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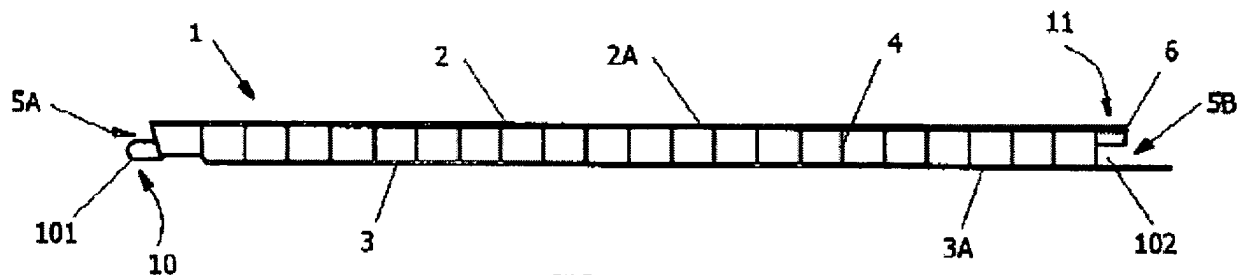
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(54) **Profiled strip**

(57) Profiled strip (1) comprising first male connecting means (10) and first female connecting means (11), suitable for connecting the longitudinal sides (5A, 5B') of adjacent profiled strips (1, 1') to one another, which profiled strip (1) is also provided with second connecting means for connecting the end sides (7A, 7B') of adjacent

profiled strips (1, 1'), the second connecting means comprising second male connecting means (20), which are non-releasably connected to a first end side (7A), and second female connecting means (21'), which are non-releasably connected to a second end side (7B') located opposite the first end side (7A), and can engage in the second male connecting means.



**Fig. 1A**

## Description

**[0001]** The invention relates to a profiled strip as described in the preamble of the first claim. The invention also relates to a method for producing a profiled strip of this type.

**[0002]** More specifically, the invention relates to a profiled strip which comprises a visible side, a first longitudinal side, provided with first male connecting means, and a second longitudinal side, located on the opposite side from the first longitudinal side and provided with first female connecting means, which first connecting means are suitable for connecting the longitudinal sides of adjacent, similar profiled strips to one another as a result of the first male connecting means engaging in the first female connecting means. The profiled strip is also provided with second connecting means for connecting the end edges of adjacent profiled strips.

**[0003]** Profiled strips of this type are generally made from a suitable polymer by means of a suitable processing method. The most conventional and suitable processing method is extrusion, in which case the profiled strips are produced quasi-continuously in great length and are then sawn to length. The profiled strips obtained in this way are used to decorate, for example, walls and ceilings, by a number of them being connected to one another along their sides by means of suitable connecting means.

**[0004]** In this context, it is important for the set of profiled strips to form an aesthetic unit, since the profiled strips are primarily intended as decoration. The aesthetics of the overall set are determined in particular by the way in which the profiled strips are connected, since the connection generally provides a different visual effect and is therefore noticeable to the eye.

**[0005]** In particular, it is important for the formation of the profiled strips to be such that visual differences between the profiled strips at the location of the connections are minimized. This provides a smooth visual effect and gives the observer of the decorative wall or ceiling an impression of quality.

**[0006]** The known profiled strip generally has a first longitudinal side, provided with first male connecting means, and a second longitudinal side, located on the opposite side from the first longitudinal side and provided with first female connecting means, which first connecting means are suitable for connecting the longitudinal sides of adjacent, similar profiled strips to one another as a result of the first male connecting means engaging in the first female connecting means. In the known profiled strip, second connecting means are provided for connecting the end edges of adjacent profiled strips. In the known profiled strip, the second connecting means comprise a separate component in the form of an H section. After a profiled strip has been sawn to length, the two, substantially flat end edges of two similar profiled strips are pushed into the openings in the H section, and optionally anchored therein, for example by a transverse nail. The two known similar profiled strips are in this way

connected to one another at the end edges.

**[0007]** The known profiled strip has the drawback that the second connecting means are very complicated to use, noticeably alter the visual appearance and also give rise to inaccurate assembly, since a separate component (the H section) is required to join two profiled strips.

**[0008]** It is an object of the invention to provide a profiled strip and a method for producing it which does not have these and other drawbacks.

**[0009]** To this end, the profiled strip according to the invention is characterized in that said profiled strip comprises butting means provided to prevent that the second male connecting means are totally enclosed in the connected position by the second female connecting means of an adjacent profiled strip such that, in the connected position, at least a section of the second male connecting means is visible, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam between adjacent profiled strips.

**[0010]** As a result of, inter alia, the second male securing means being non-releasably connected to the first end side, an accurate and operationally reliable end-to-end connection between similar profiled strips is obtained.

**[0011]** Preferably, the profiled strip according to the invention is characterized in that the second male connecting means are formed by a lip which projects from the end face with a suitable projection depth U, which lip extends substantially parallel to the plane PP' of the profiled strip, and the top surface of which lip is recessed with respect to the surface of the visible side, and in that the second female connecting means are formed by a groove of a shape which is such that the second male connecting means of an adjacent, similar profiled strip can be received in a slide-fitting manner therein until the connected position is reached, wherein in the connected position

- the projection depth U of the lip is at least equal to the depth D of the groove, resulting in that the front edge of the lip butting against the rear wall of the groove; and/or
- the end face butts against the end face of the adjacent, similar profiled strip, whereas the projection depth U of the lip is at least equal to the length of the section of the lip received in the groove

such that at least a section of the lip is visible in the connected position, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam between adjacent profiled strips.

**[0012]** This results in very efficient and operationally reliable joining of the strip profiles. After all, keeping the projection depth of the lip and the groove depth for the strip profiles to be joined equal in each strip profile, and in a preferred embodiment enabling the front edge of the lip to butt against the rear wall of the groove, allows very simple assembly to be implemented, and moreover ensures that the end connecting seam in all cases has a

virtually equal width.

**[0013]** A further advantage of the profiled strip according to the invention is that the profiled strip, and in particular also its end edges, will be less likely to be damaged during their handling as part of assembly work.

**[0014]** When profiled strips are connected to one another, a connecting line which is clearly visible in the plane of the visible side is formed at the connection. For two profiled strips according to the invention to be connected to one another, the male connecting means of a profiled strip are pushed into the female connecting means of the adjacent profiled strip. The visible sides of the two profiled strips are positioned against one another in this connected state. However, the division between the profiled strips (the connecting seam) is visible in the form of a lower-lying line or band. The connecting means according to the invention ensure that this lower-lying line or band can be virtually identical over the entire visible surface of the constructed wall and/or ceiling. This is because the dimensions of the male and female connecting means according to the invention are fixed, since they are produced integrally with the profiled strip. Another advantage of the profiled strip according to the invention is that the width of the connecting seam can be set in advance by selection of the ratio between insertion depth of the lip and groove depth, independently of the assembly of the profiled strips.

**[0015]** Moreover, in a preferred embodiment, during the assembly of profiled strips, the depth by which the lip penetrates into the groove is likewise fixed on account of the fact that the front edge of the lip, assuming correct assembly, butts against the rear wall of the groove.

**[0016]** The known profiled strip is generally in the form of a sandwich structure which comprises a top wall and a back wall, which are kept at a distance from one another by connecting ribs running more or less perpendicular thereto. A sandwich structure of this type is very lightweight and rigid and can be produced in a known way in a single operation, for example by means of extrusion.

**[0017]** The invention also relates to a method for producing a profiled strip according to the invention, in which at least a top wall, a rear wall and connecting ribs running more or less perpendicular thereto are extruded, wherein at least one additional top layer is coextruded on the top wall and/or the rear wall at the visible side, this coextrudate, after it has cooled, being cut to the length of the profiled strip, in which method, at the first end side, the top layer and at least a section of the rear wall and/or the connecting ribs are removed by milling over a length virtually equal to the projection depth U of the lip, and, at least with regard to the top layer, over a depth to where the top wall is situated, thus forming the lip, and in which method, at the second end side, the top wall and if appropriate a section of the connecting ribs is removed by milling in the longitudinal direction, thereby forming the groove so that with this method butting means are formed to prevent that second male connecting means are totally enclosed in the connected position by second female

connecting means of an adjacent profiled strip, such that, in the connected position, at least a section of the second male connecting means is visible, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam between adjacent profiled strips.

**[0018]** In a preferred method according to the invention in which method,

- at the second end side, the top wall and if appropriate a section of the connecting ribs is removed by milling over a depth D, from the end edge, of at most the projection depth U in the longitudinal direction, thereby forming the groove;  
and/or
- in which method, at the first end side, the top layer and at least a section of the rear wall and/or the connecting ribs are removed by milling over a length virtually equal to the projection depth U of the lip which is at least equal to the length of the section of the lip received in the groove.

**[0019]** Preferably according this method in the connected position

- the projection depth U of the lip is at least equal to the depth D of the groove, resulting in that the front edge of the lip butting against the rear wall of the groove;  
and/or
- the end face butts against the end face of the adjacent, similar profiled strip, whereas the projection depth U of the lip is at least equal to the length of the section of the lip received in the groove

such that at least a section of the lip is visible in the connected position, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam between adjacent profiled strips.

**[0020]** Although the method according to the invention is described above for a profiled strip which is composed of a sandwich structure with a top layer, it will be clear to the person skilled in the art that in a similar way it is possible to obtain a profiled strip with top layer which is constructed in a different way, for example by means of various layers applied on top of one another, by means of a sandwich structure with a foam core instead of connecting ribs, etc. All that is essential for the method is that at least on the visible side of the profiled strip, a top layer be applied by means of preferably coextrusion, which top layer is then partially removed at the end side of the profiled section formed, thereby forming a lip which can engage in a groove in a second profiled strip. The way in which the groove is made in the second end side may obviously also differ, depending on the type of profiled strip used. For example, in a preferred method, the connecting ribs may be partially removed by milling in order to form the groove. In the case of a profiled strip with a foam core, by way of example, a section of the foam core will be cut out.

**[0021]** Where, in the context of the present application, reference is made to milling and/or removing by milling, this is also to be understood as meaning any known method for (partially) machining away a layer of material.

**[0022]** Where, in the context of the present application, reference is made to cutting to length, this is also to be understood as meaning any known method of producing the correct length of a profiled strip, such as for example sawing.

**[0023]** In the context of the present application, the term visible side of the profiled strip is to be understood as meaning the side which can be seen in normal use after a wall and/or ceiling comprising the profiled strips has been constructed.

**[0024]** Although coextrusion is a production technique known per se for profiled sections and other objects made from polymers, and the known profiled strip is produced by means of extrusion, it has not hitherto been described that a profiled strip with integrated second connecting means can be produced by means of extrusion and/or coextrusion. In fact, the known profiled strip only has integrated first connecting means (for connecting the longitudinal sides), and separate auxiliary pieces (in this case the H section) have to be used to connect the end sides.

**[0025]** Producing the profiled strip according to the invention as described above results in the lip forming part of a top wall, which extends below the plane of the visible side substantially parallel to the plane of the profiled strip and the top surface of which is recessed with respect to the plane of the visible side while extending over virtually the entire length of the profiled strip. This has major advantages since it is now possible for profiled strips according to the invention to be produced in different lengths and with different connecting seam widths from the same coextrudate (and coextrusion line). All that this requires is for the cutting and milling settings to be adjusted.

**[0026]** According to the invention, profiled strips of this type which have been extruded with a top wall can be cut to length, and it is then sufficient, in order to form the grooves, to cut through the connecting ribs on the relevant sides of the profiled strips. These grooves can be obtained very easily with the aid of a cutting tool, for example a milling cutter, in which case the position and drive are controlled in such a manner that the grooves are preferably made just below the top wall.

**[0027]** Furthermore, there are advantages in characterizing the profiled strip according to the invention by the fact that the lip is provided with an edge which projects out of the plane of the lip, and the groove is provided with a wall recess shaped in such a manner that the edge can be received therein in the connected position.

**[0028]** This results in a further improvement to the connection, and moreover achieves a connecting seam width which is relatively insensitive to long-term effects, such as creep in the profiled strips, moisture influences and the like.

**[0029]** To obtain a constructed wall and/or ceiling with a visual tile effect, it is advantageous for the profiled strip according to the invention to be characterized in that the first connecting means of the profiled strip are formed by the above-described second connecting means according to the invention.

**[0030]** In a set of profiled strips, the connecting seams (formed by the uncovered central section of the lips) of the first connecting means will be visible at the longitudinal connection between the profiled strips, while the connecting seams (formed by the uncovered central section of the lips) of the second connecting means are likewise visible at the level of the transverse (or end-to-end) connection of the profiled strips.

**[0031]** Making the dimensions of the first and second connecting means identical in similar profiled strips means that if a plurality of similar profiled strips are combined as described above, the widths of the transverse and longitudinal connecting seams are virtually equal, which gives a smooth visual appearance. However, it is also possible for the widths of the transverse and longitudinal connecting seams to be selected to be different, for example in proportion to the dimensions of the room in which the profiled strips are used.

**[0032]** With regard to the extent to which the connection joints are recessed with respect to the plane of the visible side (which is determined by the profiled-section thickness between the grooves and the plane of the visible side), there are aesthetic benefits in the thicknesses ( $d_1$ ,  $d_2$ ) between the first or second groove and the visible side of the profiled strip being virtually equal to one another.

**[0033]** It is preferable for the profiled strip to have a projection depth of the lip which is substantially equal to the sum of the depth of the groove and the width of the connecting seam visible in the connected position. This facilitates assembly of the profiled strips, since, when the lips "butt against" the rear wall of the grooves, this gives precisely the width of the connecting seams.

**[0034]** Furthermore, it is preferable for the width of the strip to be at least substantially equal to the width of the profiled strip, and more preferably the width of the groove is likewise at least substantially equal to the width of the profiled strip.

**[0035]** Enabling the lip and groove to run over the entire width of the profiled strip enables the dimensions of a profiled strip to be easily adapted (even after the production process), in which case the first connecting means can also easily be obtained afresh by removing the top wall and the rear wall by milling at the first longitudinal side, over a length which is virtually equal to the projection depth of the lip, and to virtually the depth at which the top wall is located, thereby forming the lip, and by removing the top wall, at the second longitudinal side, over a depth from the side edge of at most the projection depth in the transverse direction by milling, thereby forming the groove.

**[0036]** According to the invention, it is possible for the

top layer, the top wall, the connecting ribs and the rear wall to be provided with any desired colour and/or decorative pattern. Since the top wall, the connecting ribs and the rear wall are generally extruded as a single unit, they will generally be of the same colour and/or decor, although this is not necessary according to the invention. Furthermore, it is possible for the top layer to be given the same colour as the top wall and/or the connecting ribs and/or the rear wall. Preferably, however, the top layer has a colour and/or decor which differs at least from the top wall (and therefore also from the connecting seam).

**[0037]** The invention will now be explained further on the basis of the following more detailed description of a possible embodiment, with reference to the following figures:

Figure 1A shows an illustration of a vertical cross section in the transverse direction of a profiled strip according to the invention.

Figure 1B shows a vertical cross section in the longitudinal direction of a profiled strip according to the invention.

Figure 2A shows, in detail, a vertical cross section through the second connecting means according to the invention in the unconnected position.

Figure 2B shows in detail a vertical cross section through the second connecting means according to the invention in the connected position.

Figure 2C shows in detail a vertical cross section through the first connecting means according to the invention in the connected position.

Finally, Figure 3 diagrammatically depicts a plan view of two profiled strips according to the invention in the connected position.

The profiled strip 1 shown in Figure 1 comprises a top wall 6, a rear wall 3 and at least one top layer 2. The top wall 6 and rear wall 3 are connected to one another by means of connecting ribs 4. In Figure 1, the top wall 6 is located just under the top layer 2. In this case, therefore, the visible side 2A is the front surface of the top layer 2. The rear side of the profiled strip 1 in Figure 1 is formed by the bottom surface 3A of the rear wall 3. The preferred embodiment of a profiled strip 1 shown in Figure 1 has first connecting means (10, 11) formed by first male connecting means 101 provided on the first longitudinal side 5A and first female connecting means 102 provided on the second longitudinal side 5B.

The first connecting means (10', 11) are provided for the purpose of connecting the longitudinal sides of

adjacent, similar profiled strips 1' and 1 to one another as a result of the first male connecting means 101' engaging in the first female connecting means 102 (cf. Figure 2C). The top layer 2' of profiled strip 1', in the preferred embodiment shown in Figure 2C, does not extend over the entire width of the profiled strip 1', and consequently a section 17 of the top wall 6' becomes visible at the longitudinal connection. In Figure 2C, this section 17 is on the longitudinal side of the first male connecting means 101'. According to the invention, it is equally possible for this section 17 to be located on the longitudinal side of the first female connecting means 102.

Figure 2A shows a detail of the first end side 7A of a profiled strip 1 and the second end side 7B' of a second, similar profiled strip 1'. According to the invention, the second connecting means are formed by second male connecting means 20, which are non-releasably connected to the first end side 7A, and second female connecting means 21', which are non-releasably connected to the second end side 7B'. The second male connecting means 20 are formed by a lip 202 which projects out of the end face 7A with a suitable projection depth U, which lip 202 extends substantially parallel to the plane PP' of the profiled strip 1, with its top surface 202A recessed by a suitable depth  $d_2$  with respect to the plane of the visible side 2A. In Figure 2A, this depth  $d_2$  corresponds to the thickness of the top layer 2. However, the depth  $d_2$  may also be greater than the thickness of the top layer 2, in which case a section of the top wall 6 is also omitted. The second female connecting means 21' are formed by a groove 212' of a shape which is such that the second male connecting means 202 of an adjacent, similar profiled strip 1 can be received in a slide-fitting manner therein until the connected position is reached.

**[0038]** It is preferable for the front edge 202V of the lip 202 in this case to butt against the rear wall 212A' of the groove 212'. The projection depth U of the lip 202 is at least equal to the depth D' of the groove 212', with the result that in the connected position at least a section of the lip 202 is visible, with the result that this section in visual terms appears as an end connecting seam 16 of width H between adjacent profiled strips 1 and 1'.

**[0039]** The statements above given in connection with the second connecting means in a preferred embodiment also apply to the first connecting means.

**[0040]** The lip 202 forms part of the top wall 6, which extends below the plane of the visible side 2A, substantially parallel to the plane PP' of the profiled strip 1, and the top surface 6A of which is recessed with respect to the plane of the visible side 2A, and which top wall 6 extends over virtually the entire length, and preferably also over virtually the entire width, of the profiled strip 1.

**[0041]** In the plan view shown in Figure 3, the visible

sides 2A and 2A' of two adjacent profiled strips 1 and 1' can be seen. The first male connecting means of profiled strip 1 and 1' respectively take the form of a lip 101, 101' running continuously along the longitudinal sides 5A and 5A' (it is also possible for the first male connecting means to be designed as interrupted lips 101, 101', or as shown in Figure 1A). The first female connecting means which interact therewith are in the form of a groove 102 and 102' which runs along the opposite longitudinal sides 5B, 5B' and in which the lip can be received. It is also possible for the first female connecting means to be designed as shown in Figure 1A. According to the invention, the second male connecting means 20 of profiled strip 1 are likewise in the form of a lip 202 running continuously along the end side 7A (it is also possible for the second male connecting means 20 to be designed as an interrupted lip 202). The second female connecting means 21', which interact therewith, of profiled strip 1' are in the form of a groove 212' which runs along the opposite end sides 7B' and in which the lip 202 can be received.

**[0042]** If two end sides 7A and 7B' are slid together with a sliding fit until they reach the connected position, as shown in Figure 3, a connecting seam 16 with a width H equal to the difference between the projection depth U of the lip 202 of the first profiled strip 1 and the depth D' of the groove 212' in the second profiled strip 1' will be formed at the end-to-end connection.

**[0043]** If desired, the profiled strip according to the invention may be provided at its end sides with a plurality of lips which form part of the top wall 6 and/or rear wall 3 and/or connecting ribs 4 and/or an optional foam core of the profiled strip 1.

**[0044]** To facilitate the introduction of lip 202 into groove 212', the groove may if desired be provided, over part of its depth, with a second wall recess 215' at the front side of the groove 212', as indicated in Figure 2B. It will be clear that there are numerous possible solutions to achieve this.

**[0045]** As is also shown in Figure 2B, in the connected state, lip 202 will be virtually completely accommodated within groove 212', in which case the lip 202 will no longer be covered by the top layer 2 over a section of its surface, which means that a connecting seam 16 is left visible. Figure 2B shows an embodiment in which the layer formed by the connecting ribs 4 and the rear wall 3 continues further beneath lip 202 than the top layer 2 (in particular over a distance virtually equal to the width H provided for the connecting seam). As a result, in the connected state, at least those sections of the first end side 7A and the second end side 7B' which are located beneath the top wall 6 will come into contact with one another, which is of benefit to the strength of connection.

**[0046]** The thicknesses of the various layers of the profiled strip can be selected within broad boundaries. Typical dimensions are between 0.1 and 15 mm for the top layer 2 and the rear wall 3, between 1 and 30 mm for the layer formed by the connecting ribs 4, and between 0.1 and 20 mm for the top wall 6. The connecting ribs 4 them-

selves have a typical thickness of 0.1 - 1 mm, although other thicknesses are possible. The height of each connecting rib 4 obviously substantially corresponds to the thickness of the layer formed by the connecting ribs 4.

5 The lip 202 (and therefore also the groove 212) does not have to be of the same thickness as the top wall 6. Its thickness may be less than, equal to or greater than the thickness of the top wall 6, provided that the top surface 202A of the lip 202 is located at least at or below the bottom surface of the top layer 2. The lip thickness (and therefore also the groove height) therefore has a typical thickness of between 0.1 and 20 mm, preferably between 0.2 and 10 mm, more preferably between 0.2 and 1 mm.

10 **[0047]** In a preferred embodiment in which both the first and second connecting means are designed in accordance with the invention, the profiled strip is preferably characterized in that the distance between the top surface of the first groove 102 and the visible side 2A of the profiled strip 1, and the top surface of the second groove 212 and the visible side 2A of the profiled strip 1', are virtually equal to one another. If different profiled strips are connected to one another, the longitudinal and transverse connecting seams will be located in virtually the same recessed plane with respect to the front surface 2A.

15 **[0048]** It is preferable for the end connecting seams 16 and/or the longitudinal connecting seams of a preferred embodiment to have the same decor, which more preferably differs from the decor of the visible side 2A (and therefore of the top layer 2).

20 **[0049]** The profiled strips 1 according to the invention are produced by a method in which at least a top wall 6, a rear wall 3 and connecting ribs 4 running more or less perpendicular thereto are extruded, with at least one additional top layer 2 being coextruded on the top wall 6 and/or the rear wall 3 on the visible side. After it has cooled, this coextrudate is cut to the length of the profiled strip 1, during which operation, at the first end side 7A, the top layer 2 and at least a section of the rear wall 3 and the connecting ribs 4 are removed by milling over a length virtually equal to the projection depth U of the lip and, at least with regard to the top layer 2, over a depth as far as where the top wall 6 is located, thereby forming the lip 202, and also, at the second end side 7B, the top wall 6 and if appropriate a section of the connecting ribs 4 are removed by milling over a depth D (or depth D' for a profiled strip 1') from the end edge of at most the projection depth U in the longitudinal direction, thereby forming the groove 212.

25 **[0050]** Coextrusion is a production technique which is known per se for polymers, and the coextrusion method which is used according to the invention does not differ from that which will be familiar to the person skilled in the art. In a preferred method according to the invention, the rear wall 3, the connecting ribs 4 and the top wall 6 are produced in a single unit by means of a first extruder, thereby forming a sandwich structure, in which case afterwards or, more preferably, simultaneously or virtually simultaneously, the top layer 2 is applied to the sandwich

structure (3, 4, 6) by means of a second extruder.

**[0051]** To allow the transverse lips 202 to be formed, according to the invention it is preferable for a milling unit with a suitable milling head to be adjusted in such a manner that it "moves with" the coextrusion process, in order to be able to form a connecting seam which runs virtually parallel to the first end side 7A of the profiled strip. For this purpose, the milling head is preferably connected to the sawing machine which saws the profiled strips to the desired length. According to the invention, however, it is also possible for the top layer 2 and if desired (sections) of the rear wall 3 and/or the connecting ribs 4 to be removed on the end side 7A in a separate machining step, by hand and/or using a suitable machining device. The same applies to the formation of the groove 212 in the end side 7B.

### Claims

1. Profiled strip (1) comprising a visible side (2A), a first longitudinal side (5A), provided with first male connecting means (10), and a second longitudinal side (5B), located on the opposite side from the first longitudinal side and provided with first female connecting means (11), which first connecting means (10, 11) are suitable for connecting the longitudinal sides (5A, 5B') of adjacent profiled strips (1, 1') to one another as a result of the first male connecting means engaging in the first female connecting means, which profiled strip (1) is also provided with second connecting means for connecting the end sides (7A, 7B') of adjacent profiled strips (1, 1'), wherein the second connecting means comprise second male connecting means (20), which are non-releasably connected to a first end side (7A), and second female connecting means (21'), which are non-releasably connected to a second end side (7B') located opposite the first end side (7A), which second connecting means (20, 21') are suitable for connecting the end sides (7A, 7B') of adjacent profiled strips (1, 1') to one another such that the second male connecting means engaging in the second female connecting means **characterized in that** said profiled strip (1) comprises butting means (7A, 7B') (202V, 212A) provided to prevent that the second male connecting means (20) are totally enclosed in the connected position by the second female connecting means (21') of an adjacent profiled strip such that, in the connected position, at least a section of the second male connecting means (20) is visible, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam (16) between adjacent profiled strips.
2. Profiled strip according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the second male connecting means (20) are formed by a lip (202) which projects from the end face (7A) with a suitable projection depth U, which

lip (202) extends substantially parallel to the plane PP' of the profiled strip (1), and the top surface (202A) of which lip is recessed with respect to the surface of the visible side (2A), and **in that** the second female connecting means (21) are formed by a groove (212) of a shape which is such that the second male connecting means (20) of an adjacent, similar profiled strip can be received in a slide-fitting manner therein until the connected position is reached, wherein in the connected position

- the projection depth U of the lip (202) is at least equal to the depth D of the groove (212), resulting **in that** the front edge (202V) of the lip (202) butting against the rear wall (212A) of the groove (212);
- and/or
- the end face (7A) butts against the end face (7B') of the adjacent, similar profiled strip, whereas the projection depth U of the lip (202) is at least equal to the length (S) of the section of the lip (202) received in the groove (212)

such that at least a section of the lip (202) is visible in the connected position, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam (16) between adjacent profiled strips.

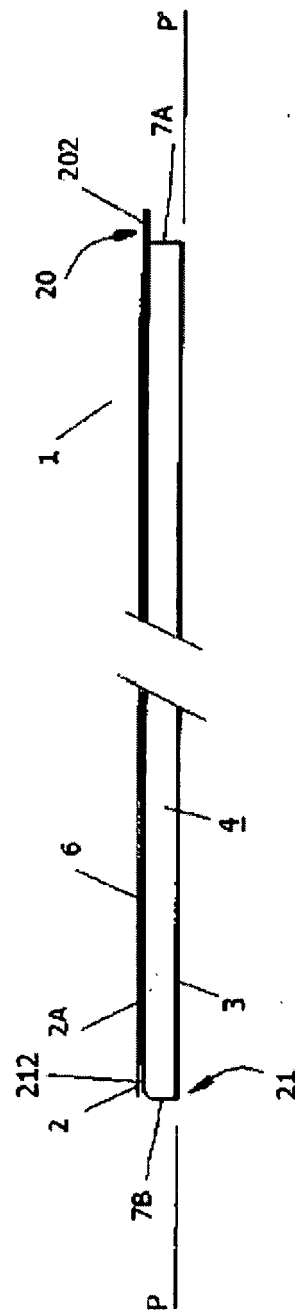
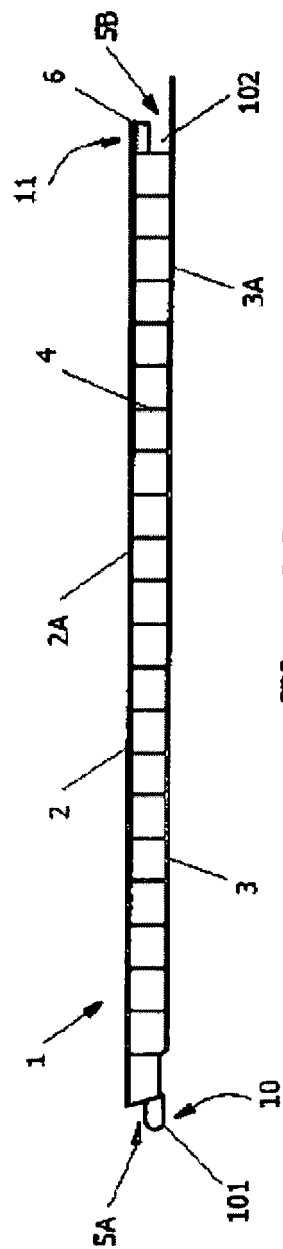
3. Profiled strip according to Claim 2, **characterized in that** the lip (202) forms part of a top wall (6), which extends below the plane of the visible side (2A) substantially parallel to the plane of the profiled strip (1) and the top surface (6A) of which is recessed with respect to the plane of the visible side (2A) while extending over virtually the entire length L of the profiled strip (1).
4. Profiled strip according to Claim 2 or 3, **characterized in that** the projection depth U of the lip (202) is substantially equal to the sum of the depth D of the groove and the width H of the connecting seam (16) which is visible in the connected position.
5. Profiled strip according to any one of Claims 2-4, **characterized in that** the width of the lip (202) is at least substantially equal to the width of the profiled strip (1).
6. Profiled strip according to any one of Claims 2-5, **characterized in that** the width of the groove (212) is at least substantially equal to the width of the profiled strip (1).
7. Profiled strip according to any one of Claims 2-6, **characterized in that** the profiled strip (1) comprises a top wall (6) and a rear wall (3), which are connected to one another by means of connecting ribs (4), and **in that** the grooves (212) are formed by at

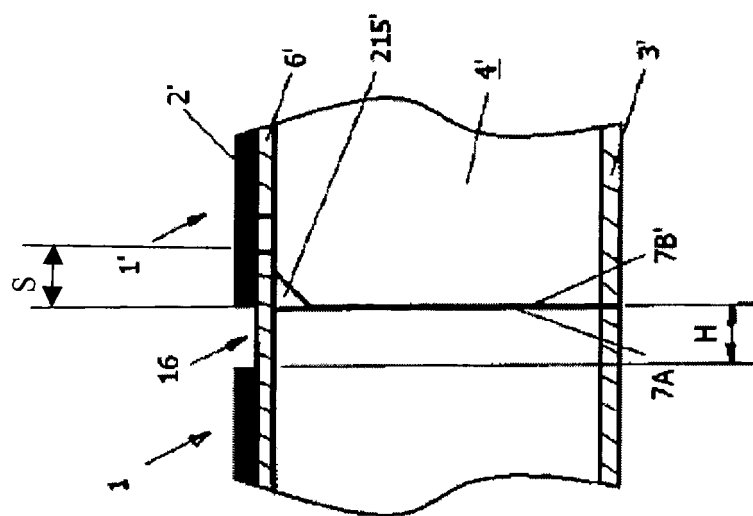
least partially cutting through the connecting ribs (4).

equal to the length (S) of the section of the lip (202) received in the groove (212).

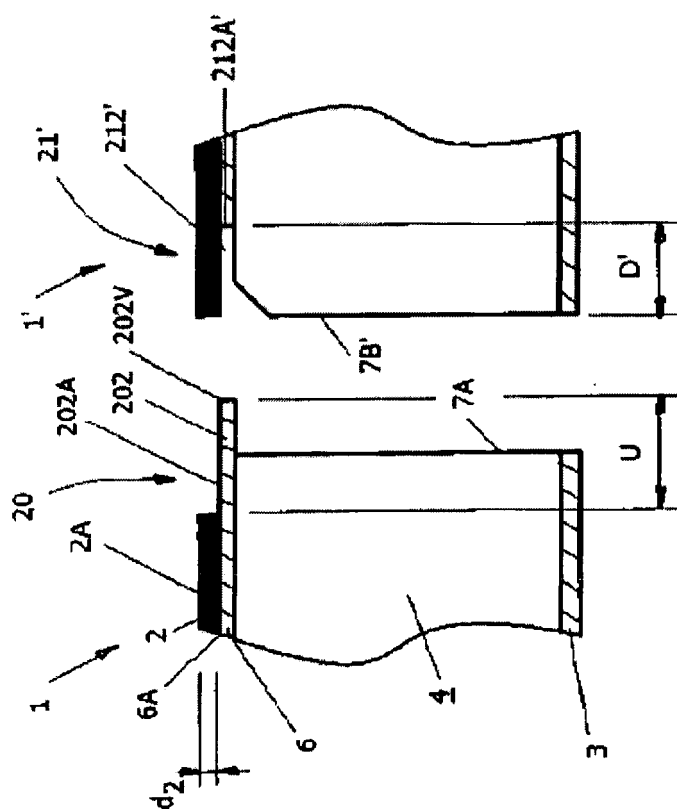
8. Profiled strip according to any one of Claims 2-7, **characterized in that** the lip (202) has a decor which differs from that of the visible side (2A). 5
  
9. Profiled strip according to any one of Claims 1-8, **characterized in that** the first connecting means (10, 11) of the profiled strip are formed by the second connecting means (20, 21) described in Claims 2-8, and **in that** the layer thicknesses between the first groove (102), second groove (212) and the visible side (2A) of the profiled strip (1) are virtually equal to one another. 10  
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10. Method for producing a profiled strip (1) as described in any one of Claims 1-9, in which at least a top wall (6), a rear wall (3) and connecting ribs (4) running more or less perpendicular thereto are extruded, **characterized in that** at least one additional top layer (2) is coextruded on the top wall (6) and/or the rear wall (3) at the visible side, this coextrudate, after it has cooled, being cut to the length of the profiled strip (1), in which method, at the first end side (7A), the top layer (2) and at least a section of the rear wall (3) and/or the connecting ribs (4) are removed by milling over a length virtually equal to the projection depth U of the lip, and, at least with regard to the top layer (2), over a depth to where the top wall (6) is situated, thus forming the lip (202), and in which method, at the second end side (7B), the top wall (6) and if appropriate a section of the connecting ribs (4) is removed by milling in the longitudinal direction, thereby forming the groove (212) so that with this method butting means are formed to prevent that second male connecting means (20) are totally enclosed in the connected position by second female connecting means (21') of an adjacent profiled strip, such that, in the connected position, at least a section of the second male connecting means (20) is visible, such that this section appears as an end connecting seam (16) between adjacent profiled strips. 20  
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11. Method for producing a profiled strip (1) according to claim 10, **characterised in that** in which method, 45
  - at the second end side (7B), the top wall (6) and if appropriate a section of the connecting ribs (4) is removed by milling over a depth D, from the end edge, of at most the projection depth U in the longitudinal direction, thereby forming the groove (212) 50  
and/or
  - in which method, at the first end side (7A), the top layer (2) and at least a section of the rear wall (3) and/or the connecting ribs (4) are removed by milling over a length virtually equal to the projection depth U of the lip which is at least 55



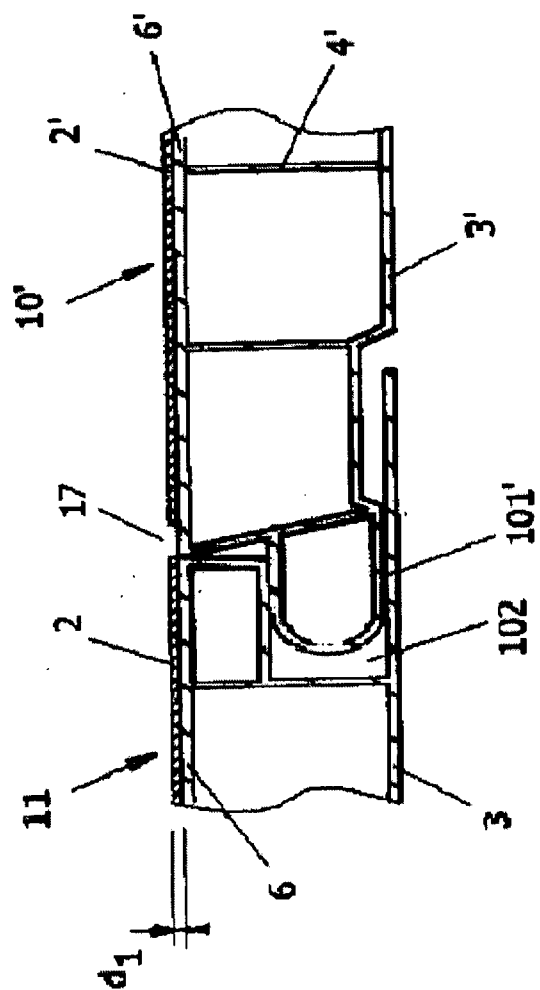




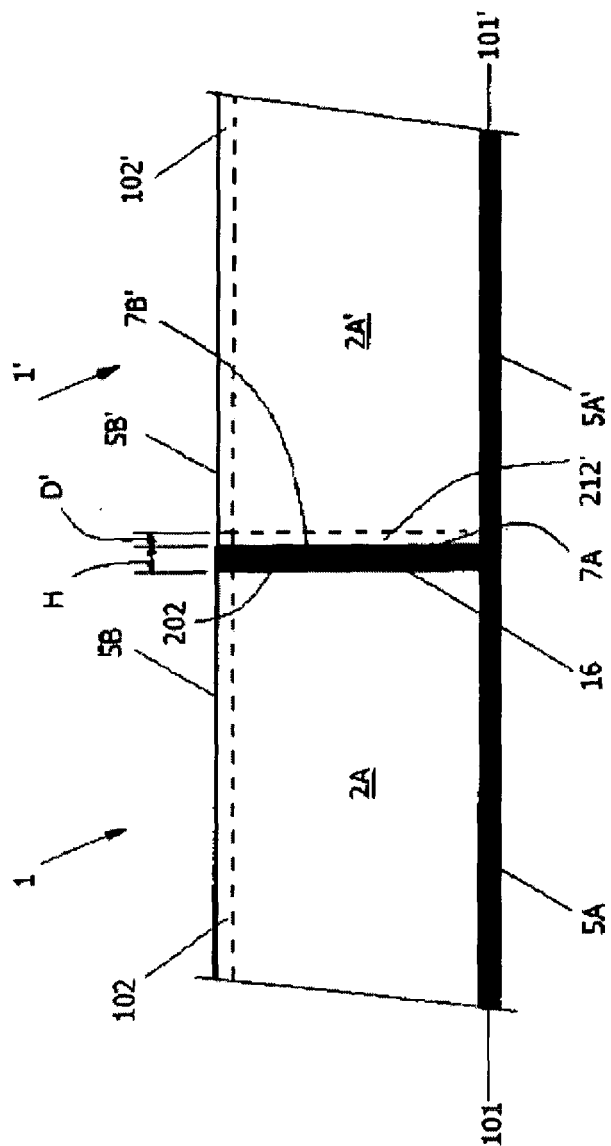
**Fig. 2B**



**Fig. 2A**



**Fig. 2C**



**Fig. 3**



European Patent  
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Application Number  
EP 05 07 7651

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