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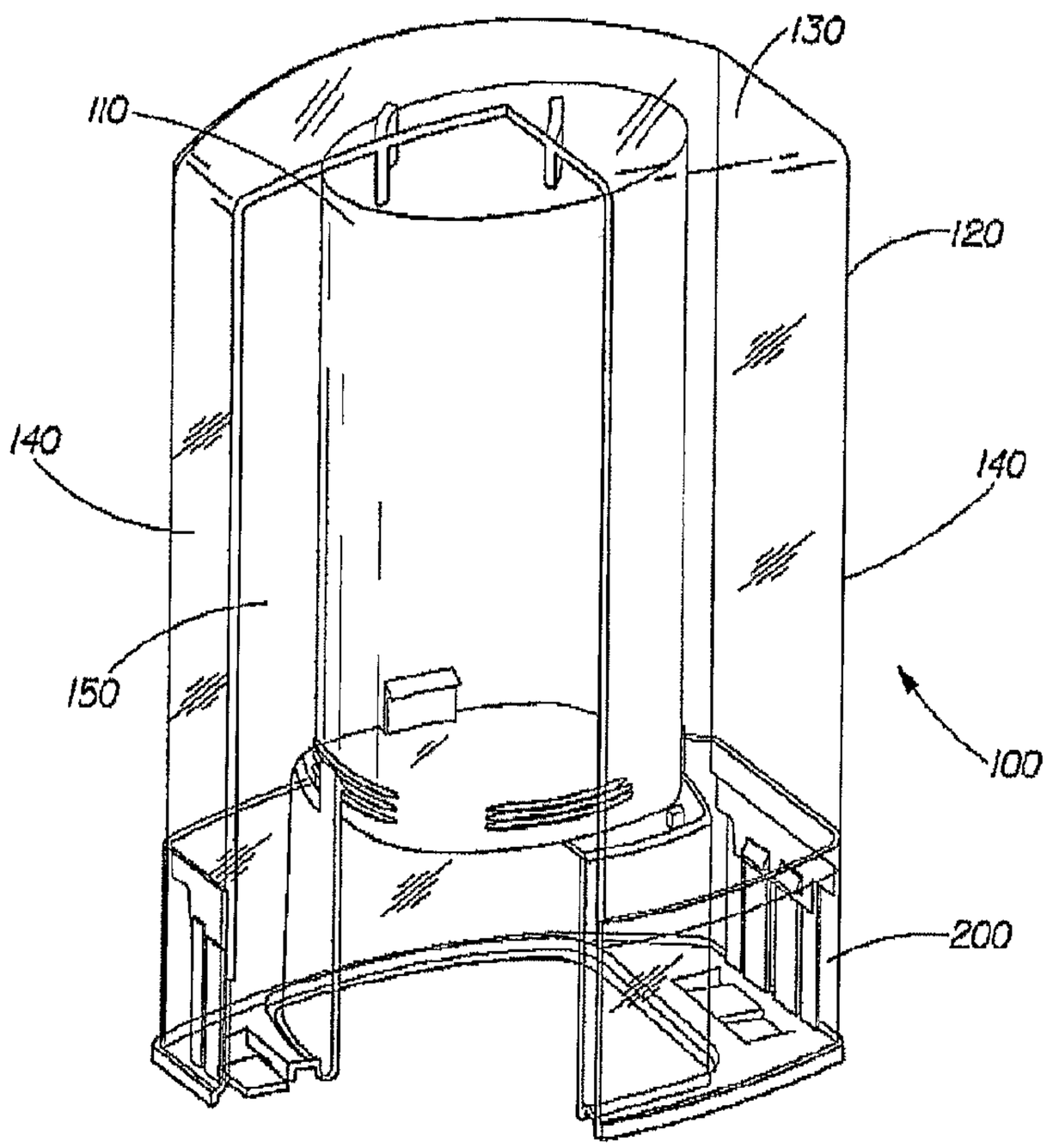
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(54) Titre : EMBALLAGE DE PRODUIT DE CONSOMMATION
(54) Title: CONSUMER PRODUCT PACKAGE



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A consumer product package comprising: (a) an upper enclosure (120), said upper enclosure comprising a top panel (130) and at least one side panel (140) extending away from said top panel and defining an interior portion, said upper enclosure further comprising, i) an upper stabilizing extension (170) extending from said top panel in said interior portion and (b) a lower base (200) comprising a bottom surface (210) and a lower stabilizing extension (220) extending away from said bottom surface in said interior portion wherein said upper enclosure is in mating relationship to said lower base.

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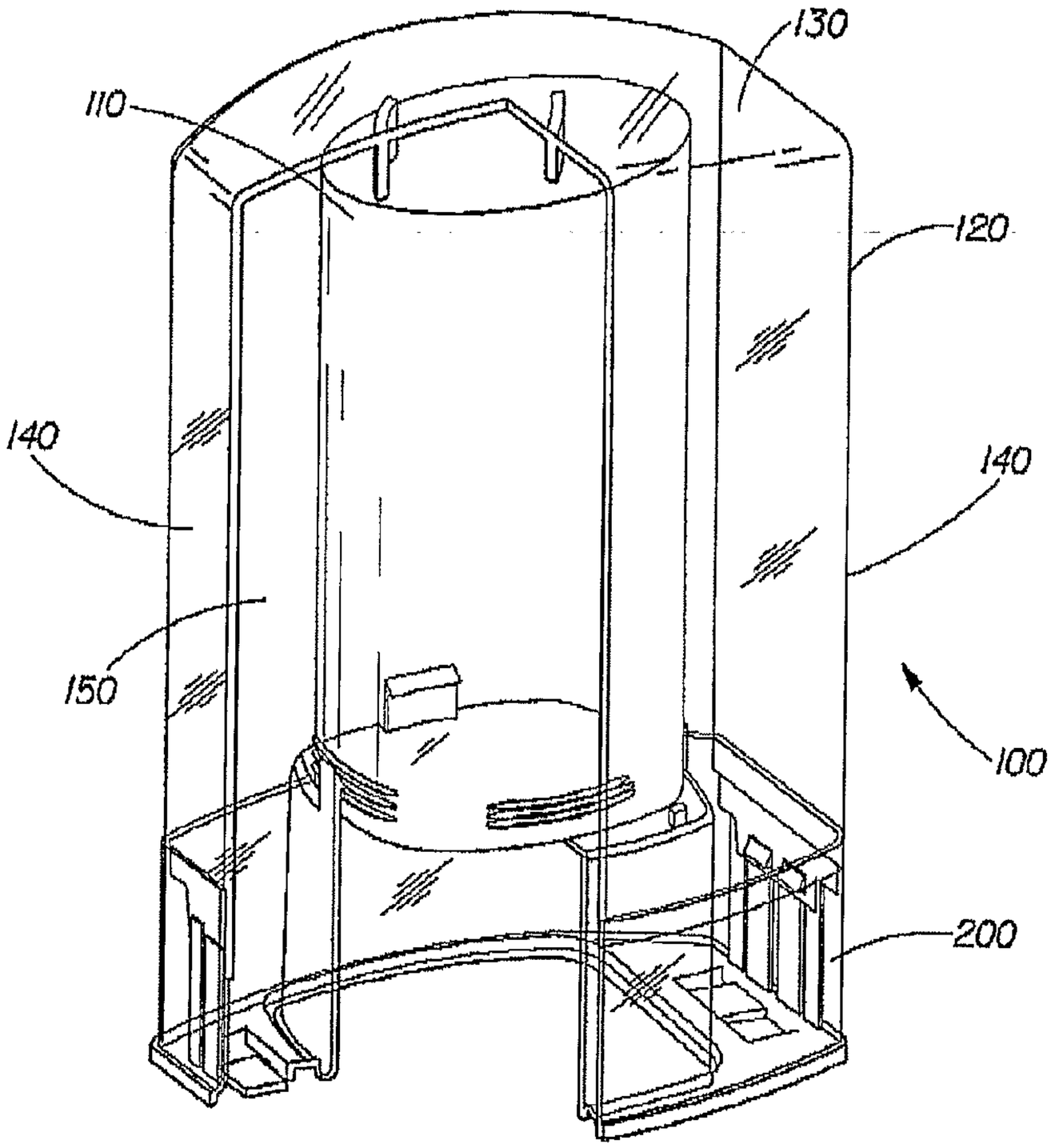
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(54) Title: CONSUMER PRODUCT PACKAGE



(57) Abstract: A consumer product package comprising: (a) an upper enclosure (120), said upper enclosure comprising a top panel (130) and at least one side panel (140) extending away from said top panel and defining an interior portion, said upper enclosure further comprising, i) an upper stabilizing extension (170) extending from said top panel in said interior portion and (b) a lower base (200) comprising a bottom surface (210) and a lower stabilizing extension (220) extending away from said bottom surface in said interior portion wherein said upper enclosure is in mating relationship to said lower base.

WO 2007/038353 A3

WO 2007/038353 A3

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CONSUMER PRODUCT PACKAGE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a consumer product package and method for merchandising consumer products in a retail store, particularly Food, Drug and Mass (FDM) markets.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Traditionally, consumer products, particularly fine fragrance products are packaged within an outer or secondary opaque package such as cardboard boxes. In department or specialty retail environments, opaque packages are sufficient secondary packages since the inner or primary package, e.g., a fragrance bottle, is typically on display and available to the consumer as a sample or tester. In FDM markets, however, displaying a primary package outside of its secondary package is not particularly feasible. If a primary package is displayed in such an environment, it is usually sealed within a thermoform or a similar theft-deterrent secondary package or similar means. Such packaging is generally effective in deterring a thieving consumer from opening the secondary package and tampering or pilfering the contained primary package. These types of packages, however, can be somewhat costly and inherently difficult to open. Additionally, the bulkiness of such packaging can be a disadvantage to shelving.

To those skilled in the art, it is recognized that a secondary package must also withstand handling through the warehousing and distribution system. Thus, the secondary package must be able to resist damage from drop impacts, withstand contact with adjacent packages during shipping, and avoid damage caused by vibrations during shipping. Additionally, the secondary package must be able to securely hold the primary package and protect it from potential damage during shipping and warehousing conditions.

Thus, what is lacking and needed in the art is a consumer product package and a method for merchandising consumer products in a retail store, particularly Food, Drug and Mass (FDM) markets wherein, the package is visibly clear, effective in deterring theft, easy to open, easy to ship and convenient to retail.

In light of the foregoing, the present invention provides a new consumer product package and method for merchandising consumer products in a retail store, particularly FDM markets.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a consumer product package comprising: (a) an upper enclosure, said upper enclosure comprising a top panel and at least one side panel extending away from said top panel and defining an interior portion sufficiently large to enclose a consumer product; said upper enclosure further comprising, i) an upper stabilizing extension extending from said top panel in said interior portion, said stabilizing extension being sufficiently long so as to contact said consumer product; wherein ii) a first portion of said side panel is visibly clear and a second portion of said side panel is substantially opaque; and (b) a lower base comprising a bottom surface and a lower stabilizing extension extending away from said bottom surface in said interior portion, said lower stabilizing extension being sufficiently long so as to contact said consumer product; wherein said upper enclosure is in mating relationship to said lower base portion such that said consumer product is held by said contact of said upper and lower stabilizing extensions.

The present invention also relates to a method of merchandising a consumer product in a retail store, comprising: displaying the consumer product package of the present invention and displaying the consumer product package of the present invention in a retail store.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

While the specification concludes with claims that particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, it is believed that the present invention will be better understood from the following description of non-limiting embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. **1** is a cross-sectional front perspective view of the consumer product package of the present containing a consumer product;

FIG. **2** is an exploded cross-sectional front perspective view of the consumer product package of the present invention containing a consumer product;

FIG. **3** is a back perspective view of the upper enclosure of the present invention;

FIG. **4** is an exploded front perspective view of the package of the present invention;

FIG. **5** is an exploded perspective view of the package of the present invention; and

FIG. **6** is an exploded bottom perspective view of the package of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

As used herein, "comprising" means that other steps and/or elements can be added. This term encompasses the terms "consisting of" and "consisting essentially of". The phrase "consisting essentially of" means that the invention may include additional elements, but only if the additional elements do not materially alter the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed invention or methods.

As used herein, "visibly clear" is defined as having the property of transmitting light without appreciable scattering so that bodies lying behind are perceivable. One acceptable test method for determining whether a product is clear is to attempt to read a series of words placed immediately behind and contacting one surface of the package, the words being printed in black color, 14 point Times New Roman font, printed on a white sheet of paper. The word and/or letters must be visible and/or readable from the front of the package by an individual using unaided 20/20 eyesight and positioned 12 inches in front of the package in indoor lighting conditions, such as retail outlight lighting conditions.

The term "frosted" is defined herein as the practice of inducing a low level of light scattering into an otherwise "clear" material causing the material to become matted in appearance.

The term "tinted" is defined herein as the practice of adding a low level of pigment of dye into a material for the purpose of imparting a color into the material.

As used herein, "substantially opaque" refers to the ability to sufficiently block the transmission of light so that bodies lying behind are not easily perceivable.

"Contact", as used herein, means direct or indirect contact.

"Consumer product", as used herein, refers to any consumer product that can be bought or sold by a consumer including but not limited to beauty care products, household care products, health care products, automobiles, supplies, industrial products, pet care products and the like.

"Beauty care product", as used herein, refers to any product bought or sold by a consumer as it relates to skin, hair, nails, aromatherapy, fragrances and the like.

By "fragrances", it is meant fine fragrances typically sold in department and specialty stores as well as fragrances that may be sold in FDMs.

CONSUMER PRODUCT PACKAGE

The present invention provides for a new consumer product package for containing a consumer product. The consumer product is able to be viewed through at least one visibly clear surface of the consumer product package. Preferably, the consumer product is positioned in the package in a front-facing orientation. Through various means described herein, the package also provides proper orientation and security means for the consumer product such that the package aids in merchandising the consumer product in a retail environment. While the FIGURES provide details of one embodiment of the present invention, one of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that the present invention is not limited to consumer product packages wherein all but one surface is visibly clear or wherein the consumer product package is shaped or sized as shown. Below provides the details of each component of the consumer product package of the present invention.

Referring generally to FIG. 1, a cross-sectional front perspective view of the consumer product package 100 of the present invention is shown containing an example of a consumer product 110 within the package 100. The package 100 includes an upper enclosure 120 and a lower base 200 that mates to form the consumer product package 100 of the present invention. The package 100, as shown, can be visibly clear on the top panel 130 and side panels 140. One side panel 140, particularly the back surface 150, is shown as substantially opaque which functions to enhance the display appearance for the consumer product 110.

Upper Enclosure

Referring generally to FIG. 2, an exploded cross-sectional front perspective view of the consumer product package 100 of the present invention containing a consumer product is shown. The upper enclosure 120 comprises a top panel 130 and at least one side panel 140 that extends away from the top panel 130 of the package 100. As shown, the package 100 may comprise four side panels 140 which, together with the top surface 130 define an interior portion 160 of the upper enclosure 120. If four side panels 140 are used (as shown), the side panels 140 may be referred to as the front surface 142, the side surfaces 144 and the back surface 150. It is realized that the upper enclosure 120 and the lower base 200 could be circular, oval, symmetric or non-symmetric in shape. It is therefore understood that the front surface 142 could be interpreted as the visible portion of the consumer package 100 intended to face forward on the retail shelf, the back surface 150 being directly opposite the front surface 142, and the side surfaces 144 being perpendicular to the front surface 142. The interior portion 160 of the package 100 should be sufficient in size to accommodate the consumer product 110 within the package 100. As shown, the interior portion 160 may be sized sufficiently to create an upper void 146 such that the side panels 140 do not contact the consumer product 110. Extending from the interior portion 160 of the top panel 130 of the package 100 is an upper stabilizing extension 170 which should be sufficient in length to contact the consumer product 110 held within the package 100. The upper stabilizing extension 170 can be of any shape and can be molded into the top panel 130 (as shown) or may be included within the package 100 as a separate part (not shown). The upper stabilizing extension 170 functions to aid in stabilizing and securing the consumer product 110 such that vertical and/or lateral movement of the consumer product 110 is minimized or negated.

The top panel 130 and side panels 140 of the present invention may be visibly clear. As shown, the top panel 130, the front surface 142 and the side surfaces 144 may be visibly clear such that the consumer product 110 can be displayed and seen from within the package 100. As shown in FIG. 3, a back perspective view of the upper enclosure 120 of the present invention is shown. The back surface 150 may be substantially opaque which functions to enhance the display appearance for the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2). The back surface 150 may also be initially visibly clear after

manufacturing yet the package 100 may include a label 110 (not shown) to give the appearance that the back surface 150 is substantially opaque. It has been discovered that if all the side panels 140 are visibly clear, the back surface 150 of the package 100 becomes highly variable which may not provide the contrast needed for optimal display of the consumer product 100. By providing a substantially opaque back surface 150 along with a visibly clear front surface 142 (FIG. 2) and side surfaces 144, the package 100 provides a consistent and optimal contrast with the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2). Particularly if the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2) is colorless and contained in a clear primary package, the package 100 of the present invention is beneficial in displaying and merchandising such a product 110 (FIG. 2) making it more visible and easily distinguishable from adjacent products. The back surface 150 may also include aesthetic traits such as being tinted, frosted, metallic, smooth solid, glittered and the like. Exhibiting a substantially opaque back surface 150 within the package 100 may be particularly useful for displaying beauty care products which are typically packaged in opaque cartons or in packages where the product inside is obstructed from view. This may be particularly true as it relates to fragrances which are often sold in cardboard boxes that obstruct the view of the fragrance bottle.

Lower Base

Referring to FIG. 4, an exploded front perspective view of the package 100 of the present invention is shown. The lower base 200 comprises a bottom surface 210 and a lower stabilizing extension 220 that extends away from the bottom surface 210. The lower stabilizing extension 220 may be of any shape and may be molded within the package 100 (as shown). The lower stabilizing extension 220 may also be included within the package 100 as a separate part 110 (not shown). The lower stabilizing extension 220 works with the upper stabilizing extension 170 to sandwich the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2) thereby minimizing or negating any vertical and/or lateral movement. When the lower stabilizing extension 220 is molded within the package 100, a lower void 230 may be created which aids in ensuring uniform resistance and expansion in the package 100. Assisting with the function of the lower void 230 is at least one extension channel 240 which aids in allowing the lower stabilizing extension 220 to adjust vertically to accommodate for height variations while still keeping the consumer

product 110 (FIG. 2) secure. Even when in the same line of manufacturing, consumer products 110 (FIG. 2), particularly those made from a glass material, are known to vary slightly in size. Because of the foregoing elements, the lower base 200 of the present invention is advantageous over prior consumer product packages that may fail to account for such manufacturing discrepancies.

On the lower stabilizing extension 220, within the interior 165 of the package 100, at least one orientation tab 250 may be used to aid in securing the consumer product 110 and in keeping the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2) in a front-facing orientation. The orientation tab 250 may also aid in preventing the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2) from sliding forward or sideways during distribution and handling. Referring back to FIG. 2, the orientation tabs 250 may also comprise a locking means, for example a notch 260, that provides added security by interaction with a receiving means, for example ribs 270, manufactured into the lower perimeter 115 of the consumer product 110. The locking means 260 and the receiving means 270 can mate by any mating means known in the art such as a frictional press fit engagement, snap fit, latches, hooks, notches and the like.

When at least one orientation tab 250 is present on the lower stabilizing extension 220 of the package 100, there should be discontinuous, non-surrounding contact between the orientation tab 250 and the lower perimeter 115 of the consumer product 110. By "discontinuous, non-surrounding", it is meant that the orientation tabs 250 should not provide a security or stability means such that the tabs form an indent or footprint that completely surrounds the entire lower perimeter 115 of the product 110. If more than one orientation tab 250 is used, the orientation tabs 250 should be spatially aligned at points perpendicular to the lateral axis of the lower stabilizing extension 220 and/or bottom surface 210. Thus, the orientation tabs 250 may be positioned so as to exceed no more than about 90%, no more than about 75%, no more than about 60%, no more than about 45%, no more than about 30%, no more than about 20%, no more than about 10% or no more than about 5% of the lower perimeter 115 of the product 110. Two or more orientation tabs 250 may also vary in height, however, the height of any orientation tab 250 should be such that it does not impede or obstruct the display of the consumer product 110. Thus, the height of an orientation tab 250 may be no more than about 50%, no more than about 20%, no more than about 15%, no more than about 10%, no more

than about 5% or no more than about 1% of the height (from top to bottom along a longitudinal axis) of the consumer product 110 when viewed from the front surface 142 of the package 100. Contact of the orientation tabs 250 with the consumer product 110 may occur at various points along the lower perimeter 115 of the consumer product 110 as long as there is a relative spatial distance from one tab 250 to another tab 250. It is understood that the perimeter of a product can be defined and measured by a variety of means. Therefore, the "lower perimeter 115 of a consumer product" 110, as used herein, refers to the lower surrounding area of the consumer product 110 at a height above the base of the consumer product 110 wherein the height is equal to the highest contact point of the orientation tab 250 and the consumer product 110.

Referring generally to FIG. 5, an exploded perspective view of the package 100 of the present invention is shown. The upper enclosure 120 and the lower base 200 can be mated by any means known in the art, including by frictional press fit engagement, snap fit, latches, hooks, and the like. As shown, the lower base 200 and the upper enclosure 120 can mate by way of at least one locking tab 260 and locking protrusion 270 wherein the mating may occur on the exterior 167 (mating elements not shown) or interior 165 of the package 100. Not only does the locking tab 260 and locking protrusion 270 function to secure the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2), its pilfer-proof design also serves to deter theft and/or destruction of the consumer product 110.

Referring generally to FIG. 6, an exploded bottom perspective view of the package 100 is shown. At least one integral tab 300 (two shown) is included within the lower base 200 and is semi-destructive in order to deter a would-be thief in a store. The integral tab 300, however, is also intuitive in design so as to not cause difficulties in opening the package 100 after purchase. The package 100 may be opened by disengagement of the lower base 200 from the upper enclosure 120. By applying downward force to the tab flexor 270 of the present invention, the tab flexor 270 folds into the package 100 creating more surface area to grab the integral tab 300. The integral tab 300 is then pulled away so as to tear away from the package 100. Such action causes a disconnect between the locking tab 260 and locking protrusion 270 because the integral tab tears away the area of the package 100 wherein the locking protrusions 270 are located. After the disconnect, the upper enclosure 120 can be removed from the lower

base 200 and the consumer product 110 (FIG. 2) can be removed from the interior 165 (FIG. 5) of the package 100. In addition to deterring theft, an advantage of the integral tab 300 is that no additional packaging materials such as a flexible plastic film, thermoformed plastic cover, or tamper-resistant stickers are required to deter theft and/or destruction of the consumer product 100 (FIG. 2). Thus, the pilfer-proof feature is less costly and less wasteful than the pilfer-proof features that have come before.

The material used for the upper enclosure 120 and the lower base 200 of the package 100 includes rigid and semi-rigid materials. For example, rigid and semi-rigid materials of the present invention may include, but are not limited to, thermoplastic materials such as polypropylene (PP), polyethylene (PE), polystyrene (PS), polyethylene-terepthalate (PET), Styrene-Acrylonitrile Copolymer (SAN); Polyethylene-terepthalate copolymers, polycarbonate (PC), polyamides and mixtures thereof. Whether making rigid or semi-rigid parts, the parts of the upper enclosure 120 and/or lower base 200 may be manufactured by any number of plastic and paper manufacturing methods known in the art including, but not limited to, injection molding.

The materials used in conjunction with the securing features detailed above also function to make the package 100 (FIG. 2) drop-impact resistant. By "drop-impact resistant", it is meant that the package 100 is able to resist drops onto a hard surface, such as a tiled or thinly-carpeted floor typically found in a retail store, from distances of from at least about 3 feet, from at least about 6 feet or from at least about 9 feet. Not only is the package 100 able to resist such drop-impact, the product is also securely held due to the design features included in the package 100. The orientation tabs (FIG. 2) can aid in the drop-impact resistance, however, the package 100 without such orientation tabs (FIG. 2) can also resist such drop-impact while still securing the consumer product (FIG. 2) inside the package 100. Additionally, the consumer product 110 is able to maintain a stable position and remain in a front-facing orientation after side, top, rear or bottom handling impacts. By "handling impacts", it is meant to include impacts often occurring during distribution and handling. The package 100 of the present invention can resist such handling impacts (with or without orientation tabs (FIG. 2)) that occur from at least about 3 feet, from at least about 6 feet or from at least about 9 feet to any position on the package 100.

METHODS OF MERCHANDISING

The present invention also provides a method for merchandising consumer products by using the consumer product package of the present invention. As detailed above, such a package provides an advantageous means for displaying a consumer product while deterring would be thieves from pilfering the consumer product within the package. A consumer product may be merchandised in a retail store by displaying a consumer product within the package of the present invention. That package may then be displayed in a retail store such as on a shelf and/or behind a glass door. As used herein, a retail store includes, but is not limited to, FDM (Food, Drug and Mass) markets, department stores, specialty stores, club markets and the like. Of particular interest to the present invention may be FDM markets.

All documents cited in the Detailed Description of the Invention are, in relevant part, incorporated herein by reference; the citation of any document is not to be construed as an admission that it is prior art with respect to the present invention. To the extent that any meaning or definition of a term in this document conflicts with any meaning or definition of the term in a document incorporated herein by reference, the meaning or definition assigned to the term in this document shall govern.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it would be obvious to those skilled in the art that various other changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is therefore intended to cover in the appended claims all such changes and modifications that are within the scope of this invention.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A consumer product package for enclosing a consumer product, the consumer product package comprising:

a) an upper enclosure comprising a top panel and at least one side panel extending from the top panel to define an interior portion sufficiently large to enclose a consumer product; and an upper stabilizing extension associated with the upper enclosure and extending into the interior portion so as to contact a first section of a consumer product contained within the interior portion;

b) a lower base matable with the upper enclosure, the lower base comprising a lower stabilizing extension that extends into the interior portion so as to contact a second section of a consumer product contained within the interior portion; and

c) a pilfer-proof feature comprising a locking tab associated with one of the upper enclosure and the lower base; a locking protrusion engaged with the locking tab and being associated with the other of the upper enclosure and the lower base; and a tab flexor configured to be folded into the interior portion upon application of a manual force to at least partially tear away the pilfer-proof feature such that the locking protrusion disengages from the locking tab wherein the upper enclosure and lower base can be separated from one another to access a consumer product contained within the interior portion.

2. The consumer product package of claim 1, wherein the at least one side panel comprises a front surface side panel, a back surface side panel, and two side surface side panels.

3. The consumer product package of claim 2, wherein the front surface side panel and the two side surface side panels are clear, and the back surface side panel is opaque.

4. The consumer product package of claim 1, wherein the upper stabilizing extension is molded with the top panel.

5. The consumer product package of claim 1, wherein the upper stabilizing extension is a separately manufactured part from the upper enclosure.

6. The consumer product package of claim 1, wherein the lower stabilizing extension is molded with the lower base.

7. The consumer product package of claim 1, wherein the lower stabilizing extension is a separately manufactured part from the lower base.

8. The consumer product package of claim 1, further comprising a consumer product disposed within the interior portion of the consumer product package.

9. The consumer product package of claim 8, wherein the consumer product comprises a clear primary package that is different than the consumer product package.

10. The consumer product package of claim 9, wherein the consumer product is colorless.

11. The consumer product package of claim 8, wherein the lower stabilizing extension comprises an orientation tab that maintains the orientation of the consumer product.

12. A consumer product package for enclosing a consumer product, the consumer product package comprising:

a) an upper enclosure comprising a top panel and at least one side panel extending from the top panel to define an interior portion sufficiently large to enclose a consumer product; and an upper stabilizing extension associated with the upper enclosure and extending into the interior portion so as to contact a first section of a consumer product contained within the interior portion;

b) a lower base matable with the upper enclosure, the lower base comprising a horizontal support surface and a lower stabilizing extension that extends into the interior portion from the horizontal support surface so as to contact a second section of a consumer product contained within the interior portion; and

c) a pilfer-proof feature comprising a locking tab associated with one of the upper enclosure and the lower base; a locking protrusion engaged with the locking tab and being associated with the other of the upper enclosure and the lower base; and a tab flexor which upon at least partially tearing away from the package disengages the locking protrusion from the locking tab wherein the upper enclosure and lower base can be separated from one another to access a consumer product contained within the interior portion; wherein the lower stabilizing extension is arranged and configured such that the consumer product can be lifted vertically from the horizontal support surface past the lower stabilizing extension when removing the consumer product from the consumer product package.

13. The consumer package of claim 12, wherein the tab flexor is configured to be folded into the interior portion upon application of a manual force to at least partially tear away the pilfer-proof feature such that the locking protrusion disengages from the locking tab.

14. The consumer product package of claim 12, further comprising a consumer product disposed within the interior portion of the consumer product package.

15. The consumer product package of claim 14, wherein the consumer product comprises a clear primary package that is different than the consumer product package.

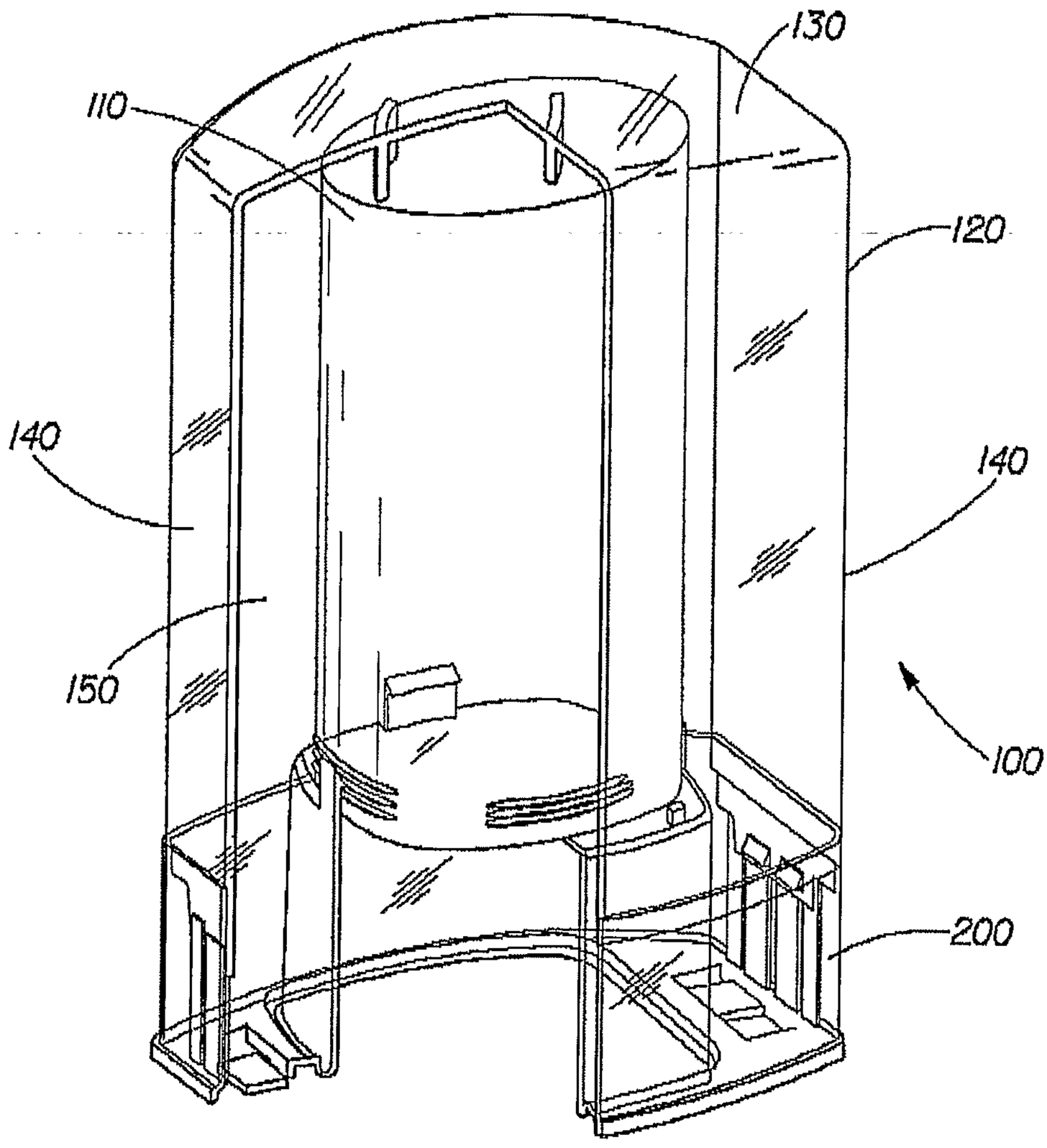


Fig. 1

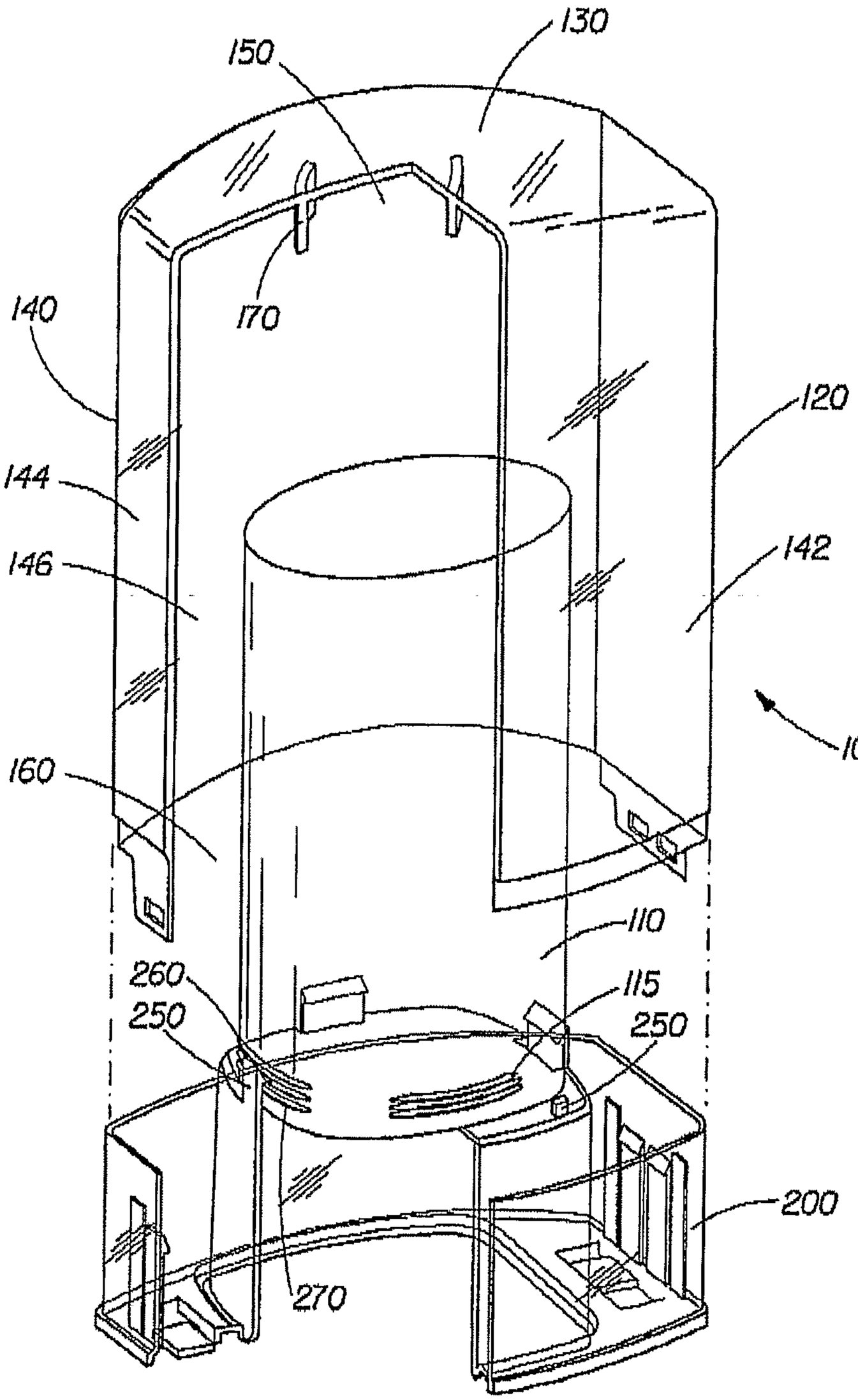

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Fig. 2

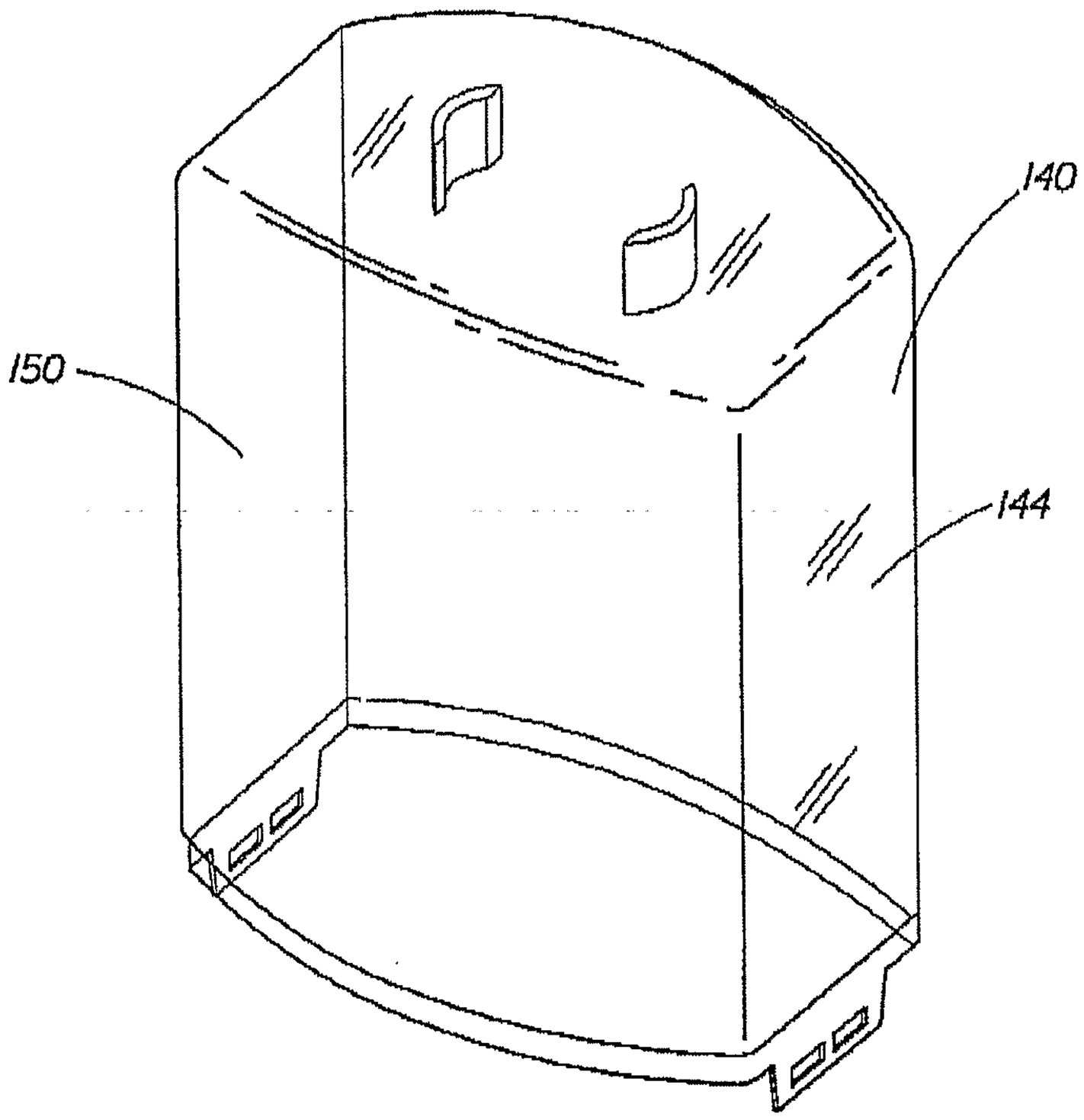


Fig. 3

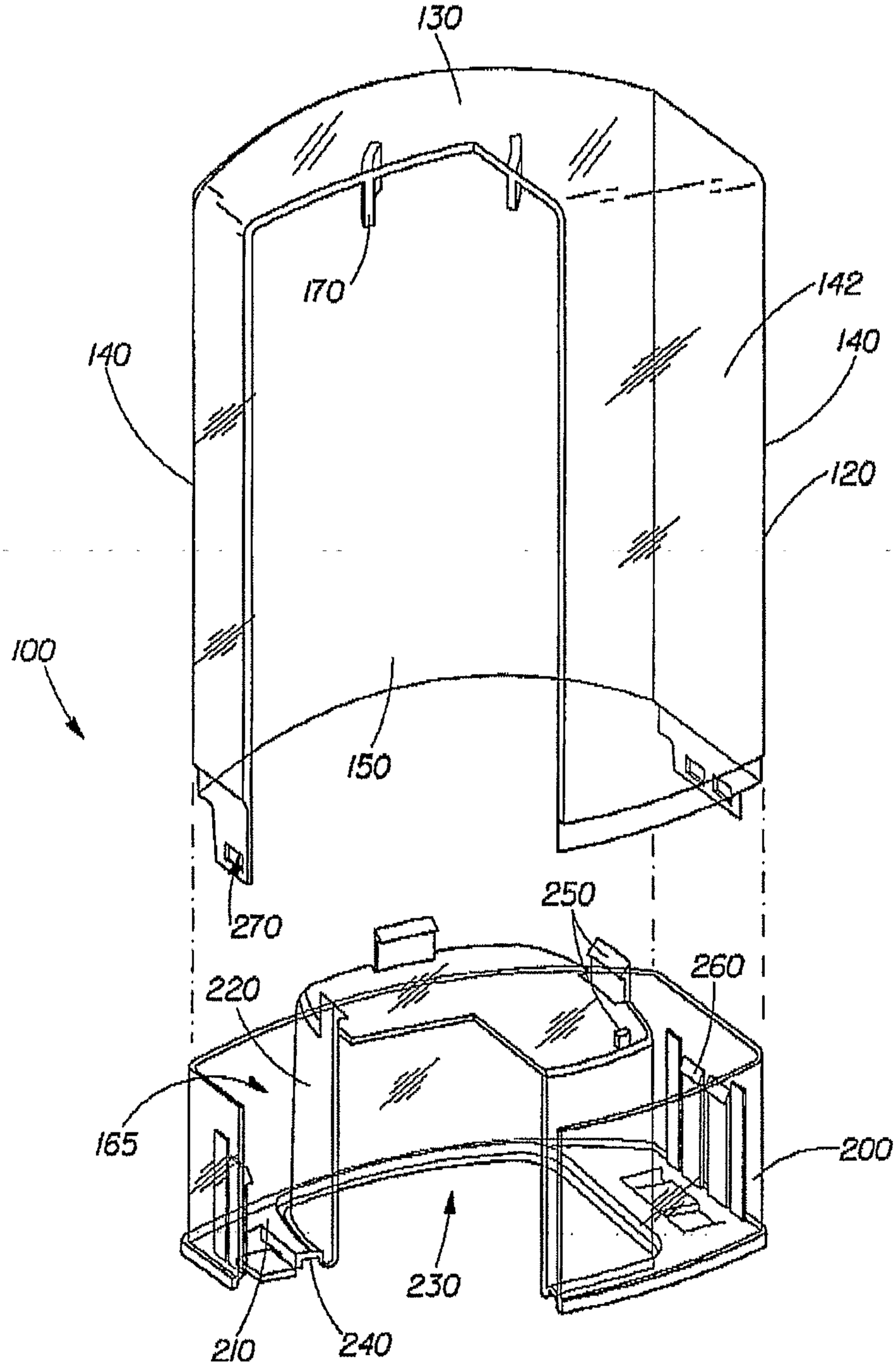

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240

Fig. 4

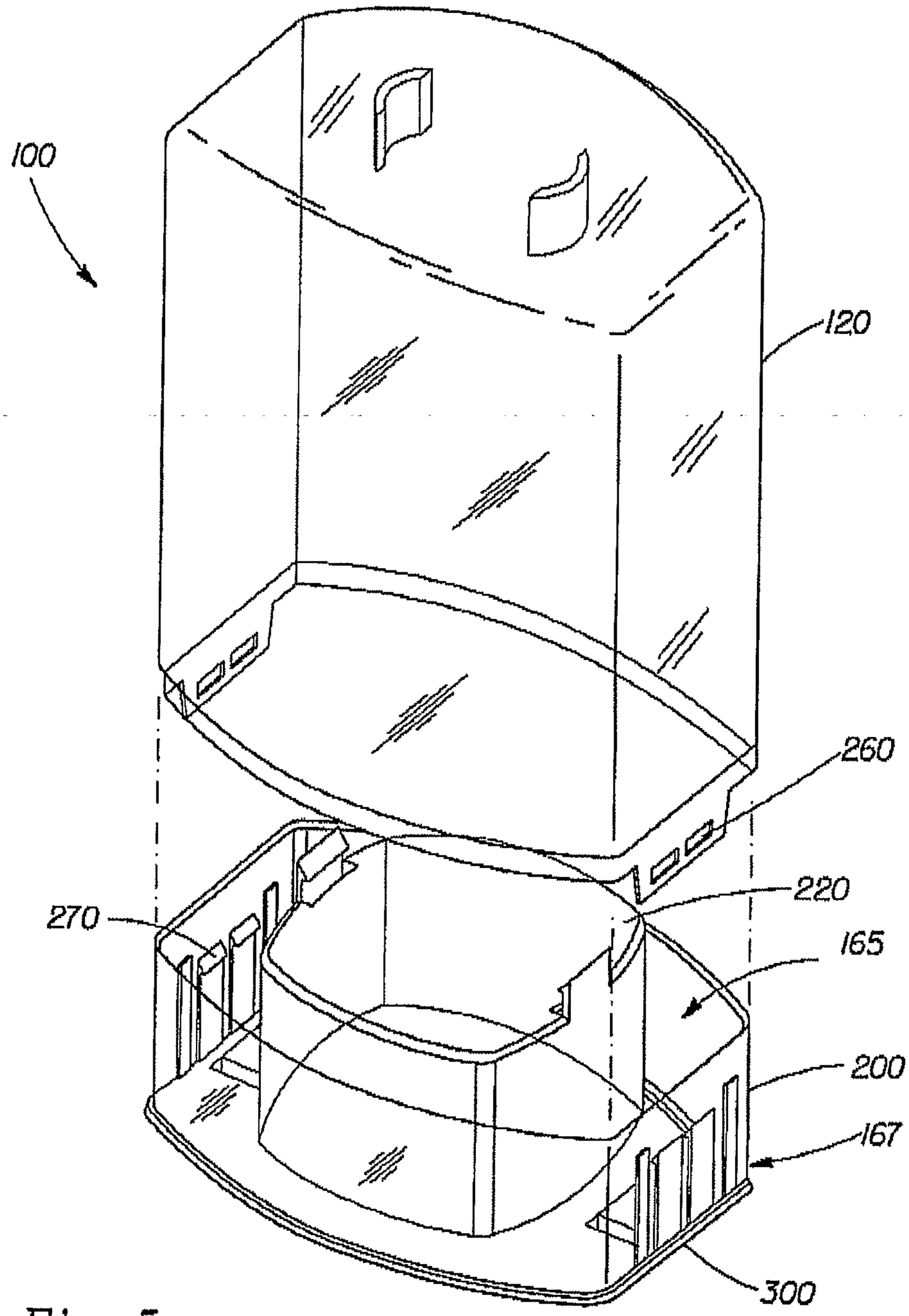


Fig. 5

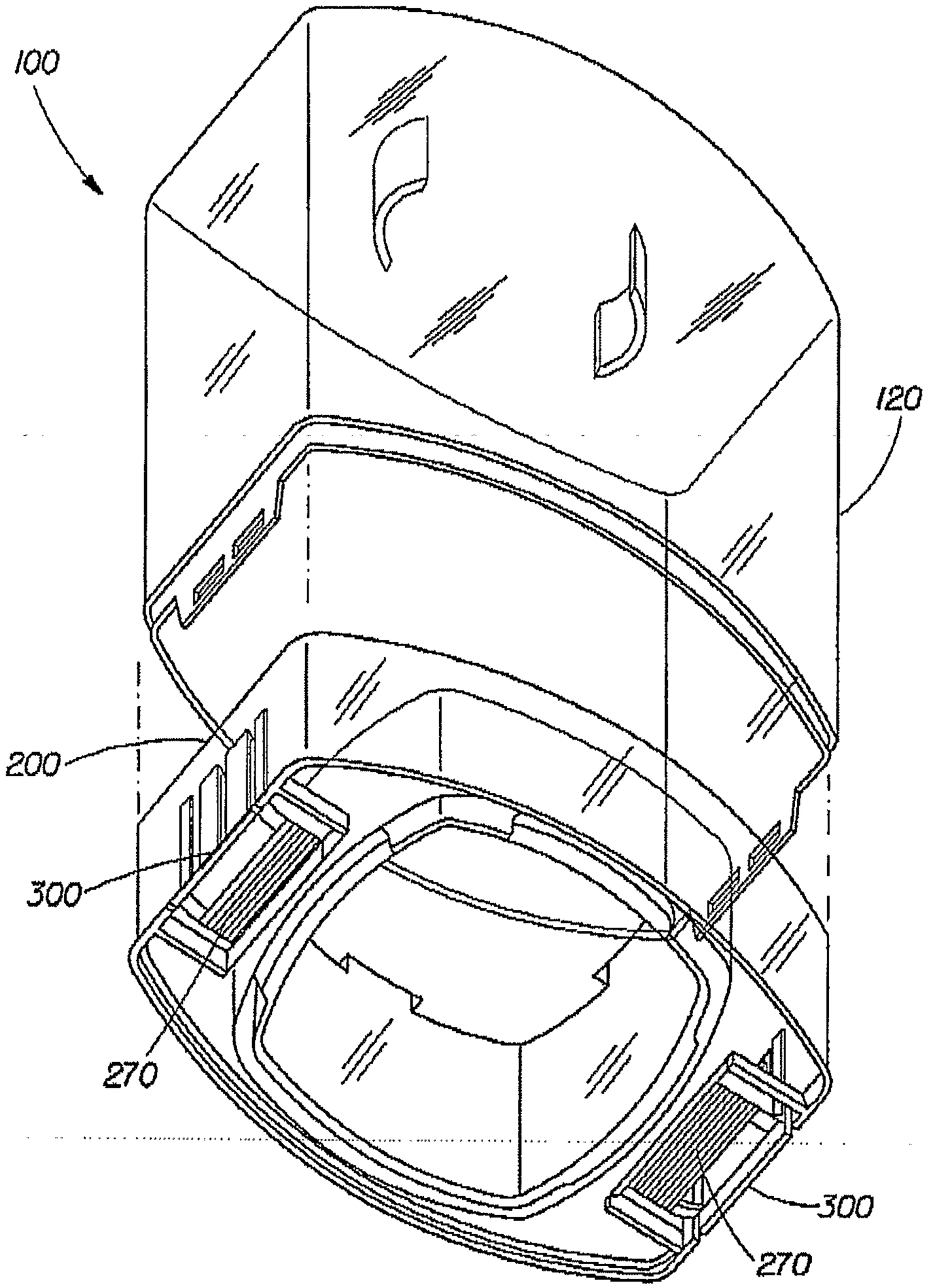
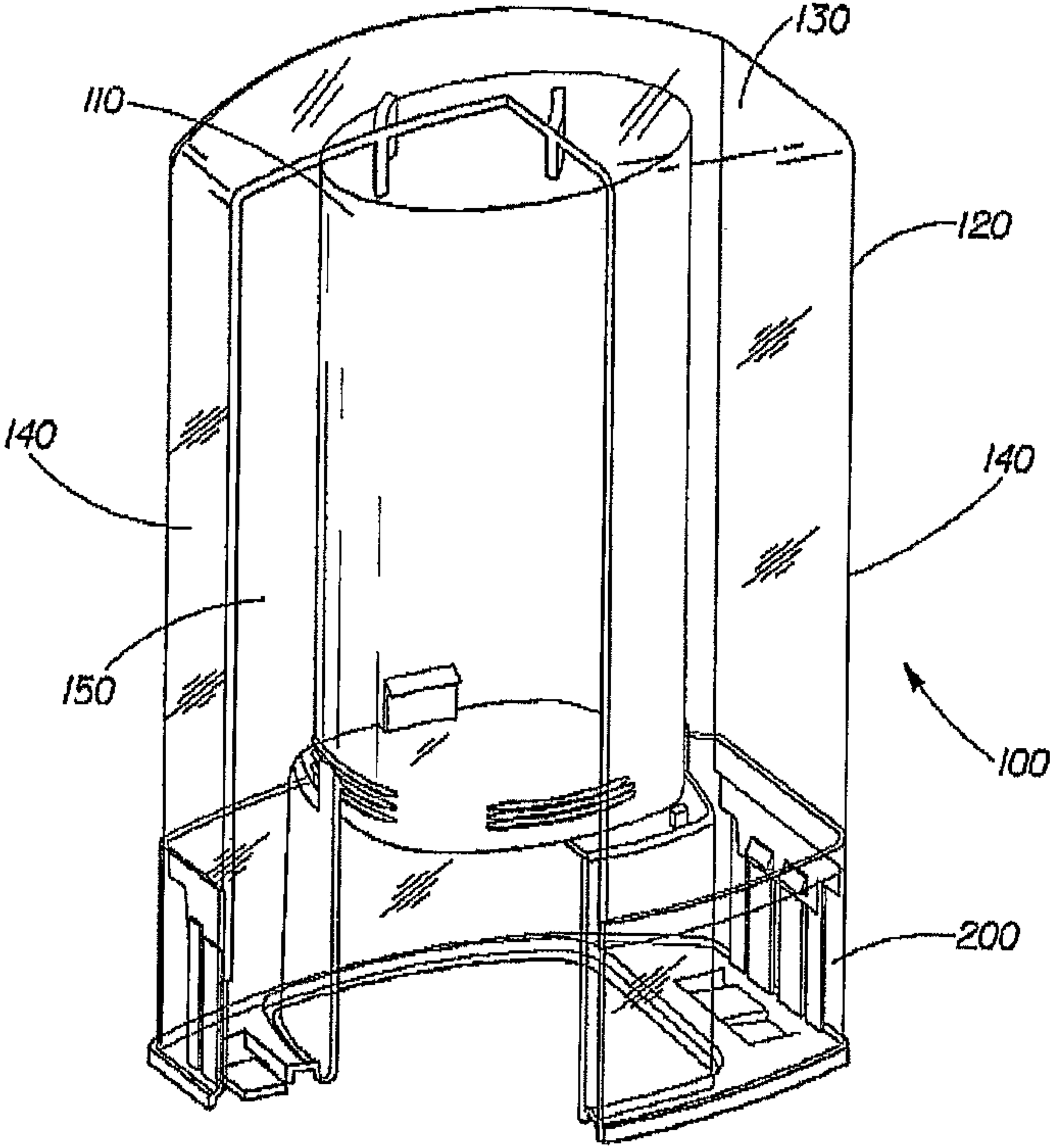


Fig. 6


130
110
120
140
150
140
100
200