

(19)



(11)

EP 2 295 891 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
16.03.2011 Bulletin 2011/11

(51) Int Cl.:
F24J 2/04 (2006.01)

(21) Application number: **09166931.7**

(22) Date of filing: **31.07.2009**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**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 SE SI SK SM TR**

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Remarks:
Amended claims in accordance with Rule 137(2)
EPC.

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(54) **Roof tile heat exchange system**

(57) A construction (7) for fixing a conduit (8) with respect to a tile batten (4a) and for providing a thermal contact between the conduit (8) and a roof tile (1b) for exchanging heat between the roof tile (1b) and a fluid in

the conduit (8), the construction (7) having an elastic portion (72; 721) to obtain a press fit contact between the conduit (8) and the roof tile (1b) when in use the roof tile (1b) is fitted.

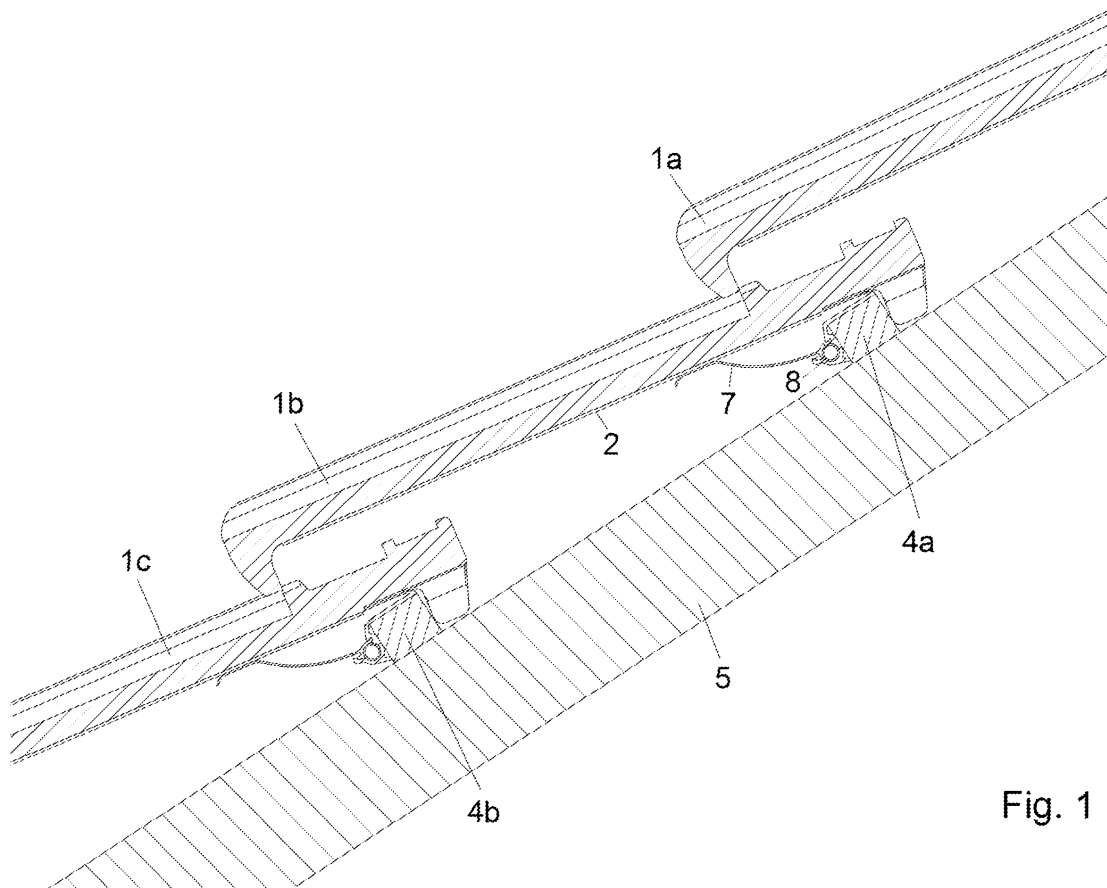


Fig. 1

EP 2 295 891 A1

Description

Field of the invention

[0001] The invention relates to a construction for exchanging heat between a roof tile and a fluid in a conduit. The invention further relates to a roof tile heat exchange system, a method of providing a roof comprising a heat exchange system, and a method of upgrading an existing roof.

Background of the invention

[0002] DE 3026217 A1 discloses a construction for heating a liquid by using the heat of a roof tile when radiated by the sun. The construction is mounted at the underside of the roof tiles. In one embodiment, a thermal conductive metal sheet fixes the pipes through which the liquid flows to the underside of the roof tiles. This construction has the drawback that the process of adding the construction to the roof is cumbersome.

Summary of the invention

[0003] It is an object of the invention to provide a construction for exchanging heat between a roof tile and a fluid in a conduit in an ease manner.

[0004] A first aspect of the invention provides a construction for exchanging heat between a roof tile and a fluid as claimed in claim 1. A second aspect of the invention provides a roof tile heat exchange system as claimed in claim 11. A third aspect of the invention provides a method of providing a roof comprising a heat exchange system as claimed in claim 12. A fourth aspect of the invention provides a method of upgrading an existing roof as claimed in claim 14. Advantageous embodiments are defined in the dependent claims.

[0005] The construction in accordance with the first aspect of the invention is shaped such that: the construction is fixed with respect the tile batten, the conduit is mountable in the construction to fix a position of the conduit with respect to the tile batten, and that a thermal contact between the conduit and a roof tile is established. The construction has an elastic portion to obtain a press fit contact between the conduit and the roof tile when, in use, the construction is mounted and the roof tile is fitted to the roof. Such a construction enables to first mount it to, for example, the tile batten. The conduits may be fitted to the construction when the construction is mounted to the tile batten, or the conduits may be fitted to the construction after the construction has been mounted to the tile batten. The last step is to mount the roof tiles. Because now the connection between the roof tiles is established by the fact that the construction has an elastic portion, it is not required to fit the conduits first to the roof tiles before the roof tiles are mounted on the roof. Consequently, the process of mounting the roof tiles is very simple because it is the same as usual for roofs without the construction

for exchanging heat.

[0006] The conduit may be any hollow and fluid tight construction, such as for example a pipe. The cross section of the conduit may have any suitable shape, such as for example circular or rectangular. Usually, the fluid flows through the conduit to transport the exchanged heat. The heat exchange may comprise transport of the heat from the roof tile to the fluid to heat the fluid. The heated fluid may be used to provide warm water or for other heating purposes. Alternatively, the fluid may be used to cool the roof tile and to transport the heat away from the roof, preferably to outside the building. In the latter situation, the fluid may be cooled to cool the roof tile.

[0007] The tile batten may be a standard tile batten as used in roofs without any heat exchange system. The construction may be fixed with respect to the tile batten in any manner, for example, the construction may be mounted on the tile batten by using nails, screws, staples or glue. Alternatively, an end of the construction may have a shape corresponding to the shape of the tile batten to at least partly surround the top of the tile batten such that the construction when the end is put over the top of the tile batten is kept in place against the gravity force.

[0008] In another embodiment of DE 3026217 A1, the tile battens are hollow to provide the pipes through which the liquid flows. This construction has the drawback that it required special non-wooden tile battens which cannot be handled in the same manner as the usual wooden tile battens. A further drawback is that in existing roofs the existing tile battens have to be replaced which is an expensive operation.

[0009] In an embodiment, the construction is shaped to mount the conduit in an area between successive tile battens when, in use, the construction is fixed with respect to the tile batten. Thus, the conduit is arranged in the free space below the roof tiles. The press fit is obtained by deforming the elastic portion by a weight of the roof tile when fitted.

[0010] In an embodiment, the construction is shaped to hold the conduit at a lower part thereof and at a side directed towards the tile batten to which the construction is mounted. The lower part of the conduit is the side of the conduit directed away from the roof tile. This shape of the construction prevents movement of the conduit in the direction towards the tile batten and away from the roof tile.

[0011] In an embodiment, the construction has an elastic portion which has a first end which makes thermal contact with the roof tile and a second end which exerts a force on the conduit thereby providing a thermal contact with the conduit. It is not essential that the whole portion between the first end and the second and is elastic. The force exerted being counteracted by the shape of the construction which prevents movement of the conduit in the direction towards the tile batten and away from the roof tile. The advantage of this construction is that the thermal contact is obtained by a press fit caused by the weight of the roof tile. No separate pressing means are

required to ensure a good thermal contact between the roof tile and the conduit. A further advantage is that there is no fixed connection between the roof tile and the conduit. This has the advantage that the roof tile can be mounted to the roof in a separate step.

[0012] In an embodiment, the construction has an extending portion extending, in use, to a top of the tile batten to fasten the construction to the tile batten, the top of the tile batten being the side of the tile batten directed towards the roof tile when present. This enables an easy fastening of the construction to the tile batten. For example by stapling the extending portion to the top of the tile batten. Alternatively, the extending portion may be cup shaped to fit over the top of the tile batten. Such a construction has the advantage that the construction need not be fastened to the tile batten because it stays in place of its own. However, also this cup shaped extending portion may be additionally fastened to the tile batten in any manner.

[0013] In an embodiment, the construction comprises a first part which is constructed to be mounted to the tile batten to hold both the conduit and a second part which is at least partly resilient. The second part extends between the roof tile and the conduit to obtain the press fit contact to transfer the heat between the roof tile and the conduit. Such a two part construction has several advantages. A first advantage is that it becomes easier to add the heat exchange system to the roof. First, the first part is mounted to the tile batten in any of the already discussed manners. Secondly, the conduit is pressed or put in a receptacle of the first part such that the first part holds the conduit. Thirdly, the second part is connected to the first part such that when in the last step the roof tile is placed, the second part, which is thermally conductive, presses against the conduit. The first part is constructed to substantially hold the conduit in position against the pressure exerted by the second part of the conduit. However, it is not essential that the second part is inflexible, it should not be so flexible that the second part is not able to make a press fit in-between the roof tile and the conduit. A second advantage is that the material of the first and second part may be different to optimally suit its function. For example, the second part is made of a plastic and the first part is made of a metal. Preferably, the metal is of light weight and has a good thermal conductivity, such as for example aluminum, to minimize the extra load on an existing roof.

[0014] In an embodiment, the first part has a lower thermal conductivity than the second part. This has the advantage that the heat transfer from the roof tile to the conduit is predominantly performed by the second part thereby obtaining a desired temperature gradient distribution over and in the roof tile. A further advantage is that the relatively low thermal conductivity of the first part when present between the roof tile and the tile batten decreases the loss of heat towards the tile batten.

[0015] In an embodiment, the second part is shaped for contacting the roof tile in its central area. In this man-

ner the temperature gradient distribution over the roof tile is optimal while the dimensions of the second part are minimal. Preferably, the second part is sheet shaped and the contact area between the second part and the roof tile is line shaped and is dividing the active surface of the roof tile in two halves. With active surface is meant the surface of the roof tile being illuminated by the sun light, thus not taking into account the part being covered by other roof tiles.

[0016] In an embodiment, the construction further comprises the conduit.

[0017] In an embodiment, the construction further comprises the roof tile which has a thermal conductive sheet, layer or coating at its underside. The underside is the side directed towards the tile batten when the roof tile is placed on the roof.

[0018] These and other aspects of the invention are apparent from and will be elucidated with reference to the embodiments described hereinafter.

Brief description of the drawings

[0019] In the drawings:

Fig. 1 schematically shows a roof with a heat exchange system,

Fig. 2 schematically shows a cross section of a two part construction for exchanging heat between a roof tile and a fluid in a conduit, and

Fig. 3 schematically shows an embodiment of the one part of the two parts of the construction which provides the thermal connection between the roof tile and the conduit in an elastic manner.

[0020] It should be noted that items which have the same reference numbers in different Figures, have the same structural features and the same functions, or are the same signals. Where the function and/or structure of such an item has been explained, there is no necessity for repeated explanation thereof in the detailed description.

Detailed description

[0021] Fig. 1 schematically shows a roof with a heat exchange system. The roof comprises tile battens 4a, 4b which are mounted on a rafter 5. The construction 7 is mounted to the tile batten 4a, holds the conduit 8 and has an elastic portion to obtain a press fit contact between the conduit 8 and the roof tile 1b. Neighboring roof tiles are indicated by 1a and 1c. The heat transferring and fixing construction 7 is explained in more detail with respect to Figures 2 and 3.

[0022] The construction 7 can be added to an existing roof by first removing the existing roof tiles. Next, the construction 7 together with the conduit 8 is attached to the tile batten 4a. Alternatively, the conduit 8 may be attached to the construction 7 after the construction 7

has been attached to the tile batten 4a. Instead of attaching the construction 7 to the tile batten 4a, the construction 7 may be attached to another suitable beam of the roof construction. As a last step, the roof tiles are placed. Due to the fact that the portion or part of the construction 7 between the conduit 8 and the roof tile 1b is at least partly elastic, the weight of the roof tile 1b presses this portion or part of the construction 7 towards the rafter 5 and thus also results in a press fit contact of this portion or part with both the roof tile 1b and the conduit 8. In this manner, the thermal contact between the construction 7 and the roof tile 1b and the thermal contact between the construction 7 and the conduit 8 is obtained by pressing the parts against each other, which results in a very good thermal contact. Another advantage of the elasticity is that can be accommodated for tolerance on the dimensions of the tile battens and the roof tiles, and for different angles of the roof.

[0023] In an embodiment, a thermal conductive sheet or layer 2 may be attached or provided to the underside of the roof tile 1b at least in the area where the construction 7 contacts the roof tile 1b. The layer 2 may be a metal sheet or a metal coating. In an embodiment, the construction 7 contacts the roof tile 1b in its center area. The center area may be a line shaped area.

[0024] Fig. 2 schematically shows a cross section of a two part construction for exchanging heat between a roof tile and a fluid in a conduit. The construction 7 has a first part 71 which in an embodiment is made from plastic and a second part 72 which in an embodiment is made from metal. What counts is that the part 72 is thermal conductive and is, at least partly, flexible or of resilient material, and that the part 71 is sufficiently stiff such that the press fit of the part 72 with the roof tile 1b and the conduit 8 is supported. If the part 72 is from metal its shape or thickness should be selected, at least locally, such that it is at least partly flexible to enable bending when the roof tile 1b associated with the part 72 is put in place.

[0025] Part 71 has a portion 710 with which part 71 is fitted to the tile batten 4a. In the embodiment shown, portion 710 is cup-shaped to be put on top of the tile batten 4a. The portion 710 may be put over the top of the tile batten 4a without being fastened by stapling, screwing, nailing or gluing. Alternatively, the portion 710 may have any suitable shape such that it can be fastened to the top and/or side of the tile batten 4a. Part 71, has a portion 711 partly surrounding the conduit 8. The portion 711 is arranged to keep the conduit in position when placed in the part 71 such that it does not fall out when the part 71 is fitted to the tile batten 4a. The portion 711 may have some resilience to tightly hold the conduit 8 in position. Further, the part 71 is shaped to hold the part 72 in place. In the embodiment shown, the part 71 comprises the portions 712a and 712b to hold the part 72 in position once mounted.

[0026] In an embodiment of the part 72, the flexible part 721 is provided at the end of part 72 contacting the roof tile 1b. The other end 722 of part 72, which cooper-

ates with the portions 712a and 712b of part 71, are shaped to keep the part 72 in place with respect to the part 71 when mounted therein. This is advantageous when assembling the construction. First, part 71, with or without the conduit 8 is fastened to the tile batten 4a. If not yet present, then the conduit 8 is put in the portion 711. Next, the part 72 is pressed towards the conduit 8 and is kept in place behind the portions 712a and 712b. Finally, the roof tile 1b is put on the roof thereby pressing by its weight on the portion 721. The pressure on the portion 721 presses the part 72 with its end 722 against the conduit 8. The part 71 is shaped to, at least for a part, withstand this pressure on the conduit 8. An embodiment of the part 72 is shown in more detail with respect to Fig. 3.

[0027] In an embodiment, the thermal conductivity of the part 71 is lower than the thermal conductivity of the part 72. A relatively low conductivity of the part 71 prevents the heat of the roof tile 1b to leak away via the tile batten 4a. This is especially true if the part 71 is of a material which is a thermal isolator. Another advantage is that the temperature gradients in the tile towards the contact point (or line or area) with the roof tile 1b is more homogenous across the roof tile 1b.

[0028] Fig. 3 schematically shows an embodiment of the one part of the two parts of the construction which provides the thermal connection between the roof tile and the conduit in an elastic manner. The metal part 72 has the portion 722 shaped for cooperation with the conduit 8 to establish the thermal contact between the part 72 and the conduit 8. The portion 722 is further shaped to cooperate with the portions 712a and 712b of the part 71 such that the part 72 is kept in position with respect to the part 71 and the conduit 8. The desired flexibility of the flexible part 721 may be obtained by providing grooves or slots extending in the direction from one end to the other end of the part 72. In addition or alternatively, the thickness of the metal may decrease towards the end of part 72 contacting the roof tile 1b.

[0029] It should be noted that the above-mentioned embodiments illustrate rather than limit the invention, and that those skilled in the art will be able to design many alternative embodiments without departing from the scope of the appended claims.

[0030] For example, the conduit 8 may be a pipe or any other hollow and fluid tight construction allowing the fluid to be transported to a place where the heat can be withdrawn or added. The material of the conduit should be thermally conductive.

[0031] Although in the embodiments, the construction 7 is mounted to the tile batten, alternatively, the construction 7 may be mounted to any other suitable beam in the roof construction.

[0032] The construction 7 which transfers the heat from the roof tile 1b to the conduit 8 and which fixes the conduit 8 with respect to the tile batten 4a may be added to existing roofs or may be implemented in new roofs. Such a roof provided with the construction 7 acts as a heat exchange system. For example, the energy of the

sun which heats the roof tile 1b is transported to the fluid in the conduit 8 and may be used or may be disposed of elsewhere. Alternatively, the fluid may be cooled to cool the roof tile 1b. It is possible to remove the heat transport system from an existing roof and to reuse it in another roof.

[0033] In the claims, any reference signs placed between parentheses shall not be construed as limiting the claim. Use of the verb "comprise" and its conjugations does not exclude the presence of elements or steps other than those stated in a claim. The article "a" or "an" preceding an element does not exclude the presence of a plurality of such elements. The invention may be implemented by means of hardware comprising several distinct elements, and by means of a suitably programmed computer. In the device claim enumerating several means, several of these means may be embodied by one and the same item of hardware. The mere fact that certain measures are recited in mutually different dependent claims does not indicate that a combination of these measures cannot be used to advantage.

Claims

1. A construction (7) for fixing a conduit (8) with respect to a tile batten (4a; 4b) and for providing a thermal contact between the conduit (8) and a roof tile (1b) for exchanging heat between the roof tile (1b) and a fluid in the conduit (8), the construction (7) having an elastic portion (72; 721) to obtain a press fit contact between the conduit (8) and the roof tile (1b) when in use the roof tile (1b) is fitted.
2. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 1, being shaped for:
 - in use, positioning the conduit (8) in an area between successive tile battens (4a, 4b) when, in use, and
 - obtaining the press fit by deforming the elastic portion (72; 721) by a weight of the roof tile (1b) when fitted.
3. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 2, being mounted to the tile batten (4a) and being shaped for holding the conduit (8) at its lower part being its side directed away from the roof tile (1b) and at a side being directed towards the tile batten (4a) to which the construction (7) is mounted in use, to prevent, in use, movement of the conduit (8) in the direction towards the tile batten (4a) and away from the roof tile (1b).
4. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 1, wherein the elastic portion (72; 721) has a first end making thermal contact with the roof tile (1b) in use and a second end for exerting a force on the conduit (8) when present thereby providing a thermal contact with the conduit (8), the force being counteracted by a shape of the construction (7) preventing movement of the conduit (8) in the direction towards the tile batten (4a) and away from the roof tile (1b).
5. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 1, wherein the construction (7) has a portion (710) extending, in use, to a top of the tile batten (4a) to mount the construction (7) to the tile batten (4a), the top of the tile batten (4a) being the side of the tile batten (4a) directed towards the roof tile (1b) when present.
6. A construction as claimed in claim 1 comprising a first part (71) being constructed for being fixed with respect to the tile batten (4a), for holding the conduit (8), and for holding a second part (72) being at least partly resilient and, in use, extending between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8) to obtain the press fit contact for transferring the heat between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8).
7. A construction as claimed in claim 6, wherein the first part (71) has a lower thermal conductivity than the second part (72).
8. A construction as claimed in claim 6, wherein the second part (72) is shaped for contacting the roof tile (1b) in its central area.
9. A construction as claimed in any one of the claims 1 to 7, further comprising the conduit (8).
10. A construction as claimed in any one of the claims 1 to 7, further comprising a roof tile (1b) with a thermal conductive sheet, layer or coating (2) at its side directed towards the tile batten (4a) when mounted.
11. A roof tile heat exchange system comprising:
 - a tile batten (4a),
 - a roof tile (1b), and
 - a construction (7) as claimed in claim 1 being fixed with respect to the tile batten (4a), wherein the elastic portion (72; 721) is arranged to be deformed by a weight of the roof tile (1b).
12. A method of providing a roof comprising a heat exchange system, the method comprising:
 - a) fixing a construction (7) as claimed in claim 1 with respect to the tile batten (4a) of the roof,
 - b) mounting a conduit (8) to the construction (7), and
 - c) placing a roof tile (1b) on the roof on a position cooperating with the construction (7) for deforming the elastic portion (72; 721) by a weight of the roof tile (1b).

13. A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the construction (7) comprises a first part (71) being constructed for being attachable to the tile batten (4a), for holding the conduit (8), and for holding a second part (72) being at least partly resilient and, in use, extending between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8) to obtain the press fit contact for transferring the heat between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8), wherein the method comprises the additional step of d) attaching the second part (72) to the first part (71), and wherein the steps are performed in the order a), b), d) and c).

14. A method of upgrading an existing roof comprising:

removing existing roof tiles (1b), and performing the steps of the method according to claim 11 or 12, wherein the roof tile (1b) of step c) is the existing roof tile or a new roof tile.

Amended claims in accordance with Rule 137(2) EPC.

1. A construction (7) for fixing a conduit (8) with respect to a tile batten (4a; 4b) and for providing a thermal contact between the conduit (8) and a roof tile (1b) for exchanging heat between the roof tile (1b) and a fluid in the conduit (8), the construction (7) having an elastic portion (72; 721) to obtain a press fit contact between the conduit (8) and the roof tile (1b) when in use the roof tile (1b) is fitted, **characterized in that** the construction (7) is shaped for:

in use, positioning the conduit (8) in an area between successive tile battens (4a, 4b) when, in use, and obtaining the press fit by deforming the elastic portion (72; 721) by a weight of the roof tile (1b) when fitted.

2. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 1, being mounted to the tile batten (4a) and being shaped for holding the conduit (8) at its lower part being a side of the conduit (8) directed away from the roof tile (1b) and at a side being directed towards the tile batten (4a) to which the construction (7) is mounted in use, to prevent, in use, movement of the conduit (8) in the direction towards the tile batten (4a) and away from the roof tile (1b).

3. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 1, wherein the elastic portion (72; 721) has a first end making thermal contact with the roof tile (1b) in use and a second end for exerting a force on the conduit (8) when present thereby providing a thermal contact with the conduit (8), the force being counteracted by a shape of the construction (7) preventing movement

of the conduit (8) in the direction towards the tile batten (4a) and away from the roof tile (1b).

4. A construction (7) as claimed in claim 1, wherein the construction (7) has a portion (710) extending, in use, to a top of the tile batten (4a) to mount the construction (7) to the tile batten (4a), the top of the tile batten (4a) being the side of the tile batten (4a) directed towards the roof tile (1b) when present.

5. A construction as claimed in claim 1 comprising a first part (71) being constructed for being fixed with respect to the tile batten (4a), for holding the conduit (8), and for holding a second part (72) being at least partly resilient and, in use, extending between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8) to obtain the press fit contact for transferring the heat between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8).

6. A construction as claimed in claim 6, wherein the first part (71) has a lower thermal conductivity than the second part (72).

7. A construction as claimed in claim 6, wherein the second part (72) is shaped for contacting the roof tile (1b) in its central area.

8. A construction as claimed in any one of the claims 1 to 7, further comprising the conduit (8).

9. A construction as claimed in any one of the claims 1 to 7, further comprising a roof tile (1b) with a thermal conductive sheet, layer or coating (2) at its side directed towards the tile batten (4a) when mounted.

10. A roof tile heat exchange system comprising:

a tile batten (4a),
a roof tile (1b), and
a construction (7) as claimed in claim 1 being fixed with respect to the tile batten (4a).

11. A method of providing a roof comprising a heat exchange system, the method comprising:

a) fixing a construction (7) as claimed in claim 1 with respect to the tile batten (4a) of the roof,
b) mounting a conduit (8) to the construction (7), and
c) placing a roof tile (1b) on the roof on a position, cooperating with the construction (7) for deforming the elastic portion (72; 721) by a weight of the roof tile (1b) **characterized in that** the construction (7) comprises a first part (71) being constructed for being attachable to the tile batten (4a), for holding the conduit (8), and for holding a second part (72) being at least partly resilient and, in use, extending between the roof tile (1b)

and the conduit (8) to obtain the press fit contact for transferring the heat between the roof tile (1b) and the conduit (8), wherein the method comprises the additional step of

d) attaching the second part (72) to the first part (71), and wherein the steps are performed in the order a), b), d) and c). 5

12. A method of upgrading an existing roof comprising: 10

removing existing roof tiles (1b), and performing the steps of the method according to claim 1, wherein the roof tile (1b) of step c) is the existing roof tile or a new roof tile. 15

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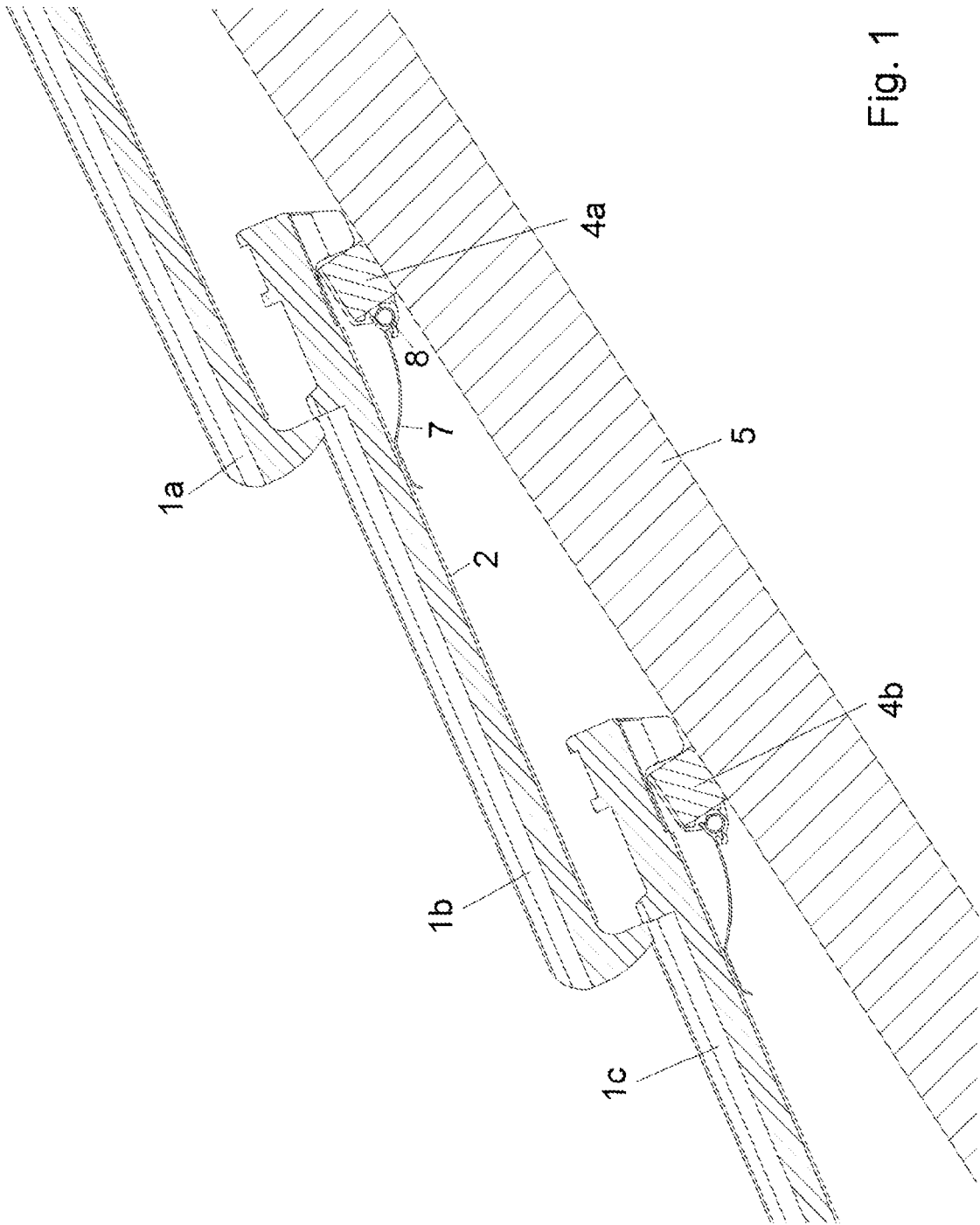


Fig. 1

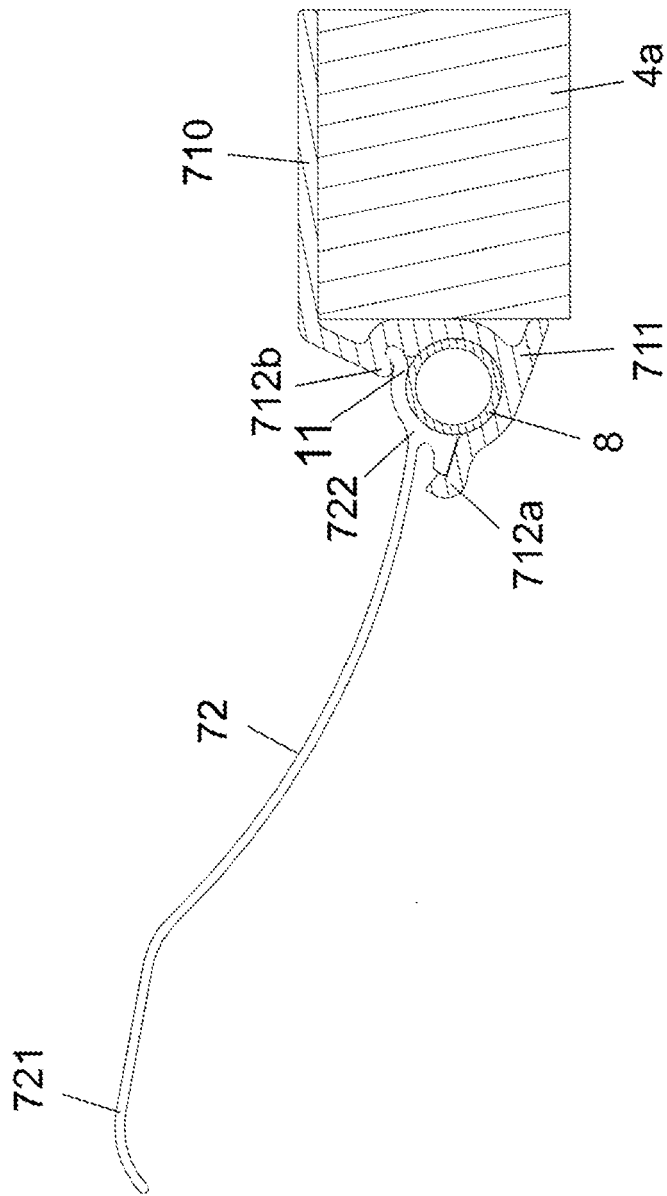


Fig. 2

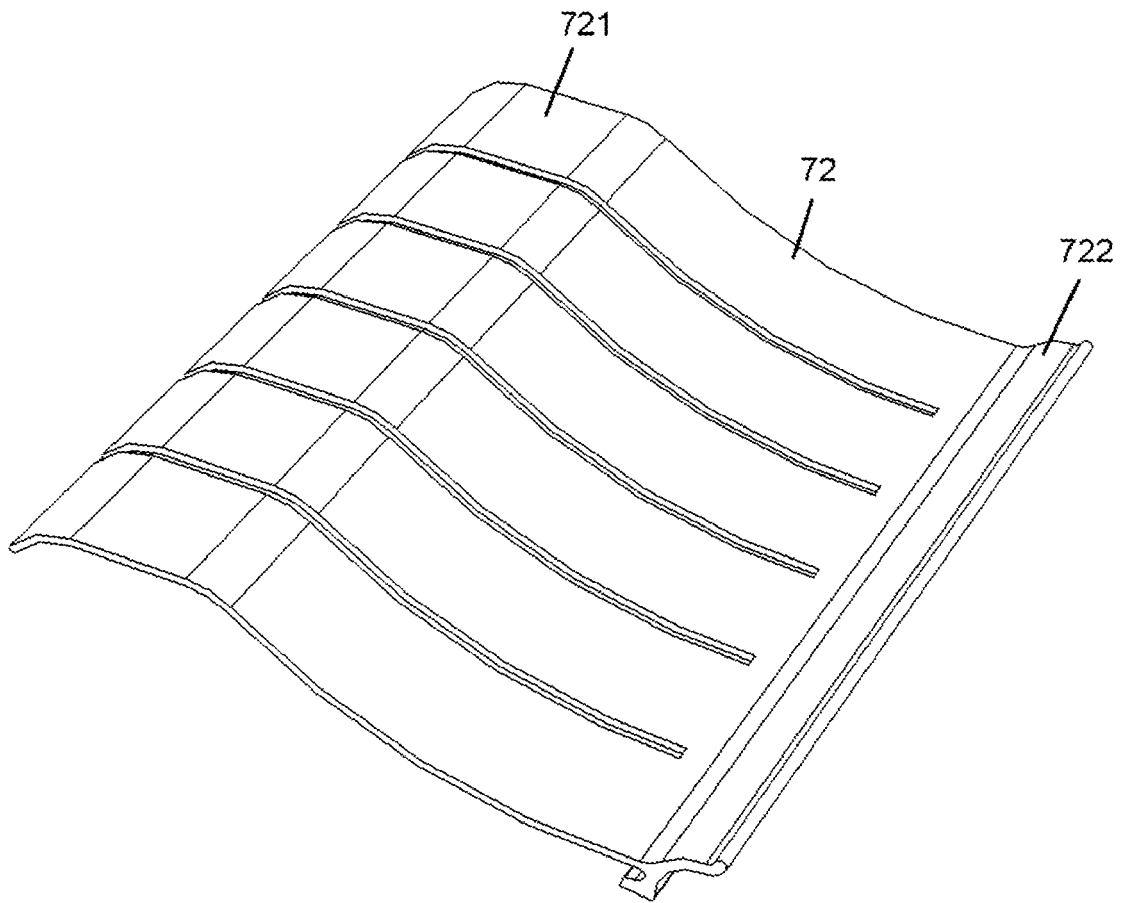


Fig. 3



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 09 16 6931

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	DE 30 26 217 A1 (WELZ HANS JOACHIM DIPL ING) 4 February 1982 (1982-02-04) * pages 9-11,14 * * page 19, paragraph 1; figures 1,2,6-10 * -----	1,4-6, 8-12,14	INV. F24J2/04
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			F24J
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich		15 December 2009	von Mittelstaedt, A
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P/M/C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 09 16 6931

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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15-12-2009

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REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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