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Conrad

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(54) **SURFACE CLEANING APPARATUS**

9/106; A47L 9/122; A47L 9/165; A47L 9/1666; A47L 9/1683; A47L 9/1691; A47L 9/22; A47L 9/2868; A47L 9/322

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See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 303 days.

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

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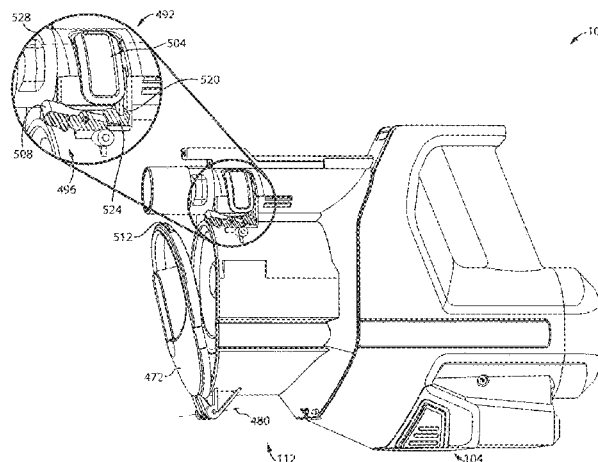
(57) **ABSTRACT**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC ... *A47L 5/24*; *A47L 5/225*; *A47L 5/28*; *A47L*

A hand vacuum cleaner has an air treatment member having an air inlet passage which comprises a handle for the air treatment member and a door lock of the air treatment member wherein, when a user's hand is holding the air treatment member by the air treatment member handle, the door release actuator is operable by the same hand.

18 Claims, 33 Drawing Sheets



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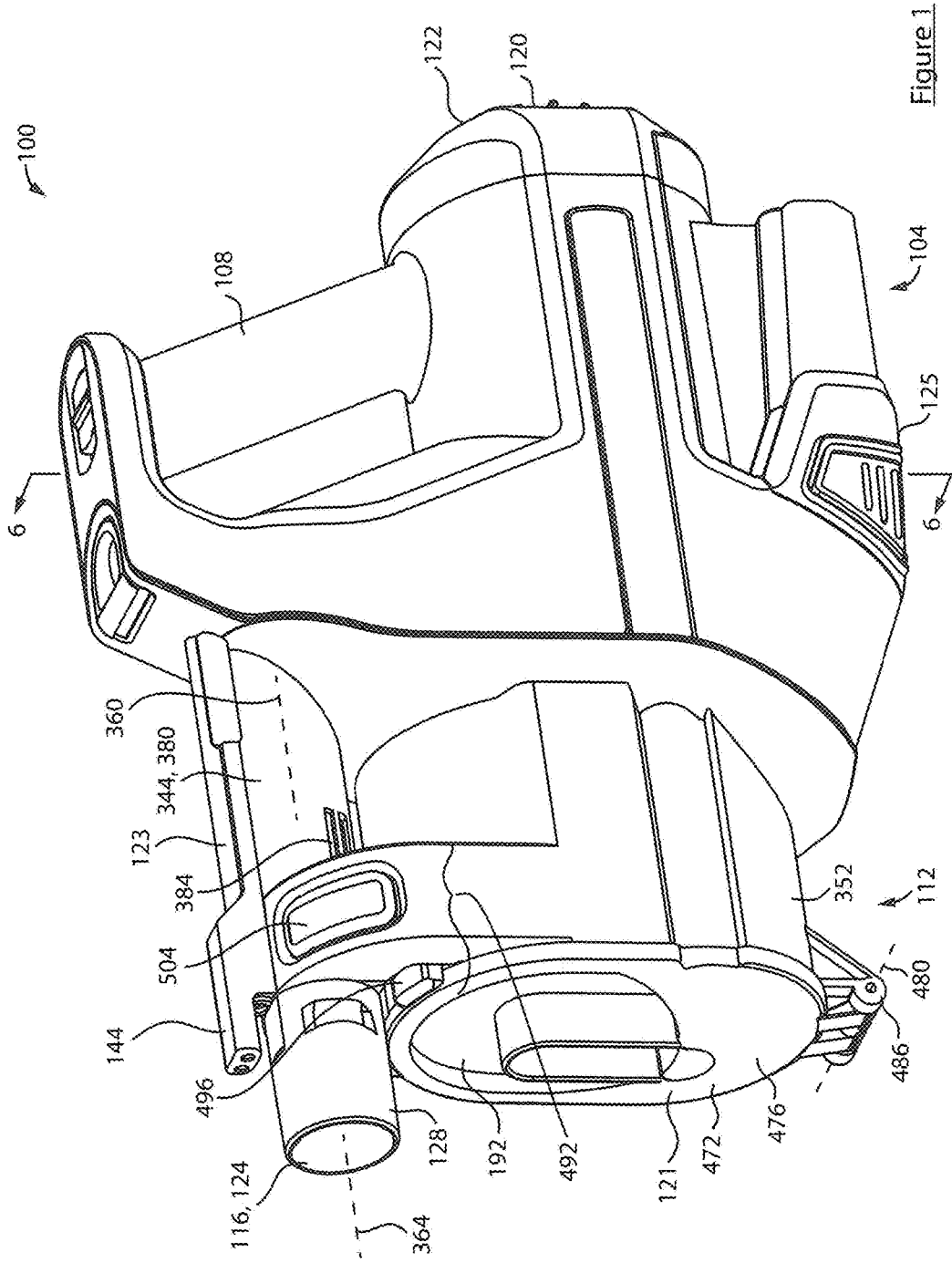


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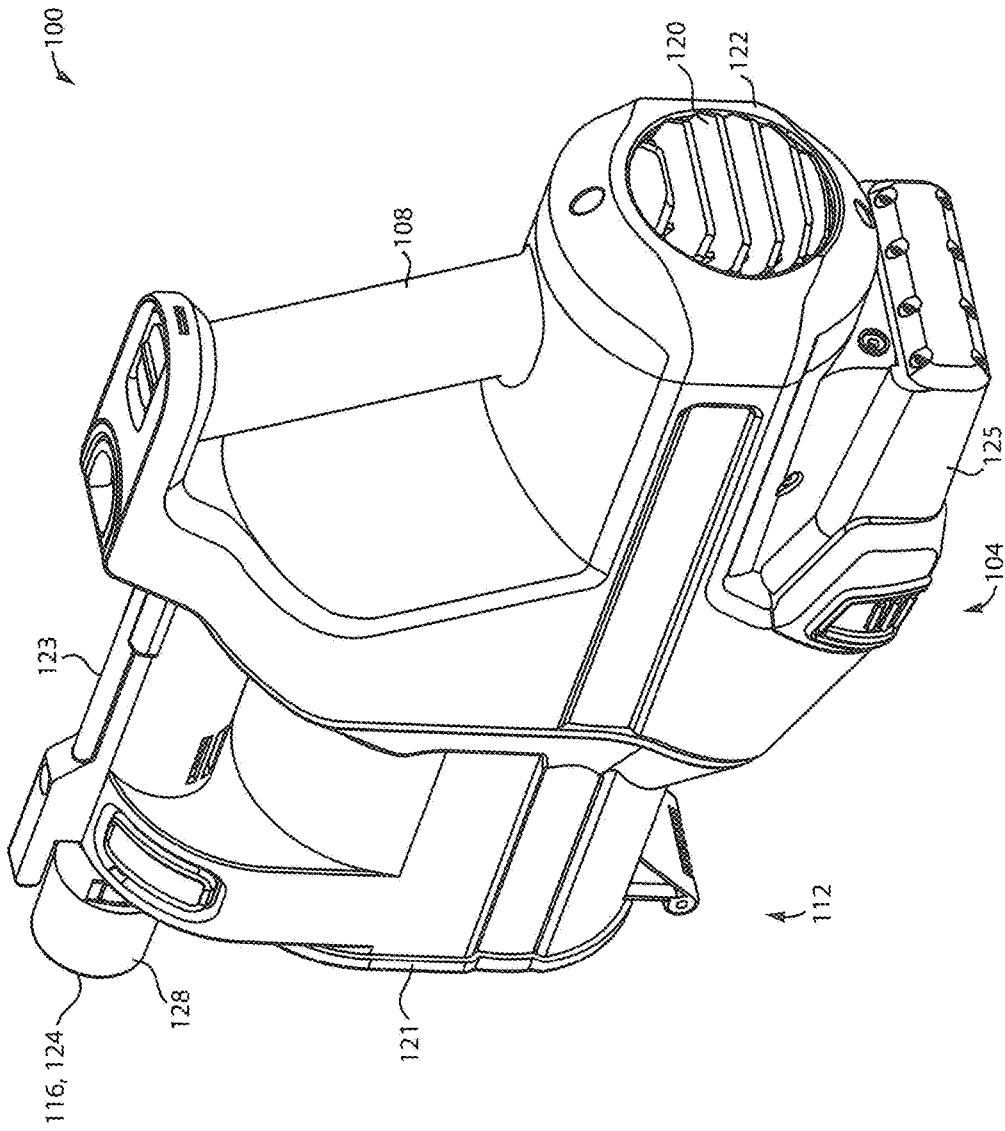


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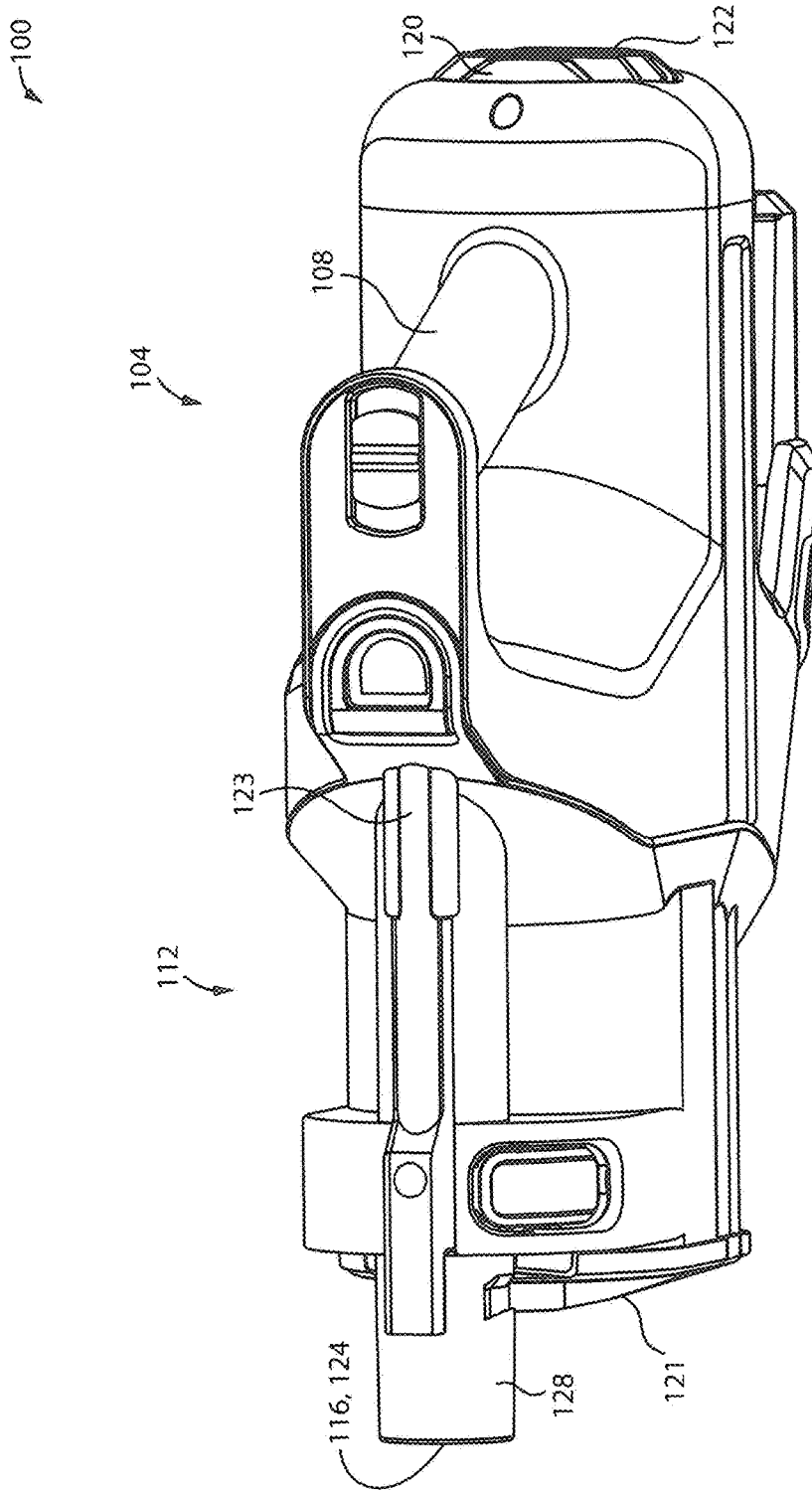


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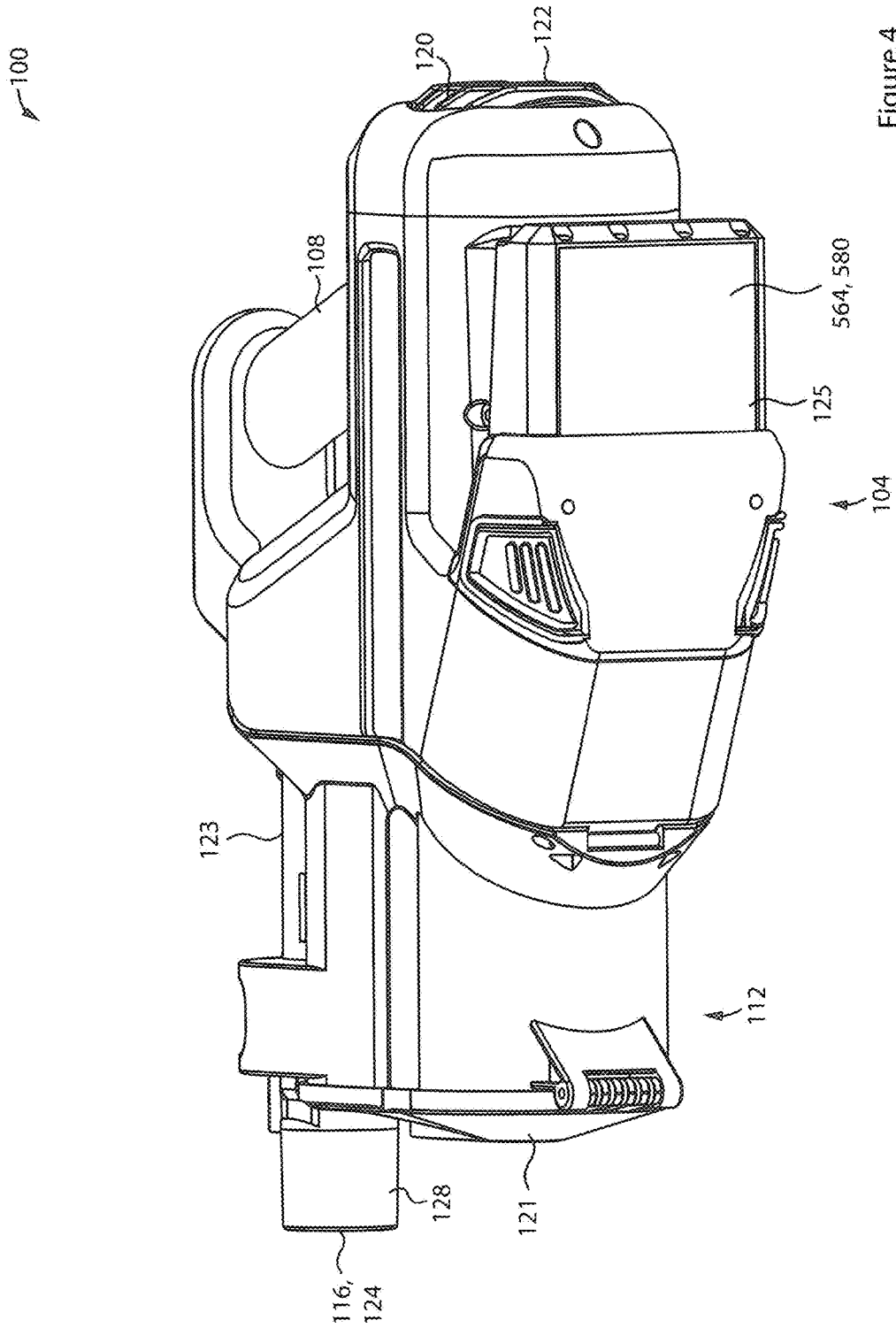


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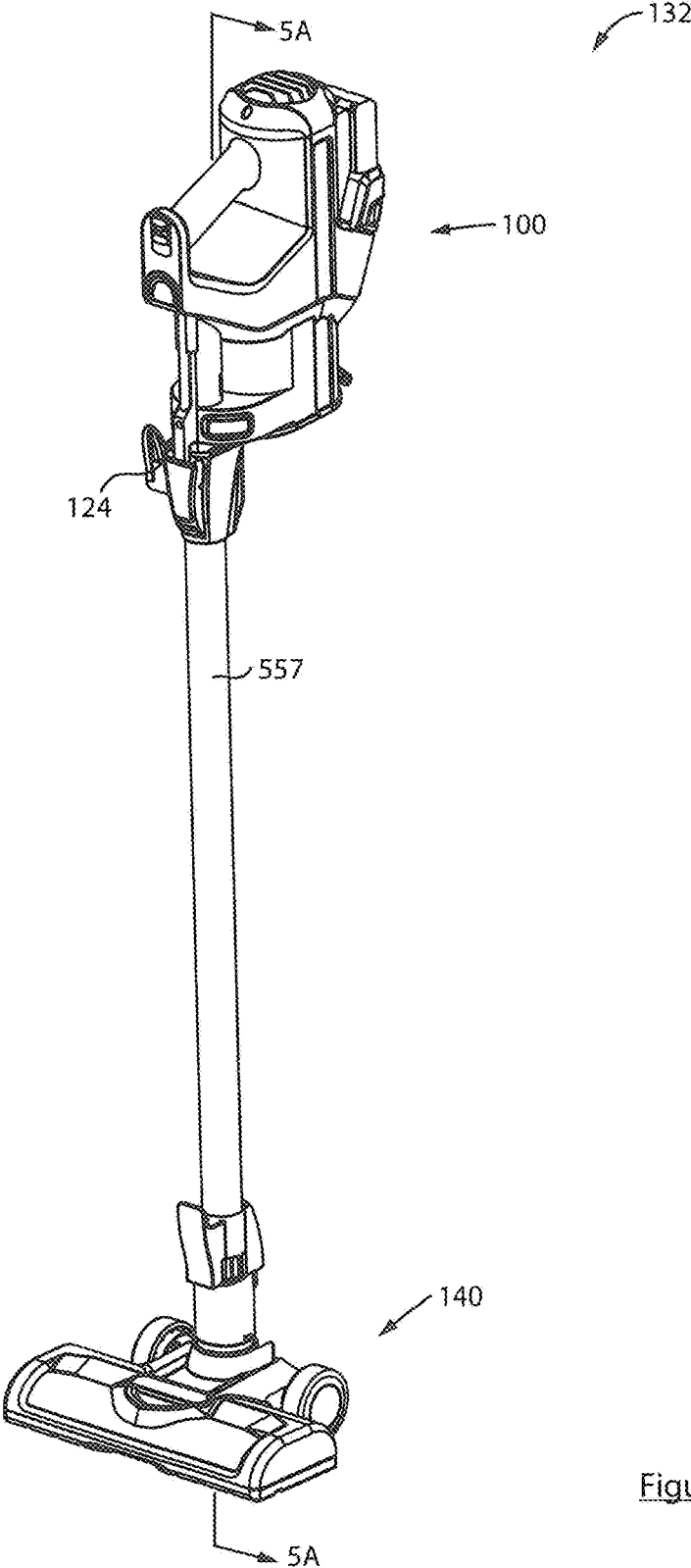


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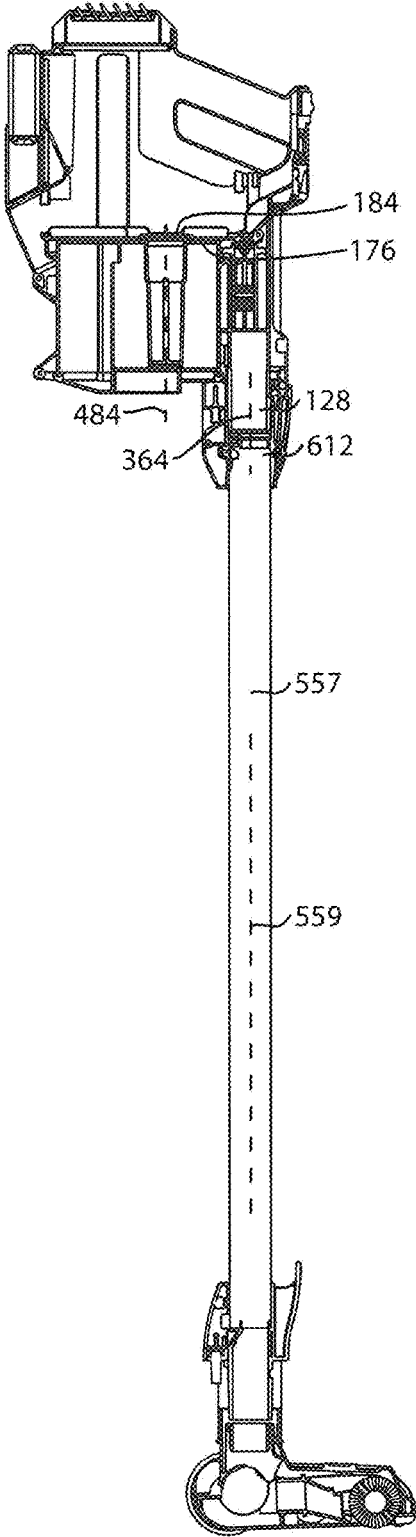


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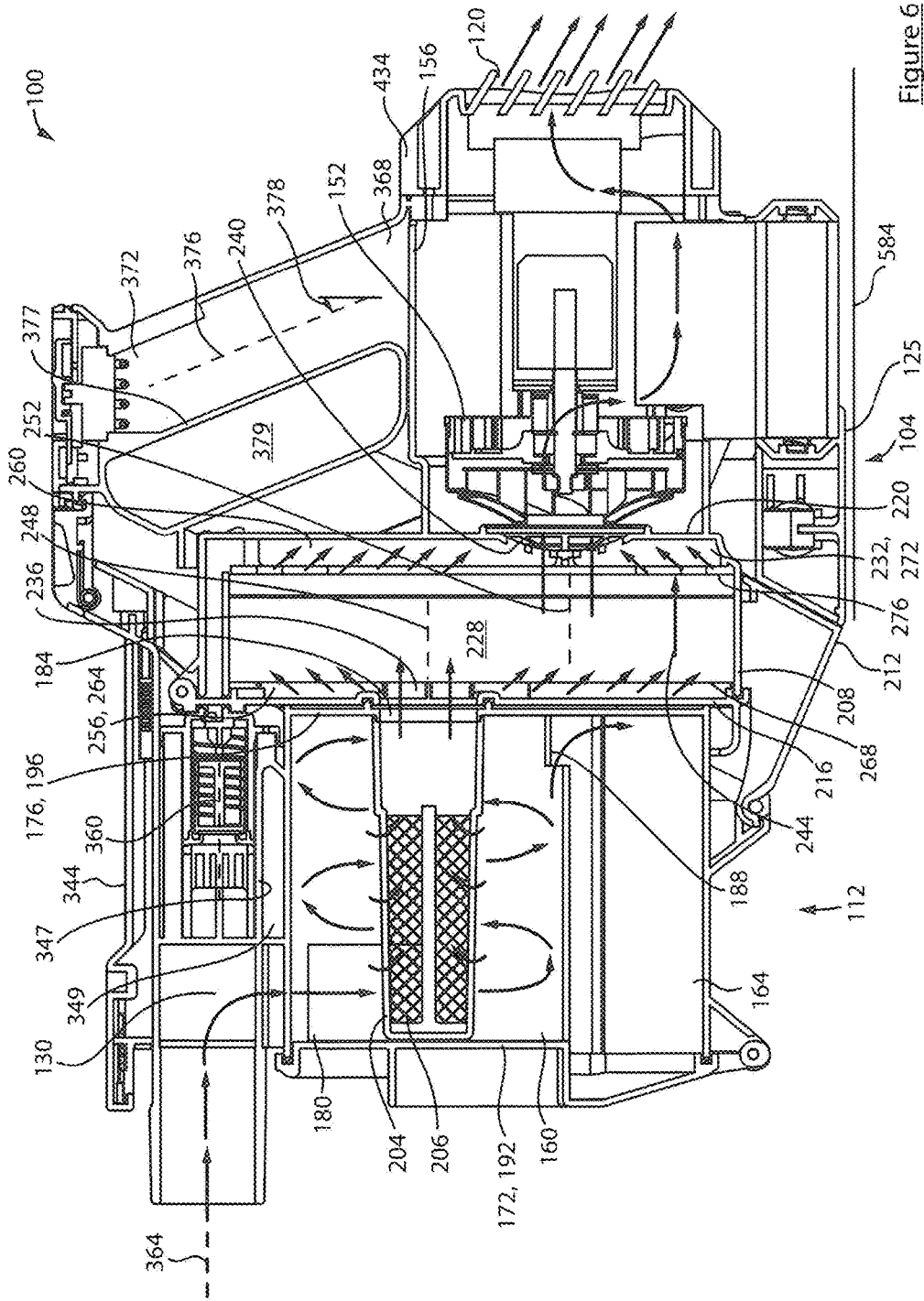
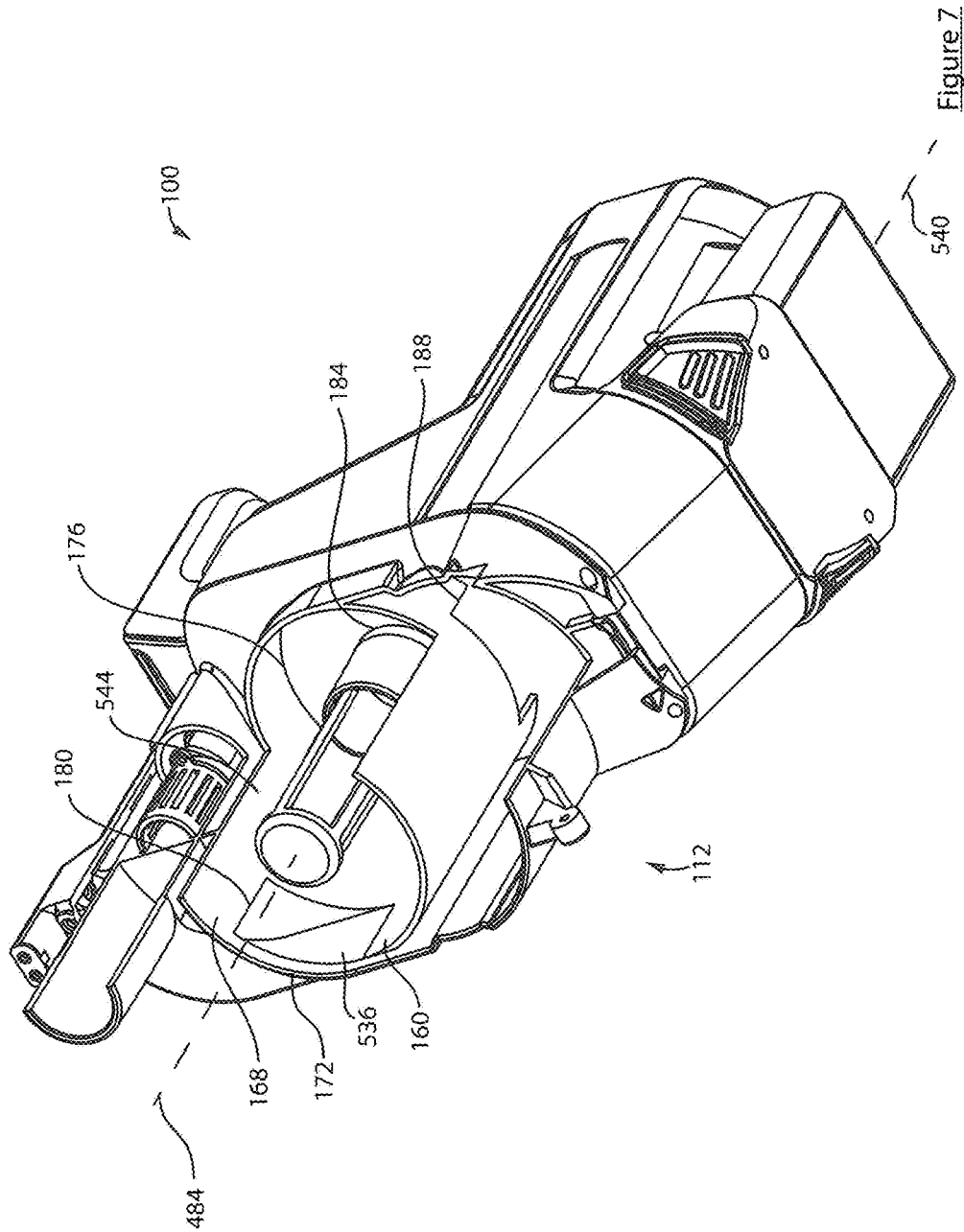


Figure 6



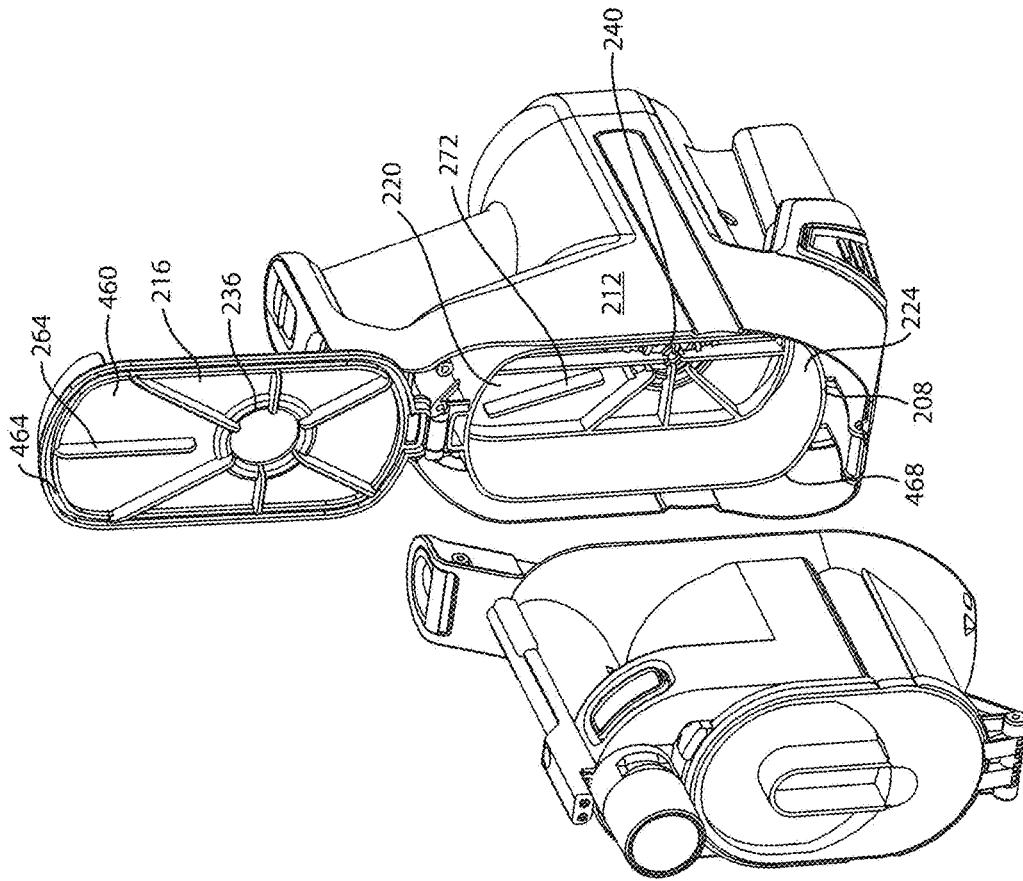


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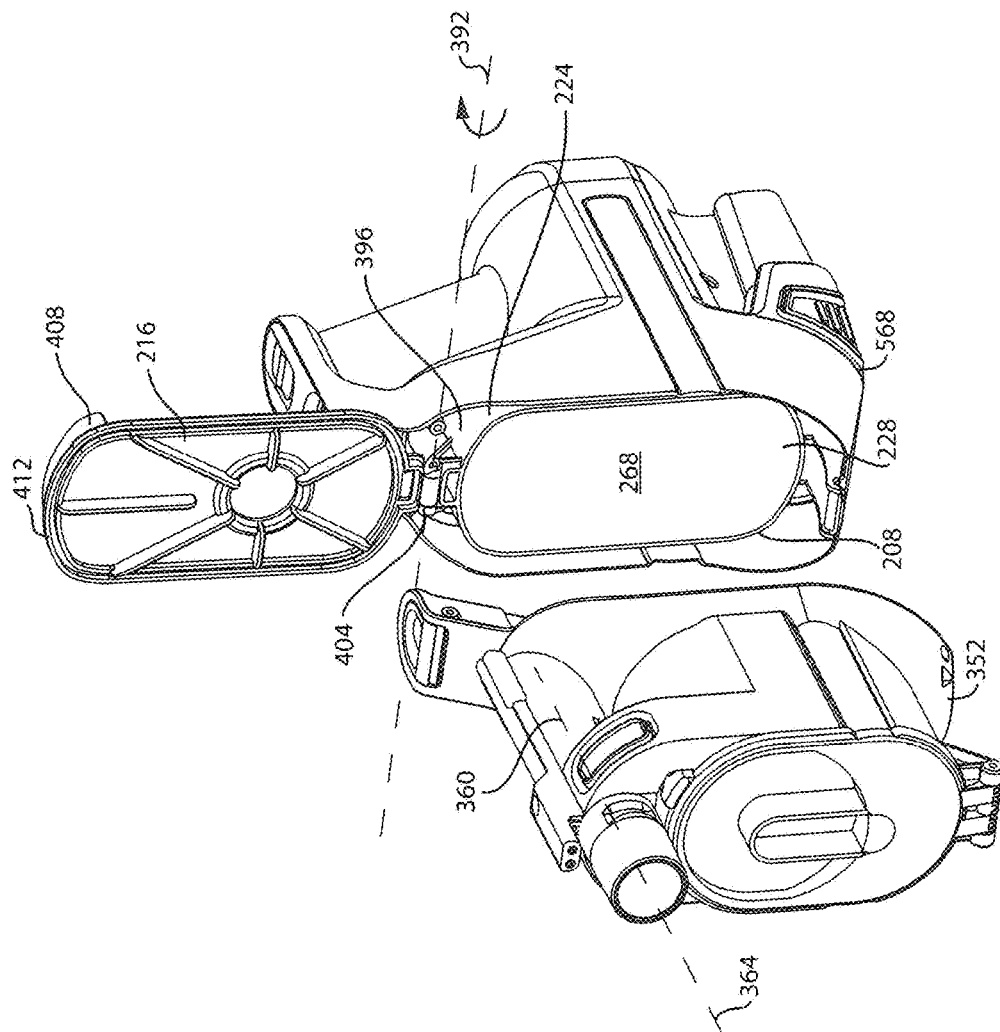
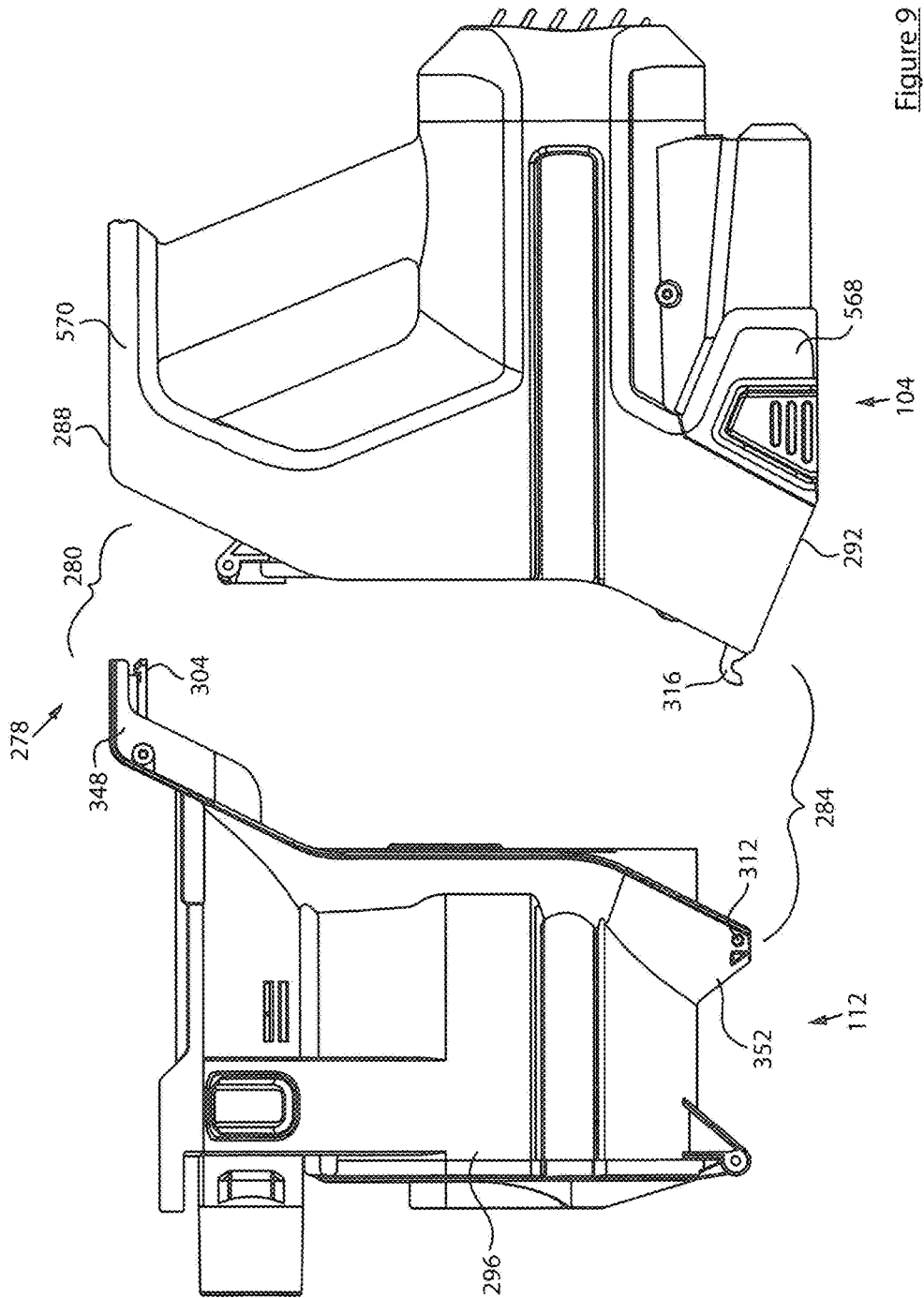


Figure 8a



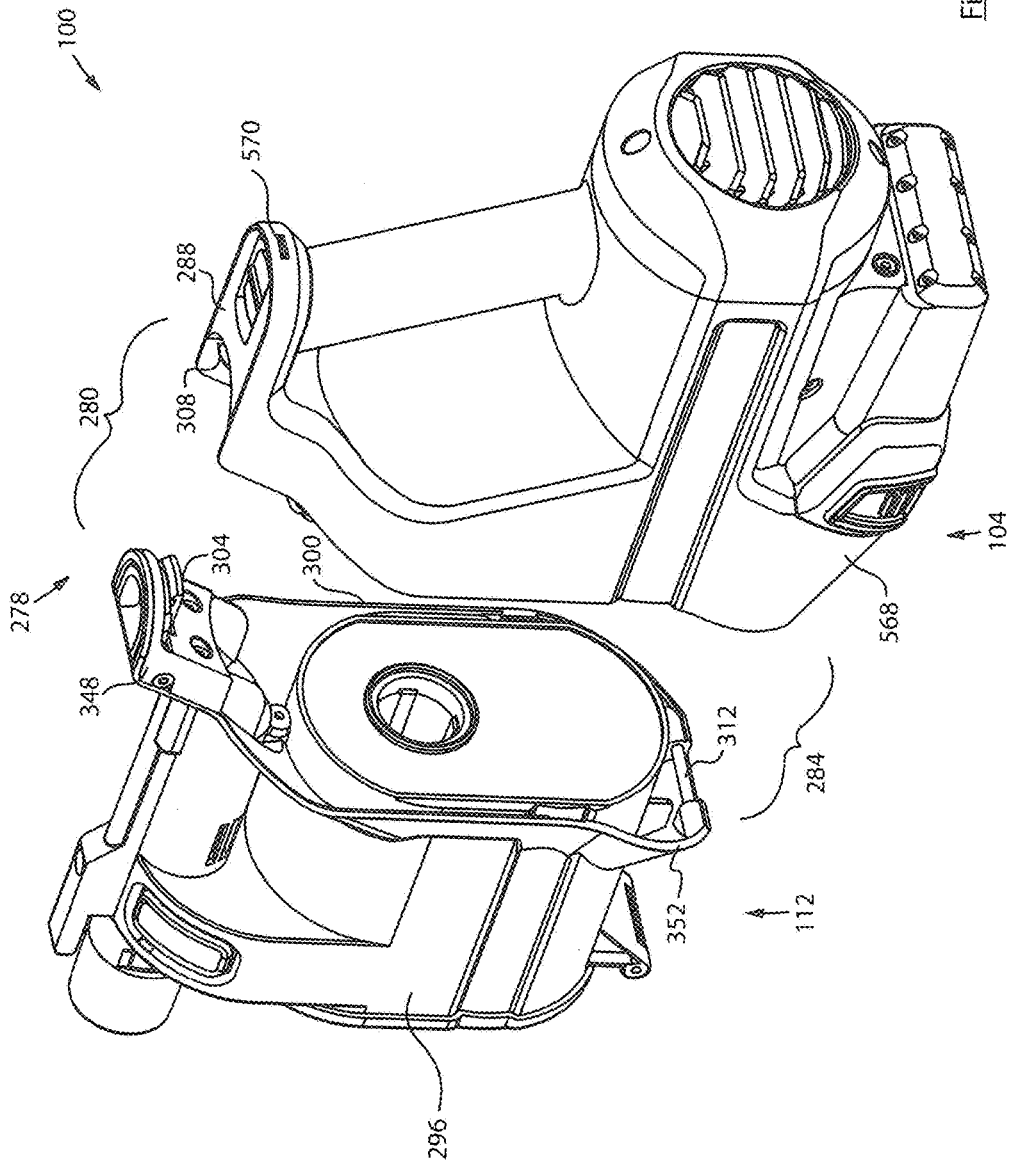


Figure 10

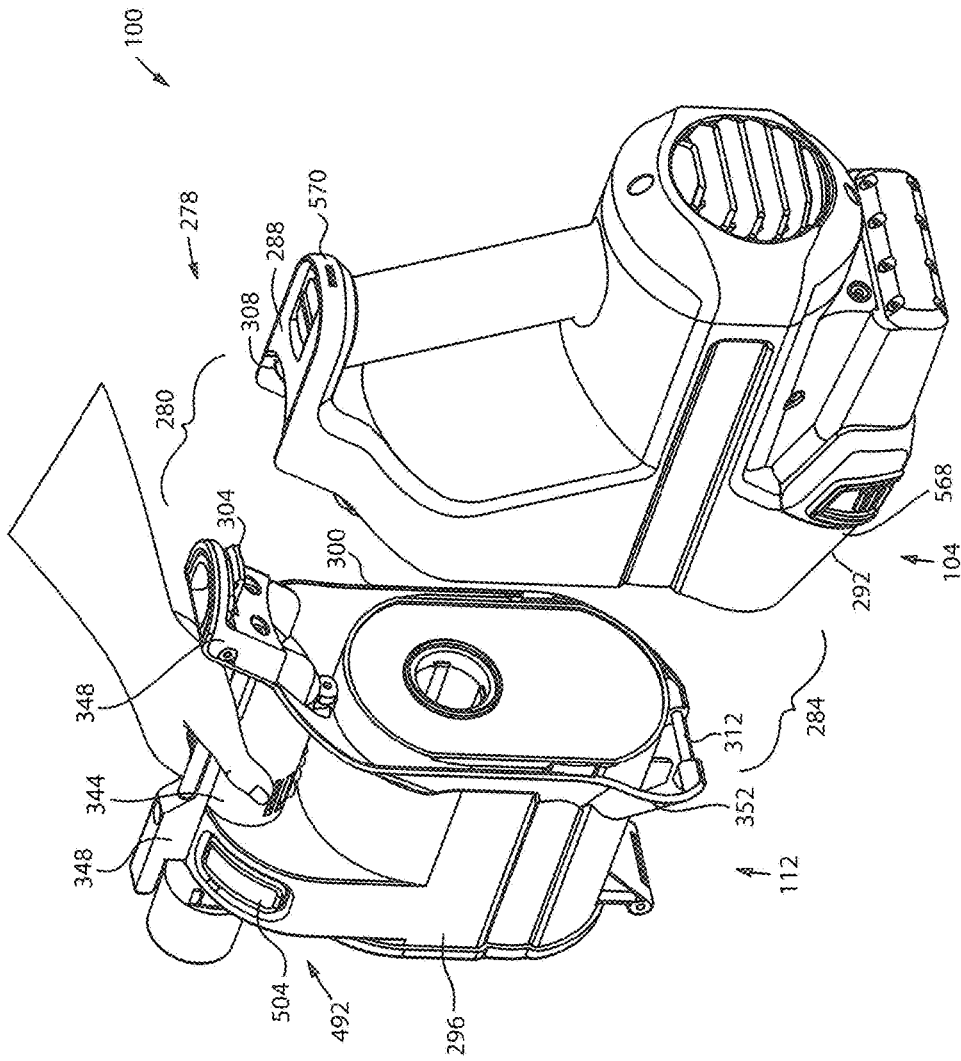


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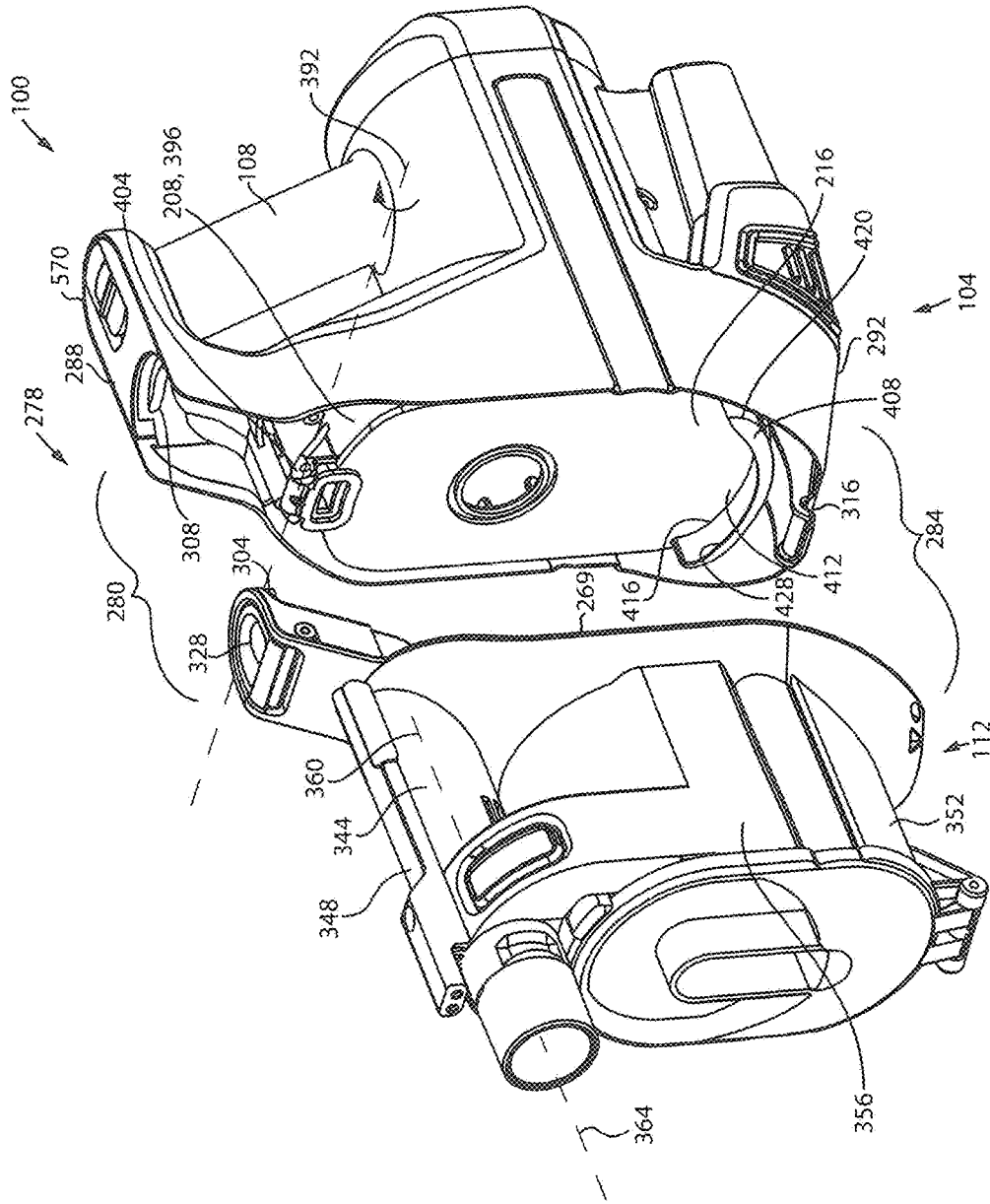


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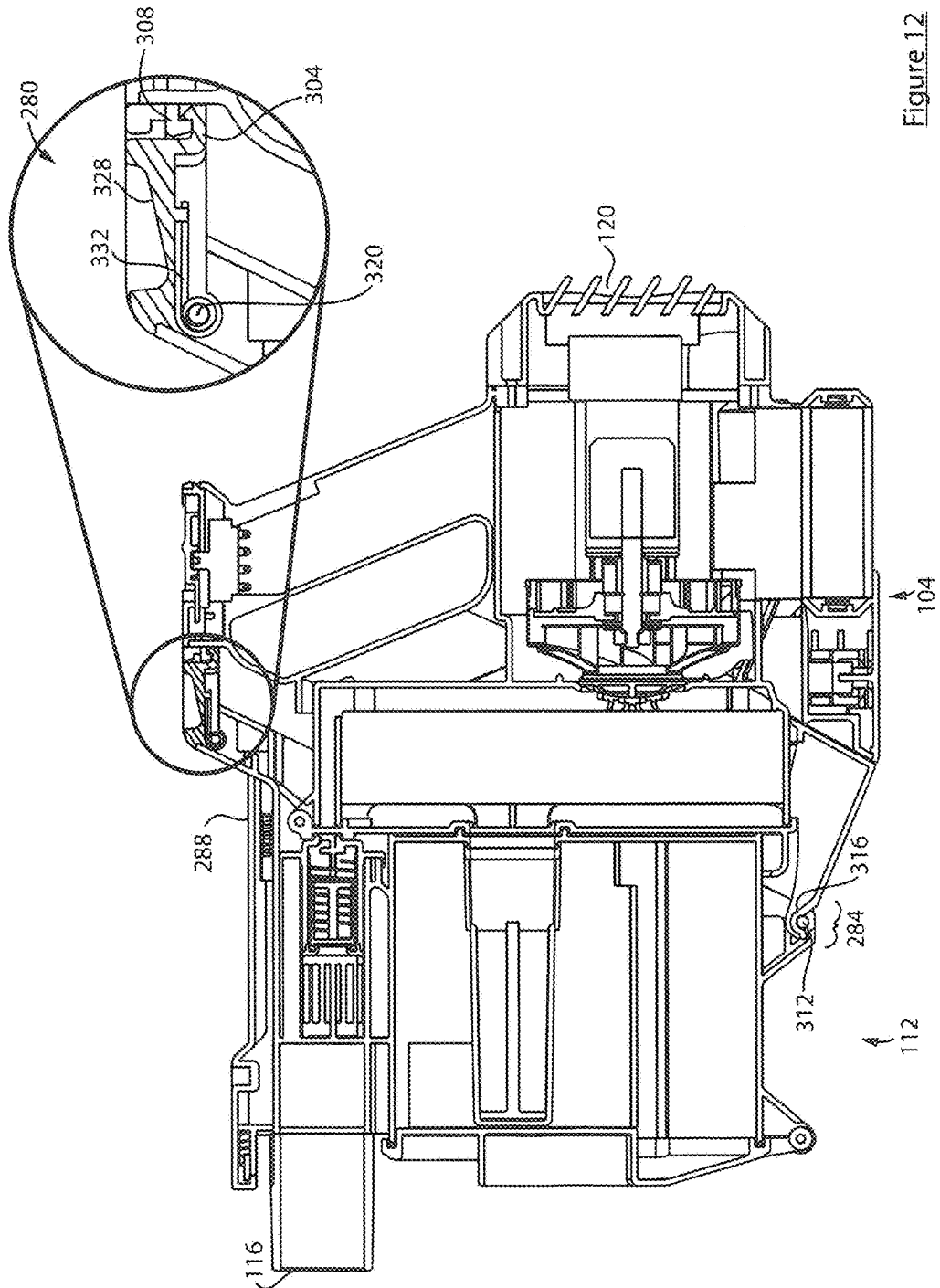


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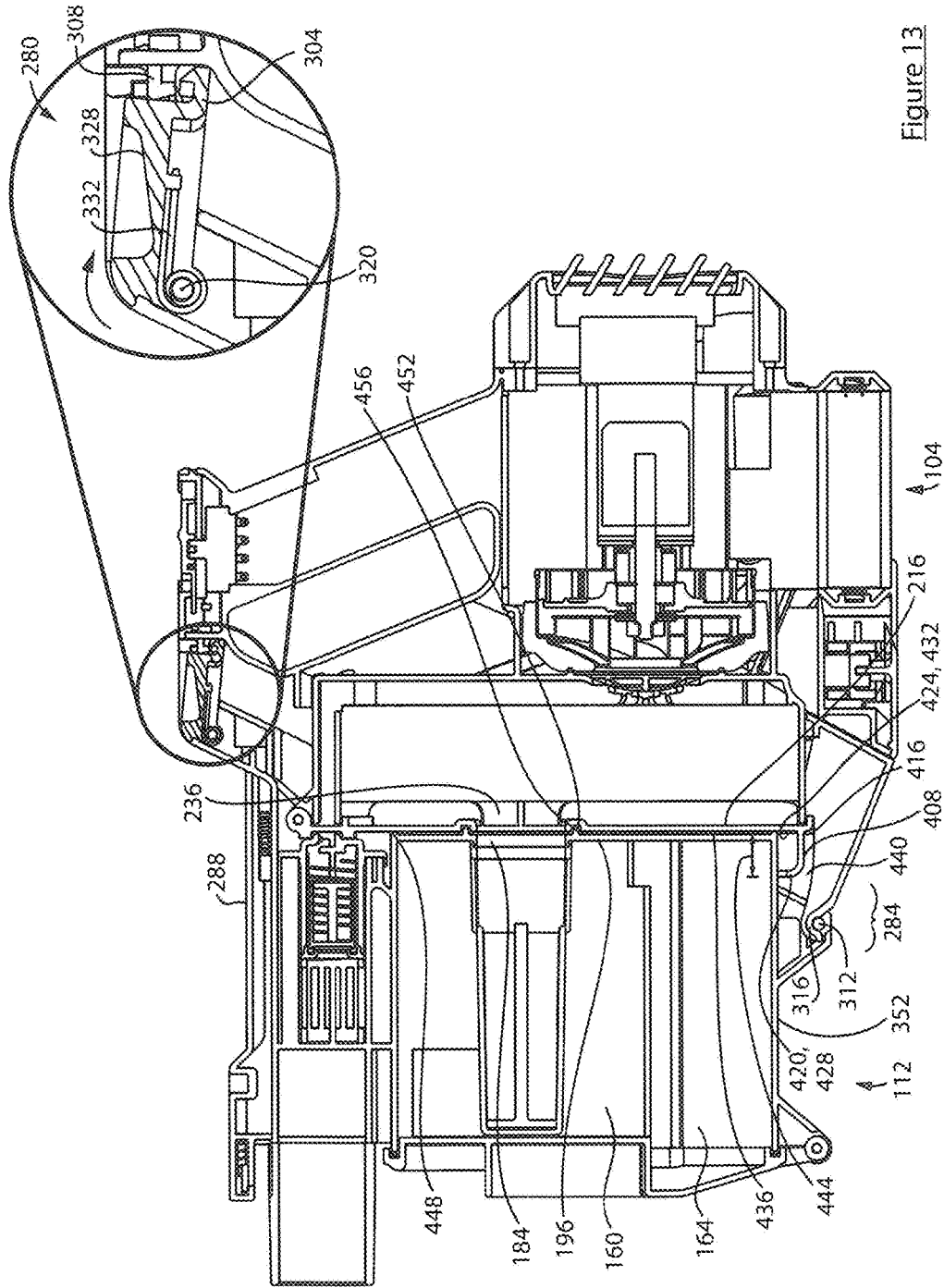


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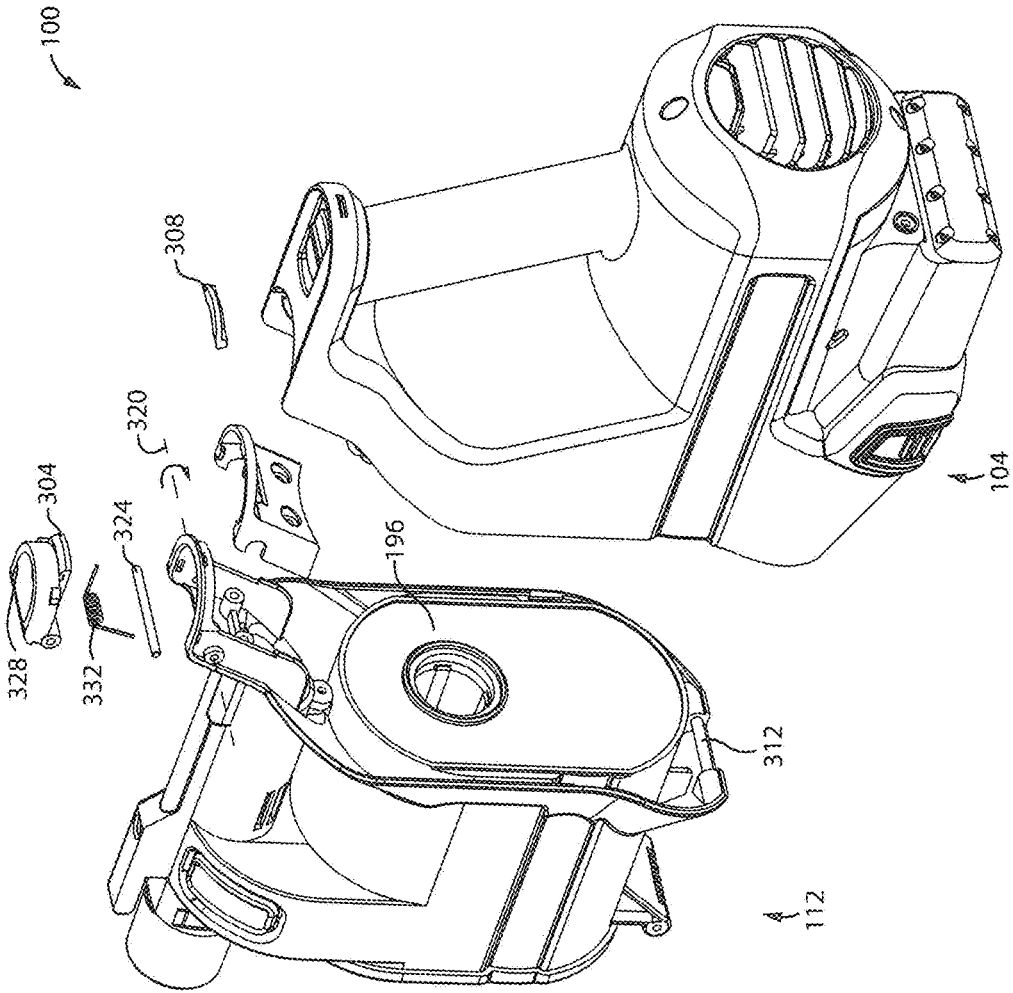


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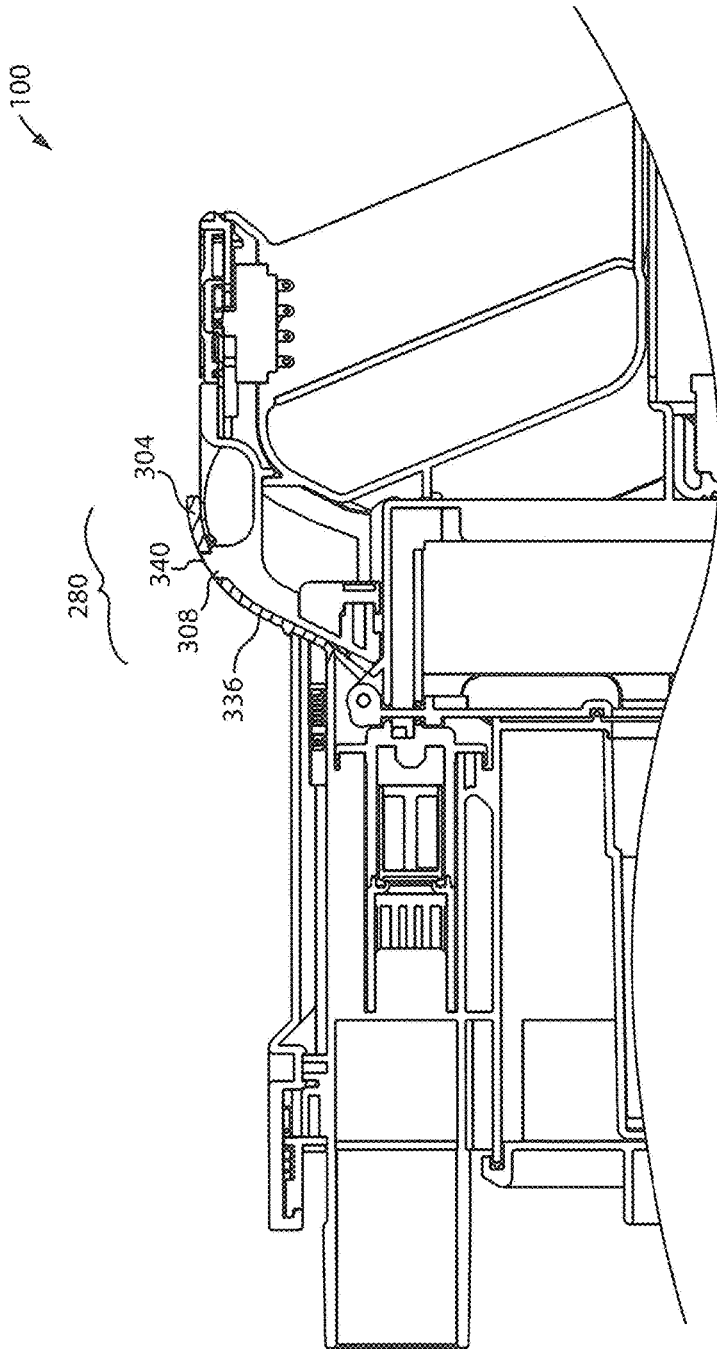


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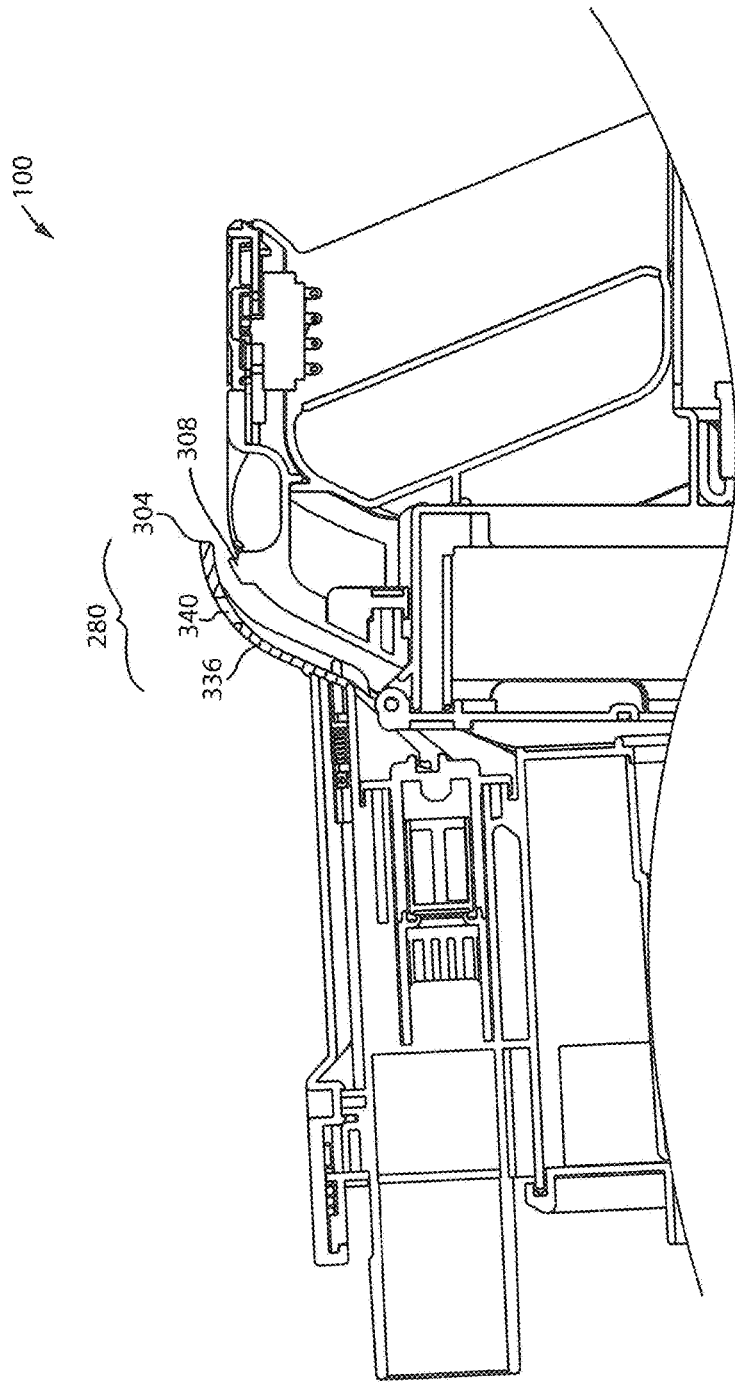


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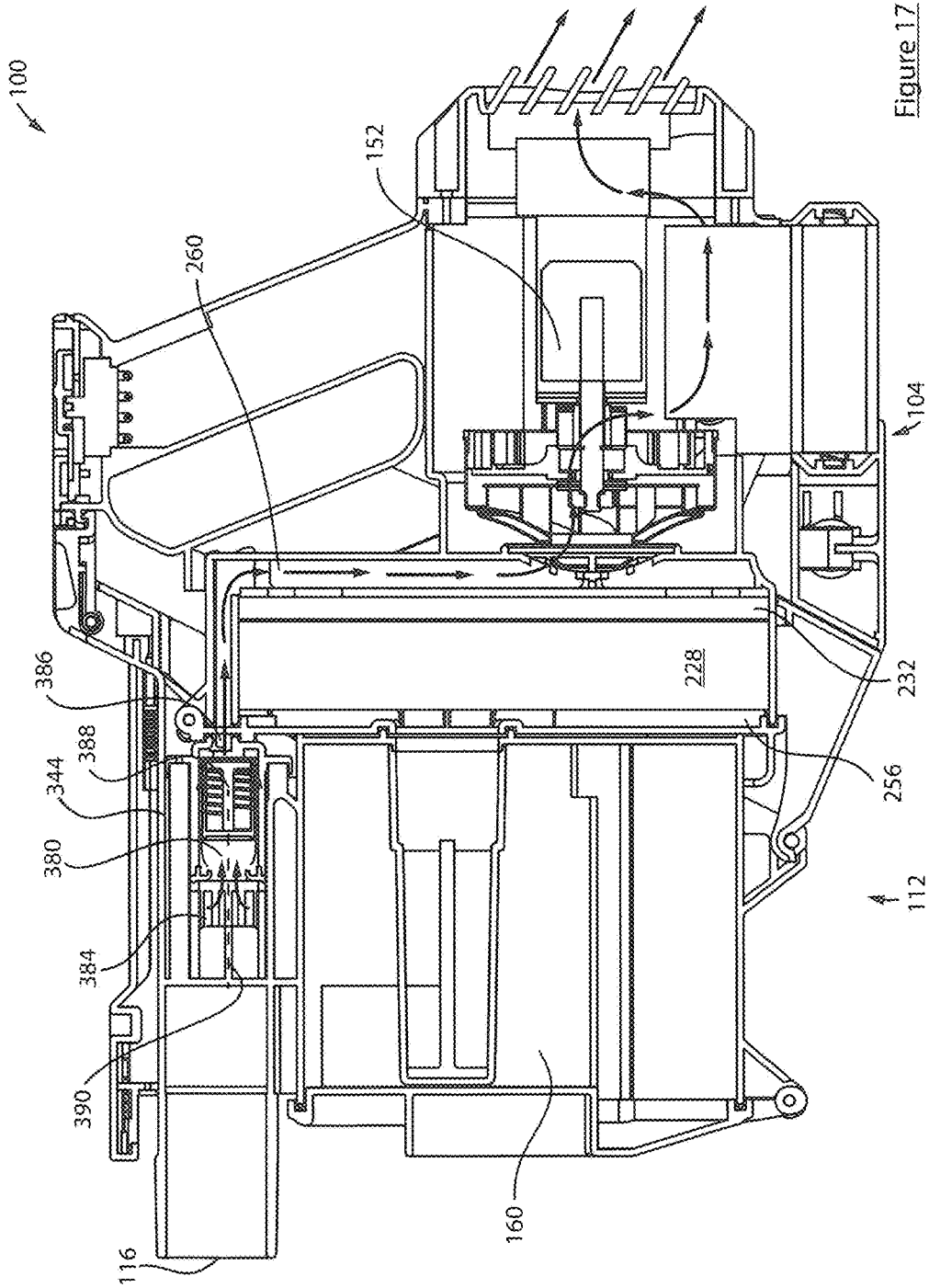


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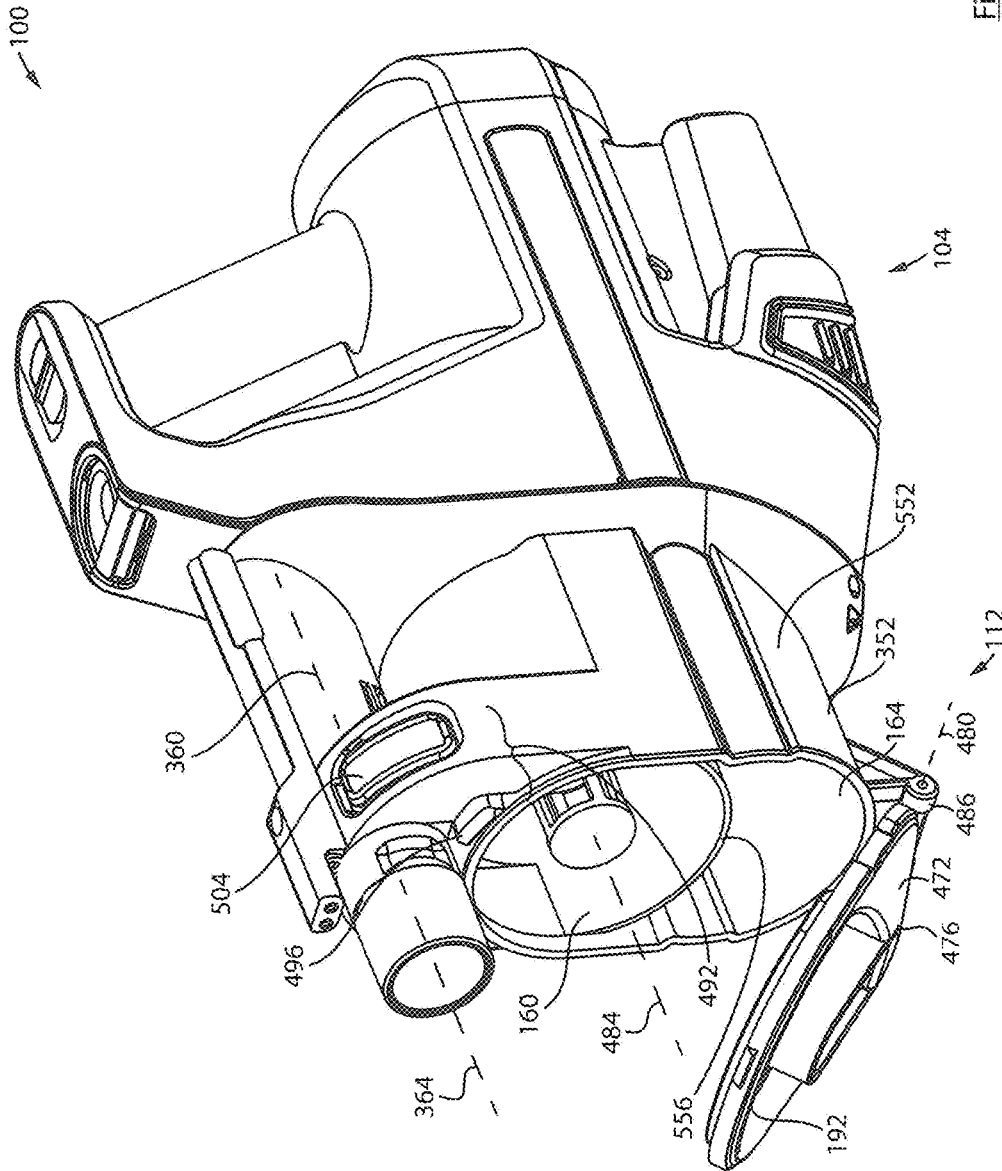


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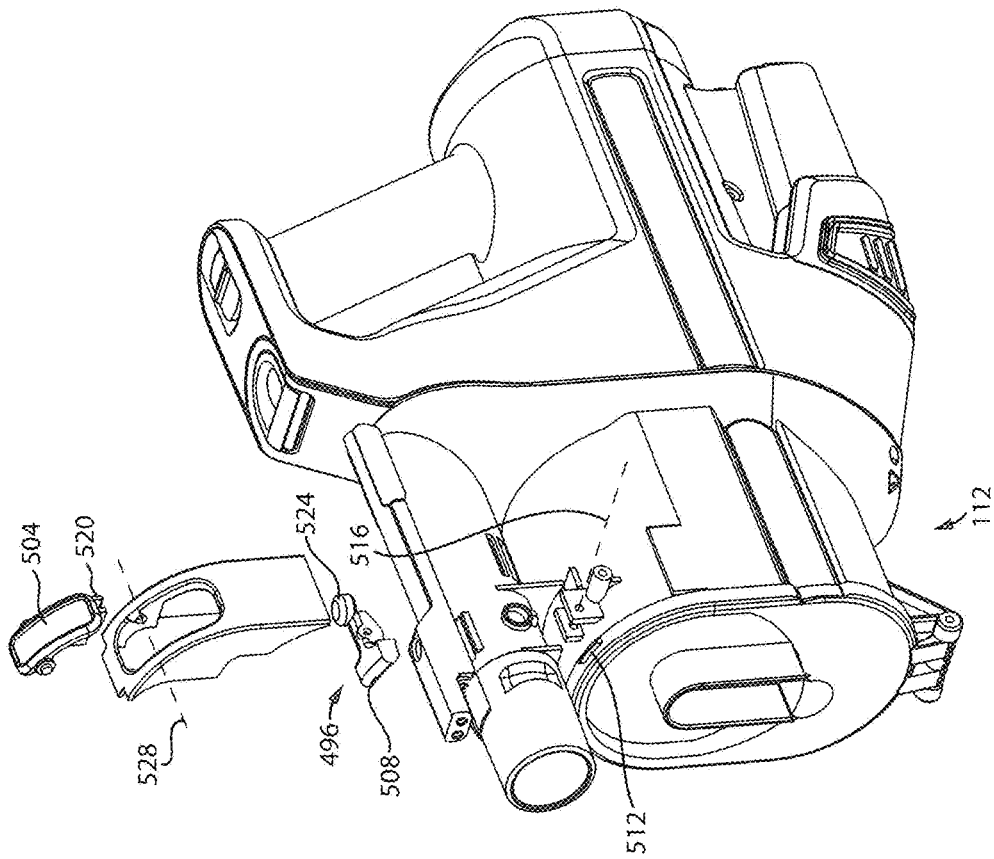
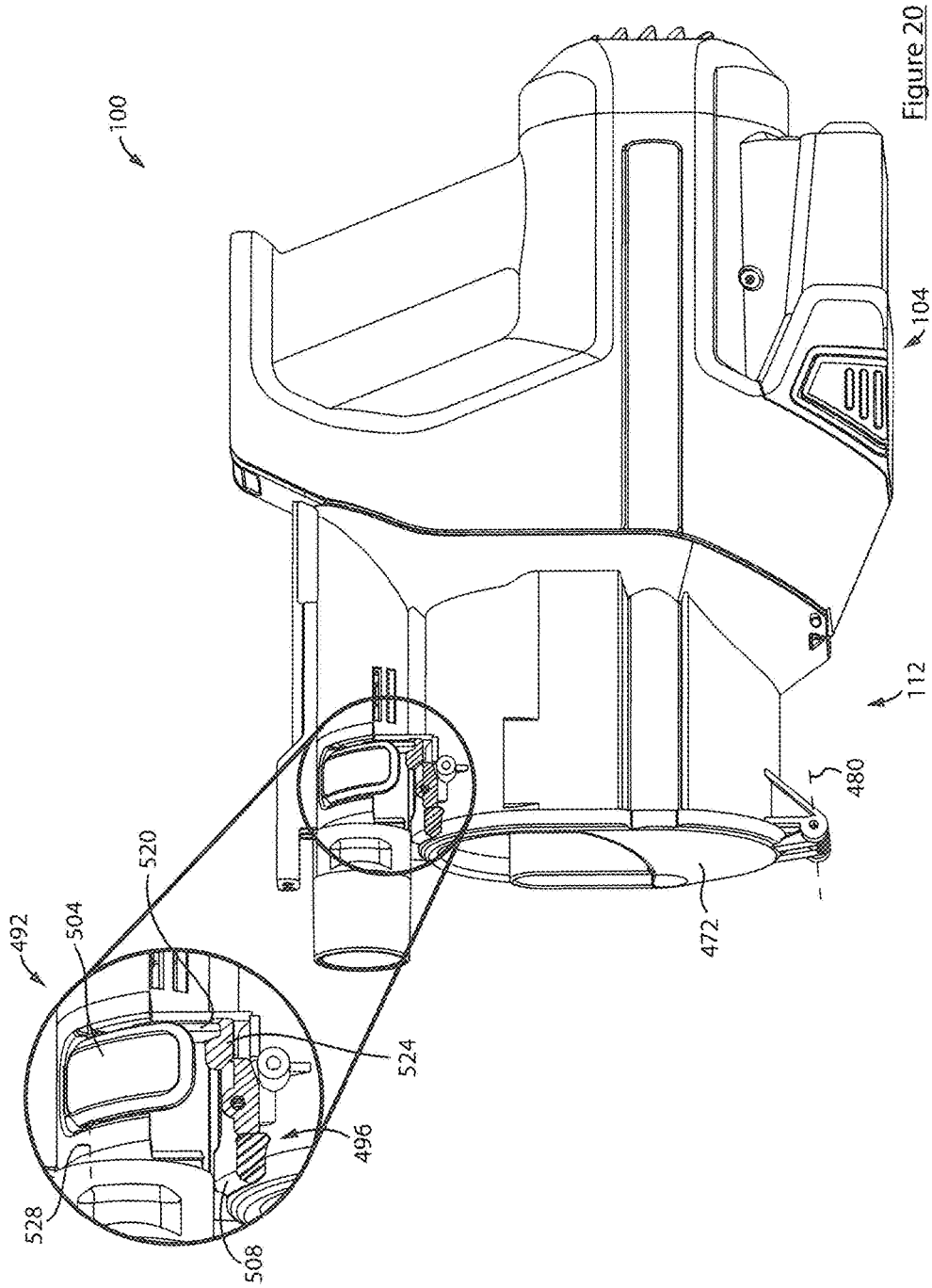


Figure 19



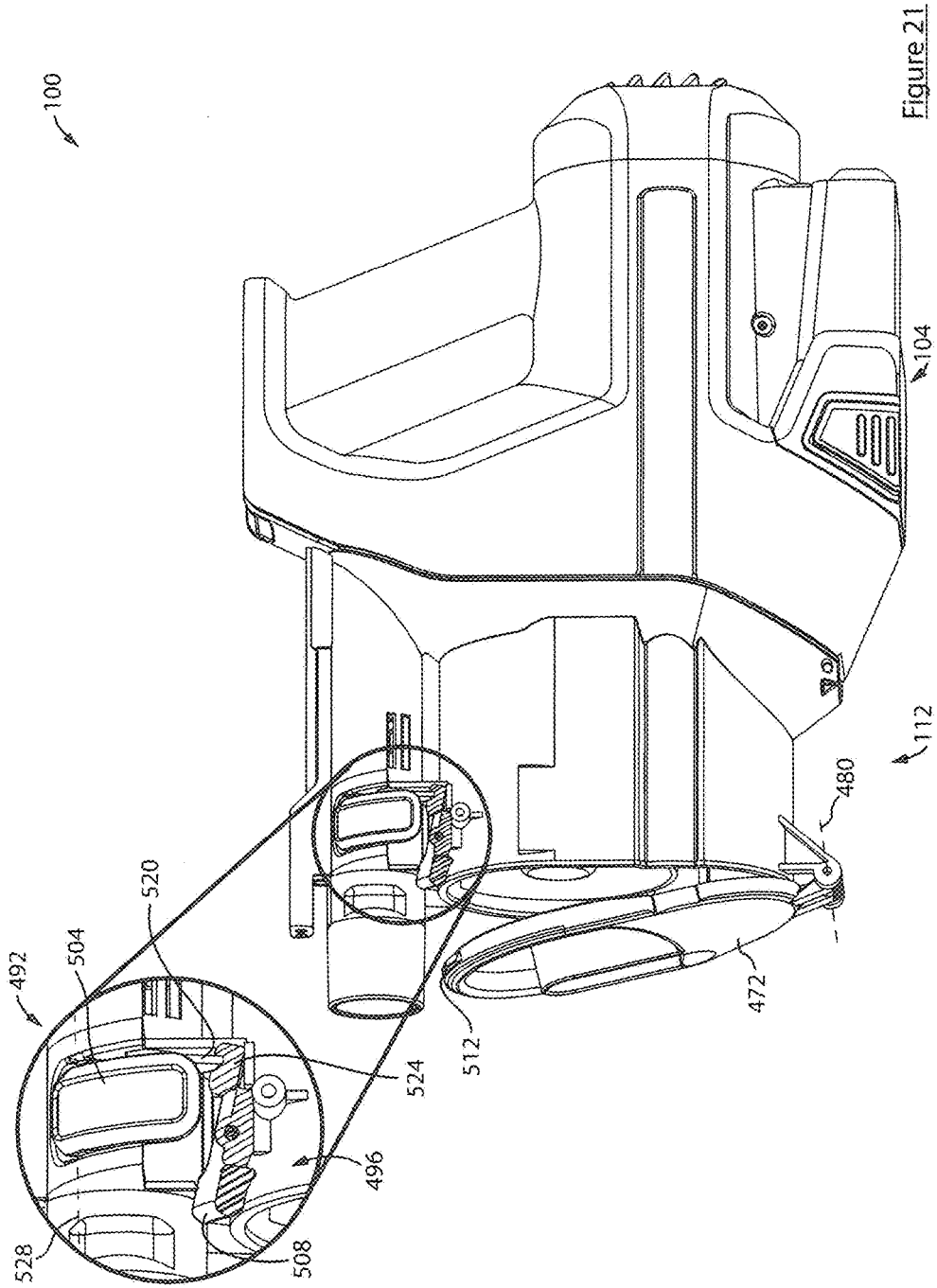


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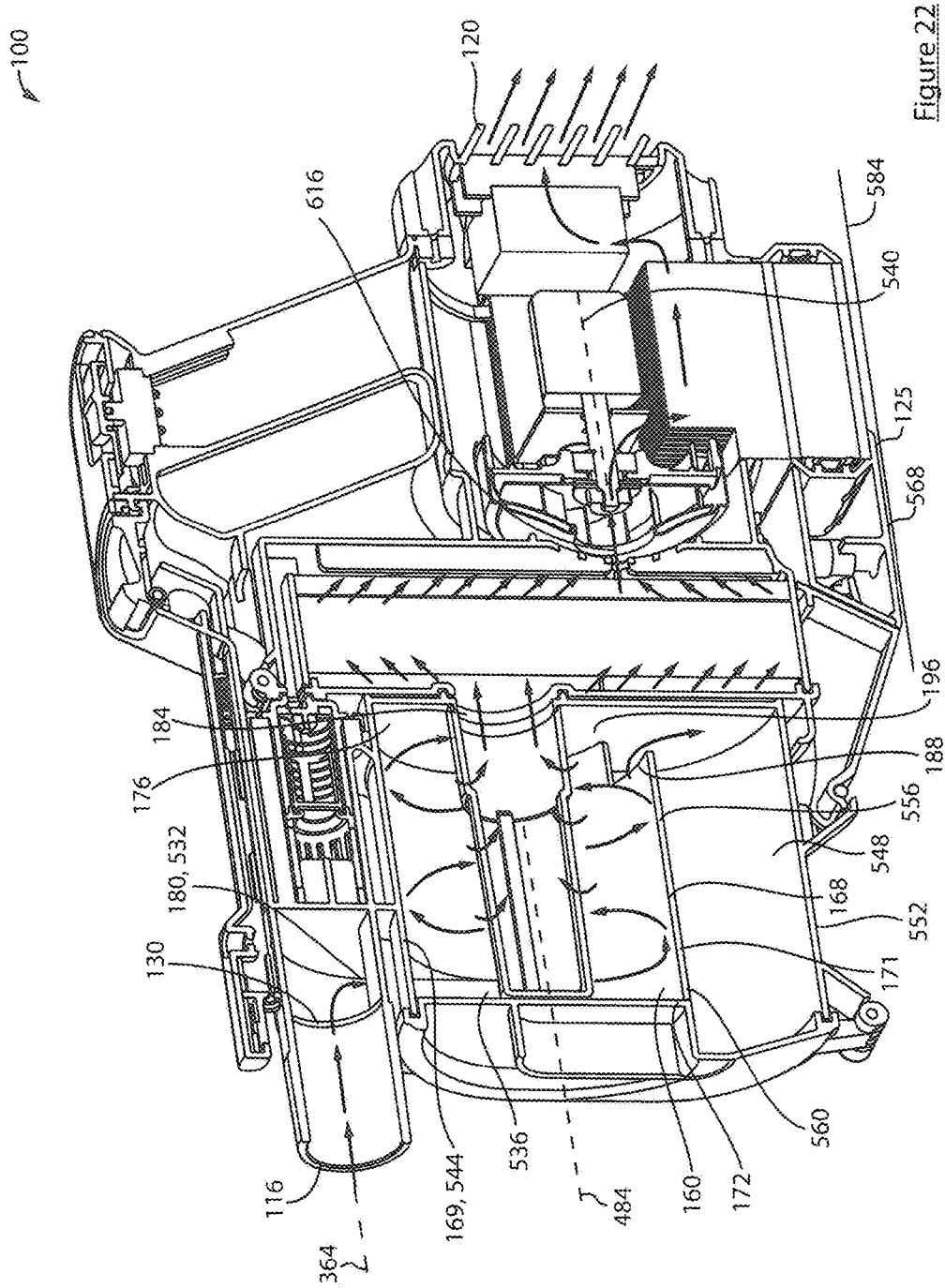


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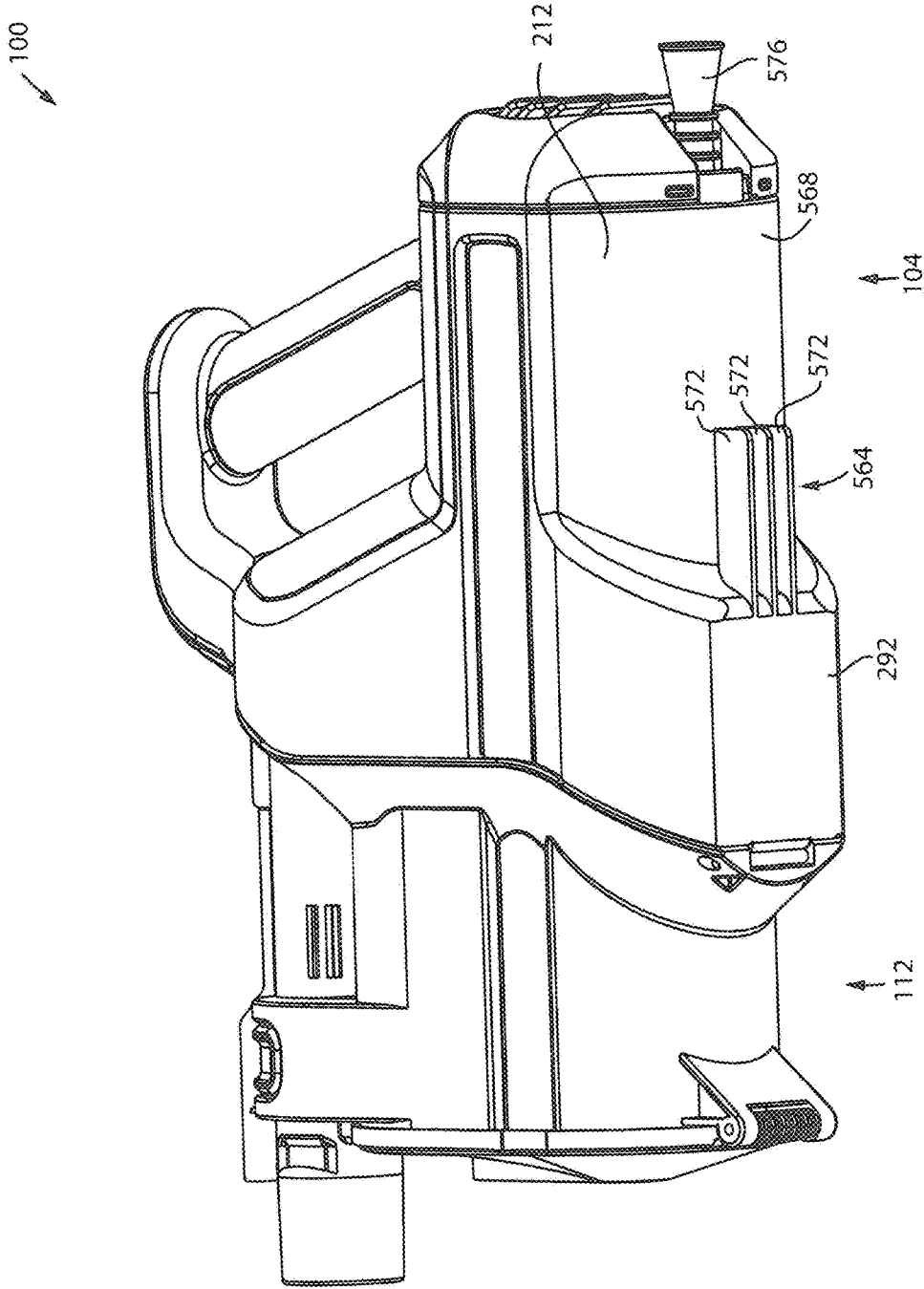


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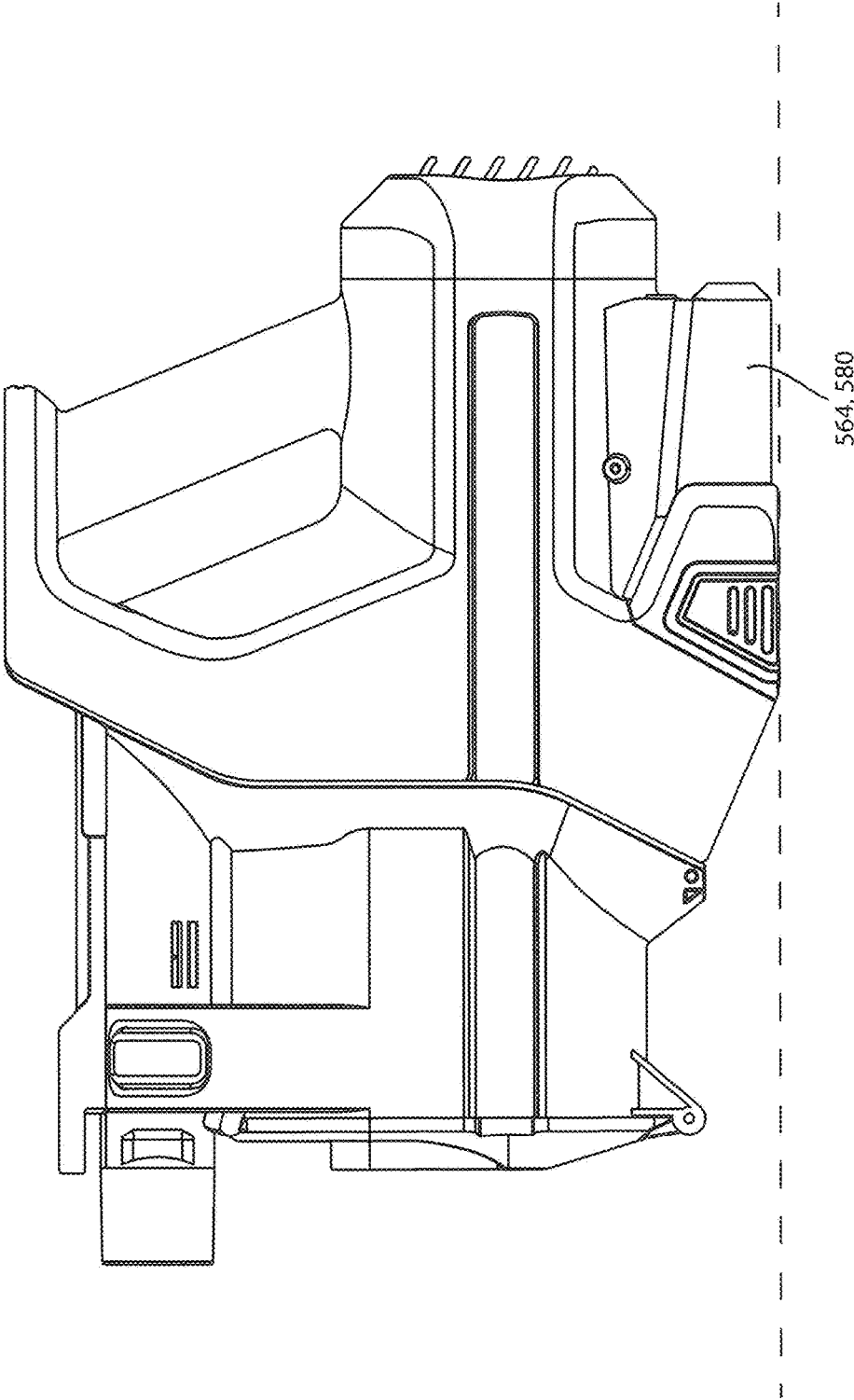


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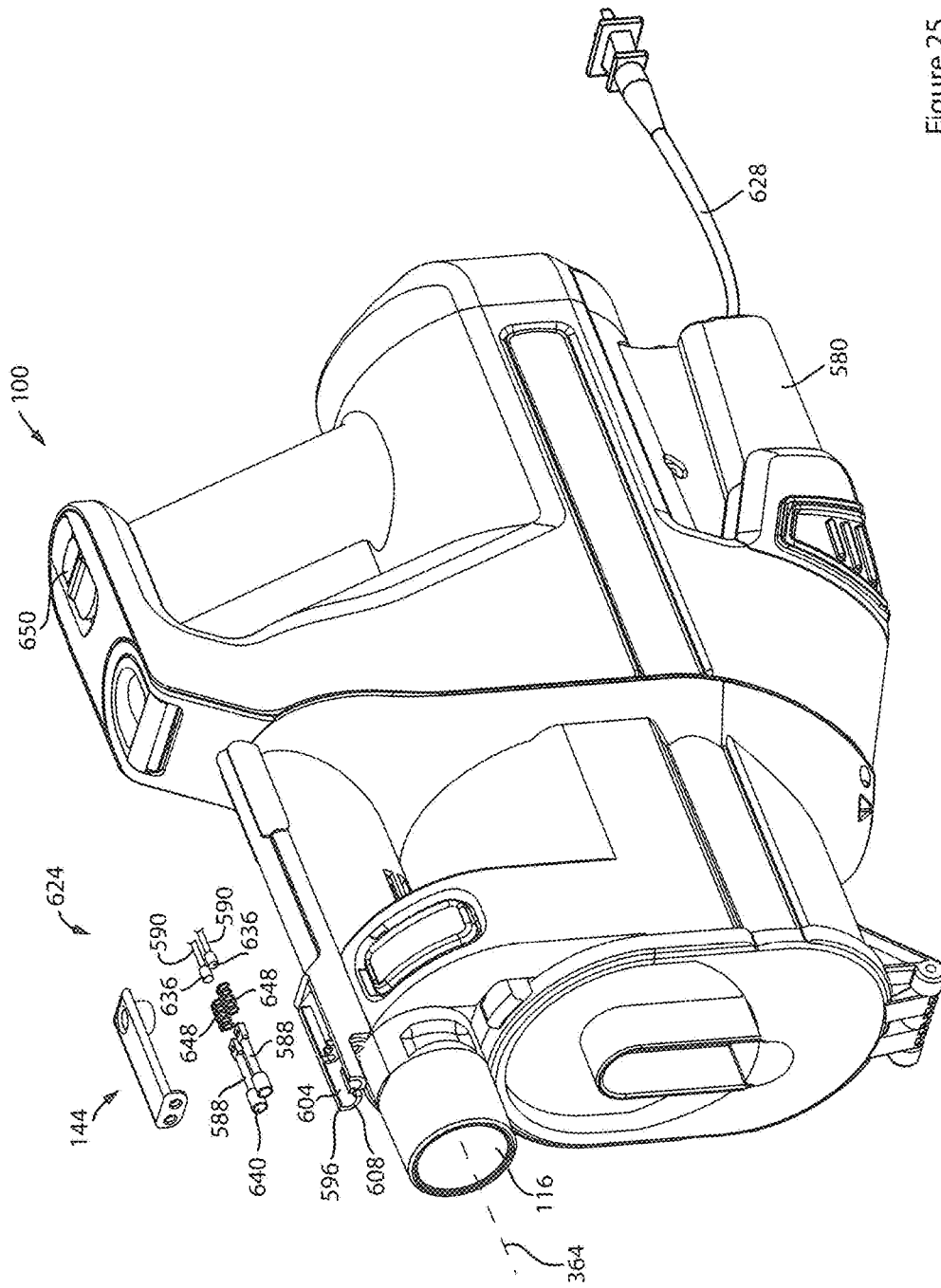


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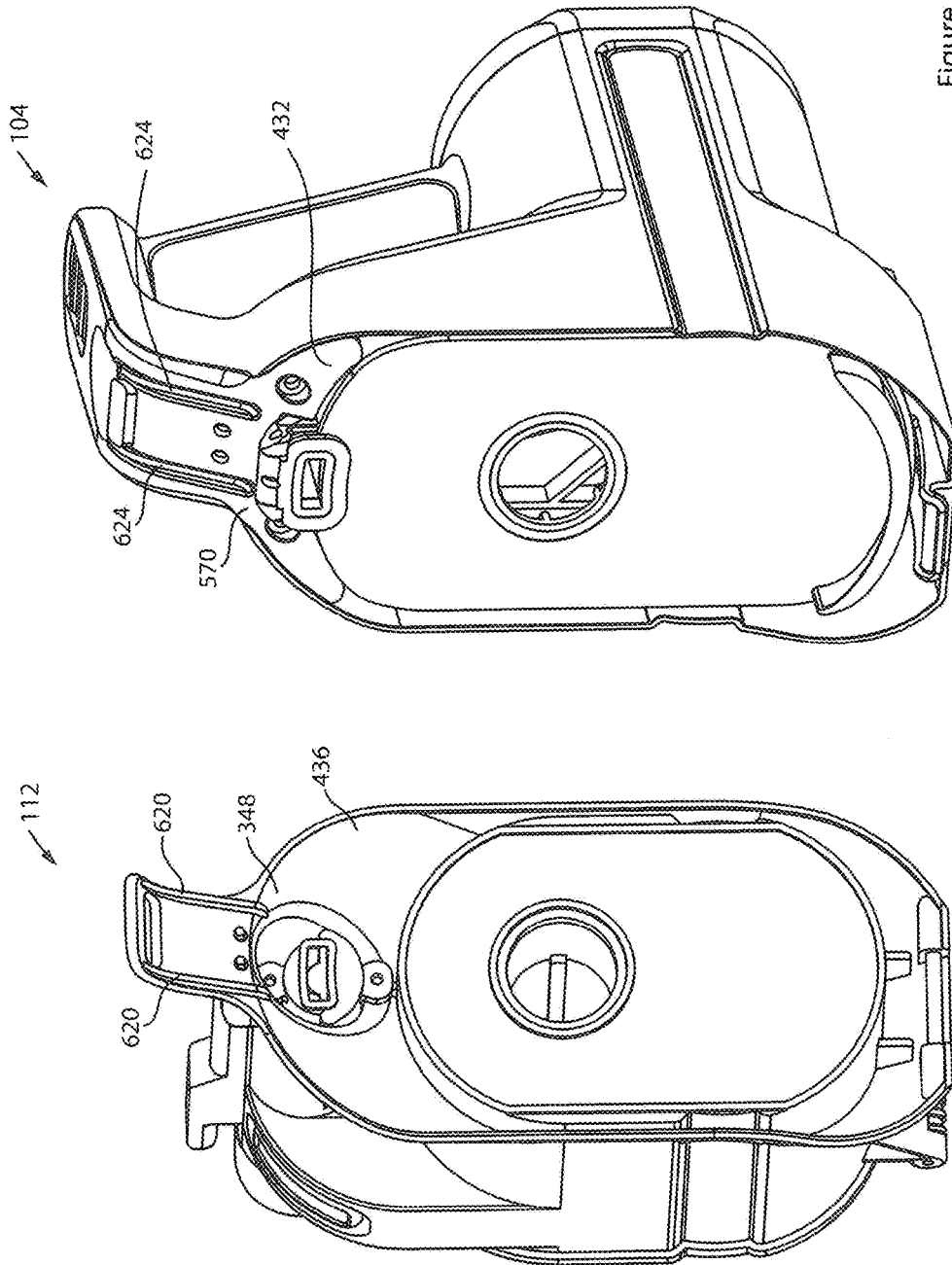


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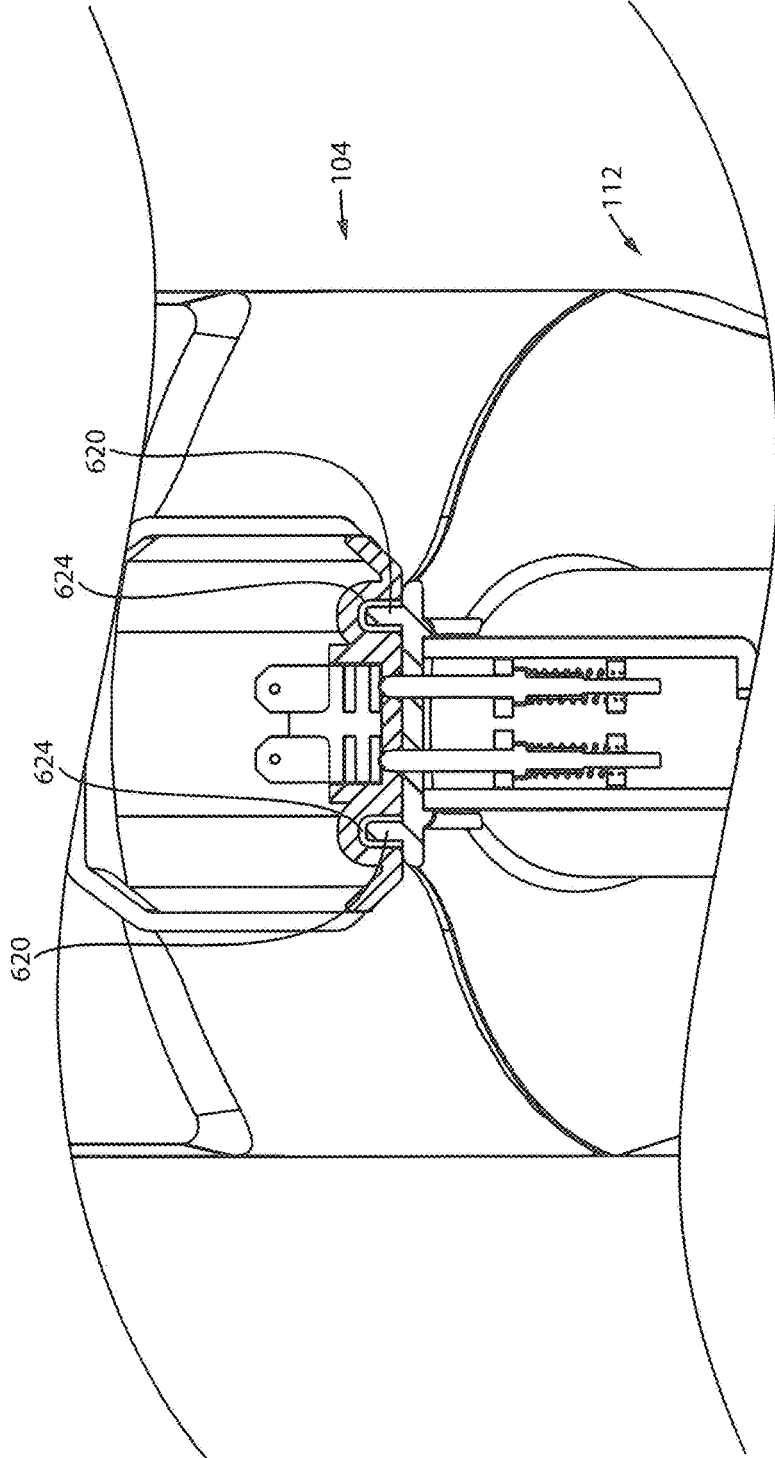


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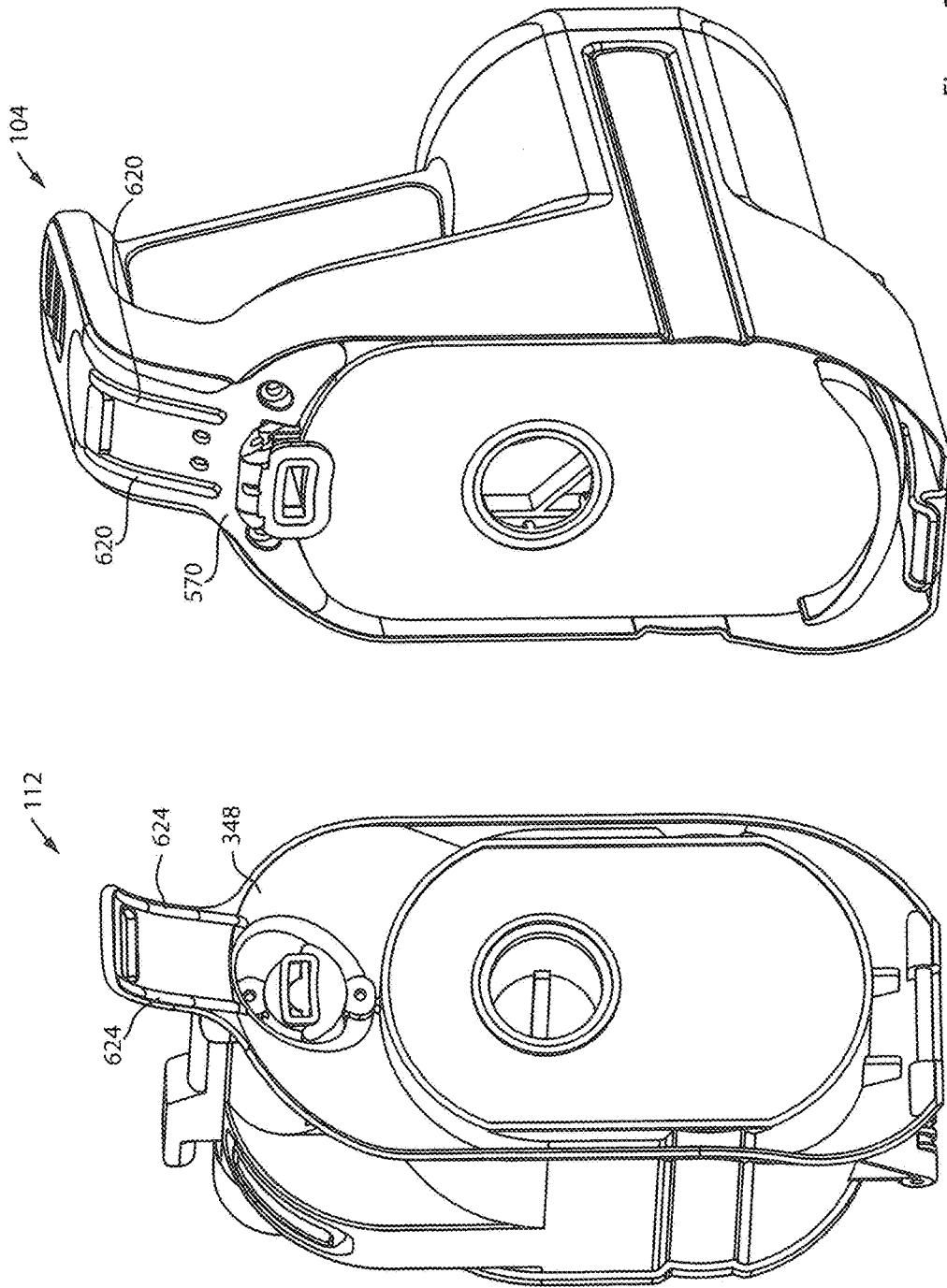


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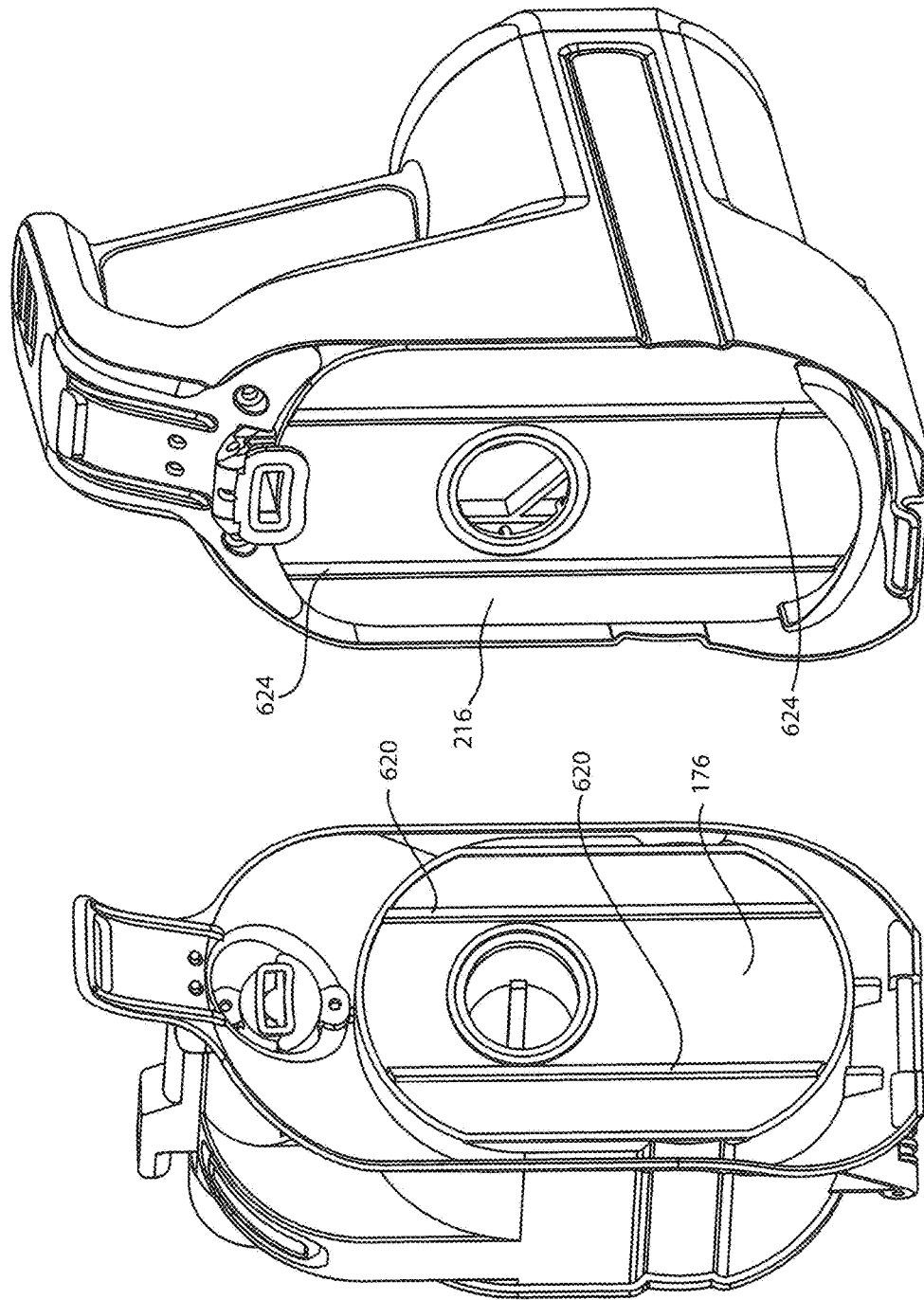


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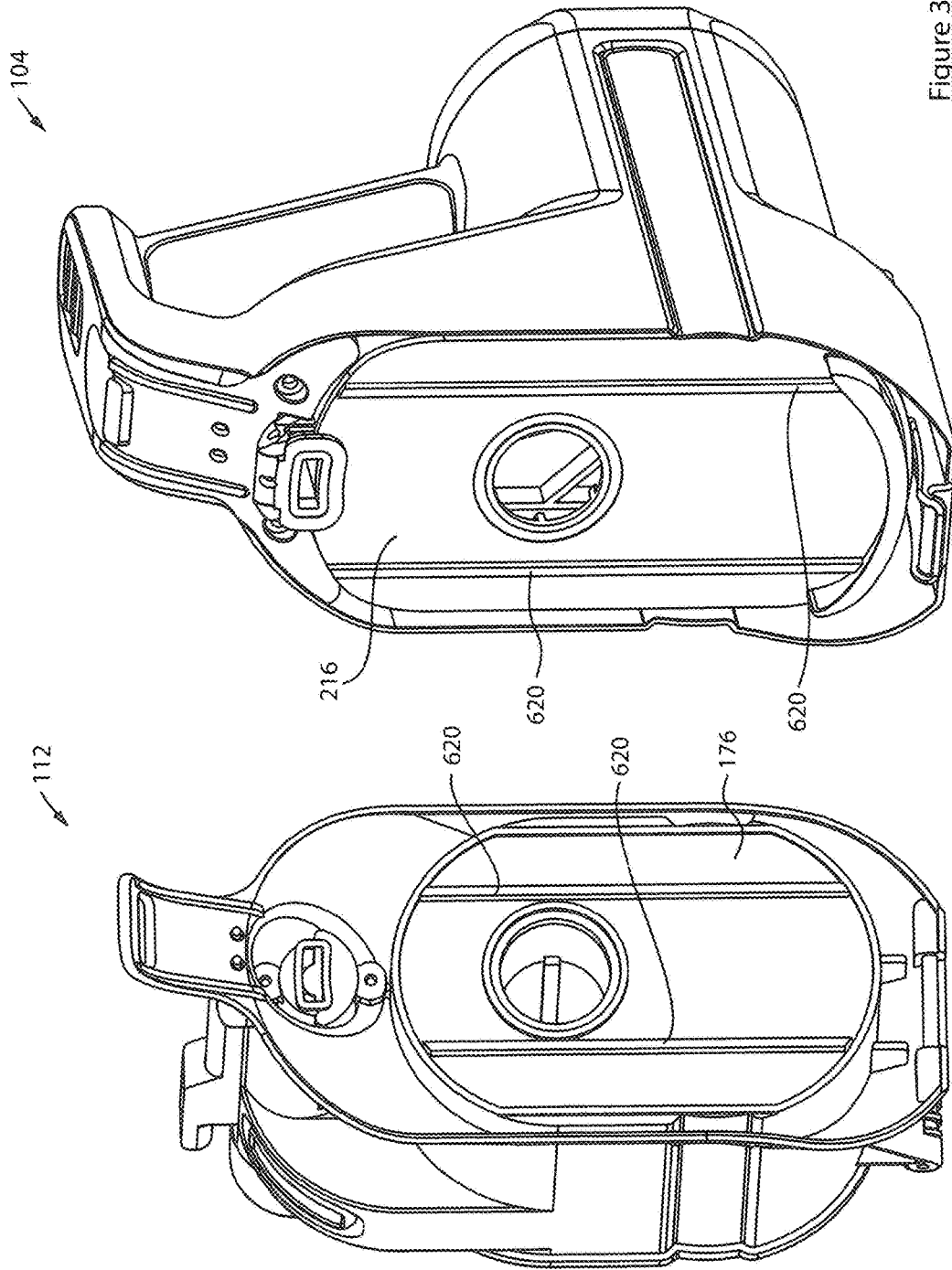


Figure 30

SURFACE CLEANING APPARATUS

FIELD

The specification relates to surface cleaning apparatus. In a preferred embodiment, the surface cleaning apparatus comprises a portable surface cleaning apparatus, such as a hand vacuum cleaner or a pod.

INTRODUCTION

The following is not an admission that anything discussed below is part of the prior art or part of the common general knowledge of a person skilled in the art.

Various types of surface cleaning apparatus are known. Surface cleaning apparatus include vacuum cleaners. Currently, a vacuum cleaner typically uses at least one cyclonic cleaning stage. More recently, cyclonic hand vacuum cleaners have been developed. See for example, U.S. Pat. No. 7,931,716 and US 2010/0229328. Each of these discloses a hand vacuum cleaner which includes a cyclonic cleaning stage. U.S. Pat. No. 7,931,716 discloses a cyclonic cleaning stage utilizing two cyclonic cleaning stages wherein both cyclonic stages have cyclone axis of rotation that extends vertically. US 2010/0229328 discloses a cyclonic hand vacuum cleaner wherein the cyclone axis of rotation extends horizontally and is co-axial with the suction motor. In addition, hand carriable cyclonic vacuum cleaners are also known (see U.S. Pat. No. 8,146,201 and U.S. Pat. No. 8,549,703).

SUMMARY

This summary is intended to introduce the reader to the more detailed description that follows and not to limit or define any claimed or as yet unclaimed invention. One or more inventions may reside in any combination or sub-combination of the elements or process steps disclosed in any part of this document including its claims and figures.

In accordance with one aspect of this disclosure, a hand vacuum cleaner has a uniflow cyclone with a front cyclone air inlet and a rear air cyclone outlet. Accordingly, the cyclone axis extends rearwardly from the front end of the cyclone. The cyclone air inlet may be in an upper portion of the cyclone and may be in an upper portion of the sidewall (e.g., most and preferably essentially all of the inlet opening may be in the sidewall of the cyclone above the axis of rotation of the cyclone). The dirt collection area may be a dirt collection chamber that is external to the cyclone chamber and may be provided below the cyclone chamber. The dirt outlet of the cyclone chamber may be provided in a lower portion of the sidewall of the cyclone near or at the rear end of the cyclone.

In accordance with this aspect, there is provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end having a dirty air inlet, a lower end, a front end and a rear end, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation; and,
- (b) a cyclone unit comprising a cyclone having a cyclone axis of rotation, a front end having a cyclone air inlet and a longitudinally spaced apart rear end having a cyclone air outlet, wherein the cyclone air inlet is in an upper portion of the cyclone;

wherein when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end, the cyclone axis of rotation is generally horizontal.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is positioned with the bottom on a horizontal surface, the cyclone axis of rotation may be generally horizontal.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end, the suction motor axis of rotation may be generally horizontal.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end, the suction motor axis of rotation may be positioned below the cyclone axis of rotation.

In some embodiments, the cyclone has a sidewall having an upper portion and a lower portion and a dirt outlet may be provided in the lower portion and is in communication with a dirt collection chamber that is exterior to the cyclone. Optionally, the cyclone air inlet may be provided in the upper portion of the sidewall of the cyclone.

In some embodiments, the cyclone axis of rotation may be generally parallel to the suction motor axis of rotation.

In some embodiments, the main body may be provided with a handle.

In some embodiments, the hand vacuum cleaner further comprises a handle having a hand grip portion that may extend upwardly and forwardly when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end.

In some embodiments, the lower end of the main body may comprise the bottom.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit may be provided on the front end of the main body. Alternately, or in addition, the cyclone unit may be removably mounted to the main body.

In some embodiments, the dirty air inlet may be provided on a front end of the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and has a longitudinal passage axis, the outlet end of the inlet passage communicates with the cyclone air inlet and the inlet passage axis may be positioned between an upper and a lower end of a handle of the hand vacuum cleaner.

In some embodiments, the handle may comprise a hand grip portion that extends upwardly and forwardly when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end. In some of these embodiments, the suction motor axis of rotation may be positioned below the cyclone axis of rotation when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may have a longitudinal passage axis that is linear and all of the longitudinal passage may be positioned above the cyclone axis of rotation when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone underneath the upper end.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a surface cleaning apparatus comprising the hand vacuum cleaner discussed herein, a surface cleaning head and a rigid air flow conduit extending between the surface cleaning head and the hand vacuum cleaner wherein an outlet end of the rigid air flow conduit is removable connectable in air flow communication with the inlet passage.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

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- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end and a rear end, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation; and,
- (b) an air treatment member having a front end having an air treatment member air inlet and a longitudinally rearwardly spaced apart rear end having an air treatment member air outlet, wherein the air treatment member air inlet is in a longitudinally extending side-wall of the air treatment member; and,
- (c) a dirty air inlet comprising an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and has a longitudinal passage axis, the outlet end of the inlet passage communicates with the air treatment member air inlet.

In some embodiments, air travels through the air treatment member air outlet in a flow direction and the flow direction may be generally parallel to the suction motor axis of rotation.

In accordance with another aspect of this disclosure, a hand vacuum cleaner has an air treatment member with an air flow conduit or passage wherein the conduit is also a handle of the air treatment member.

In accordance with this aspect, there is provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation;
- (b) an air treatment member comprising an air treatment member handle, a dirt collection region having an openable door and an openable door lock comprising a door release actuator wherein the door is moveable to an open position when the door release actuator is actuated; and,
- (c) an air inlet comprises an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and has a longitudinal passage axis and the inlet passage comprises the air treatment member handle.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may comprise a portion spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the driving handle and the main body.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member handle may comprise a portion spaced from the air treatment member whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the air treatment member handle and the air treatment member.

The In some embodiments, the air treatment member handle may be provided above the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the openable door may be provided at the front end of the hand vacuum cleaner.

In some embodiments, the openable door may have a lower end that is moveably mounted to the air treatment member and an upper end that may be engaged by the door lock.

In some embodiments, the door release actuator may be positioned proximate the air treatment member handle.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may extend generally rearwardly.

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In some embodiments, the door release actuator may be positioned at a forward end of the inlet passage.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation; and,
- (b) a cyclone unit comprising a cyclone having a cyclone axis of rotation, a cyclone unit handle, a dirt collection region having an openable door and an openable door lock comprising a door release actuator wherein the door is moveable to an open position when the actuator is actuated;

wherein when a user's hand is holding the cyclone unit by the cyclone unit handle, the door release actuator is operable by the same hand.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may comprise a portion spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the driving handle and the main body.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit handle may comprise a portion spaced from the cyclone unit whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the cyclone unit handle and the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit handle may be provided above the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the openable door may be provided at the front end of the hand vacuum cleaner.

In some embodiments, the air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and the inlet passage comprises the cyclone unit handle.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is positioned with the bottom on a horizontal surface, the cyclone axis of rotation may be generally horizontal.

In accordance with another aspect of this disclosure, the air treatment member, e.g., a cyclone unit, may be removably mounted to the rest of the hand vacuum cleaner. The air treatment member may include a dirty air inlet that is connectable to an upper end of a longitudinally extending rigid member (e.g., which may be hollow to enable airflow therethrough) and a surface cleaning head may be provided (preferably removably connected) to a lower end of the longitudinally extending rigid member. When assembled as an upright or stick vacuum cleaner with the hand vacuum cleaner drivingly connected to the surface cleaning head by the longitudinally extending rigid member (e.g., a rigid wand), the handle of the hand vacuum cleaner may be used to steer the surface cleaning head. An advantage of this configuration is that the hand vacuum cleaner may be easily converted to an upright or stick vacuum cleaner.

In such a configuration, lateral stresses (i.e., stresses transverse to the longitudinal forward/rearward axis of the hand vacuum cleaner) may occur as the handle of the hand vacuum cleaner is used to steer the surface cleaning head. In order to assist in stabilizing the joint of the air treatment member and the rest of the hand vacuum cleaner, lateral stability members may be provided at the interface of the air treatment member and the rest of the hand vacuum cleaner. For example, one or more pairs of inter-engagement members may be provided which extend in a direction that

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extends generally between the lower end and the upper end of the hand vacuum cleaner. These lateral stability members may extend continuously or they may have discontinuities and they may extend linearly or otherwise. As the lateral stresses are exerted in a direction that is at an angle between 0-90°, 25-90°, 45-90° or 70-90° to the lateral stability members, and may be generally perpendicular (90°) thereto, the lateral stability members will strengthen the joint of the air treatment member and the rest of the hand vacuum cleaner. Preferably, at least one pair is provided on either lateral side of a center line extending in the longitudinal forward/rearward direction of the hand vacuum cleaner. The lateral stability members may be any members that have sides that abut to resist the lateral stresses and may comprise a longitudinally extending protrusion or spline and a mating groove or abutting longitudinally extending protrusions or splines.

In accordance with this aspect, there is provided a surface cleaning apparatus comprising:

(a) a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a longitudinally spaced apart rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

(i) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end and a rear end, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation;

(ii) an air treatment member removably mounted at the front end of the main body, the air treatment member comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end and a rear end, the lower end of the air treatment member is rotationally mounted to the lower end of the main body; and,

(III) an air treatment member release lock comprising a release actuator and first and second engagement members wherein the first engagement member is provided on the upper end of the air treatment member and the second engagement member is provided on the upper end of the main body and the release actuator is provided on one of the air treatment member and the main body,

(b) a surface cleaning head; and,

(c) a rigid air flow conduit extending between the surface cleaning head and the hand vacuum cleaner wherein an outlet end of the rigid air flow conduit is removably connectable in air flow communication with the inlet passage.

In some embodiments, the lower end of one of the air treatment member and the main body may be provided with a transversely extending rod and the lower end of the other of the air treatment member and the main body may be provided with a hook removably connectable with the rod.

In some embodiments, the lower end of the air treatment member may be rotationally mounted to the lower end of the main body at a position longitudinally spaced from the first and second engagement members.

In some embodiments, the lower end of the air treatment member may be rotationally mounted to the lower end of the main body at a position longitudinally spaced from a position at which the upper end of the air treatment member abuts the upper end of the main body.

In some embodiments, one of the air treatment member and the main body may be provided with an outwardly extending protrusion and the other of the air treatment member and the main body may be provided with a groove

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in which the outwardly extending protrusion is received when the air treatment member is secured to the main body.

In some embodiments, the main body may have a driving handle and the dirty air inlet is part of the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member may comprise a cyclone unit and the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body and the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end provided at a front end of the cyclone unit and an outlet end, and the inlet end may be adapted to receive an accessory cleaning tool. The accessory cleaning tool may comprise a rigid air flow conduit.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member may comprise a cyclone unit and the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body and the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end provided at a front end of the cyclone unit and an outlet end, and the inlet end may be positioned forward of the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, dirty air inlet may be provided above the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member may comprise a dirt collection region having an openable door and the openable door may be provided at the front end of the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the air treatment member below the upper end, the cyclone axis of rotation may be generally horizontal.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a longitudinally spaced apart rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

(a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end and a rear end, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation;

(b) a cyclone unit removably mounted at the front end of the main body, the cyclone unit comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a cyclone axis of rotation, the lower end of the cyclone unit is rotationally mounted to the lower end of the main body; and,

(c) a cyclone unit release lock comprising a release actuator and first and second engagement members wherein the first engagement member is provided on the upper end of the cyclone unit and the second engagement member is provided on the upper end of the main body and the release actuator is provided on one of the cyclone unit and the main body.

In some embodiments, the lower end of one of the cyclone unit and the main body may be provided with a transversely extending rod and the lower end of the other of the cyclone unit and the main body may be provided with a hook removably connectable with the rod.

In some embodiments, the lower end of the cyclone unit may be rotationally mounted to the lower end of the main body at a position longitudinally spaced from the first and second engagement members.

In some embodiments, the lower end of the cyclone unit may be rotationally mounted to the lower end of the main body at a position longitudinally spaced from a position at which the upper end of the cyclone unit abuts the upper end of the main body.

In some embodiments, one of the cyclone unit and the main body may be provided with an outwardly extending

protrusion and the other of the cyclone unit and the main body is provided with a groove in which the outwardly extending protrusion is received when the cyclone unit is secured to the main body.

In some embodiments, the main body may have a driving handle and the dirty air inlet is part of the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body and the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end provided at a front end of the cyclone unit and an outlet end, and the inlet end may be adapted to receive an accessory cleaning tool. The accessory cleaning tool may comprise a rigid air flow conduit.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body and the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end provided at a front end of the cyclone unit and an outlet end, and the inlet end may be positioned forward of the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the dirty air inlet may be provided above the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit may comprise a dirt collection region having an openable door and the openable door may be provided at the front end of the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the cyclone below the upper end, the cyclone axis of rotation may be generally horizontal.

In accordance with another aspect of this disclosure an air treatment member includes an air flow passage which functions as a handle of the air treatment member. An advantage of this design is that the air treatment member may be provided with a handle that is not an additional part. The air flow passage may be part of the air flow path from a dirty air inlet to the air treatment member air inlet. Alternately or in addition, the air flow passage may be part of an air flow path for a bleed stream and a bleed valve may be provided in the air flow passage.

In accordance with this aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end, a rear end, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation; and,
- (b) an air treatment member, the air treatment member comprising an air treatment member axis and an air treatment member handle wherein the air treatment member handle comprises an air flow passage.

In some embodiments, the air flow passage may comprise an inlet passage of the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may extend longitudinally between a dirty air inlet end and an outlet end.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member handle may comprise a portion spaced from the air treatment member whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the air treatment member handle and the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member handle may be provided above the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the passage may extend generally axially in the direction of the air treatment member axis.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may comprise a portion spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the driving handle and the main body.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member may be removable from the main body and the air treatment member handle may be removable with the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, a bleed valve may be positioned in the air treatment member handle.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end, a rear end, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation; and,
- (b) a cyclone unit, the cyclone unit comprising a cyclone having a cyclone axis of rotation, a cyclone unit handle, wherein the cyclone unit handle comprises an air flow passage.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit handle may comprise an inlet passage of the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may extend longitudinally between a dirty air inlet end and an outlet end.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit handle may comprise a portion spaced from the cyclone unit whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the cyclone unit handle and the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit handle may be provided above the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the passage may extend generally parallel to the cyclone axis.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may comprise a portion spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the driving handle and the main body.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body.

In some embodiments, the cyclone unit may be removable from the main body and the cyclone unit handle may be removable with the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the upper end positioned above the lower end, the cyclone axis of rotation may be generally horizontal.

In some embodiments, a bleed valve may be positioned in the cyclone unit handle.

In accordance with another aspect of this disclosure, a surface cleaning apparatus is electrically connectable with an accessory cleaning tool (e.g., a rigid air flow conduit, a crevice tool, a brush or the like) and a circuit electrically connecting the accessory tool with a source or power provided for the surface cleaning apparatus (e.g., AC power from a wall outlet or an on board energy storage member such as one or more batteries) is moved from a circuit open position to a circuit closed position when the accessory tool is mounted in air flow communication with the surface cleaning apparatus. An advantage of this design is that the terminal ends of the electrical outlet of the surface cleaning apparatus are de-energized when they are exposed. In one embodiment, an electrical conductor element of the accessory cleaning tool drives an electrical conductor element of the surface cleaning apparatus to a circuit closed position when the accessory tool is mounted in air flow communication with the surface cleaning apparatus. Accordingly, one

or more of the electrical conductor elements of the surface cleaning apparatus may be biased to a circuit open position and may be moveable (e.g., linearly moveable, by contact with the electrical conductor element of the accessory tool). In alternate embodiments, the driving member provided on the accessory cleaning tool may be a non-conductive (e.g., plastic) engagement member (e.g., finger), that engages a member (e.g., a slideable tab of a housing of the electrical conductor elements of the surface cleaning apparatus) to move the electrical conductor elements of the surface cleaning apparatus to a circuit closed position.

In accordance with this aspect, there is provided a surface cleaning apparatus comprising:

- (a) an air flow passage extending between a dirty air inlet and a clean air outlet;
- (b) a main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly that is positioned in the air flow passage;
- (c) an air treatment member positioned in the air flow passage;
- (d) an electrical outlet electrically connectable with an accessory cleaning tool; and,
- (e) a circuit extending between a source of power and the electrical outlet, the circuit comprising first and second electrical conductor elements, at least the first electrical conductor element is biased to a circuit open position wherein the first electrical conductor element is moved to a circuit closed position when an accessory cleaning tool is connected to the dirty air inlet.

In some embodiments, the first and second electrical conductor elements may engage electrical conductors of the accessory tool whereby the first and second electrical conductor elements are electrically connectable with the accessory cleaning tool and at least the first electrical connector conductor may be biased to a circuit open position.

In some embodiments, the first and second electrical conductor elements may comprise first and second electrical connector conductors, each of the electrical conductor elements may have an accessory tool contact end and a terminal end contact end, at least the first electrical connector conductor may be biased to a circuit open position and at least one of the accessory tool contact ends may be recessed in the electrical outlet when in the circuit open position.

In some embodiments, the circuit may comprise electrical conductive members, each of which extends from the source of power to a terminal end, at least the first electrical conductor element may be moveably mounted from a position in which it contacts one of the terminal ends to a position in which it is spaced from the terminal end.

In some embodiments, each of the electrical conductor elements may be moveably mounted from a position in which each of the electrical conductor elements contacts one of the terminal ends to a position in which the electrical conductor elements contacts are spaced from the terminal ends.

In some embodiments, the circuit may comprise electrical conductive members, each of which may extend from the source of power to a terminal end, the first and second electrical conductor elements may comprise first and second electrical connector conductors, each of the electrical conductor elements may have an accessory tool contact end and a terminal end contact end, at least the first electrical conductor element may be moveably mounted from a position in which it contacts one of the terminal ends to a position in which it is spaced from the terminal end.

In some embodiments, surface cleaning apparatus may further comprise a compression spring positioned between the first electrical conductor element and one of the terminal ends.

In some embodiments, the compression spring may be non-conductive.

In some embodiments, the source of power may comprise a power cord.

In some embodiments, the circuit further may comprise a main power switch.

In some embodiments, the accessory cleaning tool may comprise a rigid air flow conduit.

In some embodiments, the surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a hand vacuum cleaner and the electrical outlet is provided adjacent the dirty air inlet.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a surface cleaning apparatus comprising

- (a) a suction motor and fan assembly operable on a source of power;
- (b) an electrical outlet housing having first and second electrical conductor elements, each of the electrical conductor elements has a first contact end and a second contact end; and,
- (c) a circuit including the electrical conductor elements and a main power switch operable between a circuit closed position and a circuit open position, at least the first electrical conductor element is moveable between a circuit closed position and a circuit open position and is biased to the circuit open position wherein the first electrical conductor element is moved to a circuit closed position upon mechanical engagement of a part having an air flow conduit with the electrical outlet housing.

In some embodiments, the circuit may comprise electrical conductive members, each of which may extend from the source of power to a terminal end, at least the first electrical conductor element may be moveably mounted from a position in which it contacts one of the terminal ends to a position in which it is spaced from the terminal end.

In some embodiments, each of the electrical conductor elements may be moveably mounted from a position in which each of the electrical conductor elements contacts one of the terminal ends to a position in which the electrical conductor elements contacts are spaced from the terminal ends.

In some embodiments, the surface cleaning apparatus may further comprise a compression spring positioned between the first electrical conductor element and the one of the terminal ends.

In some embodiments, the compression spring may be non-conductive.

In some embodiments, the source of power may comprise a power cord.

In some embodiments, the first electrical conductor element may be longitudinally moveable in the electrical outlet housing

In some embodiments, the surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a hand vacuum cleaner and the electrical outlet housing is provided adjacent a dirty air inlet.

In accordance with another aspect of this disclosure, a hand vacuum cleaner is provided with a front openable door of a dirt collection area and the hand vacuum cleaner has a handle that extends upwardly and forwardly when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the upper end above the lower end (e.g., when the hand vacuum cleaner is seated on a horizontal surface). An advantage of this design is that the handle is oriented to permit the user to point the hand

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vacuum cleaner downwardly to empty the dirt collection area when the door is opened.

In accordance with this aspect, there is provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation wherein the driving handle has a hand grip portion that extends upwardly and forwardly when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the upper end above the lower end; and,
- (b) an air treatment member comprising a dirt collection region having an openable door provided on a front end of the air treatment member and an openable door lock comprising a door release actuator wherein the door is moveable to an open position when the door release actuator is actuated.

In some embodiments, the hand grip portion may be spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the hand grip portion and the main body.

In some embodiments, at least a portion of the finger receiving area may be positioned linearly rearwardly from the air treatment member.

In some embodiments, the main body may comprise a suction motor housing and the driving handle has an end that may extend from the suction motor housing.

In some embodiments, the main body may comprise a suction motor housing and the driving handle may have an end that extends upwardly and forwardly from the suction motor housing.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may extend generally rearwardly.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may be positioned above the openable door.

In some embodiments, the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and has a longitudinal passage axis and the longitudinal passage axis intersects the driving handle.

In some embodiments, the air treatment member may have a front end having an air treatment member air inlet and a longitudinally rearwardly spaced apart rear end having an air treatment member air outlet.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may be positioned above the openable door.

In accordance with this aspect, there is also provided a hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation wherein the driving handle has a hand grip portion that extends upwardly and forwardly when the hand vacuum cleaner is oriented with the upper end above the lower end; and,
- (b) a cyclone unit comprising a cyclone having a cyclone axis of rotation, a dirt collection region having an openable door provided on a front end of the cyclone unit and an openable door lock comprising a door

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release actuator wherein the door is moveable to an open position when the actuator is actuated.

In some embodiments, the hand grip portion may be spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the hand grip portion and the main body.

In some embodiments, at least a portion of the finger receiving area may be positioned linearly rearwardly from the cyclone unit.

In some embodiments, the main body may comprise a suction motor housing and the driving handle has an end that extends from the suction motor housing.

In some embodiments, the main body may comprise a suction motor housing and the driving handle has an end that extends upwardly and forwardly from the suction motor housing.

In some embodiments, the driving handle may be provided at the rear end of the main body.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may extend generally rearwardly.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may be positioned above the openable door.

In some embodiments, the dirty air inlet may comprise an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and has a longitudinal passage axis and the longitudinal passage axis intersects the driving handle.

In some embodiments, the inlet passage may be positioned above the openable door.

In some embodiments, when the hand vacuum cleaner may be oriented with the upper end above the lower end, the cyclone axis of rotation is generally horizontal.

It will be appreciated that the aspects and embodiments may be used in any combination or sub-combination.

DRAWINGS

The drawings included herewith are for illustrating various examples of articles, methods, and apparatuses of the teaching of the present specification and are not intended to limit the scope of what is taught in any way.

FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a surface cleaning apparatus in accordance with at least one embodiment;

FIG. 2 is a rear perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a top perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a bottom perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1 mounted to a wand and surface cleaning head in a stickvac configuration;

FIG. 5A is a cross-sectional view taken along line 5A-5A in FIG. 5;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 6-6 in FIG. 1, showing an air flow path;

FIG. 7 is a front perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1, with a cyclone unit partially cutaway;

FIG. 8 is a front perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1 with the cyclone unit separated from a main body and a pre-motor filter chamber in an open position;

FIG. 8A is the front perspective view of FIG. 8 with a pre-motor filter in the pre-motor filter chamber;

FIG. 9 is a side elevation view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1 with the cyclone unit separated from the main body;

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FIG. 10 is a rear perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1 with the cyclone unit separated from the main body;

FIG. 10A is the rear perspective view of FIG. 10 showing the cyclone unit being held by the cyclone unit handle;

FIG. 11 is a front perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1 with the cyclone unit separated from the main body;

FIG. 12 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 6-6 in FIG. 1, with an enlargement of a first connector pair in a locked position;

FIG. 13 is the cross-sectional view of FIG. 12, with the first connector pair in an unlocked position;

FIG. 14 is the rear perspective view of FIG. 10, with the first connector pair exploded;

FIG. 15 is a partial cross-sectional view taken along line 6-6 in FIG. 1, showing an alternative first connector pair in a locked position;

FIG. 16 is the partial cross-sectional view of FIG. 15 showing the alternative first connector pair in an unlocked position;

FIG. 17 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 6-6 in FIG. 1, showing an airflow path through a bleed valve;

FIG. 18 is a front perspective view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1, with a front cyclone unit wall in an open position;

FIG. 19 is the front perspective view of FIG. 1, with an exploded cyclone unit lock and lock actuator;

FIG. 20 is the front perspective view of FIG. 1, with an enlarged and partially cutaway cyclone unit lock in an engaged position;

FIG. 21 is the front perspective view of FIG. 20, with the cyclone unit lock in a disengaged position;

FIG. 22 is a cross-sectional perspective view taken along line 6-6 in FIG. 1;

FIG. 23 is a bottom perspective view of a surface cleaning apparatus with a counterweight stand, in accordance with at least one embodiment;

FIG. 24 is a side-elevation view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 1 supported on a horizontal surface;

FIG. 25 is the front perspective view of FIG. 20, with an exploded electrical coupling;

FIG. 26 is a perspective view of a surface cleaning apparatus with the cyclone unit separated from the main body, in accordance with another embodiment;

FIG. 27 is a partial cross-sectional view of the surface cleaning apparatus of FIG. 26 with the cyclone unit connected to the main body;

FIG. 28 is a perspective view of a surface cleaning apparatus with the cyclone unit separated from the main body, in accordance with another embodiment;

FIG. 29 is a perspective view of a surface cleaning apparatus with the cyclone unit separated from the main body, in accordance with another embodiment; and,

FIG. 30 is a perspective view of a surface cleaning apparatus with the cyclone unit separated from the main body, in accordance with another embodiment.

DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS EMBODIMENTS

Numerous embodiments are described in this application, and are presented for illustrative purposes only. The described embodiments are not intended to be limiting in any sense. The invention is widely applicable to numerous embodiments, as is readily apparent from the disclosure herein. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the present invention may be practiced with modification and alteration

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without departing from the teachings disclosed herein. Although particular features of the present invention may be described with reference to one or more particular embodiments or figures, it should be understood that such features are not limited to usage in the one or more particular embodiments or figures with reference to which they are described.

The terms “an embodiment,” “embodiment,” “embodiments,” “the embodiment,” “the embodiments,” “one or more embodiments,” “some embodiments,” and “one embodiment” mean “one or more (but not all) embodiments of the present invention(s),” unless expressly specified otherwise.

The terms “including,” “comprising” and variations thereof mean “including but not limited to,” unless expressly specified otherwise. A listing of items does not imply that any or all of the items are mutually exclusive, unless expressly specified otherwise. The terms “a,” “an” and “the” mean “one or more,” unless expressly specified otherwise.

As used herein and in the claims, two or more parts are said to be “coupled”, “connected”, “attached”, or “fastened” where the parts are joined or operate together either directly or indirectly (i.e., through one or more intermediate parts), so long as a link occurs. As used herein and in the claims, two or more parts are said to be “directly coupled”, “directly connected”, “directly attached”, or “directly fastened” where the parts are connected in physical contact with each other. As used herein, two or more parts are said to be “rigidly coupled”, “rigidly connected”, “rigidly attached”, or “rigidly fastened” where the parts are coupled so as to move as one while maintaining a constant orientation relative to each other. None of the terms “coupled”, “connected”, “attached”, and “fastened” distinguish the manner in which two or more parts are joined together.

Referring to FIG. 1, an embodiment of a surface cleaning apparatus 100 is shown. The following is a general discussion of this embodiment which provides a basis for understanding each of the features which is discussed herein. As discussed in detail subsequently, each of the features may be used in other embodiments.

In the embodiment illustrated, the surface cleaning apparatus 100 is a hand-held vacuum cleaner, which is commonly referred to as a “hand vacuum cleaner” or a “handvac”. As used herein and in the claims, a hand-held vacuum cleaner or hand vacuum cleaner or handvac is a vacuum cleaner that can be operated one-handedly to clean a surface while its weight is held by the same one hand. This is contrasted with upright and canister vacuum cleaners, the weight of which is supported by a surface (e.g. floor below) during use. Optionally, surface cleaning apparatus 100 could be removably mountable on a base so as to form, for example, an upright vacuum cleaner, a canister vacuum cleaner, a stick vac, a wet-dry vacuum cleaner and the like. Power can be supplied to the surface cleaning apparatus 100 by an electrical cord (not shown) that can be connected to a standard wall electrical outlet. Alternatively, or in addition, the power source for the surface cleaning apparatus can be an onboard energy storage device, including, for example, one or more batteries.

As exemplified in FIGS. 1-4, the surface cleaning apparatus 100 may comprise a main body 104 having a handle 108, an air treatment member 112 connected to the main body 104, a dirty air inlet 116, a clean air outlet 120, and an air flow path extending between the inlet 116 and outlet 120. Surface cleaning apparatus 100 includes a front end 121, a rear end 122, an upper end 123, and a bottom 125. In the embodiment shown, the dirty air inlet 116 is at the front end

121. As exemplified, dirty air inlet **116** is the inlet end **124** of an inlet passage **128**. Dirty air inlet **116** may be positioned forward of air treatment member **112** as shown. Optionally, the inlet end **124** can be used as a nozzle to directly clean a surface. Alternatively, the inlet end **124** can be connected or directly connected to the downstream end of any suitable accessory tool such as a rigid air flow conduit (e.g. wand, crevice tool, mini brush or the like) for example. For example, FIGS. **5** and **5A** show an exemplary surface cleaning apparatus **132** (e.g. a stickvac) including surface cleaning apparatus **100** with connector inlet end **124** directly connected to a wand **136** (e.g., wand outlet end **612** may be removably connectable in air flow communication with inlet connector **128**) that is pivotally connected to a surface cleaning head **140**. Wand may be securable to connector **128** by any means known in the art such as a locking member or a friction fit. In the illustrated configuration of FIG. **5**, the surface cleaning apparatus **100** can be used to clean a floor or other surface in a manner analogous to conventional upright-style vacuum cleaners.

From the dirty air inlet **116**, the air flow path may extend through an air treatment member **112**. The air treatment member **112** may be any suitable member that can treat the air in a desired manner, including, for example, removing dirt particles and debris from the air. In the illustrated example, the air treatment member is a cyclone unit **112**, which may be of any design. Alternatively or in addition, the air treatment member may comprise one or more of a bag, a filter or other air treating means.

Cyclone unit **112** may include one or a plurality of cyclones for separating dirt from the air flow, and one or a plurality of dirt collection regions for receiving dirt separated in the cyclone(s). As exemplified in FIG. **6**, cyclone unit **112** includes a cyclone or cyclone chamber **160** and an external dirt collection chamber **164**. The cyclone **160** and dirt collection chamber **164** may be of any configuration suitable for separating dirt from an air stream and collecting the separated dirt, respectively. For example, it will be appreciated that in some dirt collection area may be internal of the cyclone chamber, e.g., a dirt collection area may be provided at a longitudinal end of the cyclone chamber. Cyclone **160** may be oriented in any direction. For example, when surface cleaning apparatus **100** is positioned with bottom **125** on a horizontal surface **584**, cyclone axis of rotation **484** may be oriented horizontally as exemplified, vertically, or at any angle between horizontal and vertical.

As also exemplified in FIG. **6**, a suction motor and fan assembly **152** may be mounted within a motor housing portion **156** of the main body **104**. In this configuration, the suction motor and fan assembly **152** is downstream from the cyclone unit **112**, and the clean air outlet **120** is downstream from the suction motor and fan assembly **152**.

Optionally, one or more pre-motor filters may be placed in the air flow path between the air treatment member and the suction motor and fan assembly. Alternatively, or in addition, one or more post-motor filters may be provided downstream from the suction motor and fan assembly.

As exemplified in FIG. **6**, main body **104** is shown including a pre-motor filter housing portion **208** that is positioned in the air flow path downstream of cyclone unit **112**. Pre-motor filter housing **208** may be of any construction known in the vacuum cleaner art. As exemplified, filter housing **208** may be bounded by one or more walls, which may be integral with or discrete from the main body exterior walls **212**. Turning to FIG. **8**, pre-motor filter housing **208** is shown including a filter housing first wall **216** axially opposite a filter housing second wall **220**, and a filter

housing sidewall **224** that extends in the direction of the cyclone axis of rotation between the first and second walls **216** and **220**. It will be appreciated that first wall **216** is optional and second wall **220** may be in the form of ribs to hold the filter in place. In the illustrated example, filter housing sidewall **224** is discrete from main body exterior walls **212**, which may provide enhanced sound insulation for air passing through the pre-motor filter housing **208**. In alternative embodiments, filter housing sidewall **224** may be defined in whole or in part by main body exterior walls **212** for a more compact design.

Referring back to FIG. **6**, one or more filters made of or comprising a porous filter media may be positioned within the pre-motor filter housing **208** to filter particles remaining in the air flow exiting the cyclone air outlet **184**, before the air flow passes through the suction motor and fan assembly **152**. In the illustrated embodiments, pre-motor filter housing **208** contains an upstream filter **228** and a downstream filter **232**. The pre-motor filters **228** and **232** may be of any suitable configuration and formed from any suitable materials. Preferably, the pre-motor filters **228** and **232** are made of porous media such as foam, felt, or filter paper. Preferably a foam pre-motor filter is provided upstream of a felt pre-motor filter.

Pre-motor filter housing **208** may include a filter housing air inlet and a filter housing air outlet of any suitable design and arrangement within the housing **208**. In the illustrated embodiment, pre-motor filter housing **208** includes a filter housing air inlet **236** formed in filter housing first wall **216**, and a filter housing air outlet **240** formed in filter housing second wall **220**.

Still referring to FIG. **6**, pre-motor filter housing **208** may promote the air flow to broadly distribute across the pre-motor filters **228** and **232** inside. This allows the collected dust particles to be more evenly distributed throughout pre-motor filters **228** and **232** instead of concentrating in a narrow air flow path. An advantage of this design is that the pre-motor filters **228** and **232** will have a greater effective dirt capacity, which allows the pre-motor filters **228** and **232** to be cleaned or replaced less frequently. To this end, pre-motor filter housing **208** may have any structure suitable for broadly distributing the air flow across pre-motor filters **228** and **232**. For example, pre-motor filter housing **208** may provide an upstream header **256**, a downstream header **260**, or both as shown. Headers **256** and **260** may be provided by spacing the pre-motor filters from the filter housing end walls **216** and **220** respectively. In some embodiments, pre-motor filter housing **208** includes spacing members positioned to hold the pre-motor filters **228** and **232** away from the filter housing end walls **216** and **220**. For example, referring to FIGS. **6** and **8**, filter housing first wall **216** may include upstanding ribs **264** that hold the upstream side **268** of pre-motor filter **228** spaced apart from filter housing first wall **216** to allow air from filter housing air inlet **236** to flow laterally between pre-motor filter **228** and filter housing first wall **216** before penetrating pre-motor filter **228**. The illustrated example also shows filter housing second wall **220** including upstanding ribs **272** that hold the downstream side **276** of pre-motor filter **232** spaced apart from filter housing second wall **220** to allow air exiting pre-motor filter **232** to flow laterally between pre-motor filter **232** and filter housing second wall **220**, to filter housing air outlet **240**.

Cyclone with a Unidirectional Flow of Air

The following is a description of a cyclone that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed including uniflow cyclone, the positioning

of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, pre-motor filter housing door, air treatment member door actuator, counterweight stand and electrical coupling members.

In accordance with this aspect a cyclone comprises a cyclone with a unidirectional flow of air or a "uniflow" cyclone. As discussed in more detail, the uniflow cyclone may be horizontally disposed as opposed to being vertically disposed which is typical in the art. In other words, when held by hand and used to clean a surface, the axis of the cyclone chamber may be closer to horizontal than vertical.

In accordance with this aspect, the cyclone air inlet may be at the front end and the cyclone air outlet may be at the rear end. An advantage of this design is that the cyclone inlet may be used to redirect the air from the inlet passage 124 to the cyclone chamber and the air may exit the cyclone and travel linearly to the pre-motor filter. Accordingly, dirty air may travel from the dirty air inlet to the pre-motor filter without passing through any bends, thereby reducing the backpressure created by flow through the vacuum cleaner.

Alternately or in addition, in accordance with this aspect, the cyclone air inlet may be in an upper portion of the sidewall 168 of the cyclone. An advantage of this design is that it inhibits dirt that may remain in cyclone chamber 160 from exiting or blocking the air inlet when the apparatus is moved to various operating angles.

Alternately or in addition, in accordance with this aspect, the dirt collection chamber 164 may be external to the cyclone chamber 160. Further, the dirt outlet 188 of the cyclone chamber 160 may be at a rear end of the cyclone chamber and/or may be in a lower portion of the cyclone chamber, such as in a lower part of sidewall 168 of the cyclone chamber. An advantage of placing the dirt outlet 188 in a lower portion of the rear end of the cyclone chamber 160 is that, when the handvac is in use with inlet 116 pointed downwardly, dirt will enter the dirt collection chamber 164 and fall forwardly due to gravity thereby preventing outlet 188 from becoming blocked until the dirt collection chamber 164 is full.

FIG. 7 exemplifies a cyclone unit including these aspects. As exemplified, cyclone 160 comprises a cyclone sidewall 168 extending axially from a cyclone first end 172 (e.g. front end comprising first end wall 192) to a cyclone second end 176 (e.g. rear end comprising second end wall 196), a cyclone air inlet 180 which enters cyclone 160 at a front portion of sidewall 168, a cyclone air outlet 184 provided in cyclone second end wall 196, and a cyclone dirt outlet 188. Cyclone sidewall 168 includes an upper wall 169 and a lower wall 171. As exemplified in FIG. 6, dirty air may enter cyclone 160 tangentially at cyclone air inlet 180 (which may be provided in the upper wall 169), and swirl (e.g. move cyclonically) through cyclone 160 to separate dirt from the air flow, and then exit cyclone 160 through cyclone air outlet 184. The separated dirt may exit cyclone 160 through cyclone dirt outlet 188 and deposit into dirt collection chamber 164.

As exemplified a vortex finder 204 may extend axially between cyclone first and second ends 172 and 176. Vortex finder 204 may have any configuration known in the art. For example, vortex finder 204 may be connected to cyclone second end wall 196 and extend axially towards cyclone first end 172. Vortex finder 204 may surround cyclone air outlet 184, so that air exiting cyclone 160 travels downstream through vortex finder 204 to cyclone air outlet 184. Vortex finder 204 may include filter media 206 (e.g. mesh) to

capture large dirt particles (e.g. hair and coarse dust) that remains in the air flow exiting cyclone 160.

It will be appreciated that if cyclone air inlet 180 is located at an upper end of the cyclone 160, then inlet passage 128 may be located above the central longitudinal axis of cyclone 160 and preferably is located above cyclone 160. For example, as exemplified in FIGS. 1, 6 and 7, cyclone air inlet 180 may be a tangential air inlet so that air entering the cyclone 160 will tend to rotate as the air travels axially through the cyclone 160, thereby dis-entraining dirt and debris from the air flow, before leaving the cyclone via the air outlet 184. Further, inlet passage 128 extends longitudinally between passage inlet end 124 (i.e., the dirty air inlet 116) and passage outlet end 130 along a longitudinal passage axis 364, and passage outlet end 130 communicates (e.g. is positioned upstream) of cyclone air inlet 180. Passage axis 364 may be linear, and all of the longitudinal passage axis 364 may be positioned above cyclone axis of rotation 484 when surface cleaning apparatus 100 is positioned with bottom 125 on a horizontal surface 584.

Cyclone air inlet 180 may be positioned and constructed in any manner suitable for directing air tangentially into cyclone 160. In the illustrated example of FIG. 22, cyclone air inlet 180 is formed as a curved passage extending from a cyclone air inlet upstream end 532 to a cyclone air inlet downstream end 536. The cyclone air inlet downstream end 536 may be oriented to direct air substantially tangentially to the inner surface of sidewall 168. As exemplified, cyclone air inlet 180 may be positioned above cyclone axis of rotation 484 and suction motor axis of rotation 540. For example, cyclone air inlet 180 may be positioned at an upper end 544 of cyclone 160. This allows gravity to assist with inhibiting dirt inside cyclone 160 from blocking or exiting cyclone air inlet 180. This is because at least a portion of the cyclone 160 will be positioned below the cyclone air inlet 180 when apparatus 100 is held at various operating angles, so that the dirt inside will tend to fall away from cyclone air inlet 180.

Still referring to FIG. 22, cyclone air inlet 180 is formed in cyclone sidewall 168 at cyclone first end 172, and cyclone air outlet 184 is formed in cyclone second end wall 196 at cyclone second end 176. As exemplified, air may exit cyclone air outlet 184 in a flow direction 616 that is generally parallel to the suction motor axis of rotation 540.

As exemplified in FIG. 6, main body lower end 568 may comprise bottom 125. In the illustrated example, when bottom 125 is placed on a horizontal surface, cyclone 160 may be oriented horizontally if bottom or base 125 is parallel to the cyclone axis. It will be appreciated that if bottom 125 is oriented at an angle to the horizontal, e.g., so that dirt air inlet 116 points downwardly when bottom 125 is on a horizontal surface, cyclone 160 may be not be oriented horizontally when bottom 125 is on a horizontal surface. It will be appreciated that, as referred to herein, cyclone 160 being horizontal relates to the orientation if bottom 125 is parallel to the cyclone axis of rotation 484.

As exemplified in FIG. 5A, when inlet connector 128 is mounted to a wand 557 (i.e. rigid air flow conduit), the wand axis 559, the inlet connector axis 364, and the cyclone axis of rotation 484 may be parallel. An advantage of this embodiment is that This reduces bends in the air flow for improved air efficiency. It will be appreciated that only some of these axes may be parallel. For example, only the inlet connector axis 364 and the cyclone axis of rotation 484 may be parallel.

Positioning of the Dirt Collection Chamber

The following is a description of a dirt collection chamber that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, pre-motor filter housing door, air treatment member door actuator, counterweight stand and electrical coupling members.

In accordance with this aspect of the disclosure, a dirt collection chamber for a cyclone chamber may be provided external to and below the cyclone chamber. An advantage of this design is that a cyclone dirt outlet **188** may be provided in a lower portion of the cyclone chamber (e.g., cyclone dirt outlet **188** is provided in lower wall **171**) such that dirt which remains in the cyclone chamber after termination of operation of the vacuum cleaner may fall into the dirt collection chamber when the vacuum cleaner is held with the cyclone extending horizontally and slightly upwardly. A further advantage is that the width of the vacuum cleaner may be narrower as the dirt collection chamber is not located on the lateral sides of the cyclone chamber. Therefore, as exemplified in FIG. **18**, the maximum width of a handvac may be determined by the width of the suction motor housing or the width of the cyclone **160**.

As exemplified in FIG. **18**, dirt collection chamber **164** extends around approximately one-half of cyclone **160**. As exemplified, partition wall **556** may circumscribe approximately one-half of cyclone **160**. In other embodiments, dirt collection chamber **164** may extend around less than or greater than one-half of cyclone **160**, and partition wall **556** may similarly circumscribe less than or greater than one-half of cyclone **160**. In alternative embodiments, dirt collection chamber **164** may not surround cyclone **160**.

It will be appreciated that cyclone sidewall **168** and dirt collection chamber sidewall **548** may have any construction suitable for separating the cyclone **160** from dirt collection chamber **164** and allowing the passage of dis-entrained dirt therebetween. For example, cyclone sidewall **168** and dirt collection chamber sidewall **548** may be discrete walls that are spaced apart and connected by a dirt outlet passage. As exemplified in FIG. **18**, dirt collection chamber sidewall **548** is formed at least in part by portions of cyclone sidewall **168** and portions of cyclone unit exterior wall **552**. Similarly, cyclone sidewall **168** as shown is formed at least in part by portions of dirt collection chamber sidewall **548** and cyclone unit exterior wall **552**. Accordingly, the wall portion **556** in common between cyclone **160** and dirt collection chamber **164** may operate as a dividing wall. Sharing a common dividing wall may help reduce the overall size of the cyclone unit **112**, for a more compact design.

Returning to FIG. **22**, cyclone **160** may include any dirt outlet **188** suitable for directing dis-entrained dirt from cyclone **160** to dirt collection chamber **164**. For example, dirt outlet **188** may be formed in or connected to one or more (or all) of cyclone sidewall **168** and cyclone end walls **192** and **196**. In the illustrated embodiment, dirt outlet **188** is formed in cyclone sidewall **168**. Dirt outlet **188** may have any shape and size suitable for allowing dirt particles to pass into dirt collection chamber **164**. In the illustrated embodiment, dirt outlet **188** is formed as a rectangular aperture in wall portion **556**. In alternative embodiment, dirt outlet **188** may be circular, triangular, or another regular or irregularly shaped aperture. As exemplified, cyclone dirt outlet **188** may be bounded in part by cyclone second end wall **196**.

It will be appreciated that cyclone dirt outlet **188** may be positioned anywhere at or between cyclone first and second ends **172** and **176**. In the illustrated embodiment, cyclone **160** is a uniflow cyclone and accordingly cyclone dirt outlet **188** is positioned at cyclone second end **176** proximate cyclone air outlet **184**. This allows the dirt and air to travel towards the same end of the cyclone **160** before parting ways—the air exiting through air outlet **184** and the dirt exiting through dirt outlet **188**.

In use, the air stream inside cyclone **160** swirls towards cyclone air outlet **184** at cyclone second end **176**, which dis-entrains dirt particles against cyclone sidewall **168**. Under the influence of the rearward air stream, the dirt particles travel towards cyclone second end **176** and exit through cyclone dirt outlet **188** to dirt collection chamber **164**.

Referring to FIG. **18**, dirt collection chamber **164** may have any size and shape suitable to accommodate dirt separated by cyclone **160** during one or more uses. A larger dirt collection chamber **164** can store more dirt to allow apparatus **100** to run longer before emptying dirt collection chamber **164**, but will add bulk and weight to the apparatus **100**. A smaller dirt collection chamber **164** is smaller and lighter, but must be emptied more frequently.

Orientation of the Suction Motor

The following is a description of the orientation of a suction motor that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, pre-motor filter housing door, air treatment member door actuator, counterweight stand and electrical coupling members.

As exemplified in FIG. **22**, in accordance with this aspect, the axis of rotation of the suction motor may be generally parallel to the cyclone axis of rotation and/or the inlet conduit axis. An advantage of this design is that the air may travel generally rearwardly from the cyclone air outlet to the suction motor air inlet, thereby reducing the backpressure through this portion of the vacuum cleaner due to a reduction in the number of bends in the air flow path.

As exemplified in FIG. **22**, when surface cleaning apparatus **100** is positioned with bottom **125** on a horizontal surface **584**, the suction motor axis of rotation **540** may be generally horizontal. For example, cyclone sidewall **168** may extend generally horizontally between longitudinally spaced apart cyclone end walls **172** and **176**, when surface cleaning apparatus **100** is positioned with bottom **125** on a horizontal surface **584**. As exemplified, suction motor axis of rotation **540** may be generally parallel with cyclone axis of rotation **484**. This allows for fewer bends in the air flow between dirty air inlet **116** and clean air outlet **120**, which can result in reduced backpressure, all other elements remaining the same.

As exemplified, the suction motor axis of rotation **540** may be positioned below cyclone axis of rotation **484**. This may provide surface cleaning apparatus **100** with a relatively lower center of gravity for greater stability when surface cleaning apparatus **100** is positioned with bottom **125** on a horizontal surface **584**. In such a case, the pre-motor filter air inlet and outlet **236** and **240** may be axially offset as shown. In the illustrated example, filter housing air inlet axis **248** is located above and spaced apart from filter housing air outlet axis **252**. An advantage of this design is that one or both of the headers may be used to change to elevation at which the

air travels rearwardly with without using a conduit with bends. For example, air may travel generally rearwardly (linearly) into the pre-motor filter housing and air may travel generally rearwardly (linearly) out of the pre-motor filter housing, but at a lower elevation.

In alternate embodiments, filter housing air inlet and outlet axes **248** and **252** may not be spaced apart (e.g. they may be collinear).

In alternate embodiments, it will be appreciated that suction motor and fan assembly **152** may be positioned in main body **104** with its axis of rotation **540** oriented in any direction.

Lateral Stability Members

The following is a description of the lateral stability members that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, pre-motor filter housing door, air treatment member door actuator, counterweight stand and electrical coupling members.

Optionally, the air treatment member may be separable from the main body, such as for emptying, cleaning, or replacing the air treatment member or other internal components of the apparatus, such as the pre-motor filters.

In accordance with this aspect the air treatment member **112** is removable mountable to the main body **104** and is provided with lateral stability members. For example, the air treatment member **112** may abut against a front face of the main body **104** (see for example FIG. 1). Optionally, one of the air treatment member **112** and the main body may be receivable in the other. Accordingly, when unlocked, the air treatment member **112** may be removed from the main body **104** by moving it forwardly. During use, a transverse force may be applied to the air treatment member **112**. As exemplified, inlet **116** is provided on the removable air treatment member **112**. Therefore, when used as part of a stickvac and handle **108** is driving connected to a surface cleaning head (see for example FIG. 5), a force may be provided transverse to wand axis **559**. If sufficient pressure is applied, then the air treatment member may break off of the main body or the air tight seal between the air treatment member and the main body may be broken allowing air to bypass the surface cleaning head. The provision of the lateral stability members reinforces the joint of the air treatment member and the main body to resist such transverse forces.

The lateral stability members are provided internal of the handvac and may be provided on opposed facing faces of the air treatment member and the main body. The lateral stability members may comprise generally vertically extending inter-engagement members

Cyclone unit **112** may be securable to main body **104** in any manner that allows the cyclone unit **112** to be selectively separated and reconnected to main body **104**. For example, cyclone unit **112** and main body **104** may collectively include any releasable engagement members (e.g. latches, snaps, magnets, straps, etc.) suitable for releasably joining the cyclone unit **112** and main body **104**. Further, cyclone unit **112** and main body **104** may collectively include any actuators that allow selective manual release (i.e. by hand) of the releasable engagement member(s). The releasable engagement member(s) and the actuator(s) may be mechanical, electrical, and/or electro-mechanical in nature.

As exemplified in FIGS. 9-11, main body **104** and cyclone unit **112** are separably connected by a cyclone unit release

lock **278**. As exemplified, cyclone unit release lock **278** includes a pair **280** of engagement members **304** and **308**, and a release actuator **328**. The release actuator **328** may be manually user operable (e.g. by hand) for selectively unlocking cyclone unit release lock **278** to allow main body **104** and cyclone unit **112** to separate.

In the illustrated example, cyclone unit **112** is also rotationally mounted to main body **104**. For example, cyclone unit **112** may be rotationally mounted to main body **104** at a position longitudinally spaced apart from cyclone unit release lock **278**. This allows cyclone unit **112** to rotationally separate from main body **104** when cyclone unit release lock **278** is unlocked (e.g. by operation of release actuator **328**). In some embodiments, cyclone unit **112** may be rotationally mounted to main body **104** by a detachable pair **284** of engagement members **312** and **316**. This allows for the option of fully detaching cyclone unit **112** from main body **104**, such as to carry cyclone unit **112** to a garbage bin for emptying or cleaning for example. In alternative embodiments, second pair **284** of engagement members **312** and **316** may provide a permanent rotational connection that is not detachable. It will be appreciated that an alternate connection mechanism may be provided to secure the lower end of the air treatment member **112** and the main body **104** together when cyclone unit release lock **278** is engaged.

Cyclone unit release lock **278** and engagement member pair **284** may be positioned at any location on apparatus **100** suitable for securely joining the main body **104** and cyclone unit **112**. For example cyclone unit release lock **278** and engagement member pair **284** may be positioned at opposite ends of apparatus **100**, such as longitudinally spaced at apparatus upper end **288** and lower end **292** as shown. In the illustrated example, first cyclone unit engagement member **304** is positioned on cyclone unit upper end **348** and first main body engagement member is positioned on main body upper end **570**. In alternate embodiments, the lock positions may be reversed.

Cyclone unit release lock **278** and engagement member pair **284** may take any form suitable for separably joining main body **104** and cyclone unit **112**. For example, one or both engagement member pairs **280** and **284** may include a first engagement member removably receivable in a second engagement member. As exemplified, first engagement member pair **280** includes a first cyclone unit engagement member **304** and a first main body engagement member **308**, and second engagement member pair **284** includes a second cyclone unit engagement member **312** and a second main body engagement member **316**.

Referring to FIG. 12, first cyclone unit engagement member **304** and first main body engagement member **308** are shown formed as hooks which are sized and positioned to interlock when the cyclone unit **112** and main body **104** are brought together. Second cyclone unit engagement member **312** is shown formed as a transversely extending rod which is received in hook-like second main body engagement member **316** when the cyclone unit **112** and main body **104** are brought together. As exemplified, cyclone unit lower end **352** is rotationally mounted to main body lower end **568** when second engagement member pair **284** is connected. When connected, cyclone unit release lock **278** and engagement member pair **284** hold cyclone unit **112** in fluid communication with main body **104**, so that an air flow path is formed from dirty air inlet **116** to clean air outlet **120**. A gasket or the like may be provided to form an air tight seal.

As exemplified in FIGS. 12-14, one or more of engagement members **304**, **308**, **312**, and **316** may be movable to facilitate manual disconnection of the cyclone unit **112** from

main body 104. For example, one or more of engagement members 304, 308, 312, and 316 may be movable away from the other engagement member of its respective engagement member pair 280 or 284 from a locked position to an unlocked position for disconnecting that engagement member pair 280 or 284. It will be appreciated that an engagement member 304, 308, 312, or 316 may be moveable in any direction. For example, it may be translatable in a linear direction or along a curved path, rotatable about any one or more axes, or combinations thereof.

As shown in FIG. 13, first cyclone unit engagement member 304 is in the open or unlocked position wherein it has been moved away from the closed or locked position shown in FIG. 12 in which it engages first main body engagement member 308, thereby disengaging the first engagement member pair 280. As exemplified, first cyclone unit engagement member 304 is pivotally mounted to a first engagement member axle 324 for rotation about the first engagement member axis 320 that extends laterally and first cyclone unit engagement member 304 extends substantially rearwardly whereby rotation of first cyclone unit engagement member 304 about first engagement member axis 320 moves the first cyclone unit engagement member 304 substantially vertically. In this example, first cyclone unit engagement member 304 is formed as a lower upwardly facing hook, first main body engagement member 308 is formed as an upper downwardly facing hook, and first cyclone unit engagement member 304 is pivotal about first engagement member axis 320 to move first cyclone unit engagement member 304 downwardly away from first main body engagement member 308 from the locked position (FIG. 12) to the unlocked position (FIG. 13), thereby disconnecting the first engagement member pair 280.

Once the first engagement member pair 280 is disconnected, the cyclone unit 112 and main body 104 may be separated at the apparatus upper end 288, and then the cyclone unit 112 may be moved relative to the main body 104 to disconnect the second engagement member pair 284 thereby completing the disconnection of the cyclone unit 112 from the main body 104.

Apparatus 100 may include any actuator 328 suitable for disengaging engagement member 304 and 308 to unlock cyclone unit release lock 278. Actuator 328 may be provided on either of cyclone unit 112 or main body 104. Preferably, the actuator 328 is manually operable (i.e. by hand) to allow selective disconnection of the engagement members 304 and 308. In the illustrated embodiment, first main body engagement member 308 is connected to an actuator 328. Actuator 328 may take any form such as a button as shown, a switch, or a slider for example. Actuator 328 may be connected to first main body engagement member 308 in manner suitable for directing the movement of first main body engagement member 308. In the illustrated example, first main body engagement member 308 is integrally formed with a distal end of actuator 328. In alternative embodiments, actuator 328 may be a discrete component that is rigidly or movably connected to first main body engagement member 308 directly or indirectly by way of one or more intermediary components.

As exemplified, a proximal end of actuator 328 may be pivotally mounted to cyclone unit 112 by first engagement member axle 324 for rotation about first engagement member axis 320. In use, a user may depress actuator 328 to rotate actuator 328 and first cyclone unit engagement member 304 downwardly, thereby disconnecting the first engagement member pair 280.

In some embodiments, first cyclone unit engagement member 304 may be biased to the locked position to mitigate the risk of first engagement member pair 280 becoming unlocked during use of apparatus 100. In the illustrated example, a bias 332 biases first cyclone unit engagement member 304 to the open position. Bias 332 may be formed as a torsional spring, as shown, which is mounted to first engagement member axle 324. A user may depress actuator 328 to move the first cyclone unit engagement member 304 against the bias of spring 332 and disconnect first engagement member pair 280.

Reference is now made to FIGS. 15 and 16, which show apparatus 100 including an alternative first engagement member pair 280. As exemplified, first cyclone unit engagement member 304 may include an engagement member arm 336 with an engagement member socket 340, and first main body engagement member 308 may be formed as a peg. In the locked position (FIG. 15), peg 308 may be received in engagement member socket 340 to securely join first engagement member pair 280. In the unlocked position (FIG. 16) peg 308 may be removed from engagement member socket 340 to disconnect first engagement member pair 280. As exemplified, engagement member arm 336 may be resiliently bendable (i.e. as a living hinge) for moving first main body engagement member 308 between the locked and unlocked positions. For example, engagement member arm 336 can resiliently bend upwardly to remove peg 308 from engagement member socket 340 (FIG. 16), and vice versa. Preferably, the resiliency of engagement member arm 336 biases first cyclone unit engagement member 304 towards the locked position.

Exemplary lateral stability members are shown in FIGS. 26-30. As exemplified, air treatment member 112 and main body 104 may collectively include one or more pairs of protrusions and recesses, which mate at the interface between air treatment member 112 and main body 104 when air treatment member 112 is connected to main body 104. This helps provide a more robust separable connection between air treatment member 112 and main body 104 with enhanced strength and rigidity. Air treatment member rear end 436 and main body front end 432 may be provided with mating protrusions 620 that are receivable in recesses 624.

Protrusions 620 and recesses 624 may have any size, shape, and position which allows the protrusions 620 to be received in the recesses 624 when air treatment member 112 and main body 104 are connected. As exemplified, each of protrusions 620 and recesses 624 may be formed as elongate segments which are continuous or have discontinuities. In the illustrated embodiment, each of protrusions 620 and recesses 624 extend longitudinally downwardly.

As exemplified in FIGS. 26 and 27, protrusions 620 are formed in cyclone unit upper end 348 (engagement member arm 336) and recesses 624 are formed in surface of main body upper end 570 against which engagement member arm 336 abuts. Protrusions 620 are received in recesses 624 when air treatment member 112 is connected to main body 104.

FIG. 28 shows an alternate embodiment, in which cyclone unit upper end 348 includes recesses 624 and main body upper end 570 includes protrusions 620.

FIG. 29 shows another alternate embodiment including protrusions 620 and recesses 624 extending across cyclone rear end wall 176 and filter housing front wall 216.

FIG. 30 shows another embodiment including protrusions 620 extending across cyclone rear end wall 176 and filter housing front wall 216. When air treatment member 112 is connected to main body 104, protrusions 620 on cyclone

rear end wall **176** contact filter housing front wall **216**, and protrusions **620** on filter housing front wall **216** contact cyclone rear end wall **176**. In this embodiment, protrusion **620** provide rigid beams at the interface between main body **104** and air treatment member **112** which may increase the rigidity and strength of the separable connection.

Air Treatment Member Handle

The following is a description of an air treatment member handle that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the position and orientation of a driving handle, pre-motor filter housing door, air treatment member door actuator, counterweight stand and electrical coupling members.

In accordance with this aspect, the air treatment member may include a handle in addition to the main body handle (“driving handle”). This allows a user to hold the main body and the air treatment member simultaneously, with different hands before, during, and after disconnecting the main body from the air treatment member.

In one embodiment, the air treatment member handle may for part of an air flow conduit of the air treatment member. Alternately or in addition, the air treatment member handle may extend along the axial direction of the air treatment member and/or may be on an upper portion thereof and/or may provide a gap for receiving fingers of the user.

As exemplified in FIG. 11, cyclone unit handle **344** is connected to cyclone unit **112** when cyclone unit **112** is disconnected from main body **104**, and driving handle **108** is connected to main body **104** when main body **104** is disconnected from cyclone unit **112**. Cyclone unit handle **344** may have any suitable size, shape, and position on cyclone unit **112** which allows a user to easily grasp the cyclone unit handle **344** by hand to carry the cyclone unit **112** (see FIG. 10A). In the illustrated embodiment, cyclone unit handle **344** is formed as a substantially cylindrical member, which extends rearwardly along cyclone unit upper portion **348**. In other embodiments, cyclone unit handle **344** may have a different regular or irregular cross-sectional shape, and may extend along a different portion of cyclone unit **112**, such as along lower portion **352**, or a lateral side **356** for example. As exemplified in FIG. 6, cyclone unit handle **344** may include a portion or gap **347** spaced from cyclone unit **112** whereby a finger receiving area **349** is provided between the cyclone unit handle **344** and the cyclone unit **112**.

Returning to FIG. 11, preferably apparatus **100** is configured to allow the user to take whatever action disconnects the main body **104** from air treatment member **112** while holding air treatment member handle **344** with one hand and holding driving handle **108** with the other hand. For example, cyclone unit handle **344** or driving handle **108** may be positioned proximate (e.g. within finger-reach of) an actuator that releases the connector(s) which hold air treatment member **112** and main body **104** together. This would allow the user to use a finger to operate the actuator while holding the handle **344** or **108** with the remaining fingers of their hand. In the illustrated embodiment, cyclone unit handle **344** and actuator **328** are both located on the cyclone unit upper portion **348** and in close proximity. This allows a user to hold air treatment member **112** by handle **344** while simultaneously operating actuator **328** with the same hand to disconnect air treatment member **112** from main body **104**.

The user may also use the same hand to open a front door of the air treatment member as discussed subsequently in more detail.

Referring to FIG. 6, cyclone unit handle **344** is shown extending along a cyclone unit handle axis **360**. In some embodiments, cyclone unit handle axis **360** may be parallel with and may be coaxial with inlet connector axis **364**. This may promote a compact shape for apparatus **100** in contrast with handles with an axis that extends above the inlet connector axis **364**.

As exemplified in FIGS. 1 and 17, cyclone unit handle **344** may comprise an air flow passage (e.g. an air flow conduit). This may promote a compact design for apparatus **100** by reducing or eliminating the volume added to apparatus **100** to incorporate cyclone unit handle **344**. For example, an existing air flow conduit may be reshaped and/or repositioned to provide handle functionality. As exemplified in FIG. 17, handle **344** is positioned rearward and coaxial with the inlet conduit extending from dirty air inlet **116**. It will be appreciated that if the inlet to the air treatment member chamber (e.g., cyclone chamber **160**) is rearward of the front of handle **344**, then part of handle **344** form part of inlet conduit **124**. Alternately, or in addition as exemplified in FIG. 17, handle **344** may provide part or all of a bleed air conduit **380** having a longitudinal passage axis **390**. Bleed conduit **380** provides a portion of the air flow path between the bleed air inlet **384** and the suction motor and fan assembly **152** and houses bleed valve **388**. The bleed valve **388** may be any suitable valve that is known in the art, which typically open automatically in response to low pressure. For example, bleed valve **388** may be a pressure relief valve. Bleed valve **388** may help maintain adequate volumetric air flow through the suction motor and fan assembly **152** during low pressure events to avoid overheating of the suction motor and fan assembly **152**. Low pressure may occur where there is a partial or total blockage in the air flow upstream of the suction motor and fan assembly **152** (e.g. a plastic bag is blocking dirty air inlet **116**).

It will be appreciated that cyclone unit handle **344** is grasped primarily when apparatus **100** is turned off (e.g. when separating, reconnecting, or transporting cyclone unit **112**) so that there is little or no concern of the bleed air inlet **384** being blocked by a user’s hands when apparatus **100** is turned on.

FIG. 17 exemplifies an optional air flow path from bleed air inlet **384** to suction motor and fan assembly **152** which bypasses cyclone **160** and pre-motor filters **228** and **232**. As exemplified, the air flow path may extend rearwardly through bleed valve conduit **380** to filter housing downstream header **260** bypassing filter housing upstream header **256** and pre-motor filters **228** and **232**. In alternate embodiments, the air flow path may extend through pre-motor filters **228** and **232** to filter fine particulates that may be present in the ambient air drawn into bleed air inlet **384**. For example, filter housing upstream header **256** may be positioned downstream of bleed valve **388** in the air flow path from bleed air inlet **384**.

Position and Orientation of a Driving Handle

The following is a description of a driving handle that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the pre-motor filter housing door, the air treatment member door actuator, the counterweight stand and the electrical coupling members.

In accordance with this aspect, the driving handle is which extends upwardly and forwardly. Driving handle **108** may extend upwardly from the suction motor housing (e.g., an upper surface of the main body that houses the suction motor). Driving handle **108** may terminate at 0r above an upper end of the handvac **100**. Accordingly, the inlet conduit axis **364** and/or the handle axis **360** may intersect the driving handle **108**. An advantage of this design is that the weight of the motor is below the hand grip. Further, the driving axis of the handvac when connected to a wand (the wand axis) is at an opposite end of the handle to the suction motor. This provides improved hand weight for a user.

As exemplified in FIG. 6, driving handle **108** may extend from its lower end **368** to its upper end **372** along a driving handle axis **376**. When surface cleaning apparatus **100** is positioned with bottom **125** on a horizontal surface **584** and the bottom **125** extends horizontally, driving handle axis **376** may extend generally upwardly and forwardly (e.g. at an angle **378** of less than 45 degrees to vertical) to provide a comfortable natural grip during use.

As exemplified, driving handle axis **376** may be at an angle to cyclone unit handle axis **360**. For example, axes **360** and **376** may be angularly offset by 30 degrees or more. This reflects that the driving handle **108** and cyclone unit handle **344** may have different functions. For example, the driving handle **108** may be configured to provide a comfortable grip for the user during use, and the cyclone unit handle **344** may be configured with a compact design.

In the illustrated embodiment, driving handle **108** includes a portion **377** spaced from main body **104** whereby a finger receiving area **379** is provided between the driving handle **108** and the main body **104**. As exemplified, driving handle **108** may be positioned at main body rear end **434** and longitudinally spaced apart from cyclone unit handle **344**.
Pre-Motor Filter Housing Door

The following is a description of a pre-motor filter door that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, the air treatment member door actuator, the counterweight stand and the electrical coupling members.

In accordance with this aspect, a surface cleaning apparatus may have a pre-motor filter chamber which is closed by an openable door that is accessible when the air treatment member is removed from the remainder of the surface cleaning apparatus (as exemplified in FIG. 6). A pre-motor filter may be accessed for cleaning or replacement when the door is opened. The pre-motor filter door may include a handle for user operation. The pre-motor filter chamber may be provided in the removable air treatment member **112** or the main body **104**. The door may be held in a closed position by a part of the surface cleaning apparatus that does not include the pre-motor filter chamber. For example, if the pre-motor filter chamber is provided in the air treatment member, then the door may be held closed by a part of the main body when the air treatment member is attached to the main body. Conversely, if the pre-motor filter chamber is provided in the main body as exemplified in FIG. 8, then the door may be held closed by a part of the air treatment member when the air treatment member is attached to the main body. An advantage of this design is that it allows a simpler design for the pre-motor filter door that is free of locking members such as latches. A further advantage is that

unintentional user access to the pre-motor filter housing **208** may be prevented while the apparatus **100** is in operation.

FIGS. 8, 8A and 11 exemplify an embodiment in which pre-motor filter housing **208** is accessible when air treatment member **112** is disconnected from main body **104**. For example, one of the filter housing walls **216** and **220** (e.g., filter housing upstream wall **216** as exemplified in FIG. 8) may be exposed when air treatment member **112** is disconnected from main body **104**.

The openable filter housing wall may be openable in any manner suitable for providing access to clean or replace the pre-motor filters inside. For example, the openable wall may be moveably mounted or removably mounted. Accordingly, filter housing wall **216** or **220** may be pivotally attached to the pre-motor filter housing **208**, slideably attached to the pre-motor filter housing **208**, or removable altogether from the pre-motor filter housing **208**. In the illustrated embodiment, filter housing upstream wall **216** is pivotally attached to pre-motor filter housing **208**.

As exemplified in FIGS. 8A and 11, filter housing upstream wall **216** is rotatable about a filter-housing wall pivot axis **392** between a closed position (FIG. 11), and an open position (FIG. 8A). It will be appreciated that filter housing upstream wall **216** may be rotatable in any manner and direction suitable for moving the filter housing upstream wall **216** generally away from the pre-motor filter housing **208** to provide access to the pre-motor filters **228** and **232** inside. In the illustrated embodiment, filter housing upstream wall **216** is upwardly rotatable about a laterally extending (e.g. horizontal) filter housing wall pivot axis **392** located at an upper end **396** of the pre-motor filter housing **208**. As exemplified, the filter housing wall pivot axis **392** is transverse to (e.g. substantially perpendicular to) the inlet connector axis **364**, the cyclone unit handle axis **360**, and the filter housing air inlet axis **248**.

In alternative embodiments, filter housing upstream wall **216** may rotate in a different direction about a different axis. For example, filter housing upstream wall **216** may move laterally outwardly by rotation about a substantially vertical axis positioned proximate a left or right side of the pre-motor filter housing **208**.

Still referring to FIGS. 8A and 11, the filter housing upstream wall **216** may have any construction suitable for allowing the filter housing upstream wall **216** to rotate about the filter housing wall pivot axis **392**. For example, filter housing upstream wall **216** may be connected to filter housing sidewall **224** by a hinge **404** of any suitable type. In some embodiments, filter housing upstream wall **216** may be resiliently bendable to connect with pre-motor filter housing **208** by a living hinge.

Optionally, filter housing upstream wall **216** may be at least partially transparent (e.g., the wall may be made of a transparent material or it may have a window) to provide visibility of the upstream surface **268** (FIG. 8A) of the pre-motor filter inside. This would allow the user to inspect the pre-motor filter through the filter housing upstream wall **216**, without opening the pre-motor filter housing **208**, in order to assess whether to clean or replace the pre-motor filter. In alternative embodiments, the filter housing upstream wall **216** may be opaque, and the pre-motor filter may not be visible through the filter housing upstream wall **216**.

Still referring to FIGS. 8A and 11, the openable filter housing wall is preferably manually user openable (e.g. by hand). This allows the user to selectively open the openable filter housing wall to access the pre-motor filters inside. In the illustrated example, the filter housing upstream wall **216**

includes a filter housing handle **408** that is user operable to move the filter housing upstream wall **216** between the open and closed positions. The filter housing handle **408** may have any construction that allows the user to easily grasp and pull the filter housing handle **408** to open the pre-motor filter housing **208**. In the illustrated example, the filter housing handle **408** extends outwardly from an end opposed to the hinged end (in this case lower end **412** of the filter housing upstream wall **216**). Referring to FIGS. **11** and **13**, the filter housing handle **408** extends from a filter housing handle inboard end **416** to a filter housing handle outboard end **420**. As exemplified, the filter housing handle inboard end **416** may be connected to an upstream face **424** of the filter housing upstream wall **216**. The filter housing outboard end **420** may include a gripping feature, which may be of any design such as a lip **428**. In the illustrated example, lip **428** curls approximately 90 degrees.

As exemplified in FIG. **13**, the filter housing handle **408** may extend from filter housing upstream wall **216** outwardly towards cyclone unit **112**. In the illustrated example, a front end **432** of main body **104** is connectable to the rear end **436** of cyclone unit **112**, and filter housing handle **408** extends forwardly from filter housing upstream wall **216** towards cyclone unit **112**. As shown, the filter housing handle outboard end **420** extends into a handle recess **440** of cyclone unit **112** outside of cyclone **160** and dirt collection chamber **164**. In this way, the handle may overlap a portion of the cyclone chamber so as to have a longer length in the direction of the cyclone axis. This construction allows the filter housing handle **408** to have a greater dimension **444** between its inboard and outboard ends **416** and **420**, while permitting the filter housing upstream wall **216** to contact at least a portion of cyclone second wall **196** to fluidly connect the cyclone air outlet **184** to the filter housing air inlet **236**. In the illustrated example, the filter housing handle **408** extends from filter housing upstream wall lower end **412**, and cyclone unit handle recess **440** is provided in cyclone unit lower portion **352**.

Returning to FIGS. **8A** and **11**, in some embodiments, pre-motor filter housing **208** may be free of locking members, such as latches or clasps, which are operable to secure the openable wall in the closed position. Accordingly, when the main body **104** and cyclone unit **112** are connected together (see, e.g. FIG. **1**) filter housing handle **408** extends forwardly from filter housing upstream wall **216** and abuts a part of air treatment member **112**, e.g., rear end wall **196** of the air treatment member.

As exemplified in FIG. **13**, the openable door of the pre-motor filter housing **208** may be held in its closed position by interaction with cyclone unit **112**, when cyclone unit **112** is connected to main body **104**. For example, at least a portion of cyclone unit rear end **436** may contact filter housing upstream wall **216** to hold the filter housing upstream wall **216** in its closed position. In the illustrated example, cyclone second wall **196** is bordered by a peripheral lip **448** which contacts upstream face **424** of filter housing upstream wall **216**, and cyclone air outlet **184** is bordered by a peripheral lip **452** that contacts a peripheral recess **456** of filter housing air inlet **236**. Peripheral lip **452** and recess **456** may form a substantially air tight connection between cyclone air outlet **184** and filter housing air inlet **236**.

In some embodiments, a gasket, such as an O-ring (not shown) may be provided and compressed when the air treatment member is attached to provide an air tight seal between the openable door and the rest of the pre-motor filter chamber.

Air Treatment Member Door Actuator

The following is a description of an air treatment member door actuator that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, the pre-motor filter housing door, the counterweight stand and the electrical coupling members.

The air treatment member may include an openable door that provides access to empty or clean the air treatment member (e.g. to empty or clean a dirt collection region of the air treatment member). In accordance with this aspect, the air treatment member door may be openable by an actuator positioned within finger-reach of the air treatment member handle. This allows for one handed operation of the air treatment member door.

Reference is now made to FIGS. **1** and **18**. In some embodiments, air treatment member **112** includes an openable wall (e.g., a door) to provide access to clean or empty the air treatment member (e.g., cyclone **160** and dirt collection chamber **164**). Any portion of air treatment member **112** suitable for emptying air treatment member **112** may be openable.

In the illustrated example, air treatment member **112** includes an openable front end **472** wherein all of the front end is openable. As exemplified, the air treatment member may be a cyclone unit comprising a cyclone and a dirt collection chamber external to the cyclone and may have a front end **472** that includes, cyclone first end wall **192**, and dirt collection chamber first end wall **476**. It will be appreciated that, in some embodiments, only a portion of the front end **472** may be openable.

The openable door may be openable in any manner suitable for providing access to clean or empty air treatment member **112**, e.g., cyclone **160** and dirt collection chamber **164**. For example, the door may be pivotally attached to the air treatment member **112** which is exemplified in FIG. **18**, slideably attached to the air treatment member **112**, and/or removable altogether from the air treatment member **112**.

As exemplified, cyclone unit front door **472** is rotatable about a cyclone unit wall pivot axis **480** between a closed position (FIG. **1**), and an open position (FIG. **18**). It will be appreciated that cyclone unit front door **472** may be rotatable in any manner and direction suitable for moving cyclone unit front door **472** generally away from the cyclone unit **112** to provide access to the cyclone **160** and dirt collection chamber **164** inside. In the illustrated embodiment, cyclone unit front door **472** is downwardly rotatable about a laterally extending (e.g. horizontal) cyclone unit wall pivot axis **480** located at a lower portion **352** of the cyclone unit **112**. As exemplified, the cyclone unit wall pivot axis **480** is transverse to (e.g. substantially perpendicular to) the inlet connector axis **364**, the cyclone unit handle axis **360**, and the cyclone axis of rotation **484**.

In alternative embodiments, cyclone unit front door **472** may rotate in a different direction about a different axis. For example, cyclone unit front door **472** may move laterally outwardly by rotation about a substantially vertical axis positioned proximate a left or right side of the cyclone unit **112**. In other embodiments, cyclone unit front door **472** may move upwardly by rotation about a substantially horizontal axis positioned proximate cyclone unit upper portion **348**.

Still referring to FIGS. **1** and **18**, the cyclone unit front door **472** may have any construction suitable for allowing

the cyclone unit front door 472 to rotate about the cyclone unit wall pivot axis 480. For example, cyclone unit front door 472 may be connected to cyclone unit 112 by a hinge 486 of any type known in the art. In some embodiments, cyclone unit front door 472 may be resiliently bendable to connect with cyclone unit 112 by a living hinge.

Still referring to FIGS. 1 and 18, the openable cyclone unit wall is locked in the closed position, and manually user operable (e.g. by hand). This allows the openable cyclone unit wall to remain closed while the apparatus 100 is operating, and allows the user to selectively open the openable cyclone unit wall to empty the cyclone 160 and dirt collection chamber 164 inside when the apparatus 100 is turned off. In the illustrated example, cyclone unit 112 includes a door lock 492, which inhibits opening of cyclone unit front door 472 when engaged. Door lock 492 is user operable to disengage door lock 492 to thereby permit cyclone unit front door 472 to move to its open position.

Door lock 492 may be any type of lock suitable for retaining cyclone unit front door 472 in its closed position, and which is user releasable to permit cyclone unit 112 to open. In some embodiments, door lock 492 may have a manually operable actuator for moving the lock between its engaged and disengaged positions. In the illustrated embodiment, door lock 492 includes an engaging member 496 and an actuator 504.

Preferably, actuator is positioned proximate the air treatment member handle 344 so that a user may operate actuator 504 with the same hand that is used to hold handle 344. For example, actuator 504 may be located within close proximity (e.g. finger-reach) of handle 344, e.g., it may be provided on or adjacent handle 344 and may be provided at the end of handle 344 at which the door is located. Accordingly while holding handle 344, the user may use their thumb of the same hand to operate actuator 504, i.e., door release actuator 504 may be operated by the same hand which is holding the cyclone unit 112 for single-handed emptying of cyclone unit 112. In the illustrated embodiment, unit door release actuator 504 is positioned forward of handle 344 on upper portion 348 (e.g. at a forward end of inlet passage 380). In other embodiments, door release actuator 504 may be located on handle 344, or rearwardly of handle 344.

As exemplified in FIGS. 20 and 21, the door release actuator 504 is manually user operable (i.e. by hand) to move the engaging member 496 between its engaged position (FIG. 20) and its disengaged position (FIG. 21). As exemplified, in the engaged position (FIG. 20), door release actuator 504 may engage cyclone unit front door 472 to inhibit movement of front door 472 to its open position. This prevents front door 472 from rotating about its cyclone unit wall pivot axis 480 to its open position. In the disengaged position (FIG. 21), door release actuator 504 releases cyclone unit front door 472 to permit front door 472 to move to its open position.

Referring to FIGS. 19-21, lock engaging member 496 may be of any construction having an engaged position for retaining the openable cyclone unit wall in its closed position, and a disengaged position for releasing the openable cyclone unit to move to its open position. In the illustrated example, lock engaging member 496 is connected to an exterior of air treatment member 112. As exemplified, lock engaging member 496 has a front end 508 which is sized and positioned to releasably hook onto a recess 512 formed in cyclone unit front door 472 to retain the front door 472 in its closed position.

Lock engaging member 496 may be movable in any suitable manner between its engaged and disengaged posi-

tions. For example, lock engaging member 496 may be rotatable as shown, translatable, or combinations thereof. In the illustrated embodiment, lock engaging member 496 is pivotally connected to air treatment member 112 for rotation about a lock engaging member axis 516 (FIG. 19) between its engaged and disengaged positions. As exemplified, in the engaged position, lock engaging member 496 may hook onto front wall lock recess 512. Lock engaging member 496 may then be rotated about its axis 516 away from cyclone unit front door 472 to unhook from front wall lock recess 512. Optionally, lock engaging member 496 may be biased to the locked position. For example, a biasing member (e.g. torsional spring, not shown) may bias lock engaging member 496 to rotate toward the closed position.

Still referring to FIGS. 19-21, door lock 492 may have any door release actuator 504 suitable for moving the lock engaging member 496 between its engaged and disengaged positions. In the illustrated example, door release actuator 504 is formed as a button which is operable to rotate lock engaging member 496 to its unlocked position. As exemplified, door release actuator 504 and lock engaging member 496 may both include abutments 520 and 524, respectively, which make contact to move lock engaging member 496 when door release actuator 504 is depressed. In this example, when door release actuator 504 is depressed, abutment 520 moves abutment 524 downwardly which teeters lock engaging member 496 to rotate about its lock engaging member axis 516 to its disengaged position. It will be appreciated that door release actuator 504 may be movable in any suitable manner. For example, door release actuator 504 may be rotatable (e.g. pivotal) as shown, or translatable (e.g. slidable). In the illustrated example, door release actuator 504 is rotatably connected to cyclone unit 112 about a lock actuator axis 528 between its raised position (FIG. 20) and its depressed position (FIG. 21). Counterweight Stand

The following is a description of a counterweight stand that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, the pre-motor filter housing door, the air treatment member door actuator and the electrical coupling members.

In accordance with this aspect, the apparatus may include a counterweight positioned to adjust the apparatus center of gravity for reducing user-torque required to orient the apparatus at common operating angles. The counterweight may be located at a lower end of the main body to provide a stand for supporting the apparatus on a horizontal surface. The counterweight may be formed by a removable member (e.g. energy storage member), or a permanently attached or integrally molded member (e.g. ribs).

As exemplified in FIG. 23, apparatus 100 includes a counterweight stand 564. The counterweight stand 564 may have any configuration suitable for helping to support apparatus 100 on horizontal surface and for influencing the center of gravity of apparatus 100. As exemplified, counterweight stand 564 may be connected to apparatus lower end 292 for supporting apparatus 100 when apparatus lower end 292 is placed on a horizontal surface (e.g. for storage). In various embodiments, counterweight stand 564 may be connected to main body 104, air treatment member 112, or both. In the illustrated embodiment, counterweight stand 564 is connected to main body lower end 568 to define at least a

portion of a lower wall of main body **104** for supporting apparatus **100** on a horizontal surface.

Counterweight stand **564** may be of any size and weight suitable for providing stable support and for influencing the apparatus center of gravity. For example, counterweight stand **564** may be formed of the same material as main body exterior wall **212** (e.g. plastic), and may be formed as a solid member, a hollow member, a porous member, or a plurality of spaced apart members. In the illustrated embodiment, counterweight stand **564** is formed as a plurality of spaced apart counterweight ribs **572** that are integrally formed with the main body exterior wall **212**. As exemplified, counterweight ribs **572** may be rearwardly extending and laterally spaced apart. This allows the counterweight ribs **572** to be distributed across a large area to form a base that may itself or with bottom **125** stably support the apparatus **100** on a horizontal surface. The collective weight of ribs **572**, and thus their influence on the apparatus center of gravity, is determined by varying the number, density, spacing, and distribution of the counterweight ribs **572**. In alternative embodiments, counterweight stand **564** may be formed by a hollow member, and the weight of the counterweight stand **564** is determined by the fill density inside the block. In some embodiments, counterweight stand **564** may be formed from a different material than main body exterior wall **212**, such as a material of greater density to provide greater stability and influence on center of gravity.

Still referring to FIG. 23, the counterweight stand **564** may be integrally formed, permanently connected, or removably connected to apparatus **100**. In the illustrated embodiment, counterweight stand **564** is permanently connected to apparatus **100**. As exemplified, apparatus **100** may be a corded appliance having a power cord connector **576** for permanently or removably receiving a power cord (not shown) that is connectable to an external power source (e.g. wall outlet). Turning to FIGS. 4 and 24, another embodiment of apparatus **100** is shown including a counterweight stand **564** formed as an energy storage member **580** (e.g. battery). Energy storage member **580** may be permanently or removably connected to apparatus **100**, and may have a size and weight suitable for helping to support apparatus **100** on a horizontal surface **584** and influencing the center of gravity of apparatus **100**.

Electrical Coupling Members

The following is a description of an electrical coupling members that may be used by itself in any surface cleaning apparatus or in any combination or sub-combination with any other feature or features disclosed herein including the uniflow cyclone, the positioning of the dirt collection chamber, the orientation of the suction motor, the lateral stability members, the air treatment member handle, the position and orientation of a driving handle, the pre-motor filter housing door, the air treatment member door actuator and the counterweight stand.

In accordance with this aspect, the apparatus may include an electrical outlet with electrical conductor element(s) that are movable from a circuit closed position to a circuit open position upon removal of an accessory tool such as a wand, crevice tool, mini brush or the like. The accessory tool which is mounted on the apparatus may have a member which engages a driven member on the apparatus. When engaged, the driven member mechanically moves an element of the circuit to open the circuit so that the electrical conductor elements on the apparatus are not live. This allows the electrical outlet to be safe to touch when the accessory tool is disconnected.

Referring to FIG. 1, connector **128** may be any suitable connector that is operable to connect to, and preferably detachably connect to, a hose, cleaning tool or other accessory tool. Optionally, in addition to providing an air flow connection, connector **128** may also include an electrical connection. Providing an electrical connection may allow accessory tools that are coupled to the connector **128** to be powered by the surface cleaning apparatus **100**. For example, the surface cleaning unit **100** can be used to provide both power and suction to a surface cleaning head, or other suitable accessory tool. In the illustrated embodiment, the connector **128** includes an electrical outlet **144** in the form of a female socket member, and a corresponding male connector member may be provided on the hose, cleaning tool or other accessory tool that is connected to the connector inlet end **124**. In other embodiments, electrical outlet **144** may include male connectors.

As exemplified in FIG. 25, apparatus **100** includes an electrical circuit **624** between a source of power and electrical conductor elements **588**. The source of power may be an energy storage member **580** (e.g. battery) or a power cord **628** (connectable to an external power outlet), for example. In accordance with this aspect, electrical conductor elements **588** may be de-energized when not connected with a mating electrical coupling (e.g. of a power accessory). This may prevent user injury from being hurt by inadvertent contact with the electrical conductor elements **588**.

The electrical circuit **624** may include two or more electrical conductor elements **588**, at least one of which, and preferably two of which, may be movable between a circuit closed position and a circuit open position, and biased to the circuit open position. In the circuit closed position, the electrical conductor element **588** is electrically connected to the source of power. In the circuit open position, the electrical conductor **588** is electrically disconnected from the source of power. Accordingly, at least one of the electrical conductor elements **588** is normally electrically disconnected from the source of power, which may prevent accidental electric shock. In use, the electrical conductor element **588** is moved to the circuit closed position upon attaching an accessory tool to dirty air inlet **116**.

In one embodiment, the electrical conductor elements **588** may be moved to the circuit closed position by engagement with the electrical conductor elements of an accessory tool. Accordingly, when the accessory tool is mounted on inlet **116**, the electrical conductor elements of the accessory tool may drive electrical conductor elements **588** to the circuit closed position.

As exemplified, electrical conductor elements **588** may be a rigid rod movably mounted in a housing **596** of electrical outlet **144**. Each electrical conductor element **588** extends from a first contact end **640** to a second contact end **644**. The first contact end **640** may be an accessory tool contact end which makes electrical contact with a mating electrical conductor element of an attached accessory tool. The second contact ends **644** may be a terminal end contact end which makes electrical contact with the terminal ends **636** of electrical conductive members **590** when the electrical conductor elements **588** are in a circuit closed position. Accordingly, when an accessory tool is electrically connected to electrical outlet **144** and electrical conductor elements **588** are in the circuit closed position, the conductor element **588** can conduct electricity from the source of power to the connected accessory tool.

It will be appreciated that electrical conductive members (e.g. wires) **590** extend from the source of power to terminal ends **636**. One or both of electrical conductor elements **588**

may be movable between a circuit closed position, in which second contact end **644** contacts terminal end **636** of an electrical conductive member **590**, and a circuit open position, in which second contact end **644** is spaced apart from the terminal ends **636** of electrical conductive members **590**. For example, one or both of electrical conductor elements **588** may be axially slidable in electrical outlet housing between the circuit open and circuit closed positions. In the illustrated example, electrical conductor elements **588** are rearwardly slideable in rearwardly extending housing channels **604** formed in electrical outlet housing **596**.

In some embodiments, the first end **640** of one or both of electrical conductor elements **588** may be recessed into the electrical outlet **144** when in the circuit open position. For example, first end **640** may be positioned rearwardly of electrical outlet front end **608**.

Electrical conductor element **588** may be biased to the circuit open position in any manner. For example, electrical outlet **144** includes a biasing member **648** that applies a biasing force urging electrical conductor element **588** toward the circuit open position. In the illustrated example, biasing member **648** is a compression spring positioned between the electrical conductor element **588** and the terminal end **636** of electrical conductive member **590** which urges electrical conductor element **588** forwardly. The force of biasing member **648** may be overcome when connecting an accessory tool to dirty air inlet **116** to move the electrical conductor element **588** rearwardly to the circuit closed position. Preferably, biasing member **648** is substantially non-electrically conductive. For example, biasing member **648** may be formed of (or coated with) plastic, rubber, a non-conductive metal or another substantially non-electrically conductive material. This helps to prevent biasing member **648** from short circuiting electrical circuit **624** or electrically connecting electrical conductor element **588** and terminal end **636** when the electrical conductor element **588** is in the closed position.

It will be appreciated that, in an alternate embodiment, electrical conductor elements **588** may be mounted in a moveable (e.g., plastic or other non-conductive material) housing and the housing may have an engagement member that is engaged by, e.g., a protrusion or finger provided on the accessory tool. In this way, the electrical conductor elements of the accessory tool need not be used to drive the circuit **624** to a closed position.

In some embodiments, main power switch **650**, which is movable between a circuit closed position and a circuit open position to energize the suction motor, may be part of electrical circuit **624**. The power switch may be manually used. In the circuit open position, power switch **650** electrically disconnects electrical terminal end **636** from the power source. In the circuit closed position, power switch **650** electrically connects circuit terminal end **636** with the power source.

While the above description provides examples of the embodiments, it will be appreciated that some features and/or functions of the described embodiments are susceptible to modification without departing from the spirit and principles of operation of the described embodiments. Accordingly, what has been described above has been intended to be illustrative of the invention and non-limiting and it will be understood by persons skilled in the art that other variants and modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the claims appended hereto. The scope of the claims should not

be limited by the preferred embodiments and examples, but should be given the broadest interpretation consistent with the description as a whole.

The invention claimed is:

1. A hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

(a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation;

(b) an air treatment member comprising an air treatment member handle, a dirt collection region having an openable door and an openable door lock comprising a door release actuator wherein the door is moveable to an open position when the door release actuator is actuated; and,

(c) an air inlet comprises an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and has a longitudinal passage axis and the inlet passage comprises the air treatment member handle wherein when a user's hand is holding the air treatment member by the air treatment member handle, the door release actuator is operable by the same hand.

2. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the driving handle comprises a portion spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the driving handle and the main body.

3. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the driving handle is provided at the rear end of the main body.

4. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the air treatment member handle comprises a portion spaced from the air treatment member whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the air treatment member handle and the air treatment member.

5. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the air treatment member handle is provided above the air treatment member.

6. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the openable door is provided at the front end of the hand vacuum cleaner.

7. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the openable door has a lower end that is moveably mounted to the air treatment member and an upper end that is engaged by the door lock.

8. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the door release actuator is positioned proximate the air treatment member handle.

9. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 1 wherein the inlet passage extends generally rearwardly.

10. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 9 wherein the door release actuator is positioned at a forward end of the inlet passage.

11. A hand vacuum cleaner having a front end having a dirty air inlet, a rear end, a clean air outlet, an upper end and a bottom, the hand vacuum cleaner comprising:

(a) a main body comprising an upper end, a lower end, a front end, a rear end and a driving handle, the main body housing a suction motor and fan assembly, the suction motor and fan assembly having a suction motor axis of rotation; and,

(b) a cyclone unit comprising a cyclone having a cyclone axis of rotation, a cyclone unit handle, a dirt collection region having an openable door and an openable door

lock comprising a door release actuator wherein the door is moveable to an open position when the actuator is actuated;

wherein when a user's hand is holding the cyclone unit by the cyclone unit handle, the door release actuator is operable by the same hand. 5

12. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein the driving handle comprises a portion spaced from the main body whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the driving handle and the main body. 10

13. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein the driving handle is provided at the rear end of the main body.

14. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein the cyclone unit handle comprises a portion spaced from the cyclone unit whereby a finger receiving area is provided between the cyclone unit handle and the cyclone unit. 15

15. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein the cyclone unit handle is provided above the cyclone unit.

16. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein the openable door is provided at the front end of the hand vacuum cleaner. 20

17. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein the air inlet comprises an inlet passage that extends longitudinally between an inlet end and an outlet end and the inlet passage comprises the cyclone unit handle. 25

18. The hand vacuum cleaner of claim 11 wherein when the hand vacuum cleaner is positioned with the bottom on a horizontal surface, the cyclone axis of rotation is generally horizontal. 30

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