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(54) **DECKING TILE**

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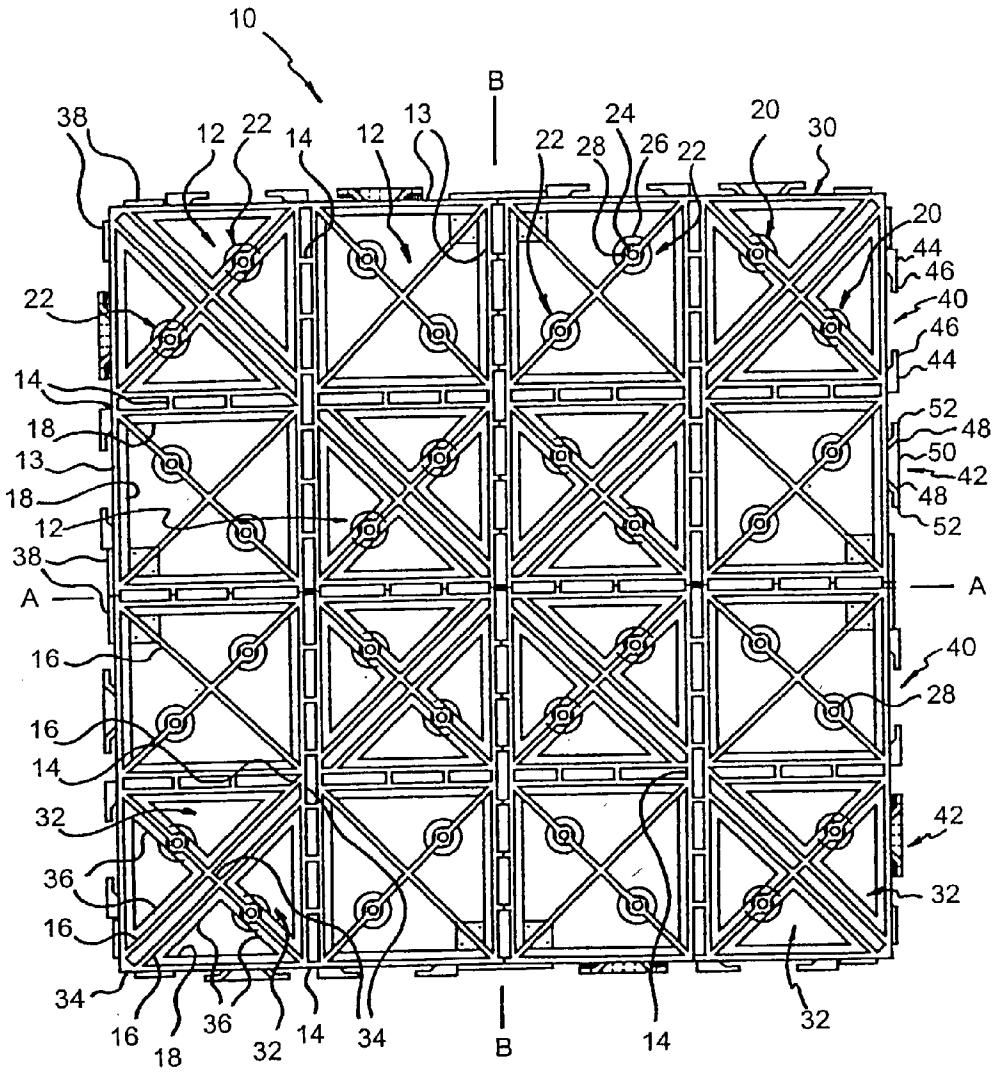
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A decking tile is divided into portions arranged in an array, with adjacent portions connected by a membranes adapted to be severed so that portions of the decking tile can be removed. Each portion is further adapted to receive at least two fasteners in order to secure one or more slats to the decking tile.



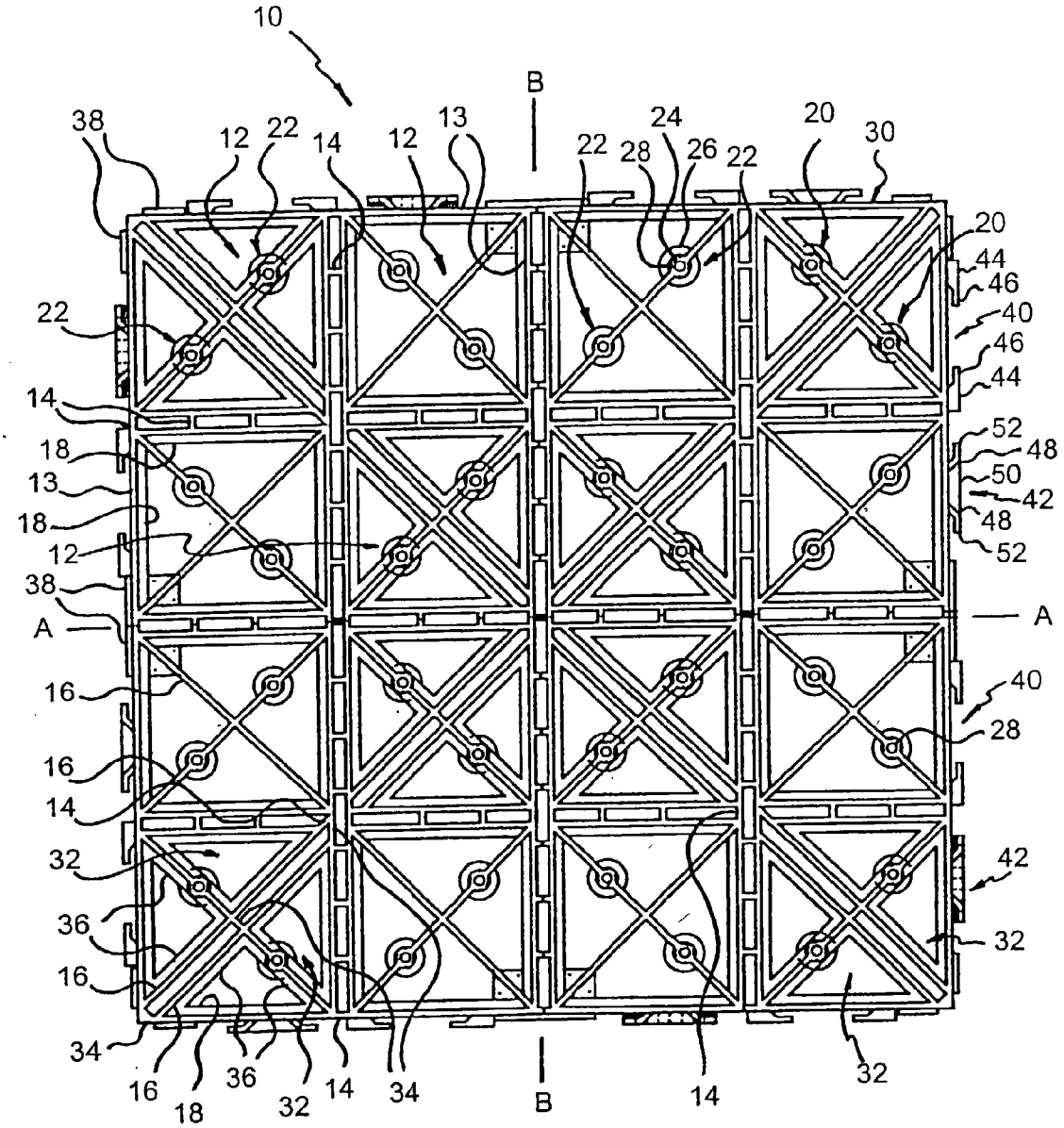

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Fig. 1.

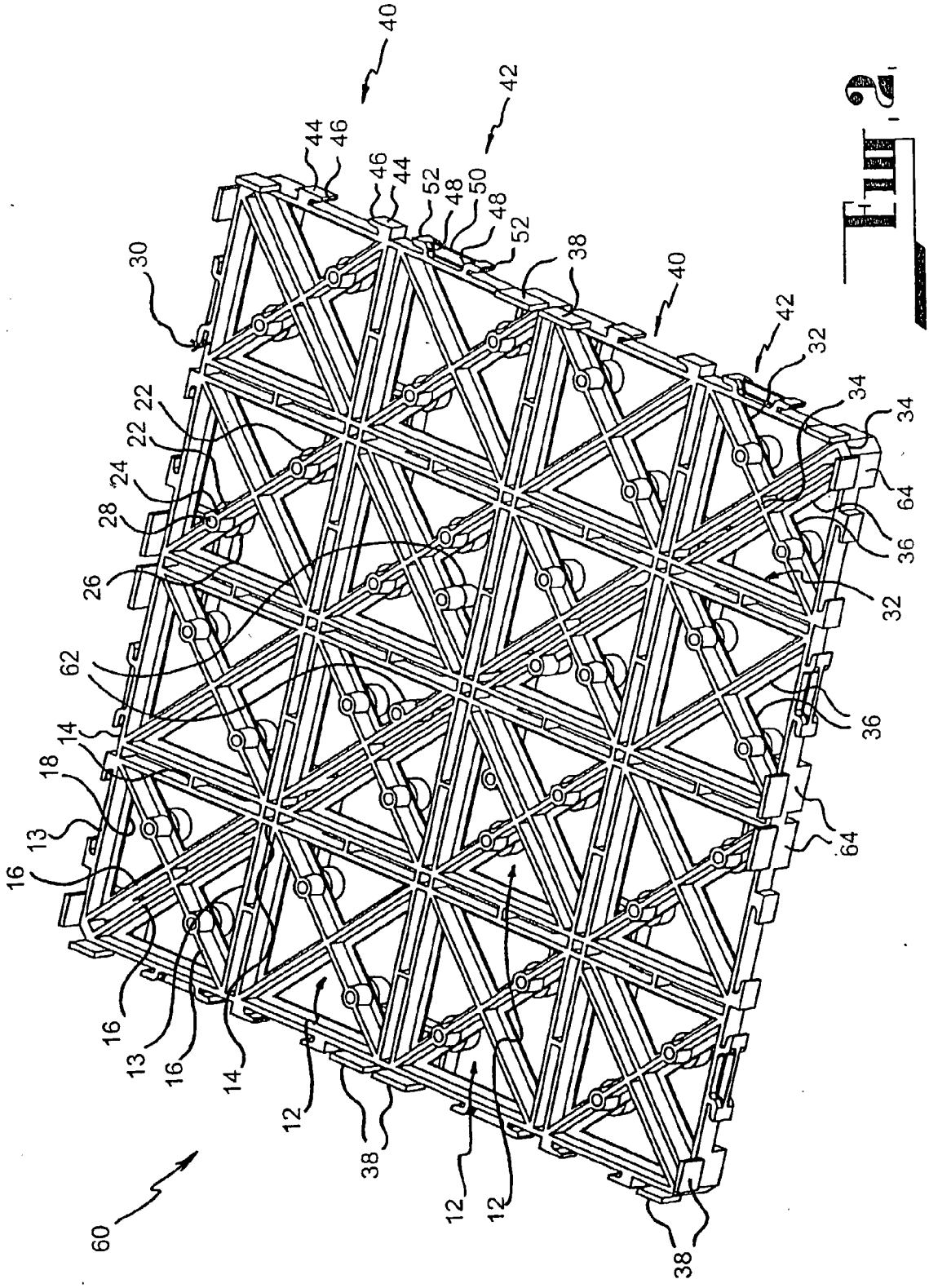
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Fig. 2

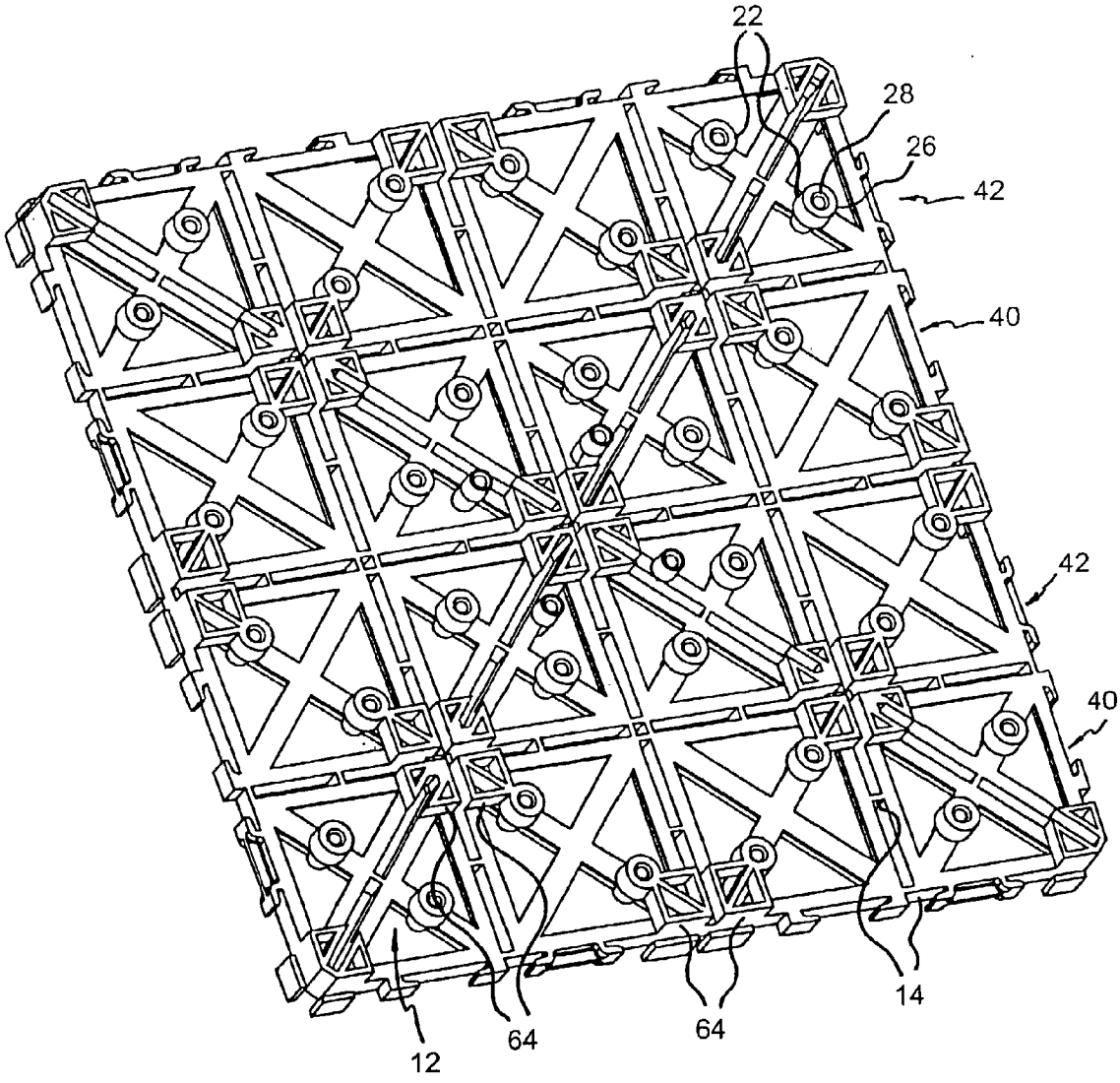
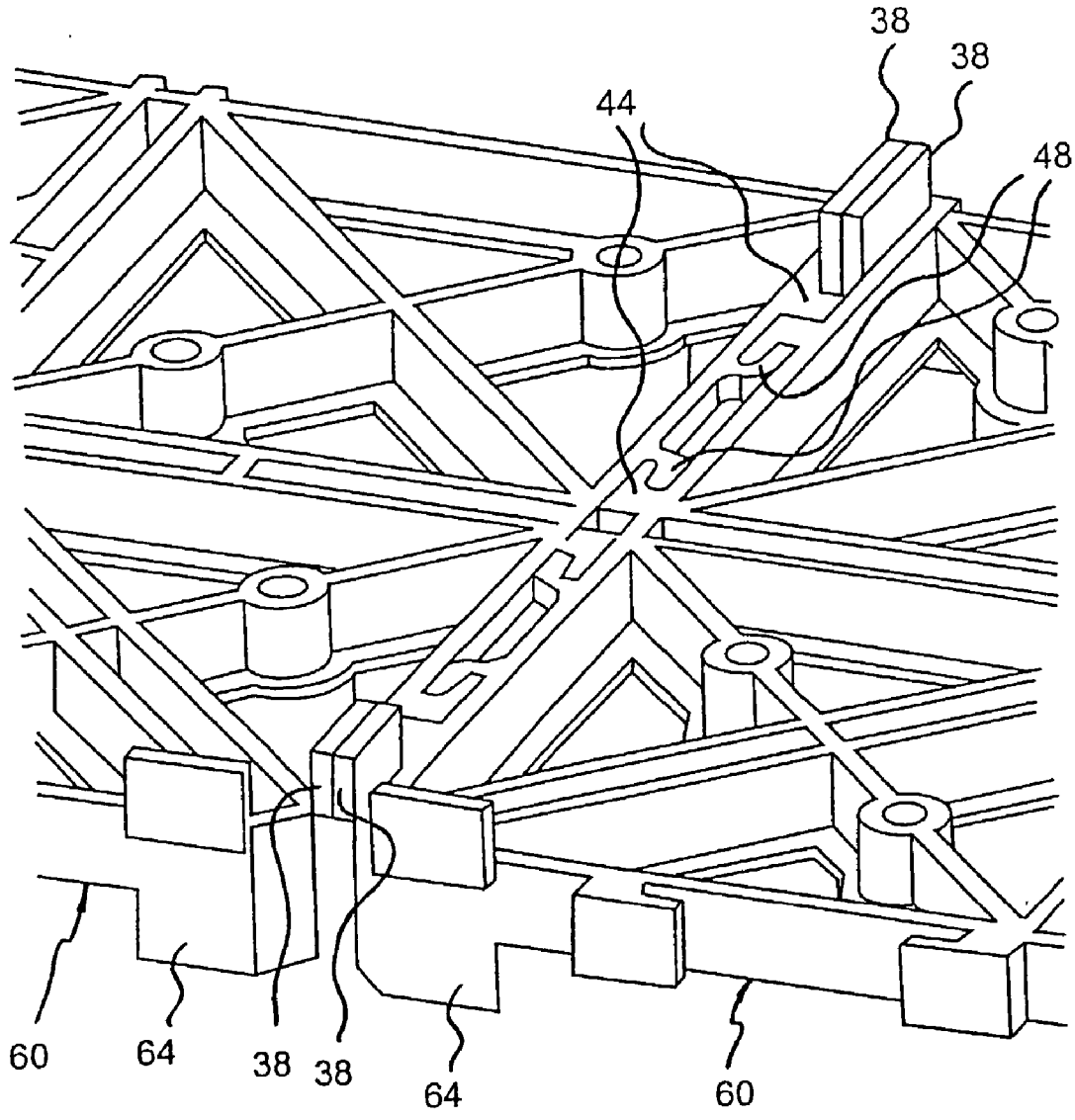


Fig. 3



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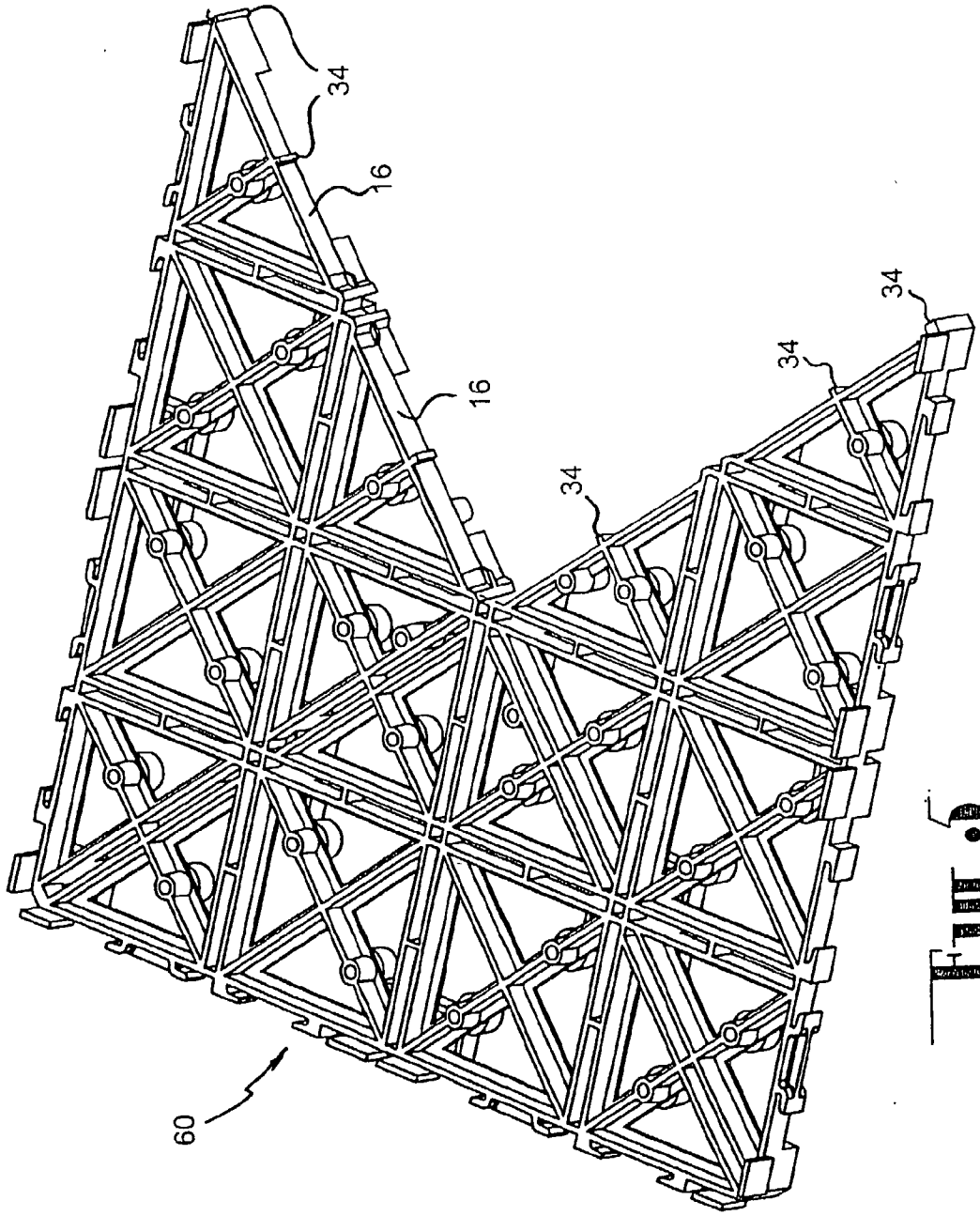

FIG. 5

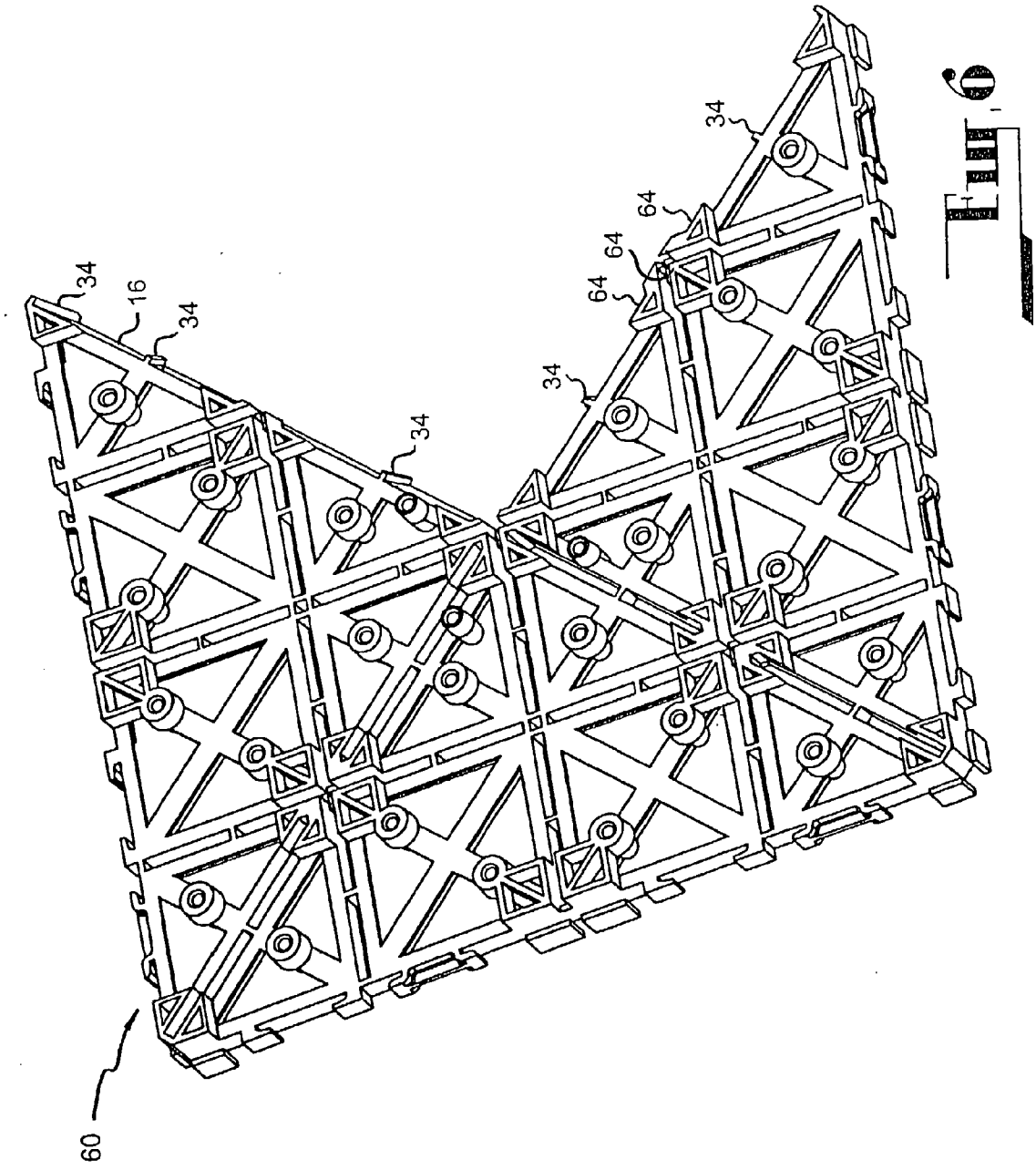

Fig. 6

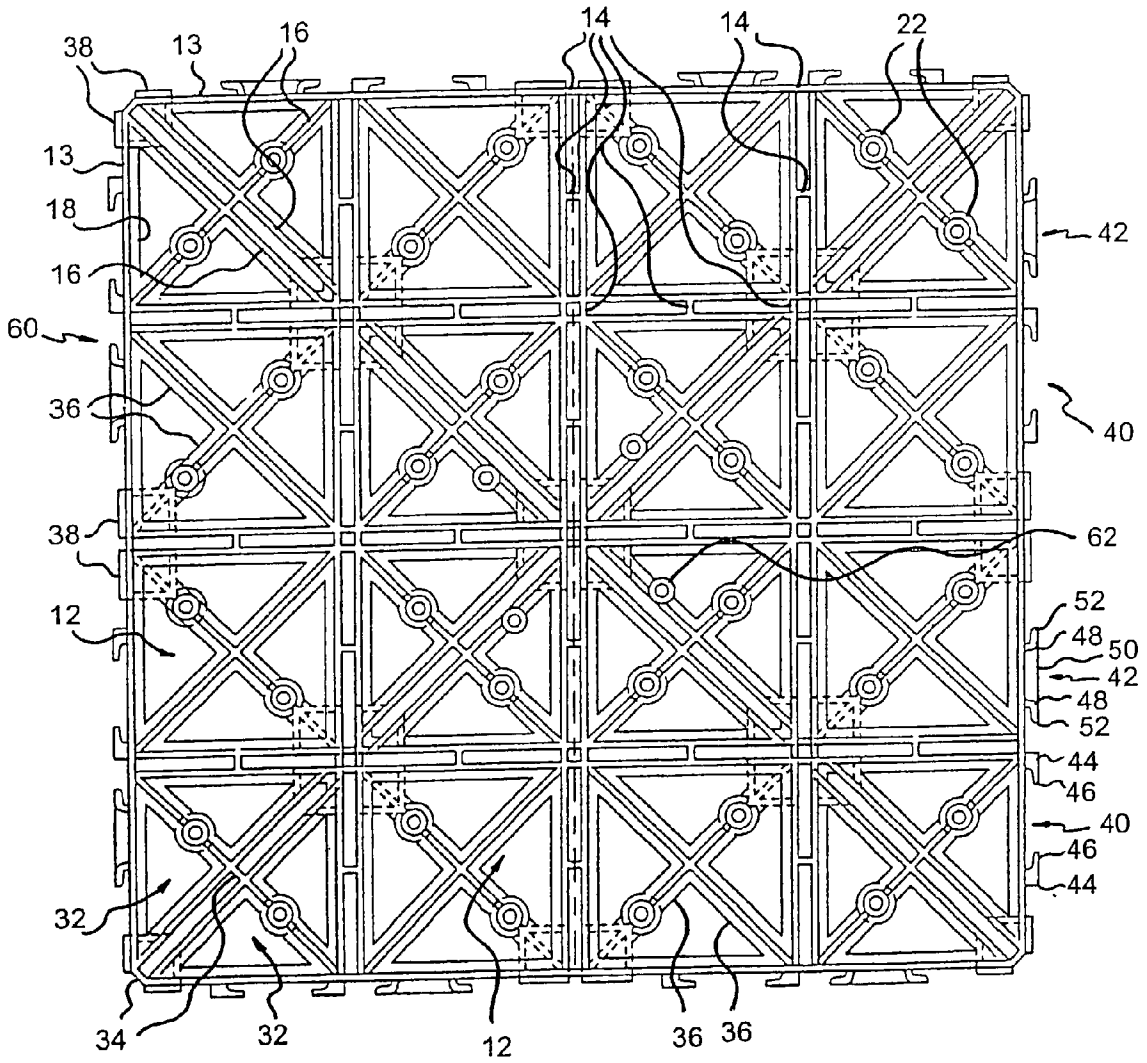
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Fig. 7

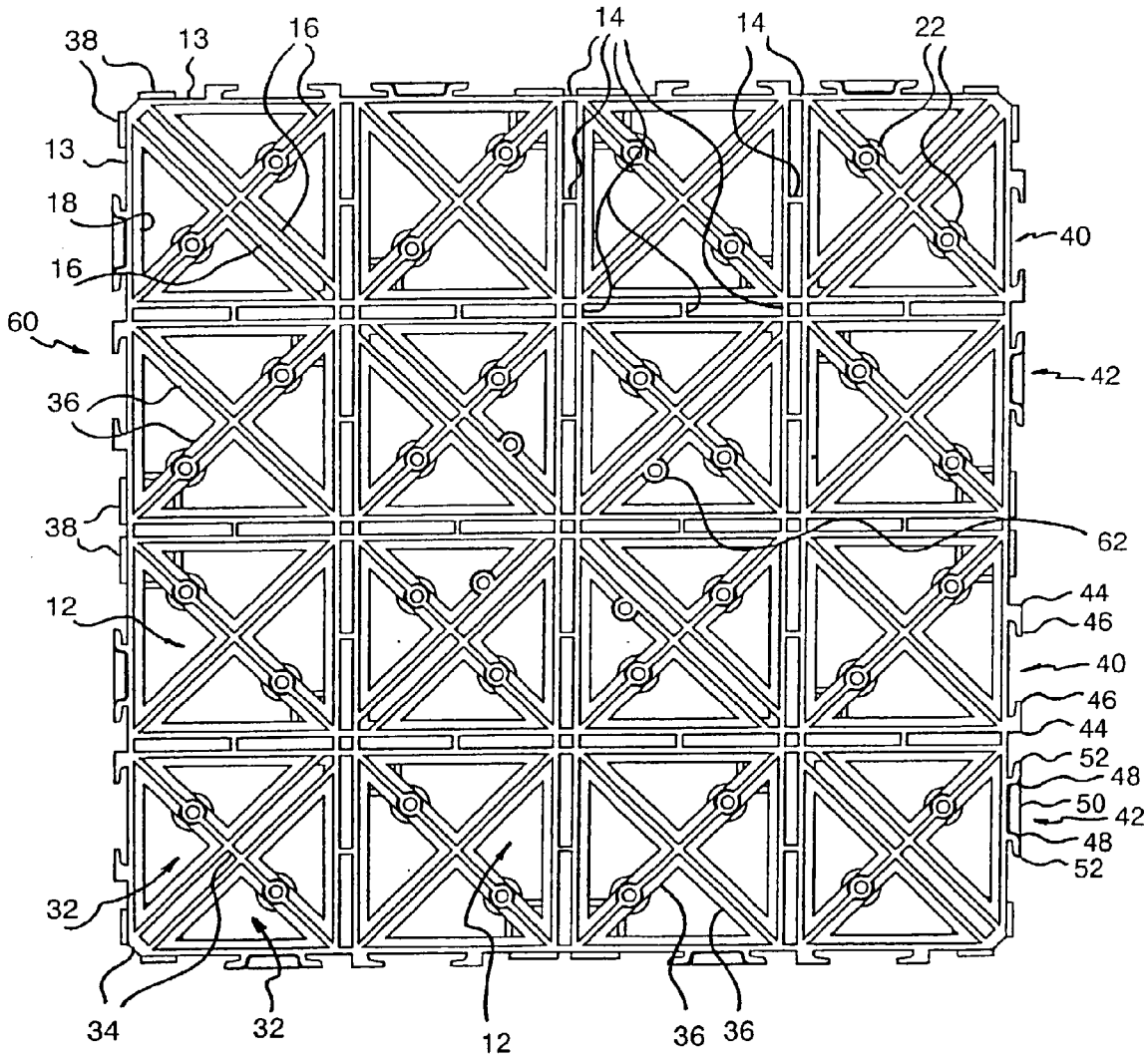
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Fig. 7A.

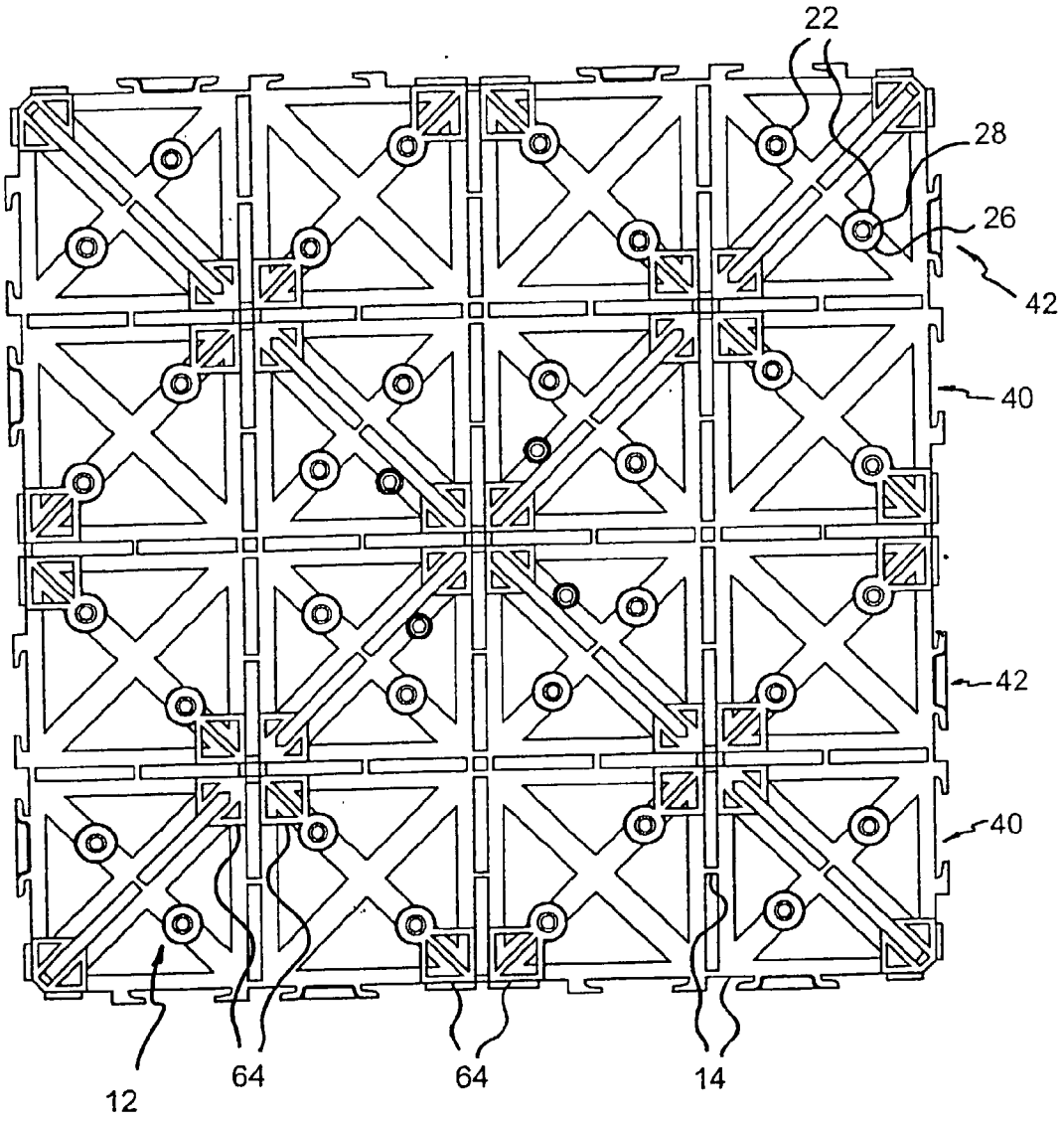

Fig. 7B.

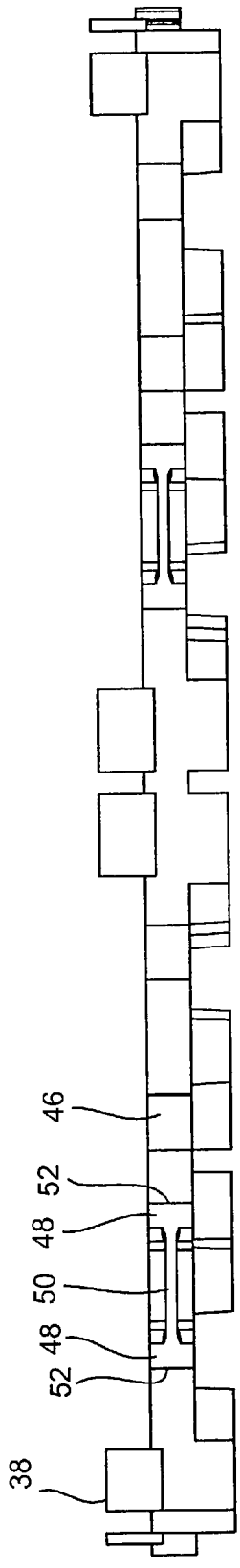

FIG. 7C

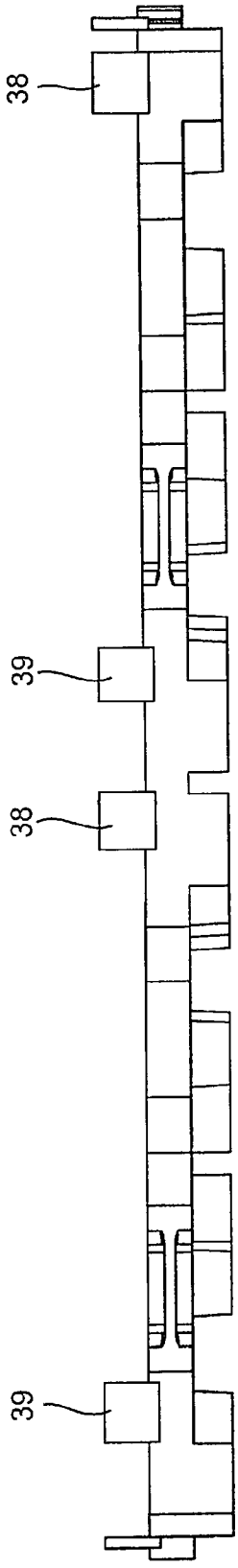

FIG. 7D

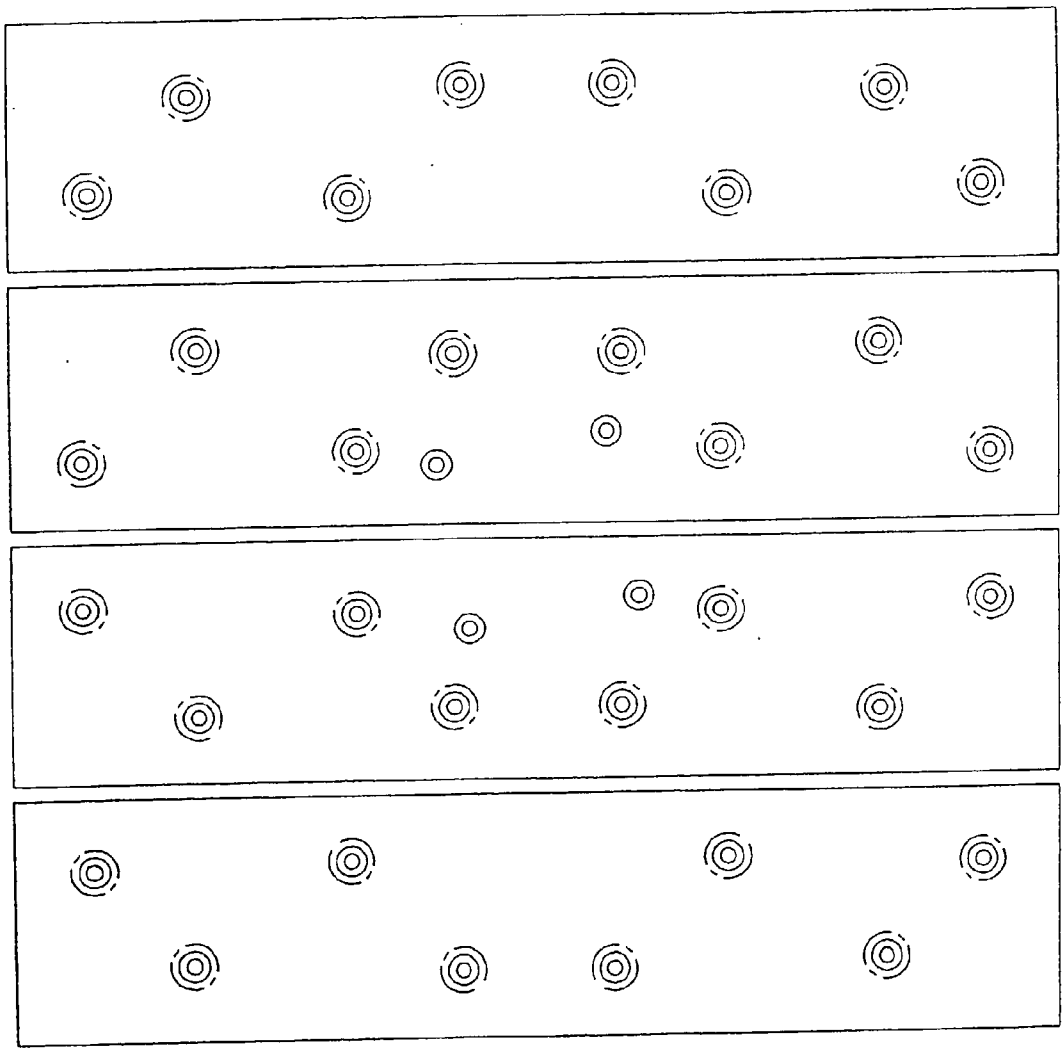

Fig. 8

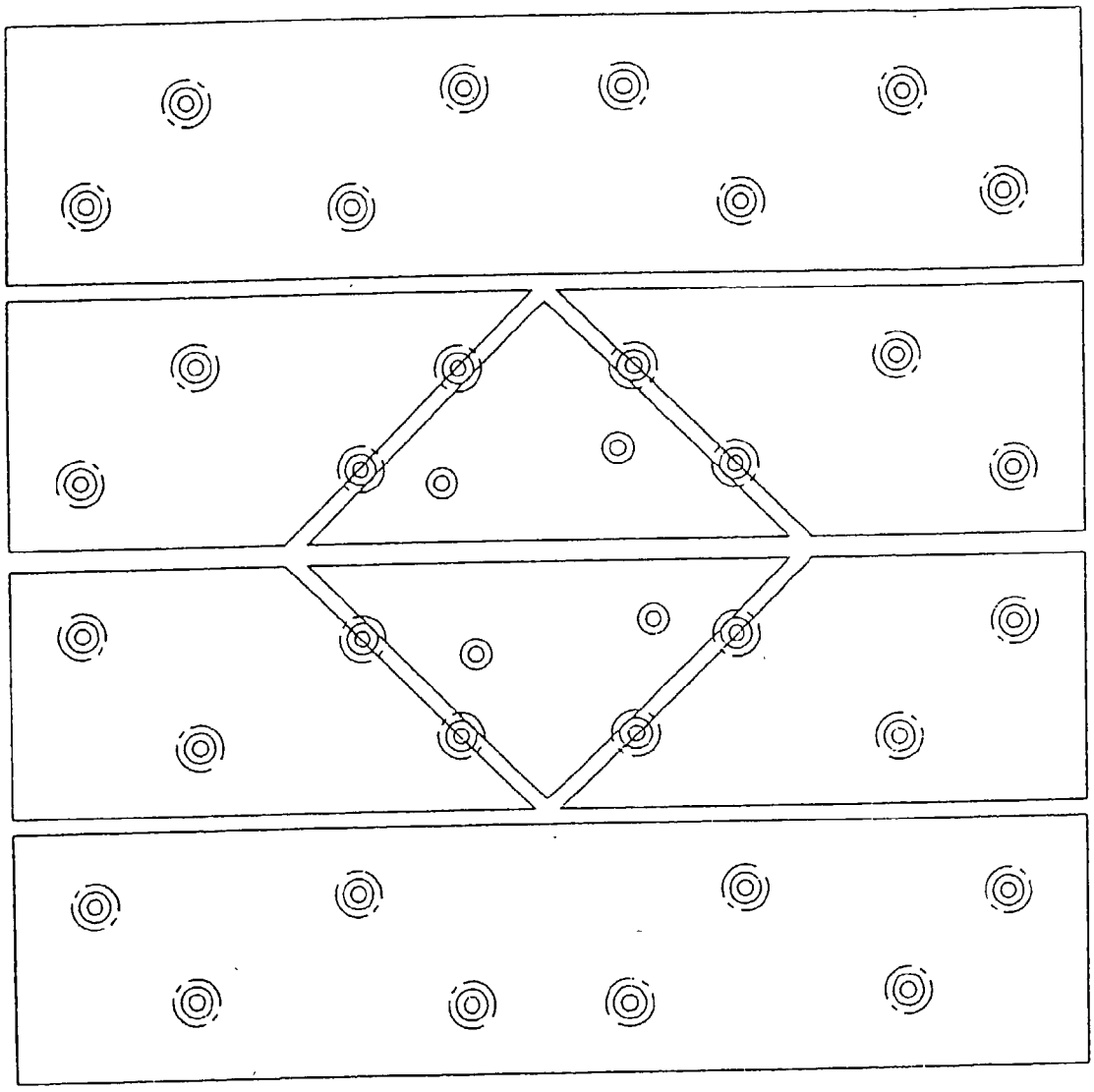

Fig. 9

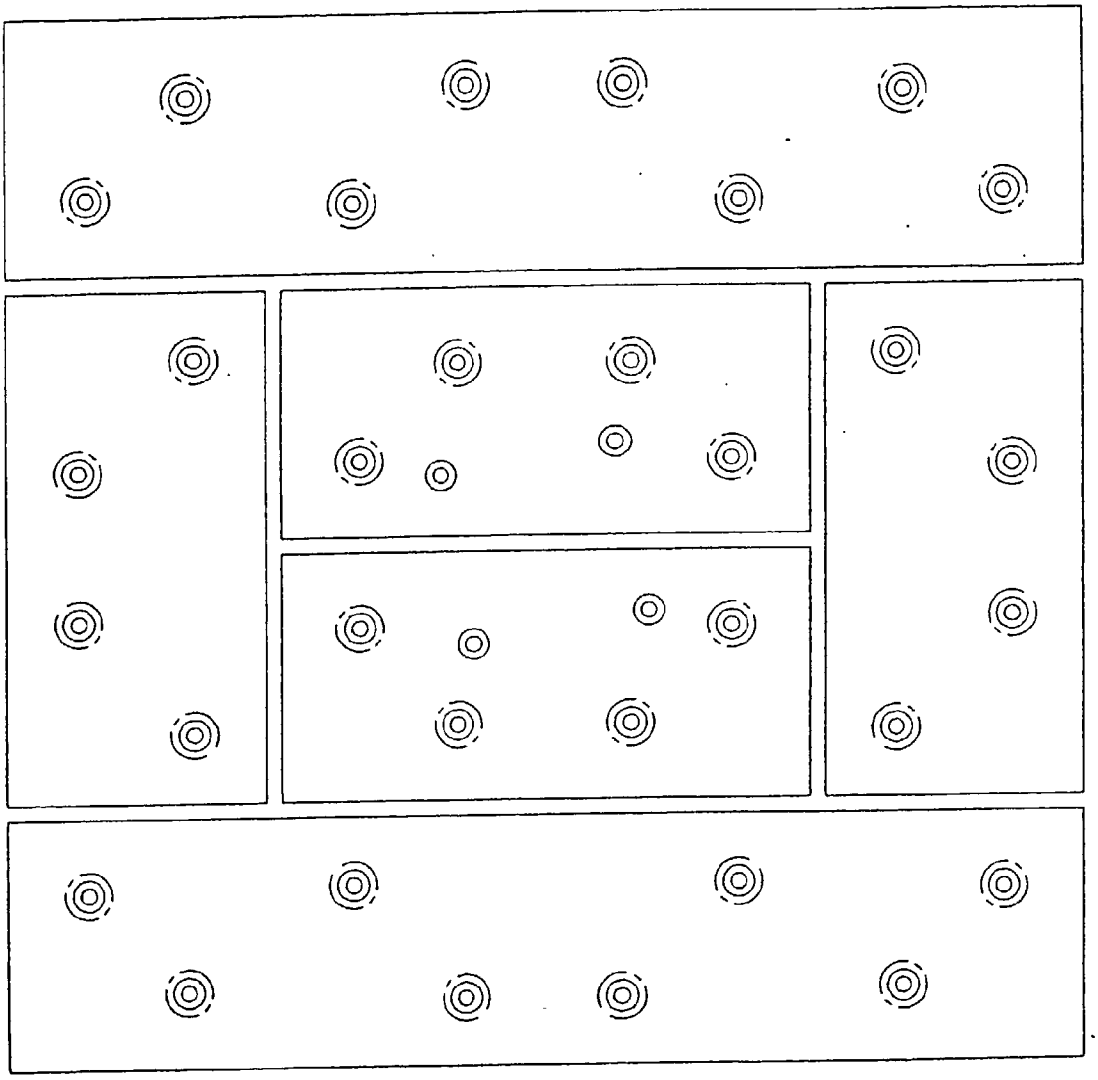

Fig. 10

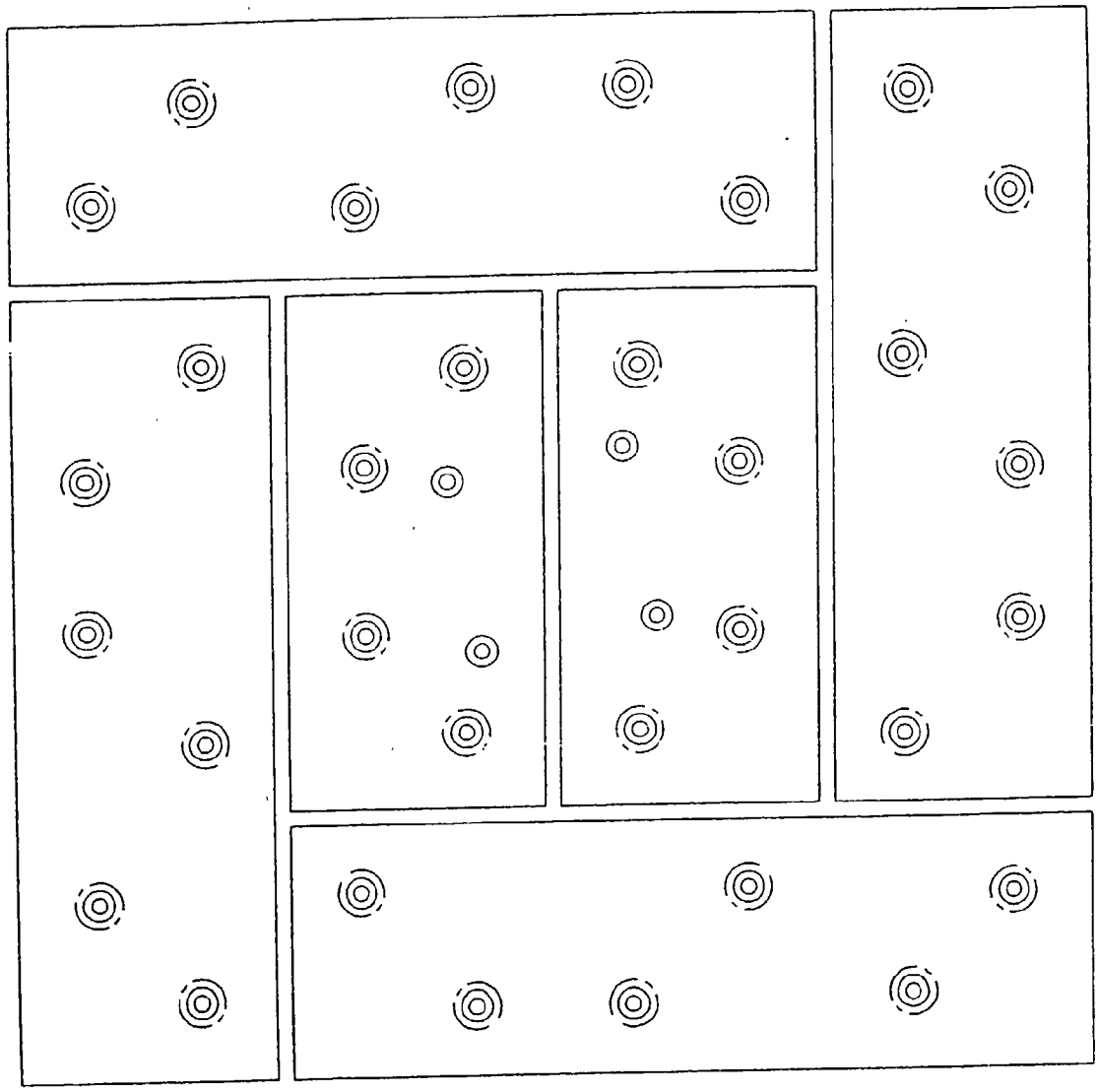

Fig. 11

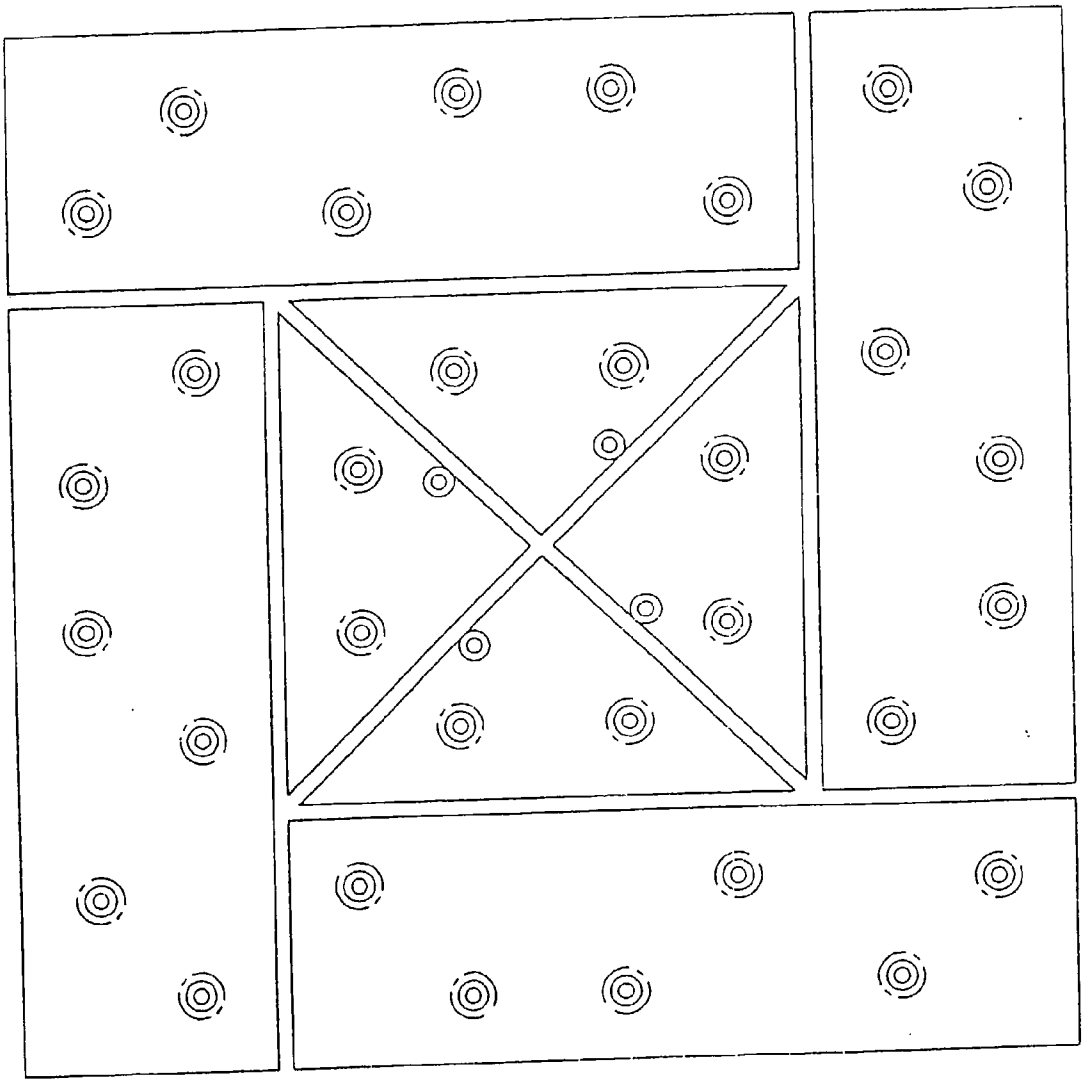

Fig. 12

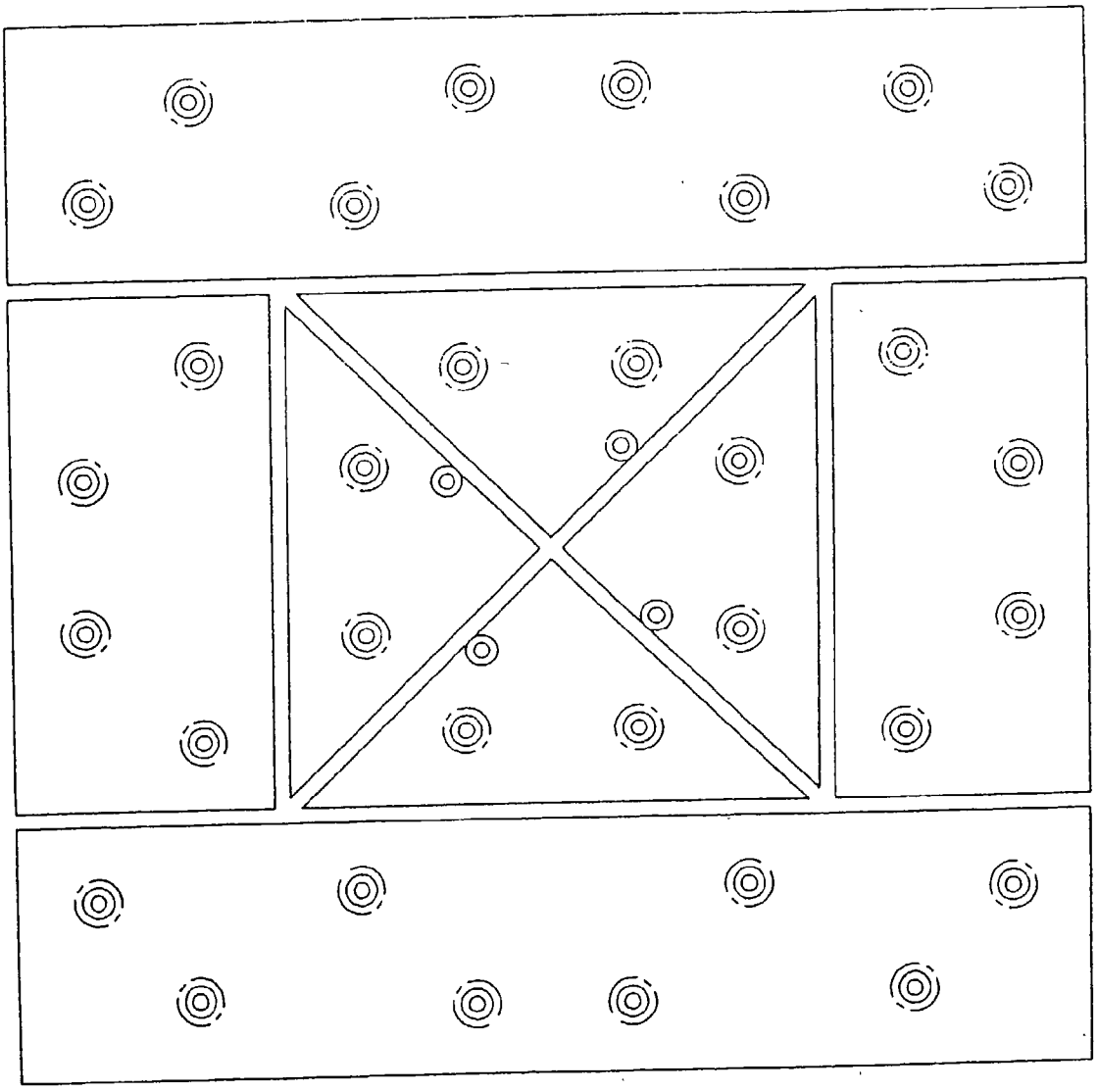

Fig. 13

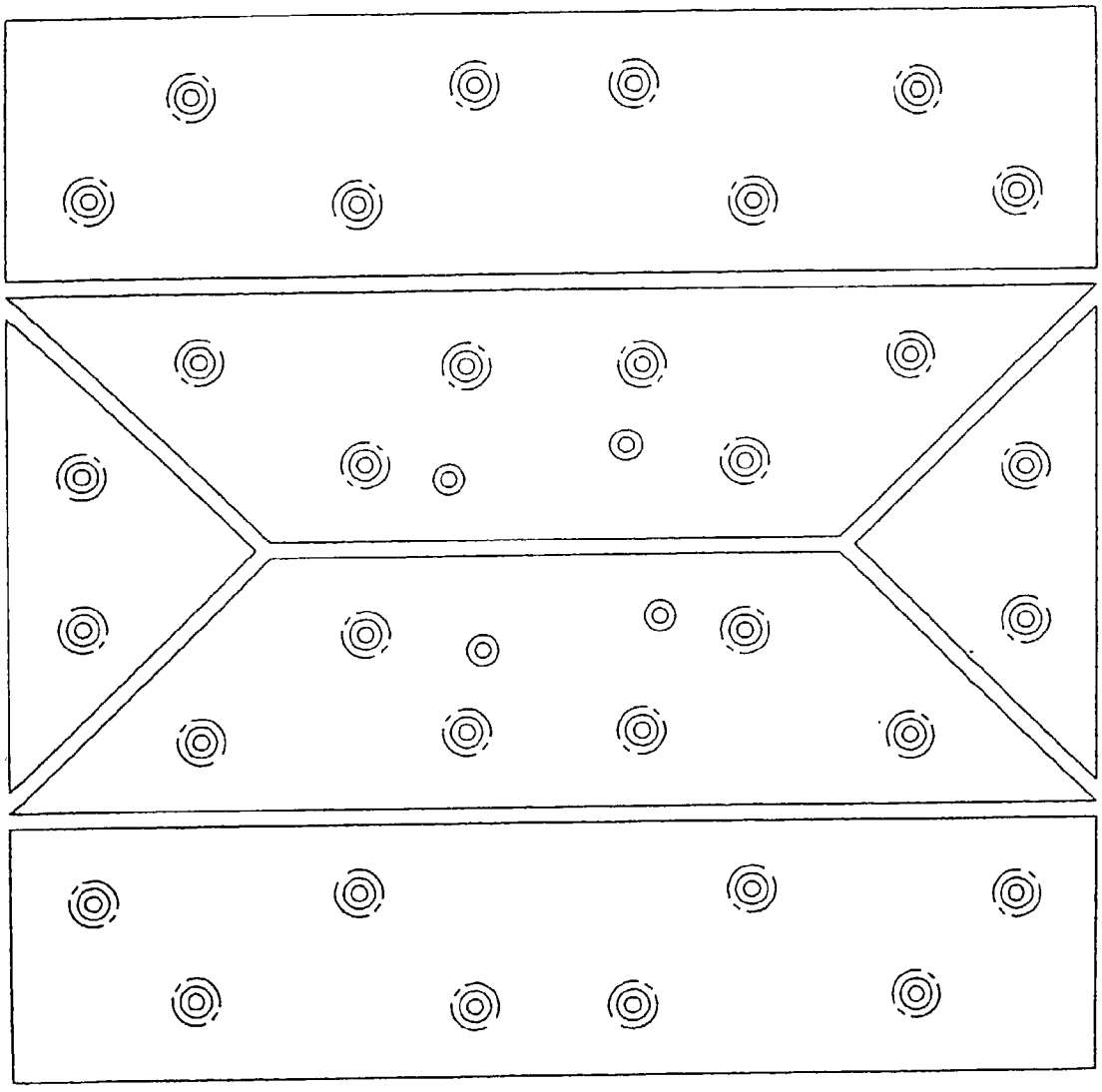

Fig. 14

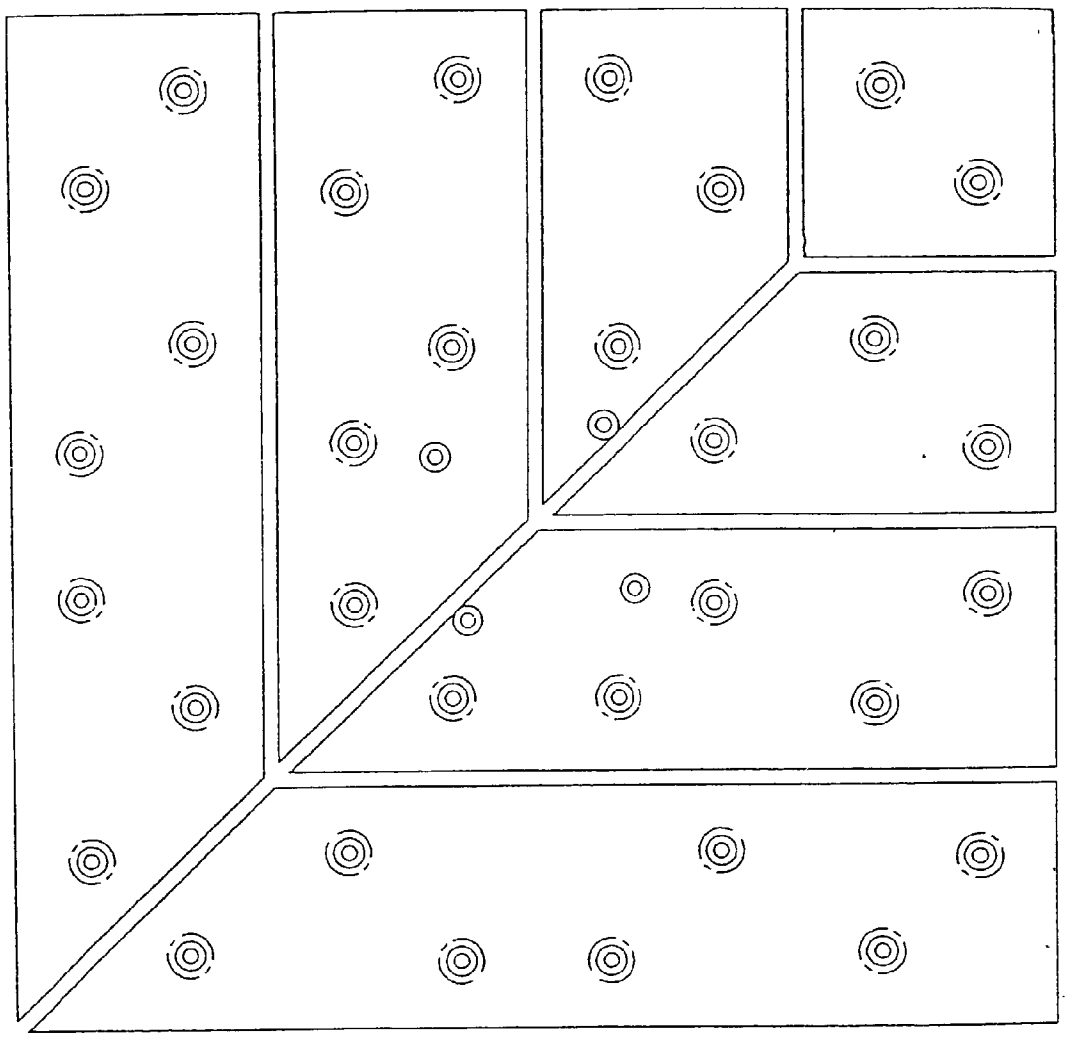

FIG. 15

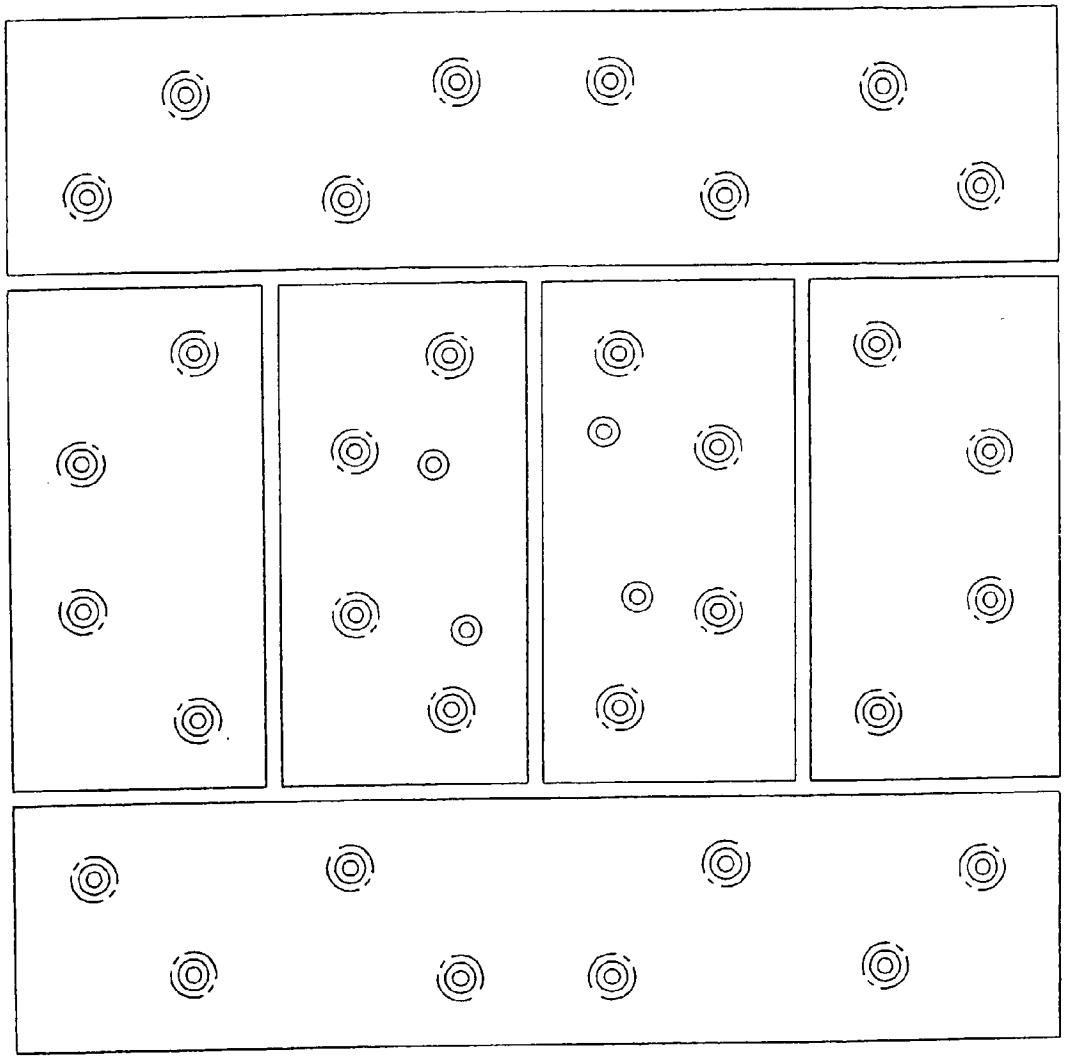

Fig. 16

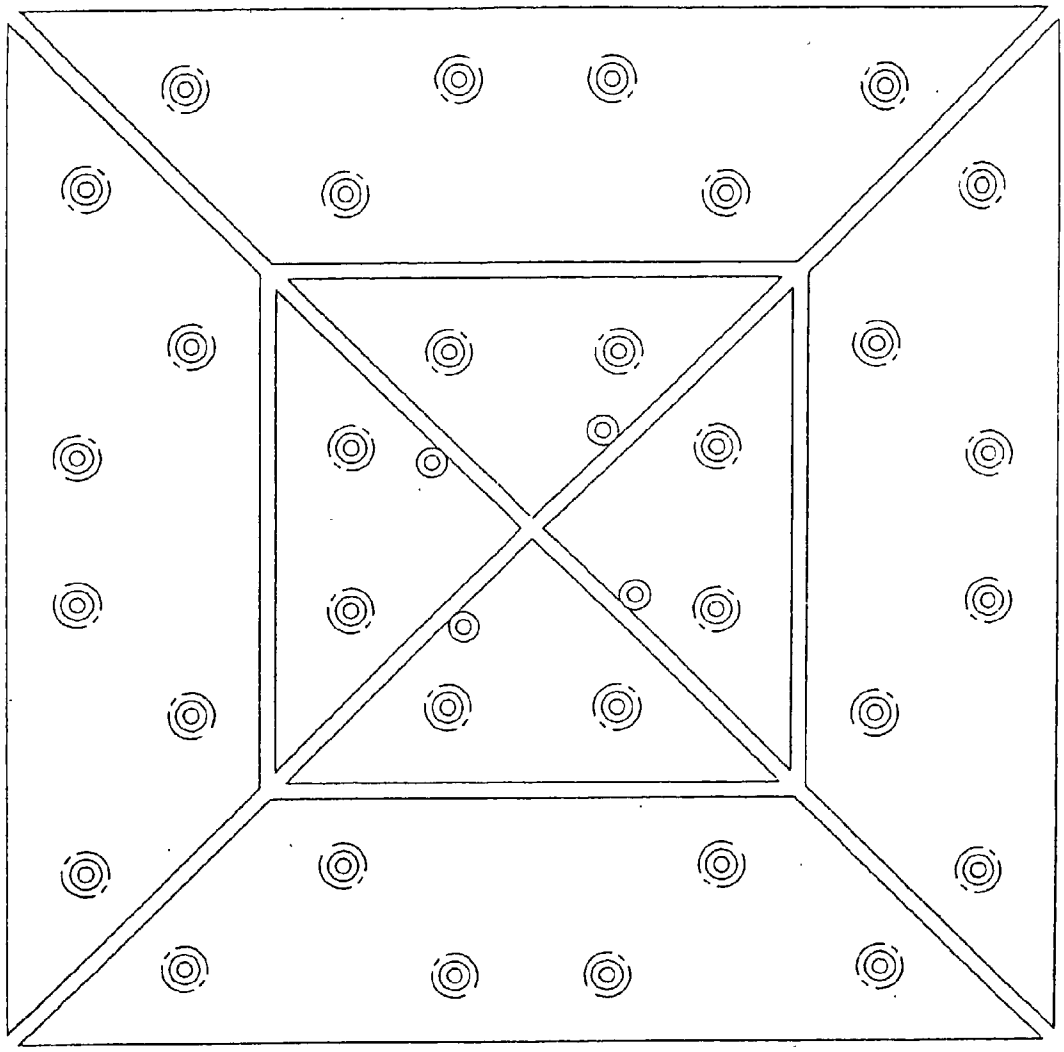

Fig. 17

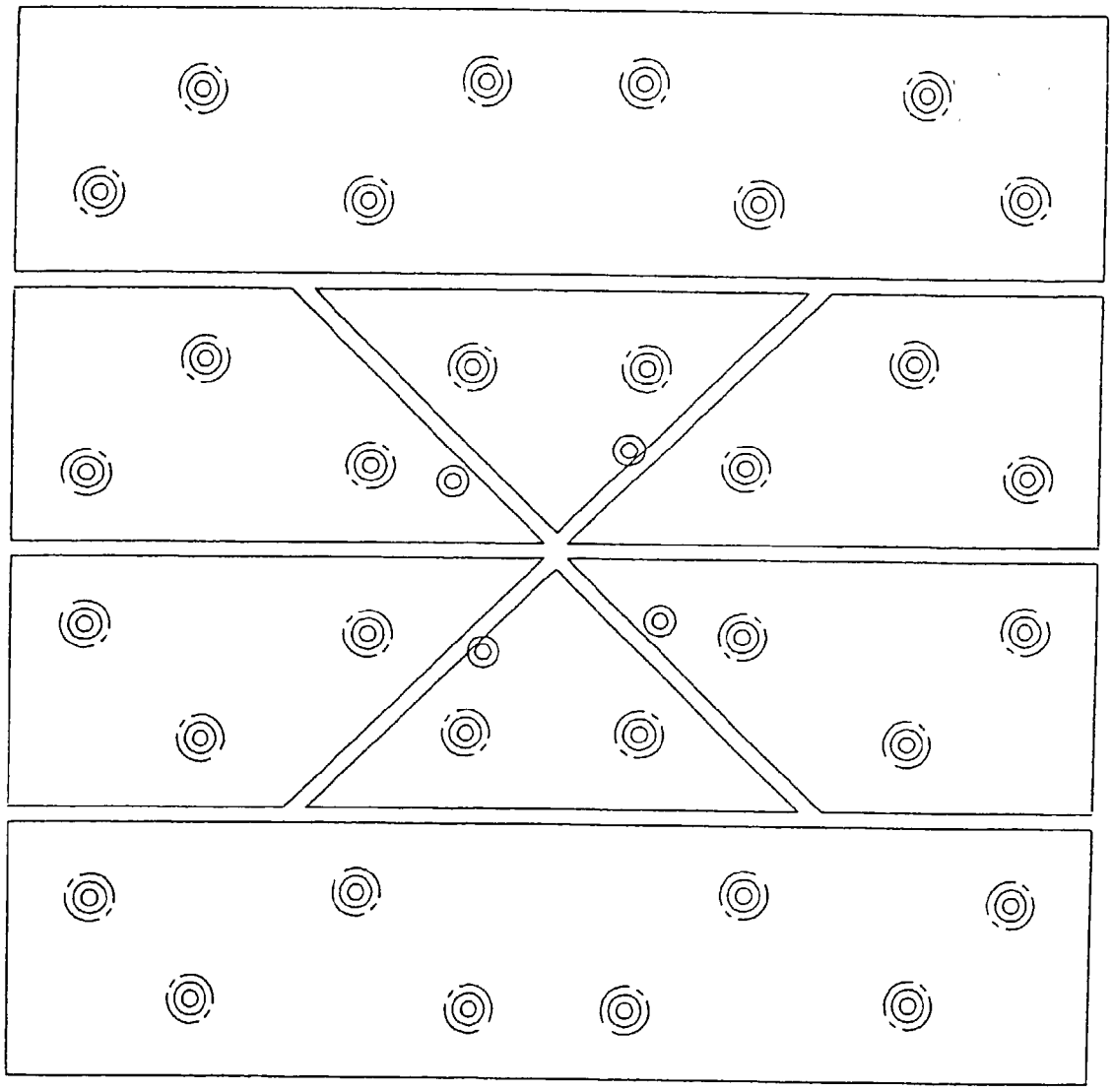

Fig. 18

DECKING TILE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application is a Continuation-in-Part U.S. Ser. No. 09/616,612, filed, Jul. 14, 2000, which claims priority of Australia Application No. PP1377 filed Jan. 16,1998, through PCT/AU99/00027 filed Jan. 15,1999, all of which are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a decking tile.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Existing decking tiles are typically formed of plastics material and are arranged to receive wooden slats laid in a side-by-side manner, with the slats connected thereto by screws or similar fasteners. Such decking tiles are used for a variety of purposes, including providing flooring for outdoor pavilions and balconies.

[0004] One type of decking tile currently available is divided into a 4×4 grid, with holes for fasteners provided centrally in the outer most 12 parts. Such tiles are designed to have four slats provided along rows or columns of the 4×4 grid. Consequently, the middle two slats will have only two fasteners holding the slat to the tile, at opposite ends of the tile. The principal problem with this form of tile is that if a portion of the tile is cut away to accommodate a permanent fixture where the tile is laid, some of the slats may have only one fastener to retain it to the tile, with the result that the slat tends to rotate, impairing the visual appearance of the tile. A secondary problem with this form of tile is that the locking mechanism has a female part provided on two sides and a male part provided on the other two sides of the tile, such that each side of any tile can connect to only two sides of another tile. Where it is desired to form patterns with the wooden slats, the arrangement of the holes for the fasteners and the requirement that each tile can be connected to only one of two sides of any other tile places restrictions on the types of patterns that can be formed.

[0005] Another type of existing decking tile is divided into a 2×2 grid, with four holes forming a diamond provided centrally within each quarter of the tile. The tile is arranged to receive four slats laid in a side-by-side manner on the tile, with each quarter receiving one half of two slats. The apertures are provided such that when the slats are laid parallel to a side of the tile, only two holes in each quarter are useable, with the other two provided in the gap between adjacent slats. The provision of the holes in a diamond pattern allows the slats to be placed parallel to any side of the tile while still providing a hole for a fastener for each slat in each quarter. If one of the quarters is removed from such a tile, two slats would then have only one fastener to hold them to the tile, again presenting problems regarding the rotation of slats on the tile. Further, the arrangement and number of holes for fasteners restricts the types of patterns that can be formed with the slats.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Accordingly, the invention resides in a decking tile divided into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, said portions being connected to adjacent portions via a plurality of membranes adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removing from said decking tile upon severing of the membranes surrounding it, each portion arranged to receive at least two fasteners to secure a slat thereto, wherein said at least two fasteners can engage a slat positioned parallel to any side of said decking tile.

[0007] According to a preferred feature of the invention, each portion includes at least two apertures, each aperture arranged to receive a fastener therethrough.

[0008] According to a preferred embodiment, said apertures are provided spaced from the periphery of the portion.

[0009] According to a preferred embodiment, the apertures are provided on an imaginary line that bisects the portion.

[0010] According to a preferred embodiment, said imaginary line forms a diagonal of said portion.

[0011] According to a preferred feature of the invention, at least one aperture is provided in each sub-portion.

[0012] According to a preferred feature of the invention, at least one of said portions is divided into sub-portions connected by further membranes whereby said at least one portion can be sub-divided.

[0013] According to a preferred embodiment, each portion is rectangular and said sub-portions are triangular to allow said at least one portion to be divided diagonally.

[0014] According to a preferred embodiment, said at least one portion is arranged to allow said decking tile to be sub-divided diagonally.

[0015] According to a preferred embodiment, at least one aperture is provided within each sub-portion.

[0016] According to a preferred embodiment, each portion forms a square having a side length commensurate with that of the width of a slat.

[0017] According to a preferred feature of the invention, said tile includes connecting means provided at each side thereof such that any two sides of adjacent tiles can be connected.

[0018] According to a preferred feature of the invention, said connecting means comprises first and second components, each side including both first and second components thereon.

[0019] According to a preferred feature of the invention, said first component comprises a pair of first arms spaced apart and inwardly directed; said second component comprises a pair of second arms spaced apart and outwardly directed, wherein said second arms and said first arms are disposable in a mutually engaged position.

[0020] According to a preferred feature of the invention, said second component includes a reinforcing member extending between said second arms.

[0021] According to a preferred embodiment, said connecting means includes locking means arranged to inhibit disconnection of said connecting means.

[0022] According to a preferred embodiment, said locking means comprises a recess provided on one of said first or second arms and a protrusion provided on the other of said first and second arms.

[0023] According to a preferred feature of the invention, each side of the decking tile is provided with guide means adapted to aid the positioning of a slat parallel to any side.

[0024] According to a preferred embodiment, the guide means comprises a plurality of guides spaced along each side.

[0025] According to a preferred embodiment, the guides are arranged so that a guide of one tile will abut a guide of an adjacent tile when connected.

[0026] According to a preferred embodiment, the guides are arranged so that a guide of one tile will not abut a guide of an adjacent tile when connected.

[0027] In accordance with another aspect of this invention, there is provided a floor covering element comprising a decking tile according to the first aspect of the invention and a plurality of slats provided on the decking tile.

[0028] In accordance with another aspect of this invention, there is provided an improvement in a decking tile arranged to receive a plurality of slats in a side-by-side manner, the decking tile having a plurality of apertures for receiving fasteners to retain the slats to the decking tile and connecting means provided around the periphery of the decking tile for connecting said decking tile to another decking tile, said improvement comprising dividing the decking tile into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, the portions being connected to adjacent portions by a plurality of membranes adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removal from the decking tile upon severing of the membranes surrounding it, each portion having at least two apertures provided therein, said at least two fasteners can engage a slat positioned on said portion parallel to any side of said decking tile.

[0029] In accordance with another aspect of this invention, there is provided an improvement in a decking tile module comprising a decking tile and a plurality of slats received by the decking tile in a side-by-side manner, the decking tile having a plurality of apertures for receiving fasteners to retain the slats to the decking tile and connecting means provided around the periphery of the decking tile for connecting said decking tile to another decking tile, said improvement comprising dividing the decking tile into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, the portions being connected to adjacent portions by a plurality of membranes adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removal from the decking tile upon severing of the membranes surrounding it, each portion having at least two apertures provided therein, said at least two fasteners can engage a slat positioned on said portion parallel to any side of said decking tile.

[0030] In accordance with another aspect of this invention, there is provided a decking tile module comprising a decking tile and cladding supported from a surface of said cladding, said cladding comprising a plurality of slats which are adapted to be fixed to said tile, said decking tile being divided into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, said portions being connected to each adjacent portion by a membrane adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removing from said decking tile upon severing of the membranes connecting it to the other portions, each portion arranged to receive at least two fasteners to secure a slat thereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0031] This invention will now be described with reference to two embodiments and the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0032] **FIG. 1** is a top plan view of a decking tile according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0033] **FIG. 2** is an upper perspective view of a decking tile according to the second embodiment of the invention;

[0034] **FIG. 3** is a lower perspective view of the decking tile shown in **FIG. 2**;

[0035] **FIG. 4** is an upper perspective view of part of two adjacent tiles being connected;

[0036] **FIG. 5** is an upper perspective view of the tile shown in **FIG. 2** with a quarter of the tile cut away;

[0037] **FIG. 6**, is a lower perspective view of the tile shown in **FIG. 5** with a quarter of the tile cut away;

[0038] **FIG. 7** is a top plan view of the decking tile shown in **FIG. 2**;

[0039] **FIG. 7A** is a top plan view of the decking tile shown in **FIG. 2**;

[0040] **FIG. 7B** is a bottom plan view of the decking tile shown in **FIG. 2**;

[0041] **FIG. 7C** is a side elevation of the decking tile shown in **FIG. 2**;

[0042] **FIG. 7D** is a side elevation of an adaptation of the decking tile shown in **FIG. 2**;

[0043] **FIG. 8** shows slats in a first configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0044] **FIG. 9** shows slats in a second configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0045] **FIG. 10** shows slats in a third configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0046] **FIG. 11** shows slats in a fourth configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0047] **FIG. 12** shows slats in a fifth configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0048] **FIG. 13** shows slats in a sixth configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0049] **FIG. 14** shows slats in a seventh configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0050] **FIG. 15** shows slats in a eighth configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0051] **FIG. 16** shows slats in a ninth configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon;

[0052] **FIG. 17** shows slats in a tenth configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon; and

[0053] **FIG. 18** shows slats in a eleventh configuration for attaching to a decking tile, with the apertures for fasteners shown thereon.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0054] The first embodiment is shown in **FIG. 1** and is directed towards a decking tile **10** formed by a plastics injection moulding process.

[0055] The decking tile **10** comprises sixteen portions **12** arranged in a 4×4 array. Each portion **12** is defined by a wall **13** extending around its periphery and is connected to adjacent portions by a plurality of membranes **14**. Accordingly, any of the portions **12** can be removed from the decking tile **10** by severing the membranes **14** surrounding it. This allows the decking tile **10** to accommodate permanent fixtures such as pipes and pillars where the decking tile is laid.

[0056] Each of the portions **12** is square in shape and includes two reinforcing members **16** extending diagonally from corner to corner, such that the reinforcing members **16** form an "X" shape. An inwardly directed flange **18** is provided on the wall **13** of each portion **12** to increase the structural strength of the decking tile **10**.

[0057] One of the reinforcing members **16** in each portion **12** has a pair of feet **20** formed integrally therewith, one to either side of the other reinforcing member **16**. Each of the feet **20** comprises a cylinder **22** having a relatively narrow section **24** formed integrally with the reinforcing member **16** and a relatively wide section **26** extending beyond the reinforcing member **16** so as to protrude from a lower surface of the decking tile **10**. The cylinder **22** has an aperture **28** formed axially therein. The aperture **28** has a widened section (not shown) formed in the relatively wide section **26** of the cylinder **22**. The aperture **28** is arranged to receive a fastener to retain a slat to an upper surface **30** of the decking tile **10**. In this regard, the widened section of the aperture **28** is intended to receive a widened portion of the fastener, such as the head of a screw. **FIG. 1** is a plan view looking onto the upper surface **30** of the decking tile **10**.

[0058] Eight of the portions **12** are sub-divided into two sub-portions **32** along the reinforcing member **16** of the portion **12** which does not have the feet **20** formed integrally therewith. Such portions have two reinforcing members **16** provided spaced apart adjacent the diagonal along which the portion is sub-divided. The two reinforcing members **16** are separated by further membranes **34** which can be used to sub-divide the portion **12**. Such portions also include further inwardly directed flanges **36** provided on each reinforcing member **16**. The sub-divided portions **12** are arranged in the decking tile **10** to allow it to be divided along a diagonal thereof.

[0059] The decking tile **10** includes a plurality of guides **38** provided at spaced locations around the periphery of the decking tile **10**. The guides **38** extend upwardly of the upper surface **30** and assist to retain slats placed upon the upper surface **30** prior to fastening the slats to the decking tile **10** in that they prevent the slats from extending beyond the periphery of the decking tile **10**.

[0060] The decking tile **10** further comprises connecting means provided at each side of the decking tile **10** to allow the decking tile **10** to be connected to any side of an adjacent decking tile. In the embodiment, the connecting means comprises first and second components **40** and **42**, respectively, with two first components **40** and two second components **42** provided on each side of the decking tile **10** in an interlaced manner.

[0061] Each first component **40** comprises a pair of first arms **44** provided spaced apart and having an inwardly directed portion **46**. The inwardly directed portion **46** is spaced from the side of the decking tile **10**.

[0062] Each second component **42** comprises a pair of second arms **48** provided spaced apart. A reinforcing member **50** extends between each pair of second arms **48**. Each second arm **48** has an outwardly directed portion **52** provided spaced from the side of the decking tile **10**. The outwardly directed portion **52** of each second arm **48** and the inwardly directed portion **46** of each first arm **44** are spaced an equal amount from the side of the decking tile **10** and are of substantially equal thickness. To connect two adjacent tiles together, the tiles are placed adjacent each other with one tile slightly above the other, which is then lowered to bring the first and second components on the adjacent sides of the tiles into a mutually engaged position with the first arms **44** of each first component **40** engaged with the second arms **48** of each second component **42**.

[0063] The decking tile **10** is symmetrical about axes AA and BB shown in **FIG. 1**, allowing any side of a decking tile to be connected to any other side an adjacent decking tile.

[0064] The reinforcing member **50** in each second component **42** increases the strength of the engagement between the first and second components **40** and **42** by resisting the tendency of the second arms **48** to be forced together if two connected tiles are pulled apart. As shown in the drawings, the width of the guides **38** are approximately half that of the first and second components **40** and **42**, so that when two decking tiles are connected together, their guides **38** are touching. However, in a preferred adaptation of the embodiments, as shown in **FIG. 7**D, the guides **39** are offset along the perimeter so that, when the tiles are connected, a guide of one tile does not contact the corresponding guide of the adjacent tile. This arrangement has been found to avoid a problem caused due to expansion of the tiles which results in the guides pressing against corresponding guides thereby causing one or more tiles to be lifted obliquely from the horizontal.

[0065] Further, the width of the first and second components **42** is the same as the distance between the walls **13** of adjacent portions **12**, such that when decking tiles are laid in an array, the joints between tiles are not prominent.

[0066] The decking tile **10** of the first embodiment is adapted to receive four wooden slats provided parallel to a side of the decking tile along rows or columns of the portions **12**, the length of each element being substantially equal to the width of the decking tile such that each wooden slat occupied four portions **12**, thereby providing a floor covering element. In this regard, it is to be noted that the arrangement of the apertures **28** in each portion **12** permits both apertures **28** in each portion **12** to be used to retain a slat thereto if necessary. This is advantageous since if some of

the portions **12** are removed from the tile to accommodate a permanent fixture, the slat positioned on that row or column will also be divided an may have only one portion **12** to retain it to the decking tile **10**. The ability to have two apertures in each portion **12** retain a slat prevents rotation of a slat even if that portion **12** is the only portion retaining the slat.

[**0067**] In addition, the incorporation of the apertures **28** into the feet **20** produces an even distribution of the feet throughout the decking tile which provides for a more even distribution of weight placed on the decking tile.

[**0068**] In addition to the above it has been found that having each portion able to receive at least two fasteners provides significant flexibility regarding forming patterns with the wooden slats, to be described hereinafter in relation to the second embodiment. Such patterns were in the main not possible with previous decking tiles because of the arrangement and location of fasteners on those decking tiles.

[**0069**] The second embodiment is shown in FIGS. **2** to **7** and is directed towards a decking tile **60**. The decking tile **60** is similar to the decking tile **10**, with like reference numeral denoting like parts.

[**0070**] In the decking tile **60** of the second embodiment, the further flanges **36** are provided on every reinforcing member **16**, including those in portions **12** which are not sub-divided.

[**0071**] Further, in the decking tile **60** the feet **20** within each quarter of the tile **60** are arranged on parallel lines, with the feet **30** forming concentric diamond shapes on the entire tile. That is, each quarter of the decking tile **60** can be derived by rotating any one of the other quarters about the centre of the tile. In contrast, the feet on the decking tile **10** of the first embodiment form diamonds within each quarter.

[**0072**] The four inner most portions **12** of the decking tile **60** each include a further cylinder **62** arranged to receive a fastener, such that each of the four inner most portions **12** can receive three fasteners. The further cylinders **62** are provided on one of the reinforcing members **16** and are located adjacent the centre of the tile **60**.

[**0073**] Further, the decking tile **60** further includes additional feet **64** as shown in **FIG. 3**. The additional feet **64** act to further distribute weight placed on the decking tile **60**. Where one of the additional feet **64** is provided at a sub-division of a portion **12**, the foot **64** is itself sub-divided into two halves so as to still permit removal of one of the sub-portions **32**.

[**0074**] **FIG. 2** is an upper perspective view of the decking tile **60** looking onto the upper surface **30**. **FIG. 7** is a top plan view of the decking tile **60** looking onto the upper surface **30**, showing the additional feet **64** in dotted outline. **FIG. 7A** is a top plan view of the decking tile **60** looking onto the upper surface **30FIG. 7B** is a bottom plan view of the decking tile **60** looking onto the lower surface. **FIG. 7C** is a side elevation of the decking tile **60**.

[**0075**] **FIG. 3** is a lower perspective view looking toward the lower surface **64**.

[**0076**] **FIG. 4** is an upper perspective view of part of two adjacent tiles **60** showing the first and second components connected.

[**0077**] As stated in relation to the first embodiment, each portion **12** or sub-portion **32** can be removed from the tile by severing the membranes **14** and/or further membranes **34**. **FIGS. 5 and 6** shows the decking tile **60** with a quarter of the decking tile removed by severing the further membranes **34**.

[**0078**] FIGS. **8** to **18** shows examples of some of the upper arrangement of floor covering elements which may be created by the application of wooden slats to the decking tiles of the invention. Each of FIGS. **6** to **12** has the apertures **28** of the decking tile **60** shown in broken lines.

[**0079**] **FIG. 8** shows the typical arrangement forfloor covering elements, with four wooden slats laid in a parallel manner. It is envisaged that where the slats are arranged in the configuration shown in **FIG. 8**, only one fastener in each portion **12** of the decking tile **10** is necessary to ensure a secure fixture of each slat to the decking tile. If any of the portions **12** of the decking tile need to be removed, further fasteners can then be provided in the other apertures **28** to ensure the remaining slat is secured to the decking tile without being able to rotate.

[**0080**] **FIG. 9** shows an arrangement of the wooden slats, with the middle two slats being cut so as to form a diamond (from two triangles) in the middle of the tile. Because the cuts of the middle two slats fall over the apertures **28** in the inner most four portions, the further cylinders **62** provide a mechanism for securing the inner most triangles of the wooden slats to the tile. It is specifically for this pattern that the further cylinders **62** are provided on the decking tile **60**. If it was not desired to produce this pattern, the further cylinders **62** would not be necessary.

[**0081**] FIGS. **10** to **18** show further patterns of wooden slats that can be accommodated on the decking tiles of the second embodiment. Most of these patterns can also be accommodated on the decking tile of the first embodiment.

[**0082**] **FIG. 14** shows a further arrangement of the wooden slats, with the middle two wooden slats being replaced with two trapezoid-shaped slats and with triangle shaped slats at each end. Whilst the further cylinders **62** are not required to retain the slats in this pattern, it is to be noted that this pattern requires the apertures **28** to be provided in the configuration shown in relation to the decking tile **60**, since the apertures **28** on the decking tile **10** would fall in the gap between the triangle shaped slats and the trapezoid-shaped slats. It is for this reason that the arrangement of the apertures **28** and feet **20** shown in relation to the decking tile **60** is the preferred arrangement.

[**0083**] Accordingly, it can be seen that the invention provides a floor covering element which alleviates one of the problems with existing floor covering elements, in that portions of the decking tile can be removed and the slats can still be retained to prevent rotation about a single retaining screw. In addition, the invention provides a decking tile which is capable of having slats attached to form various patterns to create a variety of floor covering elements, greatly enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the floor covering elements. Such patterns are not possible with existing decking tiles.

[**0084**] It should be appreciated that the scope of this invention is not limited to the particular embodiments described above.

1. A decking tile divided into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, said portions being connected to adjacent portions via a plurality of membranes adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removing from said decking tile upon severing of the membranes surrounding it, each portion arranged to receive at least two fasteners to secure a slat thereto, wherein said at least two fasteners can engage a slat positioned parallel to any side of said decking tile.

2. A decking tile as claimed in claim 1, wherein each portion includes at least two apertures, each aperture arranged to receive a fastener therethrough.

3. A decking tile as claimed in claim 2, wherein said apertures are provided spaced from the periphery of the portion.

4. A decking tile as claimed in claim 3, wherein the apertures are provided on an imaginary line that bisects the portion.

5. A decking tile as claimed in claim 4, wherein said imaginary line forms a diagonal of said portion.

6. A decking tile as claimed in claim 2, wherein at least one of said portions is divided into sub-portions connected by further membranes whereby said at least one portion can be sub-divided.

7. A decking tile as claimed in claim 6, wherein each portion is rectangular and said sub-portions are triangular to allow said at least one portion to be divided diagonally.

8. A decking tile as claimed in claim 6, wherein said at least one portion is arranged to allow said decking tile to be sub-divided diagonally.

9. A decking tile as claimed in claim 6 wherein at least one aperture is provided in each sub-portion.

10. A decking tile as claimed in claim 1, wherein each portion forms a square adapted to have a side length commensurate with that of the width of a slat.

11. A decking tile as claimed in claim 1, further comprising connecting means provided at each side thereof such that any two sides of adjacent tiles can be connected.

12. A decking tile as claimed in claim 11, wherein said connecting means comprises first and second components, each side including both first and second components thereon.

13. A decking tile as claimed in claim 12, wherein said first component comprises a pair of first arms spaced apart and inwardly directed; said second component comprises a pair of second arms spaced apart and outwardly directed, wherein said second arms and said first arms are disposable in a mutually engaged position.

14. A decking tile as claimed in claim 13, wherein said second component includes a reinforcing member extending between said second arms.

15. A decking tile as claimed in claim 11 wherein said connecting means includes locking means arranged to inhibit disconnection of said connecting means.

16. A decking tile as claimed in claim 13 wherein said connecting means further comprises a locking means arranged to inhibit disconnection of the connecting means, wherein said locking means comprises a recess provided on one of said first or second arms and a protrusion provided on the other of said first and second arms.

17. A decking tile as claimed in claim 11 wherein each side of the decking tile is provided with guide means adapted to aid the positioning of a slat parallel to any side.

18. A decking tile as claimed in claim 17 wherein the guide means comprises a plurality of guides spaced along each side.

19. A decking tile as claimed in claim 18 wherein the guides extend beyond a plane of contact of the slat with the decking tile.

20. A decking tile as claimed in claim 18 wherein the guides are arranged so that a guide of one tile will abut a guide of an adjacent tile when connected.

21. A decking tile as claimed in claim 18 wherein the guides are arranged so that a guide of one tile is offset from the guide of an adjacent tile to allow for transverse movement or flexing of the guides to allow for expansion or flexing of the tile.

22. A decking tile arranged to receive a plurality of slats in a side-by-side manner, the decking tile having a plurality of apertures for receiving fasteners to retain the slats to the decking tile and connecting means provided around the periphery of the decking tile for connecting said decking tile to another decking tile, wherein said decking tile comprises a plurality of portions arranged in an array, the portions being connected to adjacent portions by a plurality of membranes adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removal from the decking tile upon severing of the membranes surrounding it, each portion having at least two apertures provided therein, said at least two fasteners can engage a slat positioned on said portion parallel to any side of said decking tile.

23. A decking tile adapted to support cladding from a surface, said cladding comprising a plurality of slats which are adapted to be fixed to said tile, said decking tile being divided into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, said portions being connected to each adjacent portion by a membrane adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removable from said decking tile upon severing of the membranes connecting it to the other portions, each portion arranged to receive at least two fasteners to secure a slat thereto.

24. A decking tile module comprising a decking tile and a plurality of slats received by the decking tile in a side-by-side manner, the decking tile having a plurality of apertures for receiving fasteners to retain the slats to the decking tile and connecting means provided around the periphery of the decking tile for connecting said decking tile to another decking tile, wherein said decking tile is divided into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, the portions being connected to adjacent portions by a plurality of membranes adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removal from the decking tile upon severing of the membranes surrounding it, each portion having at least two apertures provided therein, said at least two fasteners can engage a slat positioned on said portion parallel to any side of said decking tile.

25. A decking tile module comprising a decking tile and cladding supported from a surface of said cladding, said cladding comprising a plurality of slats which are adapted to be fixed to said tile, said decking tile being divided into a plurality of portions arranged in an array, said portions being connected to each adjacent portion by a membrane adapted to be severed, each portion being adapted for removing from said decking tile upon severing of the membranes connecting it to the other portions, each portion arranged to receive at least two fasteners to secure a slat thereto.

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