

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Yao et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2025/0259932 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 14, 2025**

(54) **DIELECTRIC ON WIRE STRUCTURE TO INCREASE PROCESSING WINDOW FOR OVERLYING VIA**

(71) Applicant: **Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, Ltd.**,
Hsinchu (TW)

(72) Inventors: **Hsin-Chieh Yao**, Hsinchu City (TW);
Chung-Ju Lee, Hsinchu City (TW);
Chih Wei Lu, Hsinchu City (TW);
Hsi-Wen Tien, Xinfeng Township (TW);
Yu-Teng Dai, New Taipei City (TW);
Wei-Hao Liao, Taichung City (TW)

(21) Appl. No.: **19/191,496**

(22) Filed: **Apr. 28, 2025**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Continuation of application No. 18/311,308, filed on May 3, 2023, now Pat. No. 12,315,817, which is a division of application No. 17/236,234, filed on Apr. 21, 2021, now Pat. No. 11,652,054.

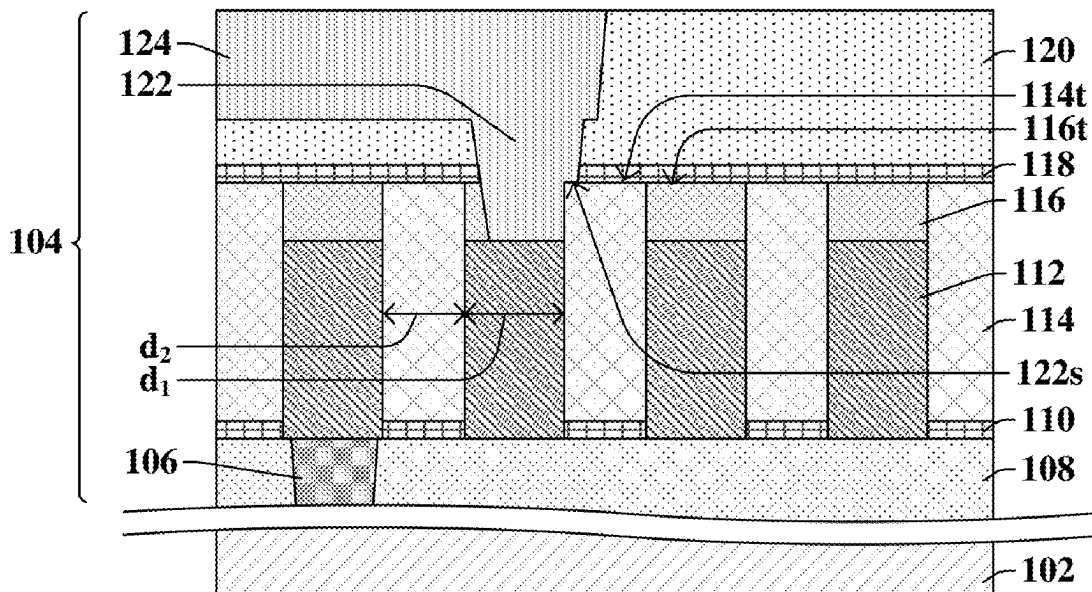
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
H01L 23/535 (2006.01)
H01L 21/768 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **H01L 23/535** (2013.01); **H01L 21/76802** (2013.01); **H01L 21/76805** (2013.01); **H01L 21/76895** (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

In some embodiments, the present disclosure relates to an integrated chip that includes a first interconnect dielectric layer over a substrate. An interconnect wire extends through the first interconnect dielectric layer, and a dielectric on wire structure is arranged directly over the interconnect wire. Outer sidewalls of the dielectric on wire structure are surrounded by the first interconnect dielectric layer. The integrated chip further includes a second interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer, and an interconnect via that extends through the second interconnect dielectric layer and the dielectric on wire structure to contact the interconnect wire.

100A →



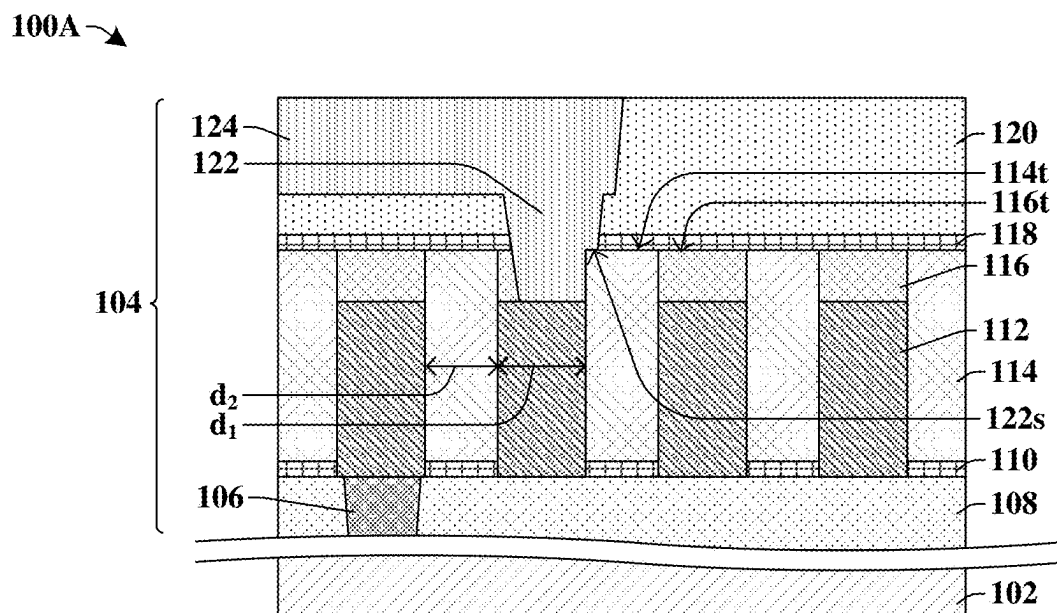


Fig. 1A

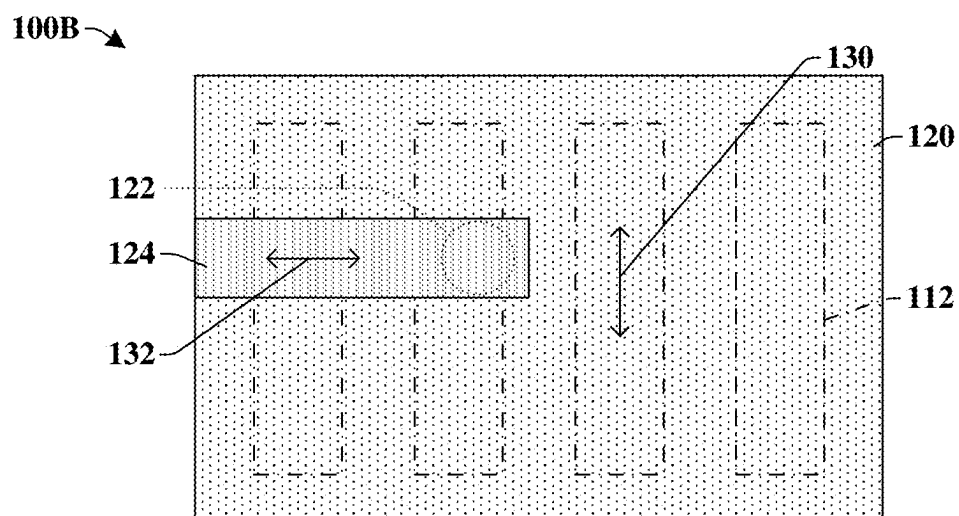


Fig. 1B

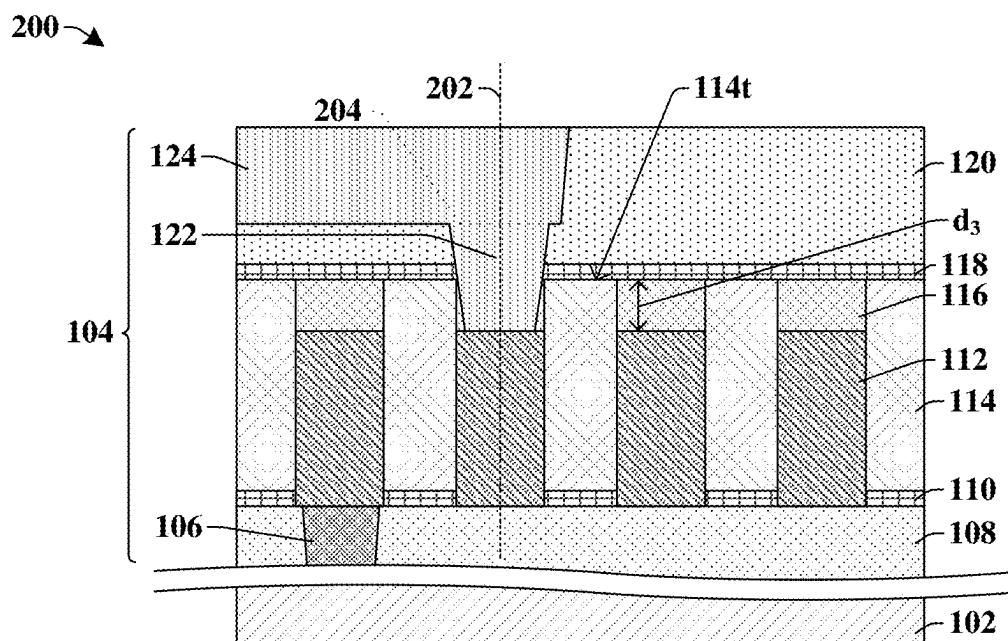


Fig. 2

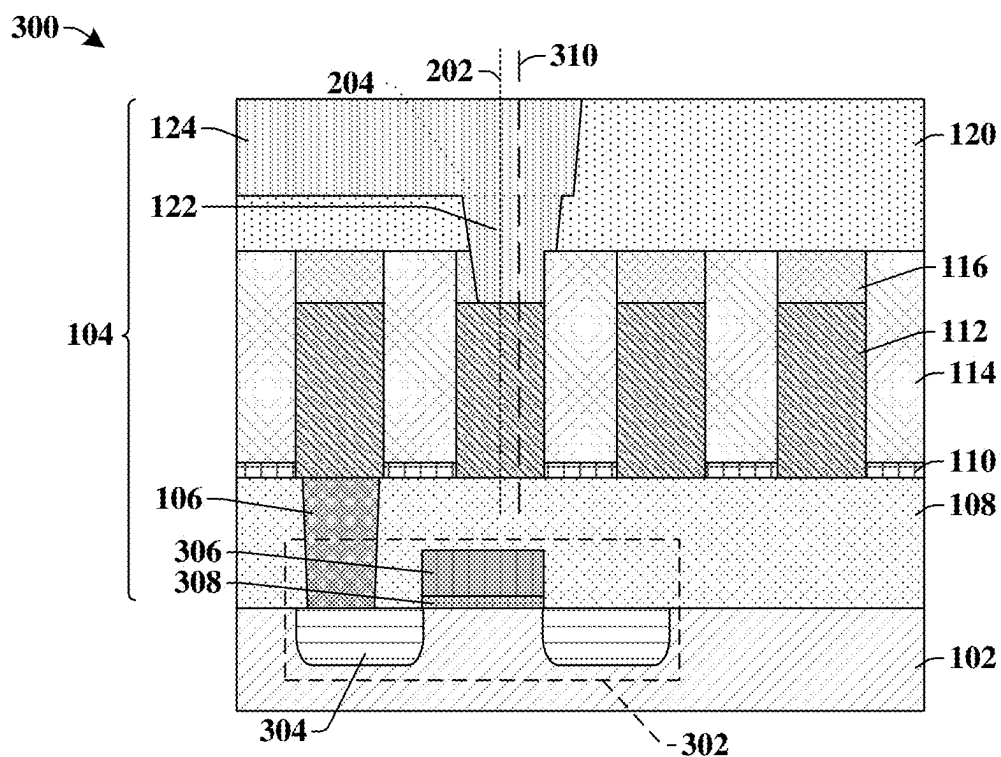


Fig. 3

400 →

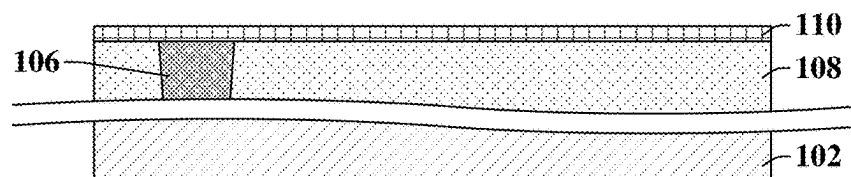


Fig. 4

500 →

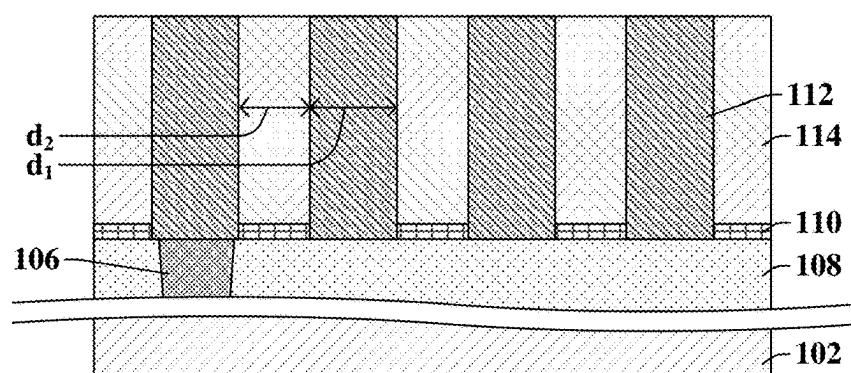


Fig. 5

600 →

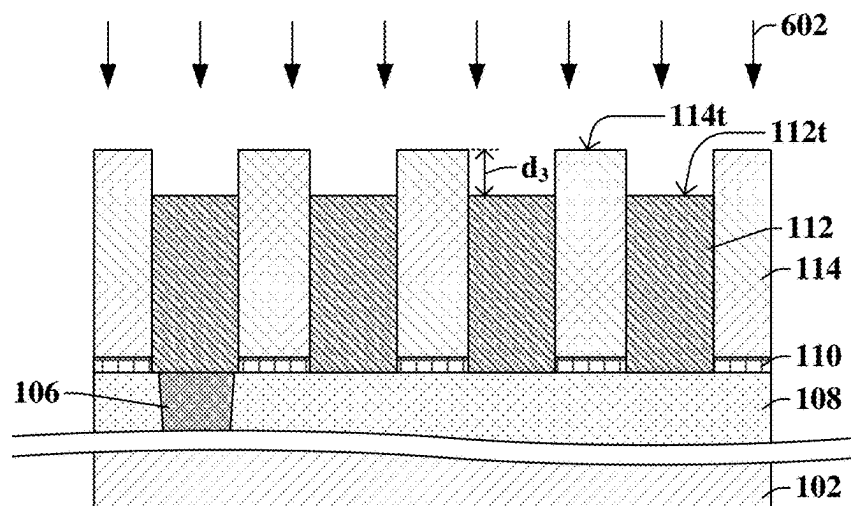


Fig. 6

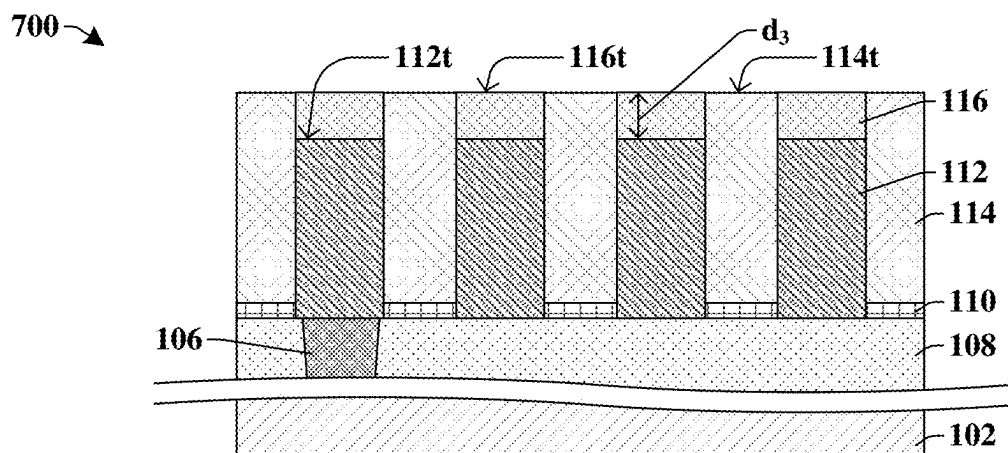


Fig. 7

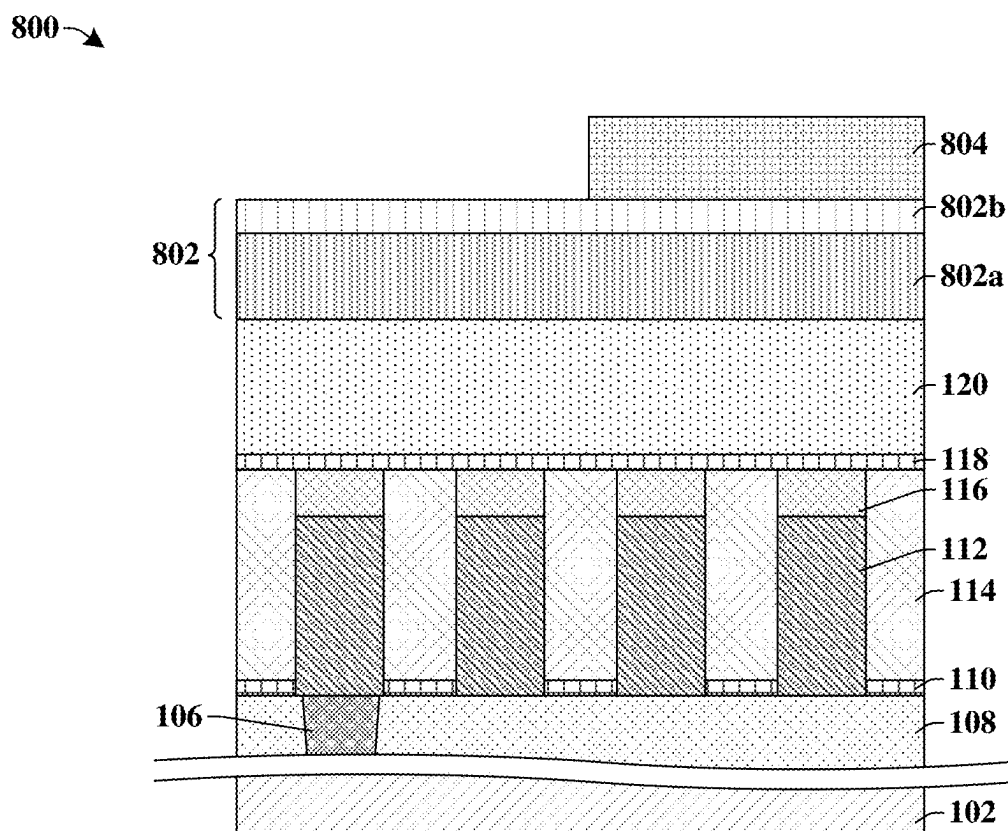


Fig. 8

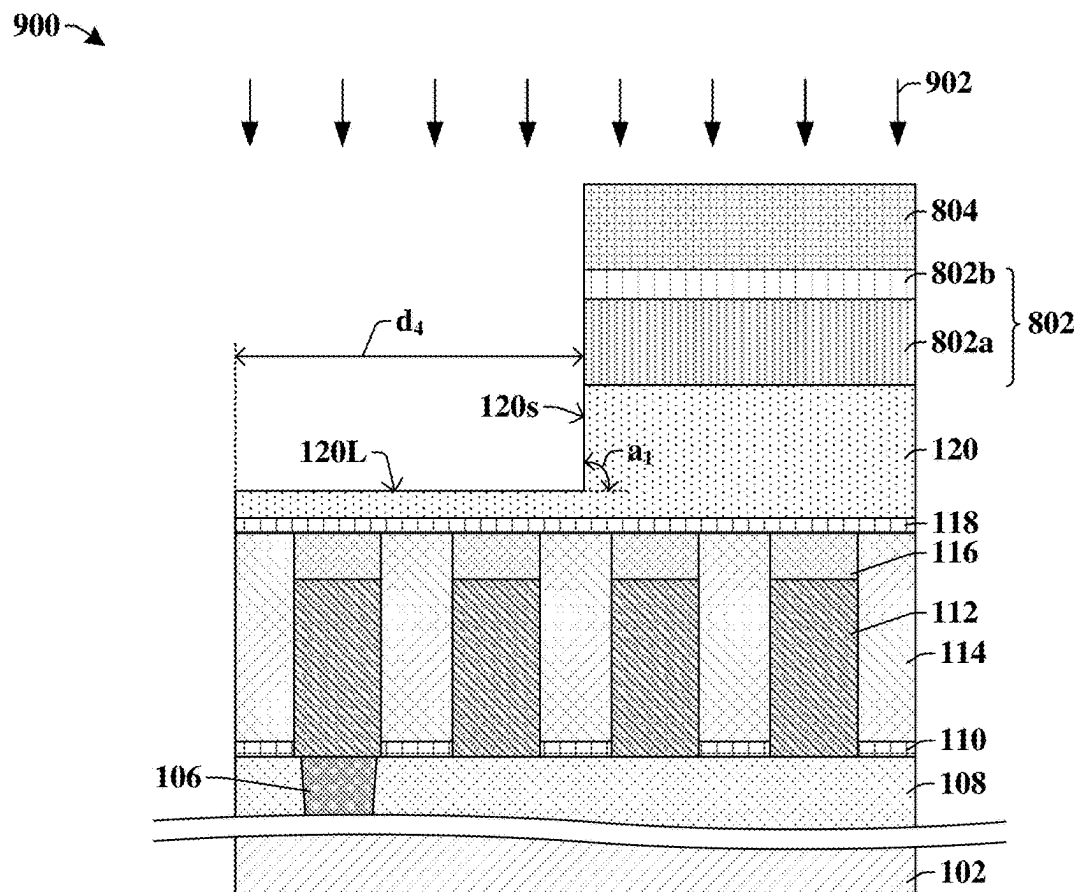


Fig. 9

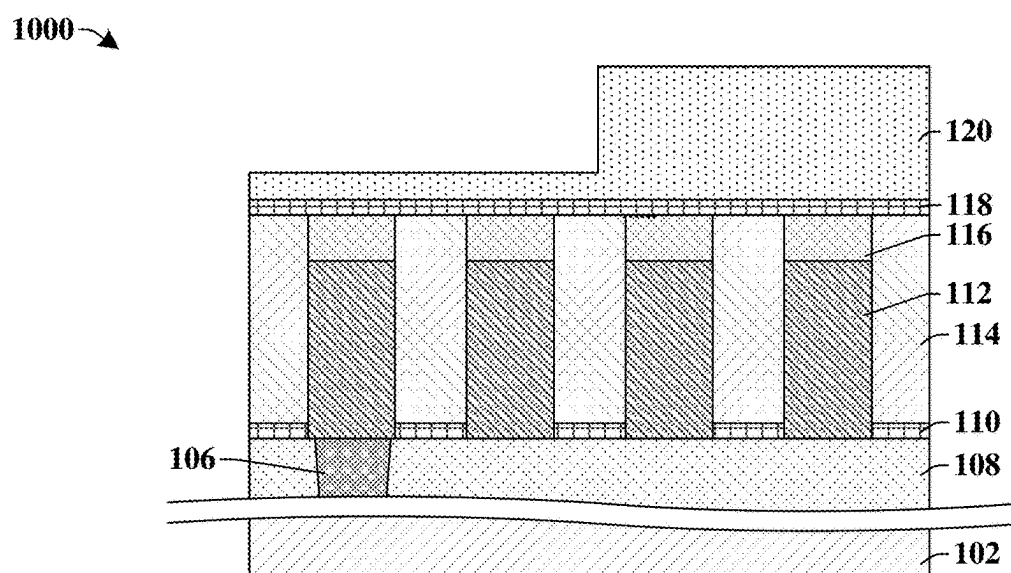


Fig. 10

1200A

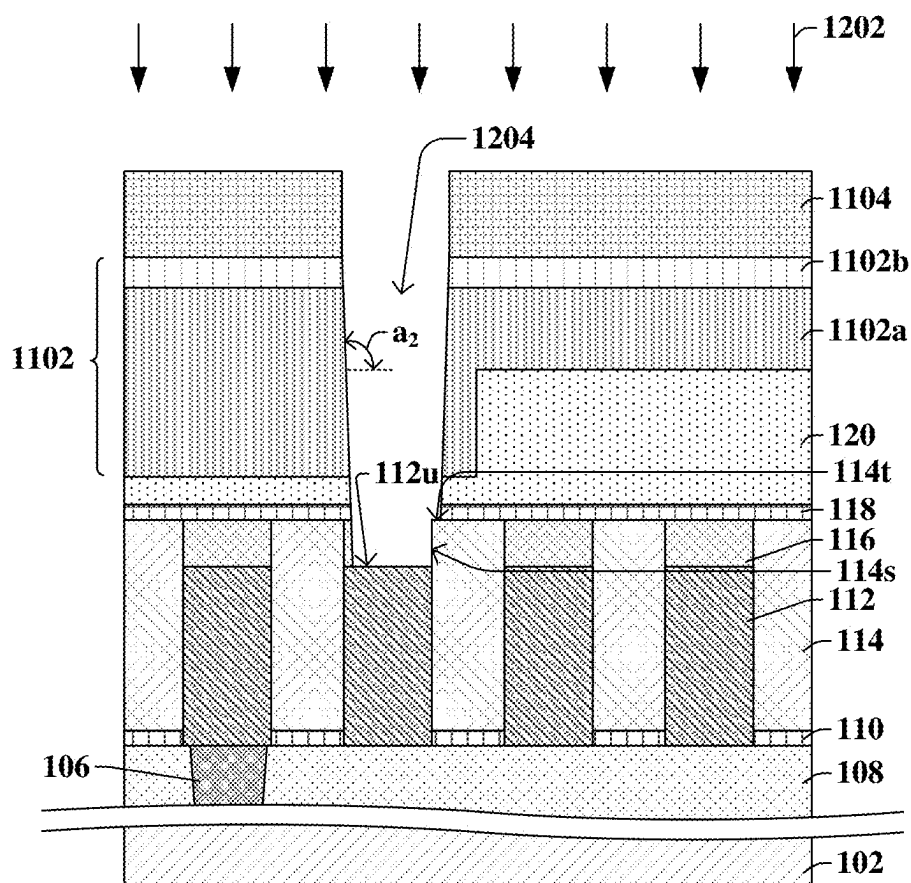
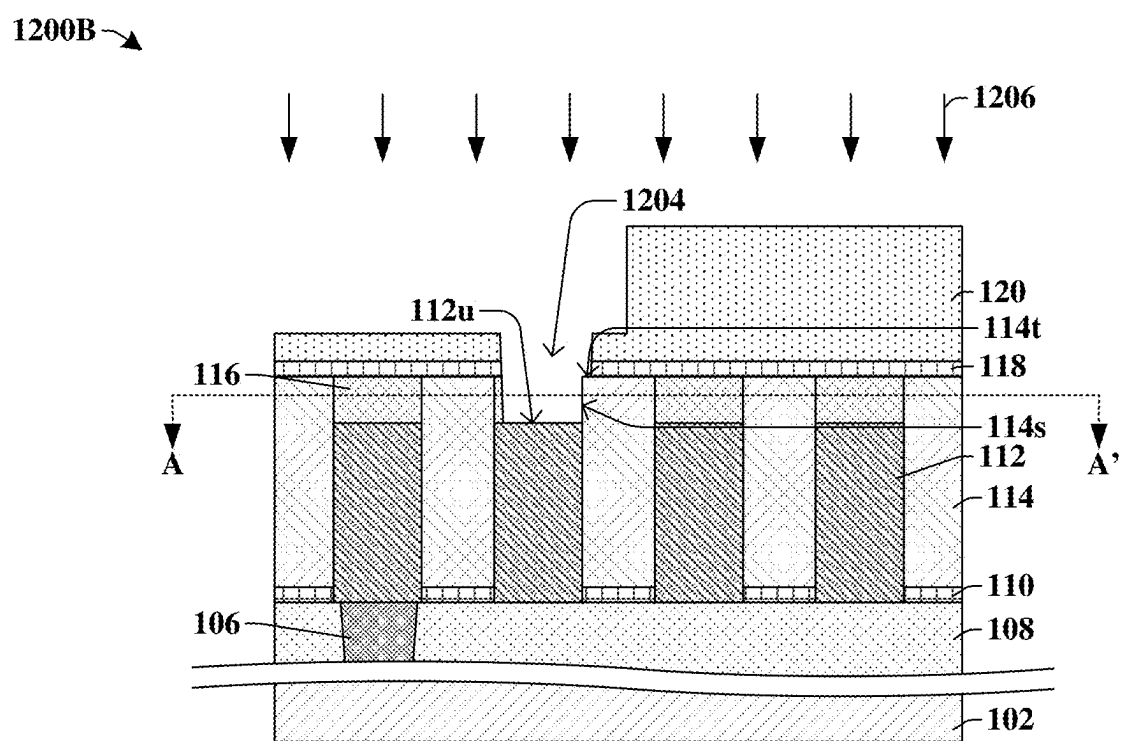


Fig. 12A



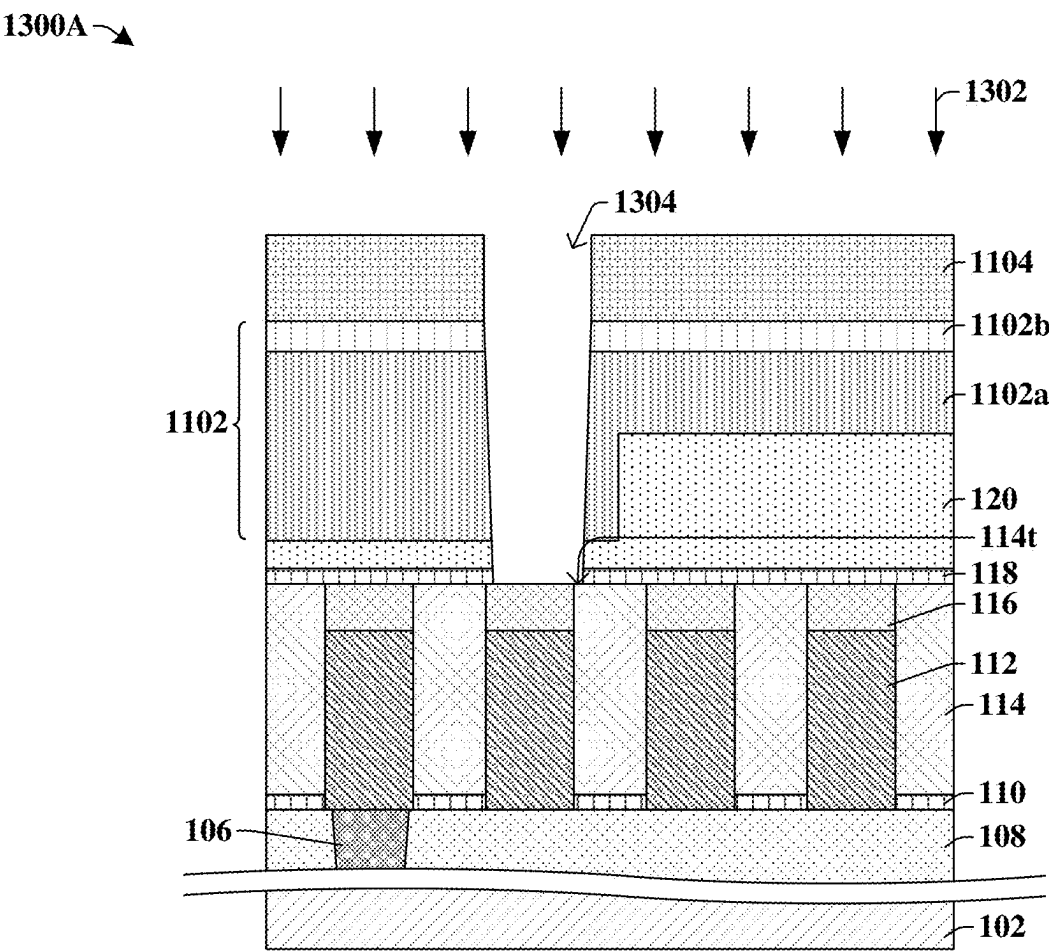
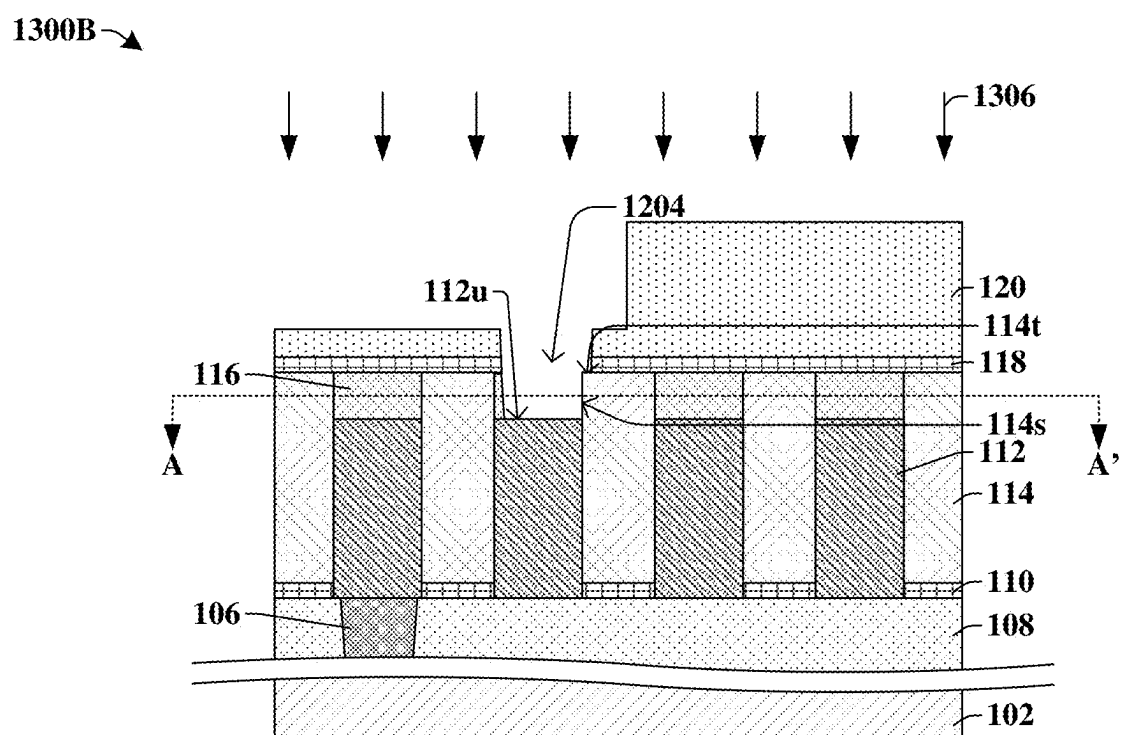
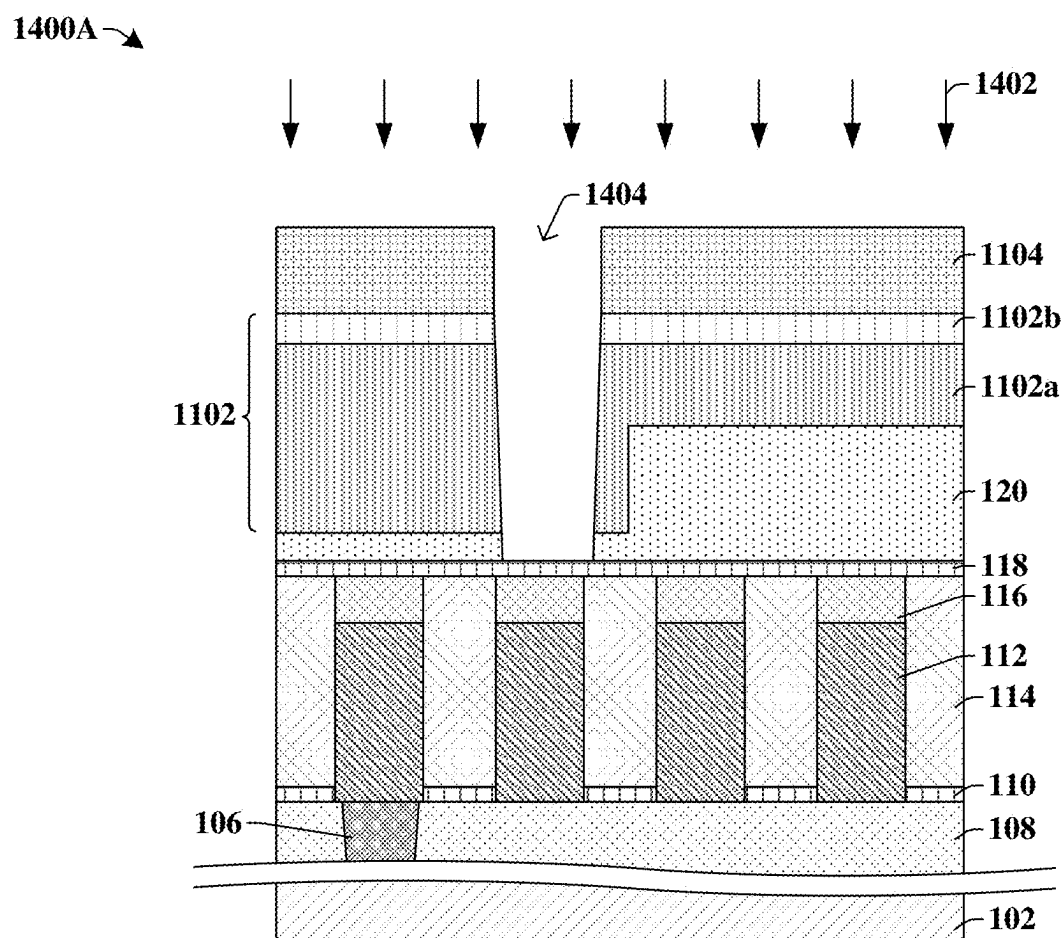


Fig. 13A





1400B

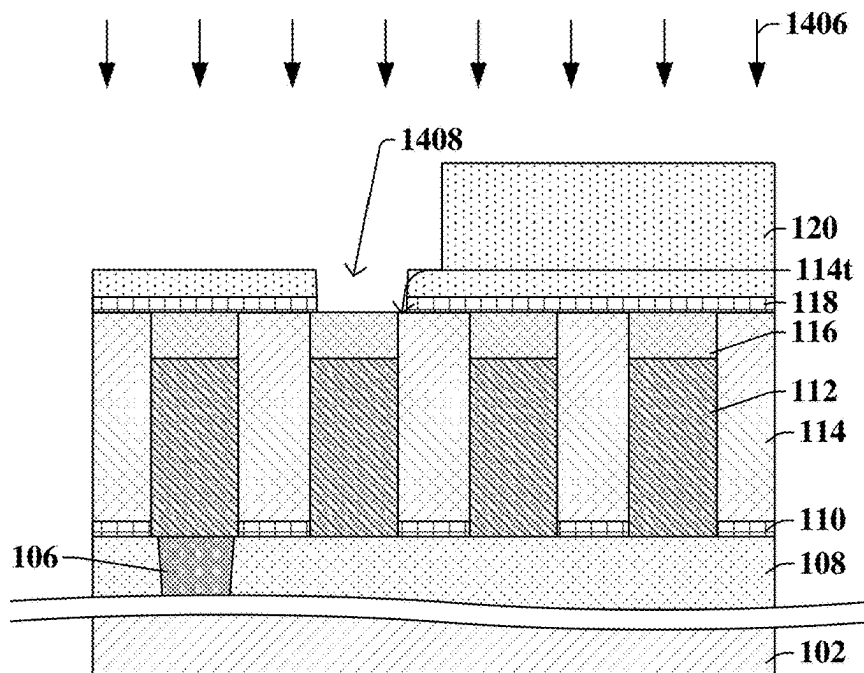


Fig. 14B

1400C

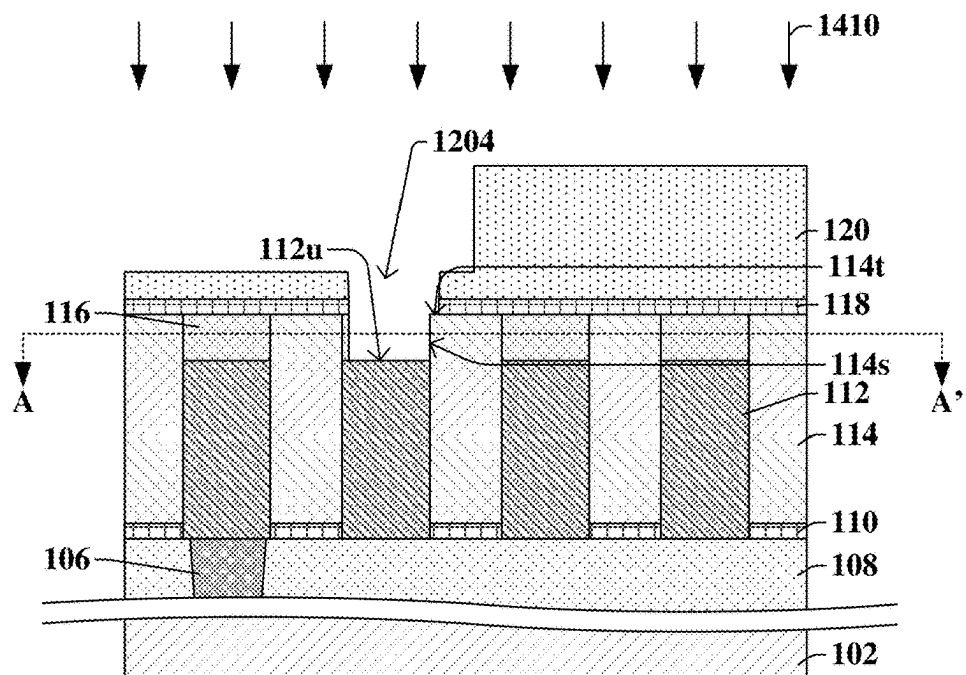


Fig. 14C

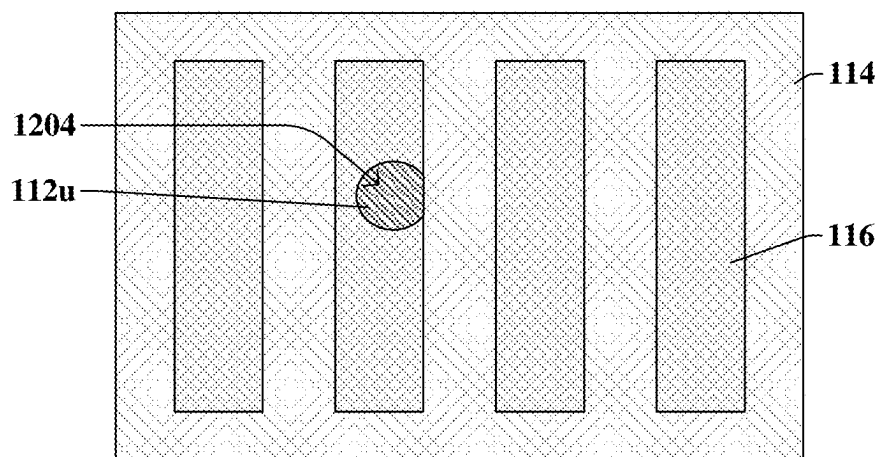
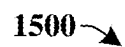


Fig. 15

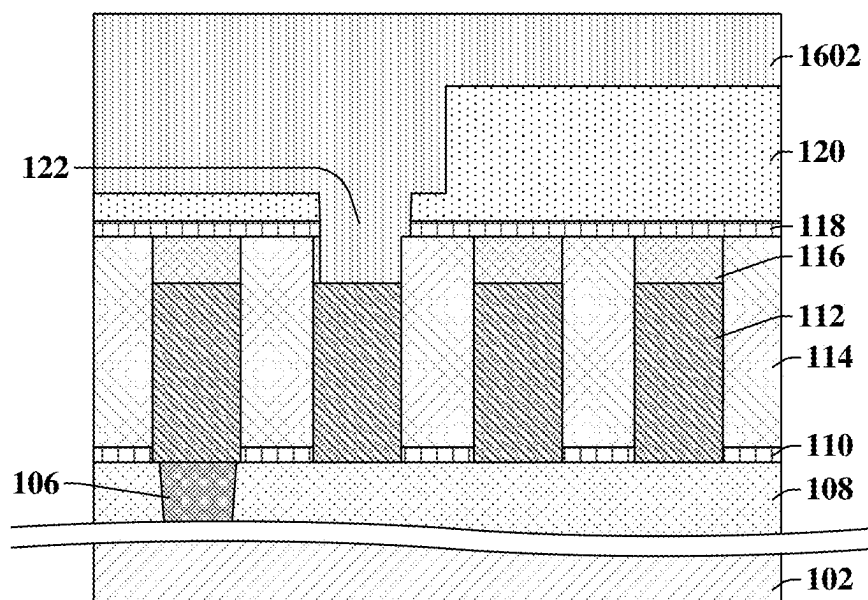
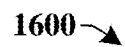
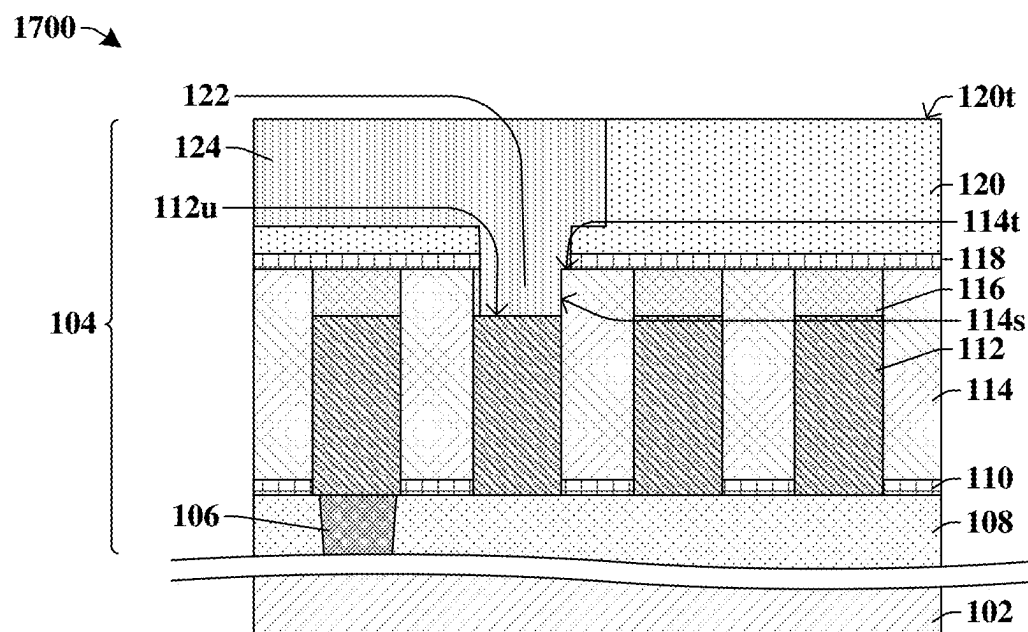


Fig. 16



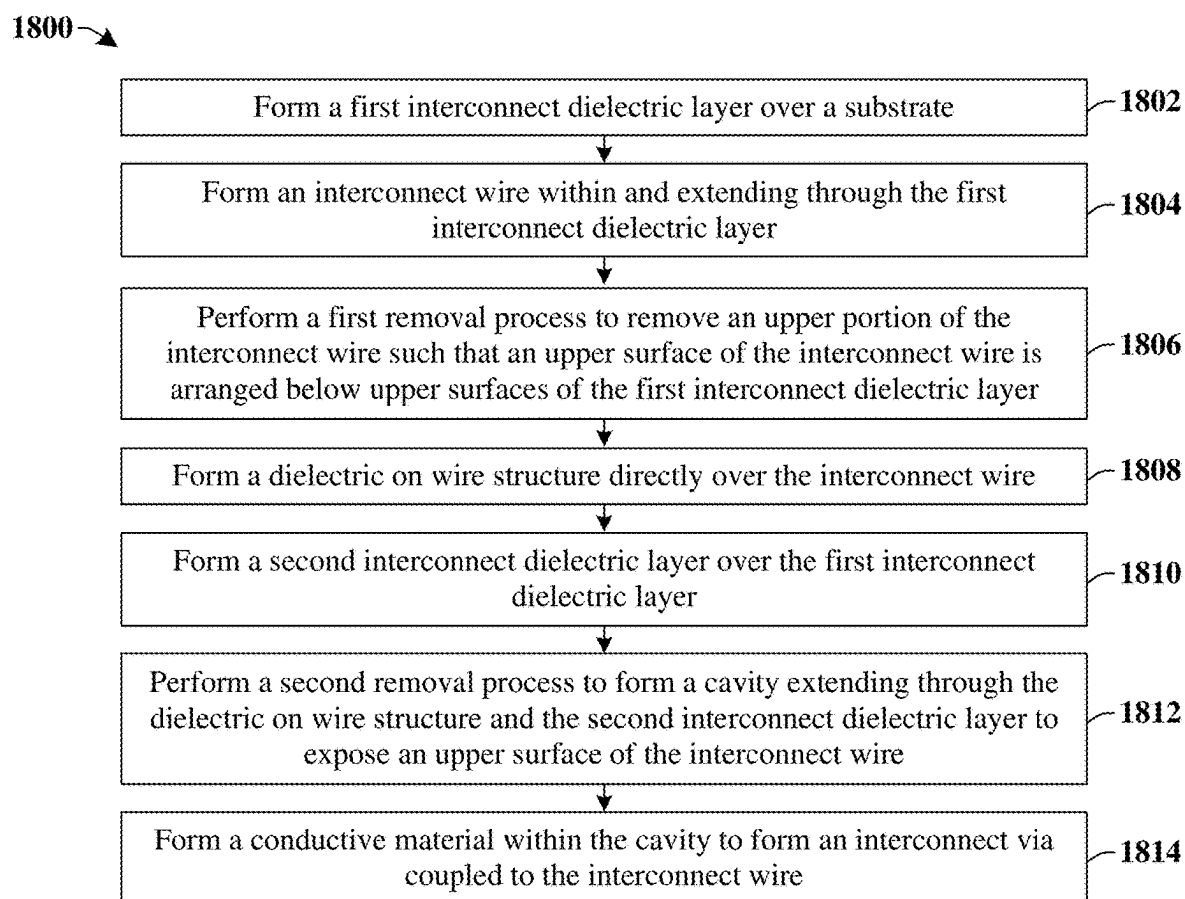


Fig. 18

DIELECTRIC ON WIRE STRUCTURE TO INCREASE PROCESSING WINDOW FOR OVERLYING VIA

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This Application is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 18/311,308, filed on May 3, 2023, which is a Divisional of U.S. application Ser. No. 17/236,234, filed on Apr. 21, 2021 (now U.S. Pat. No. 11,652,054, issued on May 16, 2023). The contents of the above-referenced Patent Applications are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] As dimensions and feature sizes of semiconductor integrated circuits (ICs) are scaled down, the density of the elements forming the ICs is increased and the spacing between elements is reduced. Such spacing reductions are limited by light diffraction of photo-lithography, mask alignment, isolation and device performance among other factors. As the distance between any two adjacent conductive features decreases, the resulting capacitance increases, which will increase power consumption and time delay. Thus, manufacturing techniques and device design are being investigated to reduce IC size while maintaining or improving performance of the IC.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] Aspects of the present disclosure are best understood from the following detailed description when read with the accompanying figures. It is noted that, in accordance with the standard practice in the industry, various features are not drawn to scale. In fact, the dimensions of the various features may be arbitrarily increased or reduced for clarity of discussion.

[0004] FIG. 1A illustrates a cross-sectional view of some embodiments of an integrated chip having a dielectric on wire structure arranged over a first interconnect wire, wherein an interconnect via extends through the dielectric on wire structure to contact the first interconnect wire.

[0005] FIG. 1B illustrates a top-view of some embodiments corresponding to FIG. 1A.

[0006] FIG. 2 illustrates a cross-sectional view some alternative embodiments of an integrated chip having a dielectric on wire structure arranged over a first interconnect wire.

[0007] FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-sectional view of some embodiments of an integrated chip having a dielectric on wire structure arranged over a first interconnect wire, wherein the first interconnect wire is coupled to a semiconductor device.

[0008] FIGS. 4-17 illustrate various views of some embodiments of a method of forming an integrated chip having a dielectric on wire structure arranged over a first interconnect wire, wherein the dielectric on wire structure aids in preventing an overlying interconnect via from being formed below a topmost surface of the first interconnect wire.

[0009] FIG. 18 illustrates a flow diagram of some embodiments corresponding to the method illustrated in FIGS. 4-17.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] The following disclosure provides many different embodiments, or examples, for implementing different fea-

tures of the provided subject matter. Specific examples of components and arrangements are described below to simplify the present disclosure. These are, of course, merely examples and are not intended to be limiting. For example, the formation of a first feature over or on a second feature in the description that follows may include embodiments in which the first and second features are formed in direct contact, and may also include embodiments in which additional features may be formed between the first and second features, such that the first and second features may not be in direct contact. In addition, the present disclosure may repeat reference numerals and/or letters in the various examples. This repetition is for the purpose of simplicity and clarity and does not in itself dictate a relationship between the various embodiments and/or configurations discussed.

[0011] Further, spatially relative terms, such as “beneath,” “below,” “lower,” “above,” “upper” and the like, may be used herein for ease of description to describe one element or feature’s relationship to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the figures. The spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures. The apparatus may be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein may likewise be interpreted accordingly.

[0012] Integrated chips may include a number of semiconductor devices (e.g., transistors, inductors, capacitors, etc.) and/or memory devices disposed over and/or within a semiconductor substrate. An interconnect structure may be disposed over the semiconductor substrate and coupled to the semiconductor devices. The interconnect structure may include conductive interconnect layers having interconnect wires and interconnect vias within an interconnect dielectric structure. The interconnect wires and/or interconnect vias provide electrical pathways between different semiconductor devices disposed within and/or over the semiconductor substrate.

[0013] Some embodiments of an interconnect structure include first interconnect wires coupled to an underlying semiconductor device, and an interconnect via is arranged over and coupled to one of the first interconnect wires. During manufacturing, the first interconnect wires embedded within a first interconnect dielectric layer may be formed. Then, a second interconnect dielectric layer may be deposited over the first interconnect dielectric layer and the first interconnect wires. A cavity may be formed within the second interconnect dielectric layer using photolithography and removal processes to expose a top surface of one of the first interconnect wires. Then, a conductive material may be formed within the cavity to form an interconnect via coupled to the one of the first interconnect wires.

[0014] However, as the size of the integrated chips decrease, the first interconnect wires and spacing between the first interconnect wires decrease, and forming the cavity that is centered directly over the one of the first interconnect wires becomes more difficult due processing limitations. Some examples of such processing limitations include precision/accuracy of overlaying a masking structure for photolithography that is directly centered on the one of the first interconnect wires and/or achieving a small enough opening in the masking structure corresponding to the one of the interconnect wires that is used for the formation of the cavity. In some cases, if the cavity is not centered over the

one of the first interconnect wires, the cavity may be partially formed over the first interconnect dielectric layer. In such embodiments, the removal process used to form the cavity may remove a portion of the first interconnect dielectric layer. In such embodiments, a portion of the interconnect via in the final structure may be arranged directly between adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires, which may increase capacitance and/or reduce the time of the first interconnect dielectric layer to breakdown between the adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires, thereby reducing the reliability of the overall integrated chip.

[0015] Various embodiments of the present disclosure relate to the formation of dielectric over wire structures arranged on top surfaces of the first interconnect wires in an interconnect structure. The dielectric on wire structures have outer sidewalls surrounded by the first interconnect dielectric layer and comprise a different material than the first interconnect dielectric layer. After the dielectric on wire structures are formed, the second interconnect dielectric layer may be formed over the first interconnect dielectric layer. Then, photolithography and removal process may be performed to form a cavity that extends through the second interconnect dielectric layer and one of the dielectric on wire structures to expose an upper surface of one of the first interconnect wires. In some embodiments, an etchant may be used to remove portions of the one of the dielectric on wire structures. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer may be substantially resistant to removal by the etchant.

[0016] Thus, in some embodiments, even if the cavity is formed directly over a portion of the first interconnect dielectric layer due to processing limitations, the etching selectivity between the first interconnect dielectric layer and the dielectric on wire structure prevents the cavity from extending into the first interconnect dielectric layer. Therefore, the resulting interconnect via formed within the cavity is not arranged directly between adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires. Thus, the processing window for forming the interconnect via is increased while isolation between the adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires is maintained, thereby reducing cross-talk and increasing reliability of the overall integrated chip.

[0017] FIG. 1A illustrates a cross-sectional view **100A** of some embodiments of an integrated chip comprising an interconnect via extending through a dielectric on wire structure to contact a first interconnect wire.

[0018] The integrated chip of FIG. 1A includes an interconnect structure **104** arranged over a substrate **102**. In some embodiments, the interconnect structure **104** comprise a lower interconnect via **106**, first interconnect wires **112** arranged over and coupled to the lower interconnect via **106**, an interconnect via **122** arranged over and coupled to one of the first interconnect wires **112**, and a second interconnect wire **124** arranged over and coupled to the interconnect via **122**. In some embodiments, the interconnect structure **104** may further comprise a lower interconnect dielectric layer **108** surrounding the lower interconnect via **106**, a first interconnect dielectric layer **114** surrounding the first interconnect wires **112**, and a second interconnect dielectric layer **120** surrounding the interconnect via **122** and/or second interconnect wire **124**. In some embodiments, a first etch stop layer **110** may be arranged over the lower interconnect dielectric layer **108** and between the lower interconnect dielectric layer **108** and the first interconnect dielectric layer

114. In some embodiments, a second etch stop layer **118** may be arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and arranged between the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**.

[0019] Further, in some embodiments, the interconnect structure **104** may be coupled to one or more semiconductor devices (e.g., transistors, inductors, capacitors, etc.) and/or memory devices (not shown) disposed over and/or within the substrate **102**. Thus, the conductive features (e.g., lower interconnect via **106**, first interconnect wires **112**, interconnect via **122**, second interconnect wire **124**) of the interconnect structure **104** may be electrically coupled to one another and to any underlying or overlying devices (not shown) to provide a conductive pathway for signals (e.g., voltage, current) traveling through the integrated chip.

[0020] In some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** each have a width equal to a first distance d_1 in a range of between, for example, approximately 5 nanometers and approximately 1000 nanometers. Further, in some embodiments, a first interconnect wire **112** may be spaced apart from an adjacent first interconnect wire **112** by a second distance d_2 . In some embodiments, the second distance d_2 may be in a range of between, for example, approximately 5 nanometers and approximately 1000 nanometers. In some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** are embedded within the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** such that the first interconnect wires **112** are spaced apart from one another by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** comprises a low-k dielectric material such as, for example, silicon carbide, silicon dioxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon nitride, silicon carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, or some other suitable dielectric material. The low-k dielectric material of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and/or any other isolation structures (e.g., other dielectric layers, air spacer structures, etc.) arranged laterally between the first interconnect wires **112** reduce capacitance and prevent cross-talk between adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires **112**.

[0021] In some embodiments, a dielectric on wire structure **116** is arranged over each first interconnect wire **112**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structure **116** may also have a width equal to the first distance d_1 , and the dielectric on wire structure **116** may have a bottom surface that completely and directly overlies a top surface of the first interconnect wire **112**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structure **116** is laterally surrounded by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** have topmost surfaces **116a** that are substantially coplanar with topmost surfaces **114a** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structure **116** comprises, for example, hafnium oxide, lithium niobium oxide, lithium nitrogen oxide, magnesium oxide, manganese oxide, molybdenum oxide, niobium oxide, nitrogen oxide, silicon oxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon carbide, tin oxide, tin silicon oxide, strontium oxide, tantalum oxide, tantalum oxynitride, titanium oxide, titanium oxynitride, tungsten oxide, zinc oxide, zirconium oxide, or some other suitable dielectric material or metal-oxide.

[0022] In some embodiments, the interconnect via **122** extends from the second interconnect wire **124** and through the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** and the dielec-

tric on wire structure **116** to directly contact the first interconnect wire **112**. In some embodiments, because the first distance d_1 of the first interconnect wires **112** and the second distance d_2 between the first interconnect wires **112** are so small (e.g., between about 5 nanometers and about 1000 nanometers), forming the interconnect via **122** to land directly on the first interconnect wire **112** is more difficult due to processing limitations. For example, in some embodiments, during the formation of the interconnect via **122**, a masking structure comprising an opening may be formed over the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**. In some embodiments, due to processing (e.g., photolithography) limitations during the formation of the masking structure, the opening may directly overlie the first interconnect wire **112** and also a portion of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. Then, in some embodiments, an etchant may be used to remove portions of the dielectric on wire structure **116** arranged directly below the opening of the masking structure to form a cavity that exposes the first interconnect wire **112**. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** comprises a different material than the dielectric on wire structure **116**, and the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** is substantially resistant to removal by the etchant used to remove the dielectric on wire structure **116**. In such embodiments, the interconnect via **122** that is formed within the cavity may have a horizontal surface **122s** that directly extends over and contacts the topmost surface **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0023] Thus, in some embodiments, even if a portion of the opening of the masking structure used to form the interconnect via **122** is arranged directly the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may not be removed during the formation of the interconnect via **122**. As a result, the interconnect via **122** does not extend below an upper surface of the first interconnect wire **112** and is not arranged directly between adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires **112**. Thus, at least due to the dielectric on wire structures **116**, isolation between the adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires **112** provided by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may be maintained during the formation of the interconnect via **122**, thereby reducing cross-talk between the adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires **112** and maintaining and/or increasing device reliability.

[0024] FIG. 1B illustrates a top-view **100B** of some embodiments corresponding to a top-view of FIG. 1A.

[0025] In some embodiments, from the top-view **100B**, the first interconnect wires **112** are arranged beneath the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, and thus, the first interconnect wires **112** are illustrated using a dot-hash line. Similarly, in some embodiments, from the top-view **100B**, the interconnect via **122** is arranged beneath the second interconnect wire **124**, and thus, the interconnect via **122** is illustrated using a dotted line. In some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** extend in a first direction **130**, and the second interconnect wire **124** extends in a second direction **132**. In some embodiments, the first direction **130** is different than the second direction **132**, and the first direction **130** is perpendicular to the second direction **132**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures (**116** of FIG. 1A) increase the processing window of the interconnect via **122** at least in the second direction **132**.

[0026] In some embodiments, the interconnect via **122** couples one of the first interconnect wires **112** to the second

interconnect wire **124**. In some embodiments, it will be appreciated that from the top-view **100B**, although the interconnect via **122** directly overlies the first interconnect wire **112**, the interconnect via **122** is not arranged directly between adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires **112** in the second direction **132**. In some embodiments, from the top-view **100B**, the interconnect via **122** may have a circular profile. In other embodiments, from the top-view **100B**, the interconnect via **122** may exhibit a rectangular, oval-like, or some other shape profile. Further, in some embodiments, additional second interconnect wires (not shown) are arranged in the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** and additional interconnect vias (not shown) couple the additional second wires to the first interconnect wires **112**.

[0027] FIG. 2 illustrates a cross-sectional view **200** of some embodiments of an integrated chip comprising an interconnect via extending through a dielectric on wire structure to contact a first interconnect wire, wherein the interconnect via is substantially centered over the first interconnect wire.

[0028] In some embodiments, a center of the first interconnect wire **112** that is arranged directly below the interconnect via **122** is arranged on a first line **202**. In such embodiments, the first line **202** is perpendicular to a top surface of the substrate **102** and also intersects the center of the first interconnect wire **112**. In some embodiments, the center of the first interconnect wire **112** is determined to be a midpoint of a width of a topmost surface of the first interconnect wire **112**. In some embodiments, a center of the interconnect via **122** is similarly determined to be a midpoint of an interface **204** between the interconnect via **122** and the second interconnect wire **124**. In some embodiments, as illustrated in the cross-sectional view **200** of FIG. 2, the first line **202** also intersects the center of the interconnect via **122**. In such embodiments, the interconnect via **122** and the underlying first interconnect wire **112** may be classified as being “aligned” or “centered” with one another. Such embodiments, wherein the interconnect via **122** and the first interconnect wire **112** are aligned, the area of contact between the interconnect via **122** and the first interconnect wire **112** is increased. In such embodiments, an entirety of a lower surface of the interconnect via **122** directly contacts the first interconnect wire **112**.

[0029] However, in some embodiments, wherein the width of the first interconnect wire **112** is so small (e.g., between about 5 nanometers and about 1000 nanometers), alignment between the interconnect via **122** and the underlying first interconnect wire **112** is rare due to processing limitations (e.g., photolithography precision, etching precision, etc.). Thus, the dielectric on wire structures **116** are still included on the first interconnect wires **112** in case of instances where the interconnect via **122** and the underlying first interconnect wire **112** are misaligned (e.g., FIGS. 1A and 3).

[0030] Further, it will be appreciated that in some other embodiments, even if the interconnect via **122** is centered over the underlying first interconnect wire **112**, the interconnect via **122** may be wider than the underlying first interconnect wire **112** due to processing limitations. In such embodiments, the resulting interconnect via **122** may still have portions that directly overlie and contact the topmost surfaces **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0031] Further, in some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** have a height equal to a third distance d_3 . In some embodiments, the third distance d_3 is in a range of

between, for example, approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms. In some embodiments, the second etch stop layer 118 comprises a different material than the first interconnect dielectric layer 114. Similarly, in some embodiments, the second etch stop layer 118 comprises a different material than the dielectric on wire structures 116. In some embodiments, the second etch stop layer 118 comprises, for example, silicon carbide, silicon dioxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon nitride, silicon carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, aluminum oxynitride, aluminum oxide, or some other suitable material. In some embodiments, the second etch stop layer 118 has a thickness in a range of between approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms, for example.

[0032] In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106, the first interconnect wires 112, the interconnect via 122, and the second interconnect wire 124 may each comprise a conductive material, such as, for example, tantalum, tantalum nitride, titanium nitride, copper, cobalt, ruthenium, molybdenum, iridium, tungsten, or some other suitable conductive material. In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106, the first interconnect wires 112, the interconnect via 122, and the second interconnect wire 124 may each comprise the same material, may each comprise a different material, or may comprise a combination of similar and different materials. In some embodiments, at least the interconnect via 122 and the second interconnect wire 124 comprise a same material because they are formed by way of a dual damascene process. In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106, the first interconnect wires 112, the interconnect via 122, and the second interconnect wire 124 may each have a height in a range of between, for example, approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms.

[0033] FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-sectional view 300 of some embodiments wherein an interconnect structure comprising dielectric on wire structures is coupled to an underlying semiconductor device.

[0034] In some embodiments, the second etch stop layer (118 of FIG. 2) may be omitted. In such embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer 120 may comprise a different material than the first interconnect dielectric layer 114. Further, in some embodiments, the interconnect via 122 is “misaligned” or “not centered” over the underlying first interconnect wire 112. In such embodiments, a second line 310 that is perpendicular to the top surface of the substrate 102 intersects the center of the interconnect via 122, and the second line 310 is parallel to the first line 202 that intersects the center of the first interconnect wire 112. In such embodiments, when the first line 202 is parallel with and does not intersect the second line 310, the interconnect via 122 is misaligned with the underlying first interconnect wire 112. In such embodiments, as described with respect to the cross-sectional view 100A of FIG. 1A, the dielectric on wire structures 116 aid in protecting the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 during the formation of the interconnect via 122, and thus, the interconnect via 122 does not extend below upper surfaces of the first interconnect wires 112.

[0035] Further, in some embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106 is coupled to an underlying semiconductor device 302. In some embodiments, the underlying semiconductor device 302 may comprise, for example, a field effect transistor (FET). In such embodiments, the semiconductor device 302 may comprise source/drain regions 304 arranged

on or within the substrate 102. The source/drain regions 304 may comprise doped portions of the substrate 102. Further, in some embodiments, the semiconductor device 302 may comprise a gate electrode 306 arranged over the substrate 102 and between the source/drain regions 304. In some embodiments, a gate dielectric layer 308 may be arranged directly between the gate electrode 306 and the substrate 102. In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106 is coupled to one of the source/drain regions 304, whereas in other embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106 may be coupled to the gate electrode 306 of the semiconductor device 302. Further in some embodiments, it will be appreciated that the interconnect structure 104 may couple the semiconductor device 302 to some other semiconductor device, memory device, photo device, or some other electronic device. It will be appreciated that other electronic/semiconductor devices other than the FET illustrated as the semiconductor device 302 is also within the scope of this disclosure.

[0036] FIGS. 4-17 illustrate various views 400-1700 of some embodiments of a method of forming an interconnect via over a first interconnect wire using dielectric on wire structures on the first interconnect wire to increase a processing window for formation of the interconnect via. Although FIGS. 4-17 are described in relation to a method, it will be appreciated that the structures disclosed in FIGS. 4-17 are not limited to such a method, but instead may stand alone as structures independent of the method.

[0037] As shown in cross-sectional view 400 of FIG. 4, a substrate 102 is provided. In some embodiments, the substrate 102 may be or comprise any type of semiconductor body (e.g., silicon/CMOS bulk, SiGe, SOI, etc.) such as a semiconductor wafer or one or more die on a wafer, as well as any other type of semiconductor and/or epitaxial layers formed thereon and/or otherwise associated with. In some embodiments, a lower interconnect dielectric layer 108 is formed over the substrate 102. In some embodiments, various semiconductor devices (e.g., transistors, inductors, capacitors, etc.) and/or memory devices (not shown) may be arranged over and/or within the substrate 102 and beneath the lower interconnect dielectric layer 108. In some embodiments, a lower interconnect via 106 may be formed within the lower interconnect dielectric layer 108 and coupled to the one or more of the various semiconductor devices and/or memory devices (not shown).

[0038] In some embodiments, the lower interconnect dielectric layer 108 may be formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., spin-on, physical vapor deposition (PVD), chemical vapor deposition (CVD), atomic layer deposition (ALD), etc.). In some embodiments, the lower interconnect dielectric layer 108 may have a thickness in a range of between, for example, approximately 30 angstroms and approximately 800 angstroms. In some embodiments, the lower interconnect dielectric layer 108 may comprise, for example, a low-k dielectric material such as silicon carbide, silicon dioxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon nitride, silicon carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, or some other suitable dielectric material.

[0039] In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via 106 may be formed within the lower interconnect dielectric layer 108 through various steps of patterning (e.g., photolithography/etching), deposition (e.g., PVD, CVD, plasma-enhanced CVD (PE-CVD), ALD, sputtering, etc.), and removal (e.g., wet etching, dry etching, chemical mechani-

cal planarization (CMP), etc.) processes. In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via **106** may comprise a conductive material such as, for example, tantalum, tantalum nitride, titanium nitride, copper, cobalt, ruthenium, molybdenum, iridium, tungsten, or some other suitable conductive material. Further, in some embodiments, the lower interconnect via **106** may have a height in a range of between, for example, approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms.

[0040] In some embodiments, a first etch stop layer **110** is formed over the lower interconnect via **106** and over the lower interconnect dielectric layer **108**. In some embodiments, the first etch stop layer **110** is formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., PVD, CVD, ALD, spin-on, etc.), and may be formed in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between, for example, approximately 150 degrees Celsius and approximately 400 degrees Celsius. In some embodiments, the first etch stop layer **110** may be formed to have a thickness in a range of between, of example, approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms. In some embodiments, the first etch stop layer **110** may comprise, for example, silicon carbide, silicon dioxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon nitride, silicon carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, aluminum oxygen nitride, aluminum oxide, or some other suitable material.

[0041] As shown in cross-sectional view **500** of FIG. **5**, in some embodiments, first interconnect wires **112** embedded in a first interconnect dielectric layer **114** are formed over the first etch stop layer **110**. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may first be formed over the first etch stop layer **110**, and then the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may undergo various steps of patterning (e.g., photolithography/etching), deposition (e.g., PVD, CVD, PE-CVD, ALD, sputtering, etc.), and removal (e.g., wet etching, dry etching, CMP, etc.) processes to form the first interconnect wires **112** within the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In other embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** may first be formed over the first etch stop layer **110** through various steps of patterning (e.g., photolithography/etching), deposition (e.g., PVD, CVD, PE-CVD, ALD, sputtering, etc.), and removal (e.g., wet etching, dry etching, CMP, etc.) processes, and then the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may be formed around the first interconnect wires **112**.

[0042] Nevertheless, in some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** is formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., spin-on, PVD, CVD, ALD, etc.) in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 400 degrees Celsius and approximately 500 degrees Celsius. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may be formed to a thickness in a range of between, for example, approximately 30 angstroms and approximately 800 angstroms. In other embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may have a thickness in a range of between, for example, approximately 20 angstroms and approximately 2000 angstroms. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may comprise a low-k dielectric material such as, for example, silicon carbide, silicon dioxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon nitride, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, or some other suitable dielectric material.

[0043] Further, in some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** may be formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., spin-on, PVD, CVD, ALD, etc.) in a chamber

set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 150 degrees Celsius and approximately 400 degrees Celsius. In some embodiments, just after the first interconnect wires **112** are formed, the first interconnect wires **112** may have a height equal to the height of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. Thus, in some embodiments, just after the first interconnect wires **112** are formed, the first interconnect wires **112** have a height in a range of between approximately 20 angstroms and approximately 2000 angstroms. Further, in some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** each have a width equal to a first distance d_1 in a range of between, for example, approximately 5 nanometers and approximately 1000 nanometers. In some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** may be spaced apart from one another by a second distance d_2 in a range of between, for example, approximately 5 nanometers and approximately 1000 nanometers. In some embodiments, the first interconnect wires **112** may comprise a conductive material, such as, for example, tantalum, tantalum nitride, titanium nitride, copper, cobalt, ruthenium, molybdenum, iridium, tungsten, or some other suitable conductive material.

[0044] In some embodiments, one or more of the first interconnect wires **112** extend through the first etch stop layer **110** to directly contact one or more lower interconnect vias **106**. Thus, in some embodiments, the formation of the first interconnect wires **112** also includes removing portions of the first etch stop layer **110**. It will be appreciated that more or less than 4 first interconnect wires **112** may be present in the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0045] As shown in cross-sectional view **600** of FIG. **6**, in some embodiments, an etch-back removal process **602** may be performed to remove upper portions of the first interconnect wires **112**. In some embodiments, the etch-back removal process **602** is achieved by, for example, inductively coupled plasma, capacitively coupled plasma, remote plasma, isotropic chemical etching, wet etching, or some other suitable dry or wet etching process. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** is substantially resistant to removal by the etch-back removal process **602**. Thus, in some embodiments, masking structures to protect the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** from the etch-back removal process **602** are not needed, thereby increasing manufacturing efficiency.

[0046] In some embodiments, after the etch-back removal process **602**, topmost surfaces **112t** of the first interconnect wires **112** are arranged below topmost surfaces **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** by a third distance d_3 . In some embodiments, the third distance d_3 may be in a range of between, for example, approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms. Thus, in some embodiments, after the etch-back removal process **602**, the first interconnect wires **112** have a height in a range of between approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 angstroms.

[0047] As shown in cross-sectional view **700** of FIG. **7**, in some embodiments, dielectric on wire structures **116** are formed over the first interconnect wires **112**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** comprise for example, hafnium oxide, lithium niobium oxide, lithium nitrogen oxide, magnesium oxide, manganese oxide, molybdenum oxide, niobium oxide, nitrogen oxide, silicon oxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon carbide, tin oxide, tin silicon oxide, strontium oxide, tantalum oxide, tantalum oxynitride, tita-

nium oxide, titanium oxynitride, tungsten oxide, zinc oxide, zirconium oxide, or some other suitable dielectric material or metal-oxide. The dielectric on wire structures **116** comprise a different material than the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** may be formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., PVD, CVD, ALD, spin-on, etc.) in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between, for example, approximately 150 degrees Celsius and approximately 400 degrees Celsius. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** comprise a material that can be selectively deposited on the topmost surfaces **112t** of the first interconnect wires **112** and not on the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In some embodiments, a removal process, such as, for example, a planarization process (e.g., CMP), is performed to remove any excess material of the dielectric on wire structures **116** arranged over the topmost surfaces **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. Thus, in some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** have topmost surfaces **116t** that are substantially coplanar to the topmost surfaces **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In some embodiments, such a removal and/or planarization process is omitted. In some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structures **116** have a height equal to the third distance d_3 .

[0048] As shown in cross-sectional view **800** of FIG. **8**, in some embodiments, a second interconnect dielectric layer **120** is formed over the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and the dielectric on wire structures **116**. In some embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** is formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., PVD, CVD, ALD, sputtering, etc.). In some embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** comprises a dielectric material such as, for example, silicon carbide, silicon dioxide, silicon oxygen carbide, silicon nitride, silicon carbon nitride, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxygen carbon nitride, or some other suitable dielectric material. In some embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** comprises a different material than the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In other embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** comprises a same material as the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In such other embodiments, a second etch stop layer **118** may be formed over the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** prior to the formation of the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**. In some embodiments, the second etch stop layer **118** may be formed under the same or similar conditions as the first etch stop layer **110** and/or may comprise the same or similar materials as the first etch stop layer **110**. In some embodiments, if the first and second interconnect dielectric layers **114**, **120** comprise different materials, the second etch stop layer **118** may or may not be formed between the first and second interconnect dielectric layers **114**, **120**.

[0049] In some embodiments, a first anti-reflective structure **802** may be formed over the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**. In some embodiments, the first anti-reflective structure **802** may comprise, for example, a first anti-reflective layer **802a** and a second anti-reflective layer **802b**. In some embodiments, the first anti-reflective structure **802** aids in future patterning/photolithography processes. In some embodiments, the first anti-reflective structure **802** is formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., spin-on, CVD, PVD, ALD, etc.) and comprises an organic or an inorganic material. In some embodiments, a first masking

structure **804** is formed over the first anti-reflective structure **802** by using photolithography and removal (e.g., etching) processes. In some embodiments, the first masking structure **804** comprises a photoresist or hard mask material. In some embodiments, the first masking structure **804** directly covers one or more of the first interconnect wires **112**, whereas one or more of the first interconnect wires **112** do not directly underlie the first masking structure **804**.

[0050] As shown in cross-sectional view **900** of FIG. **9**, a first removal process **902** is performed to according to the first masking structure **804** to remove portions of the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**. In some embodiments, portions of the first anti-reflective structure **802** that do not directly underlie the first masking structure **804** are completely removed during the first removal process **902**, and upper portions of the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** that do not directly underlie the first masking structure **804** are removed during the first removal process **902**. In some embodiments, after the first removal process **902**, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** still fully covers the second etch stop layer **118**. In some embodiments, the portion of the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** uncovered by the first masking structure **804** has a width about equal to a fifth distance d_5 . In some embodiments, the fifth distance d_5 is in a range of between, for example, approximately 5 nanometers and approximately 3000 nanometers. In some embodiments, a new sidewall **120s** of the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** defined by the first removal process **902** may be situated at a first angle a_1 with respect to a new lower surface **120L**. In some embodiments, the first angle a_1 is measured away from to the new lower surface **120L** as illustrated in FIG. **9**, and may be in a range of between approximately 50 degrees and approximately 95 degrees.

[0051] In some embodiments, the first removal process **902** may be or comprise an etching process. For example, in some embodiments, the first removal process **902** may be or comprise reactive-ion etching, inductively coupled plasma, and/or capacitively coupled plasma. In such embodiments, the first removal process **902** may utilize one or more of the following gas etchants: a carbon-hydrogen gas (e.g., CH_4), a fluoride-based gas (e.g., CH_3F , CH_2F_2 , C_4F_8 , C_4F_6 , CF_4), hydrogen bromide, a carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, boron trichloride, chlorine, nitrogen, helium, neon, argon, or some other suitable gas. In some embodiments, the first removal process **902** may be conducted in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 0 degrees Celsius and approximately 100 degrees Celsius; to a pressure in a range of between approximately 0.2 millitorr and approximately 120 millitorr; to a power in a range of between approximately 50 watts and approximately 3000 watts; and to a bias in a range of between approximately 0 volts and approximately 1200 volts.

[0052] As shown in cross-sectional view **1000** of FIG. **10**, in some embodiments, the first anti-reflective structure (**802** of FIG. **9**) and the first masking structure (**804** of FIG. **9**) are completely removed from the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**. In some embodiments, the first anti-reflective structure (**802** of FIG. **9**) and the first masking structure (**804** of FIG. **9**) are removed by way of a wet etchant, and the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** may remain substantially unaffected by the wet etchant.

[0053] As shown in cross-sectional view **1100** of FIG. **11**, a second masking structure **1104** is formed over the second

interconnect dielectric layer 120. In some embodiments, the second masking structure 1104 comprises a first opening 1106 arranged directly over one of the first interconnect wires 112. In some embodiments, prior to the formation of the second masking structure 1104, a second anti-reflective structure 1102 may be formed over the second interconnect dielectric layer 120. In some embodiments, the second anti-reflective structure 1102 may comprise a fourth anti-reflective layer 1102b arranged over a third anti-reflective layer 1102a. In some embodiments, the second anti-reflective structure 1102 aids in future patterning/photolithography processes. In some embodiments, the second anti-reflective structure 1102 and the second masking structure 1104 may be formed using similar processes as the formation of the first anti-reflective structure (802 of FIG. 8) and the first masking structure (804 of FIG. 8), respectively. Similarly, in some embodiments, the second anti-reflective structure 1102 and the second masking structure 1104 comprise similar materials as the first anti-reflective structure (802 of FIG. 8) and the first masking structure (804 of FIG. 8), respectively.

[0054] In some embodiments, a first line 202 intersects a center of the first interconnect wire 112 that directly underlies the first opening 1106 of the second masking structure 1104. In some embodiments, a second line 310 intersects a center of the first opening 1106. In some embodiments, the center of the first interconnect wire 112 may be defined as a midpoint of a width of the first interconnect wire 112, and similarly, the center of the first opening 1106 may be defined as a midpoint of a width of the first opening 1106. In some embodiments, the first line 202 and the second line 310 are perpendicular to a topmost surface of the substrate 102. In some embodiments, due to photolithography precision and/or accuracy limitations, for example, the first line 202 may be offset from the second line 310. In such embodiments, the first opening 1106 may directly overlie a portion of the first interconnect dielectric layer 114. In such embodiments, the first opening 1106 of the second masking structure 1104 may be determined to be “misaligned” with the underlying one of the first interconnect wires 112.

[0055] In some other embodiments, the first line 202 may be collinear with the second line 310, and the first opening 1106 may directly overlie only the underlying one of the first interconnect wires 112. In such other embodiments, the first opening 1106 may be determined to be aligned with the underlying one of the first interconnect wires 112. In yet other embodiments, the first line 202 may be collinear with the second line 310, but a width of the first opening 1106 may be greater than a width of the first interconnect wire 112. In such other embodiments, the first opening 1106 may still directly overlie portions of the first interconnect dielectric layer 114. In some embodiments, a width of the first opening 1106 may be in a range of between, for example, approximately 5 nanometers and approximately 300 nanometers.

[0056] FIGS. 12A and 12B illustrate cross-sectional views 1200A and 1200B, respectively, of some embodiments of performing photolithography and removal processes to expose an upper surface of one of the first interconnect wires.

[0057] As shown in cross-sectional view 1200A of FIG. 12A, in some embodiments, a first via removal process 1202 is performed to remove portions of the second anti-reflective structure 1102, the second interconnect dielectric layer 120,

the second etch stop layer 118, and the dielectric on wire structure 116 that directly underlie the first opening (1106 of FIG. 11) of the second masking structure 1104. In such embodiments, the first via removal process 1202 forms a cavity 1204 through the second anti-reflective structure 1102, the second interconnect dielectric layer 120, the second etch stop layer 118, and the dielectric on wire structure 116 to expose an upper surface 112u of the first interconnect wire 112 that directly underlies the first opening (1106 of FIG. 11) of the second masking structure 1104. In some embodiments, the cavity 1204 may have sidewalls angled at a second angle α_2 . In some embodiments, the second angle α_2 may be in a range of between, for example, approximately 90 degrees and approximately 140 degrees.

[0058] In some embodiments, the first via removal process 1202 comprises one or more dry etchants used to remove the portions of the second anti-reflective structure 1102, the second interconnect dielectric layer 120, the second etch stop layer 118, and the dielectric on wire structure 116. In some embodiments, the first via removal process 1202 may be achieved using the same or similar parameters (e.g., etchant gases, chamber conditions) as the first removal process (902 of FIG. 9). Thus, in some embodiments, the first via removal process 1202 may be or comprise reactive-ion etching, inductively coupled plasma, remote plasma, and/or capacitively coupled plasma. In such embodiments, the first via removal process 1202 may utilize one or more of the following gas etchants: a carbon-hydrogen gas (e.g., CH_4), a fluoride-based gas (e.g., CH_3F , CH_2F_2 , C_4F_8 , C_4F_6 , CF_4), hydrogen bromide, a carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, boron trichloride, chlorine, nitrogen, helium, neon, argon, or some other suitable gas. In some embodiments, the first via removal process 1202 may be conducted in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 0 degrees Celsius and approximately 100 degrees Celsius; to a pressure in a range of between approximately 0.2 millitorr and approximately 120 millitorr; to a power in a range of between approximately 50 watts and approximately 3000 watts; and to a bias in a range of between approximately 0 volts and approximately 1200 volts.

[0059] In some embodiments, the cavity 1204 may also expose a topmost surface 114t of the first interconnect dielectric layer 114. Further, in some embodiments, the cavity 1204 may expose a sidewall 114s of the first interconnect dielectric layer 114. However, in such embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 may be substantially resist to removal by the one or more dry etchants of the first via removal process 1202. More specifically, in some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 may be resistant to removal by the dry etchant(s) used to remove the second etch stop layer 118 and the dielectric on wire structures 116. In some embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 is also resistant to removal by the dry etchant(s) used to remove the second interconnect dielectric layer 120. Thus, the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 comprises a different material than the dielectric on wire structures 116 such that the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 and the dielectric on wire structure 116 have different etch selectivities during the first via removal process 1202. In some embodiments, a difference in the etch selectivity between the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 and the dielectric on wire structure 116 is in a range of about 15 and about 25, for example. This way, the first interconnect dielectric layer 114 may be protected

during the first via removal process **1202**, thereby maintaining isolation between the first interconnect wires **112** provided by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0060] As shown in cross-sectional view **1200B** of FIG. **12B**, in some embodiments, a first mask removal process **1206** is performed to remove the second anti-reflective structure (**1102** of FIG. **12A**) and the second masking structure (**1104** of FIG. **12A**). In some embodiments, the first mask removal process **1206** comprises a wet clean etchant. In such embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**, the second etch stop layer **118**, the dielectric on wire structure **116**, and the first interconnect wire **112** may be substantially unaffected by the first mask removal process **1206**.

[0061] FIGS. **13A** and **13B** illustrate cross-sectional views **1300A** and **1300B**, respectively, of some other embodiments of performing photolithography and removal processes to expose the upper surface **112u** of one of the first interconnect wires **112**. Thus, in some embodiments, the method may proceed from the cross-sectional view **1100** of FIG. **11** to the cross-sectional view **1300A** of FIG. **13A**, thereby skipping the acts illustrated in cross-sectional views **1200A** and **1200B** of FIGS. **12A** and **12B**, respectively.

[0062] As shown in cross-sectional view **1300A** of FIG. **13A**, in some embodiments, a second via removal process **1302** is performed to remove portions of the second anti-reflective structure **1102**, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, and the second etch stop layer **118** that directly underlie the first opening (**1106** of FIG. **11**) of the second masking structure **1104**. In such embodiments, the second via removal process **1302** may form a first sub-cavity **1304** through the second anti-reflective structure **1102**, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, and the second etch stop layer **118** to expose the dielectric on wire structure **116** arranged directly below the first opening (**1106** of FIG. **11**) of the second masking structure **1104**. Thus, in some embodiments, the dielectric on wire structure **116** is not removed by the second via removal process **1302**. In some embodiments, the first sub-cavity **1304** also exposes a top-most surface **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In such embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** is substantially resistant to removal by the second via removal process **1302**.

[0063] In some embodiments, the second via removal process **1302** comprises one or more dry etchants used to remove the portions of the second anti-reflective structure **1102**, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, and the second etch stop layer **118**. In some embodiments, the second via removal process **1302** may be achieved using the same or similar parameters (e.g., etchant gases, chamber conditions) as the first removal process (**902** of FIG. **9**). Thus, in some embodiments, the second via removal process **1302** may be or comprise reactive-ion etching, inductively coupled plasma, remote plasma, and/or capacitively coupled plasma. In such embodiments, the second via removal process **1302** may utilize one or more of the following gas etchants: a carbon-hydrogen gas (e.g., CH_4), a fluoride-based gas (e.g., CH_3F , CH_2F_2 , C_4F_8 , C_4F_6 , CF_4), hydrogen bromide, a carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, boron trichloride, chlorine, nitrogen, helium, neon, argon, or some other suitable gas. In some embodiments, the second via removal process **1302** may be conducted in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 0 degrees Celsius and approximately 100 degrees Celsius; to a pres-

sure in a range of between approximately 0.2 millitorr and approximately 120 millitorr; to a power in a range of between approximately 50 watts and approximately 3000 watts; and to a bias in a range of between approximately 0 volts and approximately 1200 volts.

[0064] As shown in cross-sectional view **1300B** of FIG. **13B**, in some embodiments, a second mask removal process **1306** is performed to remove the second anti-reflective structure (**1102** of FIG. **13A**) and the second masking structure (**1104** of FIG. **13A**). In some embodiments, the second mask removal process **1306** comprises a wet clean etchant. In some embodiments, the second mask removal process **1306** also removes portions of the dielectric on wire structure **116** arranged directly below the first sub-cavity (**1304** of FIG. **13A**) thereby forming a cavity **1204** that extends through the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, the second etch stop layer **118**, and the dielectric on wire structure **116** to expose an upper surface **112u** of the first interconnect wire **112**. In other embodiments, a different wet etchant or a dry etchant is used to remove portions of the dielectric on wire structure **116** after the removal of the second masking structure (**1104** of FIG. **13A**).

[0065] In some embodiments, the topmost surface **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and a sidewall **114s** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** are exposed during the second mask removal process **1306**. However, in such embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may be substantially resistant to removal by the second mask removal process **1306**. Thus, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** comprises a different material than the dielectric on wire structures **116** such that the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and the dielectric on wire structure **116** have different etch selectivities during the second mask removal process **1306**. This way, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may be protected during the second mask removal process **1306**, thereby maintaining isolation between the first interconnect wires **112** provided by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0066] FIGS. **14A**, **14B**, and **14C** illustrate cross-sectional views **1400A**, **1400B** and **1400C**, respectively, of yet some other embodiments of performing photolithography and removal processes to expose an upper surface **112u** of one of the first interconnect wires. Thus, in some embodiments, the method may proceed from the cross-sectional view **1100** of FIG. **11** to the cross-sectional view **1400A** of FIG. **14A**, thereby skipping the acts illustrated in cross-sectional views **1200A**, **1200B**, **1300A**, and **1300B** of FIGS. **12A**, **12B**, **13A**, and **13B**, respectively.

[0067] As shown in cross-sectional view **1400A** of FIG. **14A**, in some embodiments, a third via removal process **1402** is performed to remove portions of the second anti-reflective structure **1102** and the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** that directly underlie the first opening (**1106** of FIG. **11**) of the second masking structure **1104**. In such embodiments, the third via removal process **1402** may form a second sub-cavity **1404** through the second anti-reflective structure **1102** and the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** to expose the second etch stop layer **118** arranged directly below the first opening (**1106** of FIG. **11**) of the second masking structure **1104**. Thus, in some embodiments, the second etch stop layer **118** is not removed by the third via removal process **1402**.

[0068] In some embodiments, the third via removal process **1402** comprises one or more dry etchants used to

remove the portions of the second anti-reflective structure **1102** and the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**. In some embodiments, the third via removal process **1402** may be achieved using the same or similar parameters (e.g., etchant gases, chamber conditions) as the first removal process (**902** of FIG. **9**). Thus, in some embodiments, the third via removal process **1402** may be or comprise reactive-ion etching, inductively coupled plasma, remote plasma, and/or capacitively coupled plasma. In such embodiments, the third via removal process **1402** may utilize one or more of the following gas etchants: a carbon-hydrogen gas (e.g., CH_4), a fluoride-based gas (e.g., CH_3F , CH_2F_2 , C_4F_8 , C_4F_6 , CF_4), hydrogen bromide, a carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, boron trichloride, chlorine, nitrogen, helium, neon, argon, or some other suitable gas. In some embodiments, the third via removal process **1402** may be conducted in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 0 degrees Celsius and approximately 100 degrees Celsius; to a pressure in a range of between approximately 0.2 millitorr and approximately 120 millitorr; to a power in a range of between approximately 50 watts and approximately 3000 watts; and to a bias in a range of between approximately 0 volts and approximately 1200 volts.

[0069] As shown in cross-sectional view **1400B** of FIG. **14B**, in some embodiments, a third mask removal process **1406** is performed to remove the second anti-reflective structure (**1102** of FIG. **14A**) and the second masking structure (**1104** of FIG. **14A**). In some embodiments, the third mask removal process **1406** comprises a first wet clean etchant to remove the second anti-reflective structure (**1102** of FIG. **14A**) and the second masking structure (**1104** of FIG. **14A**). In some embodiments, the third mask removal process **1406** also removes a portion of the second etch stop layer **118** arranged below the second sub-cavity (**1404** of FIG. **14A**) using the first wet clean etchant. In some other embodiments, a second etchant (e.g., wet etchant or dry etchant) is used after the first wet clean etchant to selectively remove the second etch stop layer **118** arranged below the second sub-cavity (**1404** of FIG. **14A**), according to the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**.

[0070] In some embodiments, the third mask removal process **1406** forms a third sub-cavity **1408** that exposes the dielectric on wire structure **116**. In some embodiments, the third sub-cavity **1408** formed by the third mask removal process **1406** also exposes a topmost surface **114t** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. In such embodiments, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and the dielectric on wire structure **116** may be substantially resistant to removal by the third mask removal process **1406**.

[0071] As shown in cross-sectional view **1400C** of FIG. **14C**, in some embodiments, a fourth via removal process **1410** is performed to remove portions of the dielectric on wire structure **116** arranged below the third sub-cavity (**1408** of FIG. **14B**). In such embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** may act as a masking structure during the fourth via removal process **1410**. In such embodiments, the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** may be substantially resistant to removal by the fourth via removal process **1410**.

[0072] In some embodiments, the fourth via removal process **1410** comprises a wet etchant or one or more dry etchants used to remove the portions of the dielectric on wire structure **116**. In some embodiments, the fourth via removal process **1410** may be achieved using the same or similar

parameters (e.g., etchant gases, chamber conditions) as the first removal process (**902** of FIG. **9**). Thus, in some embodiments, the fourth via removal process **1410** may be or comprise reactive-ion etching, inductively coupled plasma, remote plasma, and/or capacitively coupled plasma. In such embodiments, the fourth via removal process **1410** may utilize one or more of the following gas etchants: a carbon-hydrogen gas (e.g., CH_4), a fluoride-based gas (e.g., CH_3F , CH_2F_2 , C_4F_8 , C_4F_6 , CF_4), hydrogen bromide, a carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, boron trichloride, chlorine, nitrogen, helium, neon, argon, or some other suitable gas. In some embodiments, the fourth via removal process **1410** may be conducted in a chamber set to a temperature in a range of between approximately 0 degrees Celsius and approximately 100 degrees Celsius; to a pressure in a range of between approximately 0.2 millitorr and approximately 120 millitorr; to a power in a range of between approximately 50 watts and approximately 3000 watts; and to a bias in a range of between approximately 0 volts and approximately 1200 volts.

[0073] In such some, the topmost surface **114t** and a sidewall **114s** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** are exposed during the fourth via removal process **1410** and are substantially resistant to removal by the fourth via removal process **1410**. In some embodiments, the fourth via removal process **1410** forms a cavity **1204** that extends through the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, the second etch stop layer **118**, and the dielectric on wire structure **116** to expose an upper surface **112u** of one of the first interconnect wires **112**. Thus, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** comprises a different material than the dielectric on wire structures **116** such that the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** and the dielectric on wire structure **116** have different etch selectivities during the fourth via removal process **1410**. This way, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** may be protected during the fourth via removal process **1410**, thereby maintaining isolation between the first interconnect wires **112** provided by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0074] It will be appreciated that the method illustrated in FIGS. **12A** and **12B** to form the cavity **1204**; the method illustrated in FIGS. **13A** and **13B** to form the cavity **1204**; and the method illustrated in FIGS. **14A**, **14B**, and **14C** to form the cavity **1204** result in a similar or substantially same cavity **1204** extending through the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, the second etch stop layer **118**, and the one of the dielectric on wire structures **116** and not through the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** in order to expose the upper surface **112u** of the one of the first interconnect wires **112**.

[0075] It will be appreciated that other combinations of wet and dry etching to form the cavity **1204** are also within the scope of the disclosure. Further, in some embodiments, wherein the first opening (**1106** of FIG. **11**) of the second masking structure (**1104** of FIG. **11**) is substantially aligned over the underlying first interconnect wire **112**, the cavity **1204** may not expose the topmost surface **114t** or the sidewall **114s** of the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**.

[0076] The method may proceed from either FIG. **12B**, FIG. **13B**, or **14C** to FIG. **15**, in some embodiments.

[0077] FIG. **15** illustrates a top-view **1500** of some embodiments corresponding to cross-section line AA' of FIG. **12B**, **13B**, or **14C**, respectively.

[0078] The top-view **1500** of FIG. **15** illustrates that the cavity **1204** exposes the upper surface **112u** of the first interconnect wire (**112** of FIG. **14A**). Further, it will be appreciated that other cavities (not shown) may have been formed simultaneously with the cavity **1204**, such that the other cavities (not shown) expose upper surfaces of other ones of the first interconnect wires (**112** of FIG. **14B**) arranged beneath the dielectric on wire structures **116**.

[0079] As shown in cross-sectional view **1600** of FIG. **16**, in some embodiments, a conductive material **1602** is formed on the second interconnect dielectric layer **120** to completely fill the cavity (**1204** of FIG. **14C**) in the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, the second etch stop layer **118**, and the dielectric on wire structure **116**. In such embodiments, an interconnect via **122** may be formed that extends through the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, the second etch stop layer **118**, and the dielectric on wire structure **116** to contact one of the first interconnect wires **112**. In some embodiments, the conductive material may comprise, for example, tantalum, tantalum nitride, titanium nitride, copper, cobalt, ruthenium, molybdenum, iridium, tungsten, or some other suitable conductive material. Further, in some embodiments, the conductive material **1602** may be formed by way of a deposition process (e.g., PVD, CVD, ALD, spin-on, etc.) in a chamber set to a temperature of between, for example, approximately 150 degrees Celsius and approximately 400 degrees Celsius. In some embodiments, the thickness of the conductive material **1602** may be in a range of between, for example, approximately 10 angstroms and approximately 1000 nanometers.

[0080] As shown in cross-sectional view **1700** of FIG. **17**, in some embodiments, a removal process is performed to remove portions of the conductive material (**1602** of FIG. **16**) arranged over a topmost surface **120t** of the second interconnect dielectric layer **120**, thereby forming a second interconnect wire **124** arranged over and coupled to the interconnect via **122**. In some embodiments, the removal process comprises a planarization process (e.g., CMP). In some embodiments, the lower interconnect via **106**, the first interconnect wires **112**, the interconnect via **122**, and the second interconnect wire **124** make up an interconnect structure **104** overlying the substrate **102** and providing conductive pathways between various electronic devices (e.g., semiconductor devices, photo devices, memory devices, etc.) arranged above and below the interconnect structure **104**.

[0081] In some embodiments, at least because the dielectric on wire structures **116** comprise a different material than the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**, the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** is not removed during the formation of the cavity (**1204** of FIG. **14C**) to form the interconnect via **122**. In such embodiments, even if the cavity (**1204** of FIG. **14C**) exposes the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**, the interconnect via **122** does not extend into the first interconnect dielectric layer **114**. Thus, the interconnect via **122** does not extend below the upper surface **112u** of the first interconnect wire **112**, and the interconnect via **122** does not extend directly between adjacent ones of the first interconnect wires **112**. Thus, the dielectric on wire structures **116** provide a larger processing window for the formation of the interconnect via **122** because even if the interconnect via **122** is misaligned over the first interconnect wire **112**, isolation between the first interconnect wires **112** provided by the first interconnect dielectric layer **114** is maintained.

Thus, the dielectric on wire structures **116** increase the processing window for the formation of the interconnect via **122** without sacrificing isolation between underlying first interconnect wires **112** in order to provide a high-performance and reliable integrated chip.

[0082] FIG. **18** illustrates a flow diagram of some embodiments of a method **1800** corresponding to the method illustrated in FIGS. **4-17**.

[0083] While method **1800** is illustrated and described below as a series of acts or events, it will be appreciated that the illustrated ordering of such acts or events are not to be interpreted in a limiting sense. For example, some acts may occur in different orders and/or concurrently with other acts or events apart from those illustrated and/or described herein. In addition, not all illustrated acts may be required to implement one or more aspects or embodiments of the description herein. Further, one or more of the acts depicted herein may be carried out in one or more separate acts and/or phases.

[0084] At act **1802**, a first interconnect dielectric layer is formed over a substrate.

[0085] At act **1804**, an interconnect wire is formed within and extending through the first interconnect dielectric layer. FIG. **5** illustrates a cross-sectional view **500** of some embodiments corresponding to acts **1802** and **1804**.

[0086] At act **1806**, a first removal process is performed to remove an upper portion of the interconnect wire such that an upper surface of the interconnect wire is arranged below upper surfaces of the first interconnect dielectric layer. FIG. **6** illustrates a cross-sectional view **600** of some embodiments corresponding to act **1806**.

[0087] At act **1808**, a dielectric on wire structure is formed directly over the interconnect wire. FIG. **7** illustrates a cross-sectional view **700** of some embodiments corresponding to act **1808**.

[0088] At act **1810**, a second interconnect dielectric layer is formed over the first interconnect dielectric layer. FIG. **8** illustrates a cross-sectional view **800** of some embodiments corresponding to act **1810**.

[0089] At act **1812**, a second removal process is performed to form a cavity extending through the dielectric on wire structure and the second interconnect dielectric layer to expose an upper surface of the interconnect wire. FIGS. **12A** and **12B** respectively illustrate cross-sectional views **1200A** and **1200B** of some embodiments corresponding to act **1812**.

[0090] At act **1814**, a conductive material is formed within the cavity to form an interconnect via coupled to the interconnect wire. FIG. **17** illustrates a cross-sectional view **1700** of some embodiments corresponding to act **1814**.

[0091] Therefore, the present disclosure relates to a method of forming an interconnect via over an interconnect wire, wherein a dielectric on wire structure is formed over the interconnect wire to aid in selectively removing portions of the dielectric on wire structure and not a surrounding first interconnect dielectric layer when forming the interconnect via to increase the processing window for the interconnect via.

[0092] Accordingly, in some embodiments, the present disclosure relates to an integrated chip comprising: a first interconnect dielectric layer arranged over a substrate; an interconnect wire extending through the first interconnect dielectric layer; a dielectric on wire structure arranged directly over the interconnect wire and having outer side-walls surrounded by the first interconnect dielectric layer; a

second interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer; and an interconnect via extending through the second interconnect dielectric layer and the dielectric on wire structure to contact the interconnect wire.

[0093] In other embodiments, the present disclosure relates to an integrated chip comprising: a first interconnect dielectric layer arranged over a substrate; a first interconnect wire arranged over the substrate and laterally surrounded by the first interconnect dielectric layer; a second interconnect wire arranged over the substrate, laterally surrounded by the first interconnect dielectric layer, and spaced apart from the first interconnect wire by the first interconnect dielectric layer; a first dielectric on wire structure and a second dielectric on wire structure arranged directly over the first interconnect wire and the second interconnect wire, respectively, wherein the first dielectric on wire structure is spaced apart from the second dielectric on wire structure by the first interconnect dielectric layer; a second interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer; and an interconnect via extending through the second interconnect dielectric layer and the first dielectric on wire structure to directly contact the first interconnect wire.

[0094] In yet other embodiments, the present disclosure relates to a method comprising: forming a first interconnect dielectric layer over a substrate; forming an interconnect wire within and extending through the first interconnect dielectric layer; performing a first removal process to remove an upper portion of the interconnect wire such that an upper surface of the interconnect wire is arranged below upper surfaces of the first interconnect dielectric layer; forming a dielectric on wire structure directly over the interconnect wire; forming a second interconnect dielectric layer over the first interconnect dielectric layer; performing a second removal process to form a cavity extending through the dielectric on wire structure and the second interconnect dielectric layer to expose an upper surface of the interconnect wire; and forming a conductive material within the cavity to form an interconnect via coupled to the interconnect wire.

[0095] The foregoing outlines features of several embodiments so that those skilled in the art may better understand the aspects of the present disclosure. Those skilled in the art should appreciate that they may readily use the present disclosure as a basis for designing or modifying other processes and structures for carrying out the same purposes and/or achieving the same advantages of the embodiments introduced herein. Those skilled in the art should also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure, and that they may make various changes, substitutions, and alterations herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. An integrated chip, comprising:

- a semiconductor substrate;
- a first interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the semiconductor substrate, the first interconnect dielectric layer including a trench and a via opening, the trench being in a lower portion of the first interconnect dielectric layer and the via opening being in an upper portion of the first interconnect dielectric layer over the trench;
- a second interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer, the via opening

extending upward from the first interconnect dielectric layer into the second interconnect dielectric layer;

a metal line disposed in the trench in the first interconnect dielectric layer;

a metal via disposed in the via opening in the first interconnect dielectric layer and in the second interconnect dielectric layer; and

a dielectric structure disposed between a sidewall of the metal via and a sidewall of the trench in the first interconnect dielectric layer.

2. The integrated chip of claim 1, wherein a bottommost surface of the metal via directly contacts an upper surface of the metal line, and wherein an entirety of the bottommost surface of the metal via directly overlies the upper surface of the metal line.

3. The integrated chip of claim 1, wherein a bottommost surface of the metal via has a width that is less than or equal to an upper surface of the metal line.

4. The integrated chip of claim 1, wherein the first interconnect dielectric layer comprises a different material than the dielectric structure.

5. The integrated chip of claim 1, further comprising:

an etch stop layer arranged directly between the first interconnect dielectric layer and the second interconnect dielectric layer and arranged directly between the dielectric structure and the second interconnect dielectric layer.

6. The integrated chip of claim 5, wherein the first and second interconnect dielectric layers comprise the same material.

7. The integrated chip of claim 1, further comprising:

an additional metal line arranged laterally beside the metal line and spaced apart from the metal line by the first interconnect dielectric layer; and

an additional dielectric structure arranged directly over the additional metal line and spaced apart from the dielectric structure by the first interconnect dielectric layer.

8. The integrated chip of claim 7, wherein the metal via is not arranged directly between the metal line and the additional metal line.

9. An integrated chip, comprising:

a semiconductor substrate;

a first interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the semiconductor substrate;

a second interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer;

a first metal line disposed in the first interconnect dielectric layer;

a metal via coupled to the first metal line, the metal via having a lower portion in the first interconnect dielectric layer and an upper portion in the second interconnect dielectric layer; and

a dielectric structure disposed between a sidewall of the lower portion of the metal via and a sidewall of the first interconnect dielectric layer, the dielectric structure having an upper surface that is level with an upper surface of the first interconnect dielectric layer.

10. The integrated chip of claim 9, wherein the first metal line has a central axis extending vertically through a trench opening in the first interconnect dielectric layer, and wherein the metal via has a central axis that is laterally offset from the central axis of the first metal line.

11. The integrated chip of claim **9**, wherein the dielectric structure has a width that is less than the first metal line.

12. The integrated chip of claim **9**, wherein the metal via has a lower surface that is arranged completely above the first metal line.

13. The integrated chip of claim **9**, wherein the dielectric structure comprises a different dielectric material than the first interconnect dielectric layer.

14. The integrated chip of claim **9**, wherein an outer edge portion of the metal via is arranged directly over the first interconnect dielectric layer.

15. The integrated chip of claim **9**, further comprising: an etch stop layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer and the dielectric structure, wherein the etch stop layer separates the first interconnect dielectric layer from the second interconnect dielectric layer.

16. An integrated chip, comprising:

a semiconductor substrate;

a first interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the semiconductor substrate;

a second interconnect dielectric layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer;

a metal line disposed in the first interconnect dielectric layer, the metal line having a central axis extending vertically through a trench opening in the first interconnect dielectric layer;

a metal via coupled to the metal line and extending through the first interconnect dielectric layer and through the second interconnect dielectric layer, the metal via having a central axis that is laterally offset from the central axis of the metal line; and

a dielectric structure disposed between a sidewall of the metal via and a sidewall of the first interconnect dielectric layer.

17. The integrated chip of claim **16**, wherein the dielectric structure has a width about equal to a width of the metal line.

18. The integrated chip of claim **16**, wherein an uppermost surface of the dielectric structure is level with an upper surface of the first interconnect dielectric layer.

19. The integrated chip of claim **16**, wherein an uppermost surface of the dielectric structure is about mid-height of the metal via.

20. The integrated chip of claim **16**, further comprising:

an etch stop layer arranged over the first interconnect dielectric layer and over the dielectric structure, wherein the etch stop layer separates the first interconnect dielectric layer from the second interconnect dielectric layer.

* * * * *