



(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:  
**22.08.2012 Bulletin 2012/34**

(51) Int Cl.:  
**E04H 15/08 (2006.01)**

(21) Application number: **12156414.0**

(22) Date of filing: **21.02.2012**

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
**AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR**  
Designated Extension States:  
**BA ME**

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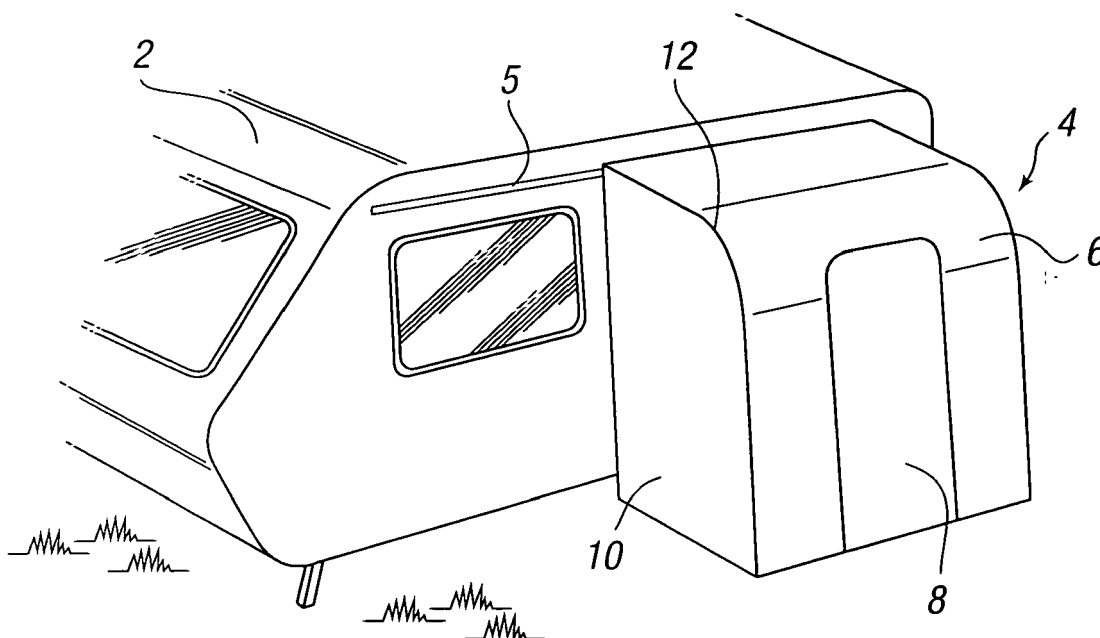
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(30) Priority: **21.02.2011 GB 201102970**

(54) **Improved awning for a caravan and method of assembly thereof**

(57) An extendible awning (4) suitable for attachment to a caravan (2) which includes a frame (30) supporting a sheet material (6) and said awning (4) includes attach-

ment means to which one or more frames and/or sheet material sections (16) are attached to extend the size of the awning (4).



**FIG. 1a**

## Description

**[0001]** The present invention relates to awnings for use with caravans and the method of assembling or erecting the same.

**[0002]** Although the following description refers to awning suitable for use with caravans, the person skilled in the art will appreciate that the apparatus and method of the present invention could be used on other structures to which awnings can be fitted, such as buildings.

**[0003]** Caravanning is a popular pastime throughout much of the world but particularly in Europe and North America. Caravans are built in many shapes and sizes and can usually be equipped with awnings to provide additional shelter. Most caravans are provided with awning channels to which an awning can be fixed.

**[0004]** Awnings are usually supplied by third party manufacturers and care has to be taken when selecting an awning to ensure that when erected, the awning doesn't interfere with a caravan's features, for example the doors and windows. As such the user is restricted to selecting an awning which is manufactured for a particular caravan type, or an awning which is small enough to only cover part of the caravan and not interfere with opening and closing the doors and windows.

**[0005]** It is therefore an aim of the present invention to provide an awning which addresses the aforementioned problems.

**[0006]** It is a further aim of the present invention to provide a method of assembling an awning which addresses the abovementioned problems.

**[0007]** In a first aspect of the invention there is provided an awning, said awning including a frame supporting a sheet material, wherein said awning includes attachment means to which one or more frames and/or sheet material sections can be attached to thereby extend the size of the awning.

**[0008]** In one embodiment the awning comprises at least one section. Typically the attachment means allows the addition of one or more sections to the awning, thereby increasing number of sections and the size of the awning accordingly.

**[0009]** In one embodiment the attached sections added to the awning include attachment means complementary to the attachment means. Typically the complementary attachment means can be engaged and/or otherwise connected together.

**[0010]** Further typically the attachment means allows a first awning to be connected to a second awning section, thereby extending the first awning to a larger single awning.

**[0011]** In one embodiment the awning and/or the awning sections include one or more panels. Typically the panels include any one or any combination of door panels, window panels, wall panels, floor panels, side panels and/or roof panels. Further typically the panels are constructed of substantially flexible sheet material.

**[0012]** In one embodiment the panels are constructed

from substantially plastics and/or polymeric material or fabric.

**[0013]** In one embodiment the frame includes a plurality of frame members. Typically the frame members are a number of interconnecting poles.

**[0014]** In one embodiment additional frame members are attached to the frame to support the one or more sections and/or panels added to the awning.

**[0015]** In one embodiment the frame members are elongate and are connected together by connecting means. Typically the connecting means are located substantially towards the end of the frame members. Further typically the connecting means includes a push-fit and/or plug and socket arrangement to connect the members together.

**[0016]** In one embodiment the frame includes telescopic members. Typically the telescopic members are substantially linear in shape and can be extended to a predetermined and/or selected length.

**[0017]** In one embodiment the awning, awning sections and/or the panels are connected to the frame members by one or more fixing means. Typically the fixing means includes any one or any combination of zips, pins, studs, flaps and/or the like.

**[0018]** In one embodiment fixing means includes one or more sleeves formed in the awning sections and/or panels. Typically the frame members are attached to the awning sections, panels and/or awning by inserting the frame members into the sleeves.

**[0019]** In a preferred embodiment the awning includes a section with one or more removable panels. Typically the one or more removable panels are attached to the awning section by attachment means. Further typically the one or more removable panels can be at least partially detached to allow an additional section to be attached to the awning.

**[0020]** In one embodiment the additional sections of the awning are attached using the same attachment means as the removable panel. Typically the removed panel can be attached to the additional section thereby forming a removable panel of the extended awning.

**[0021]** Further typically the removable panel is a wall panel and/or side panel.

**[0022]** Preferably a plurality of awning sections can be attached and/or otherwise added to form an extendible awning.

**[0023]** In one embodiment the attachment means includes any one or any combination of fasteners, zips, press studs, buttons, clips, eyelets and/or the like.

**[0024]** Preferably the attachment means are one or more zips and/or zippers.

**[0025]** In one embodiment the zip and/or zipper attachment means attaching the one or more removable panels to the awning sections have the same number of teeth, or otherwise are substantially the same size, as the as the awning sections added to the awning.

**[0026]** In one embodiment the attachment means are covered by one or more flaps. Preferably the attachment

means are covered by a first inner flap and a second outer flap. Typically the flaps are extension to the sheet material.

**[0027]** In one embodiment the first flap forms a pocket and/or channel within which the attachment means is located. Typically the second flap forms a pocket and/or channel containing the first flap and attachment means.

**[0028]** In one embodiment each flap includes an opening through which the pocket and/or channel can be accessed. Typically the flap openings are located at an edge of the flap. Further typically the flap openings are on substantially opposite edges of the respective flaps. As such, the pockets and/or channels extend in substantially opposed directions from the flap openings. This prevents the ingress of rain and/or wind into the awning through the attachment means.

**[0029]** Typically the flaps include at least one elasticated edge.

**[0030]** In one embodiment the awning is extendable in more than one direction from the original awning by adding additional sections.

**[0031]** Typically the original awning can be extended by adding a plurality of awning sections. Further typically the additional awning sections can be extended by adding one or more further awning sections.

**[0032]** In a second aspect of the invention there is provided a method of extending an awning, said awning including at least one first section including a frame and attachment means, wherein said method includes the steps of;

- attaching at least one further section to the first using said attachment means.

**[0033]** Typically the at least one further section is supported on the frame and/or additional frame members. Further typically the frame and/or additional frame members are first positioned before the connection of the at least one further section.

**[0034]** In one embodiment the first section includes a removable panel. Typically the removable panel is detachably attached to the first section by the attachment means. Further typically the removable panel is detached or otherwise removed before the further section is attached to the first.

**[0035]** In one embodiment the removable panel can be reattached to the awning. Typically the removable panel is a side wall which is removed to attach the additional section extend the awning and is then reattached to the extended awning to complete the awning structure.

**[0036]** In a third aspect of the invention there is provided an awning system suitable for caravan, said system including an awning including at least one panel and wherein the at least one panel includes attachment means to which one or more further panels can be attached to extend and/or otherwise enlarge the awning.

**[0037]** In one embodiment different types of panels or sections can be selected to be attached to the awning

and therefore the awning system is essentially modular.

**[0038]** Specific embodiments of the invention are now described with reference to the following figures wherein;

5 Figures 1a and 1b shown perspective views of an embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 shows a front view of one embodiment of the invention;

10 Figure 3 shows a front view of the attachment means in accordance with one embodiment of the invention;

15 Figure 4 shows an inside view of the an extended awning in accordance with one aspect of the invention; and

20 Figure 5 shows a promotional leaflet with various configurations of extended awning in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

**[0039]** The present invention relates to an extendible awning for caravans. Typically, third party awning have to be selected which are of a size not interfere with the opening and closing of the caravans doors and windows. As such, all the available space in which to position the awning is rarely utilised and if the user changes to a different caravan shape, size and/or style the awning is often not suitable.

25 **[0040]** Turning firstly to figure 1a where there is shown a caravan 2 equipped with an awning 4. The awning is attached to the side of the caravan 2 and engages with the awning channel 5 which most caravans are equipped with. The awning 4 of the present invention includes sheet material 6 which encloses the door of the caravan, and is thus a porch awning. The awning sheet material 6 forms a canopy in this example and is supported on an internal frame (not shown). The awning sheet material 6 is formed from a number of panels, including the door panel 8 and side panels 10. The side panel 10 forms a side wall of the awning 4 and is detachably attached to the awning. The side panel 8 is attached to the awning by attachment means which are located substantially at the edge 12 of the side panel 10 where the same joins the awning 4. In this example the attachment means is a zip and/or zipper.

**[0041]** The porch awning 4 forms a first section which can be selectively added to, to adjust the size of the awning. In order to achieve this, a further awning section 14 is added to the first, as shown in figure 1b.

**[0042]** The further awning section 14 includes a canopy of sheet material 16, a window panel 18 and attachment means (not shown), in this example in the form of a zip and/or zipper, located at the edge of the sections 12, 12'. The zip has the same number of teeth as the side panel 10 and thus the further section 14 can be attached by zipping together the sheet material 6, 16 of each awning section.

[0043] The process for adding the additional awning section 14 is to first detach the side panel 10 and then attach the further section 14. The enlarged awning is then completed by reattaching the side panel 10 to the side of the further section 14 along edge 12', which also includes a zip attachment means.

[0044] The person skilled in the art will appreciate that although the first awning section to be attached to the caravan was a porch awning in this example, the user has a choice in which awning section to attach first and in which position. Therefore, the awning system provided here is essentially modular, with different sections capable of being added at different times and in different positions. Indeed, the first section can be purchased to start the awning system and then can be selectively added to in time. For example, if the user purchased a larger caravan a further section with a window could be purchased to be added to the other side of the porch section.

[0045] Figure 2 shows such an embodiment wherein the first porch awning section 4 is located on the left and the further awning section 20 is attached to the right hand side. The further section 20 in this example also includes a window panel 22.

[0046] Figure 3 shows the attachment means zip 24 in more detail. It can be seen that the zip is concealed under a double flap. The first inner flap 26 overlies the zip 24 and can be opened from the left hand edge. The second flap 28 overlies the first and is opened along the right hand edge. The edges are elasticated and are therefore the flaps are resiliently biased to lie flat against the sheet material and/or in the same plane. Arranging the flaps to be opened along substantially opposite edges prevents the ingress of moisture and wind, whilst allowing easy access to the attachment means.

[0047] Turning now to figure 4 which shows the inside of the extended awning. It can be seen that the sheet material 6 is attached to the sheet material 16 of the additional section 14 by a zip 24 along edge 12. The awning sheet material 6 is supported on a frame 30 comprising a number of hollow aluminium pole frame members. The frame members which run substantially horizontally in this example are telescopic and can be extended to the required length, which is usually the width of the additional awning section 14.

[0048] The sheet material 6, 16 includes a number of fixing means 32 in the form of sleeves, within which the pole frame members are located. The sleeves in this example are also provided with zip attachment means to facilitate attachment, removal and repositioning of the sheet material in this example.

[0049] Figure 5 shows some of the many number of ways differently sized additional sections 14, 14' can be attached to the awning 4. In particular the additional section 14 can also be further extended by including the further additional section 14'.

## Claims

1. An awning including a frame supporting a sheet material **characterised in that** said awning includes attachment means to which one or more frames and/or sheet material sections are attached to extend the size of the awning.
2. An awning according to claim 1 **characterised in that** the awning comprises at least one section.
3. An awning according to claim 2 **characterised in that** the sections are attached together by the attachment means.
4. An awning according to any preceding claim **characterised in that** the attached sections added to the awning include attachment means complimentary to the attachment means of the awning.
5. An awning according to any preceding claim **characterised in that** the awning and/or awning sections include one or more panels.
6. An awning according to claim 5 **characterised in that** the panels are constructed from substantially flexible sheet material.
7. An awning according to any preceding claim **characterised in that** the frame includes a plurality of frame members.
8. An awning according to claim 7 **characterised in that** the frame members are connected together with connecting means.
9. An awning according to 7 or 8 **characterised in that** the awning is connected to the frame members using on or more fixing means.
10. An awning according to claim 9 **characterised in that** the fixing means includes one or more sleeves.
11. An awning according to claim 10 **characterised in that** the frame members are attached to the awning sections by inserting the members into the sleeves.
12. An awning according to any of claims 5-11 **characterised in that** an awning section includes one or more removable panels.
13. An awning according to any preceding claim **characterised in that** the attachment means are covered by one or more flaps.
14. An awning according to claim 13 **characterised in that** the attachment means are covered by a first inner flap and a second outer flap wherein the first

flap forms a pocket and/or channel within which the attachment means is located and the second flap forms a pocket and/or channel containing the first flap and attachment means.

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- 15.** A method of extending an awning including at least one first section including a frame and attachment means, wherein said method includes the steps of;

- attaching at least one further section to the first using said attachment means.

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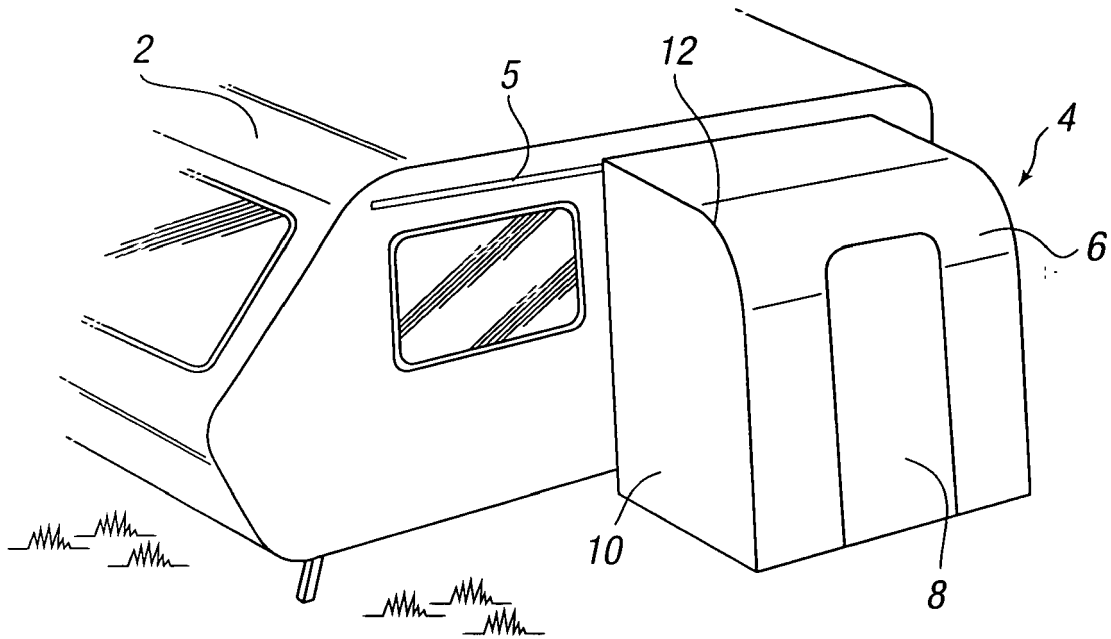


FIG. 1a

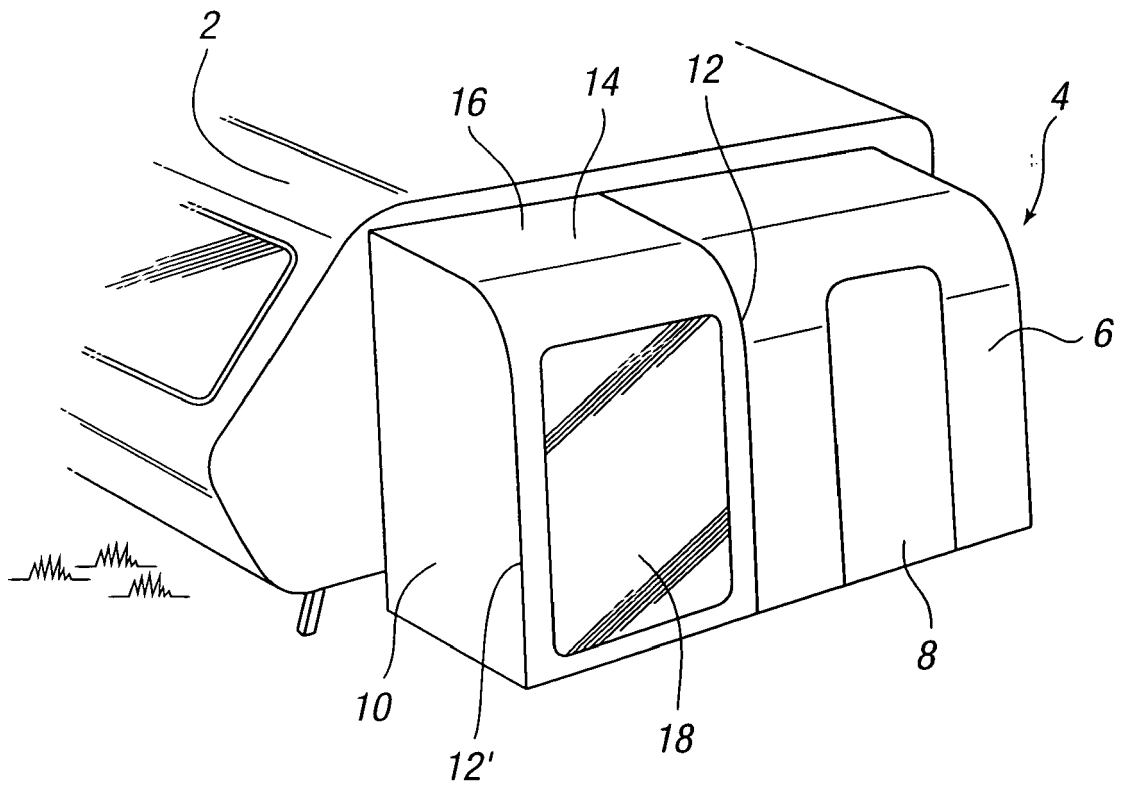


FIG. 1b

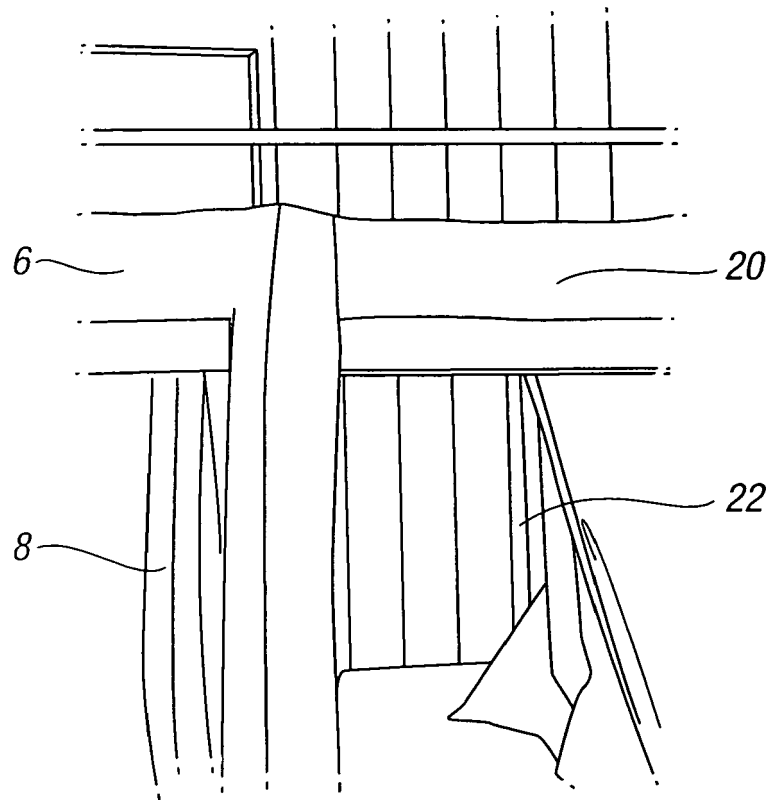


FIG. 2

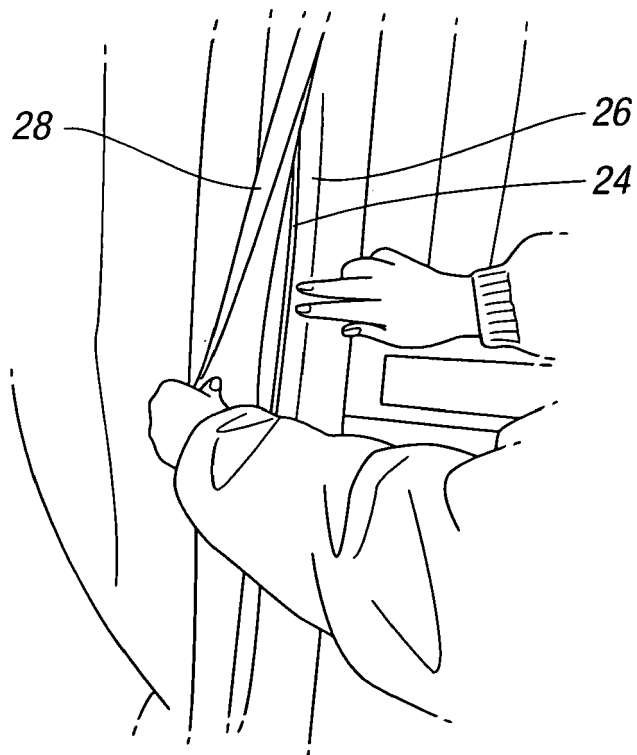


FIG. 3

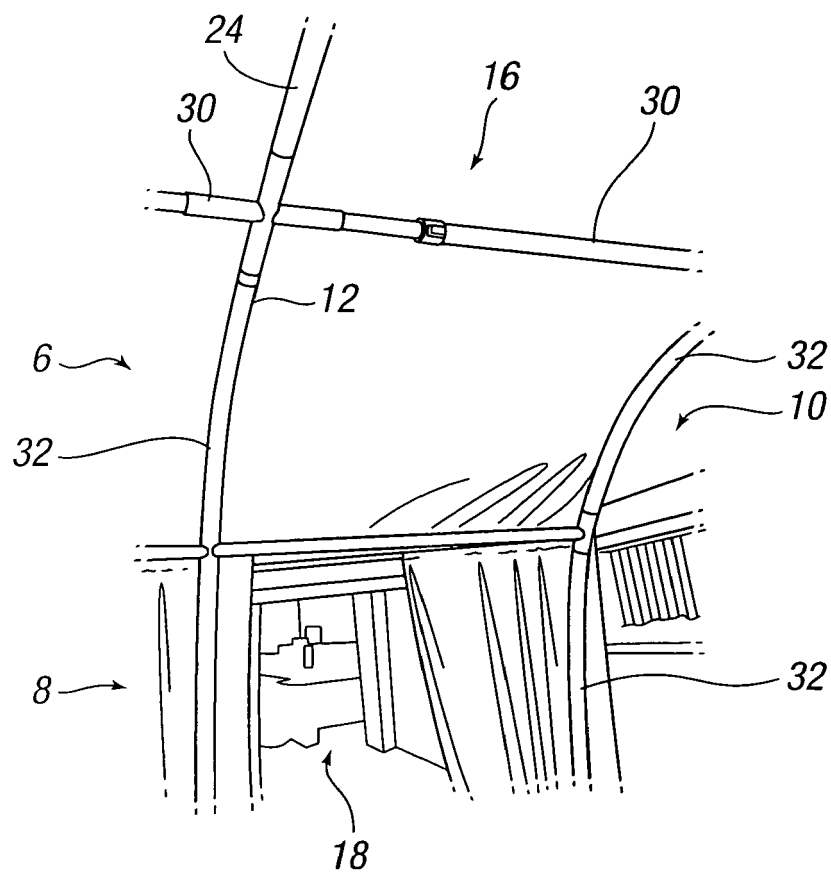


FIG. 4



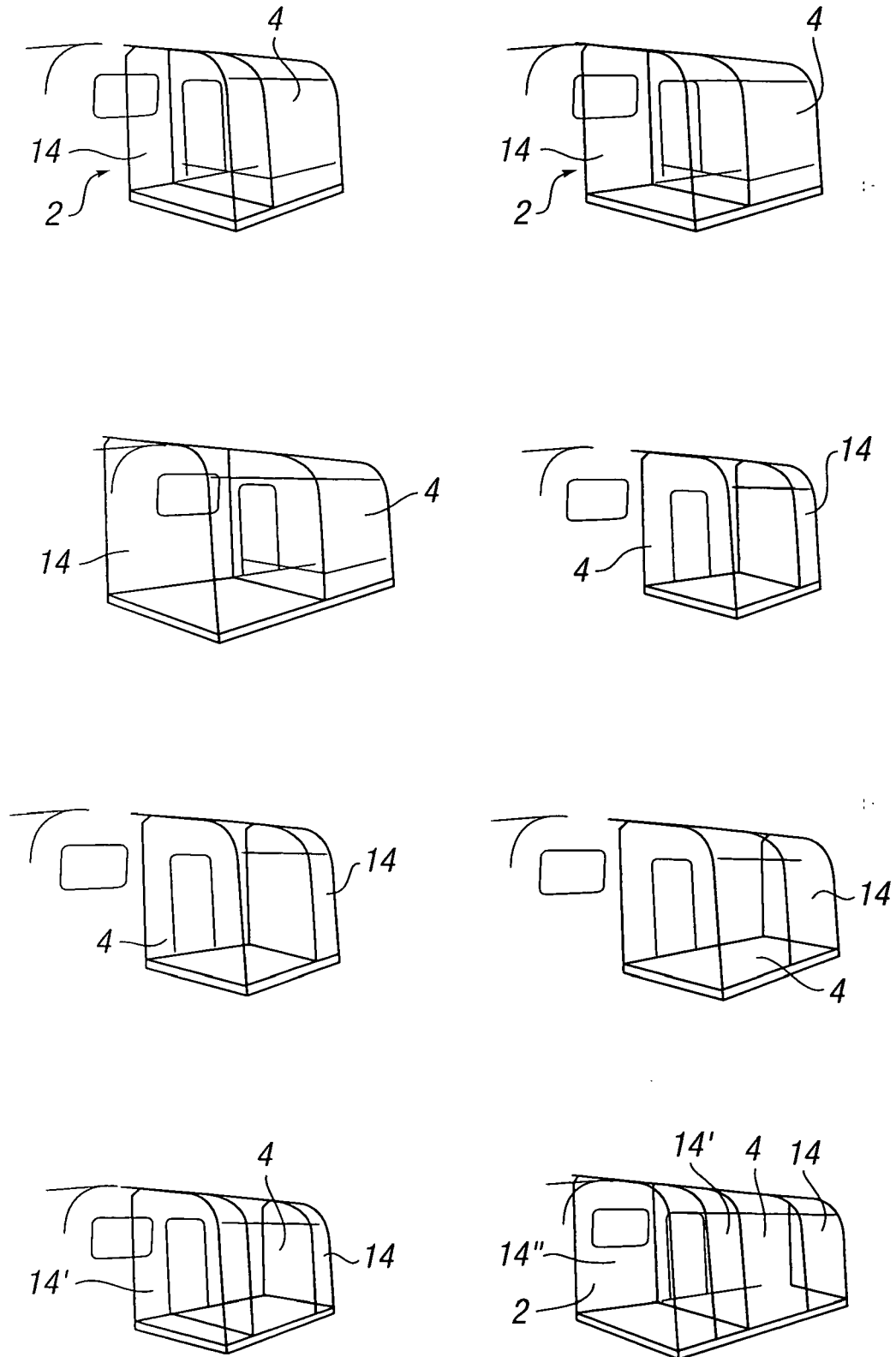


FIG. 5