

Craig et al.

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[54] **PARTITIONING SYSTEM HAVING
REMOVABLE PANELS**

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287/20.92

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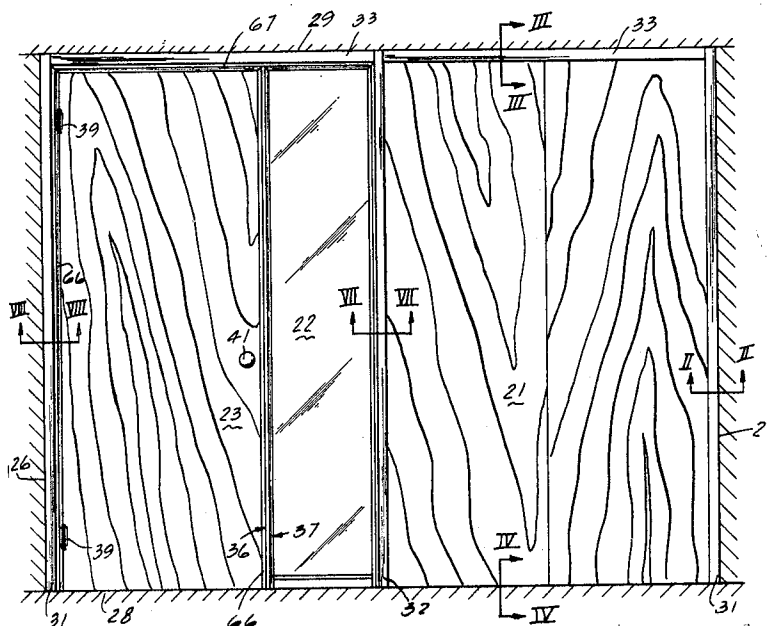
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A system for partitioning an existing room having a floor, a ceiling and walls into smaller room units comprising at least one vertically extending framing member formed to provide an elongated recess; means for providing a partitioning panel formed with an elongated recess in confronting relationship with the support recess; means for connecting the panel to the framing member; and means for releasably biasing the connecting means into engagement with one of the recesses. The connecting means includes an elongated member interposed between the panel means and the framing member having a first portion slidably received within the recess of the framing member and a second portion slidably received within the recess of the panel means. Desirably, a vertically extending support member is disposed adjacent to each of the opposed end portions of the panel means with the biasing means of each end portion arranged both to urge the connecting means of each end portion into engagement with the adjacent framing member recess and to urge the panel toward the framing member adjacent to the opposite end portion. Additionally, the connecting means includes means for receiving a tool for moving the connecting means against the biasing means to a position wherein the connecting means will be out of engagement with one of the recesses formed in either the framing member or the panel means, thereby to permit removal of the panel means.

20 Claims, 9 Drawing Figures



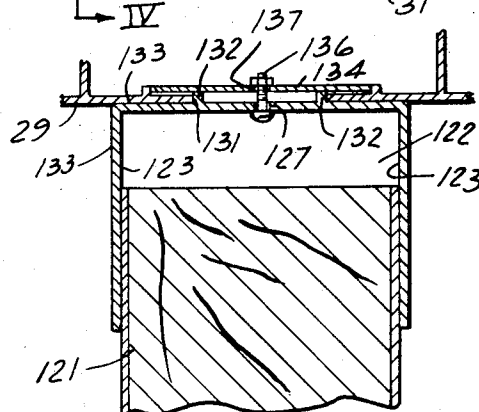
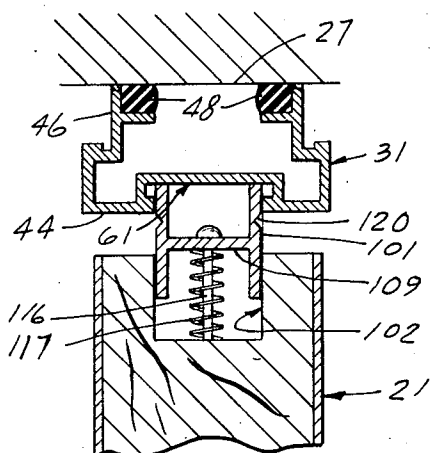
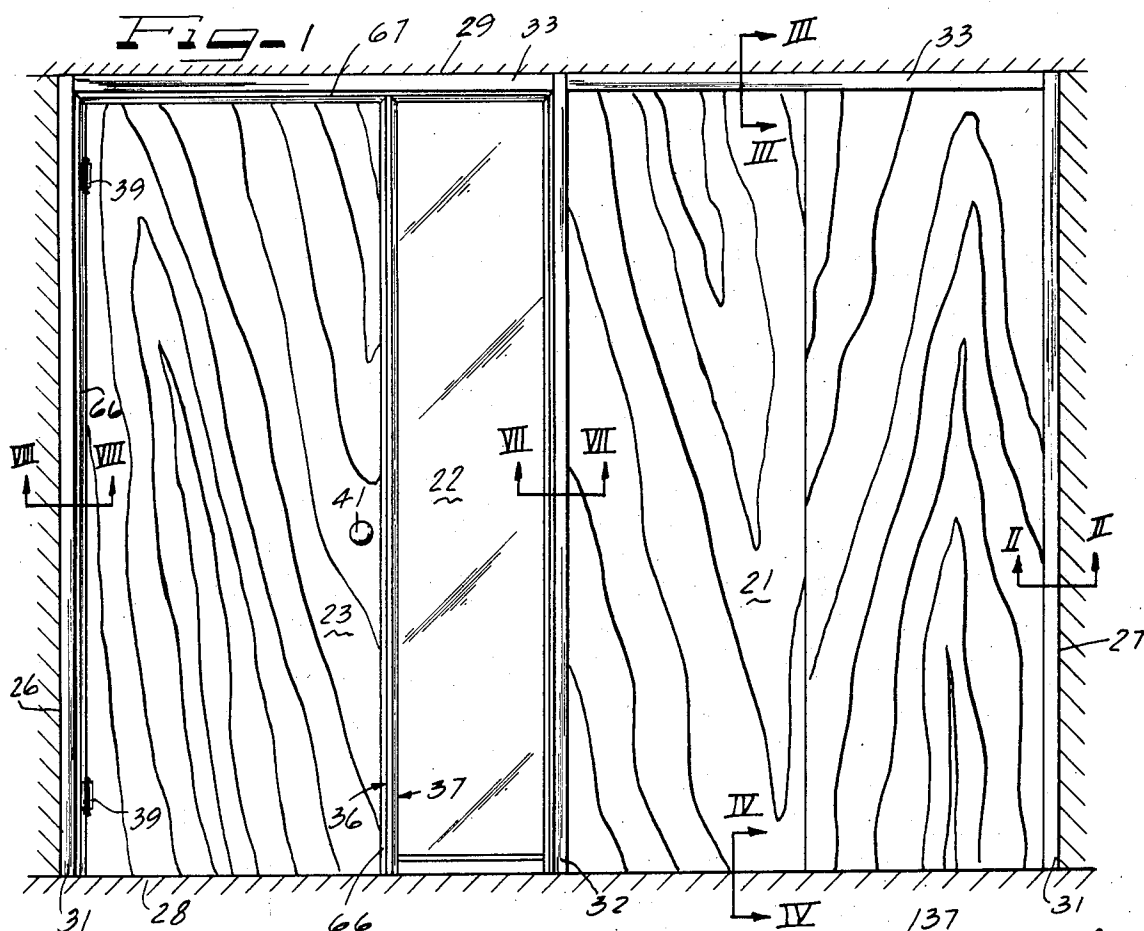


Fig. 2

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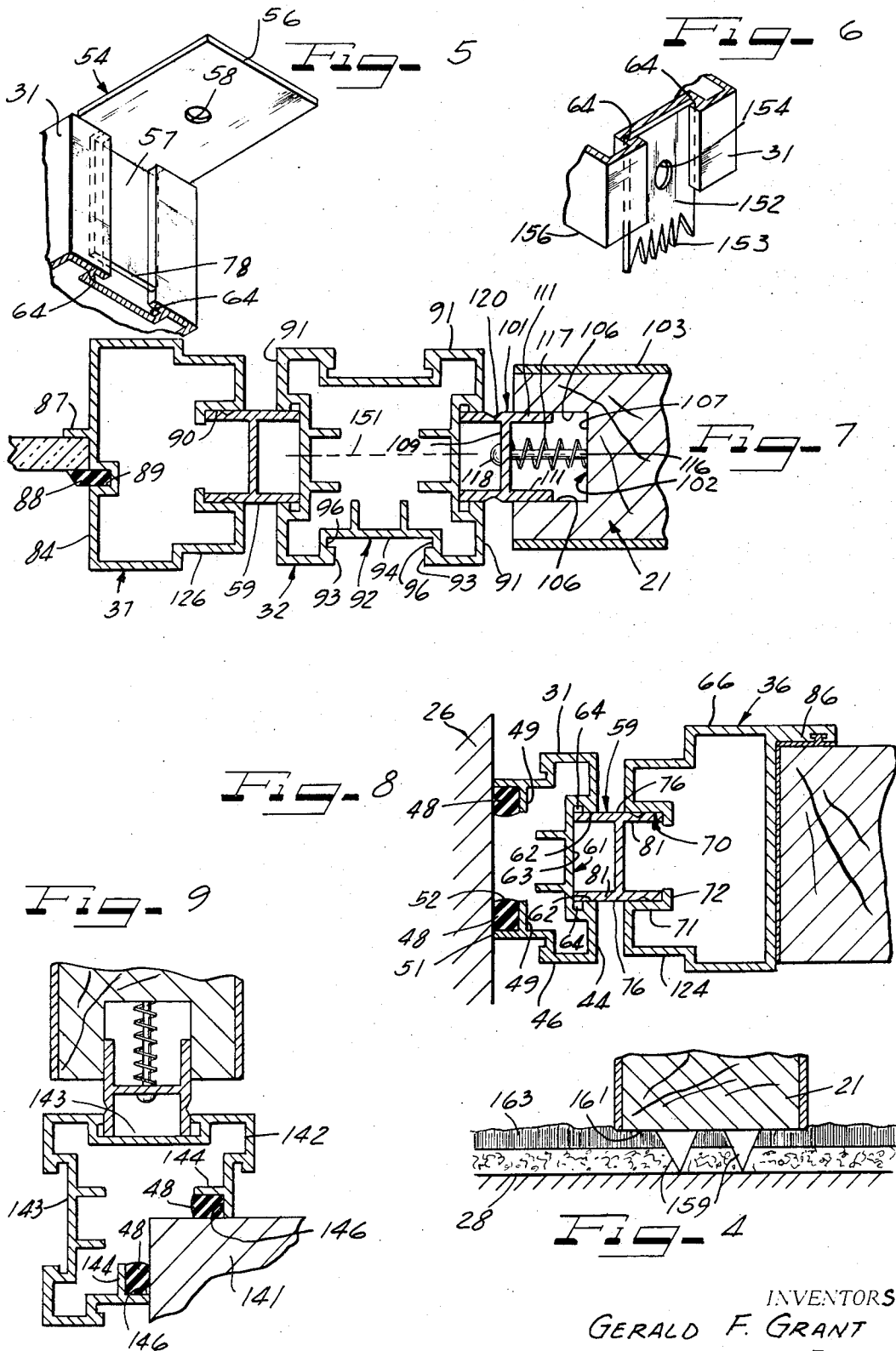
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PARTITIONING SYSTEM HAVING REMOVABLE PANELS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a partitioning system, and more particularly refers to a system of readily assembled cooperating support structures for supporting and retaining panels disposed in open spaces formed by a unique framing structure.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Heretofore in the development of partitioning systems various limitations and disadvantages have been found to exist preventing a single system from serving many uses or being architecturally acceptable apart from specific installations. For maximum versatility, a partitioning system must be able to accept partitioning panels of various configurations, including—for example—wood panels, glass panels and doors.

Architecturally, a partitioning or panelling system must present clear and uncluttered lines with finished joints and edges to blend in with modern office interiors. Prior art panelling systems have not provided the necessary clean, modern lines, but rather have included miscellaneous, exposed connecting elements such as screws, bolts and the like.

Additionally, most partitioning systems heretofore proposed have been unsatisfactory because they required skilled workmen and the use of many tools for the assembly and disassembly thereof.

It should be appreciated that the existing walls of a structure are normally neither square nor perfectly flat. Therefore, a partitioning system should be designed to compensate for these variations in squareness and flatness for providing a partition which neatly fits into the existing corners formed between the walls of the building and for providing a panel which fits flush against both the wall and the ceiling. Partitioning systems heretofore proposed have not provided this desirable feature.

Moreover, most modern office buildings are provided with carpeting to cover the floor surface. It should be appreciated, that it is economically desirable to carpet one large room prior to partitioning the same into smaller room units or offices. Prior art partitioning systems have not provided a means for preventing the formation of permanent depressions in the carpeting caused by partitions which extend from the floor to the ceiling. Therefore, when the prior art partitions were removed to enable the office configurations to be changed, a permanent depression remained in the carpeting where the panel was previously positioned.

Also, many prior art partitioning systems require apertures to be formed in the existing wall surfaces to receive means for securing a support bracket to the existing wall, whereby requiring repair of the wall when the partition is removed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The features of the present invention are applicable to a partitioning system including a variety of panel configurations—for example—wood panels, glass panels, and doors. The panels may be formed to extend from an existing floor to an existing ceiling of the building or to extend to any lesser height.

In accordance with the present invention, a partition which extends between a pair of opposed, parallel existing walls of a building includes an identical framing member disposed adjacent to each of the opposed walls. To compensate for any variations in the flatness of the existing wall of the building, a flexible sealing means is interposed between each framing member and the adjacent wall. A panel, or a series of interconnected panels, extend between the opposed support members.

A spring biased connecting means is interposed between at least one of the outermost, vertically extending edge portions of the panel and the adjacent framing member for interconnecting the edge portion of the panels to the adjacent framing member. For receiving the connecting means, each of the framing members is formed with an elongated, vertically extending recess therein which is in confronting relationship with a corresponding, elongated recess formed in each of the outermost end portions of the partitioning panel. Each connecting means includes an elongated member interposed between the outermost end portions of the partitioning panel and the adjacent framing member. The elongated member is formed with a first portion which is slidably received in the recess of the framing member and which engages a bottom surface thereof, and a second portion which is slidably received within the recess of the panel.

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, a biasing means is provided between a bottom surface of the recess of the panel and the connecting means for urging the latter outwardly of the panel and into engagement with the bottom surface of the recess of the framing member. It should be noted, that the biasing means urges the framing member and the sealing means associated therewith into snug engagement with the existing wall of the building, while at the same time exerting a clamping force on the opposed outermost end portions of the panel. The spring biasing means should be of sufficient strength to create a frictional force between the sealing means and the adjacent existing wall surface to retain the panel in an upright position.

Additional lateral support may be provided for the panel by securing the framing means to the existing ceiling. It is contemplated by the present invention that the means for securing the framing member to the ceiling include an elongated, horizontally extending member attached to the ceiling and formed to provide a downwardly opening channel for receiving an uppermost edge portion of the panel in overlapping relationship therewith. The elongated ceiling support member may be secured to the ceiling by conventional means. It should be noted that due to the overlapping relationship between the securing means and the uppermost edge portion of the panel, any waviness in the ceiling and any deviation in the squareness between the ceiling and the wall is automatically compensated for by the securing member.

An additional feature of the present invention contemplates providing means for slightly elevating both the vertically extending framing members and the panels above an existing floor of the building to permit a carpet to be interposed between lowermost edge portions of both the framing members and the panels and the existing floor. The means for elevating the panels

and the framing members generally includes downwardly extending attachments affixed to both the framing members and the panels. The downwardly extending attachments provide a series of tapered projections which pass through a nap of the carpeting and engage the floor surface in a manner to permit the weight of the partition to be directly carried by the floor without depressing the nap of the carpeting. Therefore, a partition construction is in accordance with the present invention may be removed without leaving a permanent depression in the carpeting to reveal where the partition was previously positioned.

It is also contemplated by the present invention that the connecting means be provided with means for receiving a tool to permit the connecting means to be moved against the biasing means and out of engagement with the recess formed in the wall support member for permitting disassembly of the partitioning panel.

Moreover, it is contemplated by the present invention, that intermediate framing members may be interposed between a series of adjacent panels to provide an interface between panels of different configurations—for example—between a wood panel and a glass panel. The intermediate framing members may also be supported on elevating means in a manner similar to the wall framing members. Additional support may be provided for a partition consisting of several individual panels by fixedly securing the intermediate framing members to the ceiling.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification and in which like reference characters are employed to designate like parts throughout the same:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view of a partition assembly extending between a pair of opposed, existing wall structures and constructed according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken on line II—II of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken on line III—III of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken line IV—IV of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a bracket utilized for securing vertically extending framing members to an existing ceiling structure;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a means for elevating a lowermost end portion of vertically extending framing members slightly above an existing floor structure to prevent permanent damage to carpeting laid on the floor;

FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VII—VII of FIG. 1;

FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VIII—VIII of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of a framing member to be utilized on an existing wall structure formed with an exterior corner.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the drawings, the features of the present invention are applicable to a partition having a wood

panel 21, a glass panel 22, and a door 23, as illustrated in FIG. 1. The partition, as illustrated in FIG. 1, is shown as laterally extending between existing walls 26 and 27 and vertically extending from an existing floor 28 to an existing ceiling 29.

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, a frame is constructed in an abutting relationship to the parallel, existing walls 26 and 27 and to the ceiling 29. The frame provides means for supporting partitioning panels, such as the wood panel 21, and generally includes a pair of identical, vertical framing members 31, 31 disposed to abut against the existing walls 26 and 27, a vertically extending intermediate framing member 32 interposed between the wood panel 21 and the glass panel 22 and a pair of horizontal framing members 33, 33 suspended from the ceiling and disposed to extend to outwardly in either direction from the intermediate framing member to each of the pair of vertical framing members. Additionally, separate frames, generally designated as 36 and 37, are provided, respectively, for both the door 23 and the glass panel 22.

It is contemplated by the present invention that the door frame be a rigid three-piece structure providing means for interconnecting the door frame with other panels or with vertical framing members such as 31. The frame 37 for the glass panel 22 covers all four edges of the glass panel and provides means for interconnecting the glass panel with either adjacent panels or adjacent framing members, such as the intermediate framing member 32. To facilitate mounting a door, such as 23, within the door frame 36, the frame is formed to provide a door jam, mounting means for hinges 39, 39, and an appropriately formed socket for receiving a door latch operated by the door handle 41.

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, a partition, as illustrated in FIG. 1, may be constructed by first erecting the vertical framing members 31, 31 adjacent to the existing walls 26 and 27. As illustrated in FIG. 8, the vertically framing member 31 disposed adjacent to the existing wall 26 for supporting the left-hand portion of the door frame 36 is formed with a channel shape in transverse cross-section. In particular, the vertical framing member 31 provides an outwardly facing medial portion 44 and a pair of leg portions 46, 46 extending from terminal ends of the medial portion toward the wall surface 26.

Desirably, sealing means are interposed between the vertical framing member 31 and the existing wall 26 to compensate for variations in the flatness of the existing wall. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, as illustrated in the drawings, the sealing means includes a pair of elongated sealing members 48, 48 each having a substantially rectangular cross-section. The seals 48, 48 are fitted into sockets formed in the vertical framing member 31 by a pair of ribs 49, 49 and a portion of each of the leg portions 46, 46. Each rib portion 49 is formed co-planar with the other rib portion and extends inwardly at right angles to the leg portion 46 toward the opposed rib portion. Each sealing member 48 is fitted into the socket formed by one of the rib portions 49 and has a width to permit the sealing member to extend beyond the terminal end portions as at 51 of the leg portions 46 of the framing member 31. When the framing member 31 is firmly urged toward

the existing wall 26, the sealing members 48, which are formed of a flexible rubber, for example—neoprene, are pushed into tight engagement with the existing wall surface and conform to the configuration thereof, thereby closing any small cracks or gaps which may be formed between the terminal end portions 51 of the leg portions 46, 46 of the framing member 31 and the existing wall 26.

The vertical framing members 31 are held in an upright position by means of support brackets 54. As illustrated in FIG. 5, the support bracket 54 has a substantially L-shaped configuration and in particular provides a first planar leg portion 56 and a second planar leg portion 57. The first planar leg portion includes at least one aperture, such as 58, passing therethrough and formed to receive an attachment means for securing the bracket 54 to the existing ceiling 29. The second leg portion 57 of the L-shaped mounting bracket 54 is formed to engage the vertically framing member 31 and retain the same in an upright position and in a tight fitting relationship with respect to the existing wall 26.

The medial portion 41 of the vertical framing member 31 is formed to provide means for engaging the bracket 54 and also means for engaging a connecting member 59 to connect the vertical framing member to the door frame 36 or to a panel such as 21. To provide the means for engaging the connector 59, the medial portion 44 is formed with a channel-shaped recess in an outwardly facing surface thereof. The recess 61 is formed with a pair of parallel, opposed wall portions 62, 62 and a planar bottom wall portion 63 extending between the parallel wall portions. The means for engaging the bracket 54 includes a pair of opposed, undercut grooves 64, 64 shaped to fittingly engage opposed edge portions of the second planar leg portion 57 of the ceiling mounting bracket 54.

In erecting the vertical framing member 31, the second leg portion 57 of the ceiling mounting bracket 54 is fitted into the grooves 64; the vertical framing member is positioned against the existing wall 26; and a conventional attachment member is inserted through the aperture 58 and into the ceiling 29.

It is contemplated by the present invention that the door frame 36 be constructed with a pair of upright members 66, 66 interconnected at uppermost end portions thereof by a horizontally extending member 67. The upright members 66, 66 and the horizontal member 67 of the door frame 36 are formed to have identical configurations in transverse cross-section. As illustrated in FIG. 8, the lefthand upright member 66 of the door frame 36 is formed with a substantially box-like configuration in transverse cross-section with an elongated opening in an outwardly facing wall thereof. The opening is formed to provide a recess 70 for receiving the connecting member 59 to interconnect the door frame with the vertical framing member 31. In particular, the recess 70 is formed by a pair of spaced-apart, parallel ribs 71, 71 which extend inwardly of the upright member 66. Additionally, each rib 71 has a short projection extending from a terminal end portion thereof toward the opposed rib 71 to form a partial bottom surface for the recess 70. The pair of ribs 71, 71 forming the recess 70 in the upright member 66 are spaced apart a distance equal to the spacing of the

parallel surfaces 62 of the recess 61 formed in the medial portion 44 of the vertical framing member 31.

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, the connecting member 59 is interposed between the vertical framing member 31 and the upright member 66 of the door frame 36 to form a connection therebetween. The connecting member 59 provides a pair of parallel surfaces 76, 76 which are spaced apart a distance equal to the spacing of both the ribs 71 and the parallel surfaces 62, respectively, of the recess 70 and the recess 61. Accordingly, with the connecting member 59 engaging both the recess 61 of the vertical framing member 31 and the recess 70 of the door frame 36, the door frame is secured in an upright position by the vertical framing member.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, as illustrated in the drawings, the connecting member 59 has an elongated configuration with an H-shaped cross-section. The connecting member desirably extends from the existing floor 28 upwardly between the vertical framing member 31 and the door frame 36 a distance to allow an uppermost edge portion thereof to fit against a lowermost edge portion 78 of the ceiling bracket 54 disposed within the undercut grooves 64 of the vertical framing member 31. In particular, the connecting member 59 includes a medial web portion 79 and a pair of parallel side bars 81, 81 arranged on opposed end portions of the medial web 79 and disposed at right angles thereto. The parallel surfaces 76 which engage the recesses 61 and 70 respectively of the vertical framing member 31 and the door frame 36, are formed by the parallel side bars 81.

It should also be understood that the upright frame member 66 on the righthand side of the door frame 36, as viewed in FIG. 1, is also provided with a recess similar to recess 70 described hereinabove. It is contemplated by the present invention that the frame 36 encircling the glass panel 22 be also provided with a recess for accepting a connecting member of similar configuration to connecting member 59. The frame 36, encircling the glass panel 22, is formed of four framing members which engage side, top and bottom edge portions of the glass panel. Each of the four framing members has an identical configuration in transverse cross-section, and, as illustrated in FIG. 7, the righthand upright framing member 84 of the frame 37 has a configuration similar to the configuration of the upright member 66 of the door frame 36. The upright framing member 84 differs from the upright framing member 66 in that the framing member 66 for the door frame 36 provides an outwardly extending projection 86 to form a door jam, whereas the upright framing member 84 of the glass frame 36 provides a short rib projection 87 against which the glass panel 22 is secured by means of the glazing compound 88 which extends into a groove 89 formed adjacent to the rib 87.

In accordance with the present invention, the upright framing member 84 of the glass frame 37 has a substantially box-like configuration in transverse cross-section and provides a recess 90 having a configuration identical to the configuration of recess 70 of the upright member 66 of the door frame 36. The glass frame 37 is interconnected with the door frame 36 along adjacent edge portions thereof by means of a connecting member 59 which is fittingly received within the

recesses 70 and 90, respectively, of the door frame and the glass frame. Additionally, as illustrated in FIG. 7, an outermost edge portion of the glass frame 36 is supported by the intermediate framing member 32.

The intermediate framing member 32 has an elongated configuration and is of a length to extend from the existing floor 28 upwardly to the existing ceiling 29. Additionally, the intermediate framing member is characterized by substantially box-shaped transverse cross-section providing four outwardly facing web portions, as at 91, disposed perpendicularly one to the other. Each web portion 91 of the intermediate framing member 32 is formed to provide a recess 92 for receiving a connecting member such as 59, therefore, the intermediate framing member provides a configuration for supporting four panels disposed at right angles one to the other. In particular, the recess 92 formed on each web portion 91, is characterized by a pair of opposed, parallel side wall surfaces 93, 93 and a bottom wall surface 94. In a manner identical of the recess 61, the recess 92 also includes a pair of opposed, undercut grooves 96 for fittingly receiving the second leg portion 57 of the ceiling mounting bracket 54. Desirably, the intermediate framing member 32 is secured to the ceiling by at least a pair of ceiling brackets 54, but it should be understood that it is not necessary to individually support each intermediate framing member interposed between adjacent panels, such as between the panels 21 and 22.

Instead of individually supporting each intermediate framing member 32, it is contemplated by the present invention that the connecting means interconnecting the wood panel 21 with both the right-hand vertical framing member 31 and the intermediate framing member 32 be provided with spring biasing means for creating a compressive force to hold the various components of the partition in tight engagement with the connecting members, such as 59, and to force the vertical framing members 31 into tight engagement with the existing walls 26 and 27 for creating a sufficient frictional force between the existing walls and the sealing members 48 to retain the partition both in an upright position and in an assembled configuration.

The connecting means for providing the compressive force includes an H-shaped, elongated connecting member 101 having a configuration similar to the connecting member 59, a channel-shaped recess 102 formed in an outermost edge portion 103 of the wood panel 21, and a spring biasing means for urging the connecting member 101 outwardly of the recess 102. The channel-shaped recess 102 is characterized by a pair of parallel, opposed wall surfaces 106, 106 interconnected by a bottom wall surface 107. The connecting member 101 includes a medial web portion 109 and a pair of parallel side bars 111 attached to opposed end portions of the medial web 109 and arranged at right angles thereto. The parallel side bars 111 present a pair of opposed, outwardly facing parallel surfaces 112 which are spaced apart a distance equal to the spacing between both the parallel surfaces 62 of the recess 61 formed by the vertical framing member 31 and the parallel surfaces 93 of the recess 92 formed by the intermediate framing member 32. Also, the parallel wall surfaces 106 formed by the recess 102 in the panel 21 are spaced apart a distance equal to the spacing of the

parallel surfaces 112 presented by the side bars 111 of the connecting member 101. Therefore, the connecting member 102, as well as the connecting member 59, is capable of being fittingly received within any of the recesses 61, 70, 90, 92 or 102 formed, respectively, in the vertical framing members 31, the door frame 36, the glass panel frame 37, the intermediate framing member 32 or the wood panel 21. Accordingly, it should be noted that either the connecting member 59 or the connecting member 101 can be used to interconnect any combination of framing members or panels.

The connecting member 101 also includes an aperture passing through the medial web portion 109 thereof for receiving the pilot pin 116 which also engages into the wood panel 21. A coil spring 117 is piloted on the pin 116 and has one end portion thereof engaging against the medial web portion 109 of the connecting member 101 and has another end portion thereof engaging against the bottom wall surface 107 of the recess 102 formed in the wood panel 21, thereby urging the connecting member 101 outwardly of the recess 102. The extent of travel of the connecting member 101 outwardly of the recess 102 is limited by an enlarged head portion 118 formed on the pin 116 which engages against the medial web 109 on a side thereof opposite to the side engaged by the spring 117. Also, it should be noted that the recess 102 is of a sufficient depth to permit substantial inward movement by the connecting member 101 thereinto.

It should be understood that any number of spring biasing means, including a pin such as 116 and a coiled spring such as 117, may be provided in vertically spaced relationship along the connecting member 101, depending upon the required spring force and upon the amount of space available. The spring force provided by the spring biasing means should be sufficient to hold a partition, such as illustrated in FIG. 1, in an upright position without the necessity of providing ceiling brackets, such as 54, to secure the framing members to an existing ceiling.

Desirably, a connecting member 101 including a biasing means is associated with each of the opposed, vertically extending edge portions of the wood panel 21. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the right-hand edge portion of the wood panel 21 also includes the connecting member 101 having at least one pilot pin 116 passing through the medial web portion 109 and into engagement with the wood panel 21 and having a coil spring 117 piloted thereon.

When it is desired to remove a partition constructed in accordance with the present invention, it is merely necessary to move the spring biased connecting members 101 associated with the panel 21 inwardly of the recesses 102 against the biasing force exerted by the spring 117 to a position wherein the connecting members will be out of engagement with the recesses formed in the adjacent framing members. To facilitate moving the connecting member 101, a slot 120 is provided on one, or both, of the side bars 111 of the connecting member 101 and is shaped for receiving a tip of a screw driver, or similar tool. The slot 120 is positioned to be accessible through a small vertically extending space provided between a vertically extending edge portion of the panel 21 and the adjacent framing member. To remove the panel 21, the screw driver is

inserted in the slot 120 and the connecting member 101 is moved inwardly of the panel 21 to a point wherein the connecting member will clear the adjacent framing member; then the panel may be pivoted out of position and removed. Subsequent to the above described operation, the remaining framing members and the glass panel 22 and the door 23 may be disassembled by merely sliding these members laterally to a point wherein the connecting members 59 may be removed. It has been found desirable to insert a metal shim between the framing member and the connecting member 101 when the latter has been moved out of engagement with the recess of the framing member to prevent the connecting member from reentering the recess.

It may be desired to close any gap left between an uppermost edge portion 121 of the wood panel 21 or an uppermost edge portion of either the door frame 36 or the glass panel frame 37 and the existing ceiling 29 by the horizontally disposed framing member 33, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 3. The horizontal framing member 33 presents a downwardly opening channel 122 characterized by a pair of opposed, parallel surfaces 123 spaced apart a distance to fittingly receive the uppermost edge portion 121 of the wood panel 21 or the uppermost edge portion of either the door frame 36 or the glass panel frame 37. In this regard, it should be noted that both the door frame 36 and the glass panel frame 37 include a stepdown portion, respectively, 124 and 126, having a thickness equal to the lateral thickness of the wood panel 21.

The horizontal framing member 33 also includes apertures as at 127 adapted to receive means for securing the framing member to the ceiling 29. The securing means may be any one of a number of conventional means for attaching members to existing ceiling structures, but in a preferred embodiment of the present invention the securing means includes a first series of narrow, equally spaced parallel slots formed in the ceiling and a second series of narrow, equally spaced parallel slots formed in the ceiling at right angles to the first series. One such slot is illustrated in FIG. 3 and is represented generally by the reference character 131. It should be appreciated, that in a newly constructed building the ceiling may initially be formed with the matrix of slots as hereinabove described to facilitate erecting partitions in various configurations.

To align the horizontal framing members 33 with the slots 131, a pair of spaced apart, elongated projections 132, 132 are provided along an upper edge portion 133 of the horizontal framing member. The projections 132 are spaced apart a distance to fittingly engage opposed, parallel surfaces presented by the ceiling slots 131. The horizontal framing members 33 are secured to the existing ceiling 29 by an attachment strip 134 which is disposed in abutting relationship with an uppermost surface of the ceiling and which is connected by means of bolts as at 136 passing through the apertures 127 of the horizontal framing member 33 and aligned apertures 137 formed in the attachment plate, thereby to clamp the horizontal framing member to an underneath side of the ceiling 29.

In constructing a partitioning system, it may be necessary to extend a partition outwardly from an outside corner such as 141, as illustrated in FIG. 9, formed

by the existing building structure. It is contemplated by the present invention that a vertical framing member 142 be provided for engaging an outside corner such as 141. The framing member 142 has an elongated configuration with a substantially box-type cross-section with one corner of the box cut off to provide an opening into which the outside corner 141 may extend. The vertical framing member 142 for use with an outside corner, such as 141, is similar in configuration to the intermediate framing member 32 described hereinabove, and in particular includes a pair of recesses 143, 143 for receiving connecting members such as the connecting member 101, as illustrated in FIG. 9. The recesses 143, 143 are identical in configuration to the recess 61 described hereinabove for the vertical framing member 31. Additionally, in accordance with the present invention, a pair of projections 144, 144 are provided on the framing member 142 to form a pair of sockets 146, 146 adapted to receive the sealing members 48, 48.

It should be noted that the three different configurations of vertical framing members, namely the vertical framing member 31 for abutting against a flush wall, the intermediate framing member 32 and the vertical framing member 142 for engaging in outside corner, may be formed by altering an extruded member having one initial configuration. To accomplish this desirable objective, it is contemplated by the present invention to provide an extruded member having a transverse cross-section substantially as described for the intermediate framing member 32 and as illustrated in FIG. 7. To form the intermediate framing member 32 an extrusion having the configuration as hereinabove described is merely cut-off to the desired length. Additionally, a pair of vertical framing members, such as 31, for abutting against a flush wall may be formed by splitting an intermediate framing member along the phantom line 151 illustrated in FIG. 7, whereas the vertical framing member 142 may be formed by cutting one corner portion from an intermediate framing member in a manner to provide the projections 144 in their proper disposition.

Since many modern office buildings are provided with carpeting to cover the existing floor structure, it has been found to be desirable to elevate the lowermost end portions of both the vertical framing members and the partitioning panels a sufficient distance above the flooring surface to prevent the nap of the carpet from being permanently matted down by the weight that would be exerted thereon if the partitioning panels and framing members rested directly upon the carpeting. Accordingly, the present invention contemplates that a means be provided for elevating the lowermost end portion of the vertical framing members 31 or 32 above the floor surface 28. Desirably, the elevating means for the vertical framing member includes an attachment plate 152 characterized by a series of downwardly tapered projections formed along a lowermost edge portion thereof as at 153. The attachment plate 152 is further provided with an aperture 154 formed to receive means for securing the attachment plate to a vertical framing member—for example—the vertical framing member 31, as illustrated in FIG. 6. The attachment plate 152 is secured to the vertical framing member 31 with opposed edge portions thereof engaging the undercut grooves 64, 64 and with the projec-

tions 153 extending below a lowermost end portion of the vertical framing member 31, as at 156. The projections 153 pass through the carpeting and engage the floor surface 28 while holding the framing member 31 above the carpeting, thereby to prevent causing permanent damage to the carpeting.

Additionally, the present invention contemplates providing elevating means for both the glass panel 22 and the wood panel 21 whenever a carpeting covers the floor surface 28. As illustrated in FIG. 4, the elevating means for the wood panel 21 includes a plurality of downwardly extending projections, as at 159, which are attached to a lowermost edge portion 161 of the wood panel 21. Each projection 159 has a substantially conical configuration with an apex thereof projecting downwardly and engaging the floor surface 28. The conical projections 159 are of a sufficient height to elevate the wood panel 21 above the carpeting 163, thereby to prevent the carpeting from being permanently depressed by supporting the weight of the panel. The conical projections 159 do not permanently damage the carpeting, but merely form small conical depressions in the carpeting which are quickly concealed when the panel 121 is removed.

Although various minor modifications might be suggested by those versed in the art, it should be understood that we wish to embody within the scope of the patent warranted hereon all such modifications as reasonably and properly come within the scope of our contribution to the art.

We claim as our invention:

1. In a partitioning system for partitioning a room having a floor a ceiling and wall into smaller room units, comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each said framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein;

means for securing an uppermost end portion of said framing member to the ceiling of the existing room.

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means,

said panel means having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed in each of said opposite end edge portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members;

a pair of upstanding, elongated connecting members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means.

each said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close the gap,

each of said connecting members being configured relative to said recesses to be closely received

therewithin for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel means and said framing members;

concealed biasing means urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting member against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means.

2. A partitioning system as defined in claim 1, wherein said means for securing an uppermost end portion of said framing member to the ceiling of the existing room comprises:

an L-shaped bracket having a first planar leg portion and a second planar leg portion disposed at right angles to said first leg portion;

said first leg portion being attached to the ceiling; and

said second leg portion being secured to said framing member.

3. A partitioning system as defined in claim 2 further characterized by:

said recess of said framing member formed with a pair of inwardly opening, opposed, undercut slots in an uppermost end portion of the framing member for receiving opposed edge portions of one of said leg portions of said means for securing said framing member to the ceiling.

4. In a partitioning system for partitioning a room having a floor a ceiling and walls into smaller room units, comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each said framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein;

means for elevating a lowermost end portion of said framing member above the floor of the existing room to prevent carpeting which is placed on the floor from being depressed by supporting said framing member

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means,

said panel means having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed in each of said opposite end portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members;

a pair of upstanding, elongated connecting members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means,

each said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close the gap,

each of said connecting members being configured relative to said recesses to be closely received therewithin for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel and said framing members;

concealed biasing means urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting members against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means.

5. A partitioning system as defined in claim 4, wherein said means for elevating said lowermost end portion of said framing member includes:

a plate member having a planar configuration with a lowermost end portion thereof formed to provide at least one downwardly extending, tapered projection for passing through said carpeting and for engaging the floor of the existing room;

said recess of said framing member formed with a pair of inwardly opening, opposed, undercut slots in a lowermost end portion of the framing member for receiving opposed edge portions of said planar plate member; and

means for fixedly attaching said plate member to the lowermost end portion of said framing member with said projection extending therebelow.

6. In a partitioning system for an existing room having a floor, a ceiling and walls, the system comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each of said framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein;

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means,

said panel means having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed in each of said opposite end edge portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members;

a pair of upstanding, elongated connecting members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means,

each of said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close the gap,

each said connecting members being configured relative to said recesses to be closely received therewithin for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel means and said framing members, and

each said connecting member including means for receiving a tool to move said connecting

member against said means for releasably biasing said connecting member to a position wherein said connecting member is out of engagement with said recess of one of said panel means and said framing member;

concealed biasing means urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting member against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means.

7. In a system for partitioning a room having a floor, a ceiling and walls into smaller room units, comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each said framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein;

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means,

said panel means having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed in each of said opposite end edge portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members;

a pair of upstanding, elongated connecting members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means,

each said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close said gap,

each of said connecting members being an elongated, vertically extending member having a configuration in transverse cross-section including a recess, said recess having a medial bottom portion with a pair of side portions laterally extending outwardly from opposite side edge portions of said medial bottom portion and arranged at generally right angles thereto for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel means and said framing members;

concealed biasing means positioned between said panel means and said recess in said connecting and engaging said medial bottom portion member urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting member against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means.

8. A partitioning system as defined in claim 1, further characterized by:

said recess of said framing member providing a pair of opposed, planar wall surfaces spaced apart a distance to fittingly receive said connecting means.

9. A partitioning system as defined in claim 8, further characterized by:

said recess of said panel means providing a pair of opposed, planar wall surfaces spaced apart a distance to fittingly receive said connecting means.

10. A partitioning system as defined in claim 9, further characterized by:

said pair of opposed planar wall surfaces of said recess of said panel means disposed co-planarly with said pair of opposed planar wall surfaces of said recess of said framing member.

11. A partitioning system as defined in claim 7, further characterized by:

said connecting means including an elongated, vertically extending member with said first portion thereof providing a pair of parallel, laterally disposed wall surfaces spaced apart a distance to fittingly engage said recess of said framing member, and with said second portion providing a pair of parallel, laterally disposed wall surfaces spaced apart a distance to fittingly engage said recess of said panel means.

12. A partitioning system as defined in claim 10, further characterized by:

said connecting means including an elongated, vertically extending member having a H-shaped configuration in transverse cross-section, i.e. having a planar medial portion with a pair of laterally extending side bars disposed on opposed edge portions of said medial portion and arranged at right angles thereto;

said pair of side bars being spaced apart a distance to provide a pair of laterally disposed, outwardly facing, parallel wall surfaces for fittingly engaging said parallel wall surfaces of said recess of said framing member and said parallel wall surfaces of said recess of said panel means.

13. A partitioning system as defined by claim 7, further characterized by:

said means for releasably biasing said connecting means outwardly of one of said recesses and into engagement with a bottom wall surface of said other recess includes at least one coiled spring interposed between said connecting means and a bottom wall surface of said recess of said panel means.

14. A partitioning system as defined in claim 7, further comprising:

said panel means being disposed with an uppermost edge portion thereof spaced from the ceiling to provide an opening between the panel and the ceiling; and

means for closing said opening between said uppermost edge portion of said panel means and the ceiling of the existing room.

15. A partitioning system as defined in claim 14, and further characterized by:

said connecting member including tool-engagement notches formed on at least one laterally projecting face thereof at a position disposed in alignment

with the gap between said framing members and said opposite end portions of said panel means, thereby enabling the engagement of a tool in said connecting member for member the same against the urging of said biasing means to facilitate assembly and disassembly of a partition.

16. In a partitioning system for an existing room having a floor, a ceiling and walls, the system comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each said framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein;

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means,

said panel means having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed in each of said opposite end edge portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members;

said panel means being disposed with an uppermost edge portion thereof spaced from the ceiling to provide an opening between the panel and the ceiling; and

means for closing the opening formed between said uppermost edge portion of said panel means and the ceiling includes an elongated, horizontally disposed member secured to the ceiling and formed with a downwardly opening channel; and

said uppermost edge portion of said panel means being fittingly received within said channel

a pair of upstanding, elongated connecting members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means,

each said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close the gap, and

each said connecting members being configured relative to said recesses to be closely received therewithin for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel means and said framing members;

concealed biasing means urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting member against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means.

17. In a partitioning system for partitioning a room, having walls, a ceiling and floor, into smaller units, the system comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each said

framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein, with at least one of said framing members being disposed adjacent an existing wall and having vertically elongated sockets opening toward the existing wall; and

a flexible sealing strip carried in said vertically elongated sockets and being urged into firm engagement with the existing wall by the compression provided by said concealed biasing means, whereby said flexible ceiling strip conforms to the configuration of the existing wall to provide a seal between said framing member and the existing wall,

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means, said panel means having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed in each of said opposite end edge portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members;

a pair of upstanding, elongated members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means, each said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close the gap,

each of said connecting members being configured relative to said recesses to be closely received therewithin for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel means and said framing members;

concealed biasing means urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting member against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means.

18. In a partitioning system for partitioning a room, having walls, a ceiling and floor, into smaller units, the system comprising:

a pair of parallel, upstanding framing members disposed in a spaced-apart relationship, each said framing member having an inwardly extending, vertically elongated recess formed therein;

panel means forming at least one partitioning panel extending between said framing members, said panel means having opposite end edge portions spaced from, and disposed adjacent to said framing members, thereby to form a gap between each of said framing members and the adjacent, confronting end edge portions of said panel means, said panel means having an inwardly extending vertically elongated recess formed in each of

said opposite end edge portions in confronting relationship with said recesses of said pair of framing members, and

each of said recesses having a pair of planar, vertically extending, spaced-apart sidewalls of an interconnecting bottom wall;

a pair of upstanding, elongated connecting members respectively connecting said pair of framing members to said opposite end edge portions of said panel means,

each said connecting member being partially received in each of said confronting recesses respectively formed in said pair of framing members and in said panel means and being substantially vertically co-extensive with said panel means, thereby to close the gap,

each said connecting members being configured relative to said recesses to be closely received therewithin for preventing relative lateral movement between said panel means and said framing members;

each said connecting member having a planar medial portion and a pair of side bars extending laterally of, and disposed on opposite end edges of, said medial portion and arranged at right angles thereto in an H-shaped configuration,

said pair of side bars being spaced apart a distance to provide a pair of laterally disposed, outwardly facing wall surfaces for fittingly engaging said sidewalls of said recesses, thereby to provide lateral support for said panel means;

concealed biasing means urging at least one of said connecting members outwardly of one of its associated recesses and into firm engagement with a bottom wall portion of the opposite one of its associated recesses, thereby to apply a compression force for holding said panel means in firm assembly and permitting movement of said connecting member against the urging of said biasing means to a position for enabling the removal of said panel means,

said concealed biasing means including at least one coil compression spring having opposite end portions operatively engaging said bottom wall of one of said recesses and said medial portion of said connecting member and being contained between, and concealed by, said pair of side bars of said connecting member.

19. In a system for partitioning an existing room having an floor, a ceiling and walls into smaller room units, comprising:

at least one vertically extending framing member formed to provide an elongated recess;

means forming a partitioning panel having an elongated recess in confronting relationship with said recess of said framing member;

means connecting said panel to said framing member, said connecting means being interposed between said panel means and said framing member and having a first portion received within said recess of said framing member and a second portion received within said recess of said panel means; and

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means for securing an uppermost end portion of said framing member to a ceiling of an existing room, said means including

an L-shaped bracket having a first planar leg portion adapted for attachment to the ceiling and a second planar leg portion disposed at right angles to said first leg portion and being adapted to be secured to said framing member, and said recess of said framing member being formed with a pair of inwardly opening, opposed, undercut slots for receiving opposed edge portions of said second planar leg portion.

20. In a system for partitioning an existing room having a floor, a ceiling and walls into smaller room units, comprising:

at least one vertically extending framing member formed to provide an elongated recess;

means forming a partitioning panel having an elongated recess in confronting relationship with said recess of said framing member;

means connecting said panel to said framing member, said connecting means being interposed between said panel and said framing member and

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having a first portion received within said recess of said framing member and a second portion said within said recess of said panel means; and

means for elevating a lowermost end portion of said framing member above a floor of an existing room to prevent carpeting which may be placed on the floor from being depressed by supporting said framing member, said means including

a plate member having a planar configuration with a lowermost end portion thereof formed to provide at least one downwardly extending, tapered projection for passing through the carpeting and for engaging the floor of the existing room,

said recess of said framing member being formed with a pair of inwardly opening, opposed, undercut slots for receiving opposed edge portions of said plate member, and

means for fixedly attaching said plate member to said framing member with said projection extending below a lowermost end of said framing member.

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