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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Livingston et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2010/0236161 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 23, 2010**(54) **LIFTING SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR
CONSTRUCTING AND ENCLOSING WIND
TURBINE TOWERS**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/932,731, filed on Jun. 1, 2007, provisional application No. 60/848,726, filed on Oct. 2, 2006, provisional application No. 60/848,725, filed on Oct. 2, 2006.

(75) Inventors: **Tracy Livingston**, Heber City, UT (US); **James Goldhardt**, Salt Lake City, UT (US); **Terry Schrader**, Southlake, TX (US); **James Lott**, Newburgh, IN (US); **David Oliphant**, West Jordan, UT (US); **Harry Daugherty**, Whitehouse, OH (US)**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **52/125.2; 52/745.18; 52/745.21; 52/578; 52/651.07**

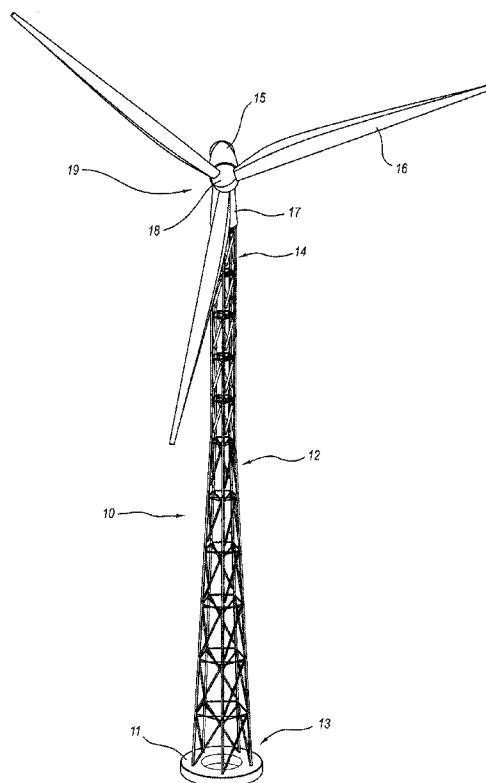
Correspondence Address:

GRANT R CLAYTON
CLAYTON HOWARTH & CANNON, PC
P O BOX 1909
SANDY, UT 84091-1909 (US)(73) Assignee: **WIND TOWER SYSTEMS, LLC**
(US)(21) Appl. No.: **12/696,297**(22) Filed: **Jan. 29, 2010****Related U.S. Application Data**

(62) Division of application No. 11/906,771, filed on Oct. 2, 2007.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus and method for mounting a wind turbine and blade assembly on the upper end of a wind turbine tower. In one aspect the apparatus generally includes a ginpole that is used to assemble the tower and a lifting frame or truss that is removably secured to a top bay assembly of the tower using the ginpole. The lifting frame or truss is operated using either cables or hydraulic rams and extends fore of the tower when the frame or truss is in a first position and generally above the tower when in a second position. When in the first position, a wind turbine or blade assembly can be hoisted to the top of the tower. The wind turbine or blade assembly is then moved into position for mounting to the tower as the frame or truss is pivoted to a second position. When the turbine and blade assembly are secured to the tower, the frame or truss is disconnected from the tower and lowered to the ground followed by the ginpole being lowered to the ground.



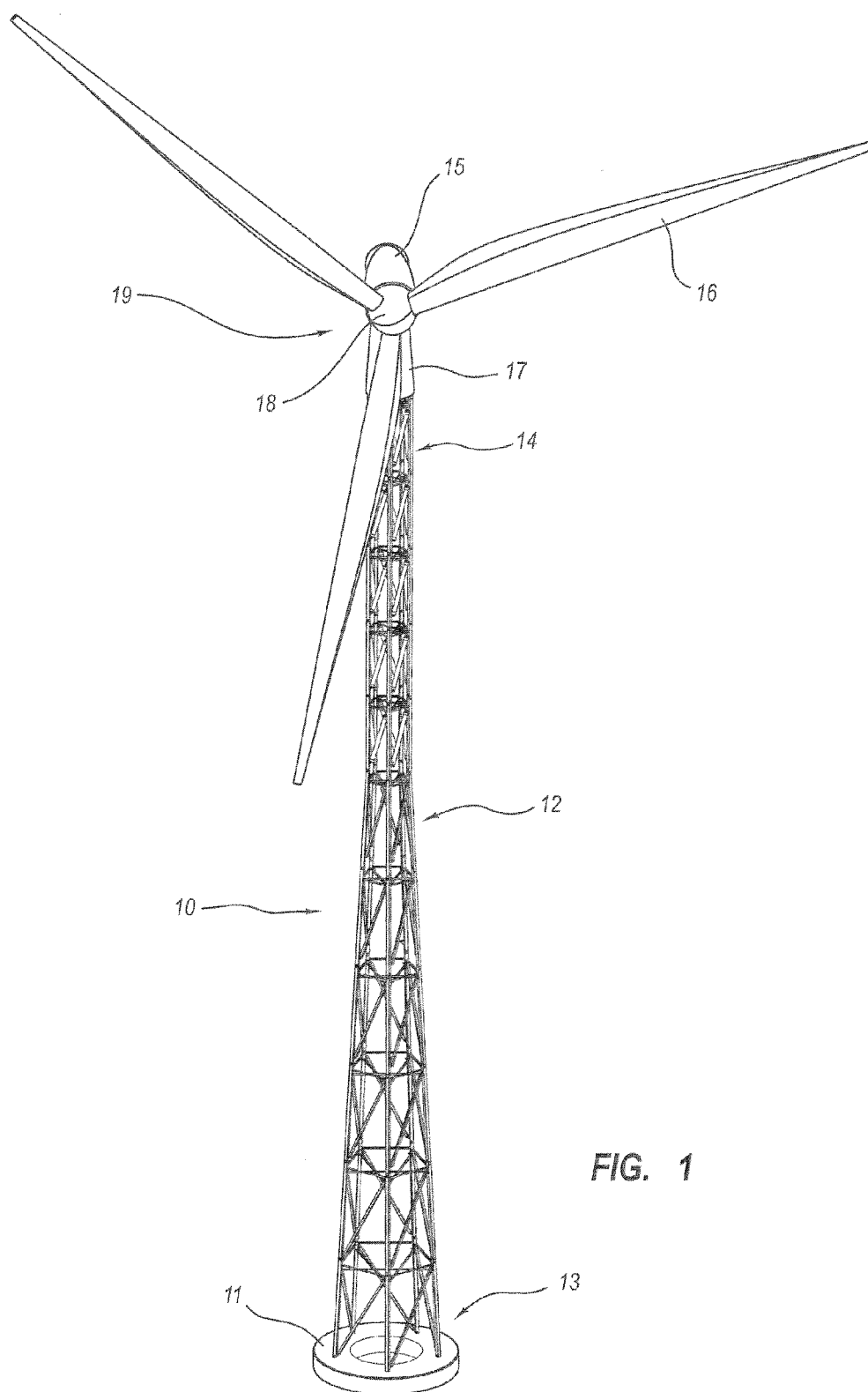


FIG. 1

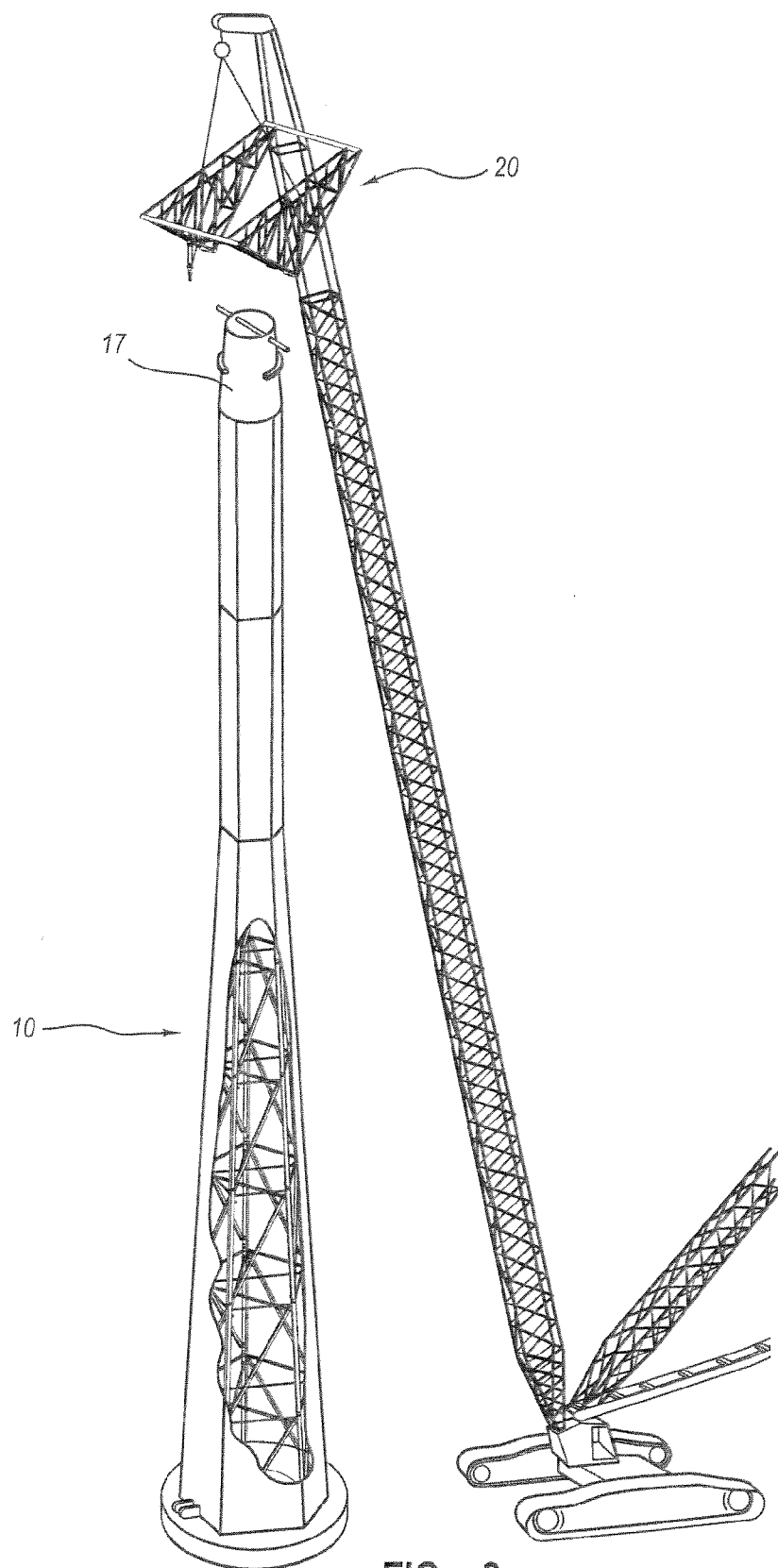


FIG. 2

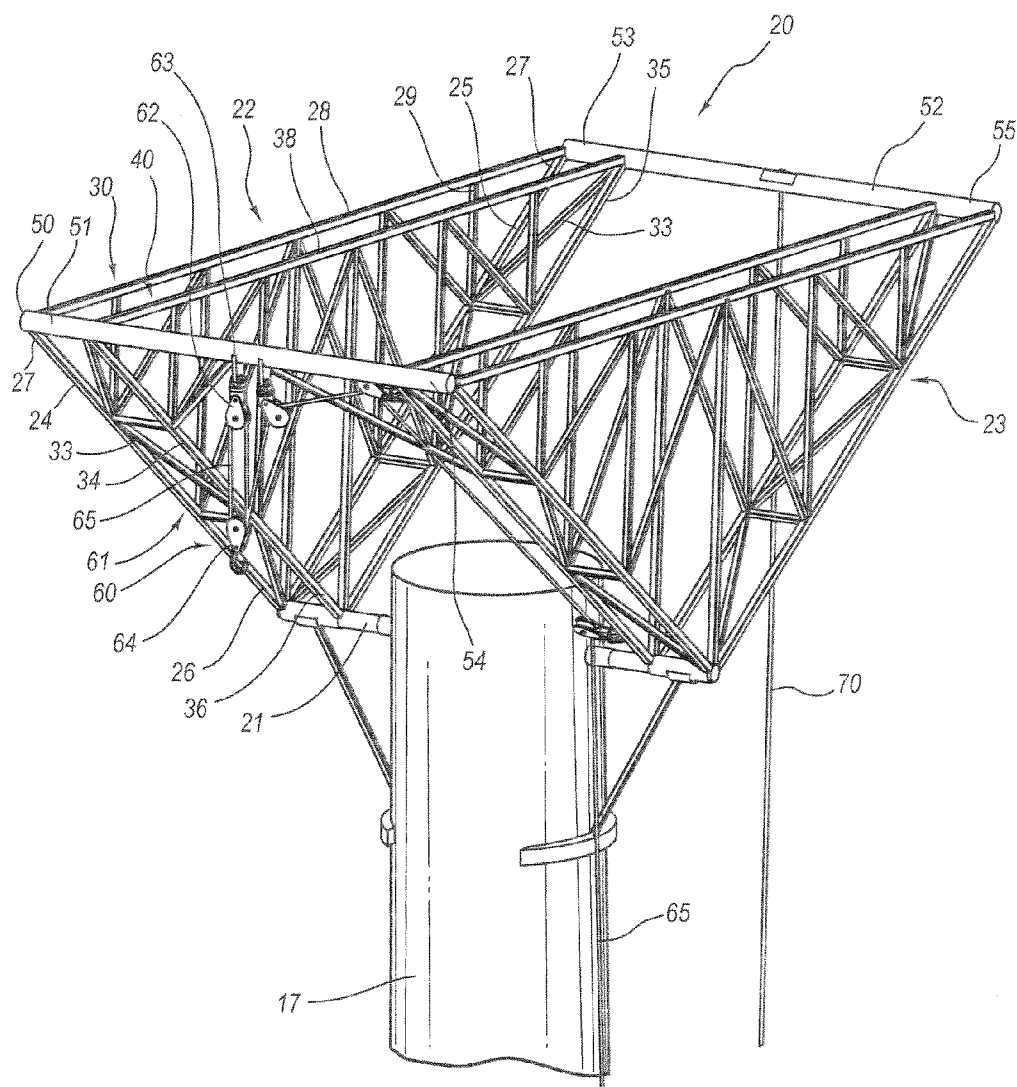


FIG. 3

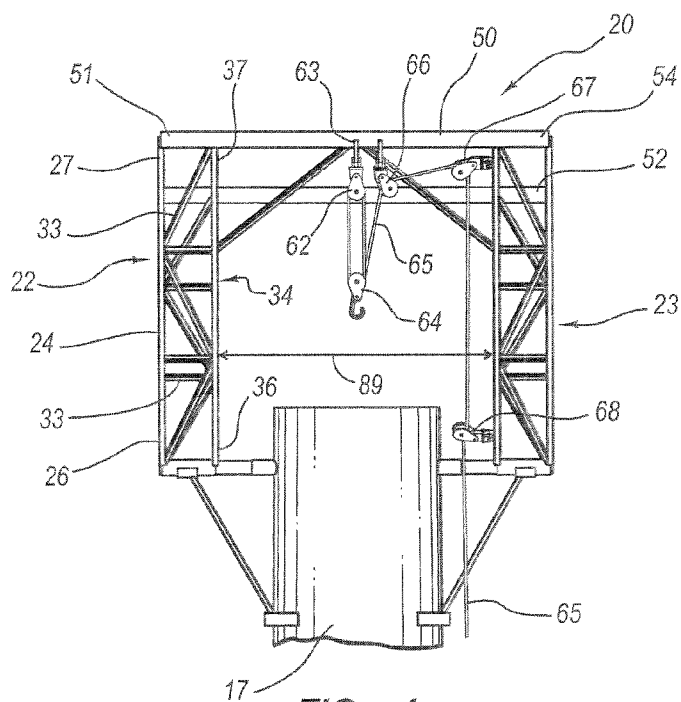


FIG. 4

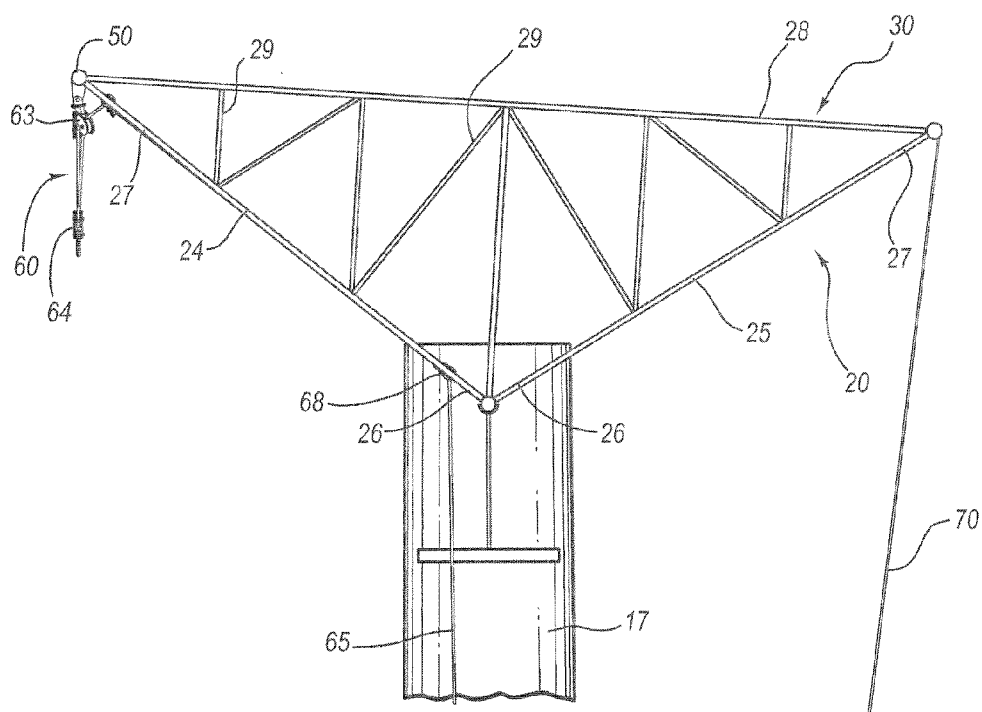
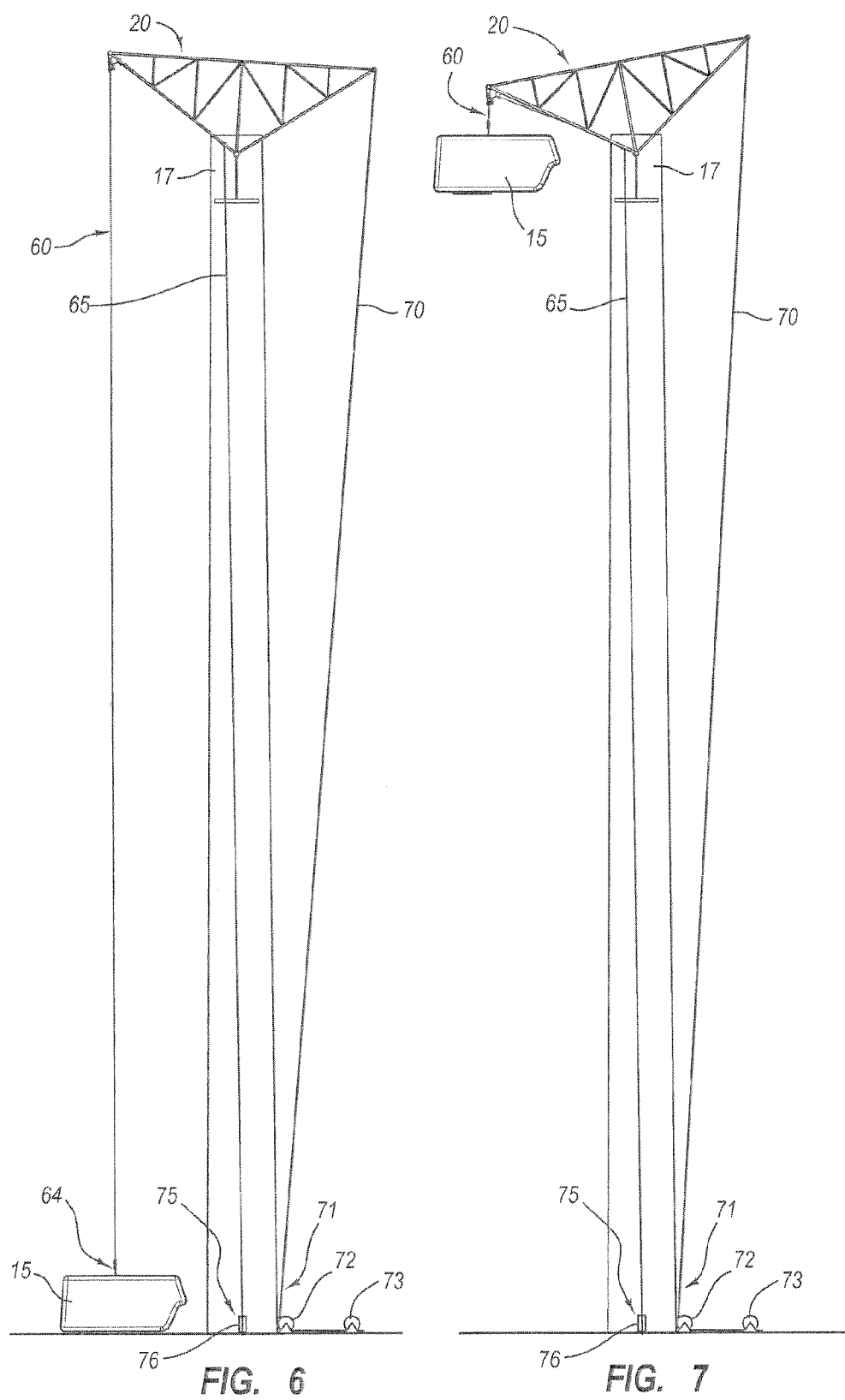


FIG. 5



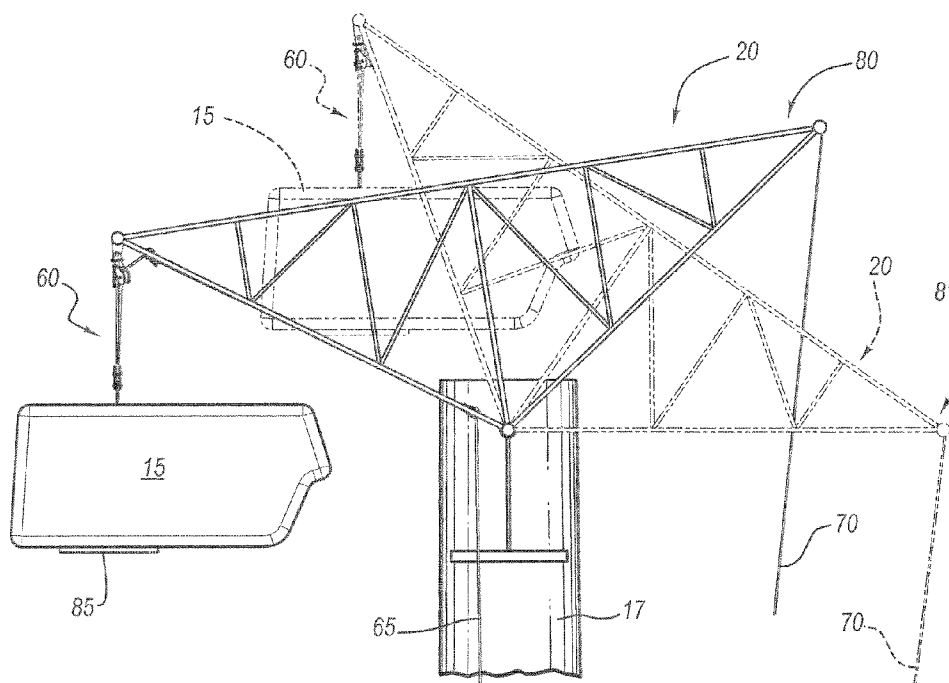


FIG. 8

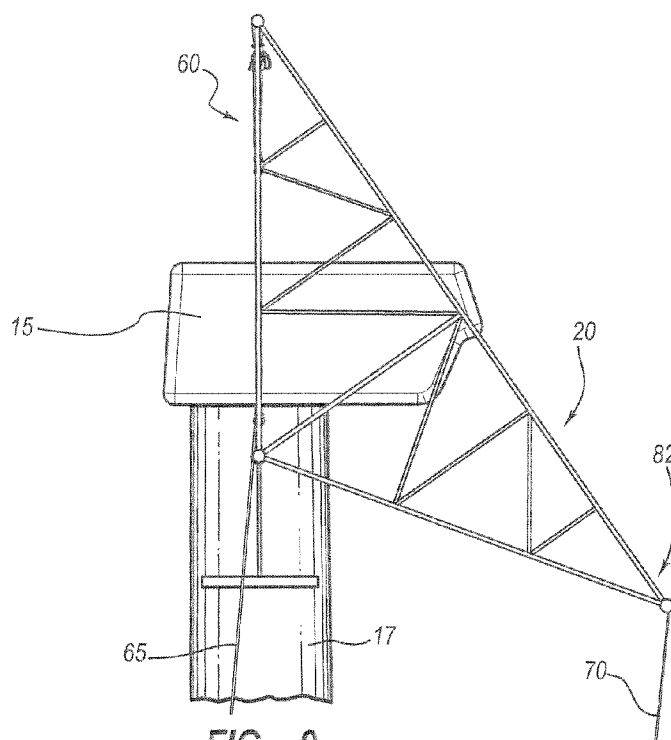
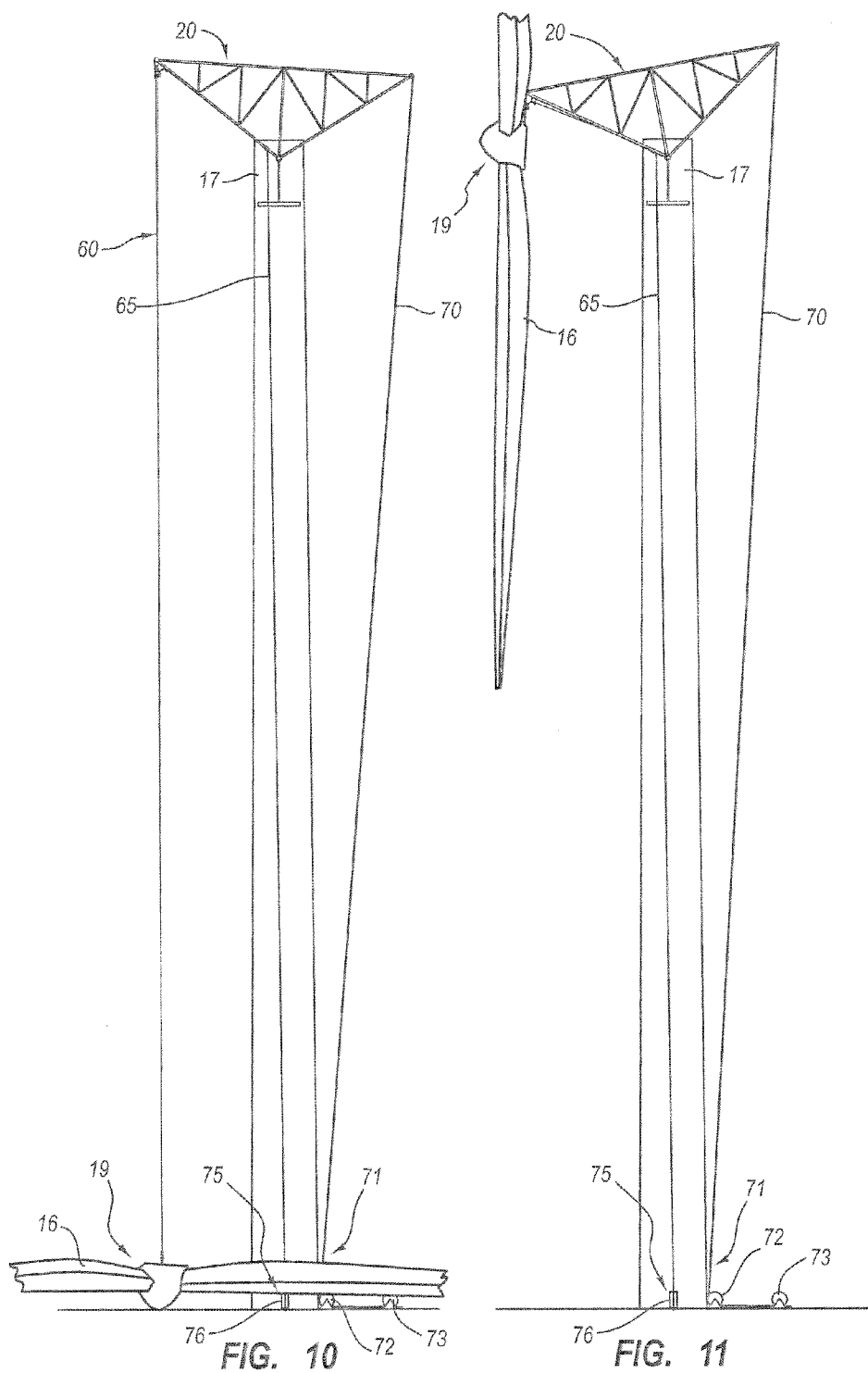


FIG. 9



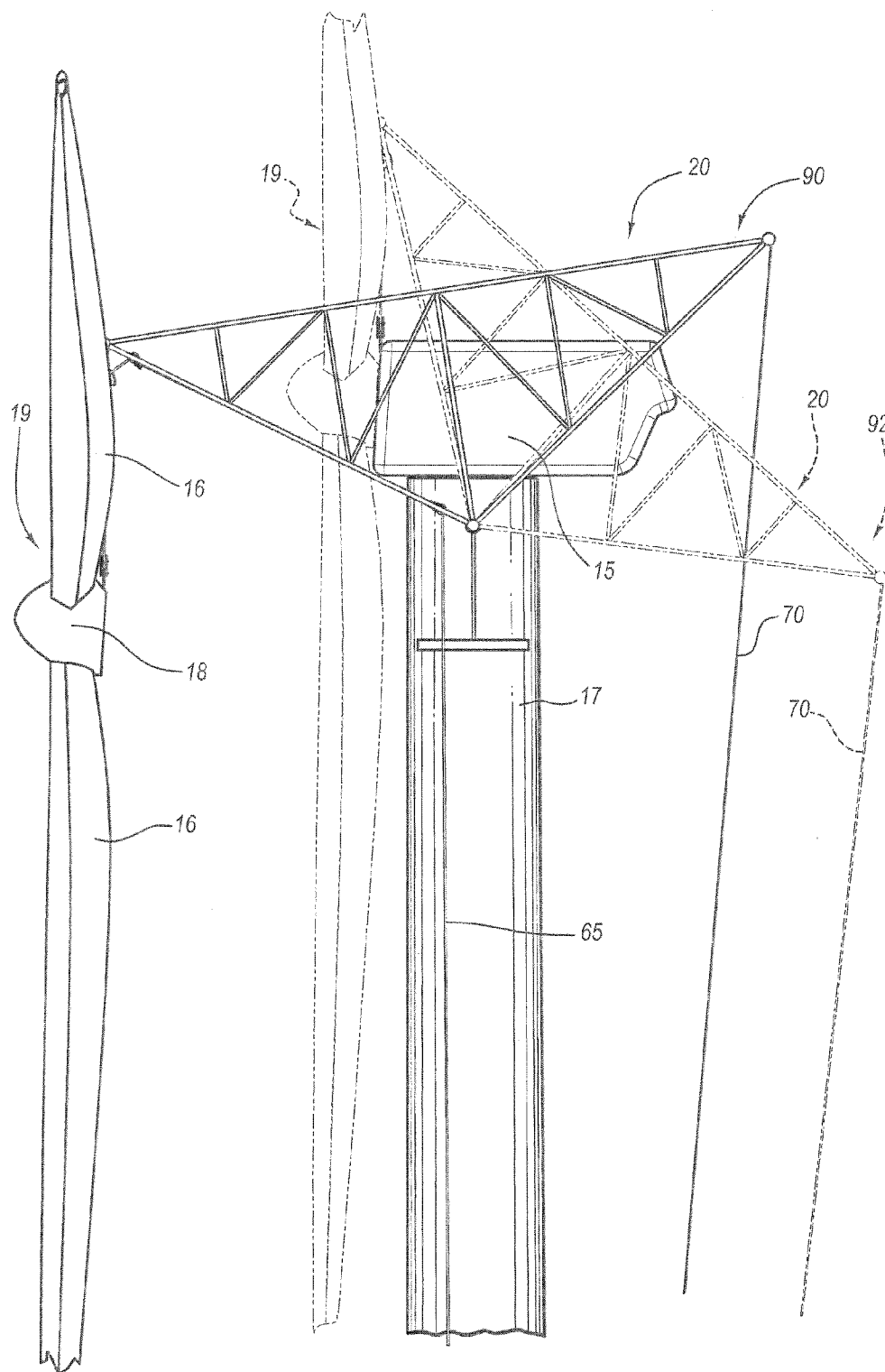


FIG. 12

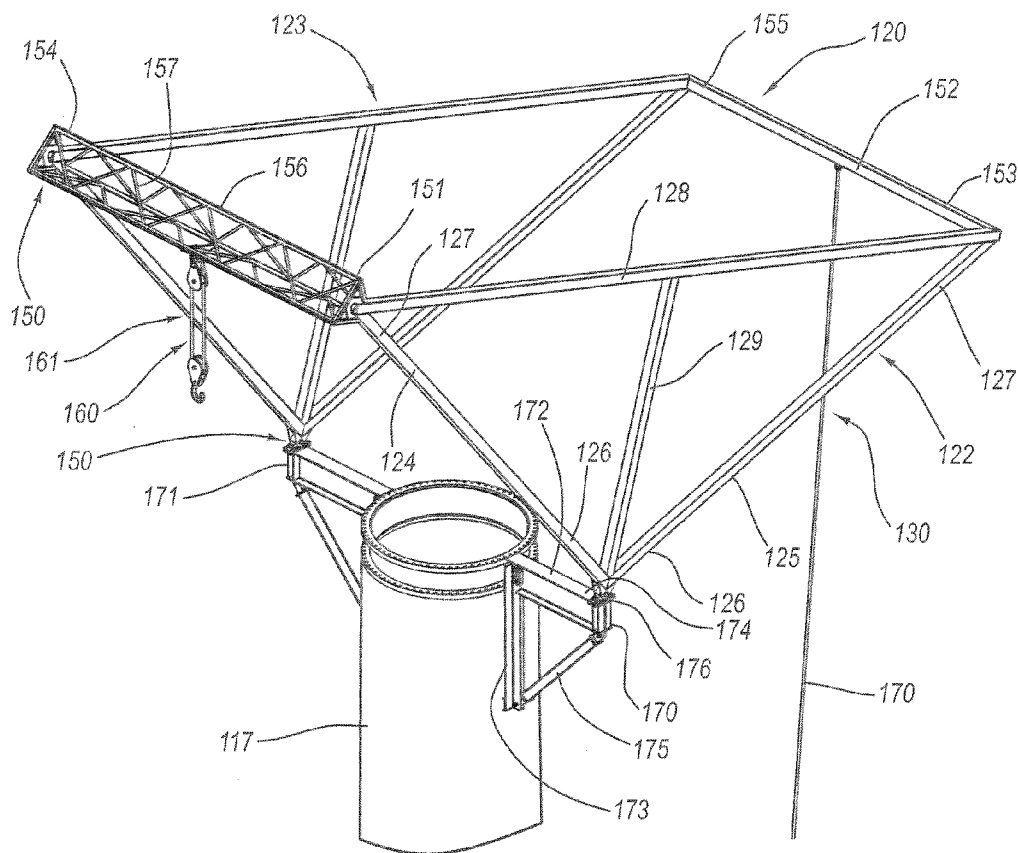


FIG. 13

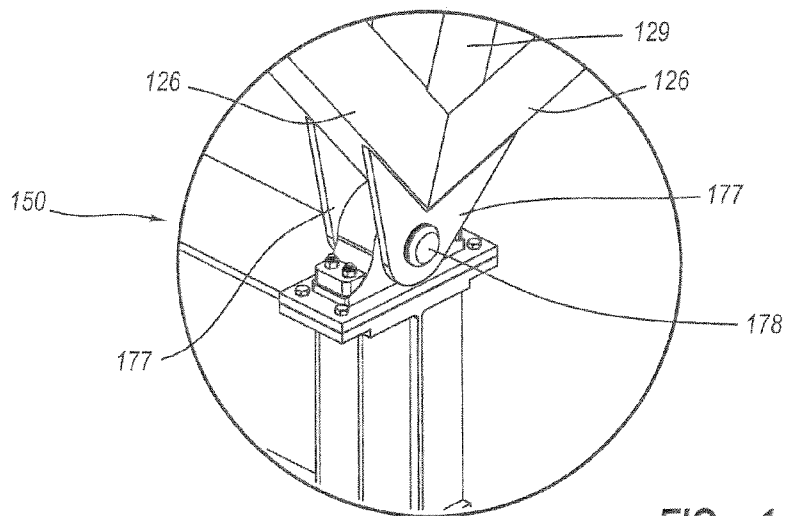


FIG. 14

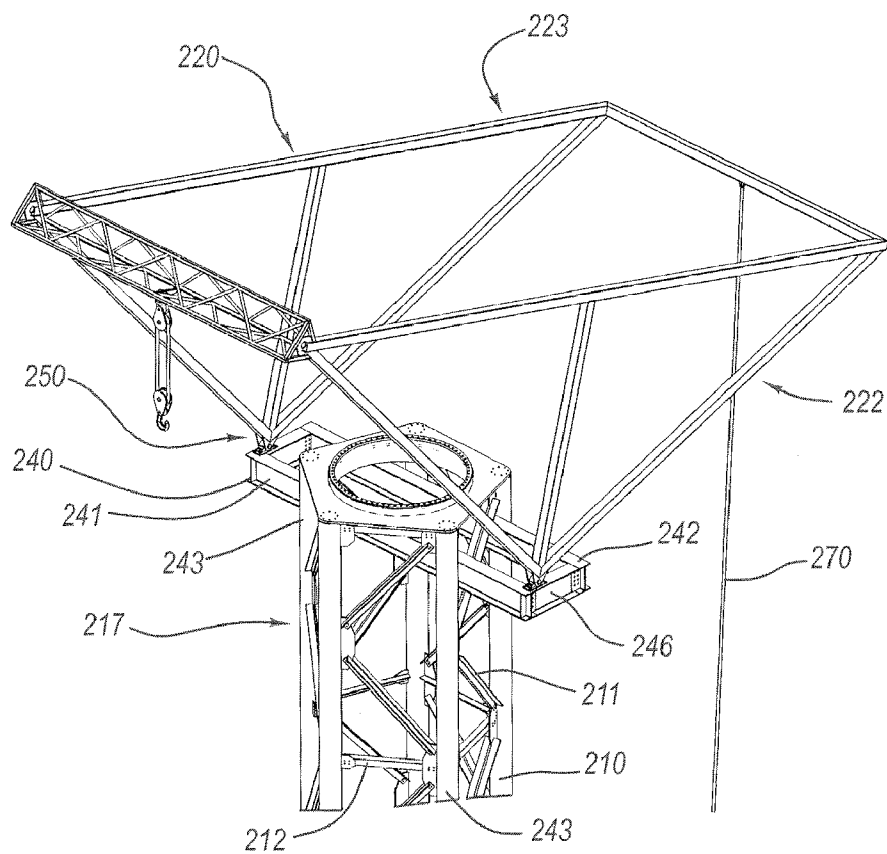


FIG. 15

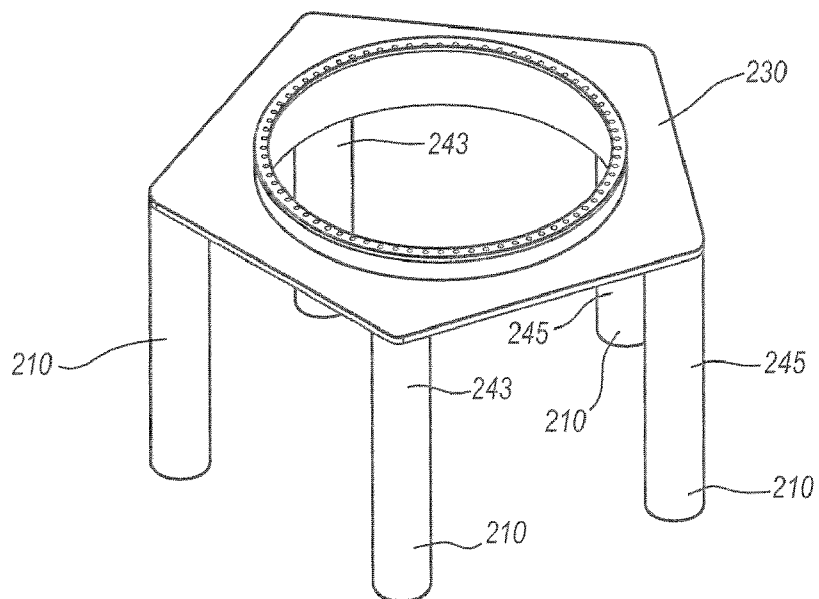


FIG. 16

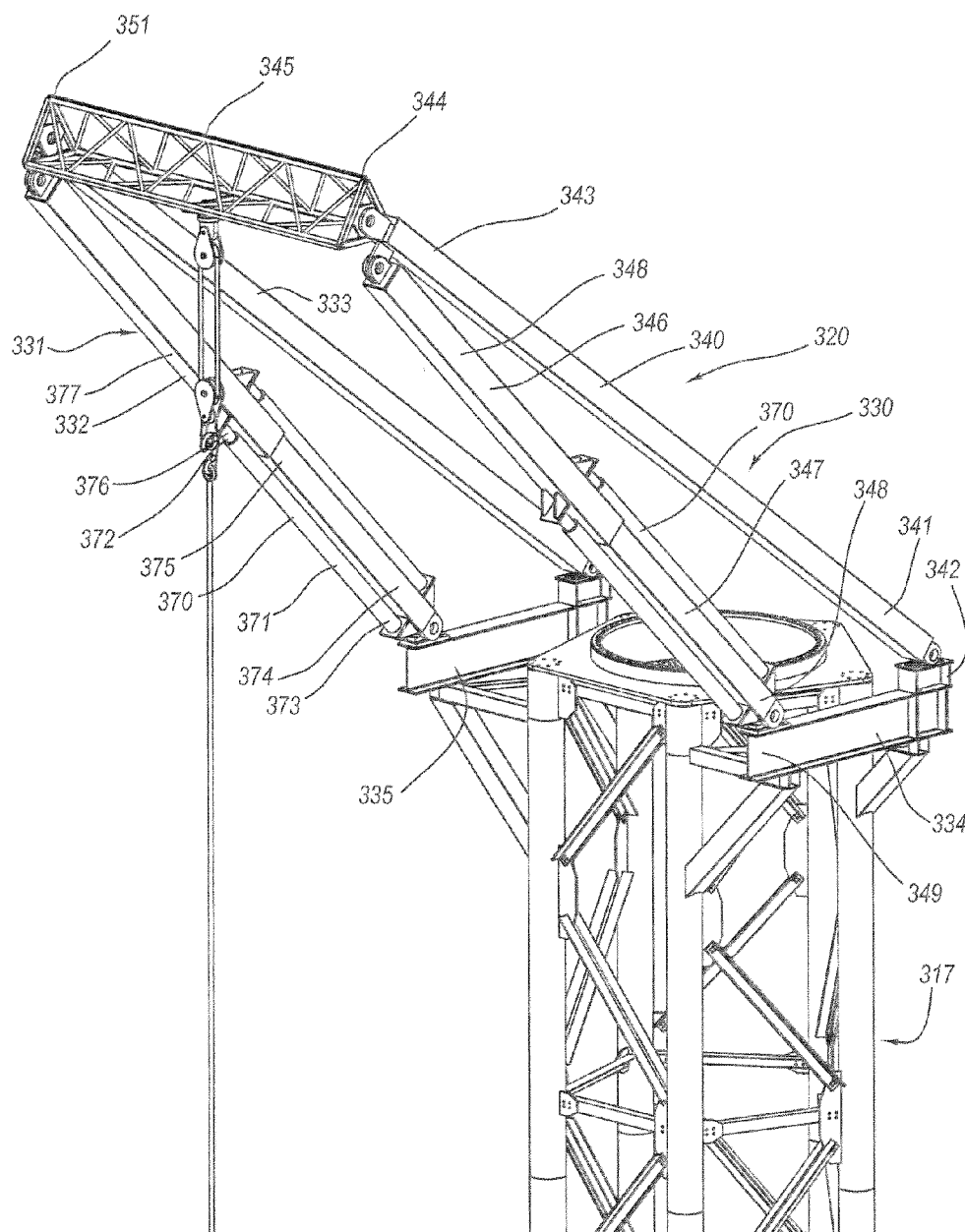


FIG. 17

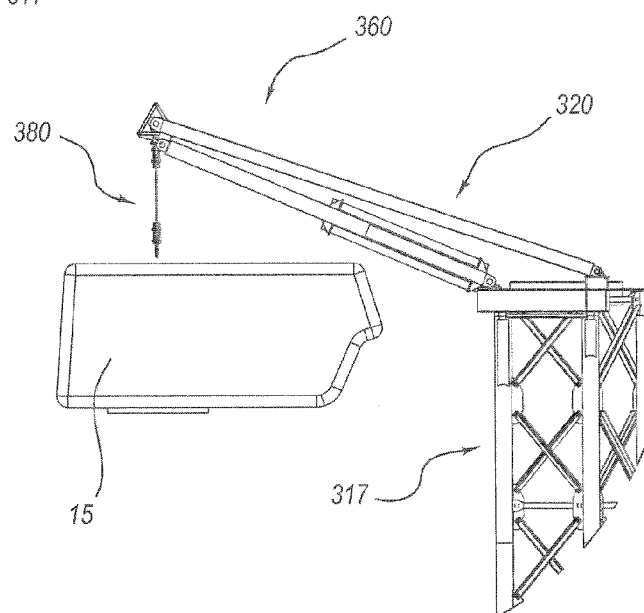
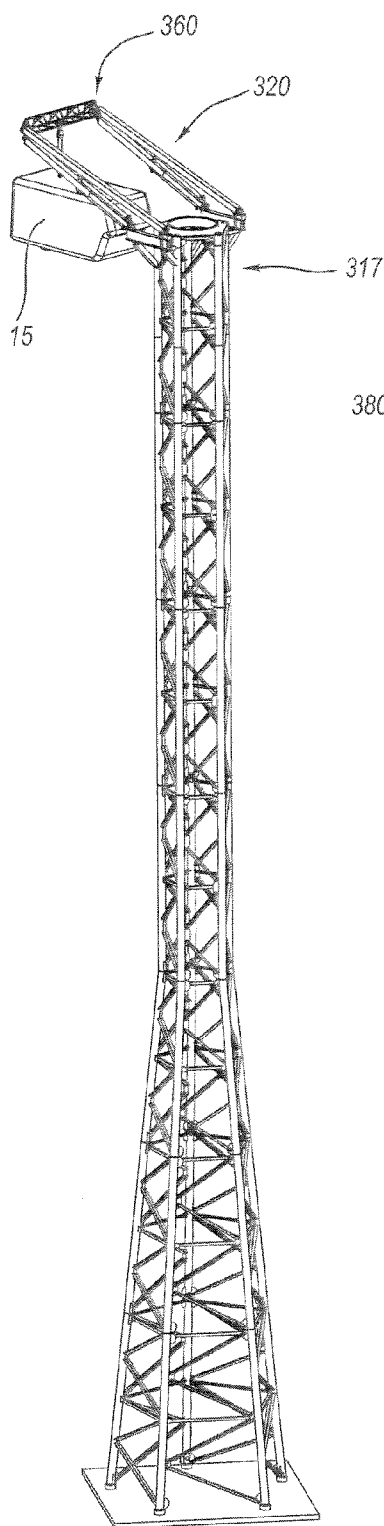


FIG. 19

FIG. 18

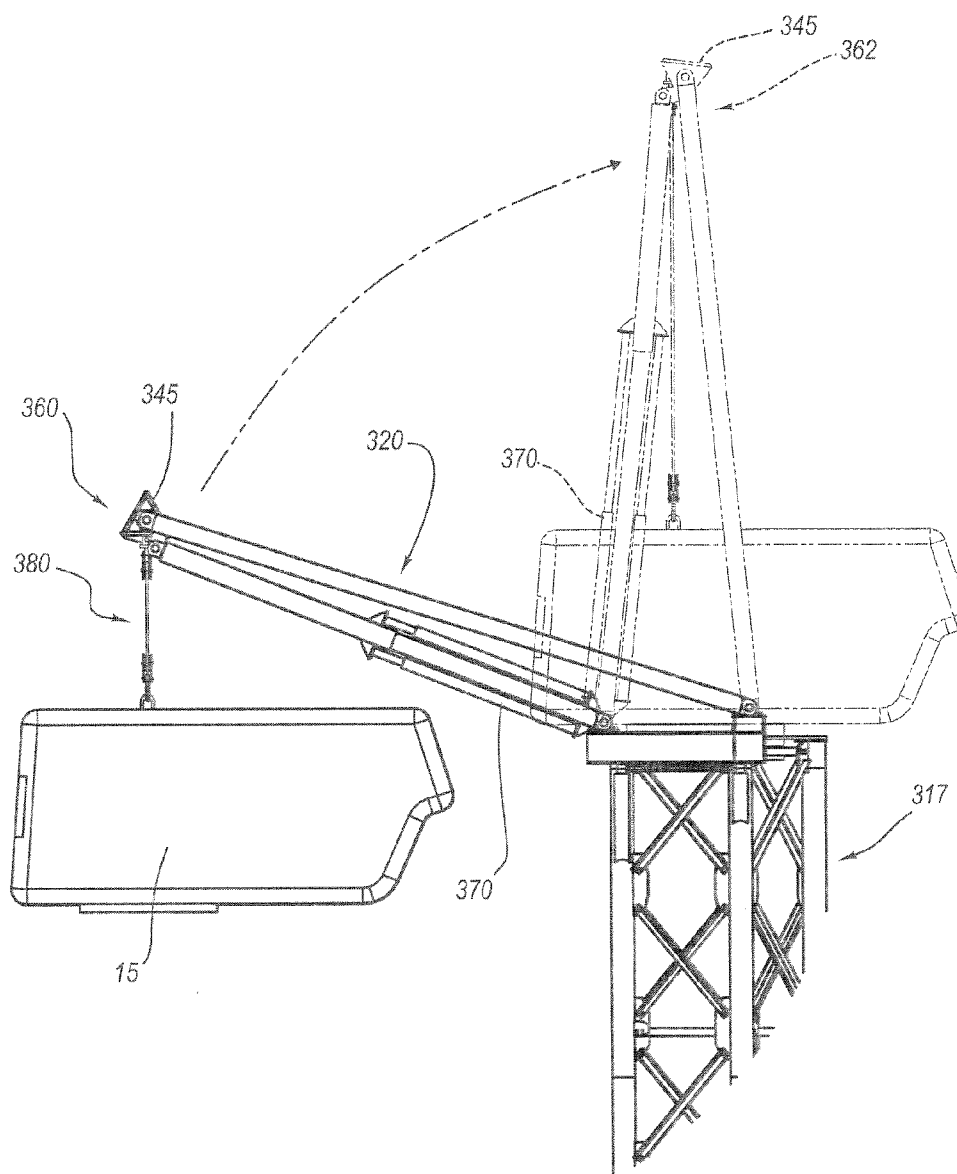


FIG. 20

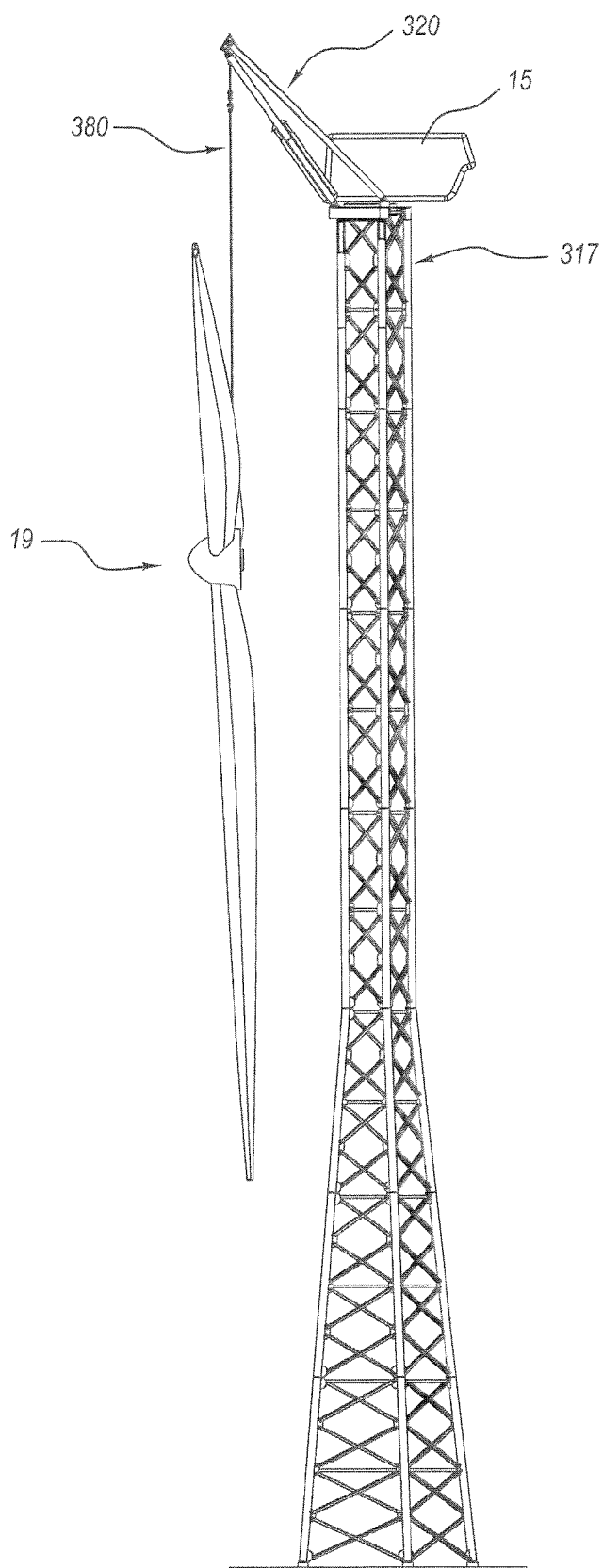


FIG. 21

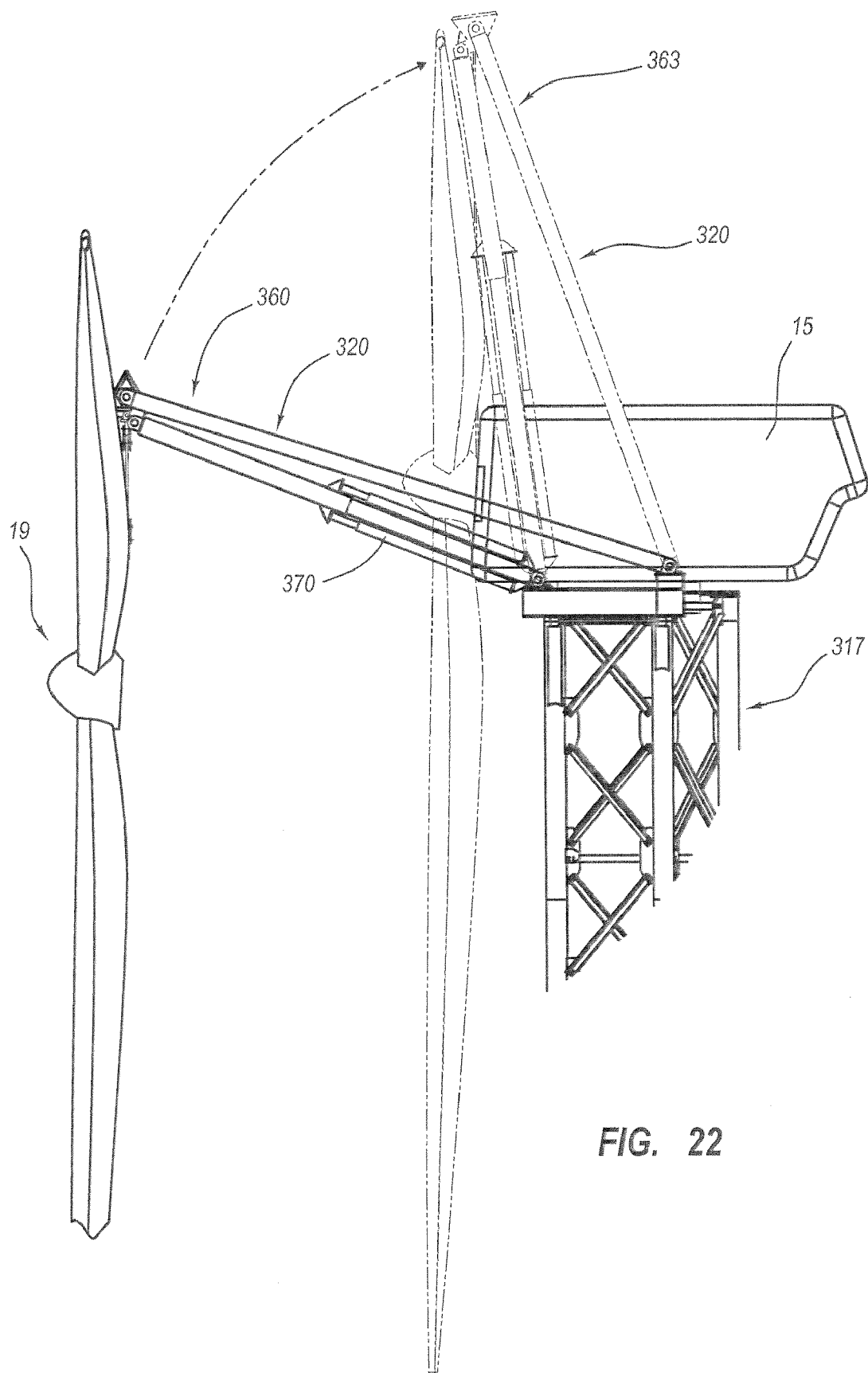


FIG. 22

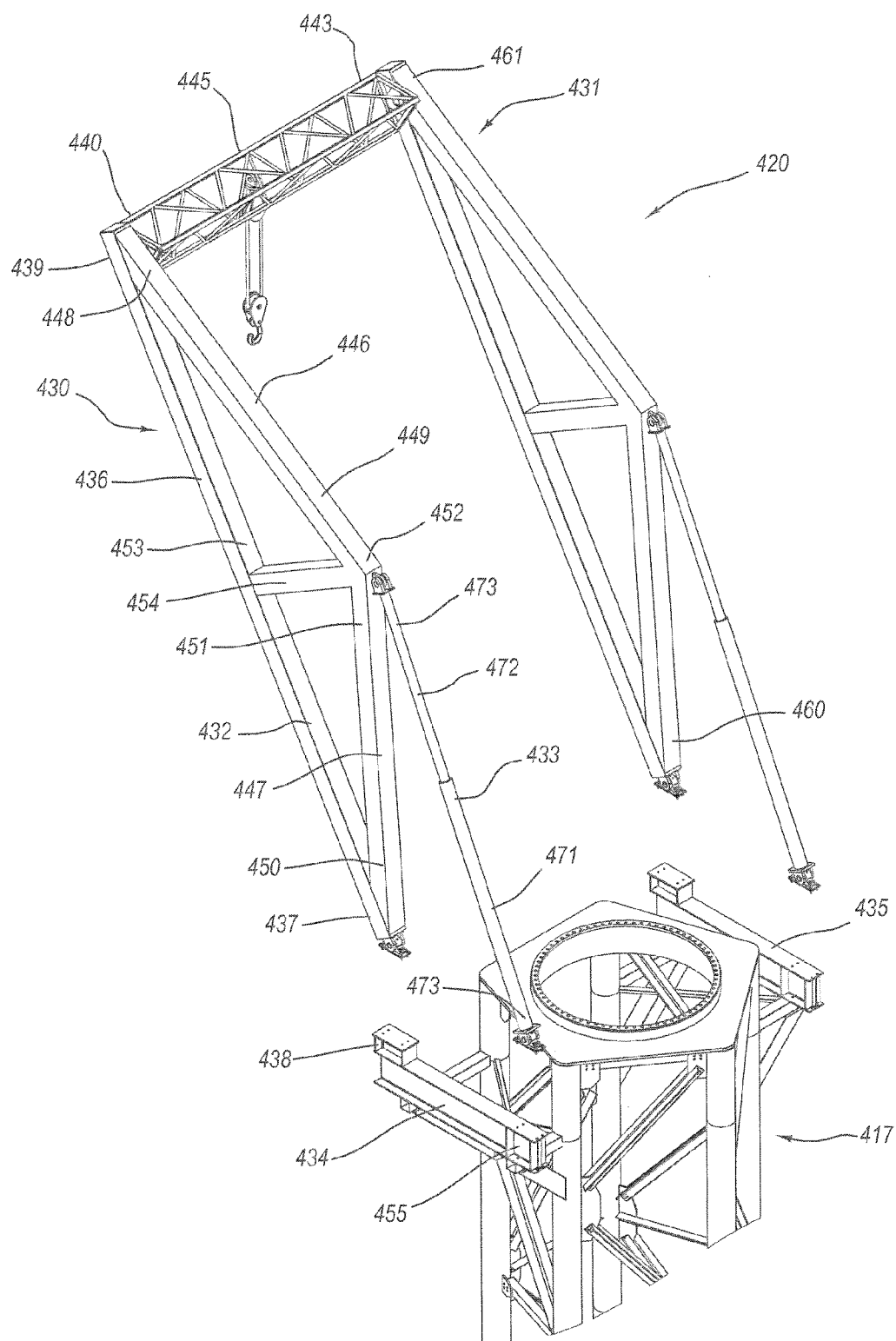


FIG. 23

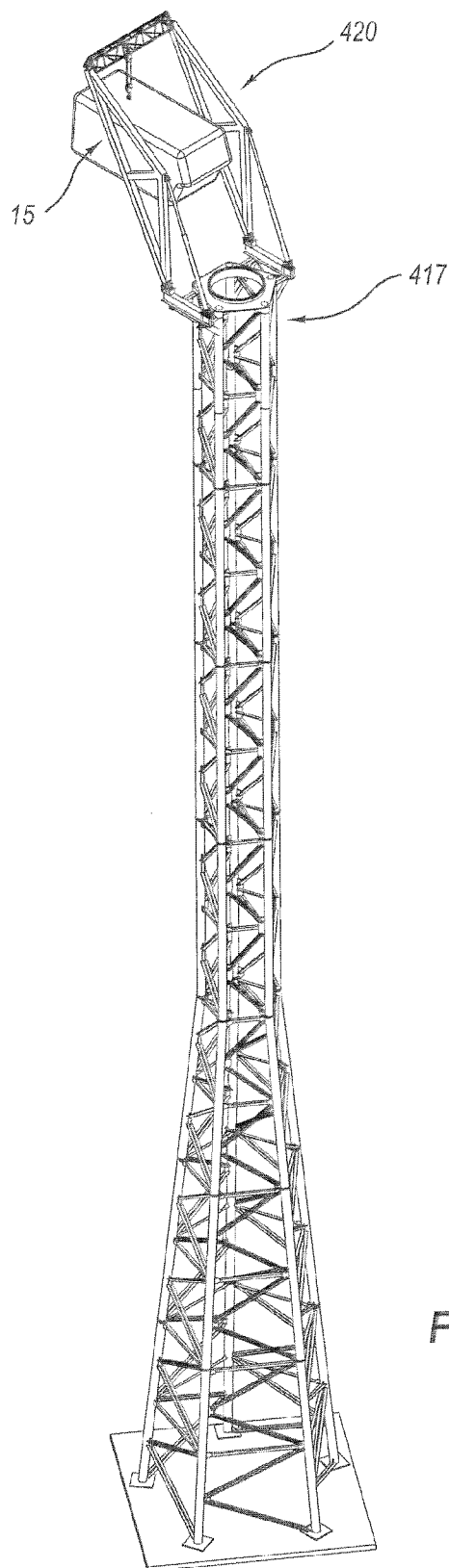


FIG. 24

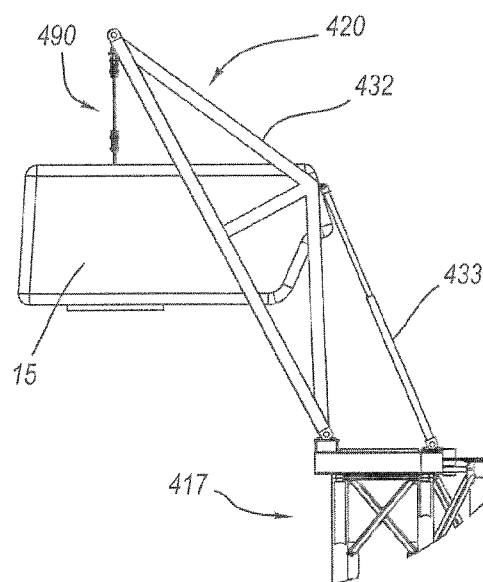


FIG. 25

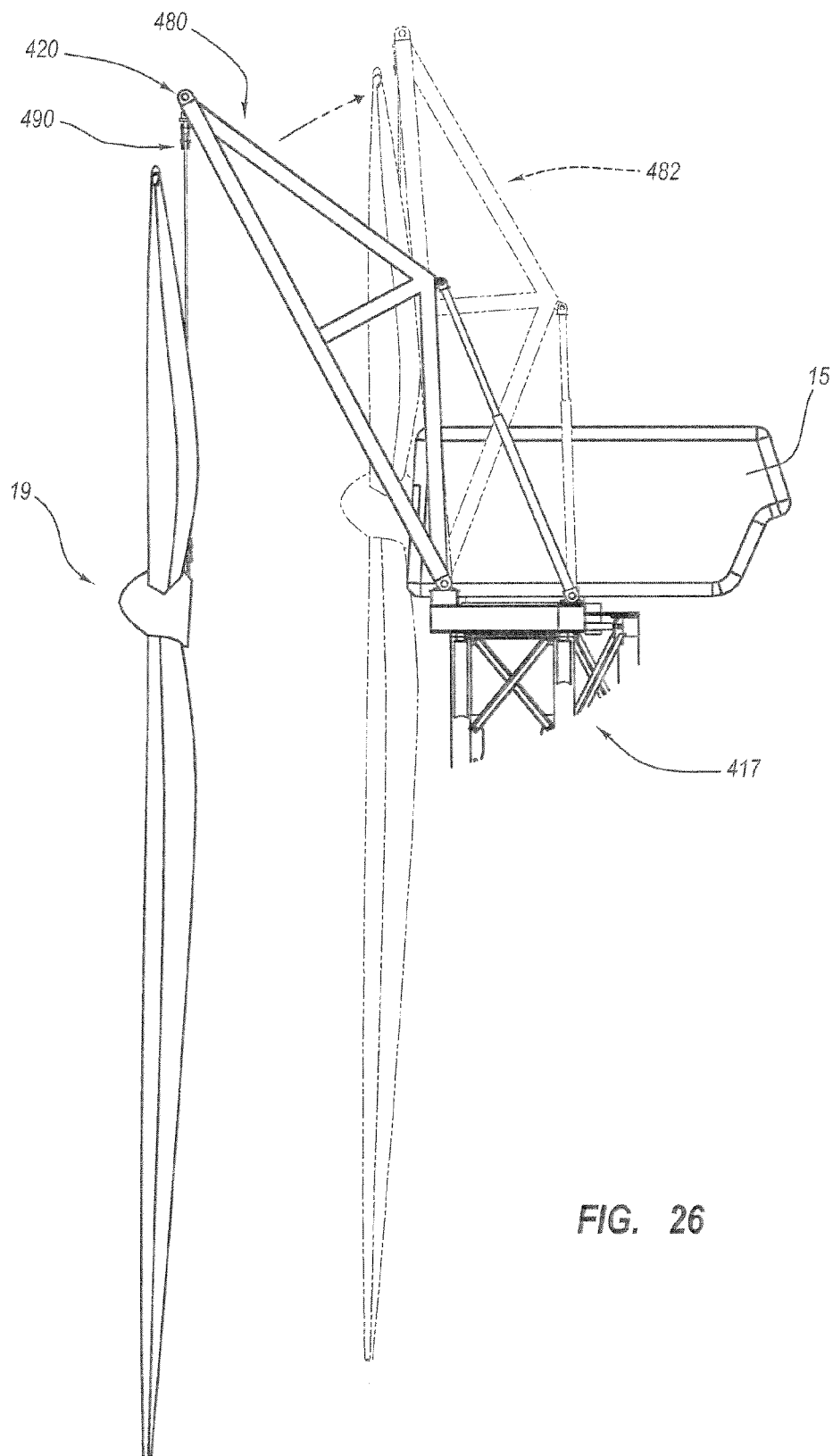


FIG. 26

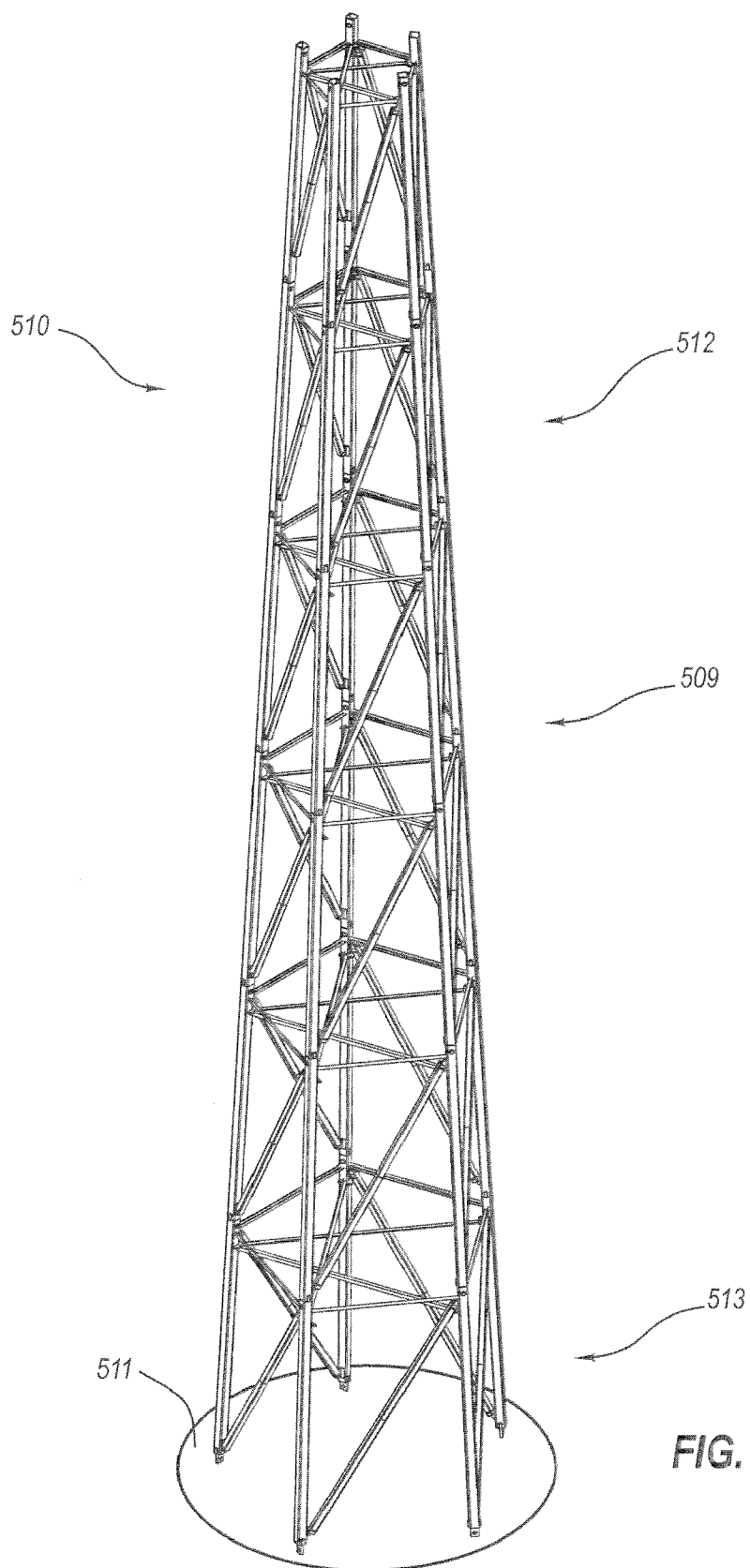


FIG. 27

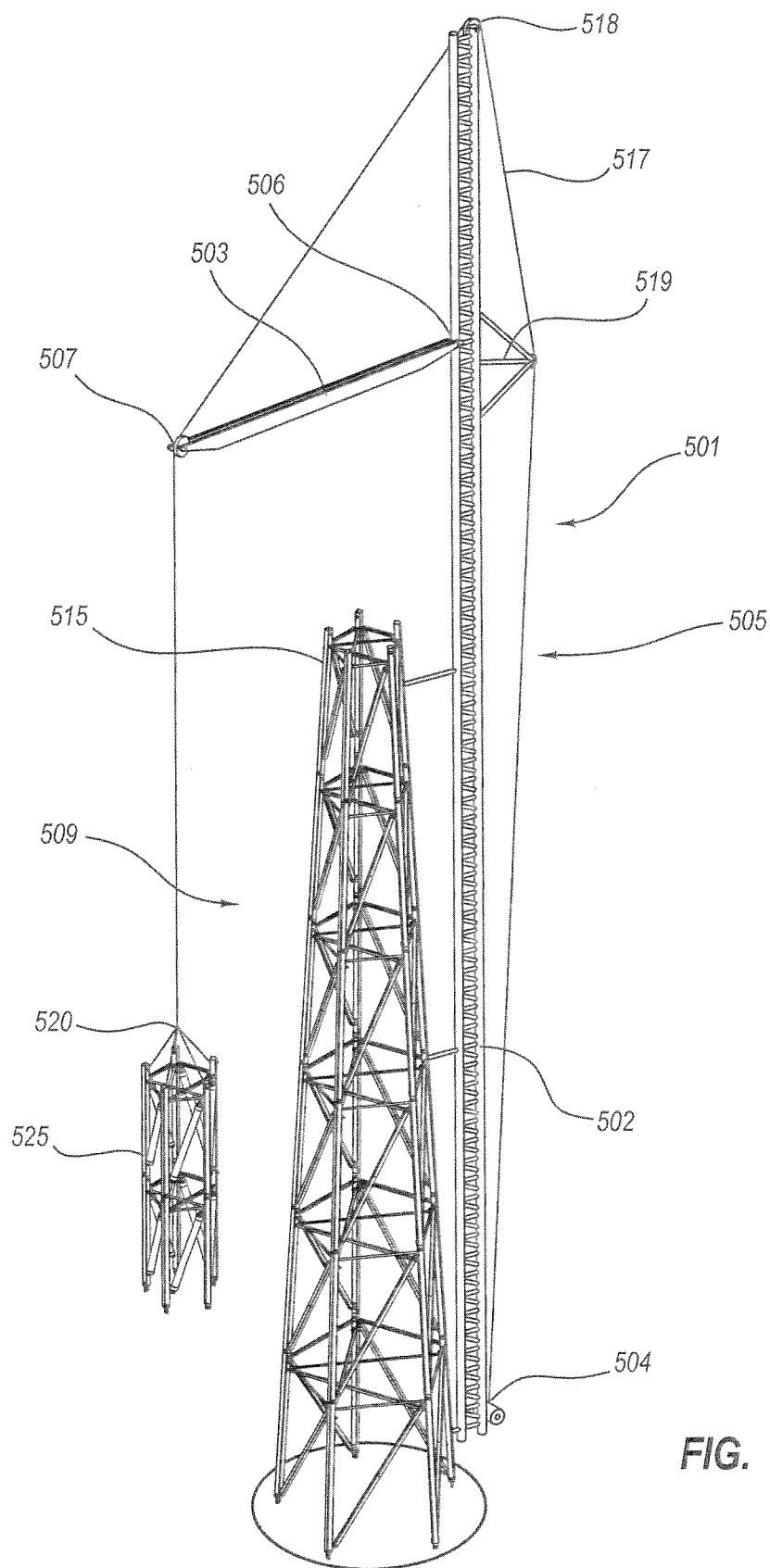


FIG. 28

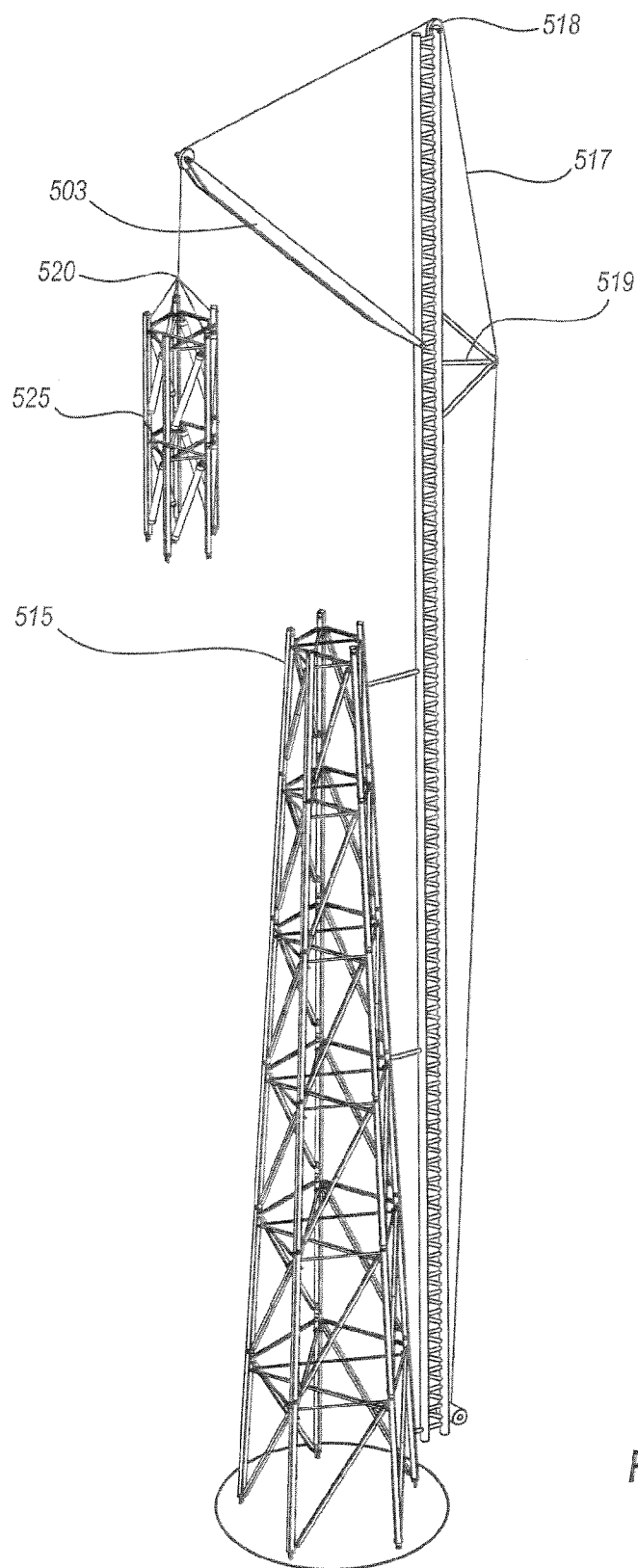


FIG. 29

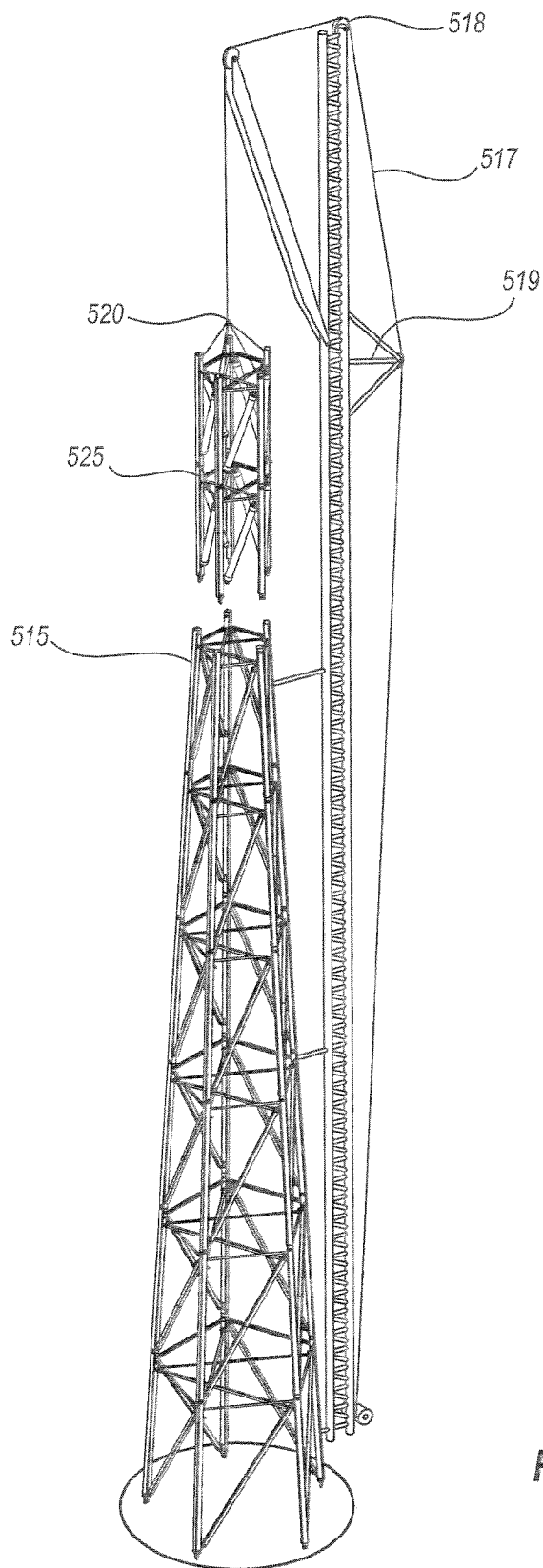


FIG. 30

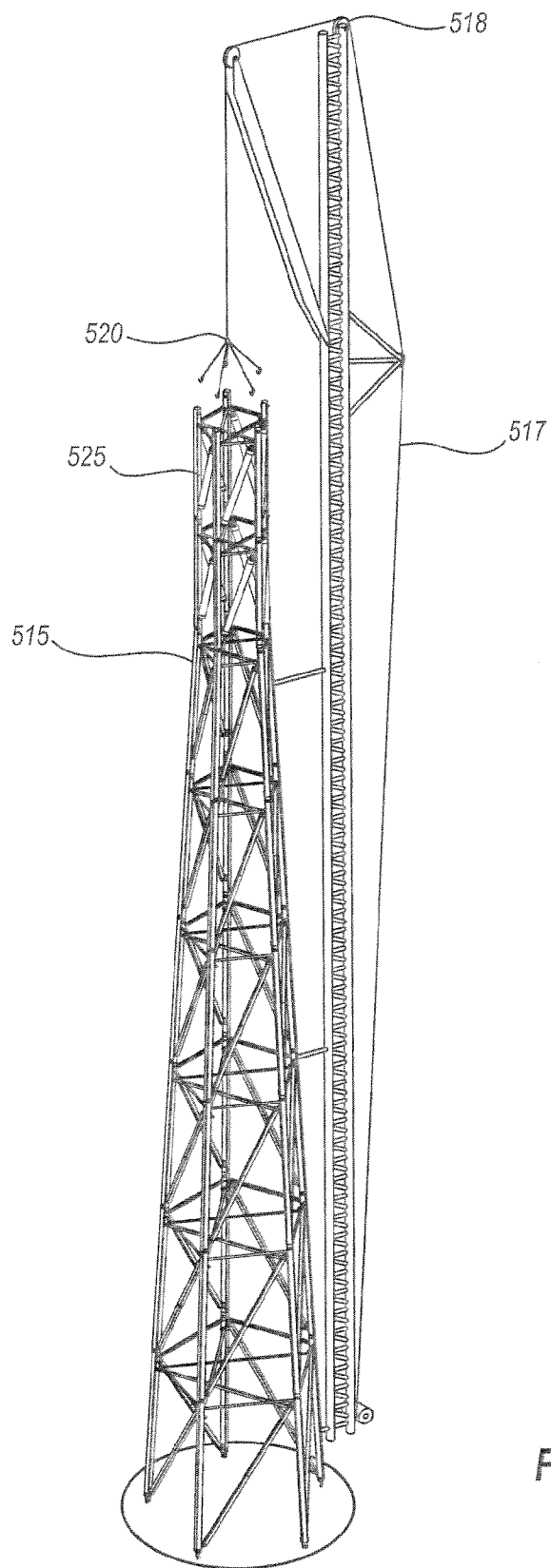


FIG. 31

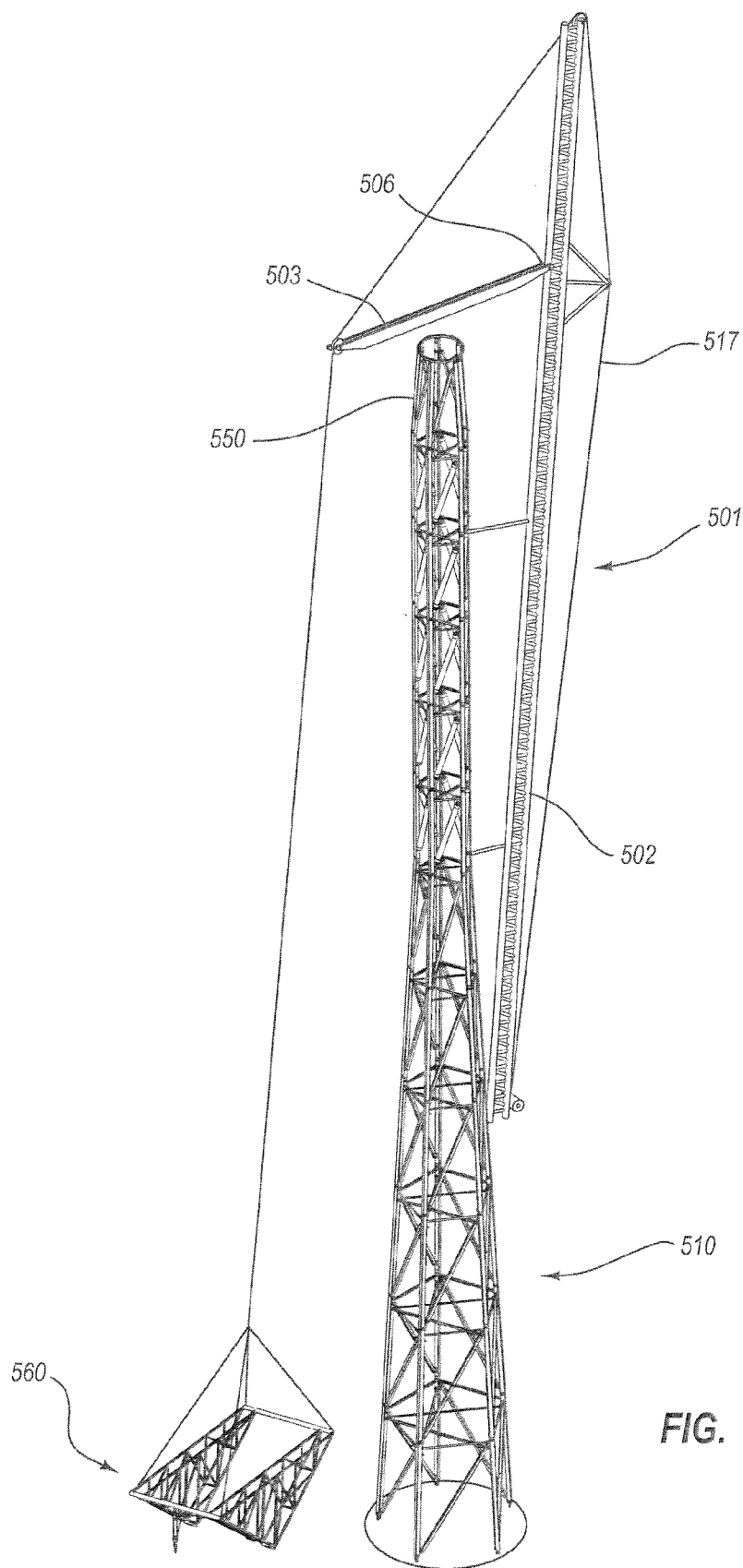


FIG. 32

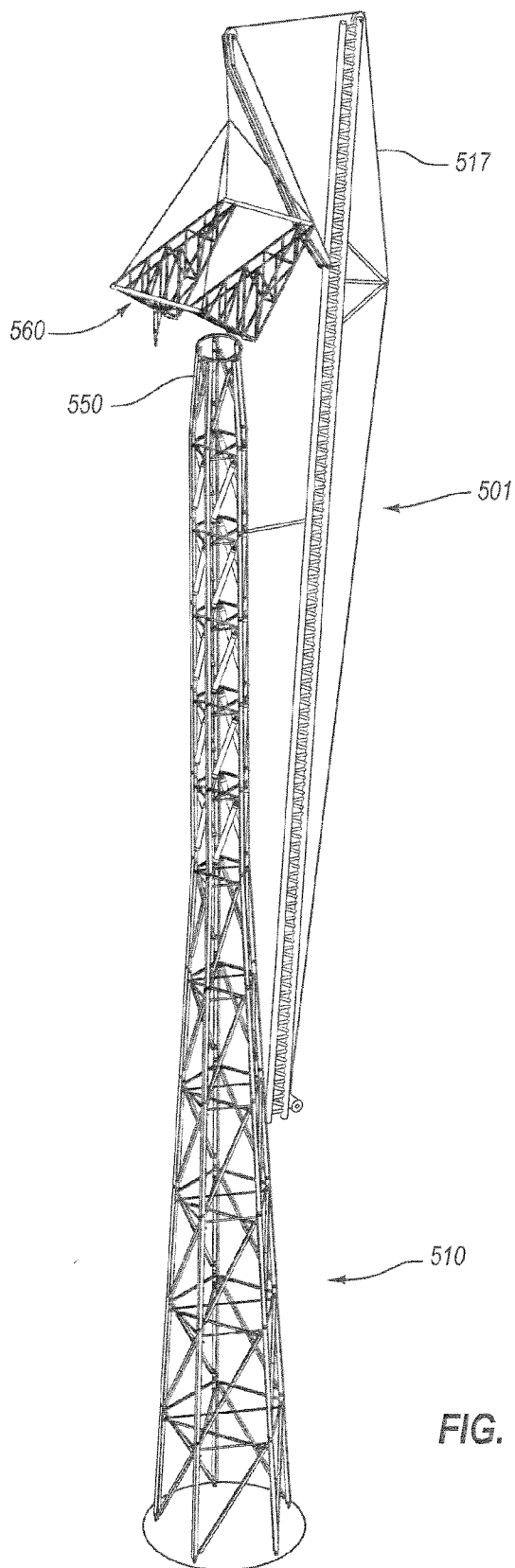


FIG. 33

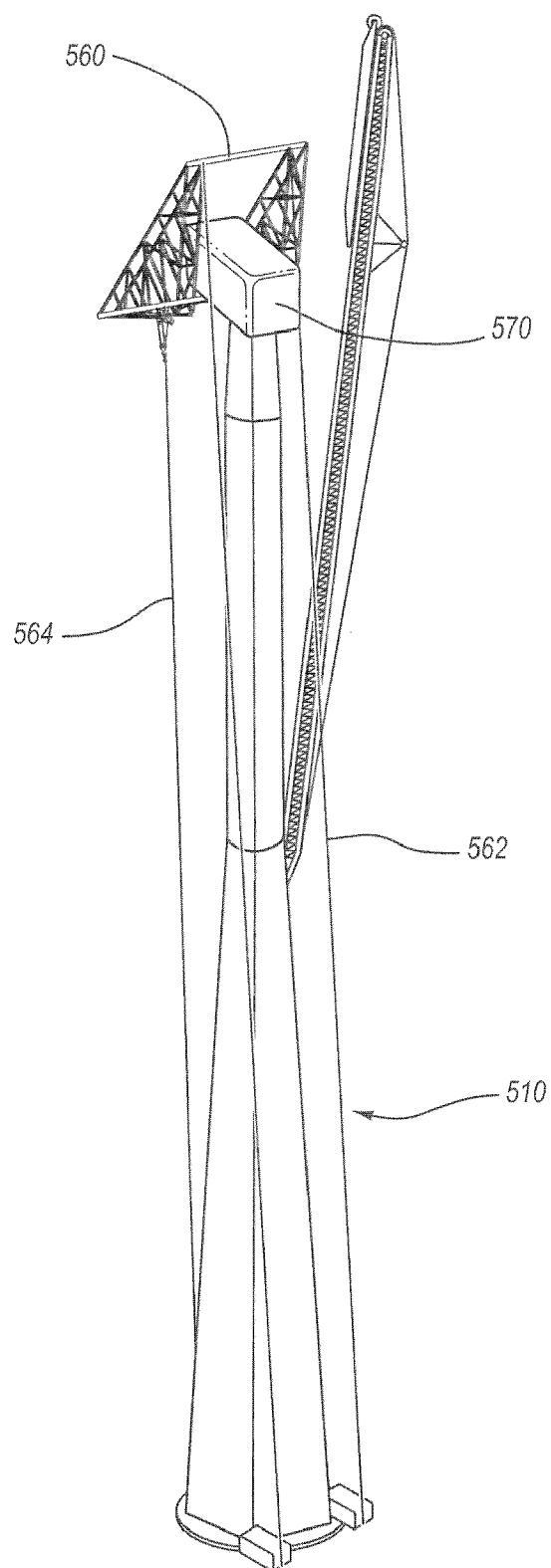


FIG. 34

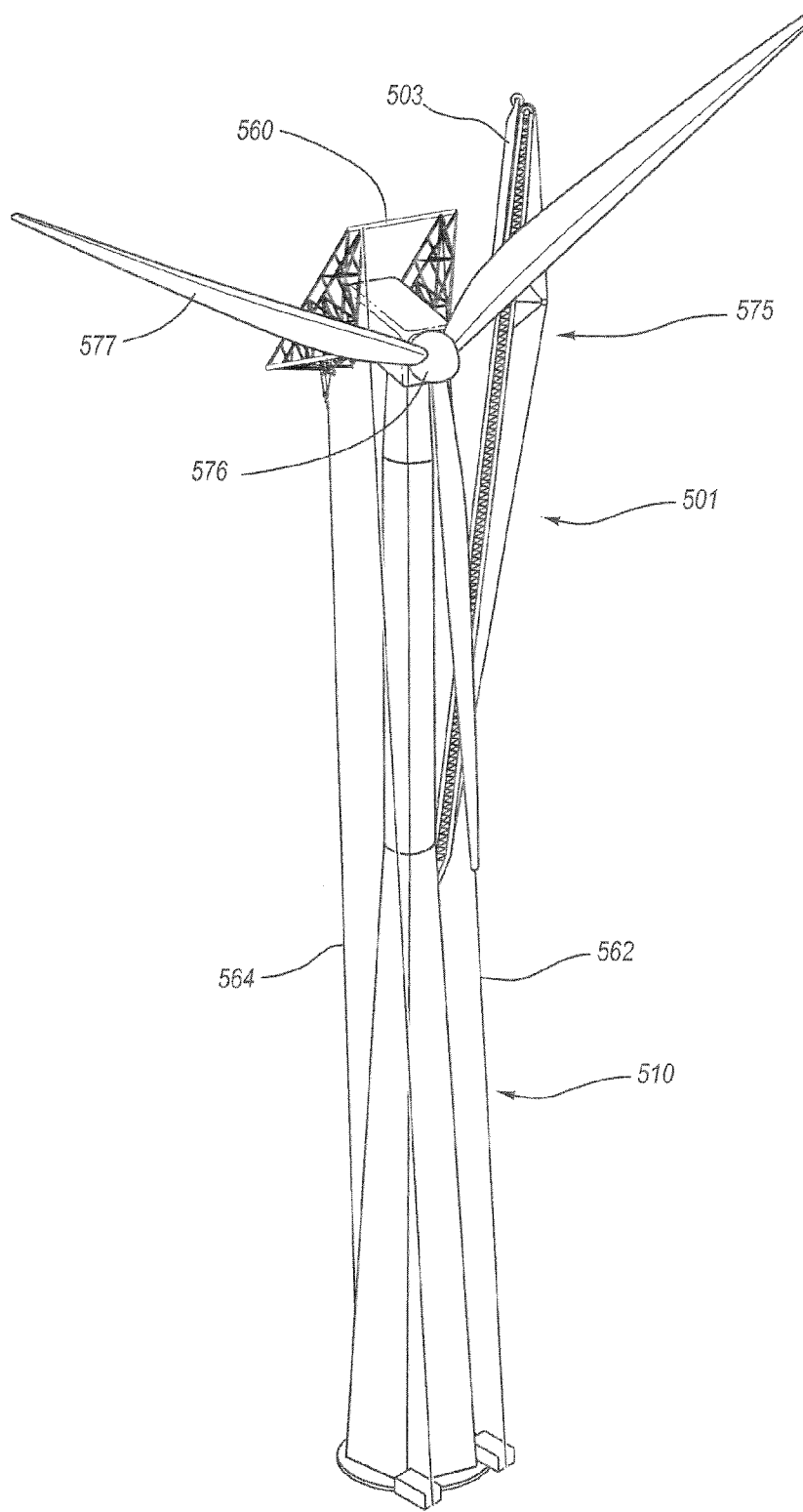


FIG. 35

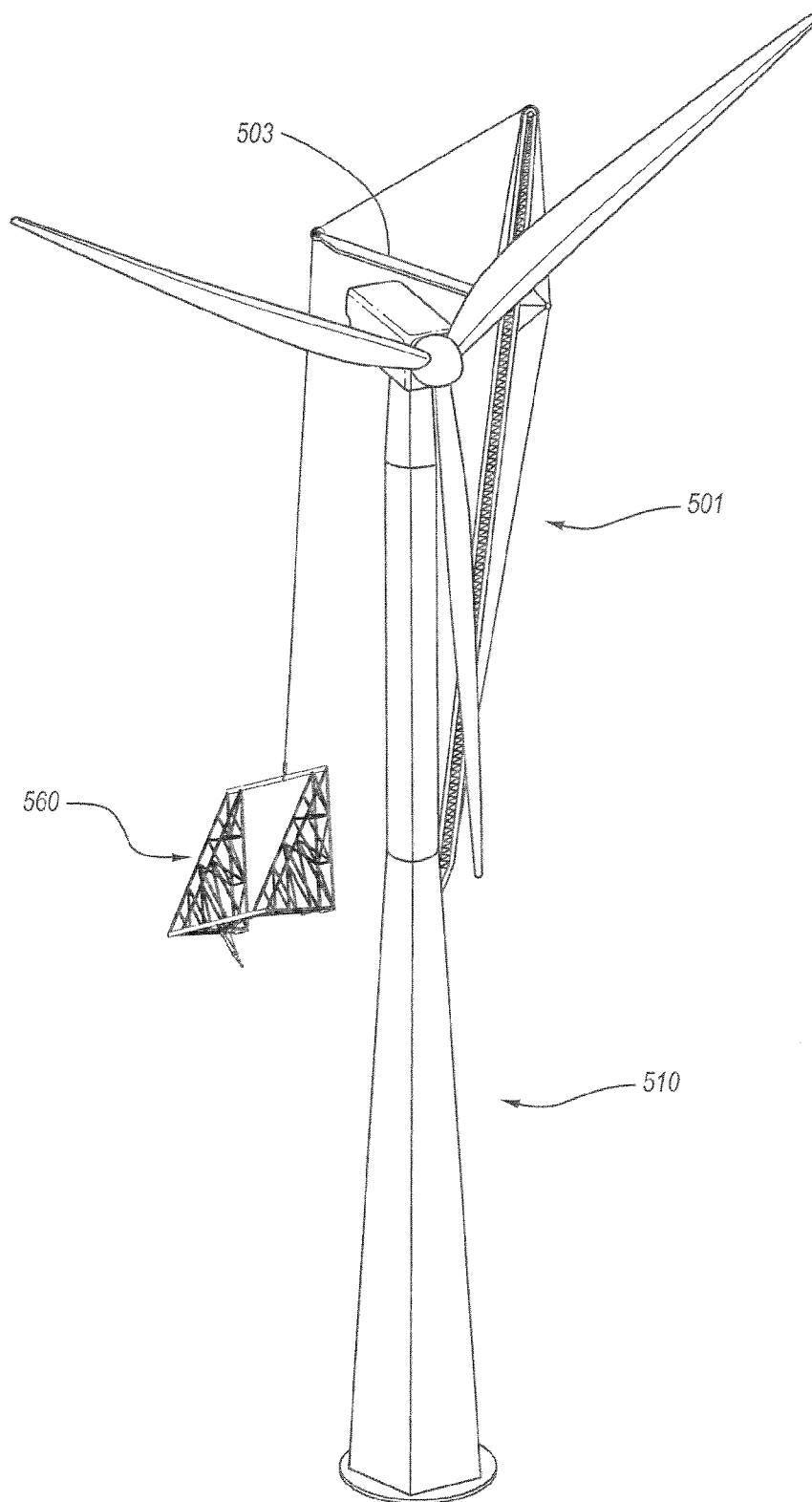


FIG. 36

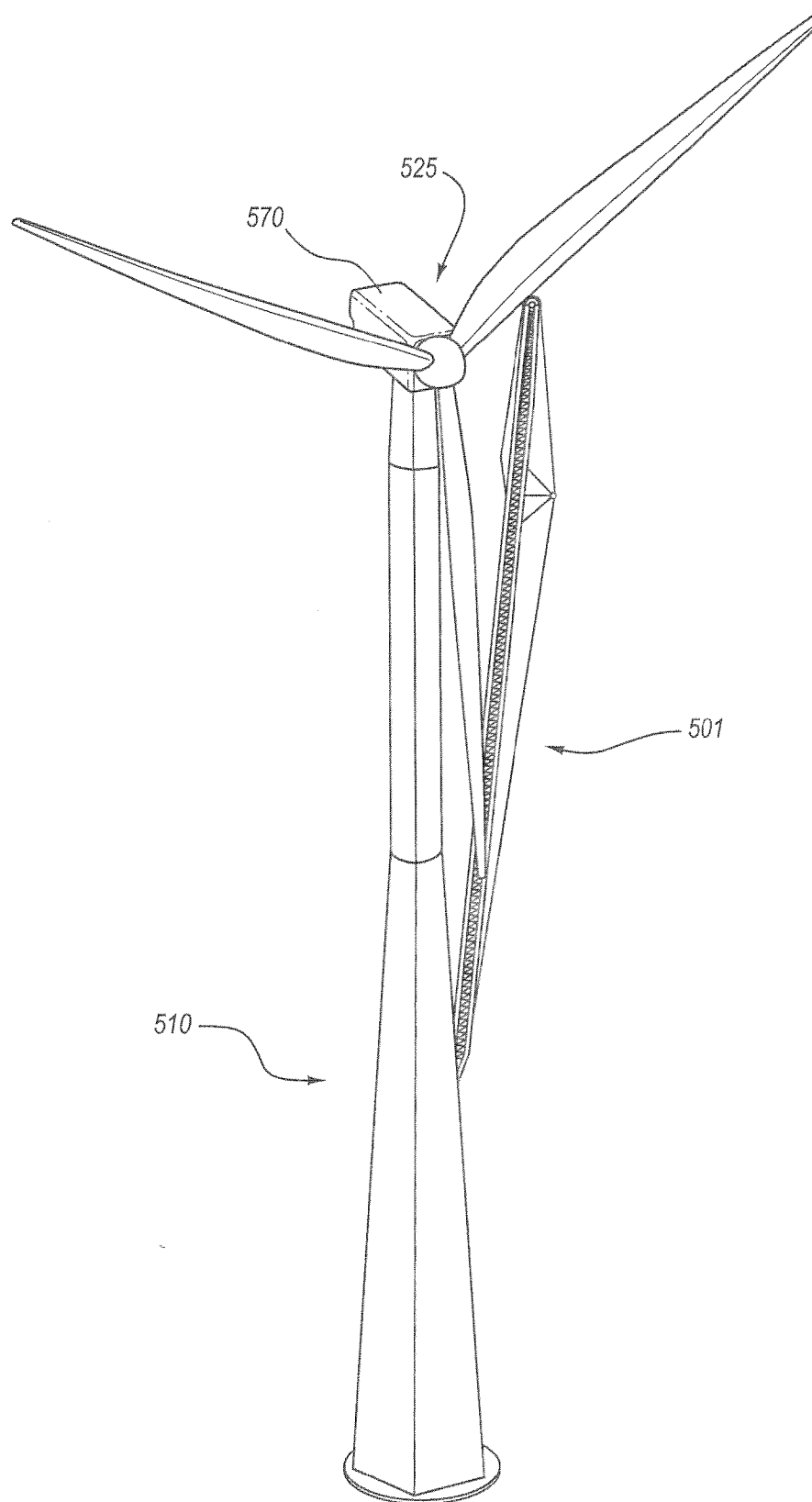


FIG. 37

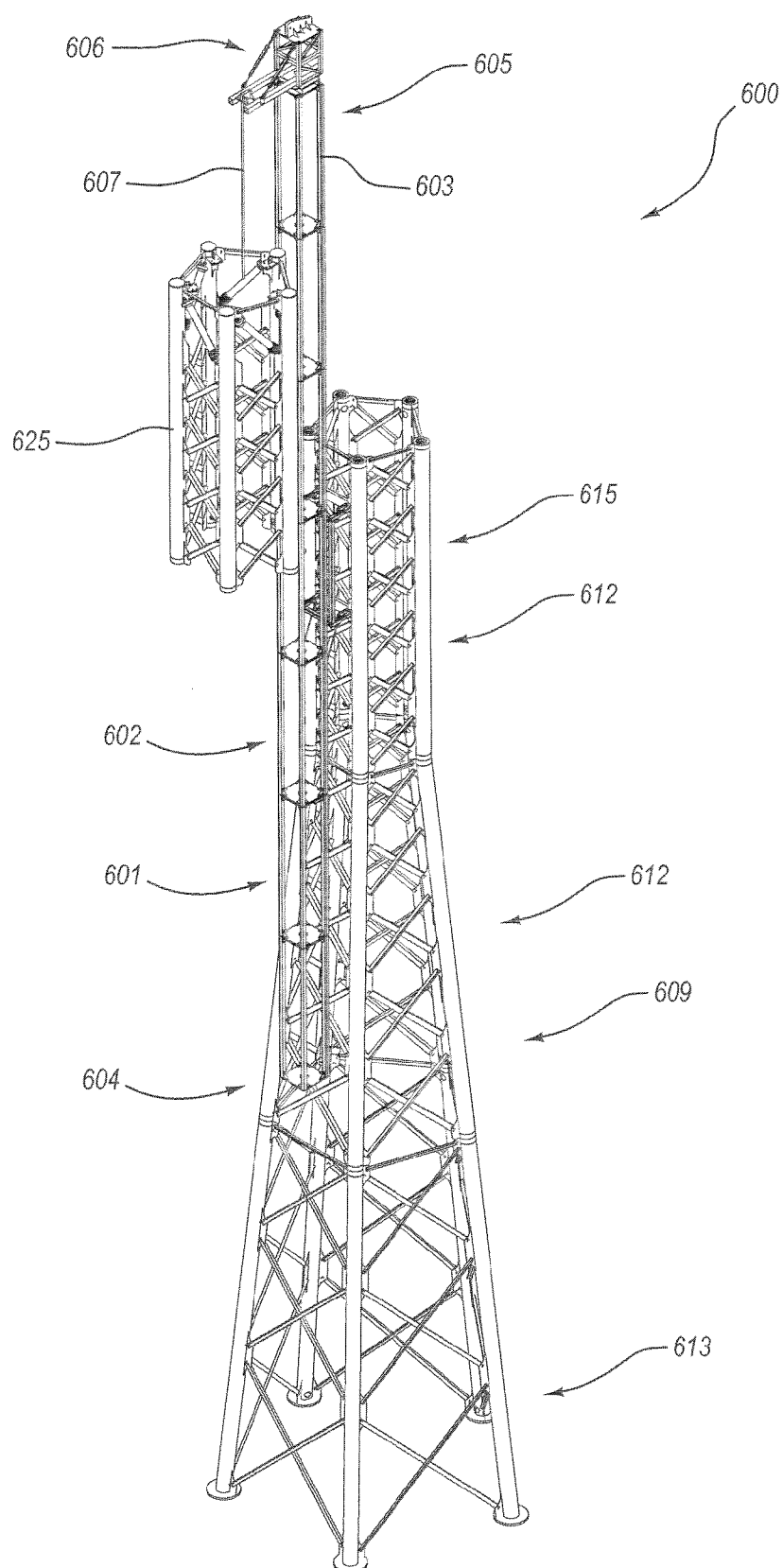


FIG. 38

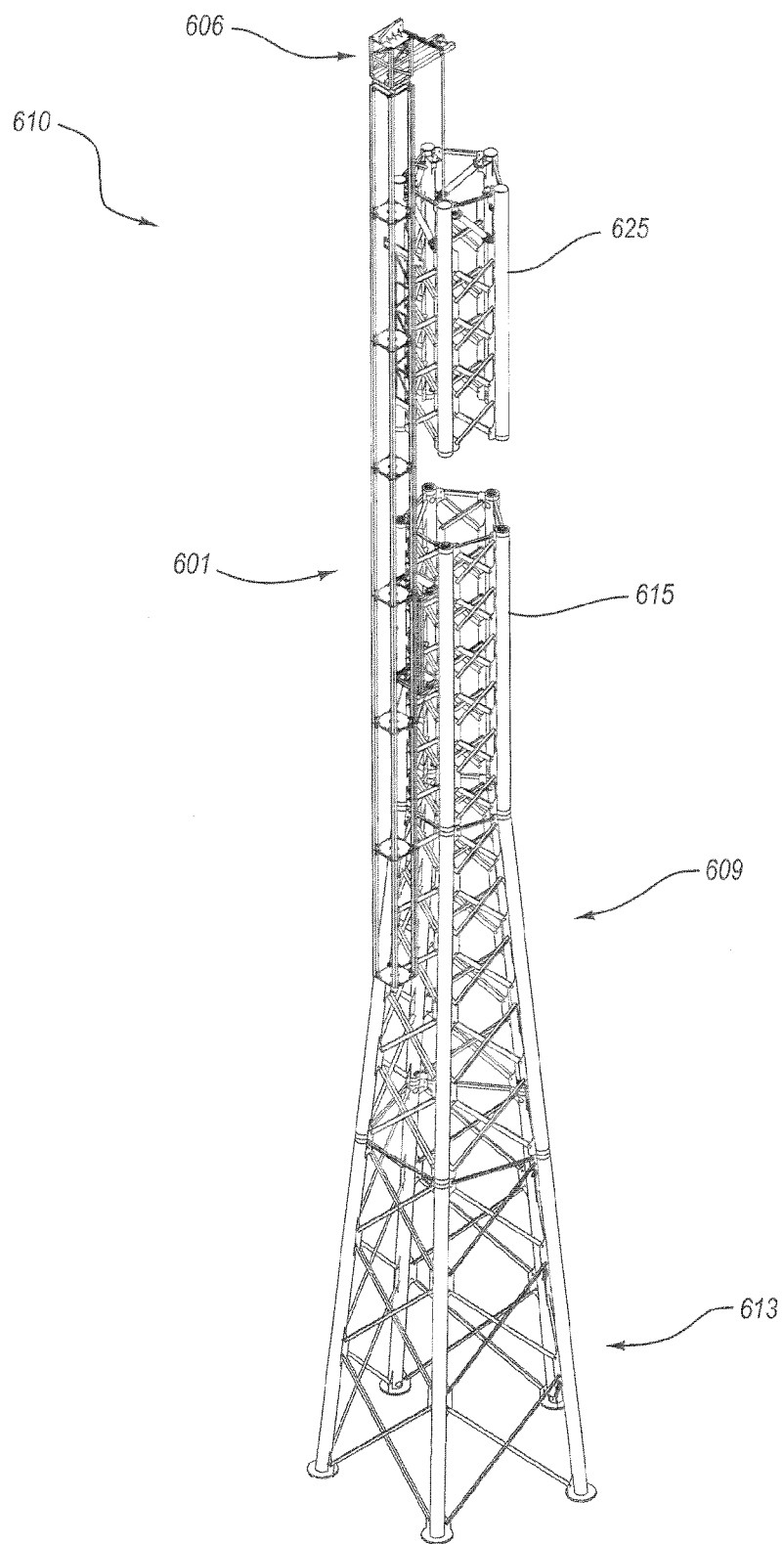


FIG. 39

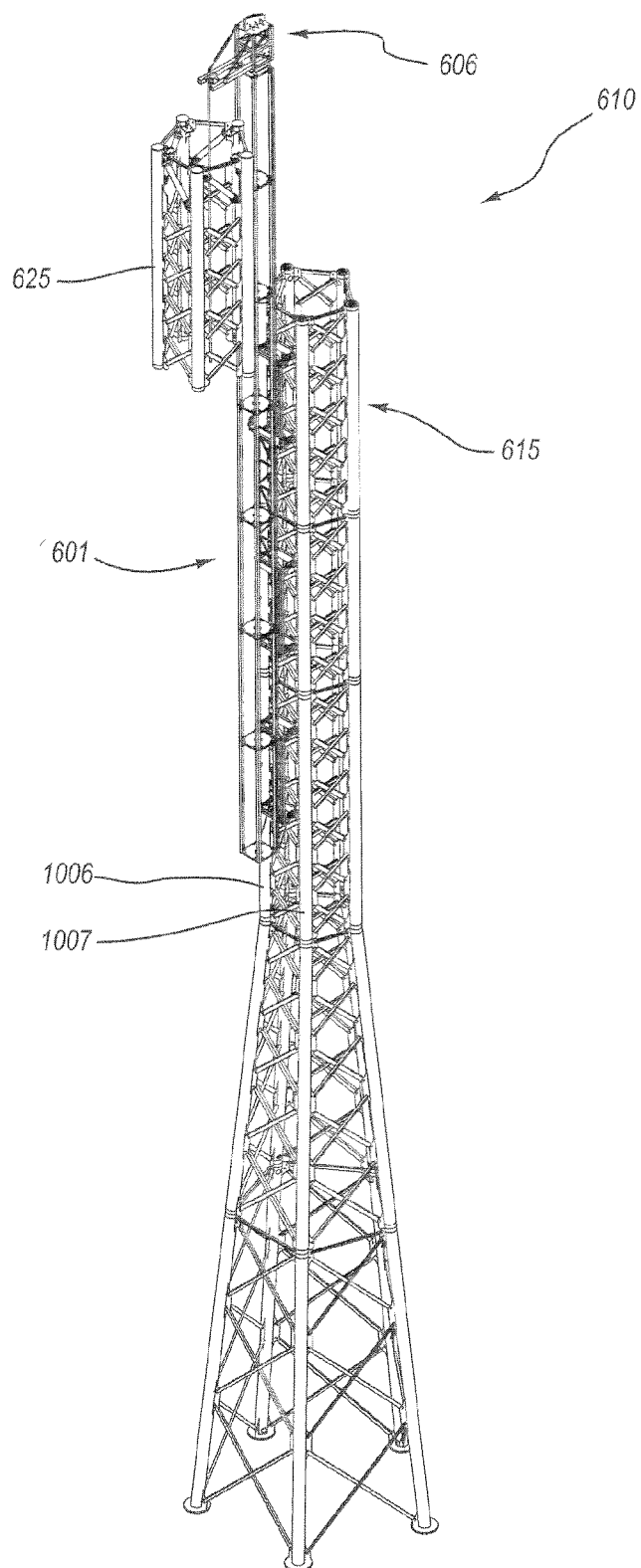


FIG. 40

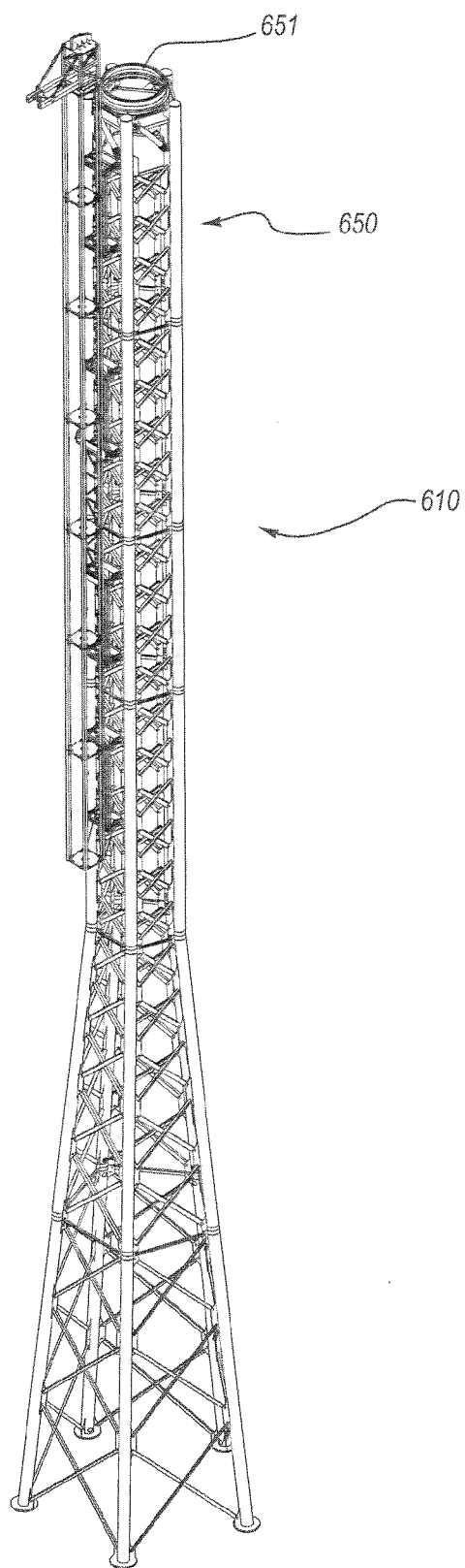


FIG. 41

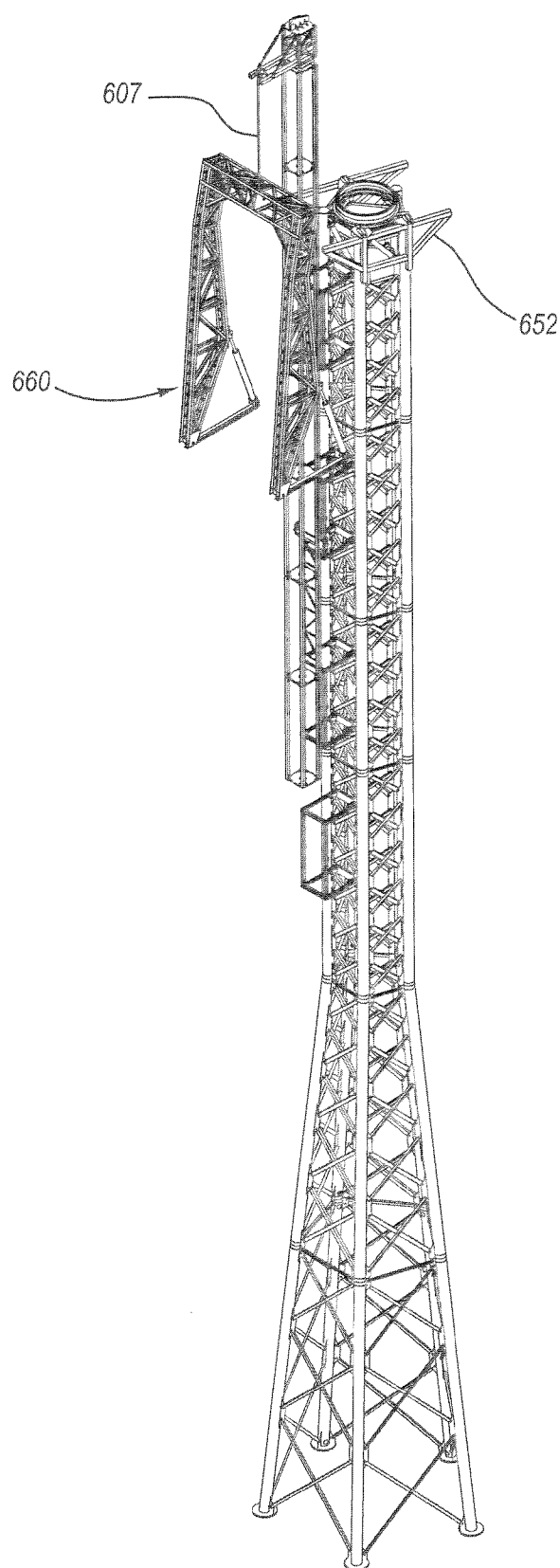


FIG. 42

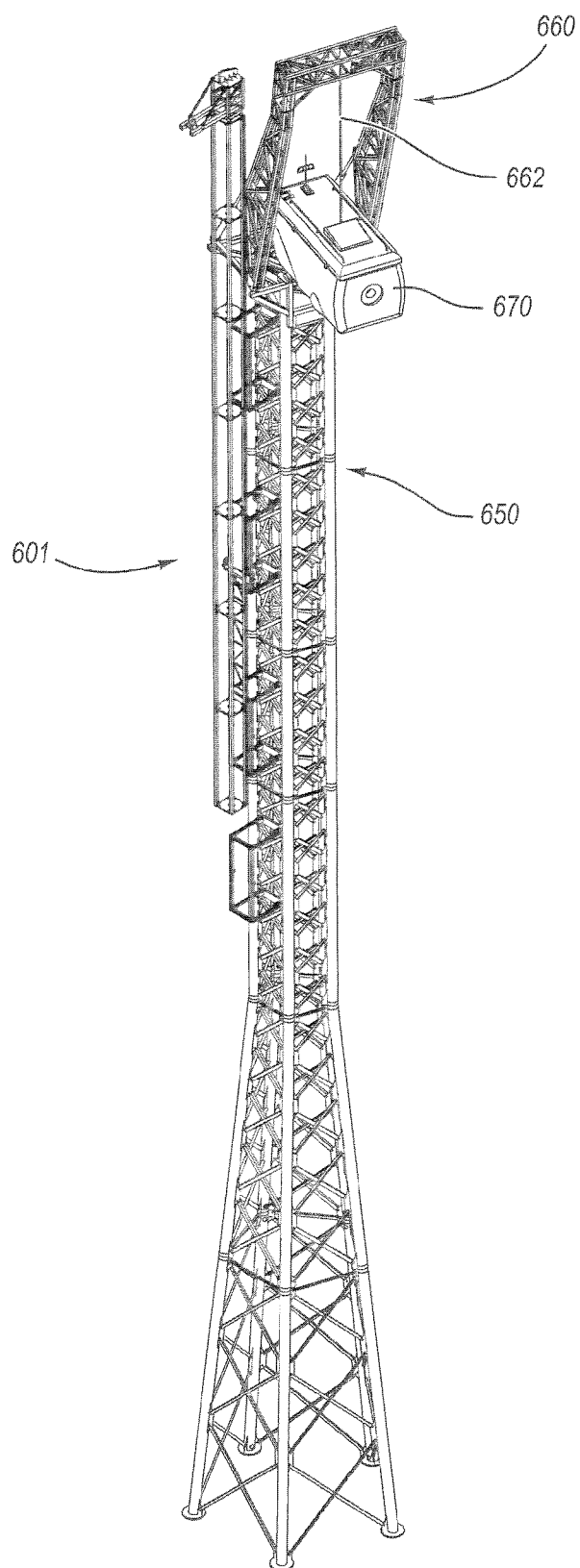


FIG. 43

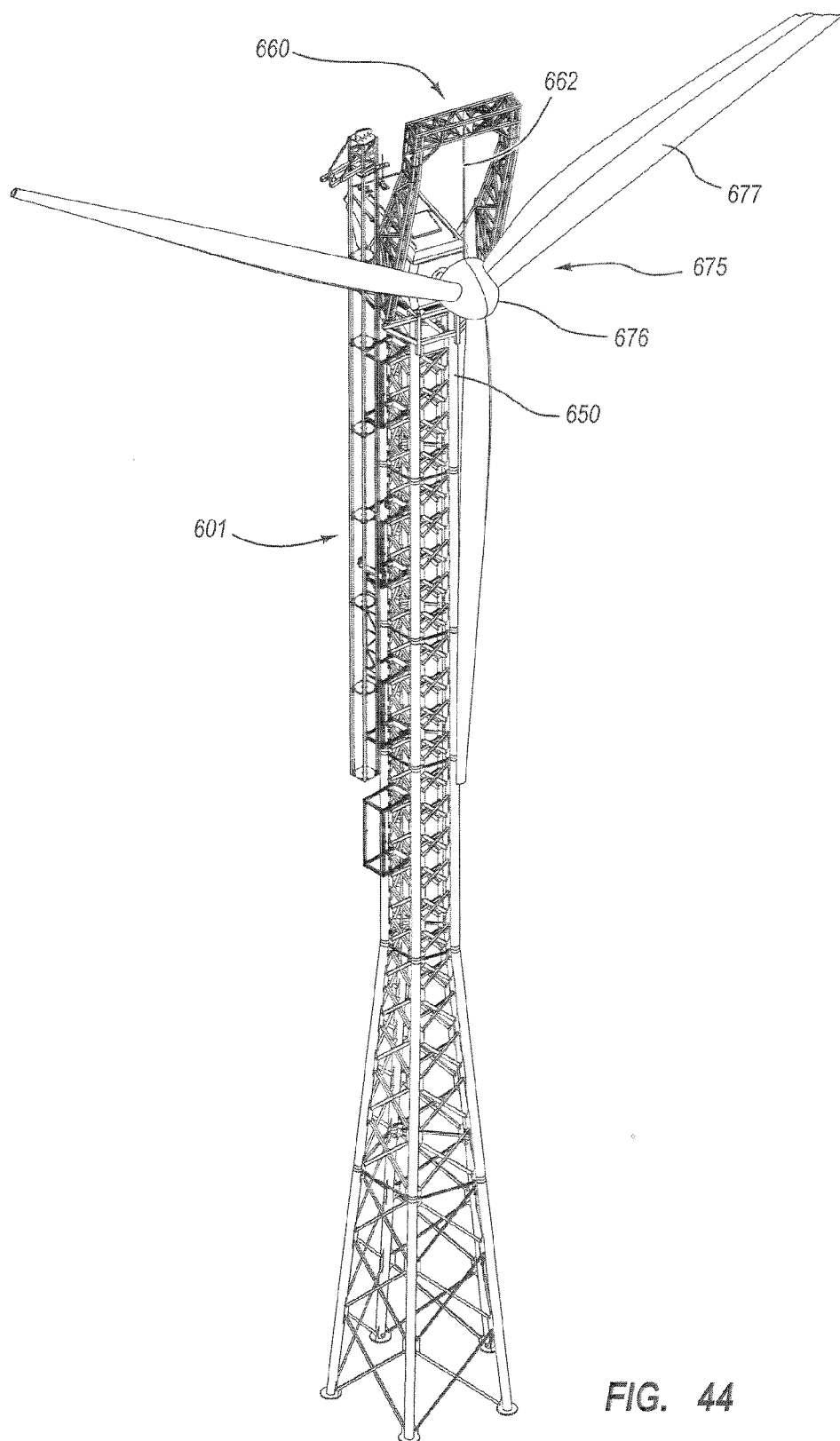


FIG. 44

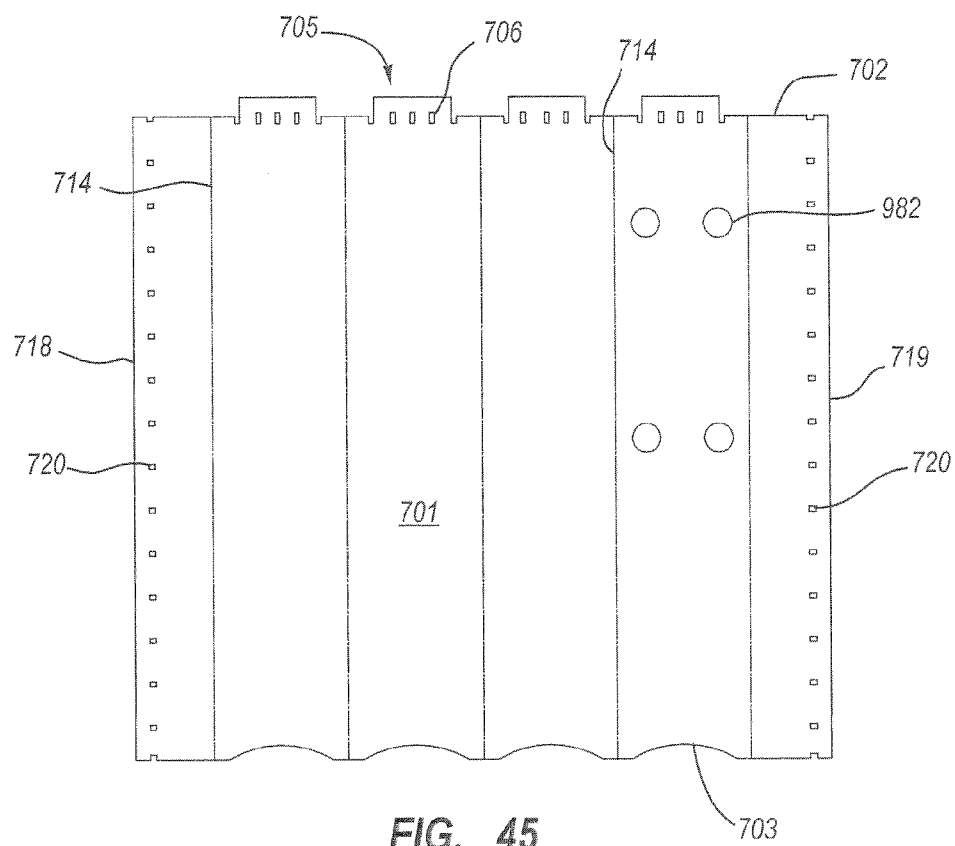


FIG. 45

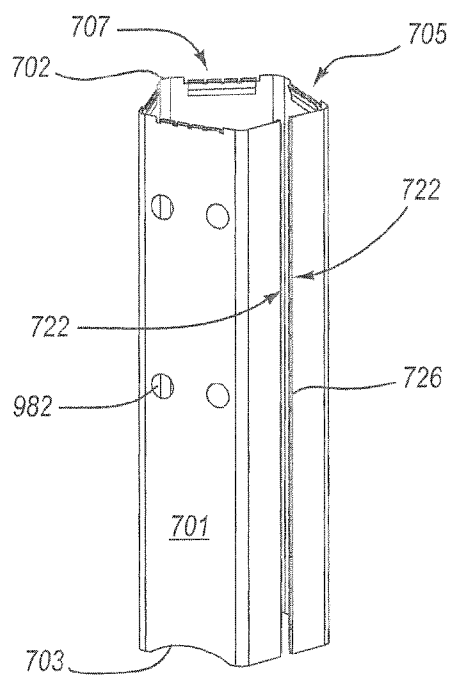


FIG. 46

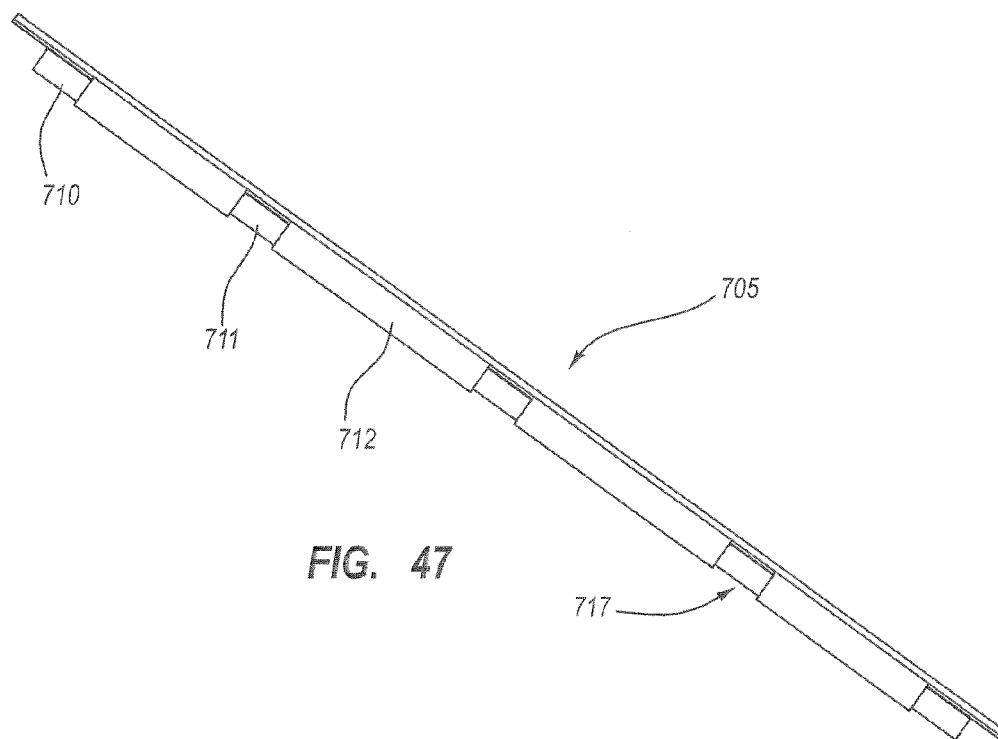


FIG. 47

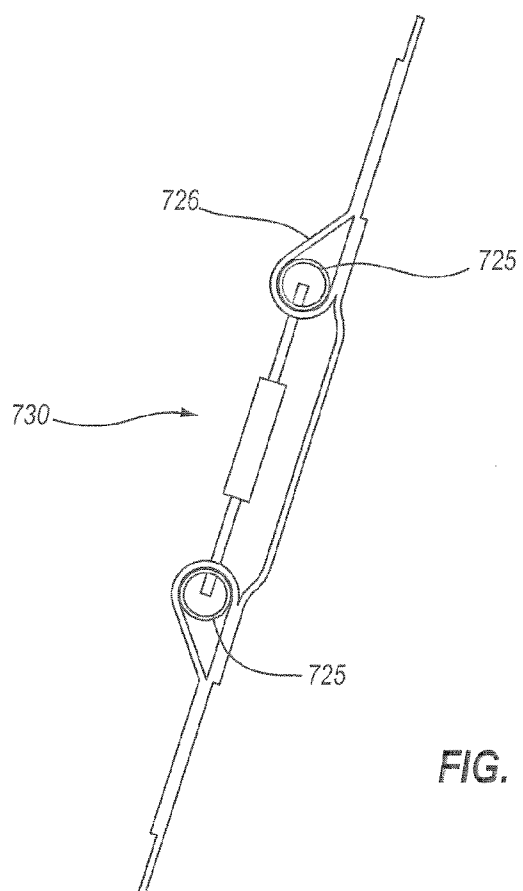


FIG. 48

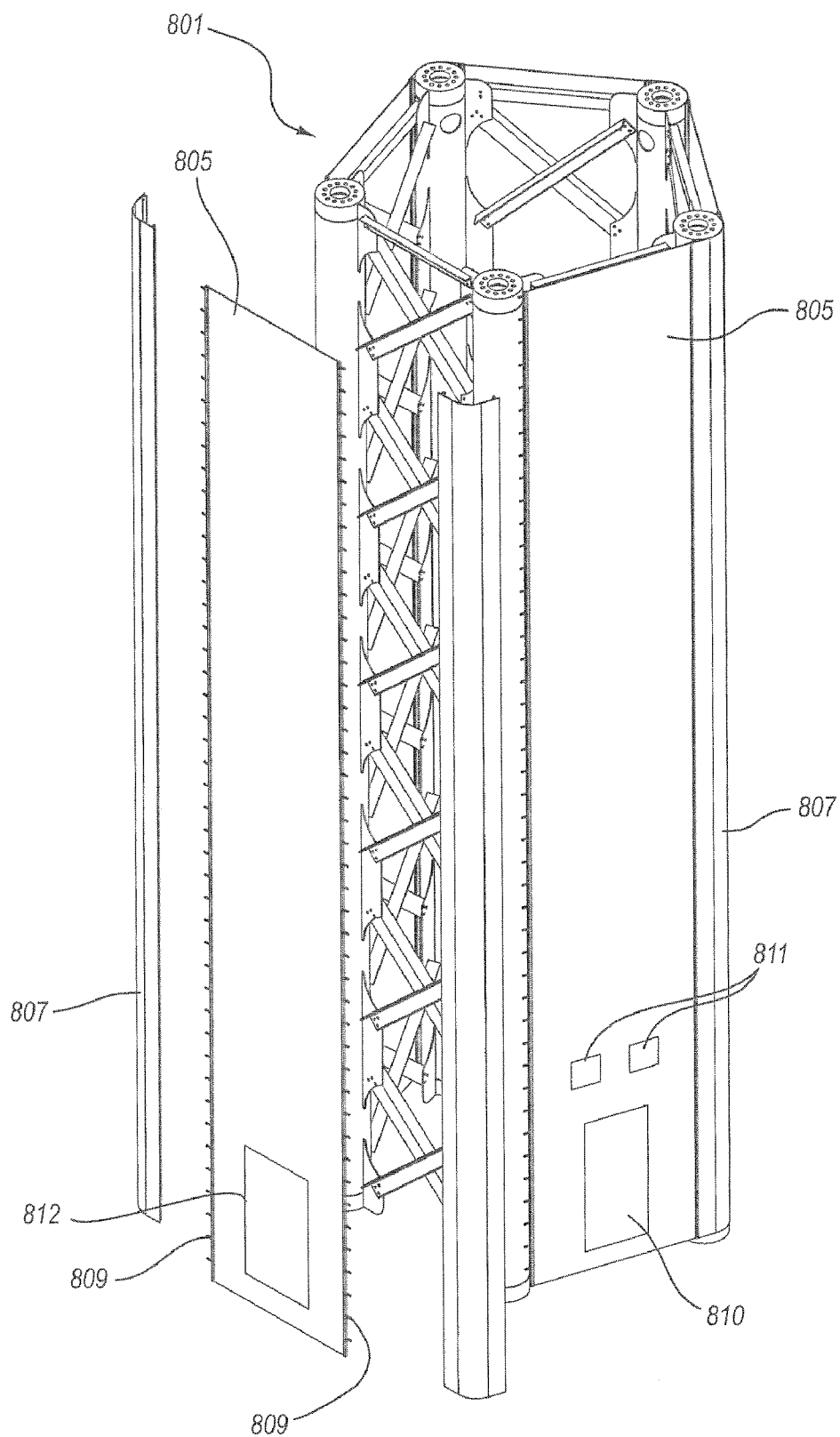


FIG. 49

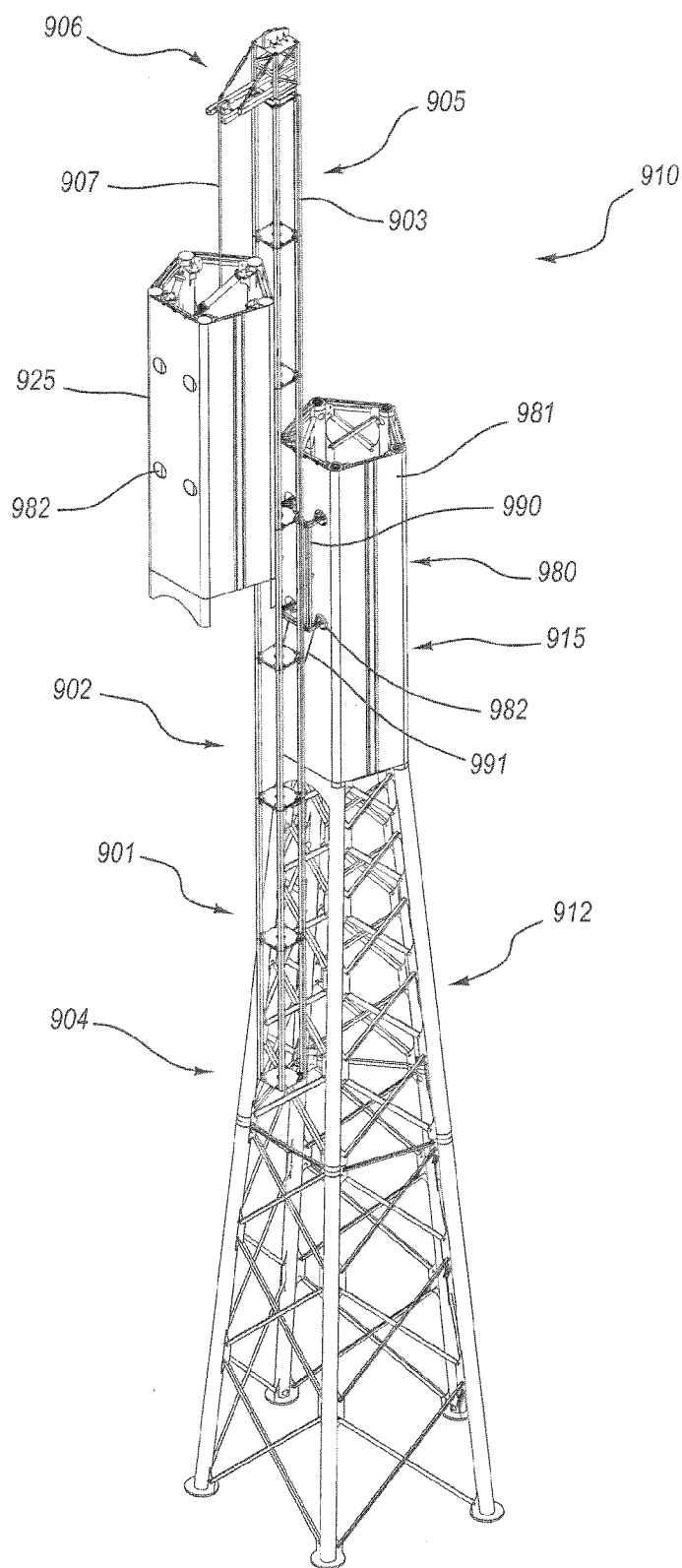


FIG. 50

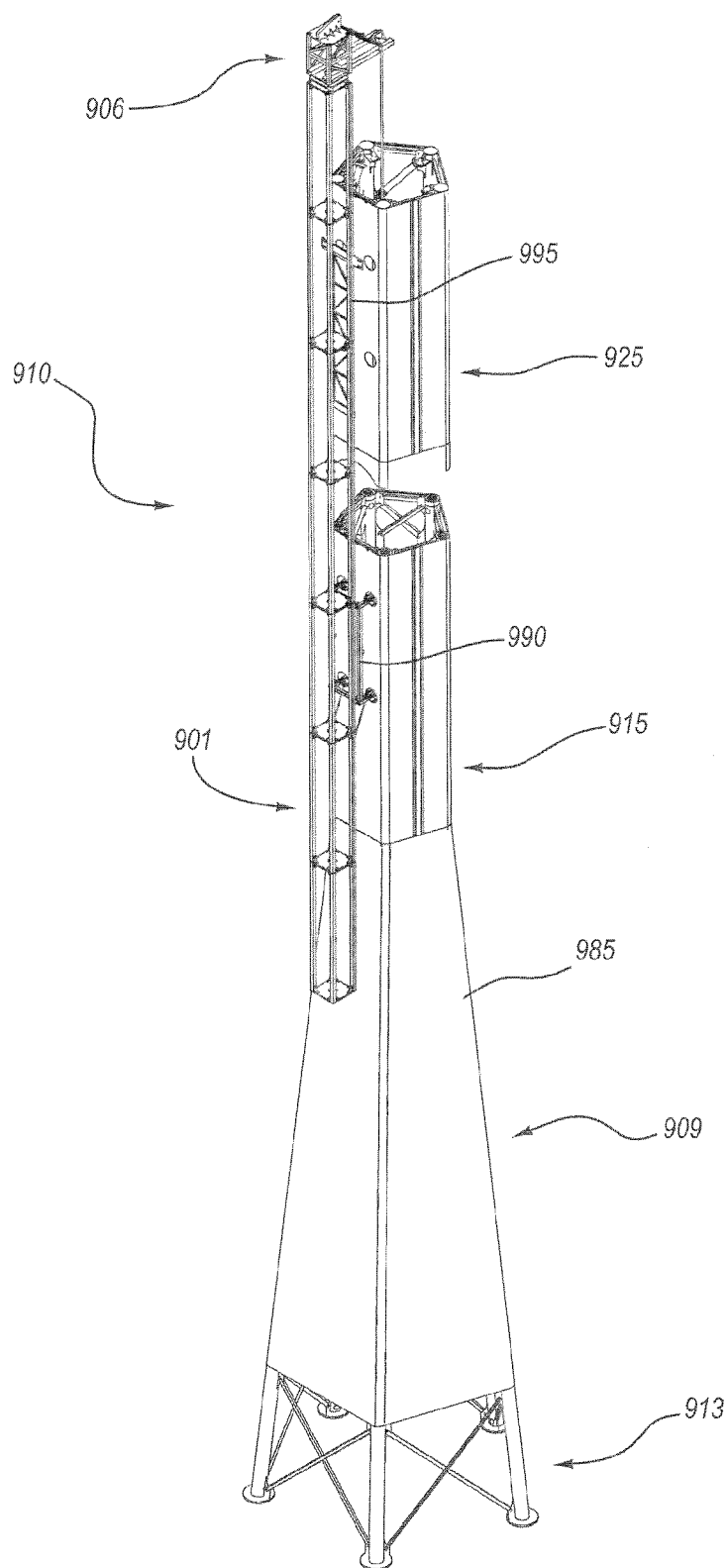


FIG. 51

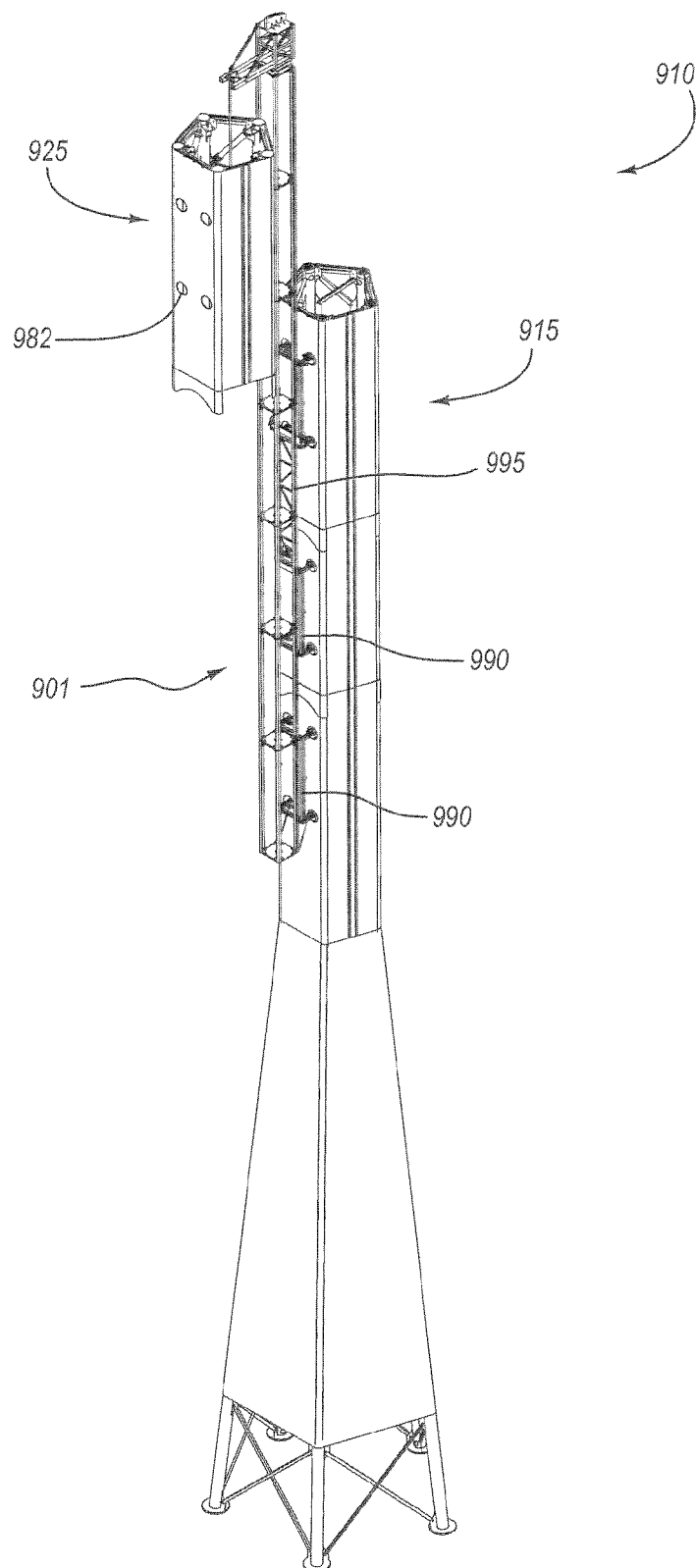


FIG. 52

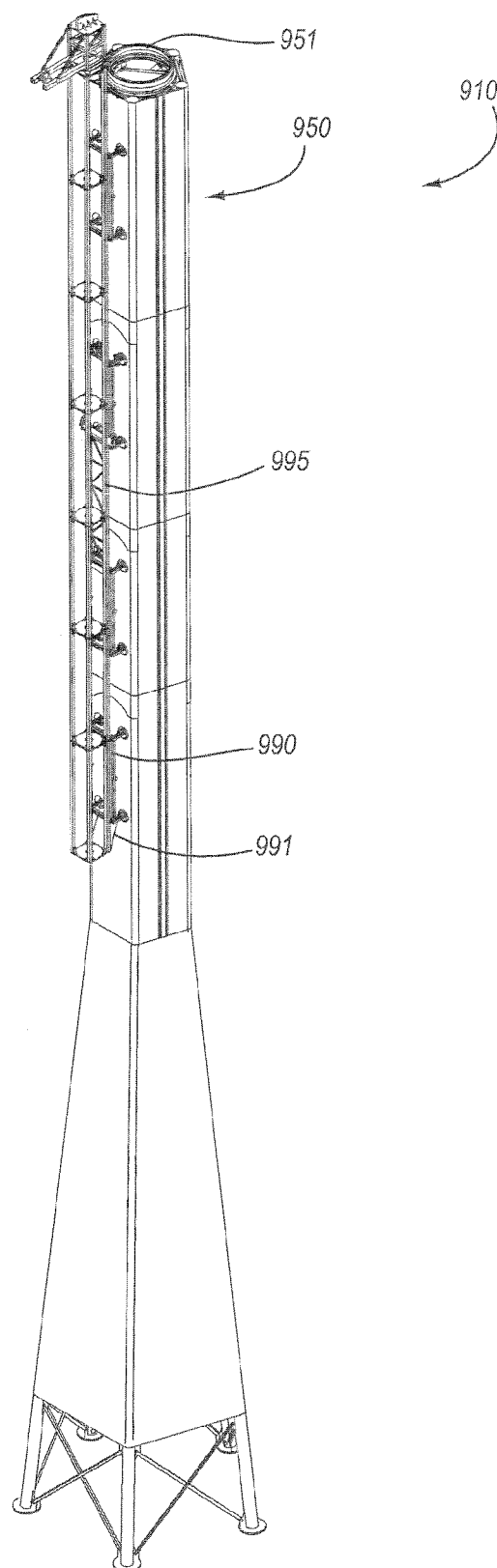


FIG. 53

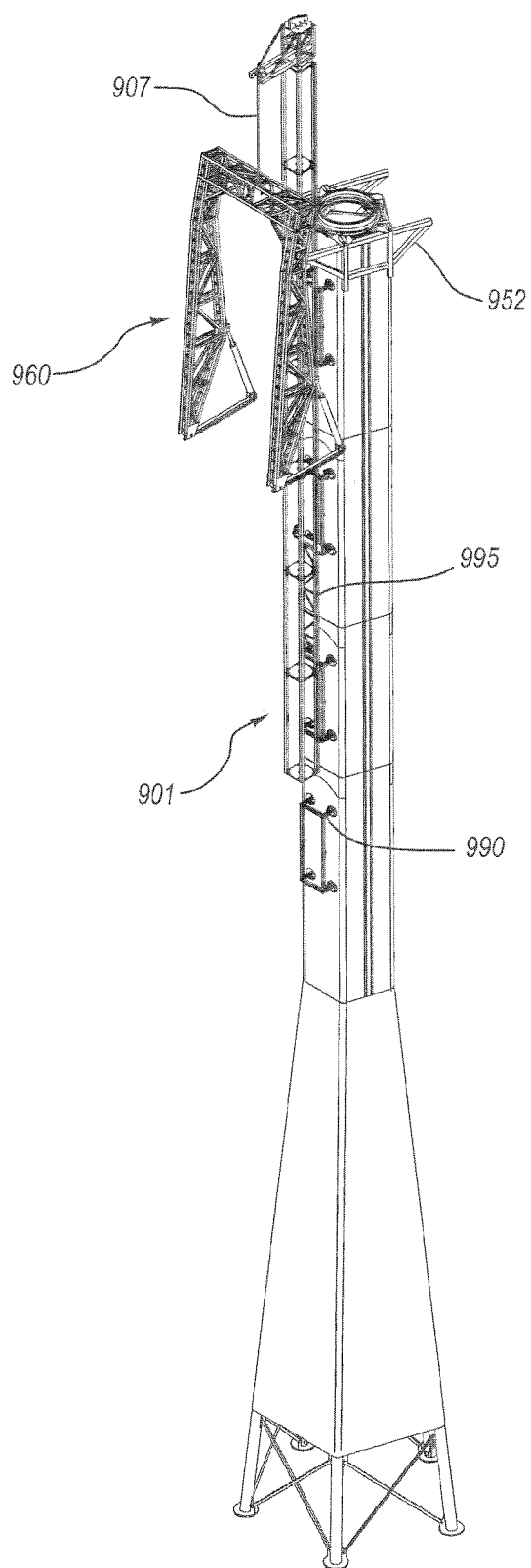


FIG. 54

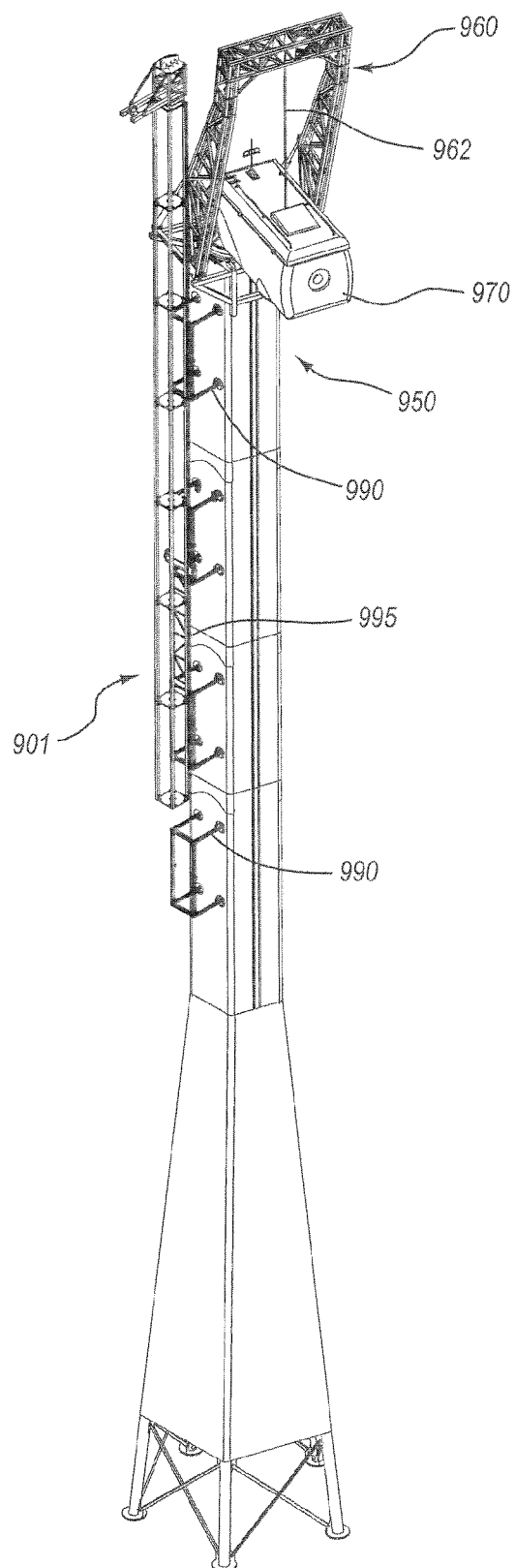


FIG. 55

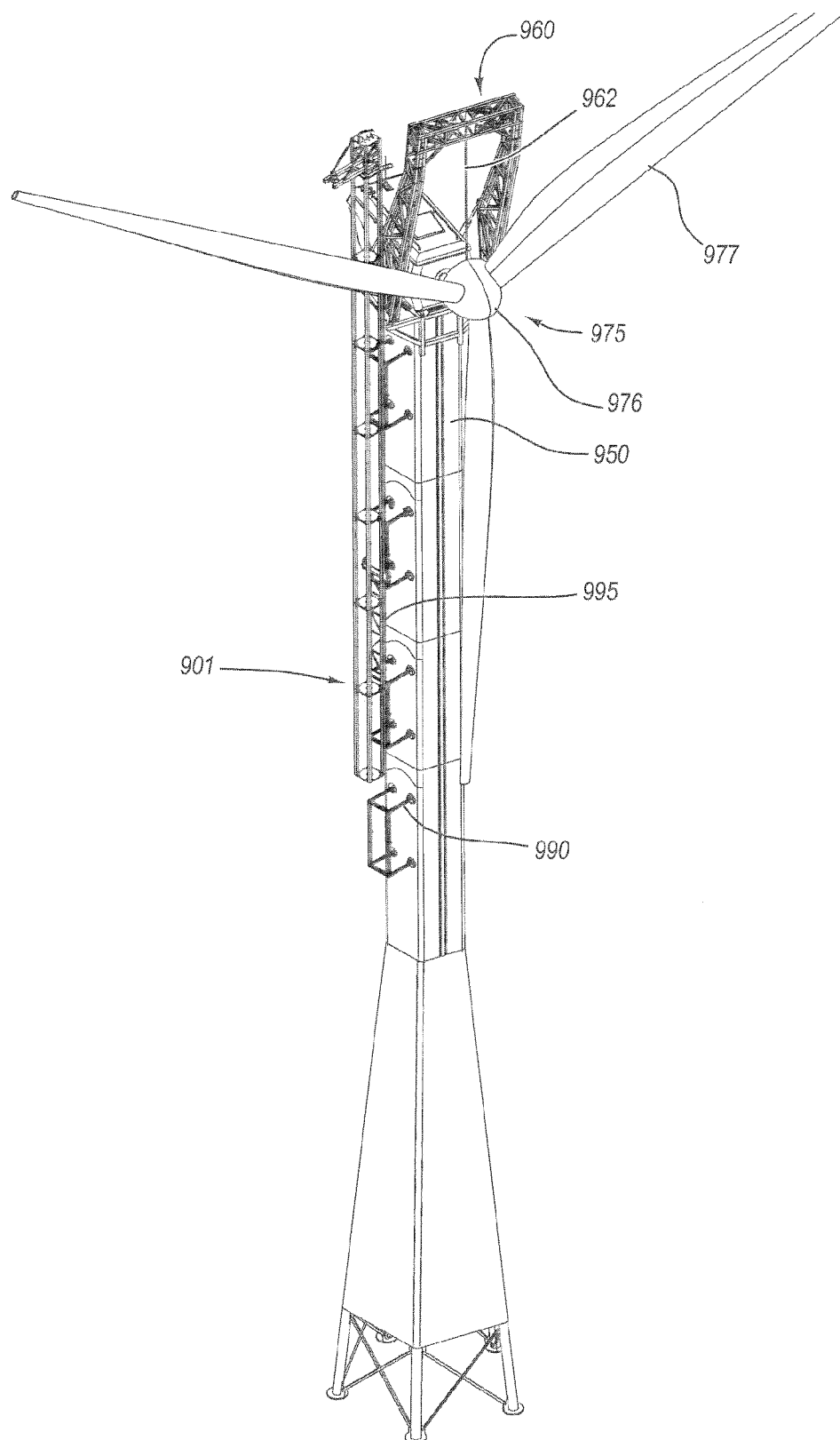


FIG. 56

LIFTING SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR CONSTRUCTING AND ENCLOSING WIND TURBINE TOWERS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a divisional application of prior pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/906,771, filed Oct. 2, 2007, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/848,725, filed Oct. 2, 2006, entitled “LIFTING SYSTEM FOR WIND TURBINE AND STRUCTURAL TOWER,” and also claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/848,726, filed Oct. 2, 2006, entitled “CLADDING SYSTEM FOR A WIND TURBINE STRUCTURAL TOWER,” and also claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/932,731, filed Jun. 1, 2007, entitled “LIFTING SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR CONSTRUCTING AND ENCLOSING WIND TURBINE TOWERS.”

[0002] All of the above-referenced applications are hereby incorporated by reference herein in their entireties, including but not limited to those portions that specifically appear hereinafter, the incorporation by reference being made with the following exception: In the event that any portion of the above-referenced applications are inconsistent with this application, this application supercedes said above-referenced applications.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0003] Not Applicable.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0004] The present invention relates to wind turbines and structural towers and, more particularly, to equipment and methods used in assembling and enclosing high elevation structural towers for wind turbines and for mounting wind turbines and blades upon high elevation structural towers.

BACKGROUND

[0005] Wind turbines are an increasingly popular source of energy in the United States and Europe and in many other countries around the globe. In order to realize scale efficiencies in capturing energy from the wind, developers are erecting wind turbine farms having increasing numbers of wind turbines with larger turbines positioned at greater heights. In large wind turbine farm projects, for example, developers typically utilize twenty-five or more wind turbines having turbines capable of producing on the order of 1.2 Megawatts (MW) of power positioned at a height of fifty meters or higher above the ground. Providing wind turbines of these specifications typically provide scale efficiencies that reduce the cost of energy while making the project profitable to the developer. Placing larger turbines at greater heights enables each turbine to operate substantially free of boundary layer effects created through wind shear and interaction with near-ground irregularities in surface contours, e.g., rocks and trees. Greater turbine heights also lead to more steady operating conditions at higher sustained wind velocities, thereby producing, on average, more energy per unit time. Accordingly, there are economic and engineering incentives to positioning larger turbines at greater heights.

[0006] Positioning larger turbines at greater heights comes, however, with an added cost. The cost is associated with the larger and more massive towers that are required to withstand the additional weight of the larger turbines and withstand the wind loads generated by placing structures at the greater heights where wind velocities are also greater and more sustained.

[0007] An additional cost concerns the equipment that is required to erect the wind turbine. For example, the weight of conventional tube towers for wind turbines, e.g., towers having sectioned tube-like configurations constructed using steel or concrete—increases in proportion to the tower height raised to the 5/3 power. Thus, a 1.5 MW tower typically weighing 176,000 lbs at a standard 65 meter height will weigh approximately 275,000 lbs at an 85 meter height, an increase of about 56 percent. Towers in excess of 250,000 lbs, or higher than 100 meters, however, generally require specialized and expensive cranes to assemble the tower sections and to mount the turbine and blades on the assembled tower. Just the cost to transport and assemble one of these cranes needed to assemble a large tower and turbine can exceed \$250,000 for a typical 1.5 MW turbine. In order to amortize the expense associated with such large cranes, wind turbine farm developers desire to pack as many wind turbines as possible onto the geographic area allocated to the towers and turbines, generally referred to as the “project footprint,” thereby spreading the crane costs over many wind turbine installations. However, with sites having limited footprints, developers are forced to amortize transport and assembly costs of the crane across fewer turbines, which may be economically unfeasible. Further, projects installed on rough ground require cranes to be repeatedly assembled and disassembled, which may also be economically unfeasible. Projects located on mountain top ridges or other logistically difficult sites may, likewise, be all but eliminated due to unfeasible economics, in addition to engineering difficulties associated with locating a crane at such sites.

[0008] In view of the forgoing, it will be appreciated that it would be an advantage over the previously available systems to be able to assemble high-elevation structural towers and to mount heavy wind turbines on the top of such towers without relying on relatively large and prohibitively expensive crane equipment. It would be another advantage over the previously available systems to provide an apparatus and method for assembling high elevation structural towers and mounting wind turbines on top of such assembled towers without the need for large and prohibitively expensive crane equipment. The illustrative embodiments described herein overcome these disadvantages as will become more apparent with an understanding of the below provided description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of an illustrative multiple-bay structural tower having a wind turbine assembly mounted thereon;

[0010] FIG. 2 illustrates a crane hoisting for assembly on top of the structural tower an illustrative embodiment of a lifting apparatus of the present invention;

[0011] FIG. 3 illustrates an illustrative embodiment of a lifting apparatus of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 4 illustrates a frontal view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3;

[0013] FIG. 5 illustrates a side view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3;

[0014] FIG. 6 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 arranged for hoisting a turbine to the top of a tower;

[0015] FIG. 7 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 after hoisting a turbine to the top of a tower;

[0016] FIG. 8 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 pivoting to bring the turbine into position for attachment to the structural tower;

[0017] FIG. 9 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 after lowering the turbine in position for attachment to the structural tower;

[0018] FIG. 10 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 arranged for hoisting a blade assembly to the top of a tower;

[0019] FIG. 11 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 after hoisting a blade assembly to the top of a tower;

[0020] FIG. 12 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 3 pivoting to bring the blade assembly into position for attachment to the driven shaft of the turbine;

[0021] FIG. 13 illustrates a further embodiment of the lifting apparatus of the present invention

[0022] FIG. 14 illustrates a close-up view of a bearing assembly used to mount a lifting frame to a support frame member;

[0023] FIG. 15 illustrates an embodiment of the lifting frame of the present invention and the frame used to secure the lifting frame to a space frame tower;

[0024] FIG. 16 illustrates a turbine mounting structure secured to longitudinal members of a space frame tower;

[0025] FIG. 17 illustrates a further embodiment of the lifting frame of the present invention;

[0026] FIG. 18 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 17 after hoisting a turbine to the top of a tower;

[0027] FIG. 19 illustrates a close-up side view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 17 after hoisting a turbine to the top of a tower;

[0028] FIG. 20 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 17 pivoting to bring the turbine into position for attachment to the structural tower;

[0029] FIG. 21 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 17 hoisting a blade assembly to the top of a tower;

[0030] FIG. 22 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 17 pivoting to bring the blade assembly into position for attachment to the structural tower;

[0031] FIG. 23 illustrates a further illustrative embodiment of the lifting frame of the present invention;

[0032] FIG. 24 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 23 after hoisting a turbine to the top of a tower;

[0033] FIG. 25 illustrates a close-up side view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 23 after hoisting a turbine to the top of a tower;

[0034] FIG. 26 illustrates the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 17 pivoting to bring the blade assembly into position for attachment to the structural tower;

[0035] FIG. 27 illustrates a plurality of bay assemblies or sections of a partially constructed structural tower;

[0036] FIG. 28 illustrates the plurality of bay assemblies shown in FIG. 27 with a ginpole assembly attached to the bay assemblies and a cable attached to a free bay assembly readied for hoisting into position;

[0037] FIG. 29 illustrates the free bay assembly depicted in FIG. 28 being hoisted by the ginpole;

[0038] FIG. 30 illustrates the free bay assembly depicted in FIG. 28 being lowered upon an adjacent bay assembly;

[0039] FIG. 31 illustrates the free bay assembly secured to an adjacent bay assembly and the ginpole cable released from the free bay assembly;

[0040] FIG. 32 illustrates the ginpole being used to hoist a lifting frame;

[0041] FIG. 33 illustrates the lifting frame being lowered onto an uppermost bay assembly;

[0042] FIG. 34 illustrates the lifting frame being used to position a wind turbine on the uppermost bay assembly;

[0043] FIG. 35 illustrates the lifting frame being used to position a blade assembly unto the wind turbine;

[0044] FIG. 36 illustrates the lifting frame being lowered to the ground using the ginpole;

[0045] FIG. 37 illustrates the ginpole being lowered along side the assembled structural tower;

[0046] FIG. 38 illustrates an alternative illustrative embodiment of a ginpole being used to hoist a free bay assembly into position;

[0047] FIG. 39 illustrates the free bay assembly depicted in FIG. 38 being lowered upon an adjacent bay assembly;

[0048] FIG. 40 illustrates a further free bay assembly being hoisted into position by the ginpole depicted in FIG. 38;

[0049] FIG. 41 illustrates an uppermost bay assembly secured to the structural tower after being positioned by the ginpole depicted in FIG. 38;

[0050] FIG. 42 illustrates a lifting frame being hoisted into position using the ginpole depicted in FIG. 38;

[0051] FIG. 43 illustrates the lifting frame depicted in FIG. 42 being used to position a wind turbine unto the structural tower;

[0052] FIG. 44 illustrates the lifting frame depicted in FIG. 42 being used to position a blade assembly unto the wind turbine;

[0053] FIG. 45 illustrates a plan view of an illustrative cladding sheet sized to enclose one or more bay assemblies of a structural tower;

[0054] FIG. 46 illustrates a perspective view of the cladding sheet depicted in FIG. 45 configured for assembly about one or more bay assemblies of a structural tower;

[0055] FIG. 47 illustrates a pipe or rod enclosed by a tab section having perforations of the cladding sheet depicted in FIG. 45;

[0056] FIG. 48 illustrates an exemplar turnbuckle positioned to secure the side edges of the cladding sheet depicted in FIG. 45;

[0057] FIG. 49 illustrates an alternative illustrative embodiment of a cladding system sized to enclose one or more bay assemblies of a structural tower;

[0058] FIG. 50 illustrates an alternative illustrative embodiment of a ginpole being used to hoist a free bay assembly including cladding into position;

[0059] FIG. 51 illustrates the free bay assembly including cladding depicted in FIG. 50 being lowered upon an adjacent bay assembly;

[0060] FIG. 52 illustrates a further free bay assembly including cladding being hoisted into position by the ginpole depicted in FIG. 50;

[0061] FIG. 53 illustrates an uppermost bay assembly including cladding secured to the structural tower after being positioned by the ginpole depicted in FIG. 50;

[0062] FIG. 54 illustrates an exemplary lifting frame being hoisted into position using the ginpole depicted in FIG. 50;

[0063] FIG. 55 illustrates the lifting frame depicted in FIG. 54 being used to position a wind turbine unto the structural tower;

[0064] FIG. 56 illustrates the lifting frame depicted in FIG. 54 being used to position a blade assembly unto the wind turbine;

[0065] FIG. 57 illustrates an exemplary jump track assembly for use with an exemplary ginpole of the present invention showing the ginpole in a lower position; and

[0066] FIG. 58 illustrates a jump track assembly for use with a ginpole of the present invention showing the ginpole in a raised position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0067] For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles in accordance with the disclosure, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the disclosure is thereby intended. Any alterations and further modifications of the inventive features illustrated herein, and any additional applications of the principles of the disclosure as illustrated herein, which would normally occur to one skilled in the relevant art and having possession of this disclosure, are to be considered within the scope of the disclosure claimed.

[0068] It must be noted that, as used in this specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a,” “an,” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. As used herein, the terms “comprising,” “including,” “containing,” “characterized by,” and grammatical equivalents thereof are inclusive or open-ended terms that do not exclude additional, unrecited elements or method steps.

[0069] The present disclosure generally relates to apparatus and methods used to assemble or construct high elevation structural towers supporting heavy loads, as in structural towers supporting wind turbines. In further detail, the present disclosure generally relates to an apparatus and method for lifting and positioning a wind turbine and associated blades on the top of a previously constructed and assembled structural tower. In yet further detail, the present disclosure generally relates to a system and method for assembling and constructing a high elevation structural tower and for lifting and positioning a wind turbine and associated blades on the top of the previously constructed and assembled structural tower. The present disclosure also relates in particular to wind turbine applications, where the wind turbine is elevated to heights approaching in the range from about 80 to about 100 meters or higher and where rotor diameters approach 70 meters or greater.

[0070] In accordance with the present disclosure, an apparatus and method for lifting a wind turbine assembly to the top of a high-elevation structural tower is disclosed. One embodiment of the apparatus comprises a pivot shaft positioned and connected proximate an upper end of a structural tower. A first

lifting truss is pivotally connected to the shaft, the first lifting truss having a first distal end extending away from the shaft and a second distal end extending in a direction away from the first distal end. A second lifting truss is pivotally connected to the shaft, the second lifting truss having a first distal end extending away from the shaft and a second distal end extending in a direction away from the first distal end. A first transverse beam connects the first distal ends of the first and second lifting trusses, and a rigging assembly is connected to the transverse beam and configured for hoisting a turbine to the upper end of the tower. A pivot control cable connected to the first lifting truss proximate the second distal end for controlling pivot movement of the first and second lifting trusses about the pivot shaft. All of the foregoing provides that wind towers can be constructed more efficiently than previously possible.

[0071] In further illustrative embodiments, the first lifting truss is triangular in shape and includes first and second members pivotally connected to the pivot shaft. The first member is positioned at an angle with respect to the second member with a portion of the pivot shaft being proximate the vertex of the angle, and with the angle being in the range from about 95 degrees to about 180 degrees. In yet a further illustrative embodiment, the first lifting truss includes third and fourth members pivotally connected to the pivot shaft.

[0072] In still further illustrative embodiments, the rigging assembly may comprise a block and tackle assembly; the first lifting truss may be pivotally connected to the pivot shaft using a bearing; and a second transverse beam may be disposed between and connected to the second distal ends with the pivot control cable being connected to the second transverse shaft.

[0073] In yet another illustrative embodiment, an apparatus for lifting a wind turbine assembly to the top of a high-elevation structural tower comprises a support frame connected to the tower and a first lifting truss pivotally connected to the support frame, with the first lifting truss having a distal end extending away from the support frame. A rigging assembly is connected proximate the distal end and configured for hoisting a turbine to the upper end of the tower, while an hydraulic ram having a first end connected to the support frame and a second end connected to the first lifting truss controls pivoting movement of the lifting truss. A second lifting truss may also be pivotally connected to the support frame, with the second lifting truss having a distal end extending away from the support frame. A transverse beam may extend between the distal ends of the first and second lifting trusses and have the rigging assembly connected to the beam. A second hydraulic ram may have a first end connected to the support frame and a second end connected to the second lifting truss. The lifting trusses may be triangular in shape, may be a straight single piece member, or take on a variety of other shapes, including square, semicircular or circular.

[0074] Also disclosed is a method for erecting a high-elevation multiple-bay structural tower and associated wind turbine equipment on a foundation, the method comprising the steps of securing a base bay assembly to the foundation; positioning an intermediate bay assembly on top of the base bay assembly using a crane or ginpole; positioning a top bay assembly on top of the first intermediate bay assembly using a crane or ginpole; positioning one of the apparatus disclosed herein for lifting a wind turbine proximate the top bay assembly using a crane or ginpole; and hoisting and positioning a

wind turbine and blades on top of the top bay assembly using one of the apparatus disclosed herein for lifting a wind turbine.

[0075] In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, a tower structure holding a wind turbine is disclosed which has an outer covering to protect the internal area of the tower from wind, snow, rain and allows for air venting of the internal area of the tower. The disclosed covering also provides additional security for equipment located near the base of the tower and also provides additional security for controlling access to the internal structures used by humans and equipment to ascend and descend the tower.

[0076] The disclosed covering can include a personnel access door as well as one or more access ports into the area inside the tower base perimeter. Such access doors and access ports can preferably accommodate construction equipment, such as a small forklift or maintenance vehicle

[0077] In accordance with another aspect of the present disclosure, the wind tower structure can include four or more vertical structural members interconnected with diagonal and horizontal structural members such that there is visible space along the perimeter or circumference of the tower structure. The visible spaces on said tower structure are concealed by in a method that does not provide significant structural support to the vertical, diagonal, or horizontal structural members of the tower. The covering can be fabricated from any number of canceling materials such as architectural fabrics, for example, PVC and fiberglass, sheet metal, organic fibers and similarly functioning materials. In the described embodiments, the material can be continuous around the perimeter of the tower structure or it can be segmented and can be applied or attached to the outside of the structural tower members thus the concealing material both hides the visible spaces and also hides the structural members of the tower from someone standing outside of the tower.

[0078] In the described embodiments, the concealing material can be applied or attached to the structural tower members so that the structural tower members are visible to a person standing outside of the tower but the visible spaces have been filled so that there are no visible spaces remaining. In some of the described embodiments, there are windows or orifices in the concealing material for allowing equipment or other items to pass through the plane of, or the surface of, the concealing material which have a covering so that when the equipment is not passing through the window or orifice in the concealing material, the orifice does not create a visible space in the tower face.

[0079] One wind tower structure in accordance with the present disclosure is assembled in multiple sections and is covered wherein the covering for the structure can be applied to the sections of the wind tower structure before the sections are vertically connected to each other and the covering is an architectural fabric, preferably coated on the outer surface with TEDLAR® or with PVC or another material to prolong the life of the fabric on the tower. Moreover, the vertical structural members of the tower can have a friction reducing material applied to them in the long predominantly vertical areas that the tower structure covering would contact or touch the vertical structural members to prolong the life of the covering material.

[0080] Features from any of the illustrative embodiments mentioned herein may be used in combination with one another in accordance with the present disclosure. In addition, other features and advantages will become apparent to

those of ordinary skill in the art through consideration of the ensuing description, the accompanying drawings, and the appended claims.

[0081] Details of such exemplary embodiments of the invention are set forth herein.

[0082] FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of an exemplary structural tower and wind turbine combination that is constructed and assembled using the principles of the present disclosure. Generally speaking, the structural tower **10** comprises a plurality of space frame sections also commonly called bay assemblies or bay sections **12**, **13**, **14** that are assembled, one on top of the other, to the desired height of the structural tower **10**. The lowermost bay assembly **13** of the structural tower **10** is secured to a foundation **11**. A series of intermediate **12** and upper **14** bay sections are assembled one on top of another to the desired height. The top bay section **17** may comprise a conventional tube-like bay section (as illustrated) or a space frame section (e.g., an upper bay section **14**) and connects a wind turbine **15** to the top of the tower **10** using connections readily known to those skilled in the art. The wind turbine **15** carries a plurality of blades **16** mounted on a rotor **18** to form a blade assembly **19** that rotates in typical fashion in response to wind. Rotation of the blades **16** drives a generator (not explicitly illustrated) that is integral to the wind turbine **14** and typically used to generate electricity. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the rotating plurality of blades **16** can be used for purposes other than generating electricity, such as, for example, driving a pump for pumping water or driving a mill for grinding grain.

[0083] Further details of the components making up such structural towers for wind turbine applications are presented in commonly-owned and pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/433,147, filed Jun. 1, 2007, entitled "STRUCTURAL TOWER," commonly-owned and pending U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/899,492, filed Feb. 5, 2007, entitled "WIND TURBINE SYSTEMS WITH DAMPING MEMBERS," commonly-owned and pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/649,033, filed Jan. 3, 2007, entitled "LIFTING SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR CONSTRUCTING WIND TURBINE TOWERS," commonly-owned and pending U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/848,857, filed Oct. 2, 2006, entitled "DRIVE PIN SYSTEM FOR A WIND TURBINE STRUCTURAL TOWER," commonly-owned and pending U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/899,470, filed Feb. 5, 2007, entitled "WIND TURBINE SYSTEMS WITH WIND TURBINE TOWER DAMPING MEMBERS," commonly-owned and pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/906,758, filed Oct. 2, 2007, entitled "DRIVE PIN SYSTEM FOR A WIND TURBINE STRUCTURAL TOWER," commonly-owned and pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/906,766, filed Oct. 2, 2007, entitled "EXPANSION PIN SYSTEM FOR A WIND TURBINE STRUCTURAL TOWER," all of the disclosures of which are now incorporated herein in their entireties by this reference. The publications and other reference materials referred to herein to describe the background of the disclosure, and to provide additional detail regarding its practice, are hereby incorporated by reference herein in their entireties, with the following exception: In the event that any portion of said reference materials is inconsistent with this application, this application supercedes said reference materials. The reference materials discussed herein are provided solely for their disclosure prior to the filing date of the present application. Nothing herein is to be construed as a suggestion

or admission that the inventors are not entitled to antedate such disclosure by virtue of prior disclosure, or to distinguish the present disclosure from the subject matter disclosed in the reference materials.

[0084] FIG. 2 illustrates one embodiment of a lifting apparatus 20 of the present invention being hoisted by a crane for positioning upon the top bay section 17 of the structural tower 10. Referring more specifically to FIG. 3, the lifting apparatus is illustrated pivotally secured to the top bay section 17. The lifting apparatus 20 includes first 22 and second 23 lifting trusses that are mounted on a pivot shaft 21. The first 22 and second 23 lifting trusses are spaced on the pivot shaft 21 a distance 89 (FIG. 4) sufficient to permit the turbine 15 to pass between the lifting trusses when the lifting apparatus pivots about the shaft during the hoisting and positioning operations described below. The first lifting truss 22 includes first 24 and second 25 members having proximal ends 26 that are pivotally secured to the pivot shaft 21 and distal ends 27 that extend away from the pivot shaft 21; the distal end 27 of the first member 24 extending generally toward a fore direction (the hoisting side of the frame 20) and the distal end 27 of the second member 25 extending generally toward an aft direction of the frame 20. A third member 28 is secured to the distal ends 27 of the first 24 and second 25 members. Referring now to both FIGS. 3 and 5, the first 24 and second 25 members, together with the third member 28, are oriented generally in and comprise a first triangular structure 30. An array of internal truss elements 29 are disposed within and connected to the first 24 and second 25 members and the third member 28 that comprise the first triangular structure 30.

[0085] If desired, the first lifting truss 22 may also include third 34 and fourth 35 members having proximal ends 36 that are pivotally secured to the pivot shaft and distal ends 37 extending away from the pivot shaft 21 in manner and direction similar to their counterparts comprising the first triangular structure 30. A sixth member 38 is secured to the distal ends 37 of the third 34 and fourth 35 members. The third 34 and fourth 35 members, together with the sixth member 38, are oriented generally in and comprise a second triangular structure 40. An array of internal truss elements 39 are disposed within and connected to the third 34 and fourth 35 members and the sixth member 38 that comprise the second triangular structure 40. An array of secondary internal truss elements 33 are disposed between and connect the first 30 and second 40 triangular structures to comprise the first lifting truss 22.

[0086] The second lifting truss 23 is constructed in similar fashion to the first lifting truss 22. While construction details of the second lifting truss 23 are not explicitly repeated herein, those having skill in the art will appreciate that the first 22 and second 23 lifting trusses may, or need not, be assembled in precisely the same way or share the same geometry.

[0087] Furthermore, those skilled in the art will appreciate that each lifting truss 22 & 23 need not comprise both first and second triangular structures as described above, but could comprise a single triangular structure or two or more triangular structures, depending on the materials selected to construct the lifting apparatus 20 and the expected loads for the particular application. Finally, those skilled in the art will recognize that the lifting trusses need not assume triangular shapes as illustrated, but could be, for example, square, rectangular circular or semi-circular. With these qualifications in

mind, this description will proceed generally with the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 3-5.

[0088] Fore 50 and aft 52 transverse beams are positioned fore and aft of the first 22 and second 23 lifting trusses and connected thereto. The fore transverse beam 50 has a first end 51 positioned proximate the intersection of the first member 24 and the third member arm 28 of the first lifting truss 22 (and, if used, the intersection of the third 34 member and the sixth member 38). In similar fashion, the aft transverse beam 52 has a first end 53 positioned proximate the intersection of the second member 25 and the third member 28 of the first lifting truss 22 (and, if used, the intersection of the fourth 35 member and the sixth member 38). The fore 50 and aft 52 transverse beams have second ends 54, 55 that are positioned and connected to corresponding locations of the second lifting truss 23 in a manner similar to the positioning and connections of the first ends 51, 53 to the first lifting truss 22.

[0089] A rigging assembly 60 is secured to the fore transverse beam 50. The rigging assembly 60 comprises a block and tackle assembly 61 that is capable of affecting a mechanical advantage when lifting the turbine 15 and blades 16 (see FIGS. 6-9 and 10-12). More specifically, a first pulley assembly 62 is secured to a tab member 63 which is itself welded or otherwise securely attached to the fore transverse beam 50. A second pulley assembly 64 is positioned to hang downward from the first pulley assembly 62 when a cable 65 is threaded through the first 62 and second 64 pulley assemblies to form the block and tackle assembly 61. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, each of the first 62 and second 64 pulley assemblies may comprise any number of pulleys to affect the desired mechanical advantage (although, for clarity of description, only one pulley for each assembly is illustrated).

[0090] In the illustrated embodiment, the free end of the cable 65 is threaded through third 66, fourth 67 and fifth 68 pulleys. The third 66 and fourth 67 pulleys are positioned and connected to or adjacent the fore transverse beam 50, while the fifth pulley 68 is positioned and connected to the second truss assembly 23 adjacent the pivot shaft 21. Positioning of the fifth pulley 68 adjacent the pivot shaft as indicated permits the lifting apparatus 20 to pivot about the pivot shaft 21 without having to adjust the play on the cable 65 to compensate in response. A pivot control cable 70 is attached to the aft transverse beam 52. The pivot control cable 70 provides a means to hold the lifting apparatus 20 in a steady position while the turbine 15 or blades 16 (see FIGS. 10-12) are being hoisted by the rigging assembly 60 or to pivot the lifting apparatus 20 about the pivot shaft 21 to position the turbine 15 or blades 16 into place as described herein below.

[0091] Referring now more specifically to FIGS. 6-9, the rigging assembly 60 and corresponding cable 65 and the pivot control cable 70 are illustrated hoisting the turbine 15 into place on the top bay assembly 17. The pivot control cable 70 is removed of excess play and adjusted so the lifting apparatus 20 is set into proper orientation with respect to the tower 10. Proper orientation requires the fore transverse beam 50 (see FIG. 5) to extend radially outward from the tower 10 a distance sufficient to prevent the turbine 15 or blades 16 from contacting the tower 10 during the hoisting process. The pivot control cable 70 has a second end 71 that may extend through one or more wheels 72 that are rotatably secured to the foundation 11 or to an auxiliary foundation (not explicitly illustrated). The second end 71 ultimately extends to a winch 73 which reels in or out the pivot control cable 70, thereby pivoting the lifting apparatus 20 about the pivot shaft 21.

[0092] It will be appreciated that the structures and apparatus disclosed herein are merely one example of a means for securing a base bay assembly to the foundation, and it should be appreciated that any structure, apparatus or system for securing a structure to a foundation which performs functions the same as, or equivalent to, those disclosed herein are intended to fall within the scope of this recited element, including those structures, apparatus or systems which are presently known, or which may become available in the future. Anything which functions the same as, or equivalently to, means for securing a base bay assembly to the foundation, falls within the scope of this element.

[0093] Once the lifting apparatus 20 is positioned in proper orientation, the turbine 17 is placed into position proximate the base of the tower 10 using a crane or other suitable means. The rigging assembly 60 is then brought into position adjacent the turbine 15 and the second pulley assembly 64 is secured to the turbine 15. In a manner similar to the pivot control cable 70, the cable 65 corresponding to the rigging assembly 60 has a second end 75 that may extend through one or more wheels 76 that are rotatably secured to the foundation 11 or to an auxiliary foundation (not explicitly illustrated). The second end 75 ultimately extends to a winch (not explicitly illustrated) that reels in or out the cable 65, thereby operating the block and tackle assembly 61 and hoisting or lowering the second pulley assembly 64 with respect to the ground or the foundation 11.

[0094] Referring now more specifically to FIGS. 8 and 9, the turbine 15 is illustrated being positioned upon the top bay assembly 17 through operation of the lifting apparatus 20. Referring to FIG. 8, the turbine is illustrated adjacent the fore side of the top bay assembly 17, following orientation of the lifting apparatus 20 and hoisting of the turbine 15 through operation of the pivot control cable 70 and rigging assembly 60 as previously described. As illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9, following hoisting of the turbine 15, the pivot control cable 70 is reeled in through operation of the corresponding winch, thereby pivoting the lifting apparatus 20 from a first position 80 through an intermediate position 81 and then to a final position 82. At the final position 82, a mounting structure 85 at the base of the turbine 15 sits directly above the top bay assembly 17. The rigging assembly cable 65 is then reeled out through operation of its corresponding winch, thereby lowering the turbine 15 into position upon the top bay assembly 17. The turbine 15 is then secured to the top bay assembly 17 through the mounting structure 85 positioned at the base of the turbine 15 and corresponding mounting structure (not illustrated) positioned at the upper end of the top bay assembly 17. Once the turbine 17 is secured to the top bay assembly 17, the rigging assembly cable 65 is slackened and the second pulley 64 of the rigging assembly 60 removed from the turbine 15.

[0095] Referring now more specifically to FIGS. 10-12, the rigging assembly 60 and corresponding cable 65 and the pivot control cable 70 are illustrated hoisting the blades 16 into place on the turbine 15. The steps are similar to those just described with respect to hoisting and positioning the turbine 15. The pivot control cable 70 is removed of excess play and adjusted so the lifting apparatus 20 is set into proper orientation with respect to the tower 10. Once the lifting apparatus 20 is positioned in proper orientation, the blades 16 are assembled onto the blade rotor 18 and the resulting blade assembly 19 is placed into position proximate the base of the tower 10 using a crane or other suitable means. The rigging

assembly 60 is then brought into position adjacent the turbine 15 and the second pulley assembly 64 is secured to the blade assembly 19. The blade assembly 19 is then hoisted to the top of the tower 10 in a fashion similar to that above described respecting hoisting of the turbine 15.

[0096] Referring now to FIG. 12, the blade assembly 19 is illustrated being secured to the turbine 15 through operation of the lifting apparatus 20. Specifically, the blade assembly 19 is illustrated adjacent the fore end of the turbine 15, following orientation of the lifting apparatus 20 and hoisting of the blade assembly 19 through operation of the pivot control cable 70 and rigging assembly 60 as previously described. Following hoisting of the blade assembly 19, the pivot control cable 70 is reeled in through operation of the corresponding winch, thereby pivoting the lifting apparatus 20 from a first position 90 through an intermediate position and then to a final position 92. At the final position 92, the rotor 18 of the blade assembly 19 is secured to a driven shaft (not explicitly illustrated) protruding from the turbine 15. Once the blade assembly 19 is secured to the driven shaft on the turbine 15, the rigging assembly cable 65 is slackened and the second pulley 64 of the rigging assembly 60 removed from the blade assembly 19.

[0097] Following complete installation of the turbine 15 and blade assembly 19 and removal of the rigging apparatus 60, the lifting apparatus is removed using the same crane employed to construct the tower and hoist and install the lifting apparatus on the top bay assembly 17. Although a crane is suggested as one means for raising and lowering the lifting apparatus 20, those skilled in the art should appreciate that other means for accomplishing the raising and lowering the lifting apparatus 20 may be employed to that end. For example, a ginpole such as one commonly used in the telecommunications industry to erect communication towers could be used to not only erect the tower, but to raise and lower the lifting apparatus 20. Another suitable means is a helicopter equipped to lift appropriate loads. Such helicopters are used, for example, in the installation of heavy towers used in ski resorts where mountainous terrain makes access difficult and installation cumbersome and expensive using other means.

[0098] While the foregoing description provides details relating to lifting apparatuses mounted to structural towers using a pivot shaft or similar structure, the following description provides details relating to other illustrative embodiments of lifting apparatuses and means for attaching the lifting apparatuses to both tube-like and space-frame structural towers.

[0099] Referring now to FIG. 13, for example, a partially exploded view of a lifting apparatus secured to a pair of radially extending beams is provided. More specifically, a lifting apparatus 120 comprises a first 122 and second 123 lifting trusses. The first lifting truss 122 includes first 124 and second 125 members having proximal ends 126 that are secured to a bearing assembly 121 and distal ends 127 that extend away from the bearing assembly 150; the distal end 127 of the first member 124 extending generally toward a fore direction (the hoisting side of the apparatus 120) and the distal end 127 of the second member 125 extending generally toward an aft direction of the apparatus 120. A third member 128 is secured to the distal ends 127 of the first 124 and second 125 members. The first 124 and second 125 members, together with the third member 128, are oriented generally in and comprise a first triangular structure 130. An internal truss

element 129 is disposed within and connects the proximal ends 126 of the first 124 and second 125 members and an intermediate portion of the third member 128 that comprise the first triangular structure 130.

[0100] The second lifting truss 123 is constructed in similar fashion to the first lifting truss 122. While construction details of the second lifting truss 123 are not repeated here, those having skill in the art will appreciate that the first 122 and second 123 lifting trusses may, or need not, be assembled in precisely the same way or share the exact same geometry. Further, those skilled in the art will appreciate that each lifting truss 122 & 123 need not comprise single triangular structures as described above, but could comprise a single triangular structure or two or more triangular structures, depending on the materials selected to construct the lifting frame 120 and the expected loads for the particular application. Finally, those skilled in the art will recognize that the lifting trusses need not assume triangular shapes as illustrated, but could be, for example, square, rectangular circular or semi-circular.

[0101] Fore 150 and aft 152 transverse beams (or a multi-beam structure as illustrated) are positioned fore and aft of the first 122 and second 123 lifting trusses and connected thereto. The fore transverse beam 150 has a first end 151 positioned proximate the intersection of the first member 124 and the third member 128 of the first lifting truss 122. In similar fashion, the aft transverse beam 152 has a first end 153 positioned proximate the intersection of the second member 125 and the third member 128 of the first lifting truss 122.

[0102] The fore 150 and aft 152 transverse beams have second ends 154, 155 that are positioned and connected to corresponding locations of the second lifting truss 123 in a manner similar to the positioning and connections of the first ends 151, 153 to the first lifting truss 122. The fore transverse beam 150 comprises a plurality of transverse beam elements 156 that are, in one illustrative embodiment, arranged in triangular cross sectional layout as shown. The transverse beam elements 156 are interconnected by a plurality of internal truss elements 157 to provide support for the transverse beam elements 156.

[0103] A rigging assembly 160 is secured to the fore transverse beam 150 and, similar to the above description, comprises a block and tackle assembly 161 that is capable of affecting a mechanical advantage when lifting the turbine 15 and blades 16. A pivot control cable 170 is attached to the aft transverse beam 152 and provides a structure to hold the lifting apparatus 120 in a steady position while the turbine 15 or blades 16 are being hoisted by the rigging assembly 160 or to pivot the lifting apparatus 120 to position the turbine 15 or blades into place as described above.

[0104] Similar to the description above, the lifting apparatus 120 is secured to the top bay assembly 117 of a structural tower. Secured to the top bay assembly are first 170 and second 171 radially extending beams. The first radially extending beam 170 has a first end 172 secured to an axial side beam 173 that is itself secured to the top bay assembly 117. The first radially extending beam 170 has a second end 174 that extends substantially radially outward from the top bay assembly 117. An angle brace 175 is secured to and extends between the second end 174 and a lower end of the axial side beam 173. Secured to the top of the second end 174 of the first radially extending beam 170 is a bearing mounting bracket 176 for mounting of the bearing assembly 150.

[0105] While FIG. 13 illustrates the first 170 and second 171 radial beam members extending in true radial direction

from an assumed central axis of the top bay assembly, those skilled in the art should appreciate that the members need not extend outward in true radial fashion but, instead, may be angled fore or aft with respect to such centerline. Further, the members need not be secured to the top bay assembly 117 separated by 180 degrees as illustrated but, instead, may be offset either fore or aft.

As illustrated in FIG. 14, the bearing assembly 150 for the first radially extending member 170 is mounted to the mounting bracket 176. The proximal ends 126 of the first 124 and second 125 members and the internal truss element 129 meet at a common vertex and are themselves secured to a pair of tab members 177. A pin 178 extends through the tab members 177 and the bearing assembly 150. When bearing assemblies 150 are positioned on the ends of the first 170 and second 171 radially extending members and incorporated into the lifting apparatus 120 as described, the lifting apparatus is pivotable about the pins extending through the bearing assemblies 150 in response to movement of the pivot control cable 170.

[0106] Referring now to FIGS. 15 and 16, a further embodiment of a lifting apparatus of the present invention is illustrated, in this instance connected to and operational with the top bay assembly 217 of a space frame tower. As disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/433,147, a space frame tower for wind turbine applications comprises a plurality of upwardly extending longitudinal members 210 interconnected by diagonal 211 and horizontal 212 members or struts. Disclosed as part of the present invention is the use of a ring member 230 that is configured to accept and mate to a mounting structure positioned at the base of the turbine 15, and is further configured to connect to the uppermost ends of the upwardly extending longitudinal members 210 that comprise the top bay assembly 217. A support frame 240 is positioned beneath the ring member 230. The support frame 240 has a transverse dimension sufficient to extend through the top bay assembly 217 and support first 222 and second 223 lifting trusses of a lifting apparatus 220 constructed as previously described. The support frame 240 comprises fore 241 and aft 242 transverse support members.

[0107] Still referring to FIGS. 15 and 16, in one illustrative embodiment, the fore transverse support member 241 is secured to an opposing pair 243 of longitudinal members 210 and the aft transverse support member is secured to an adjacent opposing pair 245 of the longitudinal members 210. Supporting cross braces 246 are disposed at the ends of the fore 241 and aft 242 transverse support members. Bearing assemblies 250 are then disposed on the supporting cross braces 246 or the fore 241 and aft 242 transverse support members. When bearing assemblies 250 are positioned on the supporting cross braces 246 or the fore 241 and aft 242 transverse support members and incorporated into the lifting apparatus 220 as described previously, the lifting apparatus is pivotable about pins extending through the bearing assemblies 250 in response to movement of the pivot control cable 270.

[0108] Referring now to FIGS. 17-22, a further illustrative embodiment of a lifting apparatus 320 of the present disclosure, connected to and operational with a top bay assembly 317 of a space frame tower, is disclosed. The lifting apparatus 320 comprises first 330 and second 331 lifting trusses, each truss generally comprising a telescoping 332 and a non-telescoping 333 member. First 334 and second 335 supporting frame members are connected to and disposed on the sides of the top bay assembly 317. More specifically, the first lifting

truss 330 comprises a non-telescoping member 340 having a first end 341 pivotally connected to an aft portion 342 of the first supporting frame member 334 and a second end 343 pivotally connected to a first end 344 of a transverse beam 345. The first lifting truss 330 further comprises a telescoping member 346 having an inner telescoping member 347 and an outer telescoping member 348. The inner telescoping member 347 has a first end 348 pivotally connected to a fore portion 349 of the first 334 supporting frame member. The outer telescoping member 348 has a first end 350 pivotally connected to the second end 338 of the non-telescoping member 340. The second lifting truss 331 comprises similar telescoping and non-telescoping members described above with respect to the first hydraulic lifting truss 330. The members are pivotally secured at one set of ends to the second supporting frame member 335. At the other ends, the non-telescoping member is connected to a second end 351 of the transverse beam 345, while the telescoping member is connected to the end of the non-telescoping member that is itself connected to the second end 351 of the transverse beam 345.

[0109] Those having skill in the art will appreciate that supporting frame members 334 and 335 have a length and whose ends may be extended fore or aft of the top bay assembly 317 so as to reduce undesirable bending moments or other loads occurring in the tower when hoisting the wind turbine or blades. While not explicitly illustrated in the figures, one approach to reducing the bending moment, at the expense of increasing the axial load, is to extend the ends of the supporting frame members 334 and 335 aft of the top bay assembly and attaching a counterbalance weight or cable tension to offset the hoisting loads being experienced due to hoisting of the turbine equipment. This approach, or variations thereof, may, moreover, be incorporated into any of the illustrative embodiments disclosed herein.

[0110] As illustrated in FIGS. 17-20, when constructed in the fashion above described, the transverse beam 339 of the lifting apparatus 320 is pivotable between a first position 360 (see FIG. 20) extending fore of the top bay assembly 317 and a second position 362 (see FIG. 20) extending substantially vertically above the top bay assembly 317. Control of the pivoting movement arises through a pair of hydraulic rams 370 that are operably connected to the telescoping members of each of the first 330 and second 331 lifting trusses. Each hydraulic ram 370 includes a cylinder unit 371 and a piston unit 372. Each cylinder unit 371 includes an end 373 that is connected to the inner member 374 of a corresponding telescoping member 375 and each piston unit 372 includes an end 376 that is connected to the outer member 377 of a corresponding telescoping member 375. When the hydraulic rams 370 are in a retracted position, the lifting apparatus 320 assumes a first position 360 with the transverse beam 345 extending fore of the top bay assembly 317. As illustrated in FIGS. 18-20, this position facilitates the hoisting of the turbine 15 using a rigging assembly 380 in a manner similar to that described above.

[0111] Referring now specifically to FIG. 20, following hoisting of the turbine 15, the hydraulic rams 370 are extended causing the lifting apparatus to pivot such that the transverse beam 345 is raised above the top bay assembly 317 to a position where the turbine 15 can be lowered and secured to connecting hardware positioned atop the top bay assembly 317.

[0112] Referring now to FIGS. 21 and 22, the blade assembly 19 is next hoisted with the lifting apparatus 320 assuming

its first position 360 (see FIG. 22). Following hoisting of the blade assembly 19, the hydraulic rams 370 are extended causing the lifting apparatus to pivot to a second position 363 (see FIG. 22) where the blade assembly 19 can be secured to the driven shaft extending from the turbine 15. Following complete installation of the turbine 15 and blade assembly 19 and removal of the rigging apparatus 380, the lifting apparatus 320 is removed using the same crane employed to construct the tower and hoist and install the lifting apparatus 320 on the top bay assembly 317.

[0113] While the foregoing described illustrative embodiment considers a pair of hydraulic rams connected to each telescoping member, those having skill in the art should appreciate that fewer or additional hydraulic rams may be used depending on the loads developed in the hoisting and pivoting process. Furthermore, those having skill in the art should also appreciate that the telescoping members themselves might comprise a hydraulic ram, to the exclusion of or in addition to, the hydraulic pairs of rams described above and illustrated in the drawings.

[0114] Referring now to FIGS. 23-26, a further illustrative embodiment of a lifting apparatus 420 connected to and operational with a top bay assembly 417 of a space frame tower is disclosed. The lifting apparatus 420 comprises first 430 and second 431 lifting truss and hydraulic ram assemblies. Each truss and ram assembly generally comprises a lifting truss 432 and a hydraulic ram 433. First 434 and second 435 supporting frame members are connected to and disposed on the sides of the top bay assembly 417. More specifically, the lifting truss 432 of the first assembly 430 comprises a first member 436 having a first end 437 pivotally connected to a fore portion 438 of the first supporting frame member 434 and a second end 439 pivotally connected to a first end 440 of a transverse beam 445. The lifting truss 432 further comprises a second member 446 and a third member 447. The second member 446 has a first end 448 connected to the second end 439 of the first member and a second end 449. The third member 447 has a first end 450 connected to the first end 437 of the first member 436 and a second end 451 connected to the second end 449 of the second member 446 at a connecting joint 452. The second ends 449, 451 of the second 446 and third 447 members are spaced a distance from an intermediate portion of the first member 436, and the connecting joint 452 of the second ends 449, 451 of the second 446 and third 447 members and the intermediate portion 453 of the first member 446 are connected by an internal truss element 454.

[0115] Still referring to FIGS. 23-26, the hydraulic ram 433 includes a cylinder unit 471 and a piston unit 472. The cylinder unit 471 includes an end 473 that is pivotally connected to an aft portion 455 of the first 434 supporting frame member, while the piston unit 472 has an end that is pivotally connected to the lifting truss 432 proximate the connecting joint 452 of the second ends 449, 451 of the second 446 and third 447 members. The second truss and ram assembly 431 comprises a lifting truss and hydraulic ram similar to that described above with respect to the first truss and ram assembly 430. The lifting truss is pivotally connected at one end 460 to the second supporting frame member 435, while pivotally connected at the other end 461 to a second end 443 of the transverse beam 445.

[0116] As illustrated in FIG. 26, when constructed in the fashion above described, the transverse beam 445 of the lifting frame 420 is pivotable between a first position 480 extending fore of the top bay assembly 417 and a second position

482 extending substantially vertically above the top bay assembly **417**. Referring now generally to FIGS. **23-26**, control of the pivoting movement arises through the hydraulic rams **433**. When the hydraulic rams **433** are in an extended position, the lifting device **420** assumes a position **480** with the transverse beam **445** extending fore of the top bay assembly **417**. As illustrated, this position facilitates the hoisting of the turbine **15** using a rigging assembly **490** in a manner similar to that described above. Following hoisting of the turbine **15**, the hydraulic rams **433** are retracted causing the lifting apparatus **420** to pivot such that the transverse beam **445** is raised above the top bay assembly **417** to a position where the turbine **15** can be lowered and secured to connecting hardware positioned atop the top bay assembly **417**. The blade assembly **19** is next hoisted with the lifting apparatus **420** assuming its fore extending position. Following hoisting of the blade assembly **19**, the hydraulic rams **433** are retracted causing the lifting apparatus **420** to pivot to a second position **482** where the blade assembly **19** can be secured to the driven shaft extending from the turbine **15**. Following complete installation of the turbine **15** and blade assembly **19** and removal of the rigging apparatus **490**, the lifting apparatus **420** is removed using the same crane employed to construct the tower and hoist and install the lifting apparatus **420** on the top bay assembly **417**.

[**0117**] While the foregoing described illustrative embodiment considers a single hydraulic ram connected to each lifting truss, those having skill in the art should appreciate that additional hydraulic rams may be used depending on the loads developed in the hoisting and pivoting process. Furthermore, those having skill in the art should also appreciate that the shape and construction of the lifting truss is exemplary and can reasonably assume other shapes and constructions, such as those discussed above with regard to other embodiments of lifting frames.

[**0118**] It will be appreciated that the structures and apparatus disclosed herein are merely one example of a means for lifting a wind turbine from a level approximately adjacent to the foundation to a level above the uppermost level of the top bay assembly, and it should be appreciated that any structure, apparatus or system for lifting a wind turbine from a level approximately adjacent to the foundation to a level above the uppermost level of the top bay assembly which performs functions the same as, or equivalent to, those disclosed herein are intended to fall within the scope of this recited element, including those structures, apparatus or systems which are presently known, or which may become available in the future. Anything which functions the same as, or equivalently to, means for lifting a wind turbine from a level approximately adjacent to the foundation to a level above the uppermost level of the top bay assembly, falls within the scope of this element.

[**0119**] Referring now to FIGS. **27-37**, a method for constructing a high elevation wind turbine tower and for lifting a wind turbine assembly to the top of a high elevation wind turbine tower is disclosed. Referring now specifically to FIG. **27**, a plurality of bay assemblies or bay sections is illustrated assembled and comprising a lower section **509** of a structural tower **510**. The lower section **509** includes a lowermost bay assembly **513** secured to a foundation **511** and one or more intermediate bay assemblies **512** constructed on top of the lowermost bay assembly **513**. The lower section **509** is constructed using a crane of suitable size and height or, alternatively,

may be constructed using a ginpole as hereinafter described with respect to assembly of the upper sections of the structural tower **510**.

[**0120**] Referring now to FIG. **28**, a ginpole **501** is illustrated attached to a side of the lower section **509**. In one illustrative embodiment, the ginpole **501** includes a lengthwise beam **502** and a boom **503**. The lengthwise beam **502** has a first end **504** configured for removable attachment to a first location on the structural tower **510**—e.g., a location proximate the lowermost bay assembly **513**. The lengthwise beam **502** further includes an intermediate portion **505** configured for removable attachment to a second location on the structural tower **510**—e.g., a location proximate the upper portion of the lower section **509**. In practice, the second location will be higher in elevation along the structural tower **510** than the first location, with the lengthwise span between the first and second locations being dependent, at least in part, on the overall length of the lengthwise beam **502**.

[**0121**] The boom **503** includes a first end that is pivotally attached to the lengthwise beam **502** at a pivot point **506** located preferably above or proximate the intermediate portion **505** of the lengthwise beam **502**. Pivotal attachment of the boom **503** to the lengthwise beam **502** permits the boom **503** to extend away from the lengthwise beam **502** a transverse distance sufficient to hoist additional bay assemblies for mounting without obstruction by the lowermost bay assemblies of the structural tower **510** where bay diameters may be relatively large compared with the diameters of the uppermost bay assemblies.

[**0122**] As further illustrated in FIGS. **28-30**, a cable **517** extends from the first end **504** of the lengthwise beam **502** to a second end **518** of the lengthwise beam **502**. In one embodiment, the cable **517** may be separated from the lengthwise beam **502** by a spreader assembly **519**. The cable **517** extends from the second end **518** of the lengthwise beam **502** to a second end **507** of the boom **503** and, ultimately, a free end **520** of the cable **517** extends downward from the second end **507** of the boom **503** for removable attachment to a free bay assembly **525** configured for mounting upon a current uppermost bay assembly **515** of the partially constructed structural tower **510**. When constructed in this or similar fashion, the boom **503** may be rotated about the pivot point **506** such that the boom **503** extends out over the axial cross section of the current uppermost bay assembly **515**. The free end **520** of the cable **517** is then lowered for attachment to a free bay assembly **525**. Once attached to the free bay assembly **525**, the cable **517** is used to hoist the free bay assembly **525** upward for mounting on the current uppermost bay assembly **515**. When hoisted to an elevation sufficient to clear the current uppermost bay assembly **515**, the boom **502** is rotated about the pivot point **506** such that the free bay assembly **525** is translated into axial alignment with the current uppermost bay assembly **515**. Once in axial alignment, the free bay assembly **525** is lowered by the cable **517** into contact with the current uppermost bay assembly **515** and secured thereto using pins, bolts or welds as described, for example, in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/433,147.

[**0123**] Following attachment of the free bay assembly **525** to the then-current uppermost bay assembly **515**, the ginpole **501** is elevated to a new location on the partially completed structural tower **510**. While various techniques for raising gin poles are known in the art, one illustrative embodiment advantageous for use with the present disclosure employs jump cabling as discussed below. The process of hoisting a

free bay assembly 525 and securing it to a then-current uppermost bay assembly 515, interspersed with elevating the gin pole 501 (as needed) to a new location on the partially constructed tower 510, is repeated until an uppermost bay assembly is elevated and secured to the structural tower 510.

[0124] It will be appreciated that the structures and apparatus disclosed herein are merely one example of a means for securing an intermediate bay assembly on top of the base bay assembly and a means for securing a top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly, and it should be appreciated that any structure, apparatus or system for securing structural members of a tower which performs functions the same as, or equivalent to, those disclosed herein are intended to fall within the scope of this recited element, including those structures, apparatus or systems which are presently known, or which may become available in the future. Anything which functions the same as, or equivalently to, means for securing structural members of a tower which performs functions the same as, falls within the scope of this element.

[0125] Referring now to FIG. 32, an uppermost bay assembly 550 is illustrated having been elevated and secured to structural tower 510. In addition, the ginpole 501 is illustrated being positioned ready to hoist a lifting frame or apparatus 560—e.g., the ginpole 501 is repositioned, if necessary, to a new elevation and the boom 503 is rotated about the pivot point 506 such that the boom 503 extends out over the axial cross section of the uppermost bay assembly 550 in position for hoisting the lifting apparatus 560.

[0126] Referring now to FIG. 35, the lifting apparatus 560 is illustrated having been hoisted to the top of the structural tower 510 (which can be substantially similar to tower 510 in FIG. 33) using the cable 517 and then lowered by the cable 517 into contact with the uppermost bay assembly 550 and secured thereto as described in one or more of the various embodiments above disclosed.

[0127] Referring now to FIGS. 33 and 34, the lifting apparatus 560 is illustrated as having a rigging assembly 562 and pivot control cable 564 for hoisting and positioning a turbine 570 or blade assembly 575 into place as variously disclosed above. More specifically, once the lifting apparatus 560 is positioned and secured into place atop the uppermost bay assembly 550, any remaining cabling necessary for the hoisting and positioning operations is installed.

[0128] Once any cabling necessary for the hoisting and positioning operations is installed, the lifting apparatus 560 is then used to hoist the turbine 570 into position atop the uppermost bay assembly 550 as disclosed above. Thereafter, the lifting apparatus 560 is used to hoist and position the blade assembly 575 or, alternatively, the rotor 576 followed by individual blades 577, into position on the turbine 570 also as disclosed above. During the hoisting and positioning operations, the ginpole 501 and the boom 503 may be positioned away from the lifting apparatus (or completely removed from the tower) to avoid interfering with the lifting apparatus 560 or the turbine 570 or blade assembly 575.

[0129] Referring now to FIGS. 36 and 37, following positioning of the turbine 570 and blade assembly 575 into their respective proper positions, the ginpole 501 is repositioned as necessary to lower the lifting apparatus 560 after it has been detached from the uppermost bay assembly 550. Following detachment and lowering of the lifting apparatus 560 from the tower 510, the ginpole 501 is lowered from the tower in the reverse order of being raised or a variation thereof.

[0130] Those skilled in the art and familiar with the disclosure provided herein and above will recognize various modifications to the above disclosed method of assembly using a ginpole 501 or similar apparatus. First, while the method is described with reference to a specific lifting apparatus 560, it is apparent that the method of construction may be equally accomplished using any of the lifting apparatus or modifications thereof disclosed herein. Second, it is also apparent that the steps involved in raising or lowering the ginpole 501 along the structural tower will depend, at least in part, on the length of the ginpole 501 or, specifically, the length of the longitudinal beam. In other words, a relatively long lengthwise beam 502 may permit hoisting and positioning of two or more free bay assemblies—either together or one at a time—between steps of raising the ginpole. Third, while a specific ginpole has been described as having a lengthwise beam and boom pivotally attached thereto, those skilled in the art will recognize that suitable alternative ginpole constructions may be used to carry out the hoisting and positioning operations. Fourth, while the method of assembly describes hoisting and positioning free bay assemblies using the ginpole, it is apparent that individual longitudinal, diagonal or horizontal members, or combinations thereof, may be hoisted and positioned into place using a ginpole. Indeed, the hoisting and positioning of individual components or sub-assemblies of the free bay assemblies would permit the use of smaller ginpoles in the construction process. Fifth, it is apparent that the method described above in constructing a tower and hoisting and positioning of the turbine and blade assembly can be reversed in steps to disassemble a tower or to repair or replace a turbine or blade assembly or even an individual blade that may become damaged during operation of the wind turbine. In addition, it should be apparent that a ginpole itself can be used—exclusive of a lifting frame or apparatus—to not only hoist and position the free bay assemblies, but also to hoist and position the turbine and blade assembly as well.

[0131] Referring now to FIGS. 38-44, an alternative method for assembling a structural tower having a wind turbine and blade assembly is disclosed. In one embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 38, one or more bay assemblies or bay sections are assembled and comprise a lower section 609 of a structural tower 610. The lower section 609 includes a lowermost bay assembly 613 secured to a foundation (not explicitly illustrated) and may include one or more intermediate bay assemblies 612 constructed on top of the lowermost bay assembly 613. The lower section 609 (which may be considered to comprise the lowermost bay assembly 613 and, if desired, one or more intermediate bay assemblies 612) is constructed using a crane of suitable size and height.

[0132] Referring still to FIG. 38, a ginpole 601 is next attached to a side of the partially constructed structural tower 610. In one embodiment, the ginpole 601 includes a lengthwise beam 602 comprising a plurality of members 603 secured together by a plurality of diagonal or horizontal members (not explicitly illustrated). The lengthwise beam 602 has a first end 604 and a second end 605 that extends upwardly from the first end 604. A rooster head 606 is rotatably secured to the second end 605 of the ginpole 601. A cable 607 extends from the rooster head 606 for raising or lowering free bay assemblies or the lifting apparatus of the present invention. The ginpole 601 is removably attached to the structural tower 610 using means generally known in the art (although a specific illustrative embodiment is described below).

[0133] Referring again to FIGS. 38-44, a sequence of steps is illustrated for assembling the structural tower and assembling a wind turbine and blade assembly thereon using the ginpole 601. As described above, a lower portion 609 of the structural tower 610 is assembled and secured to a foundation using a crane or other suitable means. A gin pole 601 is then attached to the structural tower, typically using the same crane to hoist the ginpole into an initial location on the partially assembled structural tower 610. Once the ginpole is attached to the tower, the rooster head 606 is swiveled outward from the tower such that the cable 607 may be lowered and attached to a free bay assembly 625 positioned on the ground. The free end of the cable 607 is then lowered for attachment to the free bay assembly 625. Once attached to the free bay assembly 625, the cable 607 is used to hoist the free bay assembly 625 upward for mounting on the current uppermost bay assembly 615. When hoisted to an elevation sufficient to clear the current uppermost bay assembly 615, the rooster head 606 is rotated about the ginpole 601 such that the free bay assembly 625 is translated into axial alignment with the current uppermost bay assembly 615. Once in axial alignment, the free bay assembly 625 is lowered by the cable 607 into contact with the current uppermost bay assembly 615 and secured thereto using pins, bolts or welds as described, for example, in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/433,147. Following attachment of the free bay assembly 625 to the then-current uppermost bay assembly 615, the ginpole 601 may be elevated to a new location on the partially completed structural tower 610 and the process repeated as illustrated in FIGS. 38-40.

[0134] Referring now to FIG. 41, an uppermost bay assembly 650 is illustrated having been elevated and secured to structural tower 610. As discussed previously, the uppermost bay assembly 650 may include or have attached thereto a ring member 651 upon which a turbine may be rotatably positioned. Referring now to FIG. 42, the ginpole 601 is again raised following placement of the uppermost bay assembly 650. The rooster head 606 is then repositioned for hoisting of a lifting apparatus 660. The lifting apparatus 660 is then hoisted to the top of the structural tower 610 using the cable 607 where it may be lowered by the cable 607 into contact with the uppermost bay assembly 650 and secured thereto as described in one or more of the various embodiments above disclosed. In the representative embodiment illustrated in FIG. 42, the lifting frame 660 is lowered upon and secured to a support frame 652 that is itself secured to the uppermost bay assembly 650.

[0135] Referring now to FIGS. 43 and 44, the lifting apparatus 660 is illustrated as having a rigging assembly 662 for hoisting and positioning a turbine 670 or blade assembly 675 into place as variously disclosed above. More specifically, once the lifting apparatus 660 is positioned and secured into place atop the uppermost bay assembly 650, any remaining cabling necessary for the hoisting and positioning operations is installed. The lifting apparatus 660 is then used to hoist the turbine 670 into position atop the uppermost bay assembly 650 as disclosed above. Thereafter, the lifting apparatus 660 is used to hoist and position the blade assembly 675 or, alternatively, the rotor 676 followed by individual blades 677, into position on the turbine 670 also as disclosed above. During the hoisting and positioning operations, the ginpole 601 may be positioned away from the lifting apparatus (or completely removed from the tower) to avoid interfering with the lifting apparatus 660 or the turbine 670 or blade assembly

675. Alternatively the gin pole 601 can be positioned for use together with the lift apparatus 660 to lift or control the lift of the turbine 670 and/or blade assembly 675 or individual blades or other turbine components. Following positioning of the turbine 670 and blade assembly 675 into their respective proper positions, the ginpole 601 is repositioned as necessary to lower the lifting apparatus 660 and the support frame 652 after they have been detached from the uppermost bay assembly 650. Following detachment and lowering of the lifting apparatus 660 and support frame 652 from the tower 610, the ginpole 601 is lowered from the tower in the reverse order of being raised or a variation thereof.

[0136] In yet a further illustrative embodiment of the present disclosure, a cladding system and a method for constructing a high elevation wind turbine tower having a surrounding cladding system and for lifting a wind turbine assembly to the top of a high elevation wind turbine tower is disclosed. Referring to FIGS. 45-48, an embodiment of a cladding system for the structural tower is described. Specifically, in one aspect of the present disclosure the cladding system comprises a cladding sheet 701 that is sized to cover substantially the outer surface of a bay assembly. In one illustrative embodiment, the cladding sheet 701 has an upper edge 702 and a lower edge 703. The upper edge 702 includes one or more tab segments 705 each having one or more edge perforations 706 extending through the cladding sheet 701. As illustrated in FIG. 46, the tab segments 705 are configured to fold inward over themselves thereby creating one or more openings 707 along the length of the tab segment 705 that correspond to the one or more edge perforations 706.

[0137] Referring to FIG. 47, a pipe or rod 710, fabricated from a material such as steel or plastic, is positioned at the edge of the fold, creating one or more sections of exposed pipe or rod 711 that are contained by sleeve sections 712 that contain the rod or pipe 710. In this manner, when the cladding sheet 701 is wrapped about the bay assembly as described below, the pipe or rod 710 provides structural support for the cladding sheet 701 and a structure for attaching the cladding sheet 701 to one or more members comprising the bay assembly, such as one of the bay assemblies described herein. The exposed sections 711 of pipe or rod may, for example, be secured to a corresponding horizontal member of a bay assembly using bolts, screws or welds or simply tied to the horizontal member using rope or wire.

[0138] Still referring to FIGS. 45-48, the cladding sheet 701 has opposed left 718 and right 719 edge segments, each having a plurality of edge perforations 720 extending through the cladding sheet 701. Similar to the description above, the left 718 and right 719 edge segments are configured to fold inward over themselves thereby creating one or more openings 722 along the length of the edge segments that correspond to the one or more edge perforations 720. In a manner similar to that described above, a steel or plastic pipe or rod 725 is positioned at the edge of the fold (see FIG. 48), creating one or more sections of exposed pipe or rod that are enclosed by sleeve sections 726 that contain the rod or pipe 725. In this manner, when the cladding sheet 701 is wrapped about the bay assembly as described below, the pipe or rod 725 provides structural support for the cladding sheet 701 and structure for attaching the opposed left 718 and right 719 edge segments of the cladding sheet 701 to one another, thereby securing the cladding sheet tightly about the corresponding bay section or sections.

[0139] In one illustrative embodiment, the exposed sections of pipe or rod 725 are secured to corresponding exposed sections using a turnbuckle 730 as illustrated in FIG. 48. In one embodiment, a turnbuckle 730 is placed at each corresponding pair of openings 722 and is attached to the sections of pipe or rod 725 that are exposed by the corresponding pairs of openings 722.

[0140] Still referring to FIGS. 45-48, the cladding sheet 701 may have crease segments 714 that assist the folding of the cladding sheet to the desired shape of a particular bay assembly. As illustrated in FIG. 46, for example, the cladding sheet 701 is folded about or in the region of the crease segments 714 to form a five-sided covering for one or more five-sided bay sections of a structural tower.

[0141] The cladding sheet 701 may be preformed to slide over the top of an assembled bay assembly or, alternatively, wrapped around an assembled bay assembly. Using either approach, once the cladding sheet 701 is positioned on the bay assembly, the exposed sections 711 of pipe or rod that are fashioned at the tab segments 705 are fastened to the bay assembly using suitable means and the series of turnbuckles 730 are tightened to securely fasten the cladding sheet 701 to the bay assembly. Additionally the folds or crease areas can, within the scope of the present disclosure, contain a double layer of cladding where in contact or close proximity to the main bay leg. The main bay leg could also be wrapped, covered, or have a friction or wear reducing coating or sheet applied to it so that the cladding does not wear or reduce life beyond the life expectancy of the areas of the cladding that are not in close proximity to the bay leg structure. As will be shown below, when assembling the tower using the cladding sheets, the lower edge 703 may extend a distance (e.g., 6 to 12 inches) over the top edge 702 of an adjacent bay assembly covered by a cladding sheet 701.

[0142] The cladding sheet 701 may be constructed from a variety of materials, including various metals, steel, aluminum, PVC-coated fabrics and PTFE-coated glass fabrics. When factors such as weather and wind stresses are considered, a preferred choice for the sheet material is the PVC-coated fabric of 28 to 30 ounces per square yard exhibiting a tensile strength of approximately 250 pounds per linear inch. These materials work well with the cladding sheet above described and are readily applied to various other sheet configurations. Further, these materials are well suited for securing the fold-over regions at the tab segments 705 and left 718 and right 719 edge segments using, for example, RF welding, stitching or, in the case of aluminum or other metals, spot or TIG welding. The materials are also suitable for forming apertures such as the edge 706 or side 720 perforations in the cladding sheet.

[0143] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that cladding structures represented in FIGS. 45-56 provide a tower structure with an outer covering which functions to protect the internal area of the tower from wind, snow, rain and other undesirable materials but which does not provide any significant temperature control, since such temperature control is not generally required. Desirably, such cladding structures can provide for air venting of the internal area of the tower and can provide additional security for equipment located within the tower, for example near the base of the tower, and also desirably provides additional security for controlling access to the structures which may be present to allow humans and equipment to ascend and descend the tower.

[0144] As represented in FIG. 49, a personnel access door 810 can be provided. Moreover as represented in FIG. 49, access ports 811 can be provided in the cladding material. Moreover, a equipment port 812 large enough for passage of a small forklift or maintenance vehicle can particularly be provided inside the tower base perimeter.

[0145] The cladding materials represented herein, also referred to as concealing materials, can desirably be architectural fabric, such as PVC or fiberglass material, sheet metal, organic fibers, or any number of materials known to those skilled in the art having the desirable characteristics. The concealing material can be continuously arranged around the perimeter of the tower structure or it can be segmented, all within the scope of the present disclosure. Moreover, the concealing material can be applied or attached to the outside of the structural tower members. In this fashion, the concealing material both conceals the visible spaces and also conceals the structural members of the tower from a position outside of the tower. The concealing material can also be applied or attached to the structural tower members so that the structural tower members are visible to a person standing outside of the tower but the visible spaces have been filled so that there are no visible spaces left.

[0146] While the embodiments disclosed above provides a suitable cover for each bay assembly (or plurality of assemblies), other embodiments provide equally suitable coverage. Referring to again FIG. 49, for example, a bay assembly 801 having a multi-faceted cladding system is shown. The multi-faceted cladding system comprises a plurality of cladding strips 805 and corner brackets 807. Each cladding strip 805 includes a plurality of bolts 809 that are embedded in or otherwise attached to the two sides of each cladding strip and whose threads extend outward from the two sides of each strip 809. The bolts are sized and spaced to extend through corresponding holes in each corner bracket 807. Assembly takes place in a manner similar to that described above. For example, the system of strips and corner brackets may be loosely assembled, with nuts partially threaded onto the bolts 809, and then slid over the top of the bay assembly 801, after which the nuts are tightened, thereby securing the cladding system to the bay assembly. Alternatively, all faces but one of the cladding system may be secured to the bay assembly, thereby leaving a face of the bay assembly open allowing interaction between a ginpole and the bay structure. Once the structural tower is assembled and the ginpole lowered and removed, the remaining strips may be assembled to each bay assembly and tightened as discussed above. Related alternatives include, of course, cladding systems sized to cover all faces but one, or any other number of faces—e.g., two or three—whereby the system includes various numbers of cladding sheets and corner brackets or rod or pipe and turnbuckle assemblies as described above.

[0147] Referring now to FIGS. 50-56, a cladding system and a method for constructing a high elevation wind turbine tower having a surrounding cladding system and for lifting a wind turbine assembly to the top of a high elevation wind turbine tower is disclosed. In one illustrative embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 50, one or more bay assemblies or bay sections are assembled and comprise a lower section 909 of a structural tower 910. The lower section 909 includes a lowermost bay assembly 913 secured to a foundation (not illustrated) and may include one or more intermediate bay assemblies 912 constructed on top of the lowermost bay assembly 913. An upper intermediate bay assembly 980 includes a

cladding system **981**. In one embodiment, the cladding system **981** surrounds the entire bay assembly in a manner described above and includes one or more apertures sized and positioned to permit interaction between the ginpole and the structural members of the bay assembly (described more fully below). The lower section **909** (which may be considered to comprise the lowermost bay assembly **913** and, if desired, one or more intermediate bay assemblies **912** and bay assemblies including cladding systems) is constructed using a crane of suitable size and height.

[0148] Referring still to FIG. **50**, a ginpole **901** is next attached to a side of the partially constructed structural tower **910**. In one illustrative embodiment, the ginpole **901** includes a lengthwise beam **902** comprising a plurality of members **903** secured together by a plurality of diagonal or horizontal members (not illustrated). The lengthwise beam **902** has a first end **904** and a second end **905** that extends upwardly from the first end **904**. A rooster head **906** is rotatably secured to the second end **905** of the ginpole **901**. A cable **907** extends from the rooster head **906** for raising or lowering free bay assemblies or the lifting apparatus of the present invention. The ginpole **901** is removably attached to the structural tower **910** using structures generally known in the art (although a specific illustrative embodiment is described below).

[0149] Referring again to FIGS. **50-56**, a sequence of steps is illustrated for assembling the structural tower and assembling a wind turbine and blade assembly thereon using the ginpole **901**. The sequence of steps is generally as described above, excepting the bay assemblies include cladding systems and structures—e.g., apertures or open faces—designed to permit interaction between the ginpole and the bay assemblies of the partially completed structural tower **910**.

[0150] As described above, a lower portion **909** of the structural tower **910** is assembled and secured to a foundation using a crane or other suitable means. A gin pole **901** is then attached to the structural tower, typically using the same crane to hoist the ginpole into an initial location on the partially assembled structural tower **910**. Once the ginpole is attached to the tower, the rooster head **906** is swiveled outward from the tower such that the cable **907** may be lowered and attached to a free bay assembly **925** positioned on the ground. The free end of the cable **907** is then lowered for attachment to the free bay assembly **925**. Once attached to the free bay assembly **925**, the cable **907** is used to hoist the free bay assembly **925** upward for mounting on the current uppermost bay assembly **915**. When hoisted to an elevation sufficient to clear the current uppermost bay assembly **915**, the rooster head **906** is rotated about the ginpole **901** such that the free bay assembly **925** is translated into axial alignment with the current uppermost bay assembly **915**. Once in axial alignment, the free bay assembly **925** is lowered by the cable **907** into contact with the current uppermost bay assembly **915** and secured thereto using pins, bolts or welds as described, for example, in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/433,147.

[0151] Following attachment of the free bay assembly **925** to the then-current uppermost bay assembly **915**, the ginpole **901** may be elevated to a new location on the partially completed structural tower **910** and the process repeated as illustrated in FIGS. **50-52**. If desired, a cladding system **985** for the lower section **909** may be assembled. In one embodiment, the cladding system for the lower section **909** includes an aluminum skin fastened to each face of the lower section **909**.

[0152] Referring now specifically to FIG. **53**, an uppermost bay assembly **950** is illustrated having been elevated and

secured to structural tower **910**. As discussed previously, the uppermost bay assembly **950** may include or have attached thereto a ring member **951** upon which a turbine may be rotatably positioned.

[0153] Referring now specifically to FIG. **54**, the ginpole **901** is again raised following placement of the uppermost bay assembly **950**. The rooster head **906** is then repositioned for hoisting of a lifting apparatus **960**. The lifting apparatus **960** is then hoisted to the top of the structural tower **910** using the cable **907** where it may be lowered by the cable **907** into contact with the uppermost bay assembly **950** and secured thereto as described in one or more of the various embodiments above disclosed. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **54**, the lifting frame **960** is lowered upon and secured to a support frame **952** that is itself secured to the uppermost bay assembly **950**.

[0154] Referring now to FIGS. **55** and **56**, the lifting apparatus **960** is illustrated as having a rigging assembly **962** for hoisting and positioning a turbine **970** or blade assembly **975** into place as variously disclosed above. More specifically, once the lifting apparatus **960** is positioned and secured into place atop the uppermost bay assembly **950**, any remaining cabling necessary for the hoisting and positioning operations is installed. The lifting apparatus **960** is then used to hoist the turbine **970** into position atop the uppermost bay assembly **950** as disclosed above. Thereafter, the lifting apparatus **960** is used to hoist and position the blade assembly **975** or, alternatively, the rotor **976** followed by individual blades **977**, into position on the turbine **970** also as disclosed above. During the hoisting and positioning operations, the ginpole **901** may be positioned away from the lifting apparatus (or completely removed from the tower) to avoid interfering with the lifting apparatus **960** or the turbine **970** or blade assembly **975**. Following positioning of the turbine **970** and blade assembly **975** into their respective proper positions, the ginpole **901** is repositioned as necessary to lower the lifting apparatus **960** and the support frame **952** after they have been detached from the uppermost bay assembly **950**. Following detachment and lowering of the lifting apparatus **960** and support frame **952** from the tower **910**, the ginpole **901** is lowered from the tower in the reverse order of being raised or a variation thereof.

[0155] While various techniques for raising gin poles are known in the art, one illustrative embodiment advantageous for use with the present disclosure employs one or more standoff brackets and a jump track. Referring to FIGS. **57** and **58**, for example, a ginpole **1001** may be slidably attached to a structural tower using one or more standoff brackets **1002** and a jump track **1004** that slidably connects the ginpole **1001** with the standoff brackets **1002**. More specifically, each standoff bracket **1002** includes a pair of mounting brackets **1003**. The mounting brackets **1003** are configured for mounting to one or more members of a bay assembly—e.g., an adjacent pair of horizontal members **1006** and **1007** as illustrated in FIGS. **57** and **58**.

[0156] The mounting brackets **1003** may be mounted to the horizontal members using tabs welded to the members and bolts securing the brackets to the tabs or some similarly suitable means of mounting. Pairs of lengthwise members **1008** and transverse members **1009**, forming a square or rectangular box-shaped frame **1010**, are adjustably attached to the mounting brackets **1003** using telescoping members **1011** positioned at the corners of the box-shaped frame **1010**.

The telescoping members **1011** permit adjustment of the standoff distance between the box-shaped frame **1010** and the bay assembly.

[0157] Removably attached to a pair of assembled standoff brackets **1002** mounted to one or more bay sections of a structural tower is the jump track **1004**. The jump track **1004** includes a pair of longitudinal rails that are separated by diagonal members. A plate member **1015** is secured by welding or other suitable means to the upper end of the jump track **1004**. The plate member **1015** includes apertures on opposing sides for attachment for attachment to a pair of slings **1016**. In one embodiment, the slings **1016** are secured by clevis pins attached at one end of the slings with the pins extending through a pair of corresponding tab members **1017** welded to the mounting brackets **1003**. A similar pair of clevis pins is used to attach the plate member **1015** to the opposite end of the slings **1016**. A second plate member **1018** is similarly secured by welding or other suitable means to the lower end of the jump track **1004**.

[0158] Both the upper **1015** and lower **1018** plate members may be bolted or otherwise secured to the box-shaped frames of the standoff brackets **1002** such that the jump track is removably attached in fixed relation to the structural tower. Further the telescoping members can be configured so the telescoping or moving parts are outside of the cladding and at a distance such that the telescoping part, stand off bracket, and operator interface does not cause contact with the cladding. The tab members **1017** are located such that the mounting bracket **1003** is located on the inside of the cladding with no contact to the cladding, and the tab **1017** extends through the opening on the cladding beyond the plane of the cladding to a distance to prevent contact between the cladding and the sling **1016**.

[0159] Referring still to FIGS. **57-58**, the ginpole **1001** is illustrated as being slidably attached to the rails **1014** of the jump track **1004**. In one illustrative embodiment, slidable attachment of the ginpole **1001** to the rails **1014** is achieved using a pair of tabs running lengthwise on each one of the pair of inner facing longitudinal members **1020** of the ginpole **1004** that form a male receiving track sized to receive the corresponding rails **1014** of the jump track **1004**. In this fashion, the ginpole **1001** is constrained to slide only up or down the length of the jump track **1004**.

[0160] Referring to FIG. **57**, the ginpole is illustrated in a first—unraised—position **1022** on the jump track **1004**. In one illustrative embodiment, the ginpole **1001** is secured in the first position **1022** using a pair of support slings (not explicitly illustrated) that have first ends secured to a standoff bracket **1002** and second ends secured to the ginpole **1001**. Hoisting the ginpole **1001** to a second—raised—position **1024** (see FIG. **58**) is accomplished using a block and tackle or similar rigging assembly. In one embodiment, a rigging assembly includes a pulley **1030** removably secured to a standoff bracket **1002**. A cable **1032** has a first end **1033** secured to a base portion **1034** of the ginpole **1001** and a second end **1035** extending to a winch (not explicitly illustrated) or other suitable cable winding structure.

[0161] When it is desired to raise the ginpole **1001** from the first **1022** to second **1024** position, the pair of support slings are released and the cable **1032** is pulled to hoist the ginpole **1001** to the second position **1024**. The support slings are then reattached, at which point the ginpole **1001** is positioned to perform the next lifting operation of a free bay assembly or lifting frame.

[0162] Referring again to FIGS. **50-56**, the ginpole **901** is illustrated secured to a standoff bracket **990**. Support slings **991** are used maintain the ginpole **901** in a fixed position with respect to the standoff bracket **990**. The apertures **982** extending through the cladding permit the standoff bracket **990** to be attached to the bay assembly as described above without removing the cladding. As the stages of assembly are completed, additional standoff brackets **990** are added and the jump track **995** is used to hoist the ginpole **901** as required. Once the wind turbine **970** and blade assembly **975** are finally positioned on the structural tower **910**, the lifting frame is lowered **960** is lowered using the ginpole.

[0163] Still referring to FIGS. **50-56**, following lowering of the lifting frame **960**, the ginpole is lowered in reverse order of raising using the jump track **995** and the hoisting cable discussed above with respect to FIGS. **57-58**. As the ginpole **901** is lowered, each standoff bracket **990** may be removed from its mounting position and lowered to the ground using the ginpole **901** or a separate cable. The apertures through the cladding may then be sealed using a suitable sized porthole cover of similar covering means.

[0164] In the foregoing Detailed Description, various features of the present disclosure are grouped together in single illustrative embodiments for the purpose of streamlining the disclosure. This method of disclosure is not to be interpreted as reflecting an intention that the claimed disclosure requires more features than are expressly recited in each claim. Rather, as the following claims reflect, inventive aspects lie in less than all features of a single foregoing disclosed embodiment. Thus, the following claims are hereby incorporated into this Detailed Description by this reference, with each claim standing on its own as a separate embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0165] It is to be understood that the above-described arrangements are only illustrative of the application of the principles of the present disclosure. Numerous modifications and alternative arrangements may be devised by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure and the appended claims are intended to cover such modifications and arrangements. Thus, while the present disclosure has been shown in the drawings and described above with particularity and detail, it will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that numerous modifications, including, but not limited to, variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use may be made without departing from the principles and concepts set forth herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of erecting a high-elevation multiple-bay structural tower and associated wind turbine equipment on a foundation, the method comprising the steps of:

- securing a base bay assembly to the foundation;
- attaching a ginpole to the base bay assembly;
- positioning an intermediate bay assembly on top of the base bay assembly using the ginpole;
- positioning a top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly using the ginpole;
- positioning an apparatus for lifting a wind turbine proximate the top bay assembly using the ginpole; and
- positioning a wind turbine on top of the top bay assembly using the apparatus for lifting a wind turbine.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of attaching the ginpole to the intermediate bay assembly prior to positioning the top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of attaching the ginpole to both the base bay assembly and the intermediate bay assembly prior to positioning the top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of sequentially positioning a plurality of intermediate bay assemblies on top of the base bay assembly prior to positioning the top bay assembly on top of an uppermost intermediate bay assembly.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of raising the ginpole following the positioning of each intermediate bay assembly comprising the plurality of bay assemblies.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the base bay assembly comprises a plurality of bay assemblies.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of attaching the ginpole to the base bay assembly includes the steps of attaching the ginpole to one or more of the bay assemblies comprising the plurality of bay assemblies.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the ginpole comprises a lengthwise beam.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the ginpole further comprises a boom.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the boom is pivotally attached to the lengthwise beam.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the apparatus for lifting a wind turbine includes:

- a support frame connected to the top bay assembly of the tower;
- a first lifting truss pivotally connected to the support frame, the first lifting truss having a distal end extending away from the support frame;
- a rigging assembly connected proximate the distal end and configured for hoisting a turbine to the upper end of the tower; and
- an hydraulic ram having a first end connected to the support frame and a second end connected to the first lifting truss.

12. A method of erecting a multiple-bay structural tower and associated wind turbine equipment, the method comprising the steps of:

- assembling a base bay assembly;
- assembling one or more upper bay assemblies on top of the base bay assembly;
- attaching a ginpole to one or more of the base bay assemblies and the one or more upper bay assemblies;
- positioning an apparatus for lifting a wind turbine proximate an uppermost bay assembly using the ginpole; and
- positioning a wind turbine on top of the uppermost bay assembly using the apparatus for lifting a wind turbine.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of attaching the ginpole to at least one of the upper bay assemblies prior to assembling the uppermost bay assembly.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of attaching the ginpole to both the base bay assembly and to at least one of the upper bay assemblies prior to assembling the uppermost bay assembly.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of sequentially assembling the one or more upper bay assemblies on top of the base bay assembly prior to assembling the uppermost bay assembly.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of raising the ginpole following the assembly of each upper bay assembly comprising the one or more upper bay assemblies.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the base bay assembly comprises a plurality of bay assemblies.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of attaching the ginpole to the base bay assembly includes the steps of attaching the ginpole to one or more of the bay assemblies comprising the plurality of bay assemblies.

19. The method of claim 12, wherein the ginpole comprises a lengthwise beam.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the ginpole further comprises a boom.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the boom is pivotally attached to the lengthwise beam.

22. The method of claim 12, wherein the apparatus for lifting a wind turbine includes:

- a support frame connected to the top bay assembly of the tower;
- a first lifting truss pivotally connected to the support frame, the first lifting truss having a distal end extending away from the support frame;
- a rigging assembly connected proximate the distal end and configured for hoisting a turbine to the upper end of the tower; and
- an hydraulic ram having a first end connected to the support frame and a second end connected to the first lifting truss.

23. The method of claim 12, wherein the one or more upper bay assemblies include a cladding system.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the cladding system includes an aperture sized and configured to permit access to the members comprising the bay assembly.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the cladding system includes a plurality of apertures.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the aperture is a strip running lengthwise along the cladding system.

27. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of attaching the ginpole to at least one of the upper bay assemblies prior to assembling the uppermost bay assembly and wherein the ginpole includes a standoff bracket extending through the aperture.

28. A covering system for a structural tower comprising:

- a plurality of cladding sheets; and
- means for securing at least one of the cladding sheets to the structural tower such that the amount of the structural tower concealed by the cladding sheets can be selectively altered.

29. The covering system as defined in claim 28 wherein the cladding sheets are comprised of a material selected from the group consisting of: steel, aluminum, PVC-coated fabrics and PTFE-coated glass fabrics and TEDLAR®.

30. The covering system as defined in claim 28 wherein the means for securing are selected from the group consisting of: bolts, screws, welds, rope, pipe and wire.

31. The covering system as defined in claim 28 wherein cladding sheets comprise at least one access port.

32. The covering system as defined in claim 28 wherein the structural tower comprises a plurality of structural members,

further comprising a friction reducing material applied to at least some of the plurality of structural members.

33. The covering system as defined in claim **32** wherein the friction reducing material is applied to the predominantly vertical areas in which the cladding sheets would contact the structural members.

34. The covering system as defined in claim **28** wherein the cladding sheets are formed as a loop around the structural tower so that the first end and the second end of the cladding sheet are connected to each other and not to the structural tower in the horizontal direction.

35. A system for erecting a high-elevation multiple-bay structural tower and associated wind turbine equipment on a foundation, the system comprising:

- a base bay assembly securable to the foundation;
- a ginpole attached to the base bay assembly;
- at least one intermediate bay assembly positioned on top of the base bay assembly, the intermediate bay assembly being releasably securable to the ginpole;
- a top bay assembly securable to the top of the intermediate bay assembly and being releasably securable to the ginpole;
- lifting means for a wind turbine proximate the top bay assembly using the ginpole; and
- means for positioning a wind turbine on top of the top bay assembly using the apparatus for lifting a wind turbine.

36. The system of claim **35**, wherein the ginpole is releasably secured to the top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly.

37. The system of claim **35**, wherein the ginpole is selectively attached to the base bay assembly and the intermediate bay assembly prior to positioning the top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly.

38. The system of claim **35**, further comprising means for sequentially positioning a plurality of intermediate bay assemblies on top of the base bay assembly prior to positioning the top bay assembly on top of an uppermost intermediate bay assembly.

39. The system of claim **38**, further comprising means for raising the ginpole following the positioning of each intermediate bay assembly comprising the plurality of bay assemblies.

40. The system of claim **35**, wherein the base bay assembly comprises a plurality of bay assemblies.

41. The system of claim **40**, further comprising means from attaching the ginpole to one or more of the structures selected from the group consisting of: the base bay assembly; the intermediate bay assembly; and, the top bay assembly.

42. The system of claim **35**, wherein the ginpole comprises a lengthwise beam.

43. The system of claim **42**, wherein the ginpole further comprises a boom.

44. The system of claim **42**, wherein the boom is pivotally attached to the lengthwise beam.

45. The system of claim **35**, wherein the means for lifting a wind turbine includes:

- a support frame connected to the top bay assembly of the structural tower;
- a first lifting truss pivotally connected to the support frame, the first lifting truss having a distal end extending away from the support frame;
- a rigging assembly connected proximate the distal end and configured for hoisting a turbine to the upper end of the tower; and
- an hydraulic ram having a first end connected to the support frame and a second end connected to the first lifting truss.

46. An apparatus for erecting a high-elevation multiple-bay structural tower and associated wind turbine equipment on a foundation, the apparatus comprising:

- means for securing a base bay assembly to the foundation;
- means for securing an intermediate bay assembly on top of the base bay assembly;
- means for securing a top bay assembly on top of the intermediate bay assembly;
- means for lifting a wind turbine from a level approximately adjacent to the foundation to a level above the uppermost level of the top bay assembly, the means for lifting being pivotally connected to the top bay assembly such that the means for lifting having a first position wherein the turbine equipment can be raised along the exterior side of the structural tower and a second position to a location substantially above the uppermost level of the top bay assembly such that the wind turbine can be operationally secured on top of the top bay assembly.

47. An apparatus according to claim **46** wherein the means for lifting comprises:

- a support frame connected to the top bay assembly of the tower;
- a first lifting truss pivotally connected to the support frame, the first lifting truss having a distal end extending away from the support frame;
- a rigging assembly connected proximate the distal end and configured for hoisting a turbine to the upper end of the tower; and
- an hydraulic ram having a first end connected to the support frame and a second end connected to the first lifting truss.

48. An apparatus according to claim **46** wherein the means for lifting comprises a rigging assembly and a pivot control cable.

49. An apparatus according to claim **46** further comprising hoisting means for raising the means for lifting to the top bay assembly.

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