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(54) **Shower enclosure fittings**

(57) A system of shower enclosure fittings is disclosed for attaching a panel (106) of a shower enclosure or a shower curtain support, such as a pole, to a wall. The system of shower enclosure fittings comprises a wall profile (114) for attachment to a wall and a shower enclosure profile (100) for attachment to the wall profile and to either a panel of a shower enclosure or a shower curtain support. The shower enclosure profile (100) comprises an elongate member (102) of one-piece construction with a hollow portion (104) therein. The hollow portion has a holder (116) for holding a personal hygiene product for use by a person when showering. The holder is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the profile between an upper end of the profile and a lower end of the profile, and such that the personal hygiene product held by the holder is accessible to the person inside the shower enclosure, when the profile is installed in the shower enclosure, attaching the panel of the shower enclosure or the shower curtain support to the wall.

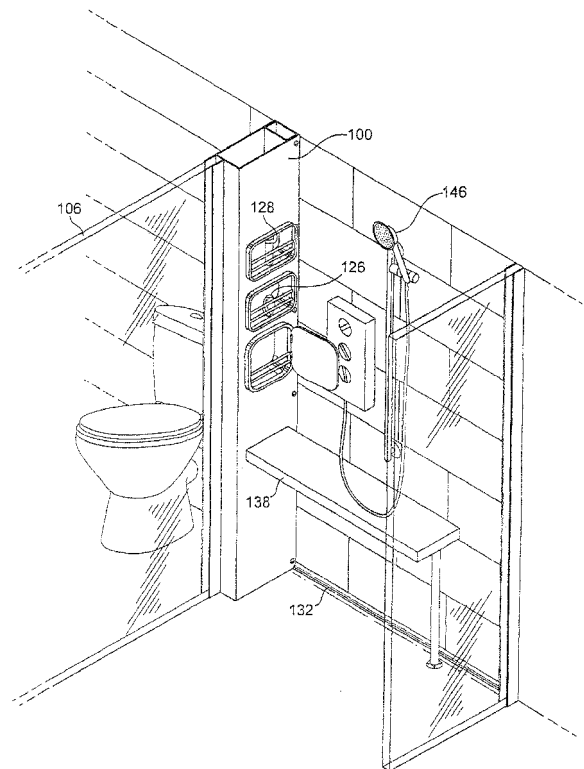


FIG. 2

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Description

[Technical Field]

[0001] The present invention generally relates to the field of bathroom shower enclosure fittings. More specifically, the present invention relates to a system of shower enclosure fittings for attaching a panel of a shower enclosure to a bathroom wall or a shower curtain support, such as a pole, to a bathroom wall.

[Background]

[0002] Domestic shower installations typically include a shower and one of the many known kinds of shower enclosure at least partially enclosing the shower so as to reduce shower spray from the shower. Familiar kinds of shower enclosure include freestanding shower cubicles, corner units for installation in a corner of a bathroom, walk-in shower enclosures and the widely-used shower enclosure that comprises a bath, and a bath screen comprising a panel fitted over a rim of the bath or a shower curtain hung from a pole. All of these different types of shower enclosure have one or more shower enclosure panels (usually tempered safety glass) or a shower curtain pole, attached, in either case, to a bathroom wall or another shower enclosure panel via a shower enclosure profile (i.e. an elongate member of one-piece construction).

[0003] The usual means of storing in the shower enclosure toiletry items such as shampoo and conditioner bottles, shower gel containers, bars of soap, sponges and other personal hygiene products that are typically required during showering, is to use storage shelves fixed to a wall of the enclosure. However, such storage shelves have the drawback that it is necessary to undertake the laborious task of installing the storage shelves onto a panel of the shower enclosure or the tiled bathroom wall inside the enclosure. This is often made difficult by the brittle nature of the panel or tile material. In the absence of storage shelves inside the shower enclosure, toiletry items are commonly kept on the floor of the enclosure or stored on top of, or hung from, the frame that is often attached to the top of the shower enclosure panels, which makes their handling inconvenient, particularly for users with a physical disability.

[0004] Accordingly, there is a need for a storage solution that can easily be installed in a shower enclosure and that allows toiletry items to be stored conveniently inside the shower enclosure, so that they are easily accessible to a person when showering.

[summary]

[0005] The inventor of the present invention has realised that the shortcomings of known shower enclosure storage solutions can be overcome by enlarging and adapting a conventional shower enclosure profile to allow

toiletries to be stored inside the heretofore unutilised hollow portion of the profile.

[0006] For aesthetic reasons, conventional shower enclosure profiles are usually designed to have as small a cross-sectional area as possible, and their colour selected to match the finish of other components of the shower enclosure or other bathroom fixtures, to make the profiles look as unobtrusive as possible. Thus, in arriving at the elegant storage solution that is provided by the present invention, the inventor has gone against the prevailing approach to the design of shower enclosure profiles.

[0007] More specifically, the present invention provides a system of shower enclosure fittings for attaching a panel of a shower enclosure to a wall, comprising: a wall profile for attachment to a wall, the wall profile comprising an elongate member; and a shower enclosure profile for attachment to the wall profile and to a panel of a shower enclosure, the shower enclosure profile comprising an elongate member of one-piece construction with a hollow portion therein and having a holder for holding a toiletry item for use by a person when showering, wherein the holder is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile between an upper end of the profile and a lower end of the profile, and such that the toiletry item held by the holder is accessible to the person when inside the shower enclosure, when the shower enclosure profile is installed in the shower enclosure so as to attach the panel of the shower enclosure to the wall.

[0008] The present invention also provides a system of shower enclosure fittings for attaching a shower curtain support to a wall, comprising a wall profile for attachment to a wall, the wall profile comprising an elongate member; and a shower enclosure profile for attachment to the wall profile and to a shower curtain support, the shower enclosure profile comprising an elongate member of one-piece construction with a hollow portion therein and having a holder for holding a toiletry item for use by a person when showering, wherein the holder is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile between an upper end of the profile and a lower end of the profile, and such that the toiletry item held by the holder is accessible to the person when inside the shower enclosure, when the shower enclosure profile is installed in the shower enclosure so as to attach the shower curtain support to the wall.

[0009] By providing a system of shower enclosure fittings comprising both a wall profile and a shower enclosure profile, the wall profile may be attached to a wall and the shower enclosure profile may be attached to the wall profile in an inclined, non-parallel configuration relative to the wall profile so that a panel can be installed with its bottom edge parallel to the floor (or a shower curtain support can be installed parallel to the floor) in a bathroom where the wall is not perpendicular to the floor.

[0010] By providing a holder for holding the toiletry item that is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile between an upper end of

the profile and a lower end of the profile (the upper and lower ends being defined with reference to the orientation of the shower enclosure profile when it is installed in the shower enclosure, attaching the panel of the shower enclosure or the shower curtain support to the wall), and such that the toiletry item held by the holder would be accessible to the person showering, the present invention allows the item to be stored in a discrete and convenient way. The present invention thus exploits the heretofore unrecognised potential for storing toiletries that is provided by the interior of shower enclosure profiles. The provision of the holder at least partially inside the shower enclosure profile has the further advantage that the holder and the one or more toiletry items held thereby are at least partially shielded by the shower enclosure profile, thus reducing the risk of the person showering knocking into them and potentially sustaining injury.

[0011] The holder may be provided as an integral part of the shower enclosure profile or supplied as a replaceable part that installs in a predefined location, the predefined location being such that, in use, when the shower enclosure profile is installed in the shower enclosure, the holder is located at least partially inside a hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile between an upper end of the profile and a lower end of the profile and a toiletry item held by the holder is accessible to the person when inside the shower enclosure.

[0012] In addition, the present invention provides a shower installation, comprising a shower and a shower enclosure having a system of shower enclosure fittings according to either of the above aspects of the invention, installed so as to allow a person inside the shower enclosure to store a toiletry item in the holder.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[0013] Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying figures, in which:

Fig. 1 shows the components of a system of shower enclosure fittings according to a first embodiment of the present invention, together with optional accessories;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a walk-in shower installation comprising a system of shower enclosure fittings of the first embodiment, which attach a shower enclosure panel to a room wall;

Fig. 3 shows the components of a system of shower enclosure fittings according to a variant of the first embodiment;

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a walk-in shower installation having a system of shower enclosure fittings according to a second embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a shower installation having a system of shower enclosure fittings according to a third embodiment of the present invention, the shower installation in this embodiment comprising a bath, a shower enclosure profile in the form of an over-bath profile, a shower curtain pole and a shower curtain.

[Detailed Description of Embodiments]

[0014] A system of shower enclosure fittings according to an embodiment of the present invention may be used in any of a wide variety of shower enclosures. Several examples of a shower enclosure comprising a system of shower enclosure fittings according to an embodiment of the present invention will now be described. The room in which the shower installation is provided is referred to herein as a bathroom, and it will be appreciated that such a bathroom may be located in any type of building where a shower is found, including private buildings such as a person's home, rental accommodation, such as a hotel room, and a public building, such as a sports centre.

[0015] A shower enclosure may take the familiar form of a shower enclosure/cubicle having two side panels attached to a bathroom wall (usually the wall on which the shower is mounted) via respective shower enclosure profiles, and a door panel or a shower curtain suspended from a pole for accessing the enclosure. Each of these panels, as well as the shower enclosure panels described herein below, is usually a pane of toughened safety glass of a suitable thickness (usually between 4 and 12 mm) although other materials (e.g. ABS) are also commonly used.

[0016] Another example is a corner enclosure for installation in a corner of a bathroom, which may have a side panel rigidly attached to one of the bathroom walls via a first shower enclosure profile, and a door panel pivotally connected to the other wall via a second shower enclosure profile. The panels of the corner shower enclosure may be planar sheets of an appropriate material (e.g. tempered safety glass, as noted above) or they may be curved, as in the case of a so-called "quadrant" shower enclosure, for example.

[0017] A further example of a shower enclosure with fewer panels is an alcove shower enclosure, which may simply have a door panel of the shower enclosure pivotally attached to one of the alcove side walls via a profile.

[0018] It is noted that shower enclosures of the kind described above are distinct from a relatively recent alternative thereto, namely shower pods that employ a number of co-operating wall units (usually ABS moulding) instead of panels that are joined to each other or to a bathroom wall via a profile. The absence of grout or sealant in these shower pods, together with the typically smooth, rounded design of the interior of the wall units makes the shower pods easier to maintain, although they are more difficult and expensive to manufacture.

[0019] Walk-in shower enclosures are another recent

development, which have gained in popularity for installation in larger bathrooms or wet rooms in particular, where shower spray is less of a concern. This kind of shower enclosure has at least one enclosure panel (also referred to in this context as a shower screen) but differs from the above examples by not having a door or shower curtain for closing off the showering area. As it is difficult to economically manufacture and transport glass panels above a certain size, larger walk-in shower enclosures for partially closing off the showering area usually have at least one pair of in-line side panels attached to each other via a panel-joining profile.

[0020] Another common type of shower enclosure comprises a bath installed in a corner of a bathroom and an enclosure panel in the form of an over-bath shower screen attached to a bathroom wall via a bath screen profile such that the shower screen (usually a planar or curved glass panel, depending on the shape of the bath) extends from the profile above the rim of the bath, with a rubber flap usually attached to the bottom edge of the shower screen and extending to contact the rim of the bath so as to provide a watertight seal between the two. The bath screen is preferably pivotally attached to the profile in order to facilitate entry into the bath.

[0021] As will be appreciated from the foregoing, system of shower enclosure fittings according to embodiments of the present invention may be used in various kinds of shower enclosure. However, for brevity, the following description of embodiments of the invention will focus on certain types of enclosure, namely the walk-in shower and the type which comprises a bath and either a shower curtain or a shower screen.

[First Embodiment]

[0022] A first embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to Figs. 1 and 2.

[0023] As shown in Fig. 1, a system of shower enclosure fittings comprises a shower enclosure profile 100 and a wall profile 114.

[0024] The shower enclosure profile 100 of the first embodiment comprises an elongate hollow member 102 of one-piece construction in the form of an aluminium extrusion having a suitable wall thickness (e.g. between 2 and 5 mm) and a substantially rectangular hollow inner 104. The internal walls of the tubular member 102 bound the hollow inner 104 thereof, which may extend along only part of the entire length of the profile or, as in the present embodiment, along the entire length of the profile.

[0025] The profile 100 further comprises means for securing a shower enclosure panel to the tubular member 102, which in the present embodiment takes the form of a pair of protrusions 108a 108b protruding from the tubular member 102 and defining a channel 110 therebetween for receiving an end portion of the shower enclosure panel, as shown at 106 in Fig. 2. The channel 110 may extend along substantially the entire length of the

tubular member 102 to allow the panel to be held securely along its full length, as in the present embodiment, or along only a part of the length of the tubular member 102. The end of the panel 106 may be held firmly in place inside the channel 110 by any suitable means known to those versed in the art, such as a rubber gasket (essentially a rubber extrusion inserted inside channel 110 so as to line the channel's inner surfaces) or an adhesive. In the latter case, the width, of the channel 110 may be chosen to be slightly greater than the thickness of the panel 106, in order to allow for a sufficient amount of an adhesive to be used to bond the panel 106 to an inner surface of the channel 110.

[0026] of course, it will be appreciated that any other suitable means for attaching the panel 106 to the elongate hollow member 102 may be used, for example a single ridge-like protrusion (similar to 108a) to which the panel may be bonded with an adhesive. Alternatively, an appropriately sized groove or channel formed in the wall of the hollow member 102, preferably fitted with a rubber gasket, may be used. The panel securing means may alternatively comprise a receptacle for the panel 106, which receptacle is attached to the tubular member. For example, the panel securing means may comprise an open-channel profile for receiving the panel (preferably via a rubber gasket), which profile is attached to the tubular member 102 by any suitable means, e.g. screws passing through the base of the open-channel profile and into the tubular member 102. In this case, the shower enclosure profile could easily be fitted with an open-channel profile having a channel width that matches the desired panel thickness. Alternatively, the open-channel profile may be provided with side walls that are inclined inwards towards one another and made of a sufficiently flexible material (e.g. a plastic) to allow the side walls to flex and thereby accommodate shower enclosure panels of a range of different thicknesses.

[0027] The tubular member 102 is provided with several holes (one of these is labelled 112 in Fig. 1) for the passage of screws during installation of the profile 100, which attach the tubular member 102 to the wall profile 114. The wall profile 114 is in turn attached to a bathroom wall using any suitable means, such as screws and wall-plugs. The tubular member 102 may be provided with slots in place of the holes in order to allow the tubular member 102 to be inclined with respect to the wall profile 114, thus allowing satisfactory installation (with the bottom edge of the panel 106 running parallel to the floor of the enclosure) in a bathroom where the wall is off vertical in relation to the floor. Alternatively, other forms of connectors may be used instead of screws and slots to permit such an inclined connection. Preferably, the wall profile 114 is an elongate member of one-piece construction, which may be formed from the same material as the shower enclosure profile 100.

[0028] The shower enclosure profile 100 has at least one holder for holding one or more toiletry items for use by a person when showering. As shown in Figs. 1 and

2, the profile 100 of the present embodiment has three holders in the form of receptacles 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3 that are each sized to receive at least one toiletry item, such as a bar of soap 126 or a shampoo bottle 128. In the present embodiment, each receptacle 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3 has a different size. However, they could, instead, all have the same size.

[0029] Having regard to kinds of toiletry items normally used in the shower enclosure and their typical sizes, each holder preferably has a surface of at least 50 cm² in area on which to hold one or more of these toiletry items. For example, in the present embodiment, each of the receptacles 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3 is 5 cm deep and 10 cm in width, and has a bottom surface approximately 50 cm² in area on which toiletry items may be placed. In the present embodiment, the height of each receptacle is 20 cm, although this could differ between the receptacles.

[0030] Preferably, the receptacles are provided with means for retaining the toiletry items therein, such as one or more retaining rails, as shown at 118 in Fig. 1. Additionally or alternatively, one or more of the receptacles may be provided with a door 120 for closing off the opening of the receptacle. In this case, the mating surfaces of the receptacle 116-3 and the door 120 are preferably arranged to cooperate so as to prevent water from entering the receptacle when the door 120 is closed, thereby allowing items such as cotton wool to be safely stored and kept dry in the frequently wet environment of the shower enclosure. To improve the seal between the receptacle 116-3 and the door 120, one or both of the mating surfaces may be covered with a resilient material such as a suitable rubber compound.

[0031] As shown in Fig. 1, each receptacle 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3 is arranged to fit inside a respective opening, 122-1, 122-2 and 122-3, in a wall of the tubular member 102 so that the receptacle extends inside the hollow inner portion 104 of the tubular member 102, thus allowing the toiletry item to be stored within the hollow portion 104 that has previously not been used for storage. The inventor has found that, for practical reasons, the area of the inner section of the profile should be at least 50 cm², with either the length or the width of the rectangular inner section of the profile of the present embodiment preferably being at least 10 cm. In the present embodiment, the inner section measures 6×11 cm. A receptacle may extend into the hollow portion 104 of the tubular member 102 fully or only partially, as in the case of receptacles 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3, each of which has a flange (labelled 124 in the case of receptacle 116-1 in Fig. 1) serving as a stop and an attachment surface for attaching (e.g. using an appropriate adhesive) the receptacle to the outer surface of the tubular member 102. Alternatively, a receptacle may be provided entirely within the hollow portion 104, and attached to the inside surface of the tubular member 102 (e.g. via a flange around the opening of the receptacle), thereby leaving the outer surface of the profile 100 around the opening in the tube 102 flat, making it easier to wipe down and enhancing

the appearance of the shower enclosure profile.

[0032] In the shower installation shown in Fig. 2, sheet flooring, together with appropriate drainage, are provided at the base of the shower enclosure. where sheet flooring is used in an alcove shower installation or a shower installation employing one or more bathroom walls (e.g. a corner installation), it is usual for waterproof sheet flooring to extend upwards along a base portion 132 off the wall within the enclosure, in order to avoid the accumulation of water at the base of the wall and its consequent leakage into the bathroom floor. In this case, one of the ends of the profile 100 may have at least one corner portion 130 which is rounded to facilitate installation of the profile 100. The remaining corner portion at the same end of the profile 100, which is also to be disposed adjacent the bathroom wall when the profile is installed in the shower enclosure, may or may not be rounded, depending on whether there is sheet flooring only inside, or both inside and outside, the shower enclosure. In the shower installation shown in Fig. 2, where there is sheet flooring inside the walk-in shower enclosure and a tiled floor outside (not shown), the corner portion 134 of wall profile 114 which is outermost from the showering area is not rounded while the innermost corner portion 136 is rounded. The corresponding corner portions of the tubular member 102 are similarly configured, to ease installation.

[0033] The shower enclosure profile is preferably provided with means for supporting a seat for a person to sit on when showering. In the present embodiment, the seat takes the form of a shower bench 138, which is supported at one of its ends by a leg 140 and at the other by the bottom surface of a slot 142 in the profile 100, with which the bench 138 engages. Of course, it will be appreciated that the profile 100 may alternatively be provided with another suitable means for support the end of the bench 138, such as hooks provided on the profile for engaging appropriately sized and spaced holes in the bottom surface of the bench 138. As a further alternative, the profile may be provided with appropriate means for fully supporting the seat (e.g. a bracket attached to the profile, onto which the seat can be attached), thus dispensing with the leg 140 or other additional means for partially supporting the seat.

[0034] As an alternative, the present inventor has realised that the increased size of the hollow portion of a profile in embodiments, as compared to conventional profiles, can be used to store a shower seat when the seat is not in use. For example, as shown in Fig. 3, the profile may comprise a seat 138-2 which is pivotally attached at one its ends, by one or more hinges 139, to the inside of the profile, so that it can be rotated away into the hollow portion 104 of the profile when it is not required by the person showering. In the variant of the first embodiment shown in Fig. 3, the seat 138-2 is mounted to the profile so as to be capable of being rotated upwards about the mounting 139 and into the hollow portion 104 of the tubular member 102 through an opening

142-2 in the tubular member 102.

[0035] A leg 140-2 for further supporting the seat 138-2 may be pivotally attached to the seat 138-2, preferably at the other end of the seat 138-2, as shown in Fig. 3. In the variant of the first embodiment shown in Fig. 3, the leg 140-2 comprises a panel having substantially the same dimensions as the opening 142-2, such that, once the seat 138-2 has been folded away into the hollow portion 104 of the profile, the outside surface of the leg 140-2 (visible in Fig. 3) covers the opening 142-2, preferably sitting flush with the surrounding surface of the profile. In the present variant, the panel leg 140-2 is joined to the seat 138-2 by a hinge 141 and functions to support the seat 138-2 and any load thereon. However, the panel need not be load-bearing component, and may be attached to leg of the kind shown at 140 in Fig. 1, for example, that is pivotally attached to the seat 138-2.

[0036] when the seat 138-2 has been stored inside the profile, the seat may be kept in place by any suitable means, such as one or more spring-loaded clips. To extract the seat 138-2 from the profile, the user may simply lift the lower end of the leg panel 142-2 (a hand-hold or a finger-hold may be provided at the base of the leg to facilitate this step) and then pull the leg to disengage the one or more spring-loaded clips (or other means for keeping the seat in place inside the profile), thereby allowing the seat 138-2 to be removed from the hollow portion 104 of the profile.

[0037] Referring again to Figs. 1 and 2, the profile 100 may be provided with one or more additional holders each for holding a toiletry item, each further holder being located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the profile between the upper end of the profile and the lower end of the profile, and such that the toy item in the further holder is accessible from an outside of the shower enclosure.

[0038] For example, as shown in Fig. 1, an opening 144 is provided in a wall of the tubular member 102, on an opposite side of the shower enclosure profile 100 to the side in which openings 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3 are provided. In other words, when the profile 100 is installed in a shower enclosure to attach the shower panel 106 to a bathroom wall, the opening 144 is provided in a surface of the profile 100 which faces the outside of the shower enclosure while openings 116-1, 116-2 and 116-3 are provided in a surface of the profile 100 which faces the inside of the shower enclosures. An additional holder also in the form of a receptacle for a toiletry item (not shown in Figs. 1 and 2) may be inserted into the opening 144 so as to extend at least partially into the hollow portion 104 of the tubular member 102.

[0039] Since a toilet and a shower enclosure are often arranged side-by-side in bathrooms, this further receptacle could be configured to function as a toilet roll holder. For example, the receptacle may be provided with a spring-loaded compressible shaft whose ends are arranged to engage respective recesses in opposing walls of the receptacle, such that the shaft can be placed

through the hole of a toilet roll and then compressed to fit inside the receptacle, engaging the recesses therein so as to hold the toilet roll in place inside the receptacle. Thus, the profile 100 of the present embodiment may serve not only as a practical, stylish shower enclosure storage unit but also as a toilet roll holder, thereby further reducing the number of separate storage elements required in the bathroom.

10 [Second Embodiment]

[0040] A second embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to Fig. 4.

[0041] Figure 4 shows a shower installation comprising a shower 146 and a shower enclosure profile 200 which attaches a shower enclosure panel 106 to a bathroom wall via a wall profile, as in the first embodiment. However, the shower enclosure profile 200 of the present embodiment differs from the profile 100 of the first embodiment in that, instead of a tubular member 102, the profile 200 comprises an elongate, trough-shaped member of one-piece construction having a hollow portion 104 in the form of an open channel, in which channel at least holder is provided in the form of a shelf (in the present embodiment, four shelves 202-1 to 202-4 are provided) for holding a toiletry item for use by a person when showering. The number of shelves 202-1 to 202-4 and their positioning within the hollow portion 104 may of course be varied in accordance with the user's requirements. Furthermore, each shelf may be arranged to extend fully or only partially into the hollow portion 104 of the profile 200. The shelves may be fitted into the channel of the profile by any suitable means known to the skilled person. The dimensions of the shelves top surfaces and of the profile's channel 104 are preferably as set out above in connection with the first embodiment.

[0042] As shown in Fig. 4, profile 200 of the present embodiment optionally includes a door 205, which may be closed to cover the storage area inside the profile. The door may extend along the full length off the profile, as shown in Fig. 4, or along only a part off the profile's length, and may be kept closed by magnetic catches 207-1 and 207-2 which are arranged to contact corresponding catches provided on the door 205.

[0043] The shower enclosure profile 200 of the present embodiment also allows toiletry items to be stored in a convenient and tidy way, which avoids the shortcomings of the prior art discussed above. In addition, the profile 200 of the present embodiment may be cheaper to manufacture than the profile of the first embodiment, and provide greater flexibility in terms of allowing the number and positioning of the toiletry item holders to be easily changed in accordance with the user's requirements.

[0044] As in the first embodiment and the variant thereof shown in Fig. 3, the shower enclosure profile 200 of the second embodiment may be provided with one or more further holders each for holding a toiletry item, each further holder being located at least partially inside the

hollow portion of the profile between the upper end of the profile and the lower end of the profile, and such that the toy item in the further holder is accessible from an outside of the shower enclosure, when the profile is installed in the shower enclosure.

[0045] For example, an opening (not shown) may be provided in the bottom wall of the through-shaped member. A further holder in the form of a receptacle for a toiletry item may be inserted into this opening so as to extend at least partially into the hollow portion 104 of the profile 200. To prevent water from the shower enclosure from leaking outside through the opening, a watertight seal is preferably provided between the opening and the receptacle. The uppermost outside surface of the receptacle could be used to store toiletry items such that they are accessible to a person inside the shower enclosure.

[0046] Furthermore, the receptacle may be configured to function as a toilet roll holder. For example, the receptacle may be provided with a spring-loaded compressible shaft whose ends are arranged to engage respective recesses in opposing walls of the receptacle, such that the shaft can be placed through the hole of a toilet roll and then compressed to fit inside the receptacle, engaging the recesses therein so as to hold the toilet roll in place inside the receptacle. Thus, the profile 200 of the present embodiment may also serve not only as a practical, stylish shower enclosure storage unit but also as a toilet roll holder, thereby further reducing the number of separate storage elements required in the bathroom.

[Third Embodiment]

[0047] Figure 5 shows a third embodiment, in which a shower installation comprises a shower 146, a bath 148 and a shower enclosure comprising a profile which takes the form of an over-bath profile 300 which connects to the wall via a wall profile (not shown). The shower installation further comprises a shower curtain support 302 from which a shower curtain 304 is hung.

[0048] Unlike the shower enclosure profiles of the first and second embodiments, which serve to attach a shower enclosure panel 106 to a bathroom wall, the shower enclosure profile 300 of the third embodiment is provided with means for attaching to the profile 300 a shower curtain support, such as a curtain pole 302. The shower enclosure profile 300 may alternatively comprise means for attaching to the profile a shower curtain support in the form of a curtain rail or other kind of shower curtain support from which the shower curtain is hung.

[0049] In the present embodiment, the curtain pole attachment means on the profile 300 comprises an annular receptacle 306 configured to receive one end of the shower curtain pole 302, the receptacle 306 preferably being provided with one or more retainers such as clips (not shown) or threaded holes (not shown) in a side-wall thereof for accepting set-screws or the like, for securing the pole 302 to the receptacle 306.

[0050] The shower enclosure profile 300 of the present

embodiment is otherwise the same as the profile of either the first or second embodiment or any of the described variant thereof, except that its length is sized to fit above the bath 148. Description of the further features of the shower enclosure profile 300 will therefore not be repeated here. The further receptacle in the form of a toilet roll holder 308, discussed above in connection with the first and second embodiments, is illustrated in Fig. 5.

[0051] The over-bath, profile 300 of the present embodiment provides the same advantages as the first and second embodiment, and additionally serves to fill the gap that usually exists between the shower curtain 304 when drawn and the wall to which the shower curtain pole 302 is attached (owing to the presence of the bath rim 310 adjacent the wall), thereby reducing the leakage of water from the shower enclosure into the surrounding area of the bathroom. More preferably, a curtain support attachment means in the form of a bracket (not shown) for holding the curtain support 302 could be provided, the bracket being mounted on the side of the profile 300 that faces the inside of the shower enclosure so that the curtain 304 overlaps the profile 300 when drawn, thereby ensuring that shower spray cannot escape from the shower enclosure through a gap between the profile 300 and the curtain 304.

[0052] Furthermore, the shower enclosure profile 300 may, particularly where it is installed in a shower installation for use by those with a physical disability, comprise a grab rail 312, which a person entering or leaving the bath can hold onto, for added safety.

[Fourth Embodiment]

[0053] In a fourth embodiment of the present invention, the shower enclosure profile 300 of the third embodiment is provided with means for attaching an over-bath shower screen thereto instead of the means for attaching a shower curtain pole 302. The over-bath shower screen may be rigidly attached to the profile 300 or it may be attached thereto pivotally via hinges, to allow the shower screen to be rotated away from the rim of the bath to facilitate access to the bath.

[Modifications and Variations]

[0054] Many modifications and variations can be made to the embodiments described above.

[0055] For example, in the embodiments described above, the cross-section of the shower enclosure profile is substantially rectangular. However, the cross-sectional shape of the shower enclosure profile may be chosen to differ from that described. For example, the shower enclosure profile may be provided with a partially cylindrical cross-section.

[0056] Although the profiles of the above embodiments comprise aluminium extrusions, it will be appreciated that other materials, for example a metal alloy such as steel, or a plastic (such as PVC) may be used instead. As a

further alternative, a combination of material may be used. For example, the profile may be made from foil-wrapped PVC and finished with a layer of paint. Furthermore, the profiles need not be manufactured by extrusion but may be made using any other technique that is appropriate for the profile material selected, for example injection moulding in the case of plastic profiles.

[0057] In the above embodiments, a holder in the form of a shelf or a receptacle is provided. However, embodiments of the present invention may alternatively employ another kind of holder for holding a toiletry item, such as a hook or similar support from which a toiletry item such as a shower gel container may be hung. It will also be appreciated that a shower enclosure profile of an embodiment may have two or more holders of different kinds.

[0058] Although the seat 138-2 of the above-described variant of the first embodiment is pivotally attached to the profile, it will be appreciated that other means of mounting the seat such that it can be moved relative to the shower enclosure profile and stored inside the hollow portion of the profile may be used. For example, the end of the seat which is supported by the profile when in use may be provided with two studs at opposing sides of the seat, which engage respective pairs of guide rails that are provided inside the tubular member 102, on opposing internal surfaces thereof, and run down the profile from the vicinity of the lower end of the opening 142-2. Each pair of guide rails terminates at a stop located in the vicinity of the lower end of the opening 142-2, which prevents the studs from leaving the pairs of guide rails. In this modification, the seat can be lowered into the hollow portion 104 of the profile, guided by the pairs of guard rails. The aforementioned stops and the lower edge of the opening 142-2 may lend sufficient support to the seat to allow the supporting leg to be dispensed with. Once the seat has been stored inside the shower enclosure profile, the opening therein may be closed off with a door to prevent the ingress of water into the storage region of the profile.

[0059] In this connection, it is noted that the features of the above-described first embodiment and the variant thereof that relate to the shower seat (e.g. the features labelled 138, 140, 142 in Fig. 1, and features 138-2, 139, 140-2, 141, 142-2 in Fig. 3), as well as the modifications to the variant set out above, are equally applicable to the other kinds of shower enclosure profile which are described herein.

[0060] Furthermore, the features described in any of the above embodiments may be combined with the features of any other embodiment in any desired way, according to necessity.

Claims

1. A system of shower enclosure fittings for attaching a panel (106) of a shower enclosure to a wall, com-

prising:

a wall profile (114) for attachment to a wall, the wall profile comprising an elongate member; and

a shower enclosure profile (100; 200) for attachment to the wall profile and to a panel (106) of a shower enclosure, the shower enclosure profile comprising an elongate member (102) of one-piece construction with a hollow portion (104) therein and having a holder (116; 202) of holding a toiletry item for use by a person when showering, wherein the holder is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile between an upper end of the profile and a lower end of the profile, and such that the toiletry item held by the holder is accessible to the person when inside the shower enclosure, when the shower enclosure profile is installed in the shower enclosure so as to attach the panel of the shower enclosure to the wall.

2. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to claim 1, wherein the wall profile (114) and the shower enclosure profile (100; 200) are configured for attaching a panel comprising an over-bath shower screen to a wall.

3. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to claim 1, wherein the wall profile (114) and the shower enclosure profile (100; 200) are configured for attaching a panel comprising a door panel to a wall.

4. A system of shower enclosure fittings for attaching a shower curtain support (302) to a wall, comprising:

a wall profile (114) for attachment to a wall, the wall profile comprising an elongate member; and

a shower enclosure profile (300) for attachment to the wall profile and to a shower curtain support (302), the shower enclosure profile comprising an elongate member of one-piece construction with a hollow portion therein and having a holder for holding a toiletry item for use by a person when showering, wherein the holder is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile between an upper end of the profile and a lower end of the profile, and such that the toiletry item held by the holder is accessible to the person when inside the shower enclosure, when the shower enclosure profile is installed in the shower enclosure so as to attach the shower curtain support to the wall.

5. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to any preceding claim, wherein one of the ends of the wall profiles (114) has at least one corner portion

- (136) which is rounded and one of the of the shower enclosure profile (100) has at least one corner portion (130) which is rounded to facilitate installation of the profiles in a shower installation having the shower enclosure and sheet flooring which extends upwards along a base portion of the wall.
6. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to any preceding claim, comprising a further holder 308 1 for holding a toiletry item, the further holder being located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile (100; 200; 300) between the upper end of the profile and the lower end of the profile, and such that the toiletry item in the further holder is accessible from an outside of the shower enclosure, when the shower enclosure profile is installed in the shower enclosure.
7. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to claim 6, wherein the further holder (308) is a toilet roll holder.
8. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to claim 6 wherein the further holder (308) comprises a shelf extending at least partially into the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile.
9. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to any preceding claim, wherein the holder (202) comprises a shelf extending at least partially into the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile.
10. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to any of claims 1 to or wherein: the shower enclosure profile (100) comprises a tubular member (102) enclosing the hollow portion (104) of the profile; the tubular member has an opening (122) in a surface thereof; and the holder comprises a receptacle (116) for receiving the toiletry item, the receptacle extending at least partially into the tubular member through the opening.
11. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to claim 10, wherein the tubular member (102) has a substantially rectangular cross-section, at least one of the length and the width of the rectangular cross-section being at least 10 cm.
12. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to any preceding claim, wherein the holder (116; 202) has a surfaces of at least 50 cm² in area on which to hold the toiletry item.
13. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to any preceding claim, wherein the shower enclosure profile further comprises means for at least partially supporting a seat (138) for a person to sit on when showering.
14. A system of shower enclosure fittings according to claim 13, further comprising a seat (138) for a person to sit on when showering, the seat being connected to the shower enclosure profile such that it can be moved between a storage position in which the seat is located at least partially inside the hollow portion of the shower enclosure profile, and an in-use position in which the seat extends out of the shower enclosure profile for a person to sit on when showering.
15. A shower installation, comprising:
- a shower (146); and
 - a shower enclosure having a system of shower enclosure fittings according to any preceding claim installed so as to allow a person inside the shower enclosure to store the toiletry item in the holder.

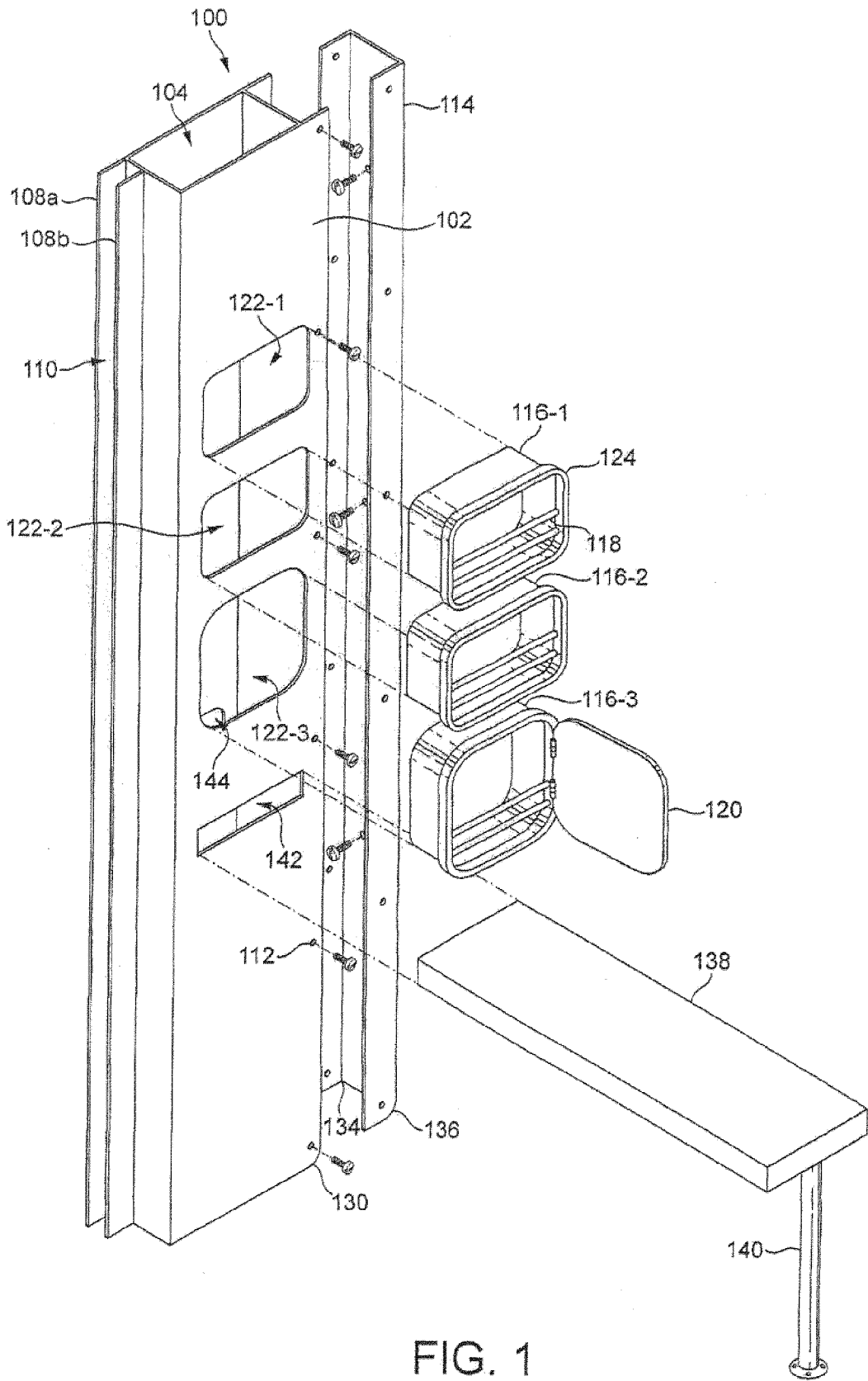


FIG. 1

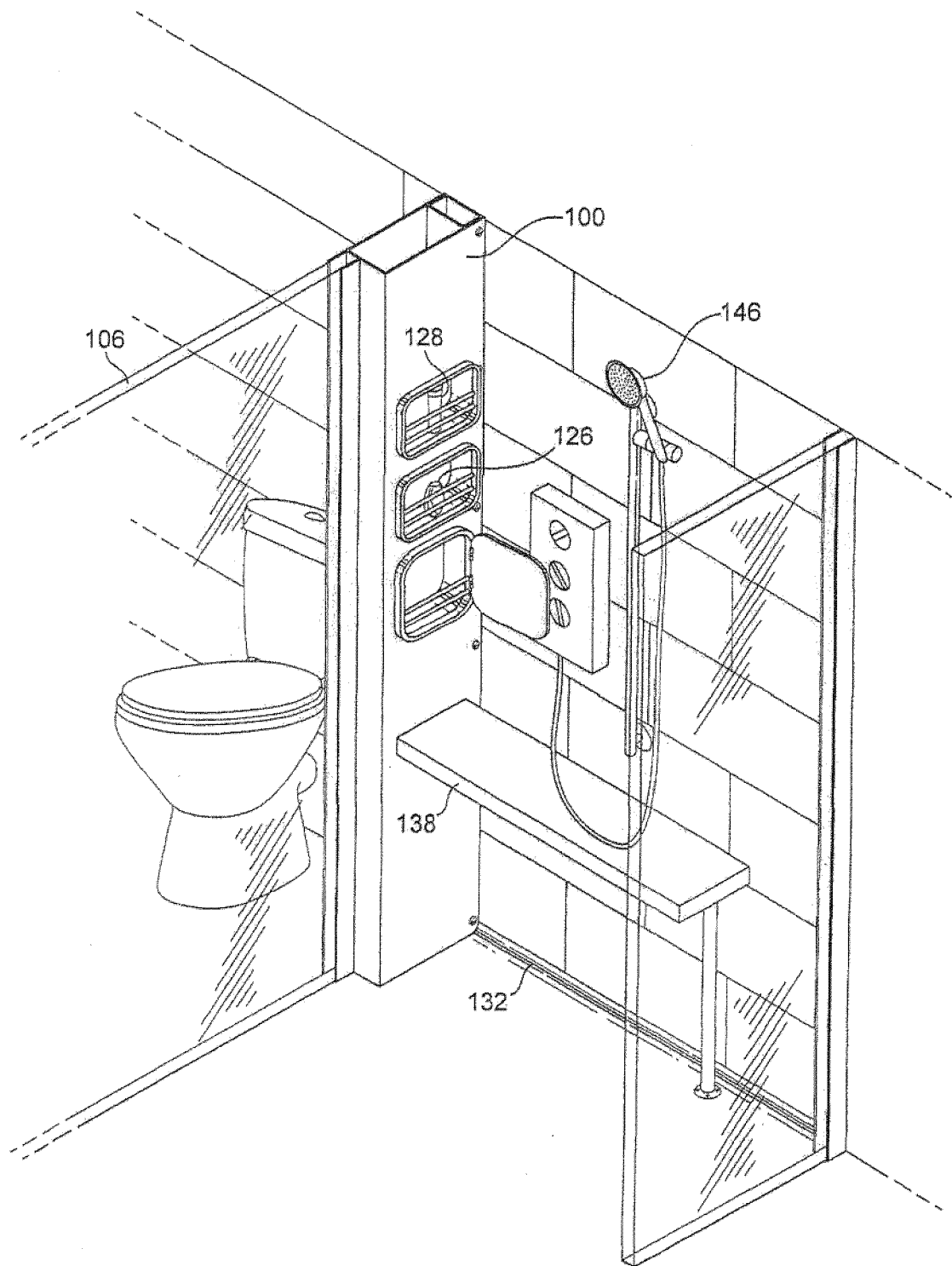


FIG. 2

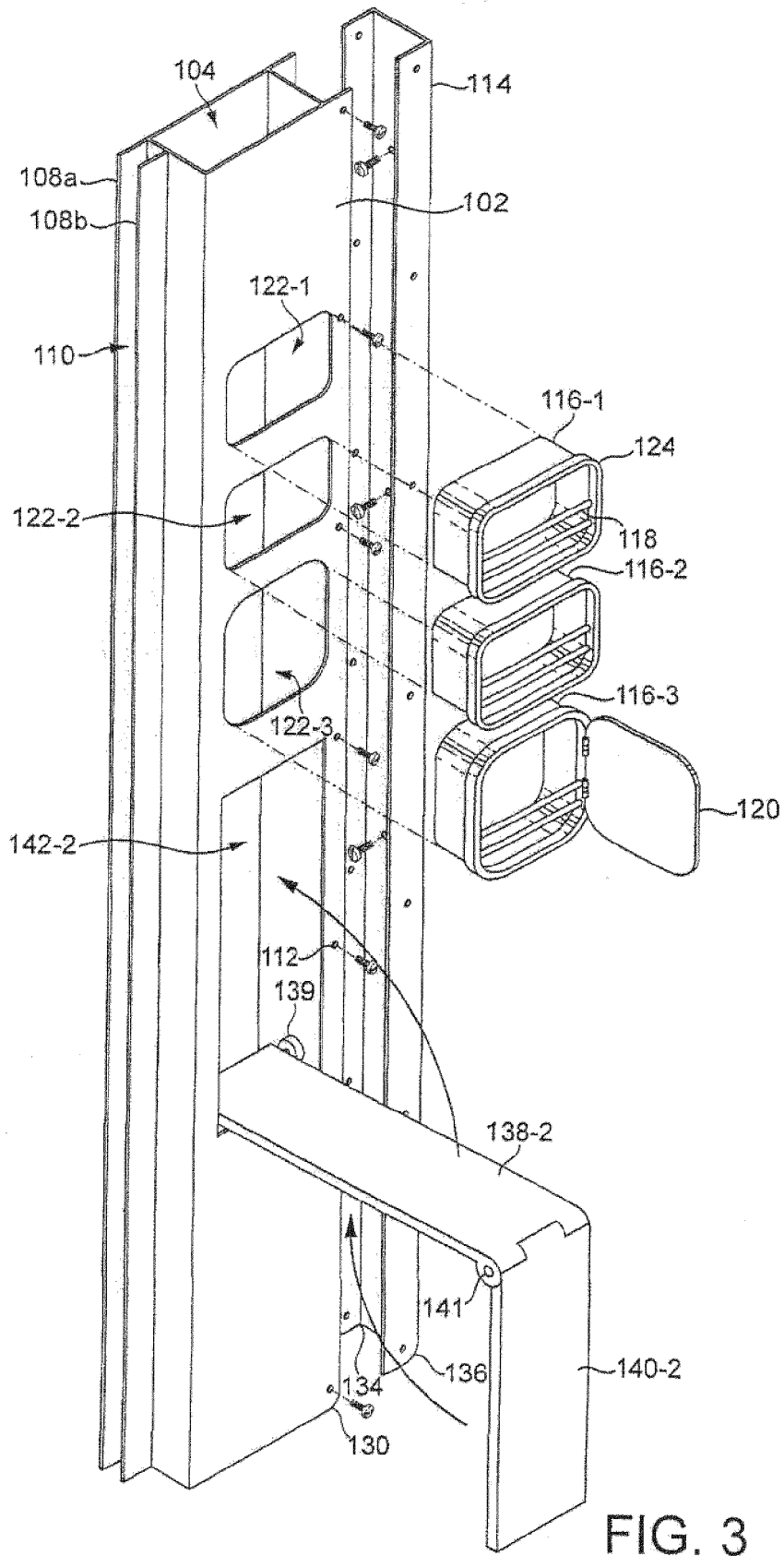


FIG. 3

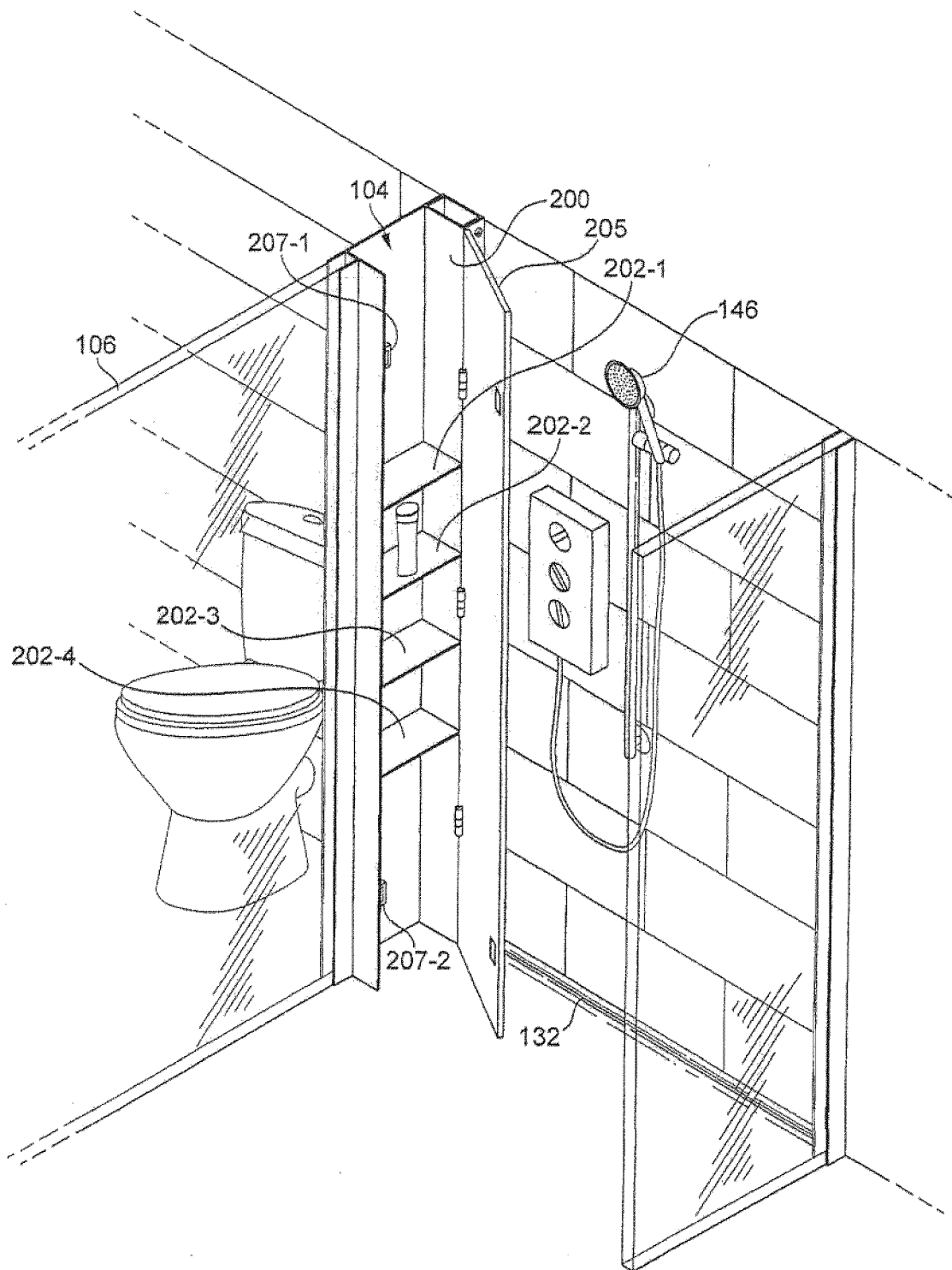


FIG. 4

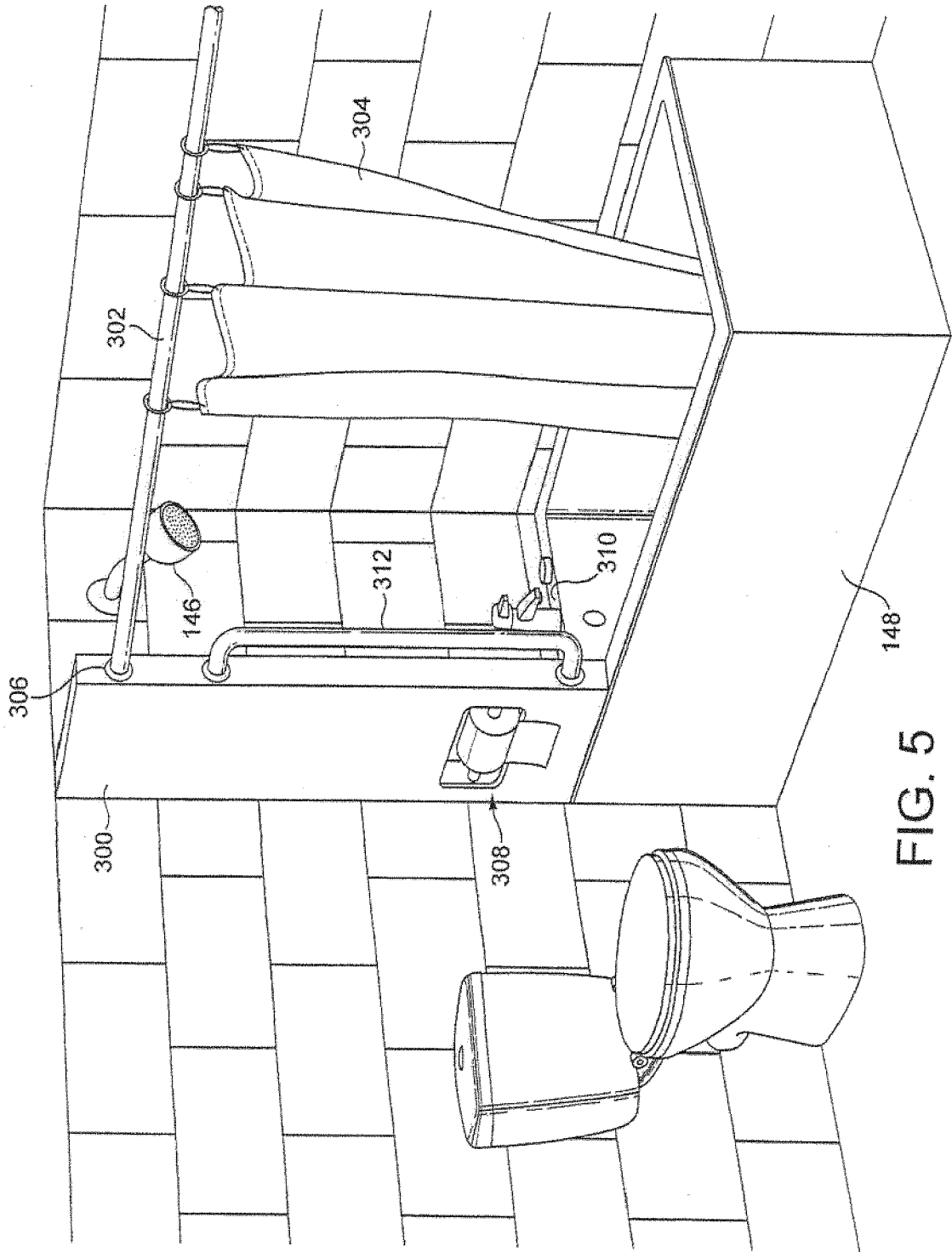


FIG. 5