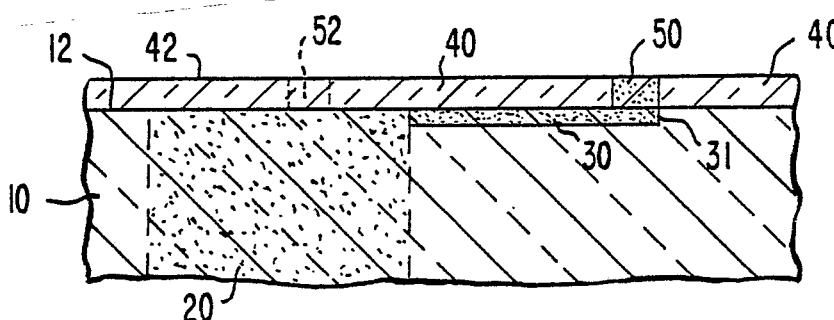




INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/US83/01389 (22) International Filing Date: 8 September 1983 (08.09.83) (31) Priority Application Number: 417,276 (32) Priority Date: 13 September 1982 (13.09.82) (33) Priority Country: US (71) Applicant: HUGHES AIRCRAFT COMPANY [US/US]; 200 North Sepulveda Boulevard, El Segundo, CA 90245 (US). (72) Inventors: GATES, James, L. ; 1332 Arcadia, Vista, CA 92083 (US). GAALEMA, Steven, D. ; 2726 Chestnut Avenue, Carlsbad, CA 92008 (US). (74) Agents: SZABO, Joseph, E. et al.; Hughes Aircraft Company, Post Office Box 1042, Bldg. C2, M.S. A126, El Segundo, CA 90245 (US).</p>		<p>(81) Designated States: DE (European patent), FR (European patent), GB (European patent), JP. Published <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i></p>

(54) Title: FEEDTHROUGH STRUCTURE FOR THREE DIMENSIONAL MICROELECTRONIC DEVICES



(57) Abstract

A method and structure for reducing the surface area occupied by feedthrough in a semiconductor substrate. A buried horizontal conducting path (30) is laid down on a major surface (12) of a substrate (10), with one end (32) of the conducting path (30) in electrical and physical contact with the feedthrough (20) (e.g. a thermal gradient zone melt TGZM). An epitaxial layer (40) is put down over the TGZM and over the buried horizontal conducting path (30). Electrical contact is made to the distal end (31) of the buried horizontal conducting path (30) by diffusion through the newly put down epitaxial layer (40) or by etching to the conducting path. The diffused region (50) is of the same dopant characteristics and conductivity type as are the horizontal path (30) and TGZM. The cross-sectional area of the diffusion region (50) is 25 to 30 square microns compared to the 507 to 2027 square microns area of the TGZM. This results in substantial reduction of the surface area occupied by feedthrough structures and allows more devices to be fabricated on the surface of the substrate.

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1 devices that can be placed on the semiconductor surface
This result is contrary to the everpresent objective to
increase the number and density of devices fabricated
on a semiconductor device.

5 It is therefore an object of the present invention
to minimize the surface area of a semiconductor which
is occupied by feedthrough structure, thereby permitting
an increase in the density, and number, of devices
which can be fabricated on the surface.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention comprises a method and structure
for reducing the surface area occupied by the end of
the verticle feedthrough in a three dimensional
15 semiconductor circuit device. A horizontal conducting
path is laid down on a major surface of the substrate,
with one end of the conducting path in electrical and
physical contact with the feedthrough (e.g. a thermal
gradient zone melt, TGZM). An epitaxial layer is then
20 put down over the major surface covering the TGZM and
burying the horizontal conducting path. Electrical
contact is made to the other end of the buried horizontal
conducting path by diffusion through the newly put down
epitaxial layer, or by etching through the new epitaxial
25 layer to the conducting path. The diffused region is
of the same conductivity type as are the horizontal
buried path and the TGZM. The cross sectional area of
the diffusion region is 25 to 30 square microns compared
to the 507 to 2027 square microns area of the TGZM. This
30 results in substantial reduction of the surface area
occupied by the ends of the TGZM feedthrough structure
and allows more devices to be fabricated on the major
surface of the semiconductor.

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1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a section of a semiconductor substrate.

5 FIG. 2 illustrates the placement of a feedthrough in the substrate.

FIG. 3 shows the horizontal conducting means contacting one end of the feedthrough.

10 FIG. 4 shows the addition of a thin epitaxial layer covering the feedthrough and horizontal conducting means.

FIG. 5 shows the electrical connection between the horizontal conducting means and the top surface of the epitaxial layer.

15 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

To meet the ever increasing packaging density demanded in various applications of semiconductor electronics the semiconductor industry has begun to fabricate rather sophisticated devices by stacking multiple substrates one on top of the other. Such circuits are often referred to as three-dimensional devices. Electrical connections are frequently made between the devices on one substrate and devices on another substrate. This interconnection is accomplished by a feedthrough structure. A feedthrough is an electrically conductive path which extends vertically through the substrate substantially perpendicular to the major surfaces of the substrate.

25 FIG. 1 shows a cross section of a small portion of semiconductor substrate 10. The substrate 10 has a first or top major surface 12 and a second or bottom major surface 14. Such a substrate may be stacked with others like it to form a high density three dimensional semiconductor device. Also, active devices may be fabricated on both major surfaces 12 and 14 of

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1 substrate 10. In both cases it is often desirable to
electrically connect a device on one substrate with a
device on another substrate or to connect a device on
a top major surface such as 12 with a device on a
5 bottom major surface such as 14. Such interconnection
is facilitated by the structure 20, as shown in FIG. 2,
which comprises an electrically conductive path called
a feedthrough. The feedthrough extends from one major
surface 12 through the semiconductor substrate 10 to
10 the other major surface 14. A semiconductor device on
surface 12 may be electrically connected to a semi-
conductor device on surface 14 by connecting the
first device to the end 22 of feedthrough 20 lying
on surface 12 and connecting the other device to the
15 end 24 of feedthrough 20 which lies on surface 14.
Such an interconnect is well known and described in
the earlier referenced literature.

While the feedthrough structure is a convenient
means to interconnect devices on opposite sides of a
20 substrate, it does have the disadvantage of occupying
substantial space on the major surfaces 12 and 14.
Devices cannot be fabricated in the area occupied by
the feedthrough nor in the small annular area surrounding
the feedthrough. The total space lost can be significant
25 if a number of feedthroughs are present in a single
wafer. Typically the feedthrough 20 will have a diameter
of from 1 to 2 mils, i.e. an area of about 507 square
microns to about 2027 square microns.

The amount of surface area occupied by feedthrough
30 structure and hence unavailable for fabrication of
circuit devices, can be significantly reduced by the
method and structure illustrated in FIGS. 3, 4 and 5.

1 First a shallow conducting means such as conducting
path 30 is fabricated in surface 12. The path 30 can
be as long as desired and practical and the path may
terminate in end 31 wherever convenient and compatible
5 with the contemplated circuit. One end of path 30 must
contact feedthrough 20 as shown at 32. The path 30 is
electrically conductive, and of the same conductivity
type as is feedthrough 20.

10 Next, a thin epitaxial layer 40 is applied as
illustrated in FIG. 4 to cover the major surface 12, the
end 22 of feedthrough 20, and the conducting path 30.
Epitaxial layer 40 is of the same conductivity type as
is substrate 10, and is relatively thin. The layer 40
may range from 0.5 to 20.0 microns in thickness.

15 Finally, a conductive path 50 as shown in FIG. 5
is fabricated and extends from surface 42 to path 30.
This path 50 may be formed by diffusion through the
epitaxial layer 40. Path 50 is of the same conductivity
as the TGZM and of opposite conductivity as the sub-
20 strate 10. Typically, path 50 may be 5 microns square
covering an area of about 25 square microns. This
represents a significant decrease from the area of
surface 12 occupied by the TGZM which was from 507 to
2027 square microns. The surface area of layer 40,
25 located directly above feedthrough 20, is available
for fabrication of semiconductor devices.

As shown in FIG. 5, the conductive path 50 is
located at the distal end 31 of conductive path 30.
With this configuration, path 30 could be tailored to
30 place conductive path 50 at any desired location.
Specifically, all paths 30 on a given substrate could
be made to terminate near the perimeter of the substrate.
All paths 50 would correspondingly be located near the
perimeter of the substrate, leaving the interior area
35 of the substrate totally free of feedthrough connections.
If preferred for a particular application, paths 30

1 could be eliminated and paths 50 could be formed through
layer 40 directly above (or below) the end 22 (or 24)
of feedthrough 20. Such a path is shown as path 52
shown in broken lines in FIG. 5. In either case, the
5 percentage of the surface area of surface 42 which is
occupied by feedthrough structure is drastically reduced
from the percentage of the surface area of surface 12
which is occupied by feedthrough structure. The per-
centage reduction can be on the order of $\frac{2002}{2027}$ or 98.7%.

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Whenever a feedthrough such as 20 is formed in a
substrate 10, microscopic structural defects appear in
the substrate 10 immediately surrounding the feed-
through 20. These defects effectively increase the
15 area of surface 12 which is unsuited for fabrication
of devices. Thus, as a design rule of thumb, it is
typical that no devices are fabricated closer than
about 25 microns from the feedthrough. The percentage
improvement noted above is thus a conservative figure.
20 Because the layer 40 covers over and fills in these
defects, it is expected that the above discussed method
will improve the net yield of substrates utilizing the
TGZM process.

Typically the substrate 10 will be 10 to 20 mils
25 thick and comprised of a semiconductor of any type IV,
type III-V, or type II-VI compound. To produce well con-
trolled feedthroughs, the crystal orientation in silicon
is normally <100> for the feedthrough direction. Thus
the major surfaces 12 and 14 are <100> oriented surfaces.

30 While the invention has been described with
particular reference to FIGS. 1 through 5, the figures
and description are for purposes of illustration only
and are not to be interpreted as limitations upon the
invention. Many changes in material and structure may
35 be made by one having ordinary skill in the art, without
departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.



1 As an example, conductive path 50 (and 52) shown
extending from surface 42 to path 30 (or to feed-
through 20) is shown as a diffused region. The
conductive paths 50 or 52 could also be formed by
5 etching through layer 40 by conventional techniques
and providing a conductor also by conventional
techniques, from surface 42 to path 30 (or feed-
through 20). The spirit and scope of the invention
are intended to be limited only by the appended
10 claims.

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CLAIMSWhat is Claimed is:

- 1 1. In a semiconductor substrate having a first
major surface and a second major surface and a feed-
through structure extending through said substrate
from said first major surface to said second major
5 surface, the improvement comprising:
 an epitaxial layer, of the same conductivity
type as said substrate, applied to at least one of said
first and second major surfaces covering said feed-
through structure and forming a new major surface; and
10 a first conductive path of the same con-
ductivity type as said feedthrough structure formed in
said epitaxial layer and extending from said new major
surface to the underlying major surface of said substrate;
 said first conductive path being in electrical
15 communication with said feedthrough structure and having
a cross-sectional area substantially less than the
cross-sectional area of said feedthrough structure.
- 1 2. The improvement according to Claim 1 further
comprising a second conductive path having a first end
and a second end:
 said first end joining said second path to
5 said feedthrough structure and said second end joining
said second path to said first path;
 whereby said first path is in electrical
communication with said feedthrough structure.
- 1 3. The improvement according to Claim 1 or
Claim 2 wherein said feedthrough structure is formed
by the thermal gradient zone melt process.



1 4. The improvement according to Claim 1 or
Claim 2 wherein said first conductive path is formed
by diffusion.

1 5. A method for reducing the surface area occupied
by the feedthrough structure of a semiconductor substrate
comprising the steps of:

5 applying a relatively thin epitaxial layer of
the same conductivity type as said substrate to a
major surface of said substrate so as to cover said
feedthrough structure and form a new major surface;
 forming an electrically conductive path
10 through said epitaxial layer and extending from said
new major surface to the underlying major surface of
said substrate;

 said electrically conductive path being in
electrical communication with said feedthrough structure.

1 6. A method for reducing the surface area occupied
by the feedthrough structure of a semiconductor substrate
comprising the steps of:

5 forming a first electrically conductive path
in a major surface of said substrate, said first
electrically conductive path having a first end joining
said feedthrough structure and a second end located
remote from said feedthrough structure;

10 applying a relatively thin epitaxial layer,
of the same conductivity type as said substrate, to said
major surface so as to cover said feedthrough structure
and said first electrically conductive path and forming
a new major surface; and



forming a second electrically conductive path
15 through said epitaxial layer and extending from said
new major surface to the underlying second end of said
first electrically conductive path; with the cross-
sectional area of said second electrically conductive
path being much less than that of the feedthrough
20 structure;

whereby said second electrically conductive
path is in electrical communication with said feedthrough
structure and occupies less area of said new major surface
than said feedthrough structure occupied of the original
25 uncovered major surface of said substrate.

1 7. The method of Claim 6 wherein said second
electrically conductive path is formed by diffusion.



Fig. 1.

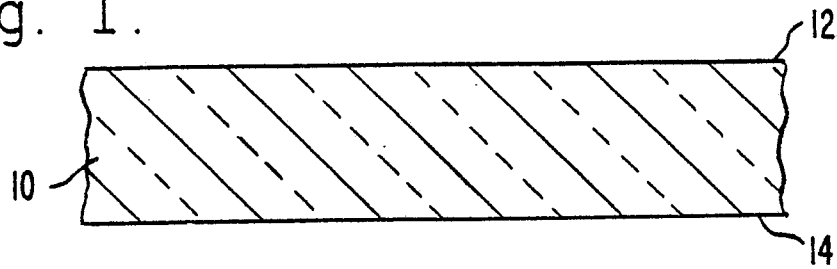


Fig. 2.

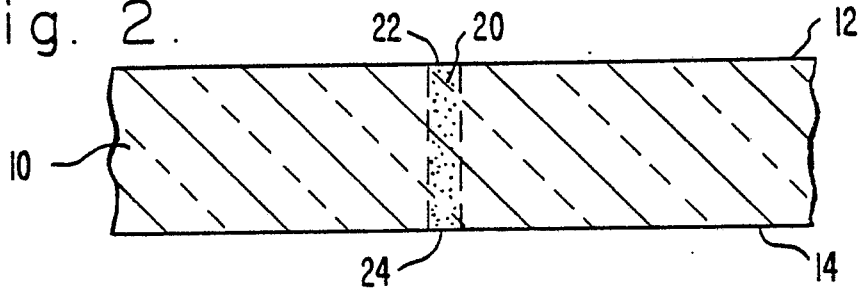


Fig. 3.

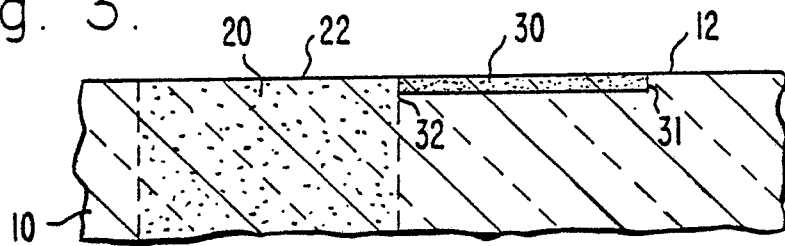


Fig. 4.

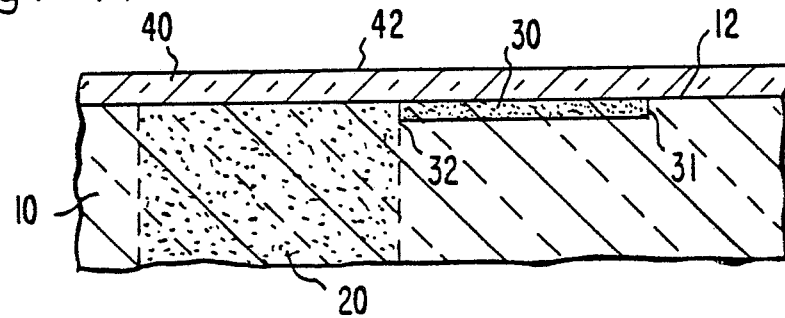
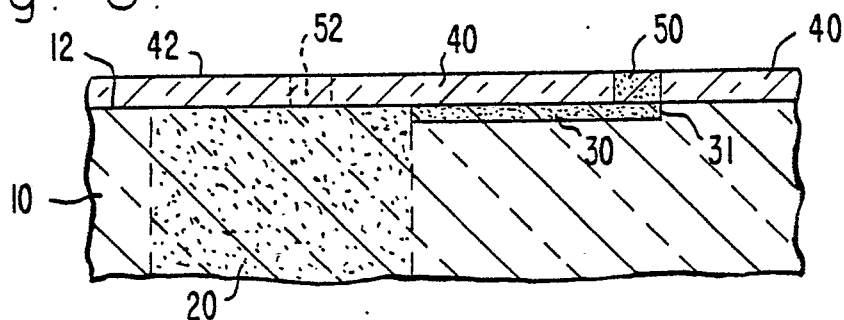
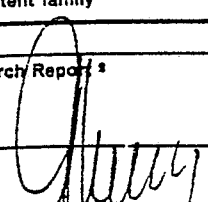


Fig. 5.



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No **PCT/US 83/01389**

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ³		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
IPC ³ : H 01 L 23/52; H 01 L 21/74		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁴		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
IPC ³	H 01 L	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁵		
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ¹⁴		
Category *	Citation of Document, ¹⁶ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹⁷	Relevant to Claim No. ¹⁸
X	US, A, 3787252 (F. FILIPPAZZI, HONEYWELL) 22 January 1974 see figure 1; column 3, line 31 - column 4, line 4 --	1,4,5
A	FR, A, 2295570 (IBM) 16 July 1976 see figure 3c; page 5, line 31 - page 6, line 7 --	1,2,6,7
A	US, A, 3982268 (T. ANTHONY, GENERAL ELECTRIC) 21 September 1976 see figure 1; column 2, lines 51-52 -----	1,3
<p>* Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁵</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search ¹	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report ¹	
22nd December 1983	23 JAN. 1984	
International Searching Authority ¹	Signature of Authorized Officer ¹⁹	
EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE	 G.L.M. Kruidenberg	

ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT ON

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/US 83/01389 (SA 5818)

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		FR-A- 2013735	10/04/70
		GB-A- 1272788	03/05/72
FR-A- 2295570	16/07/76	DE-A- 2554965	01/07/76
		GB-A- 1488759	12/10/77
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		US-A- 4074342	14/02/78
		JP-A- 51078176	07/07/76
US-A- 3982268	21/09/76	FR-A, B 2249443	23/05/75
		DE-A- 2450902	07/05/75
		GB-A- 1493814	30/11/77
		CA-A- 1020290	01/11/77
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