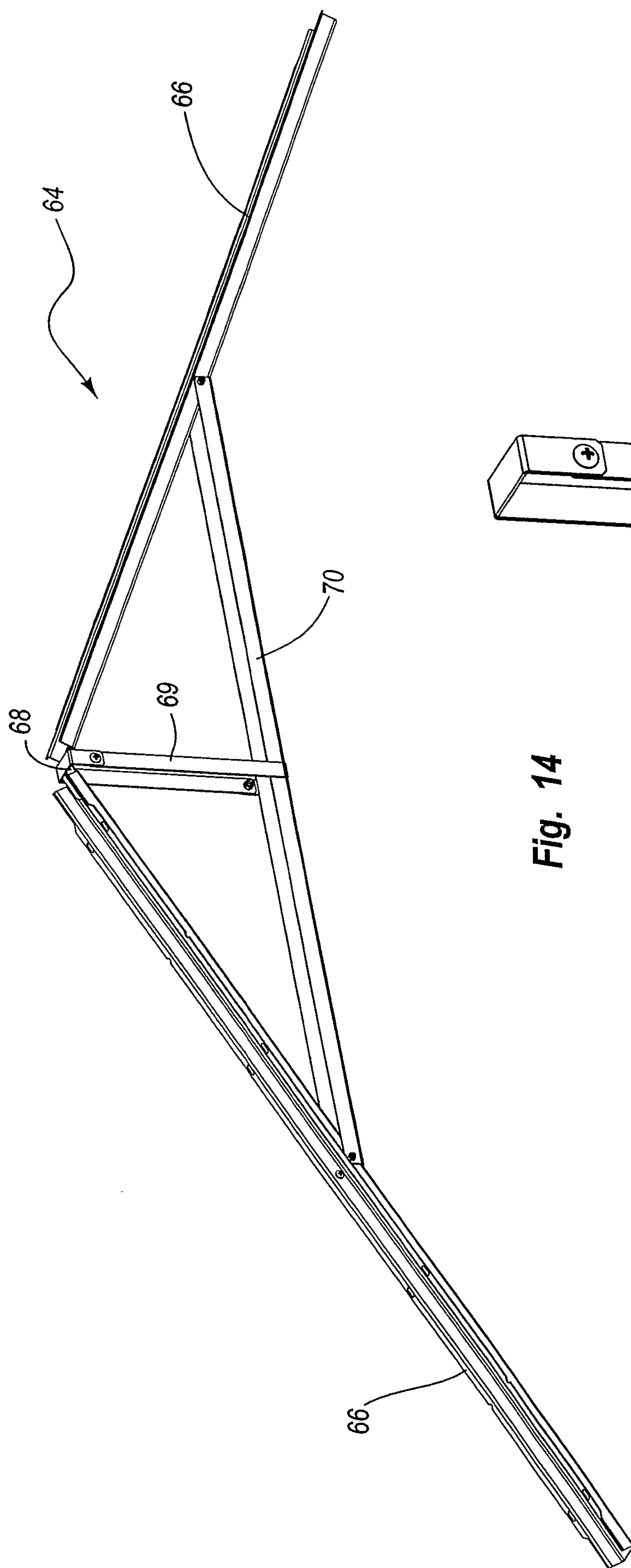


Fig. 14

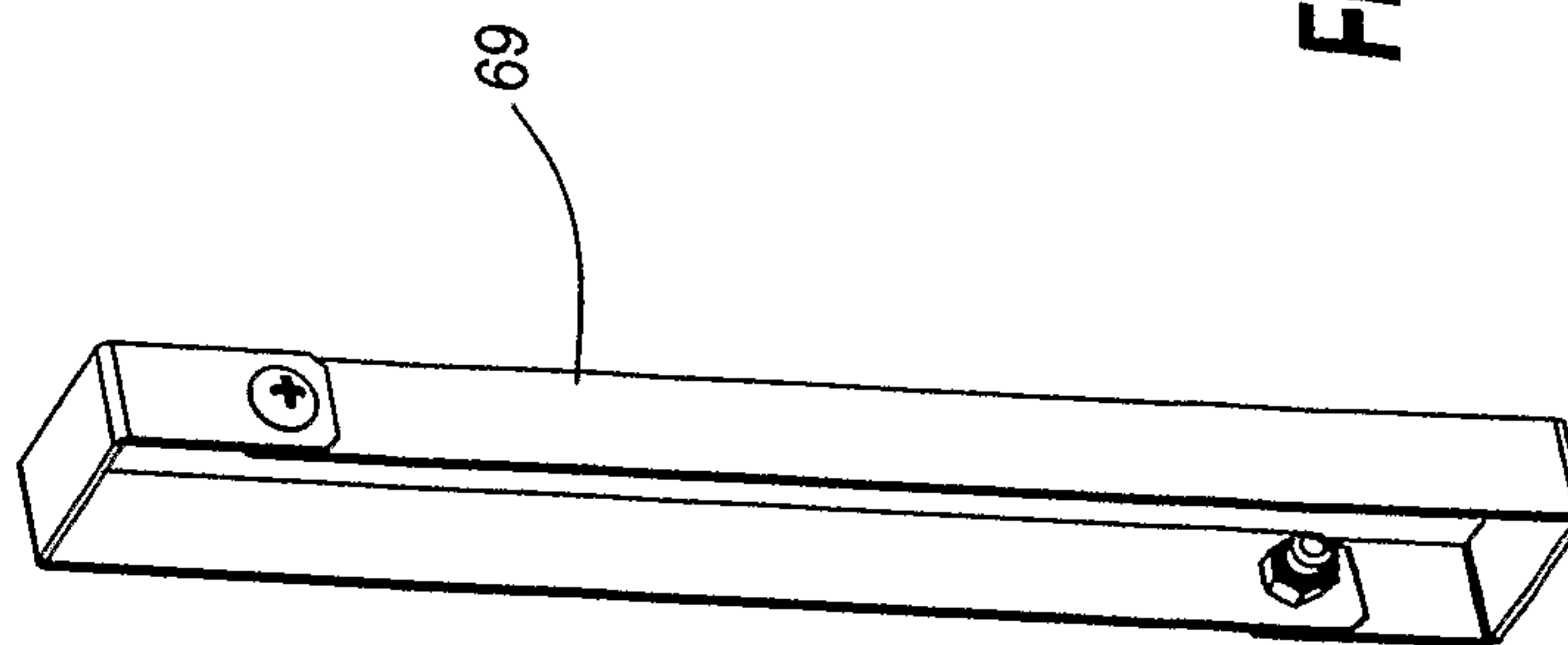


Fig. 15

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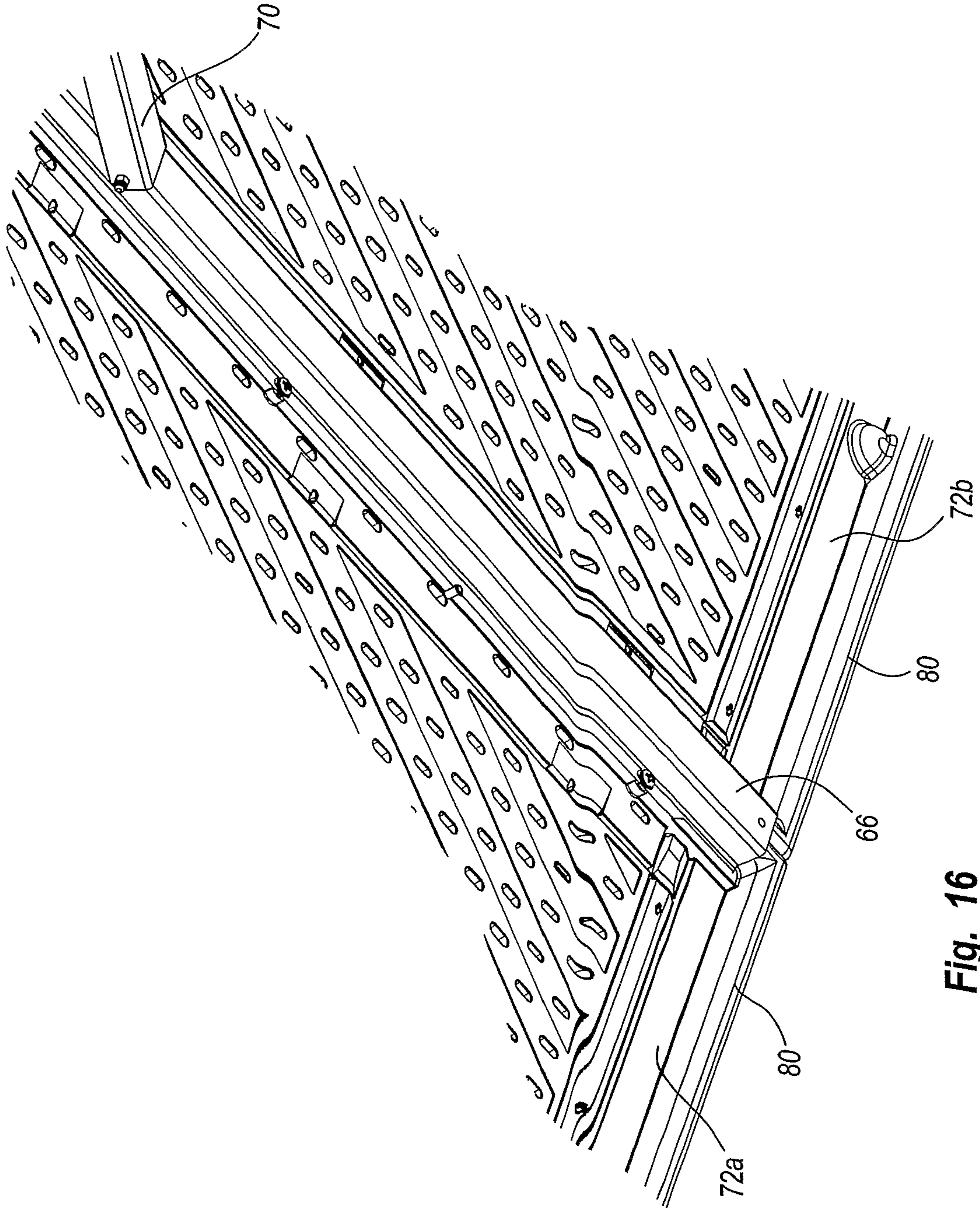


Fig. 16

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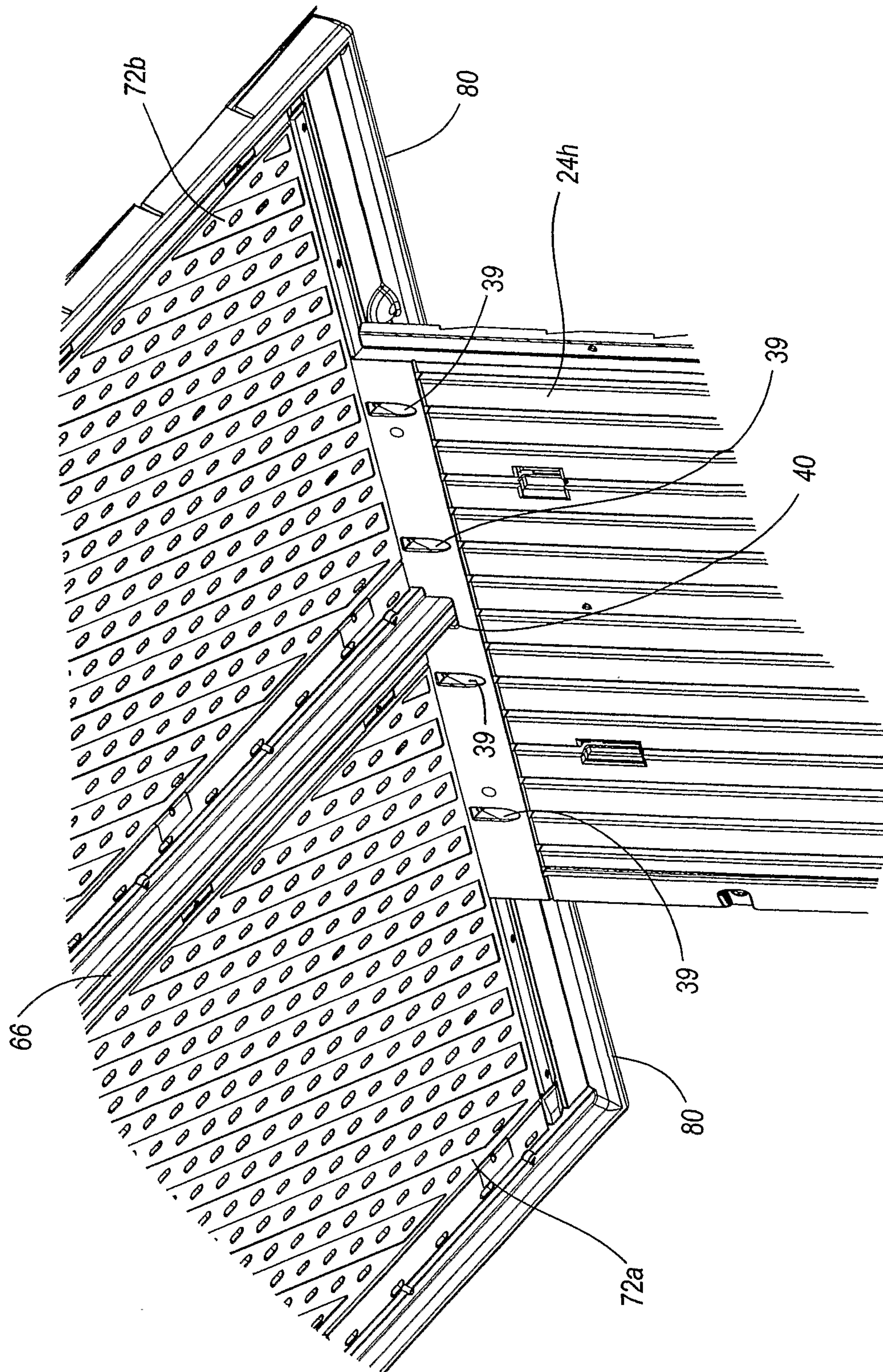


Fig. 17

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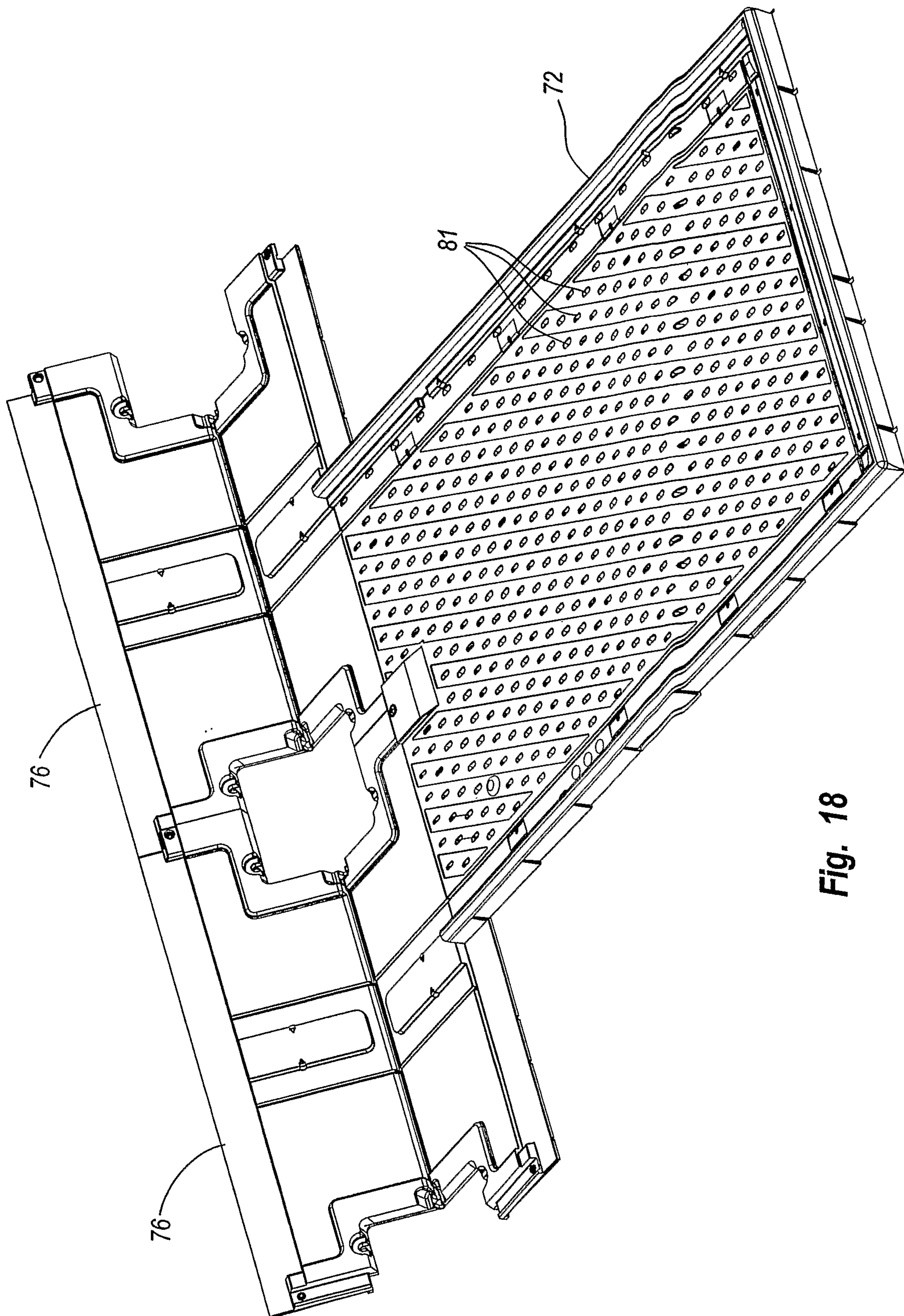


Fig. 18

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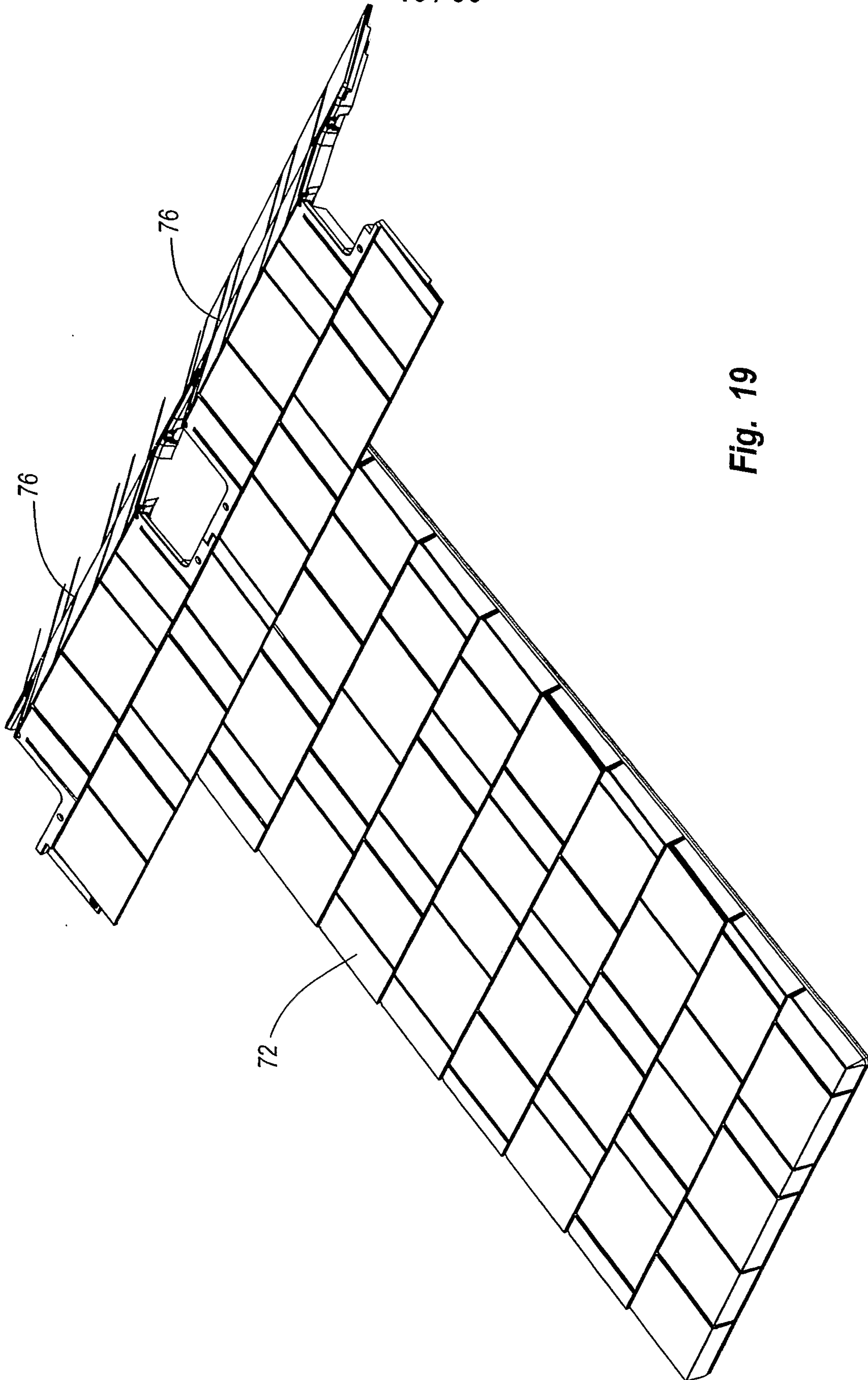


Fig. 19

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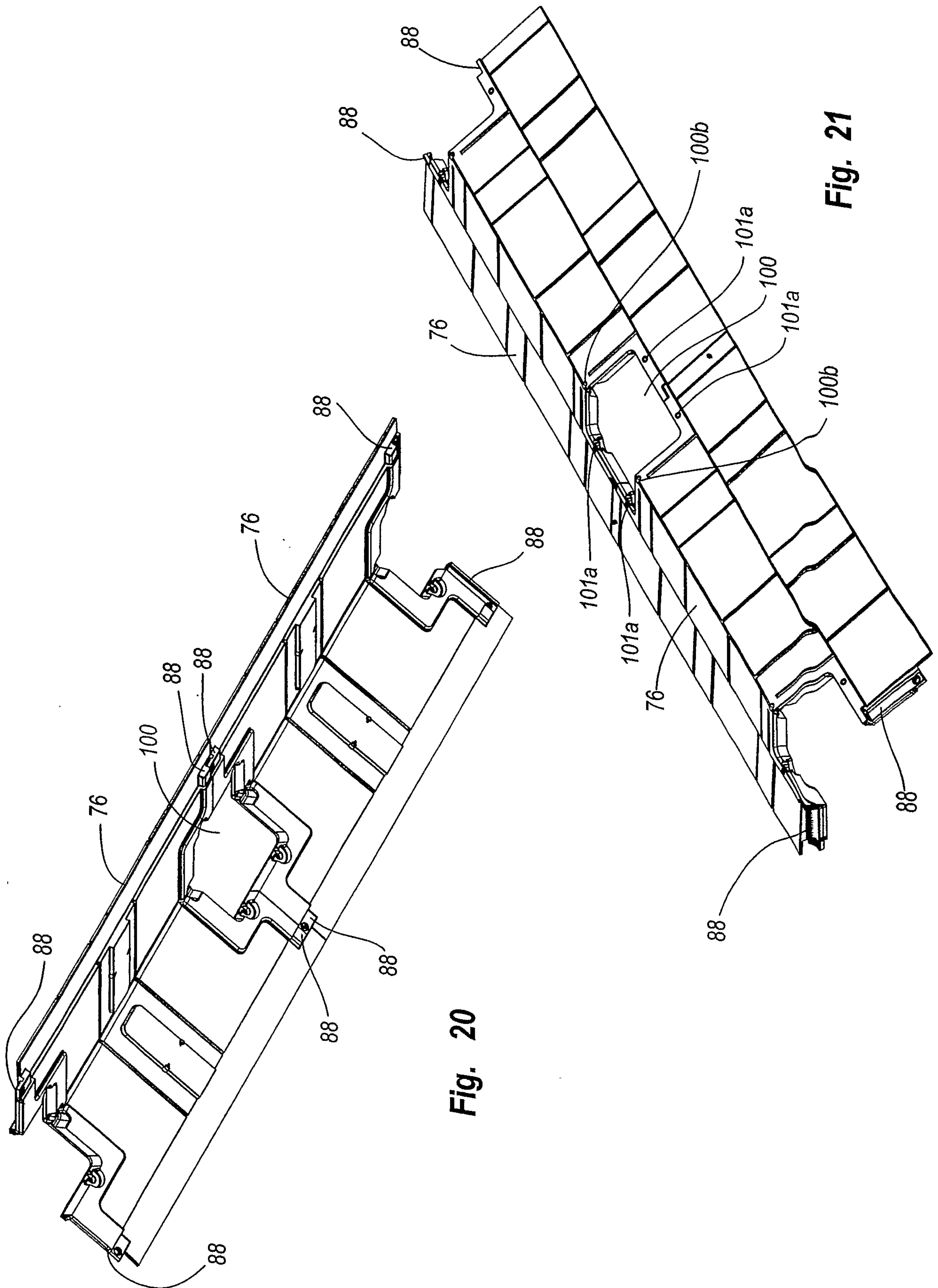


Fig. 21

Fig. 20

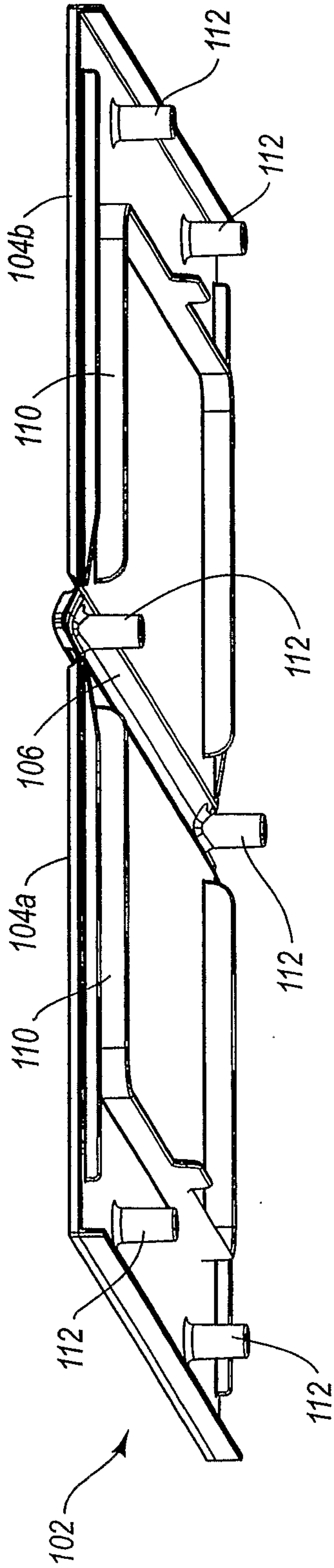


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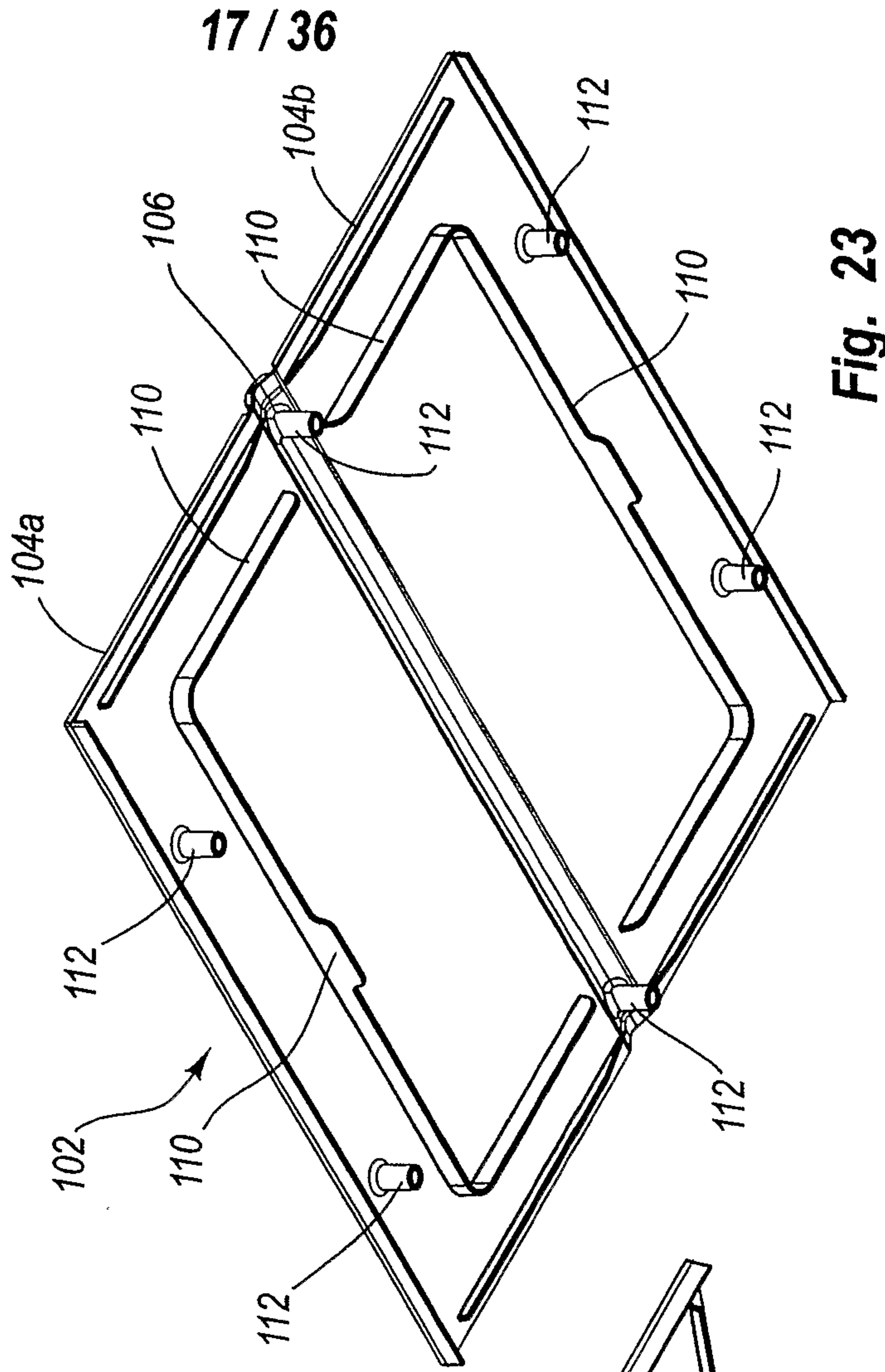


Fig. 23

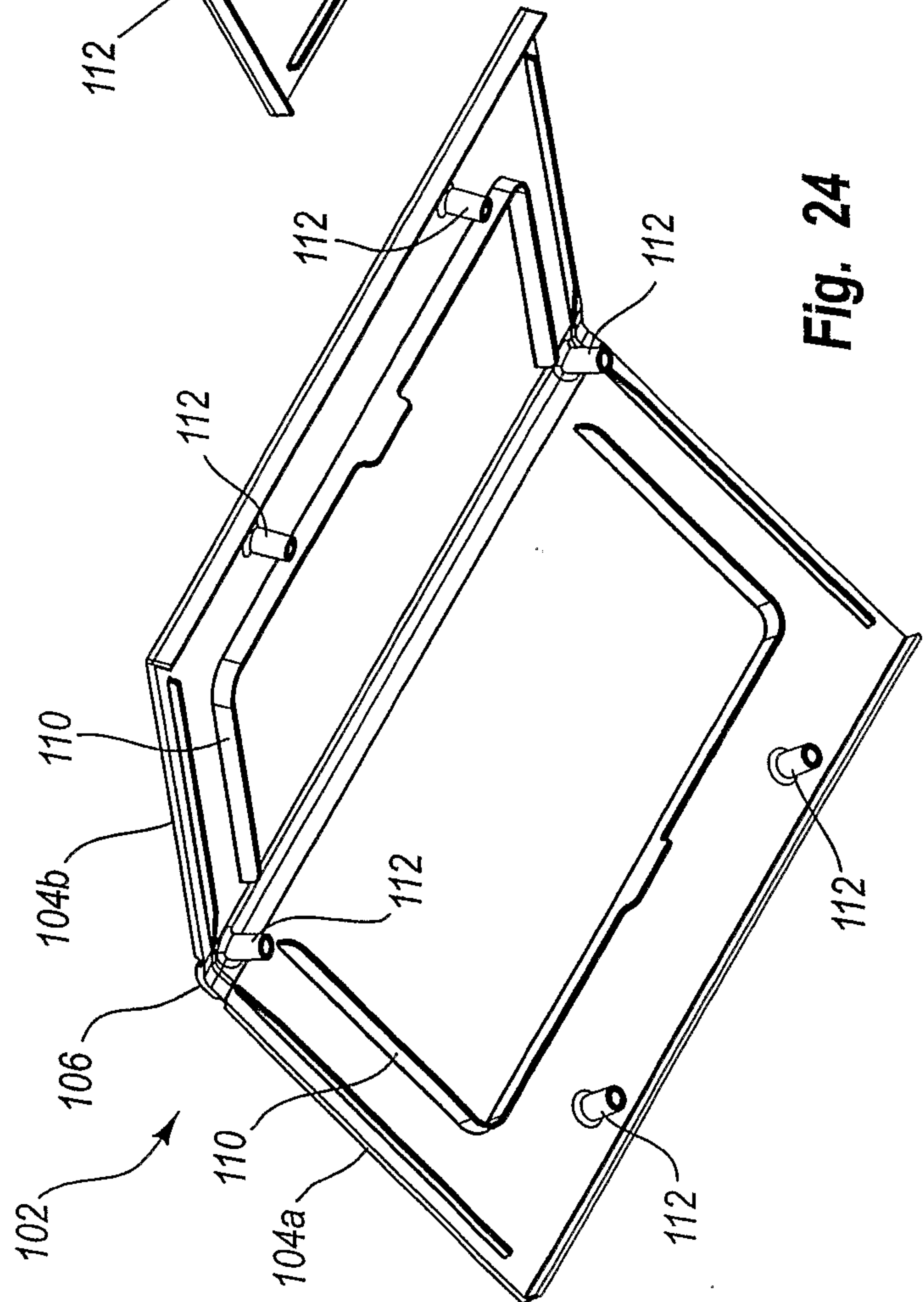
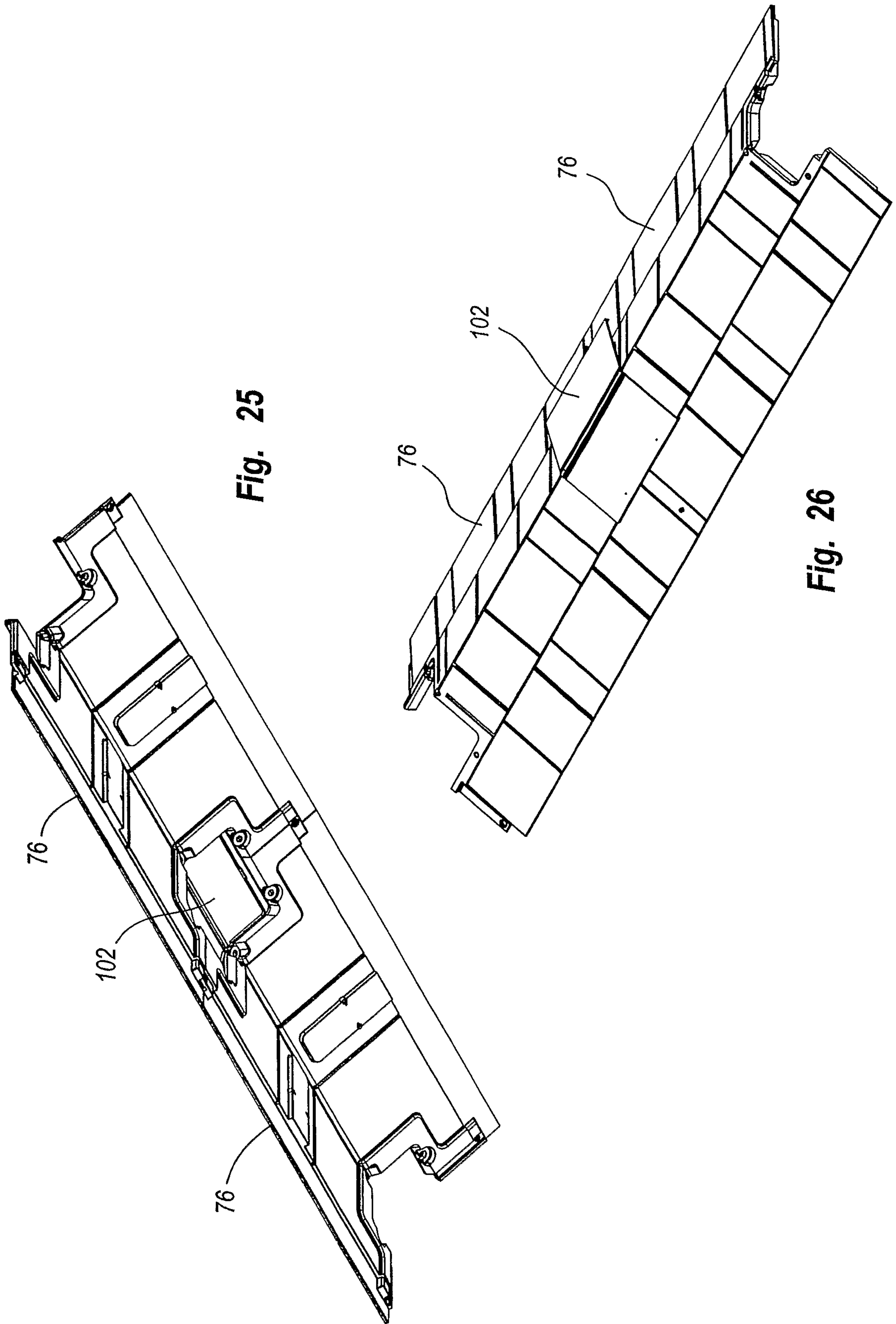


Fig. 24

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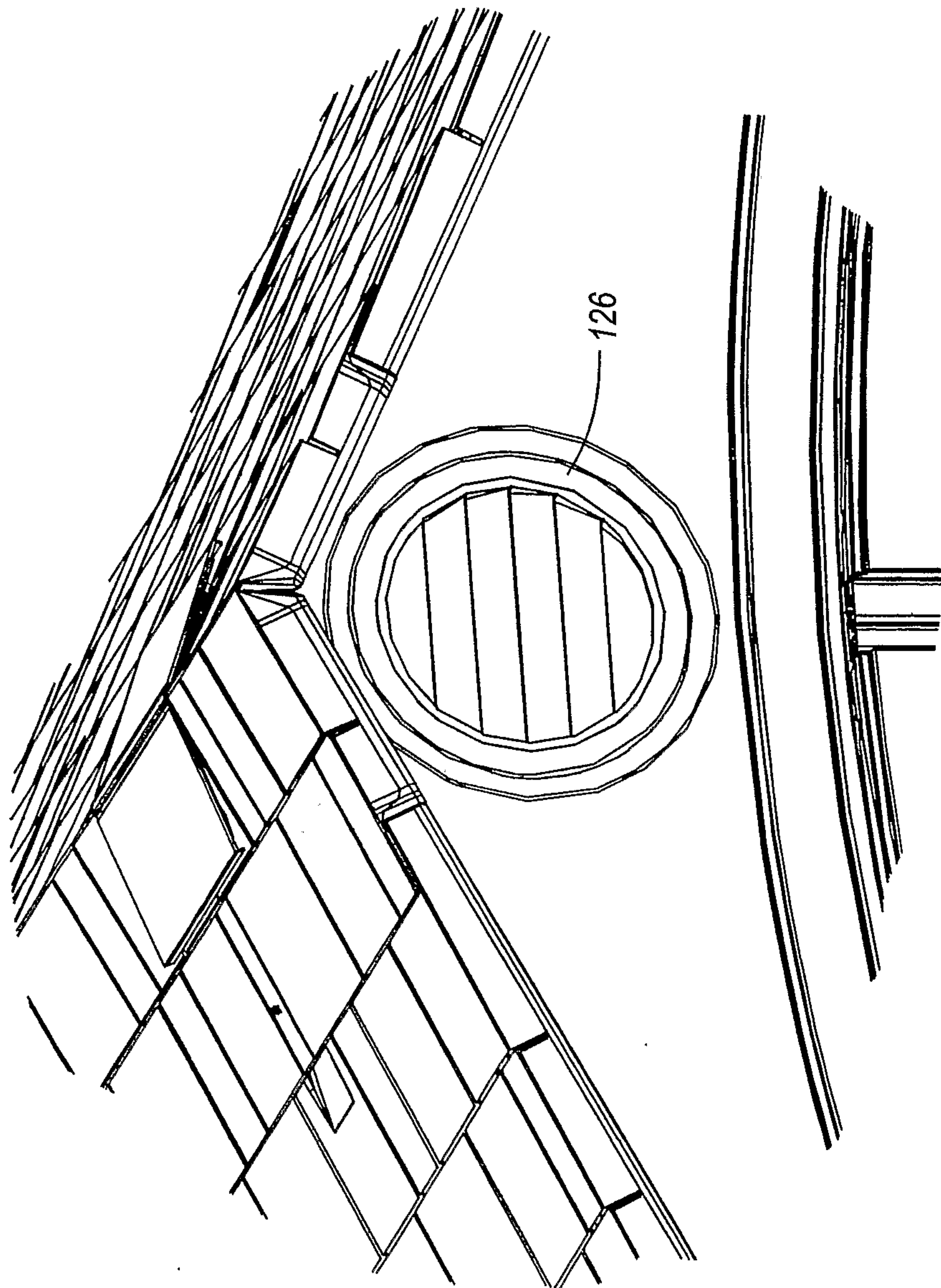


Fig. 27

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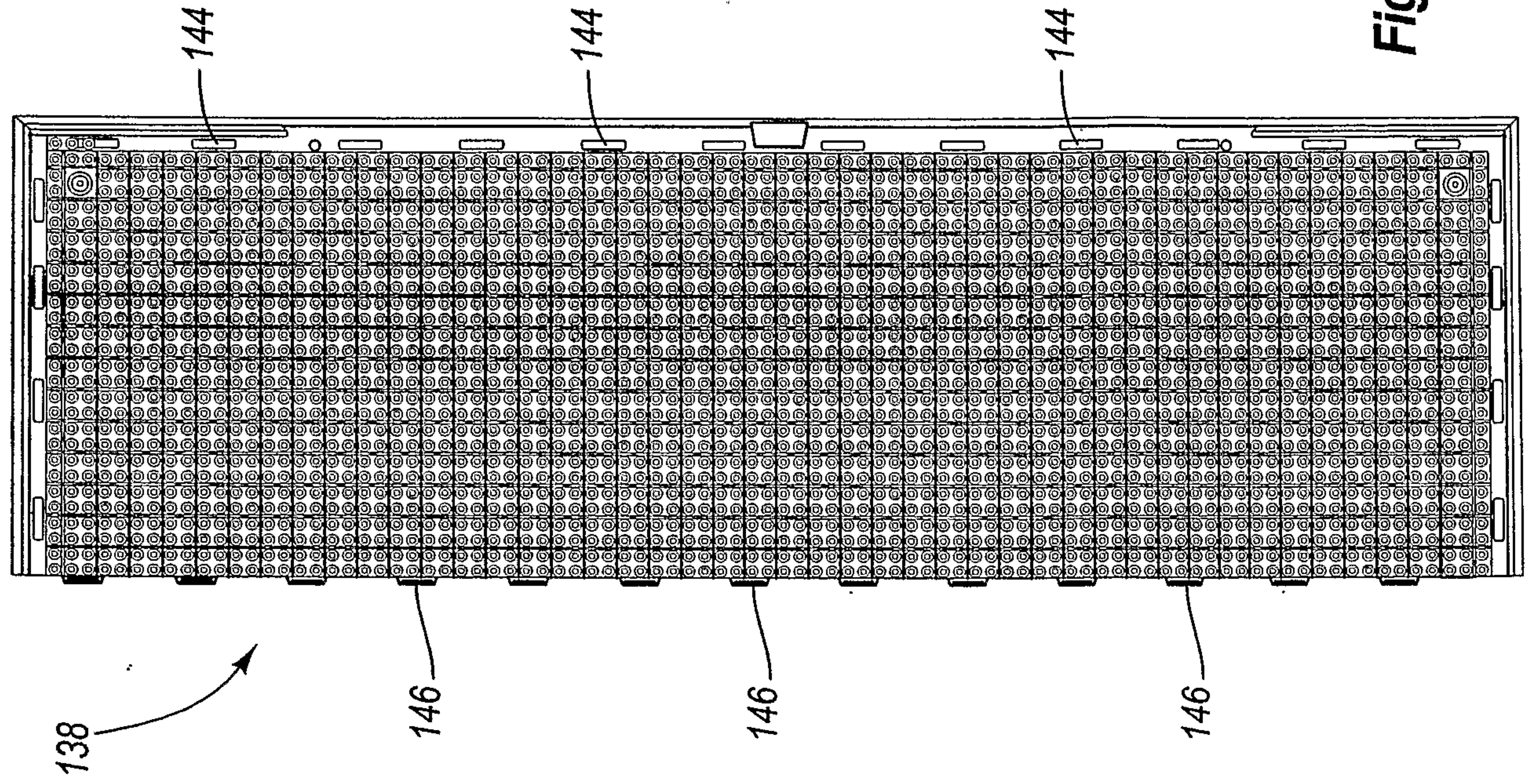


Fig. 29

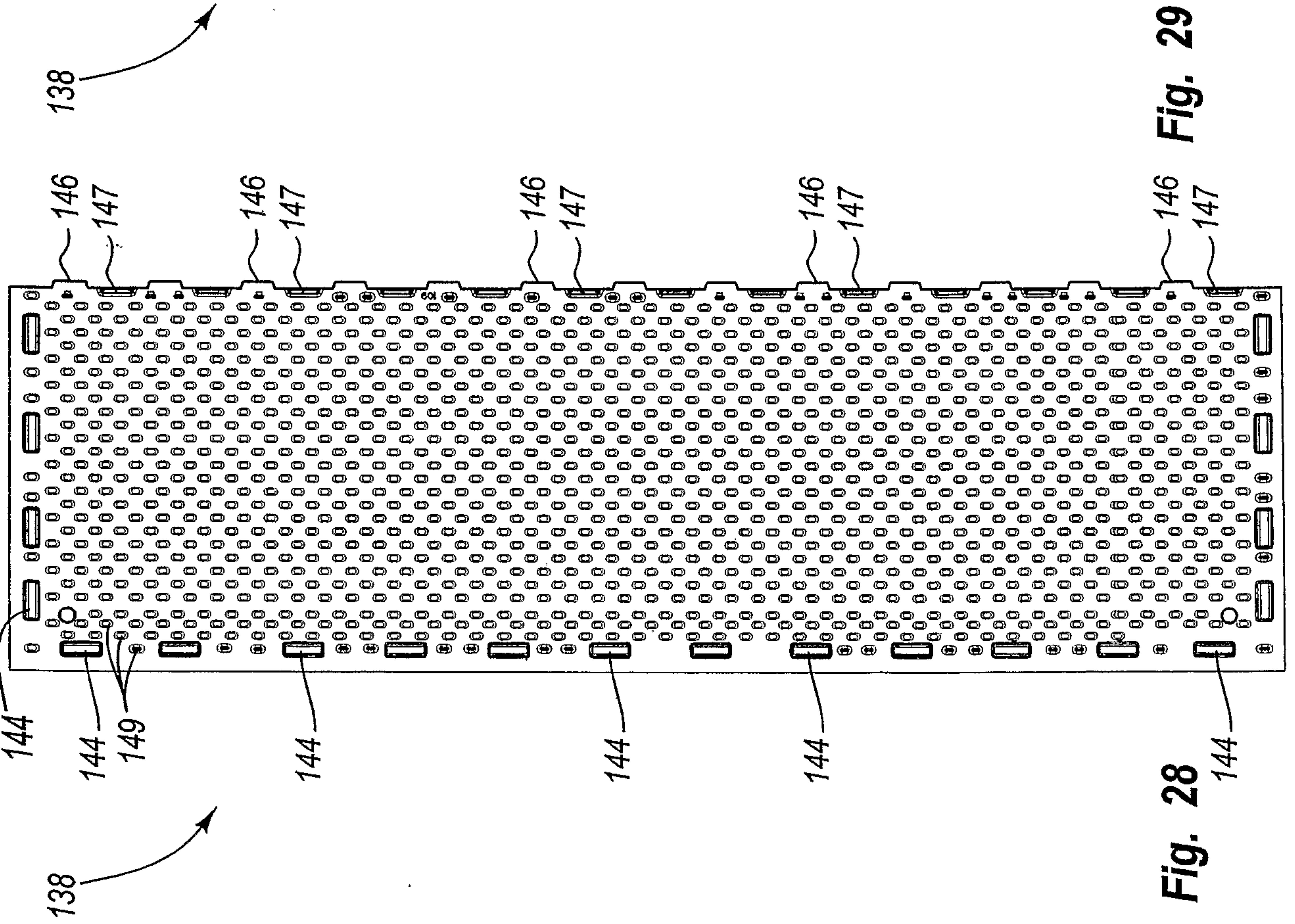


Fig. 28

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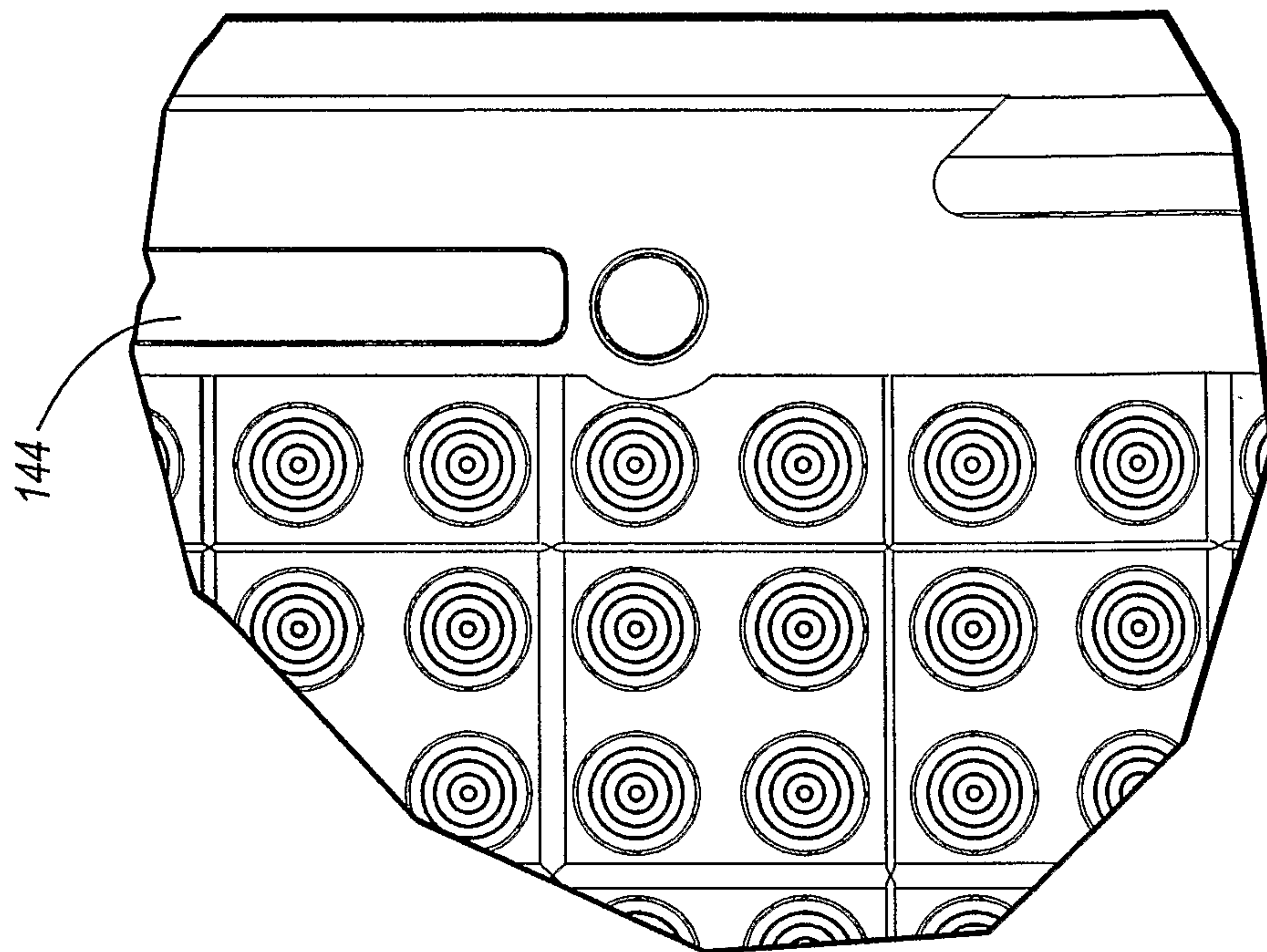


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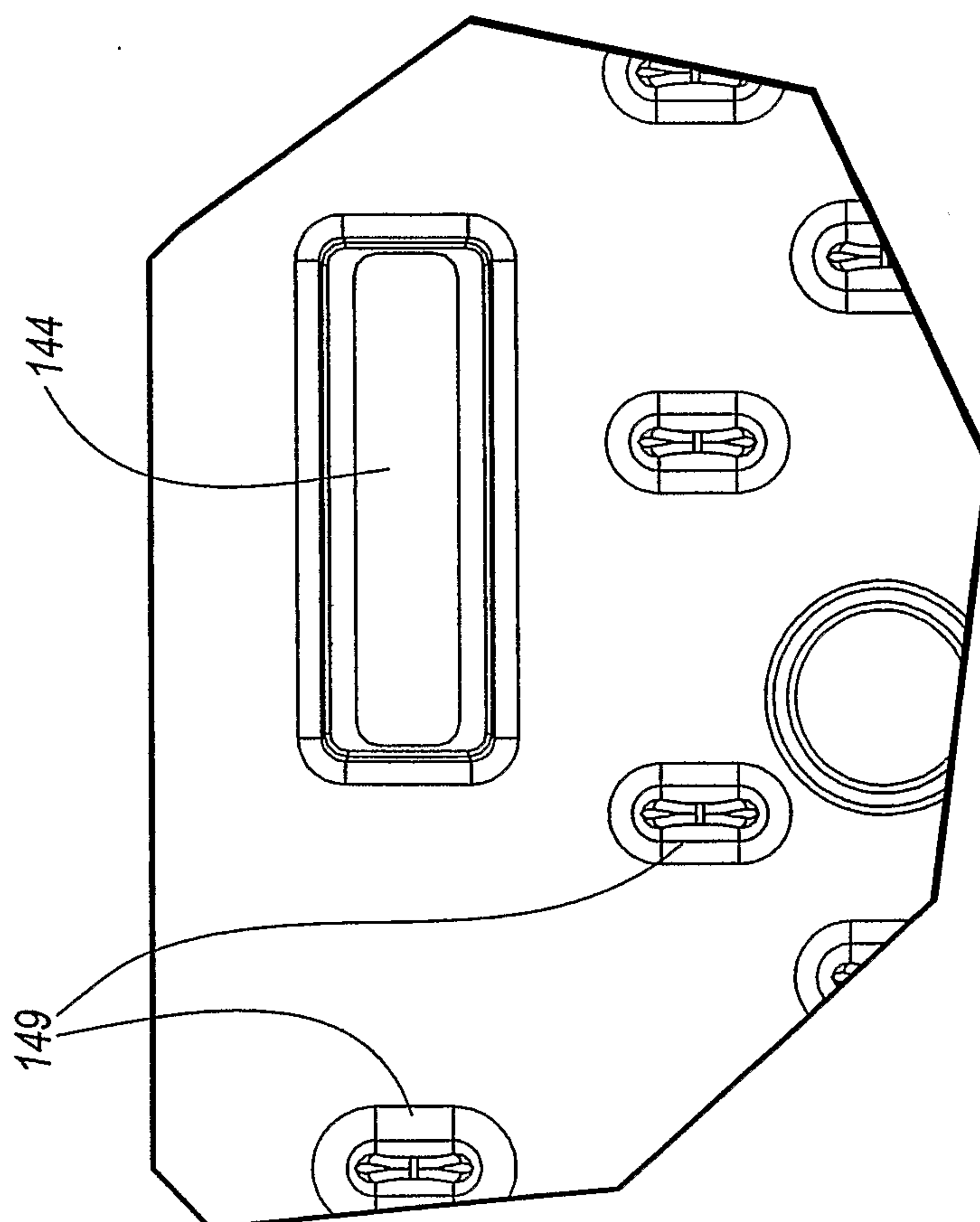


Fig. 31

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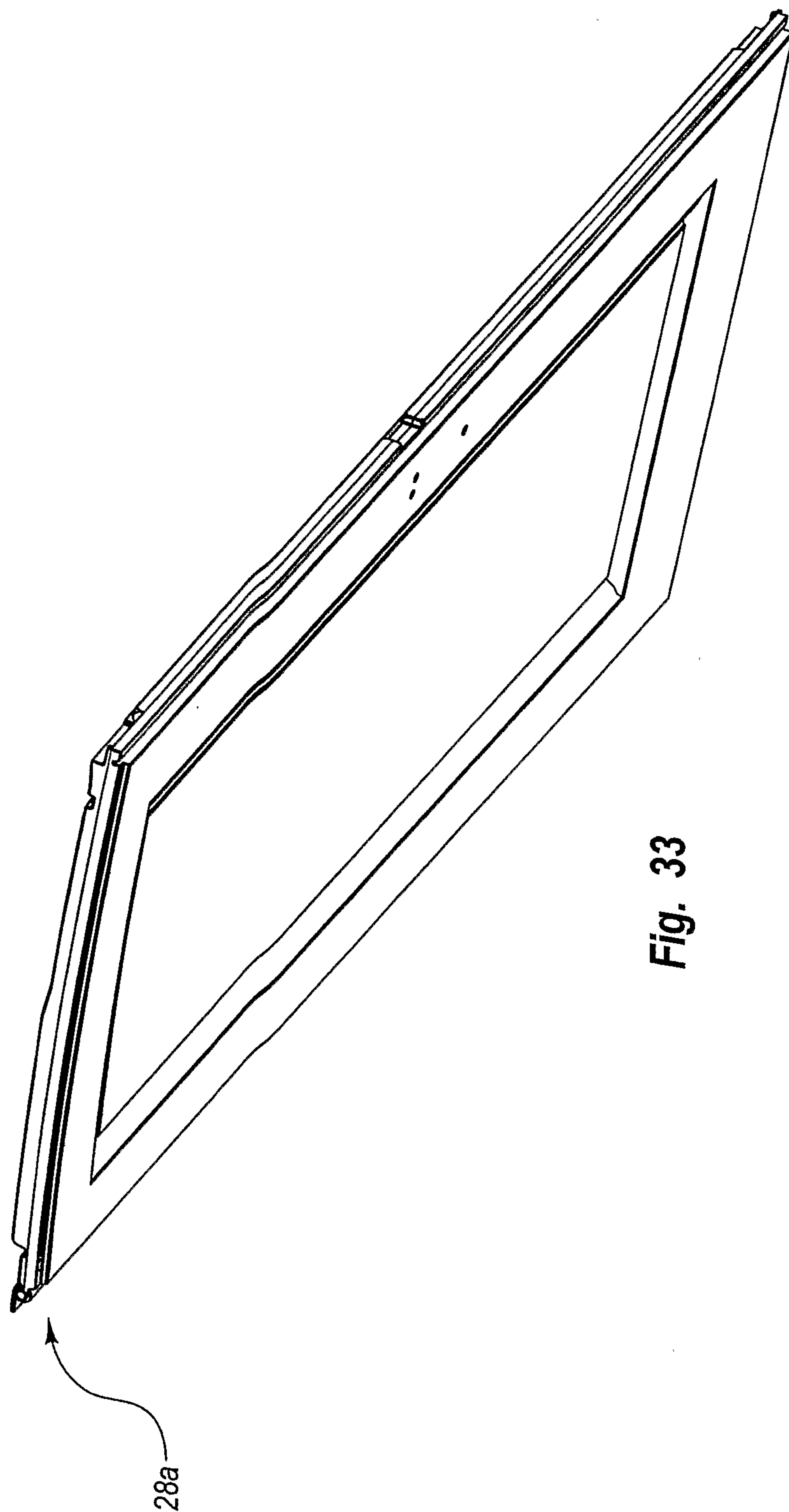


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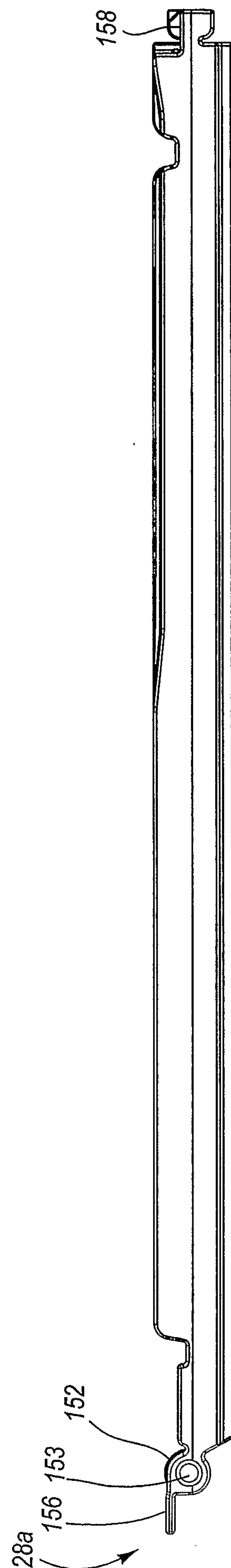
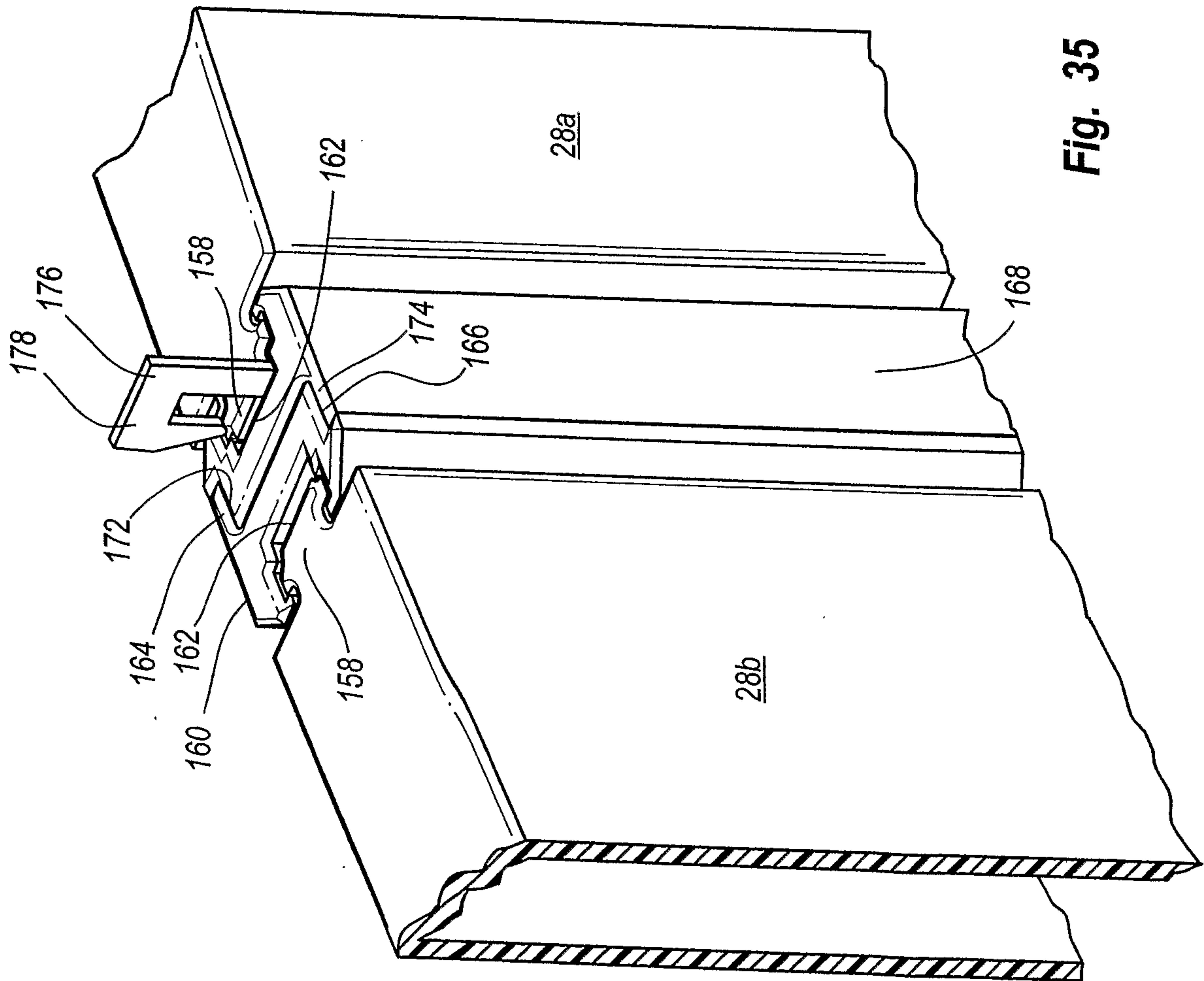


Fig. 34

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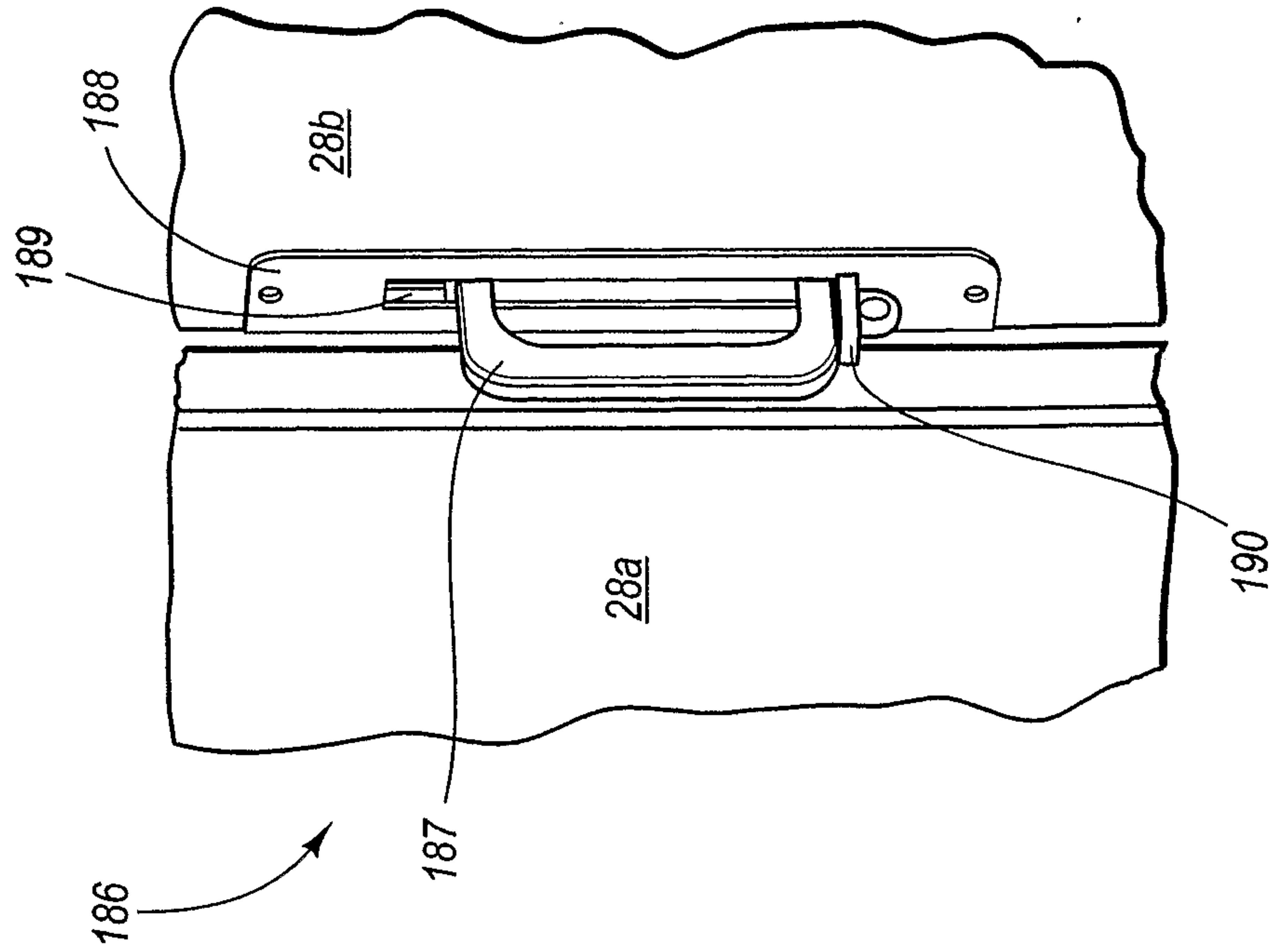


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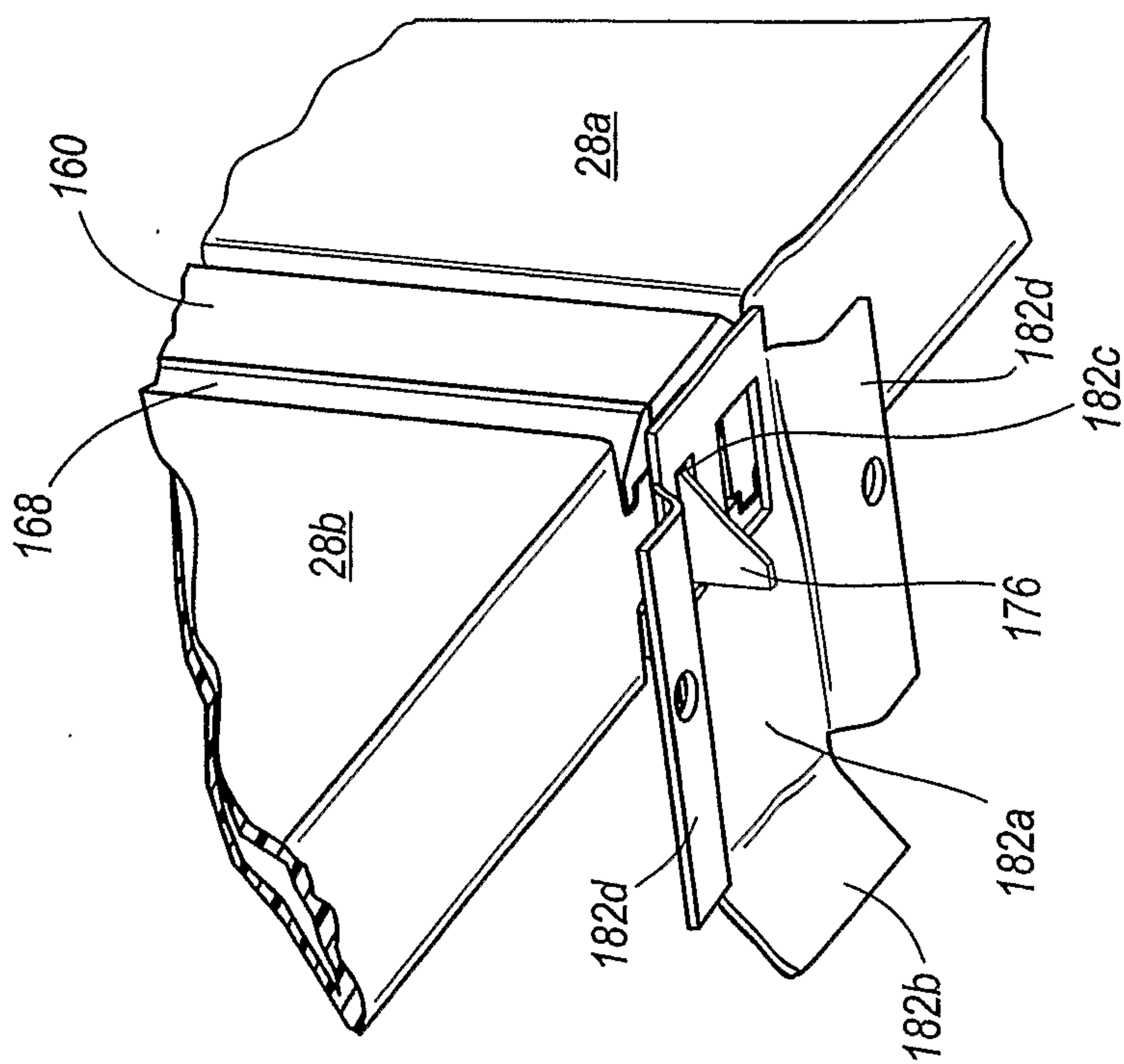


Fig. 36

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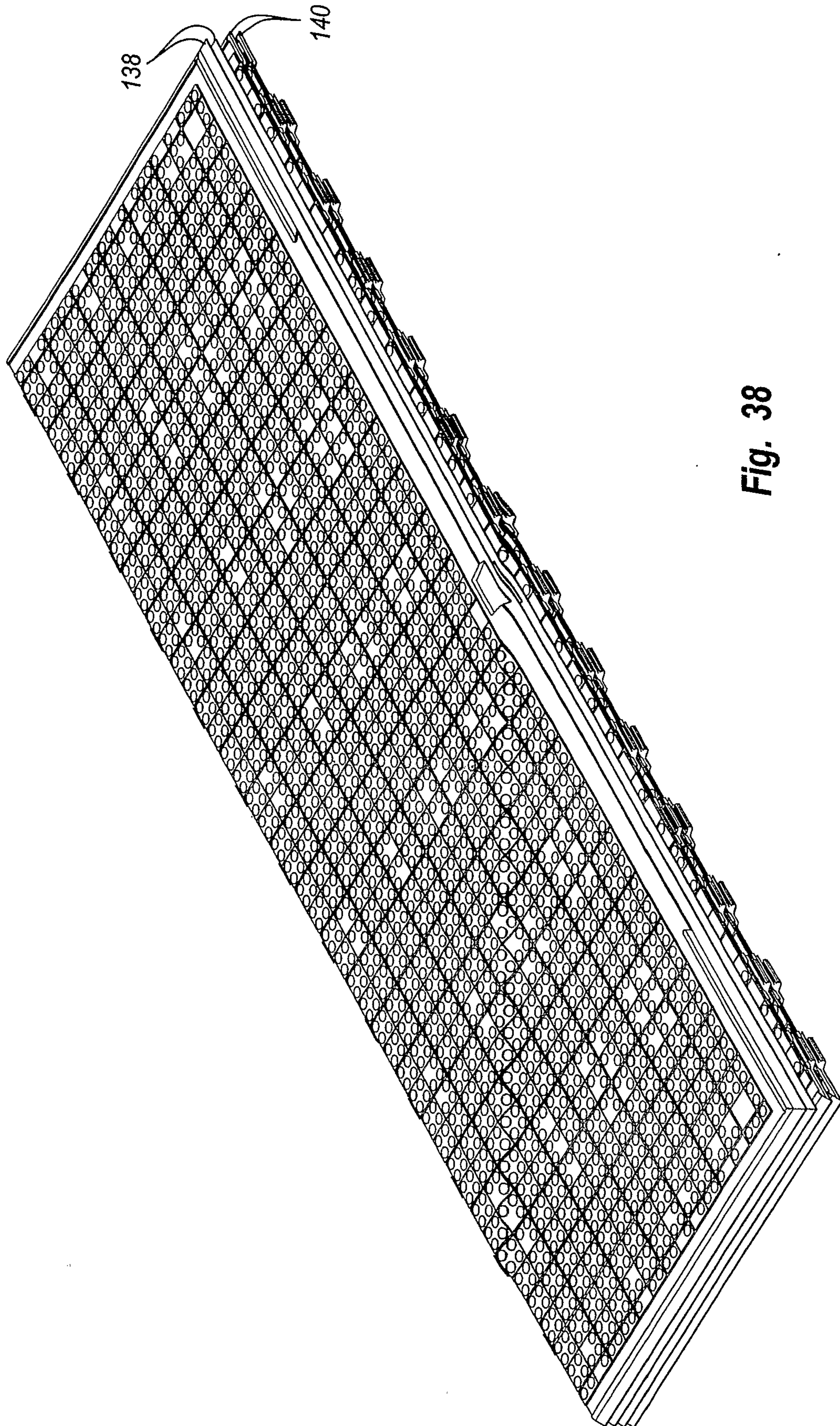


Fig. 38

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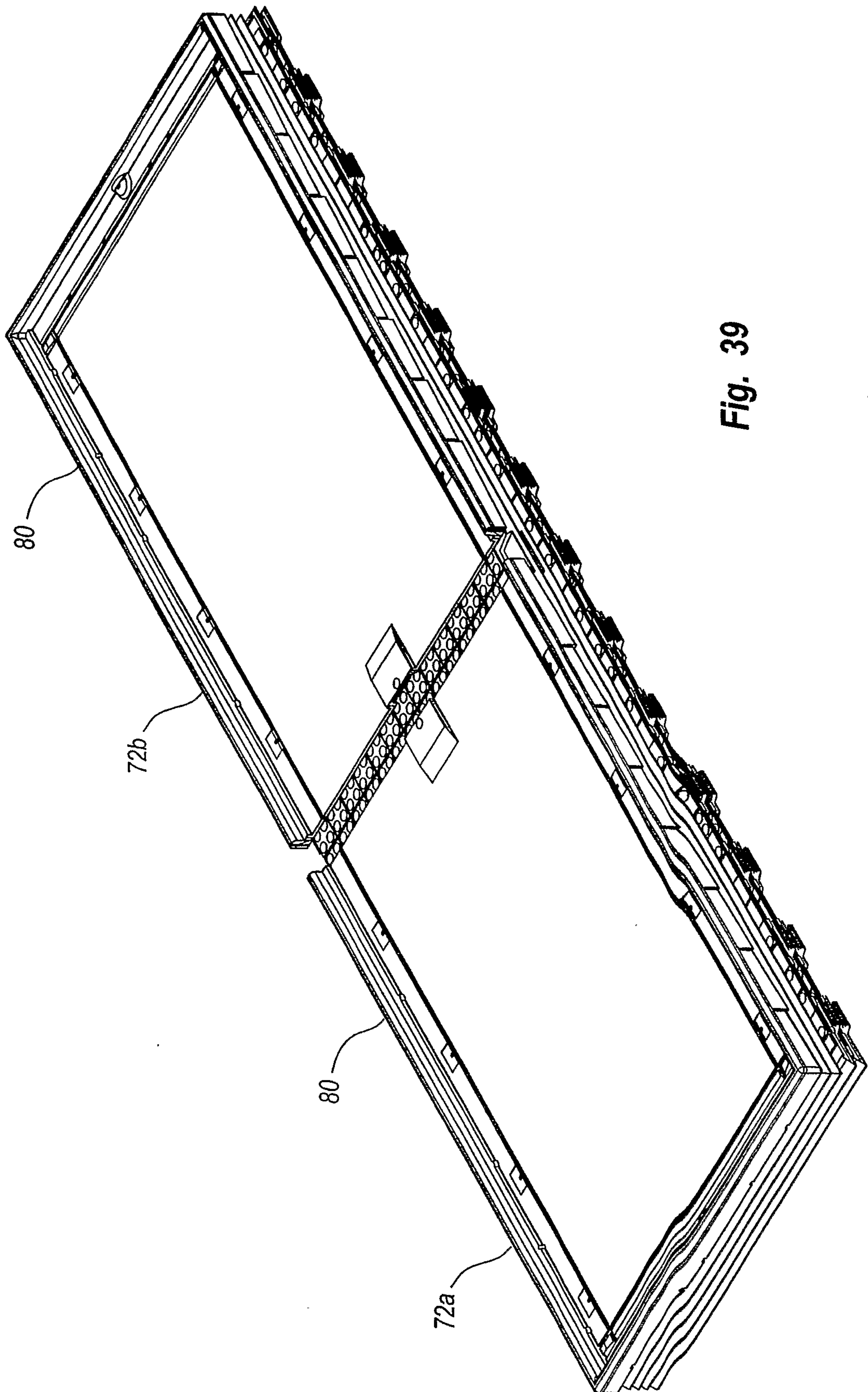


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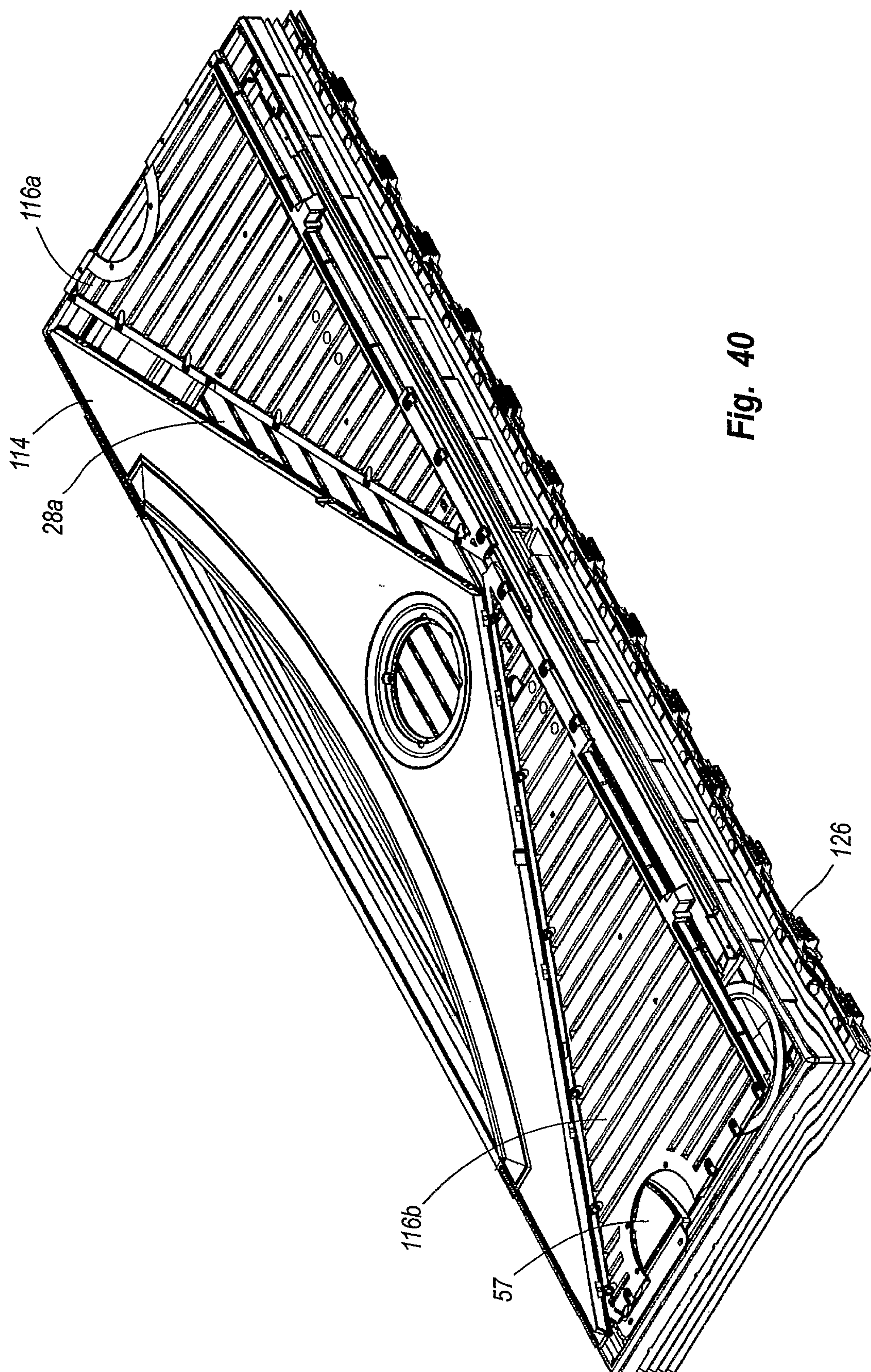
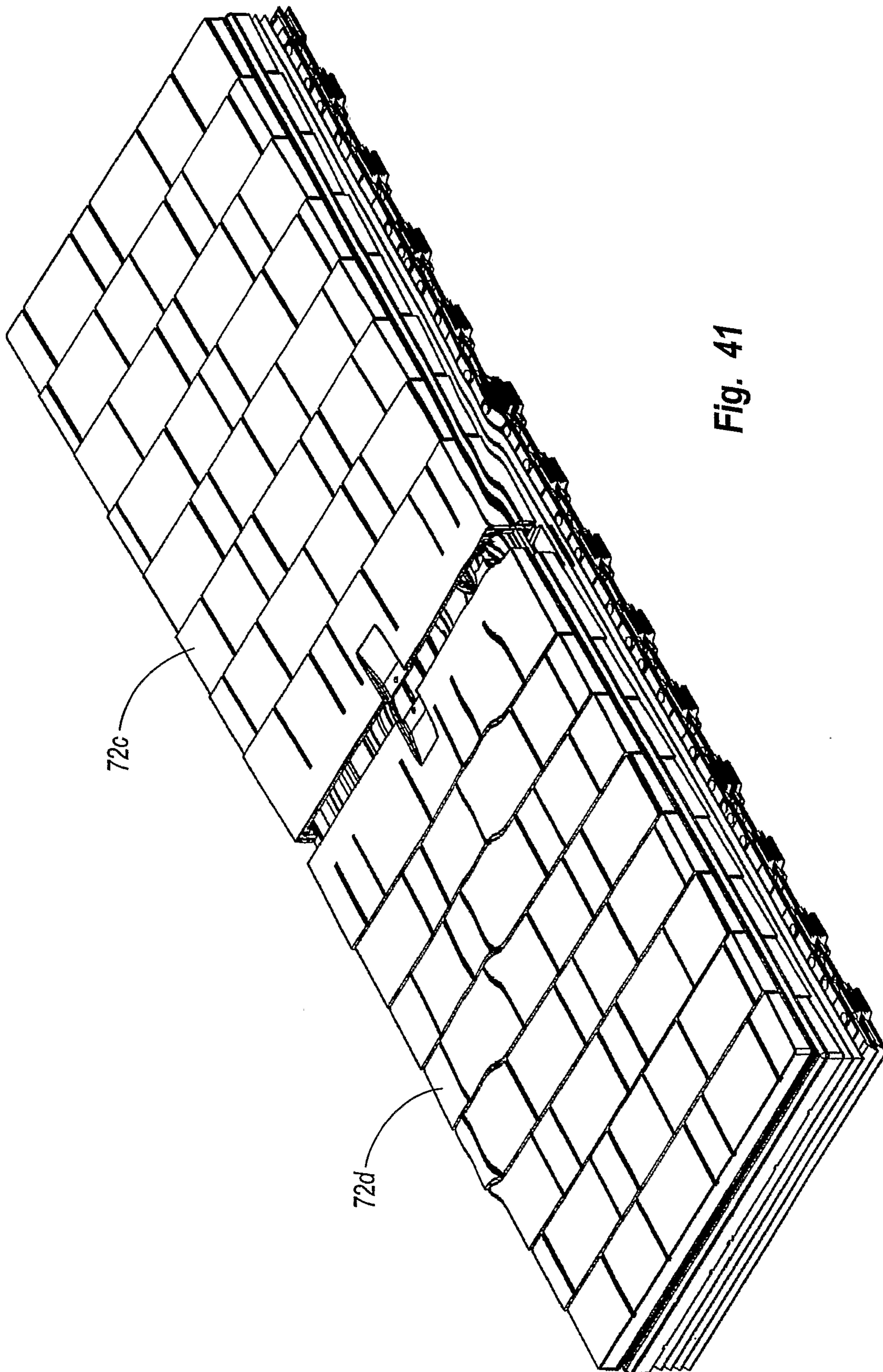


Fig. 40

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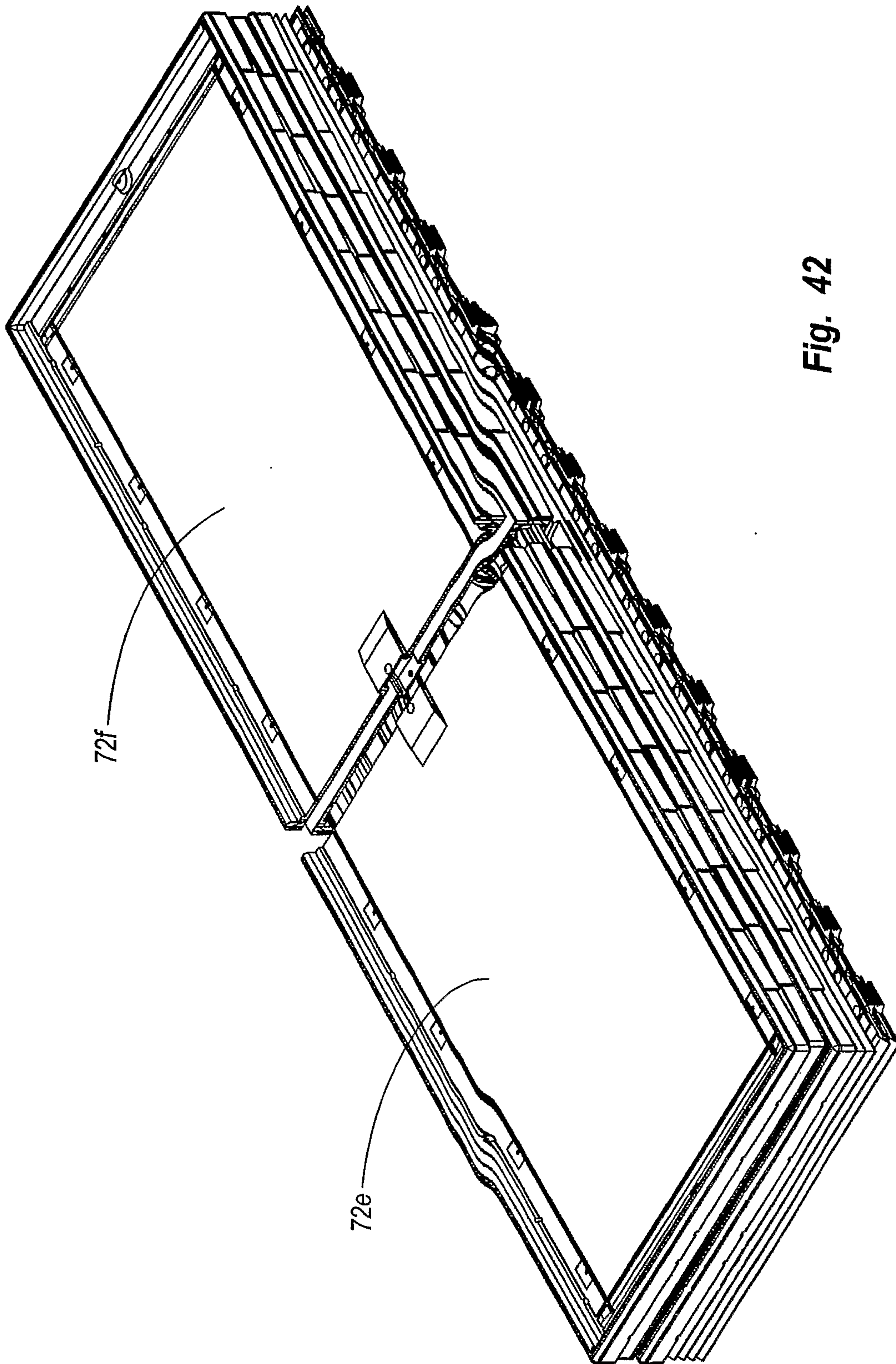
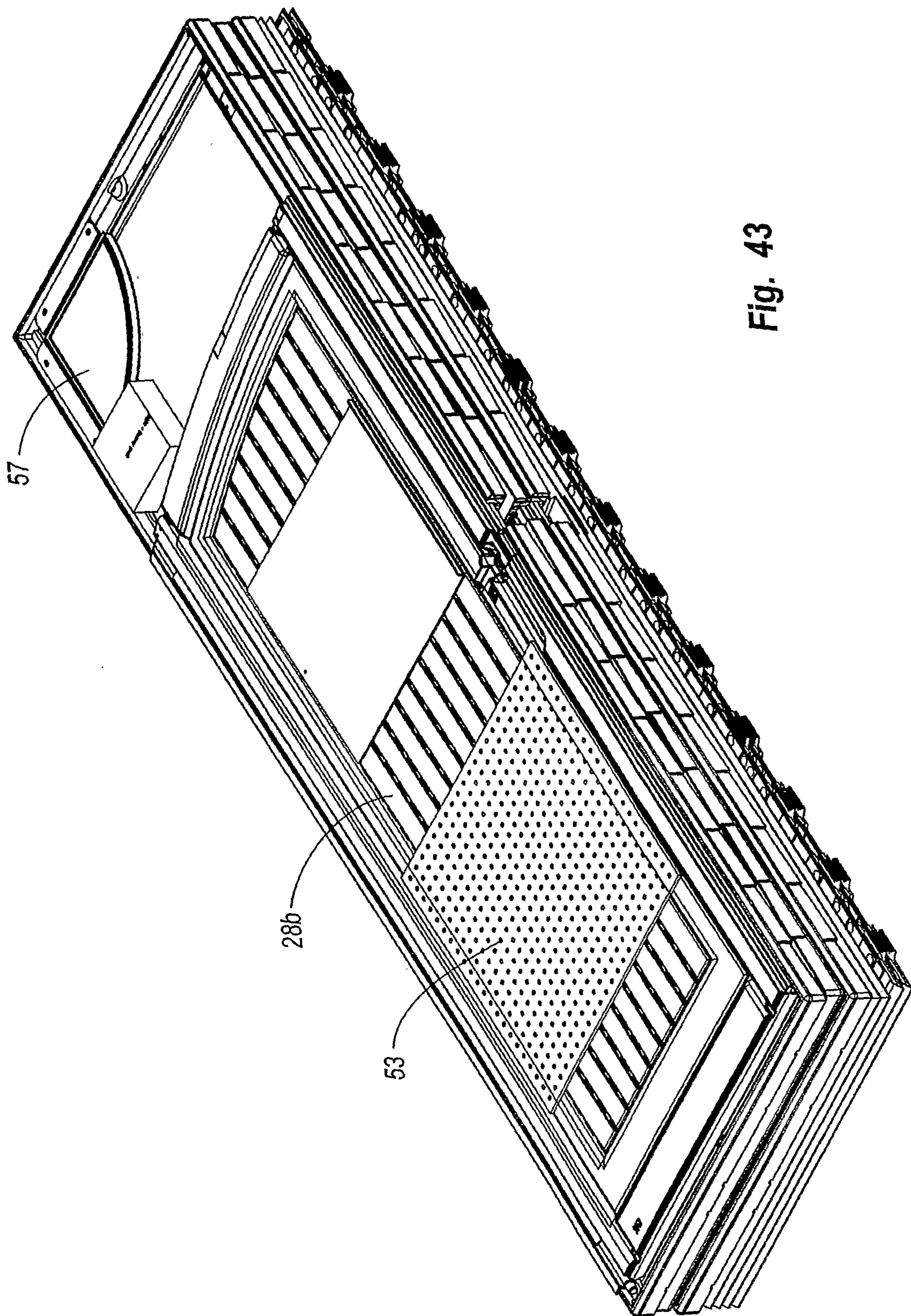


Fig. 42

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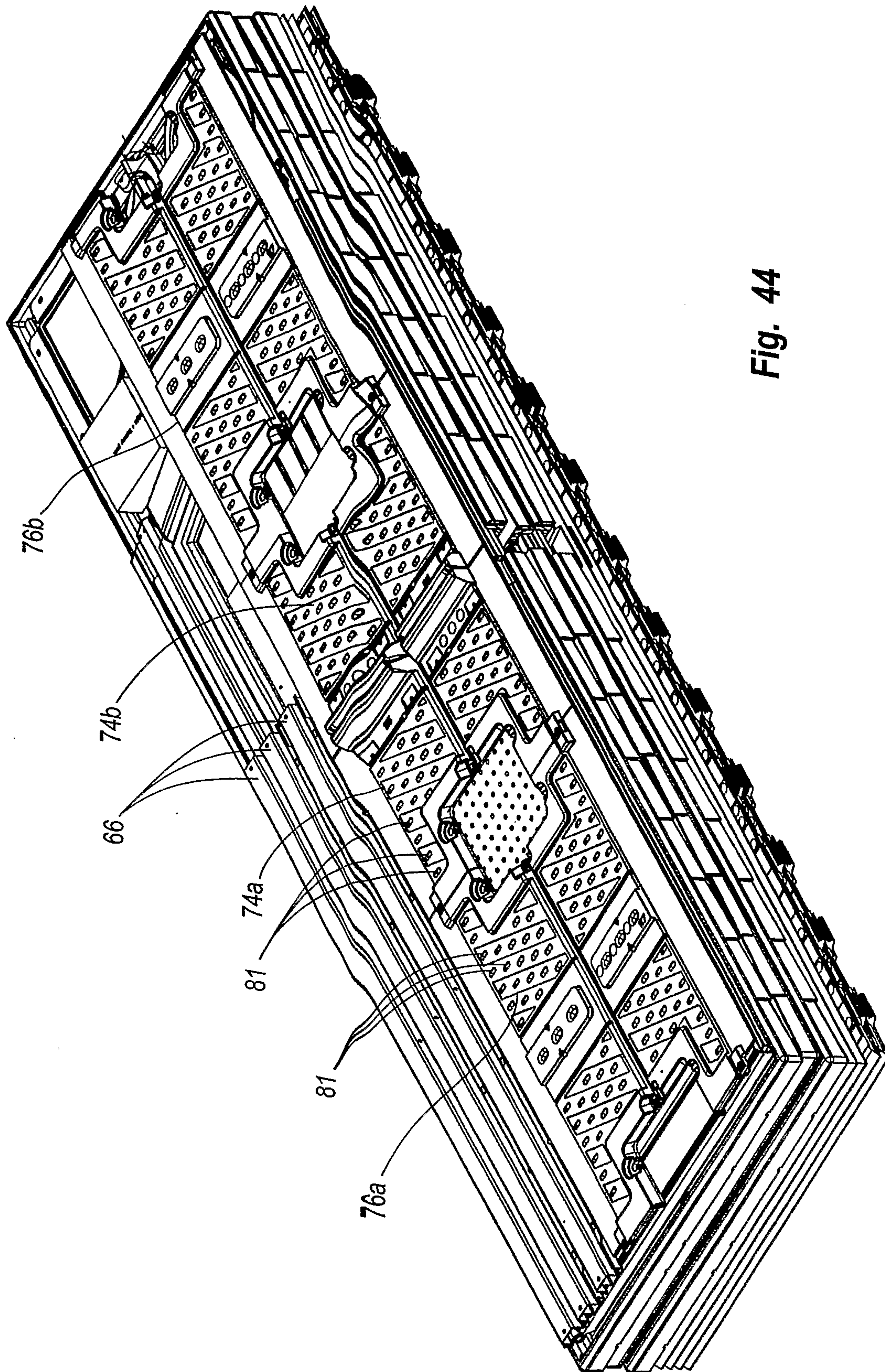


Fig. 44

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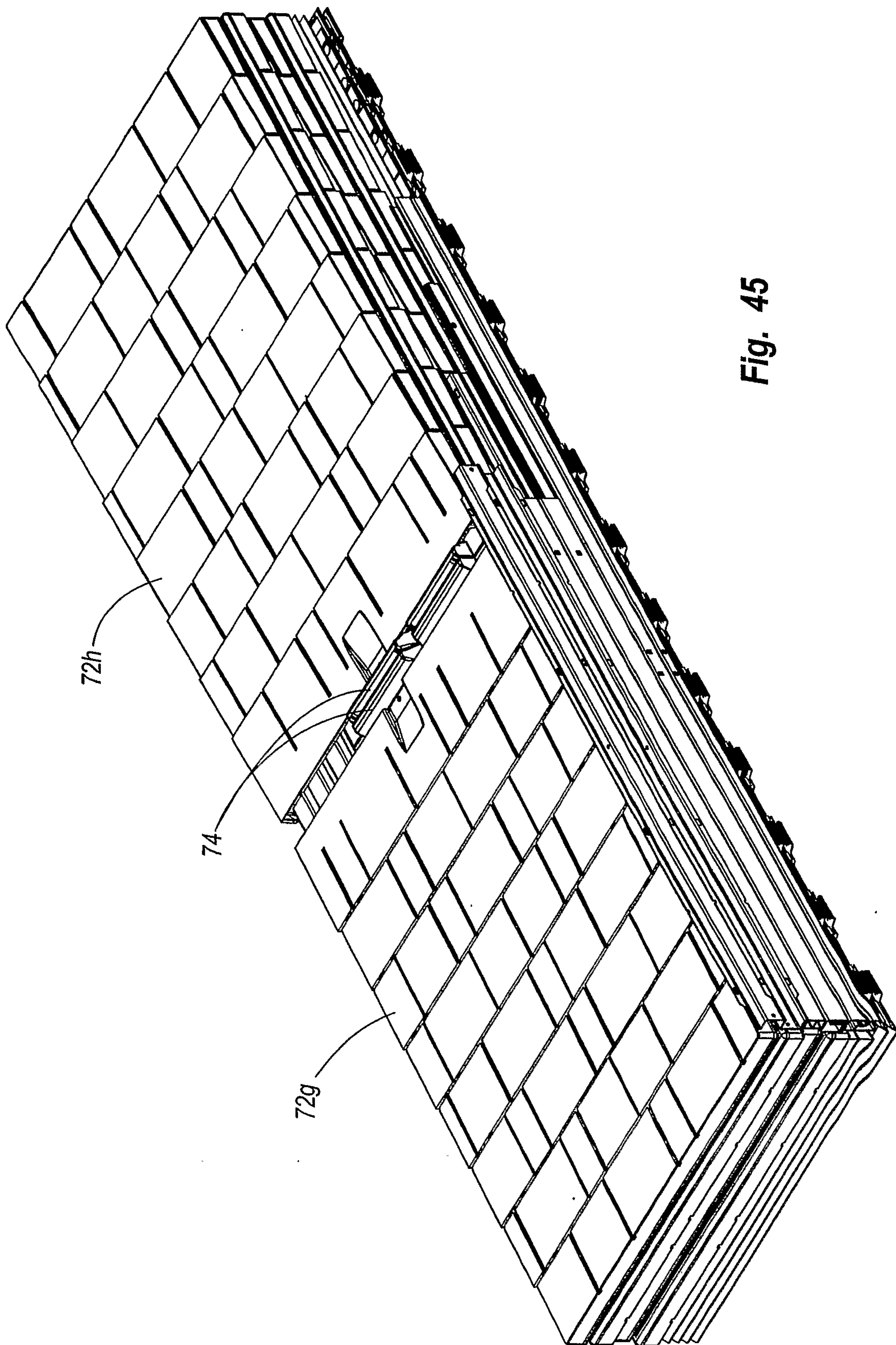


Fig. 45

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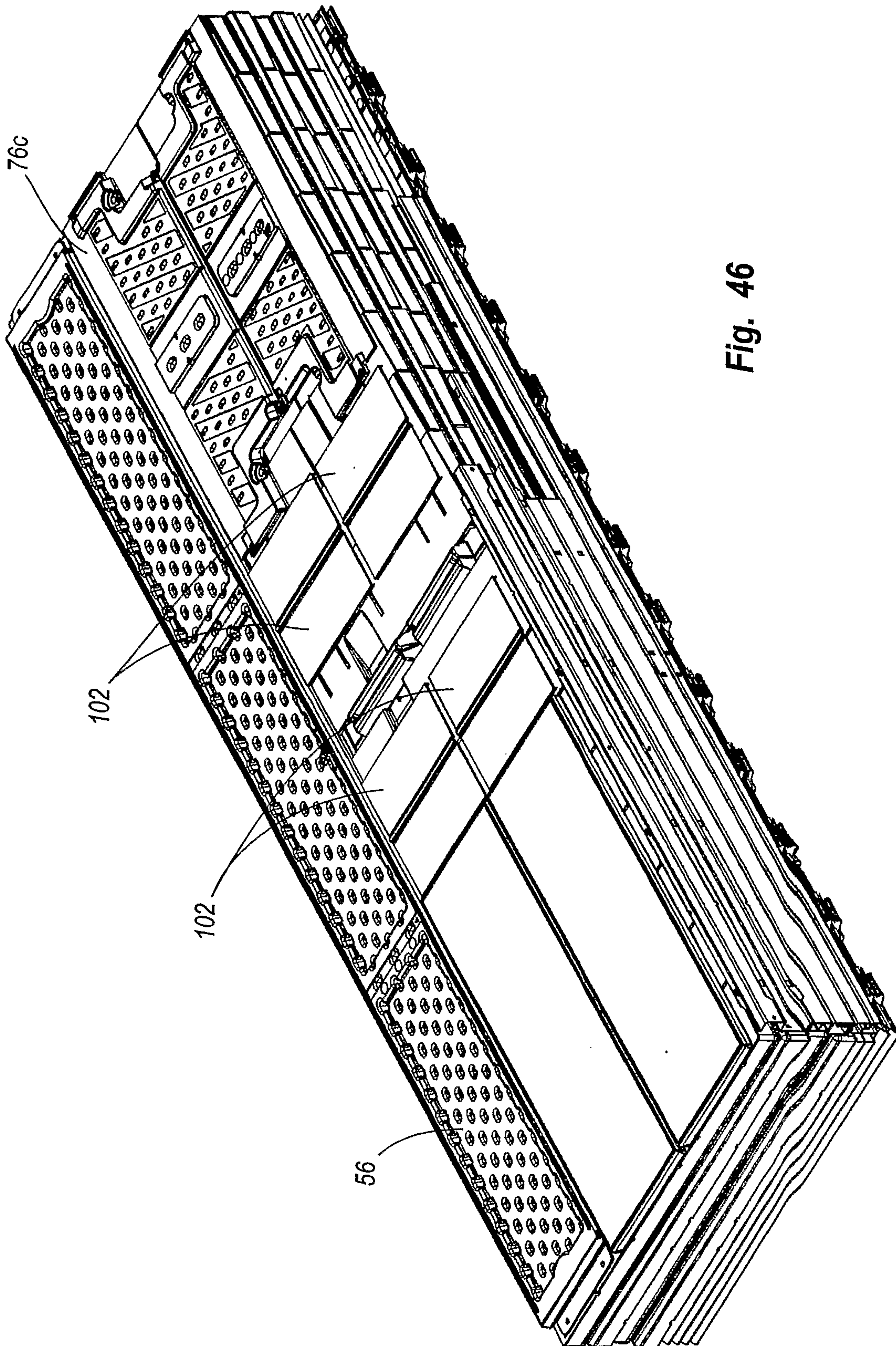
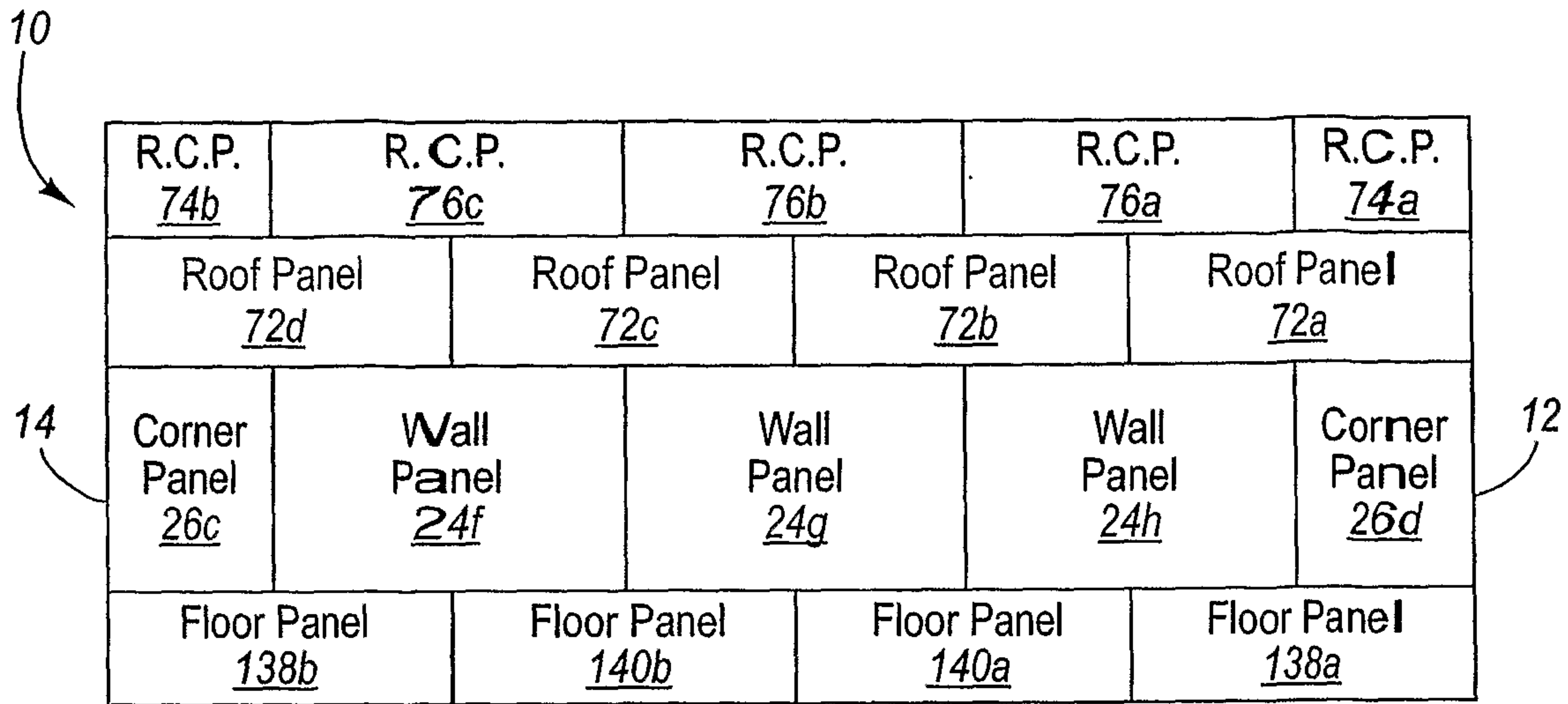
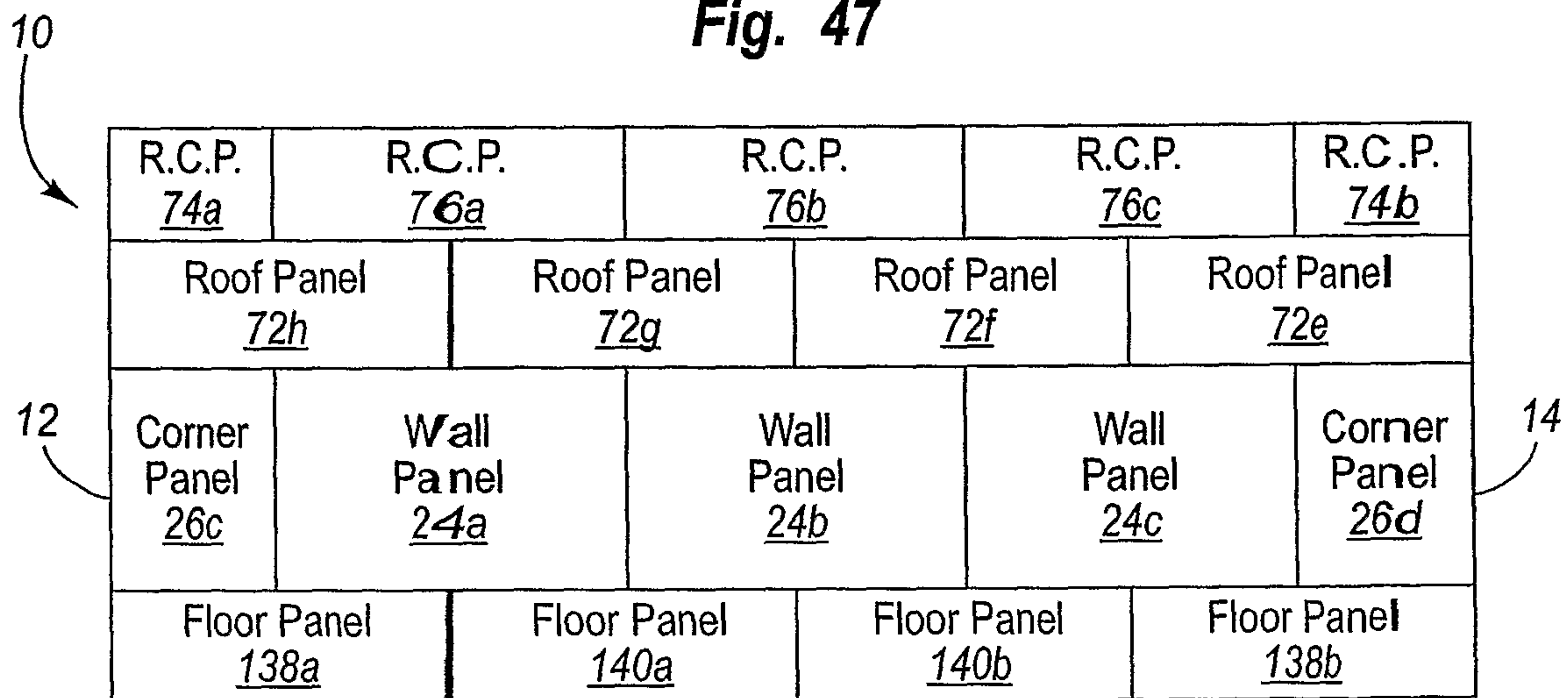
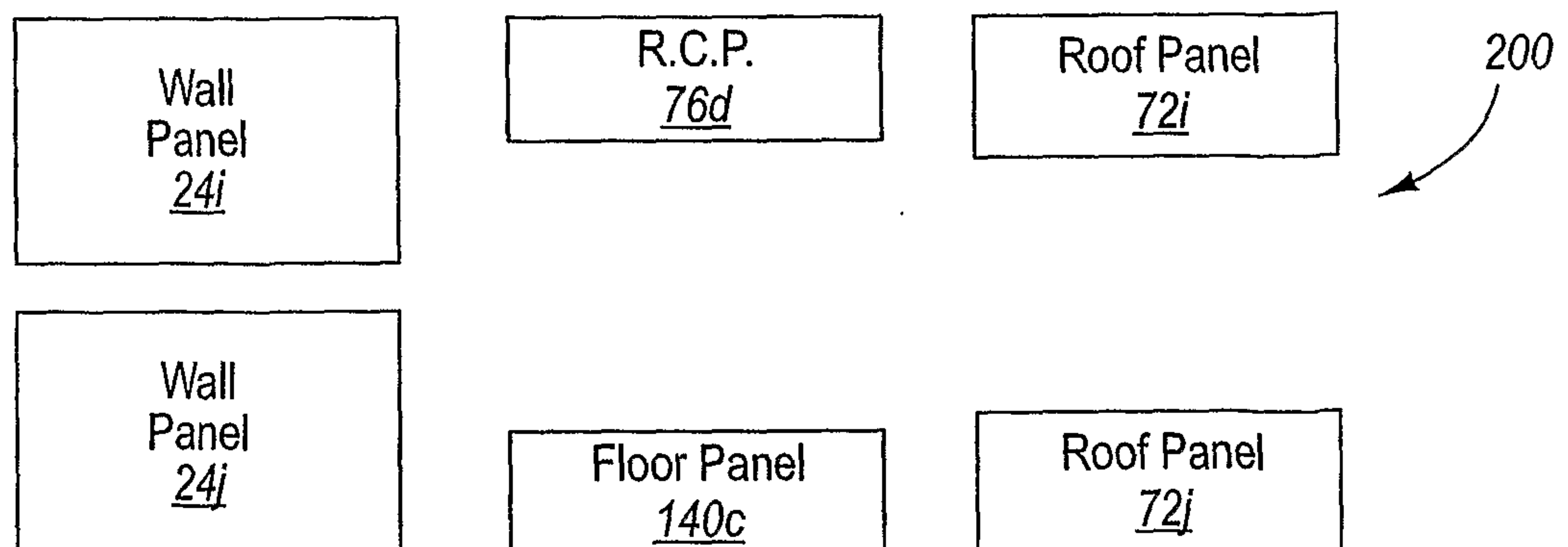


Fig. 46

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**Fig. 47****Fig. 48****Fig. 49**

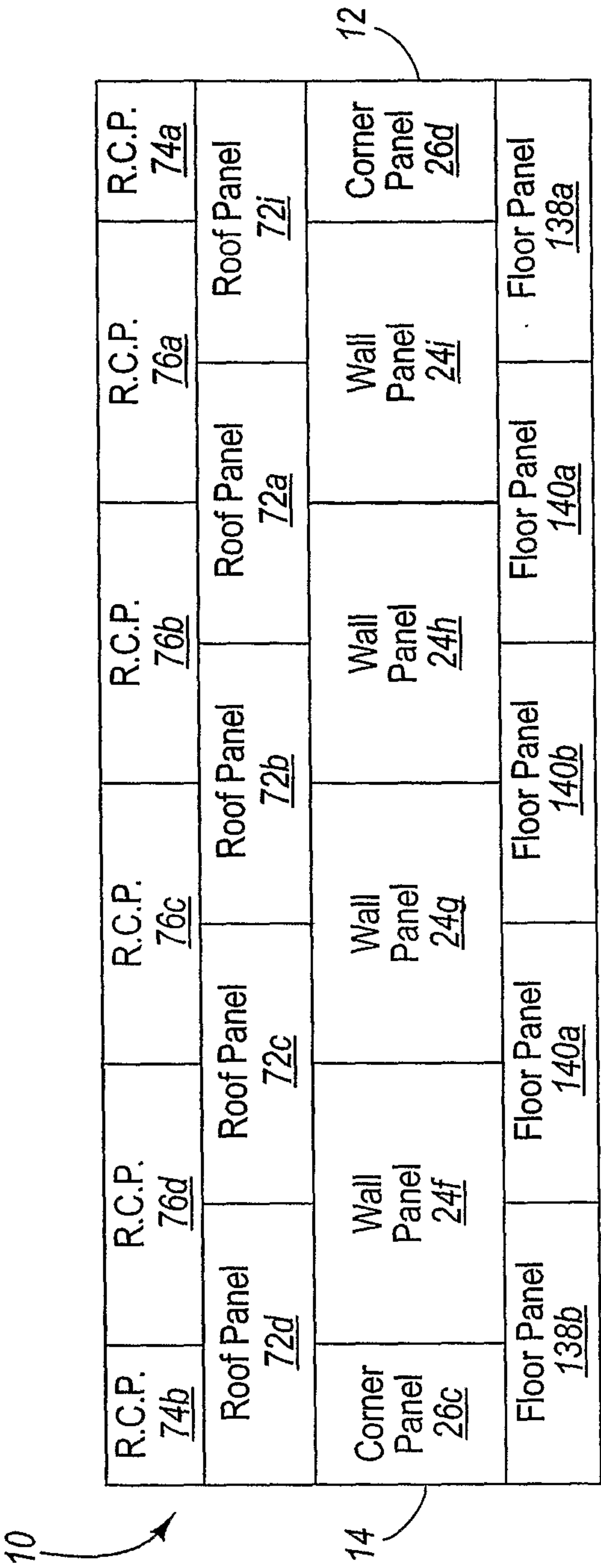


Fig. 50

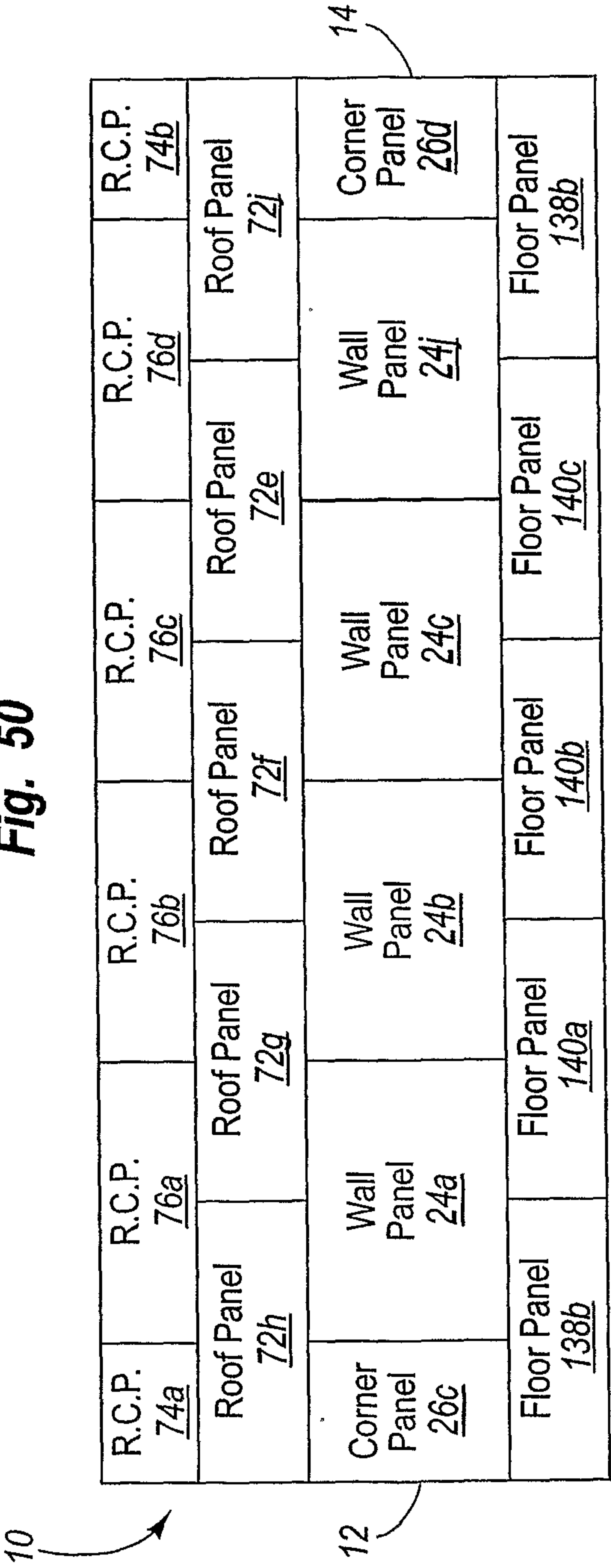
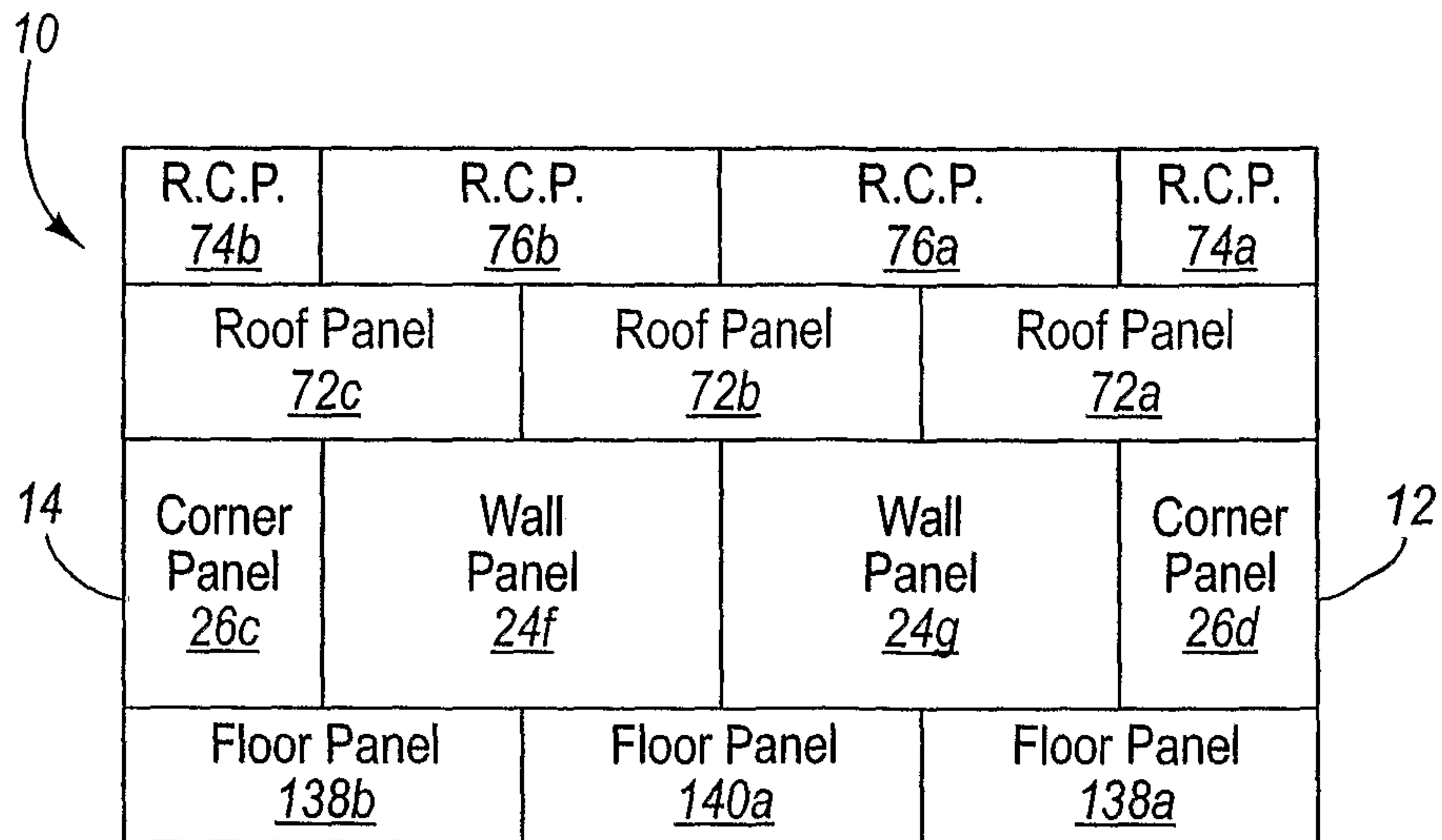
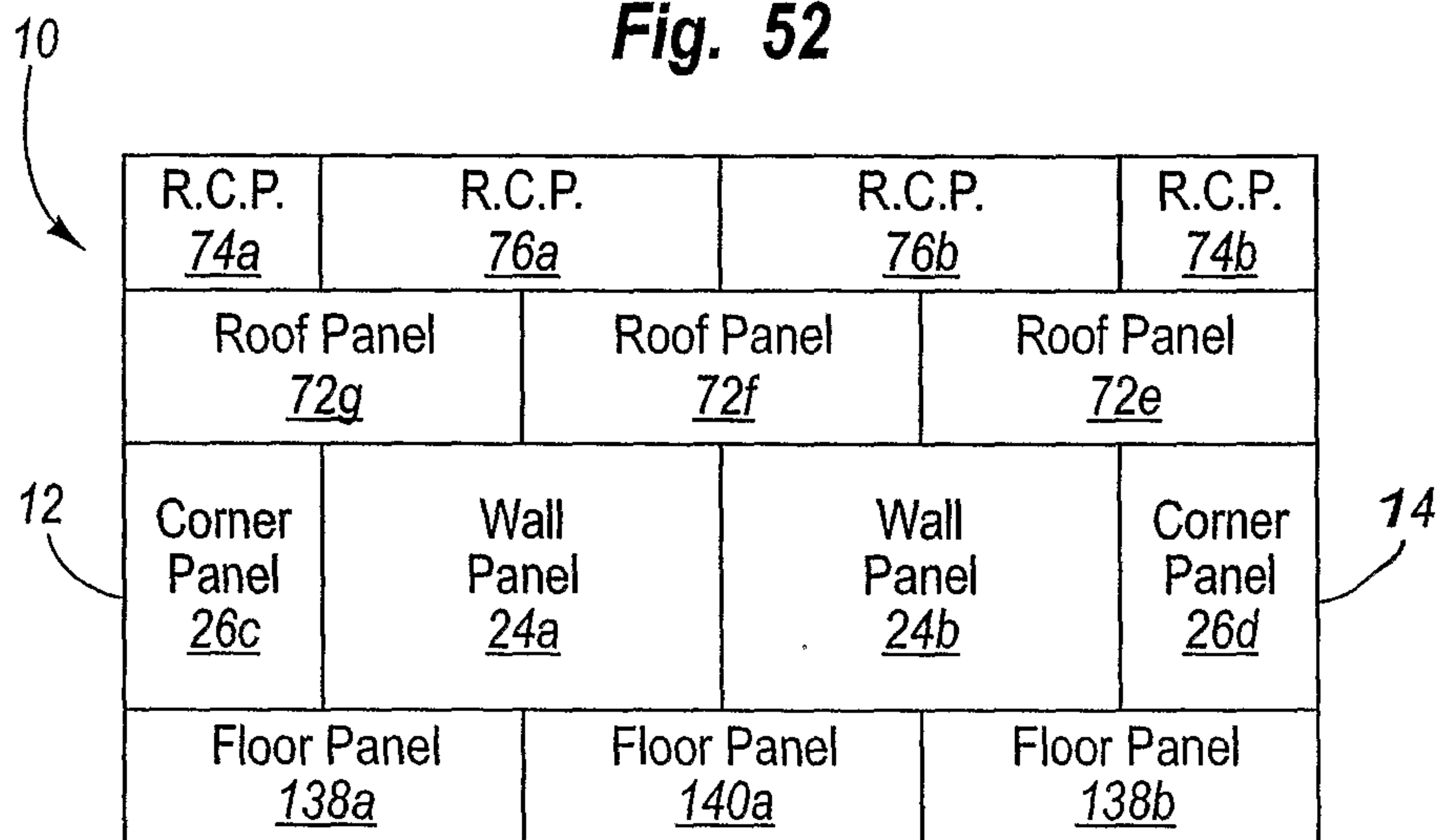
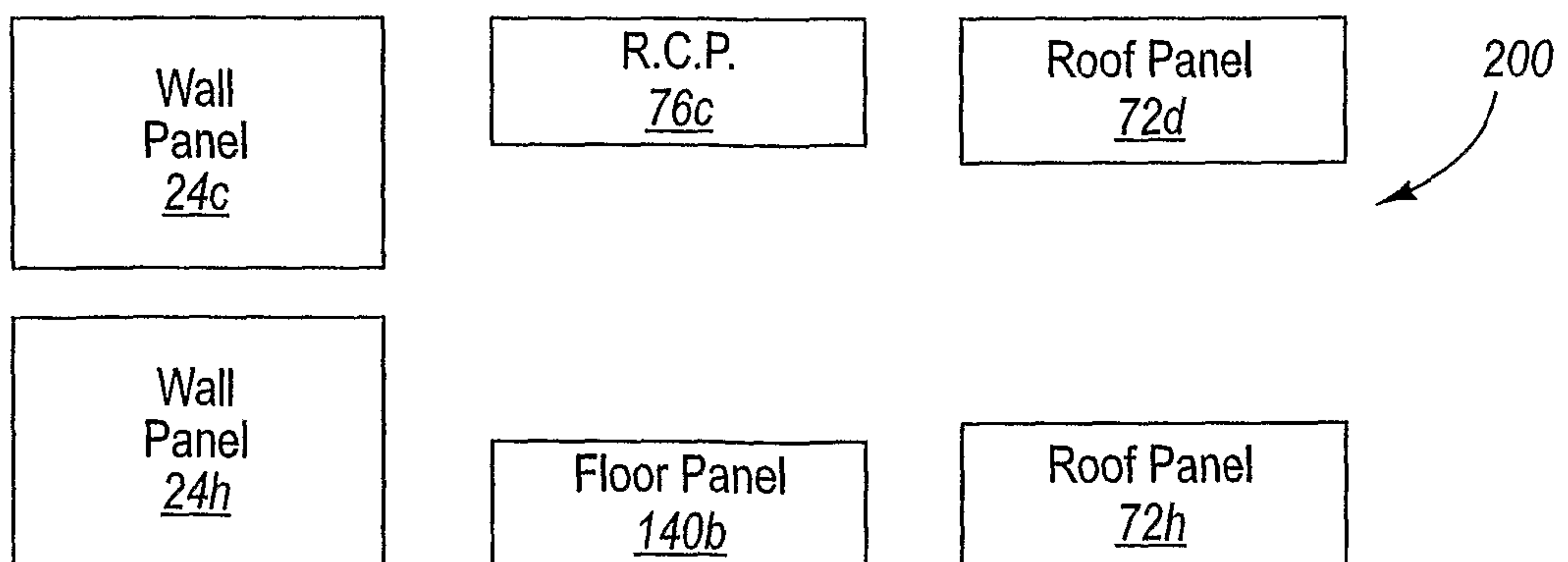


Fig. 51

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