

FIG. 2
PRIOR ART

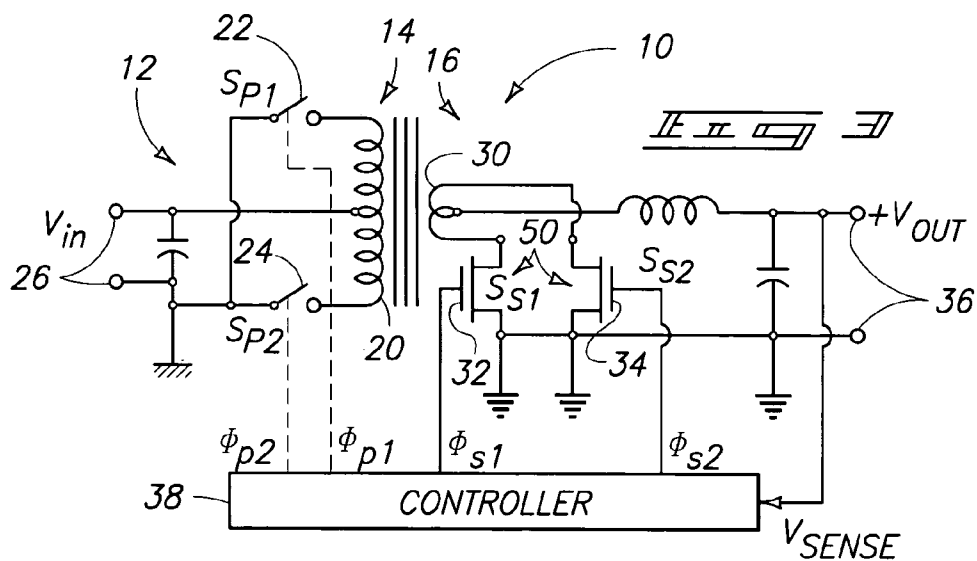


FIG. 3

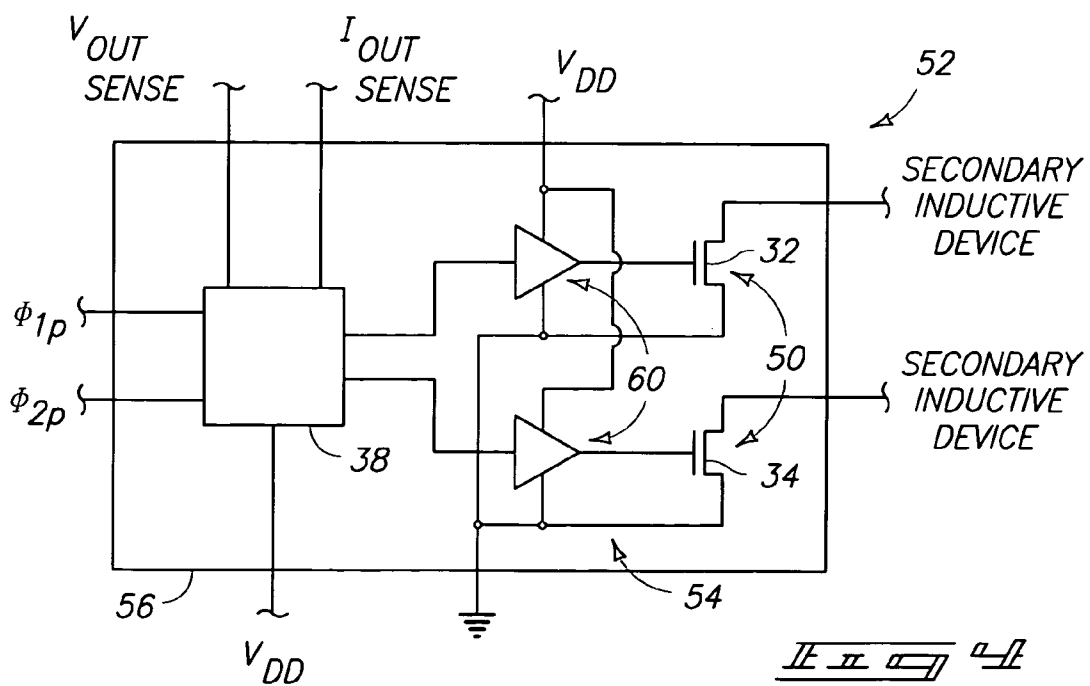
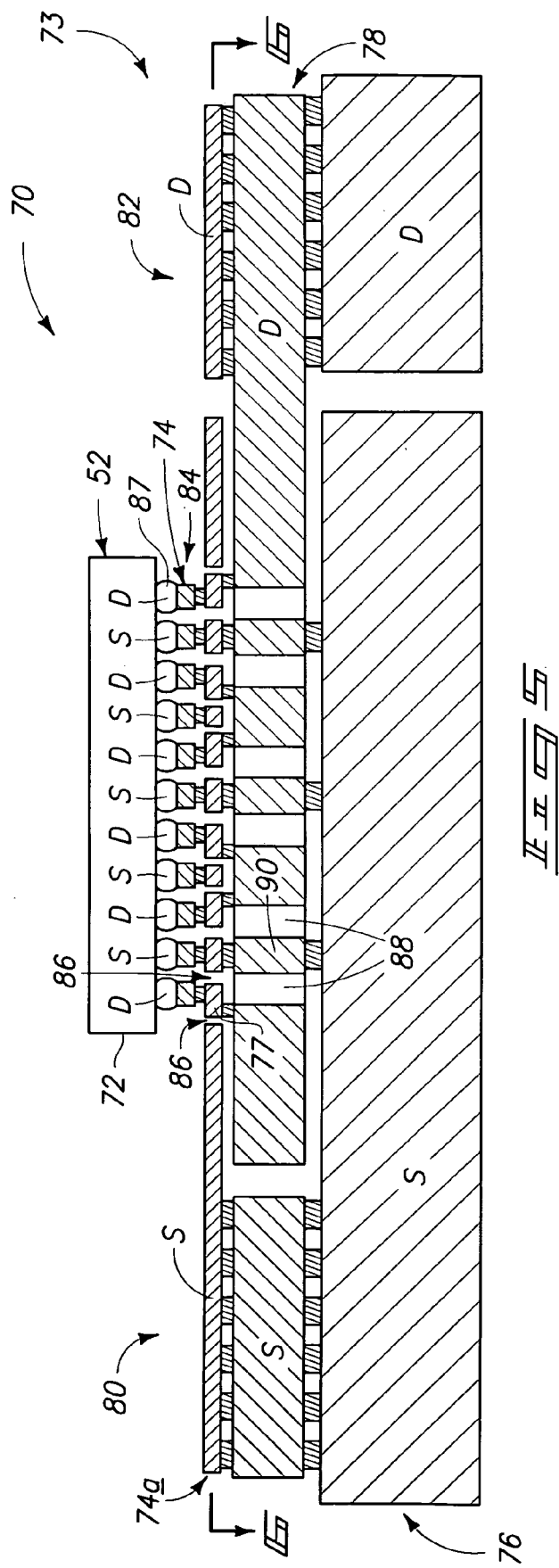
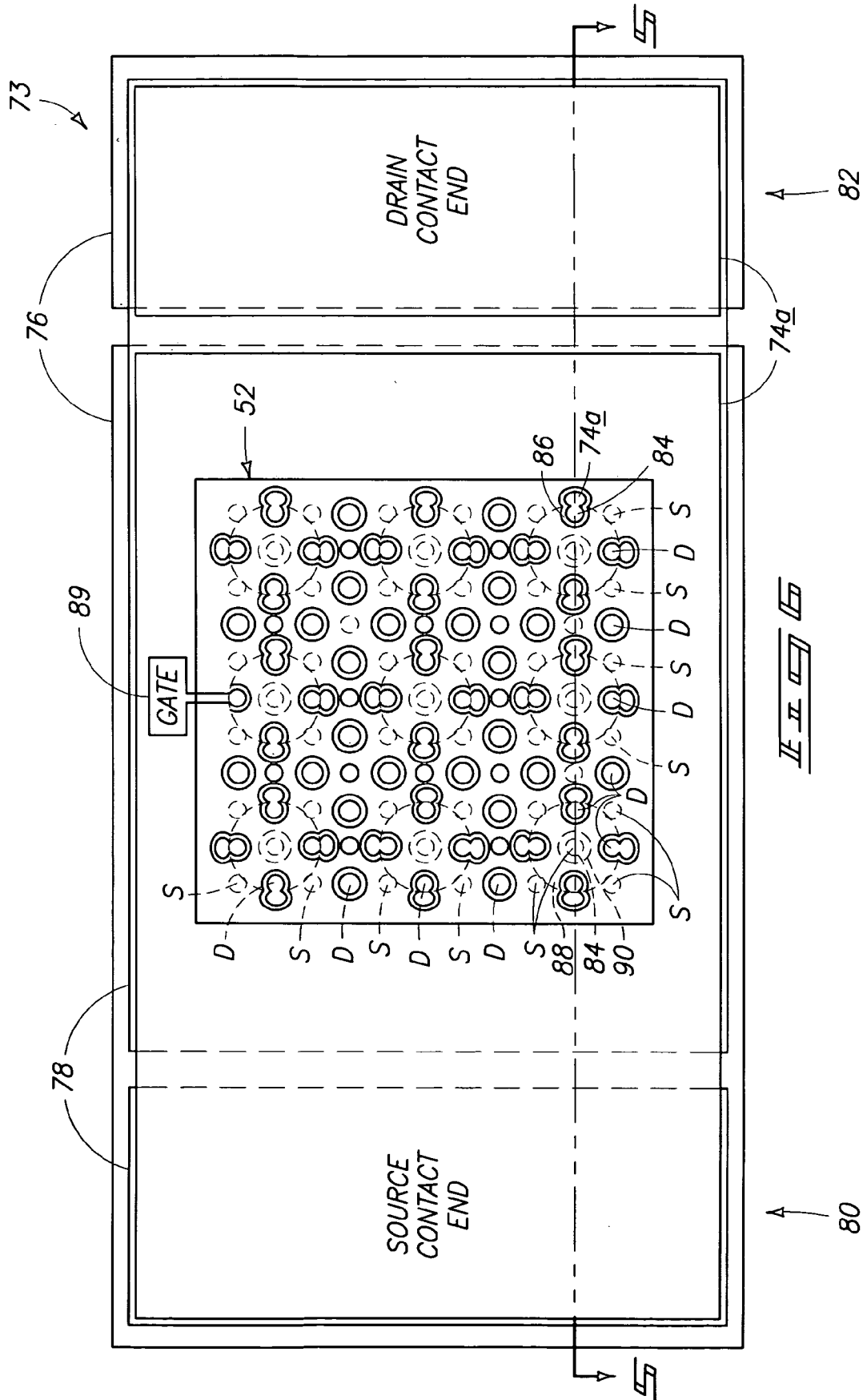
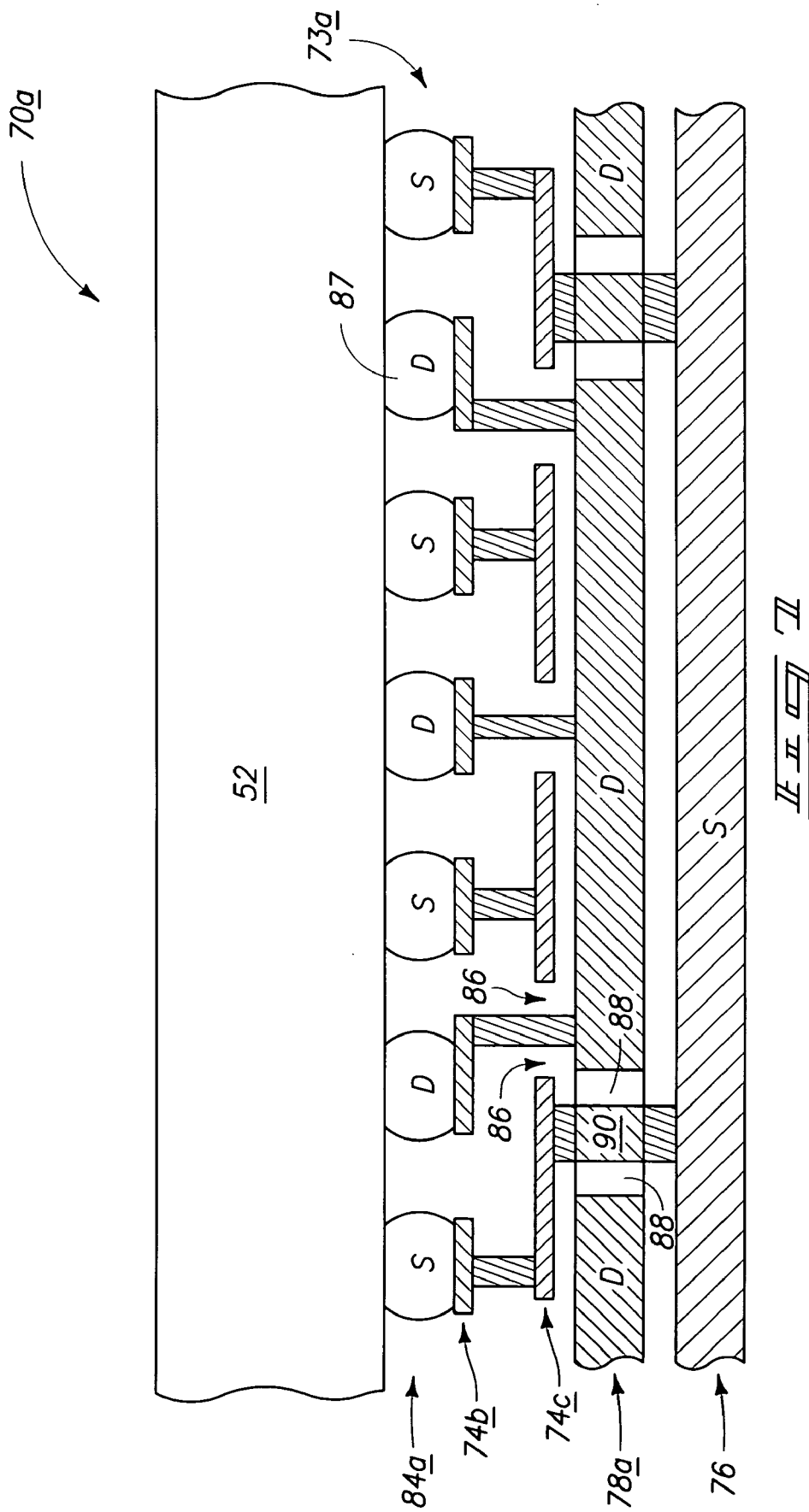
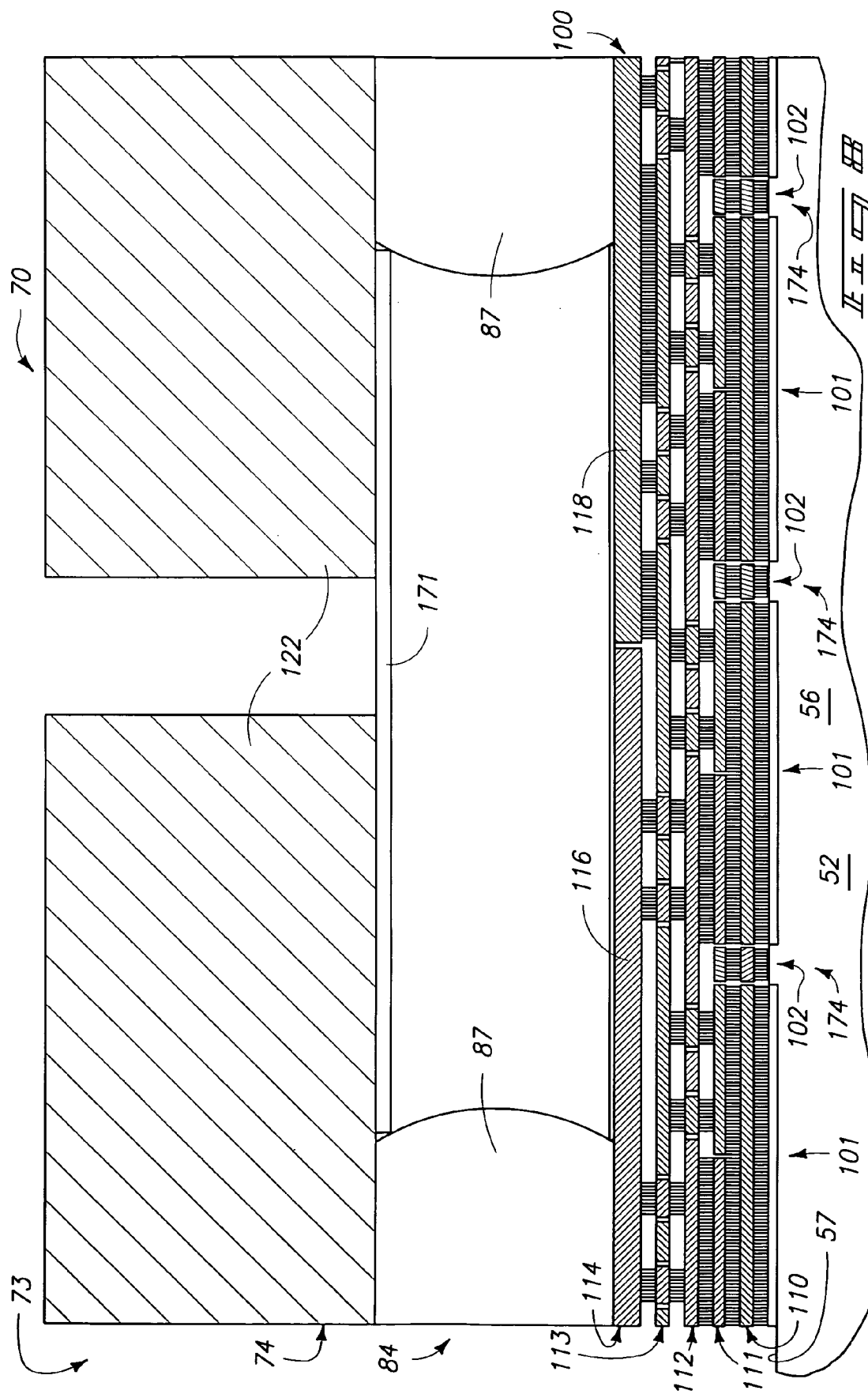


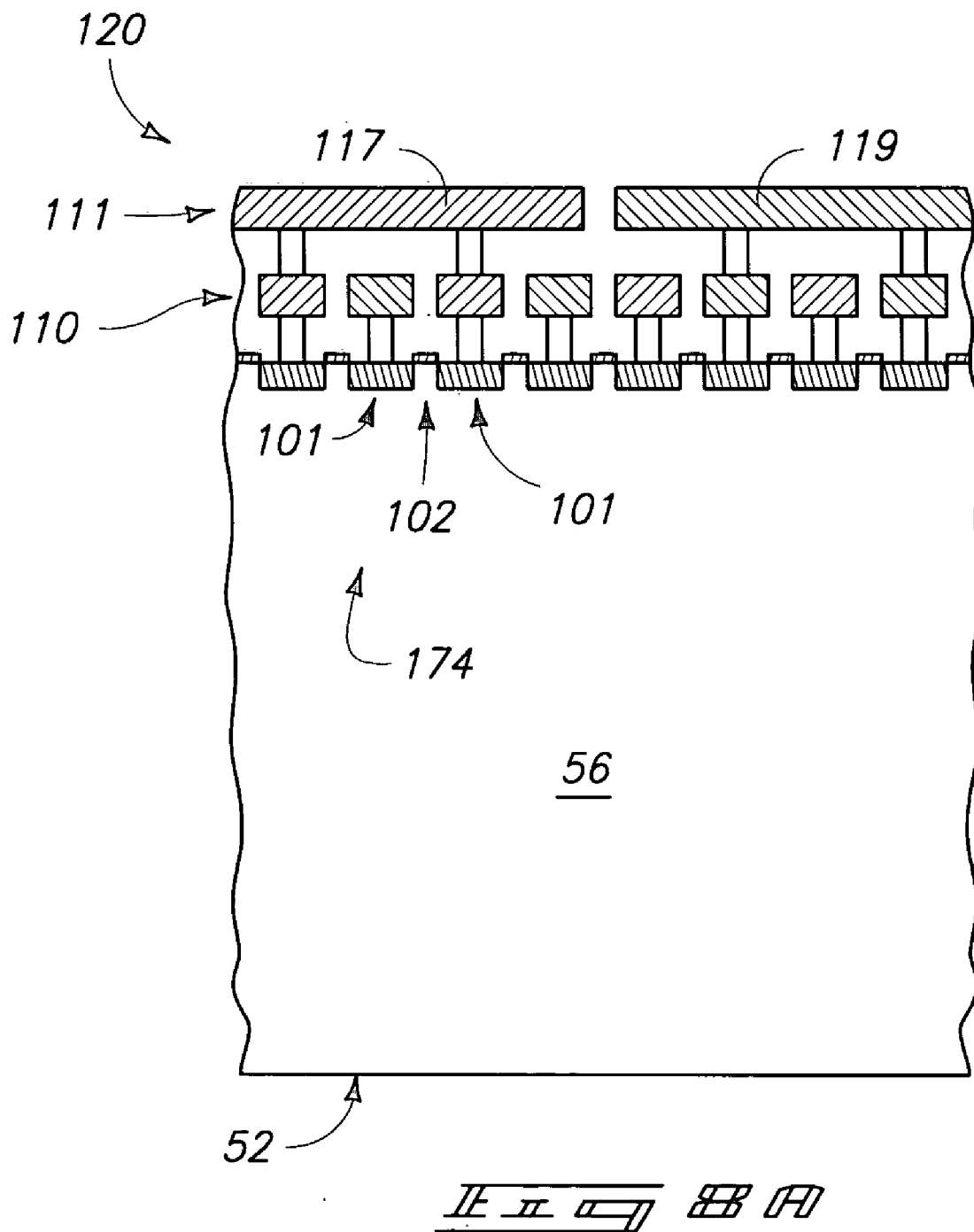
FIG. 4

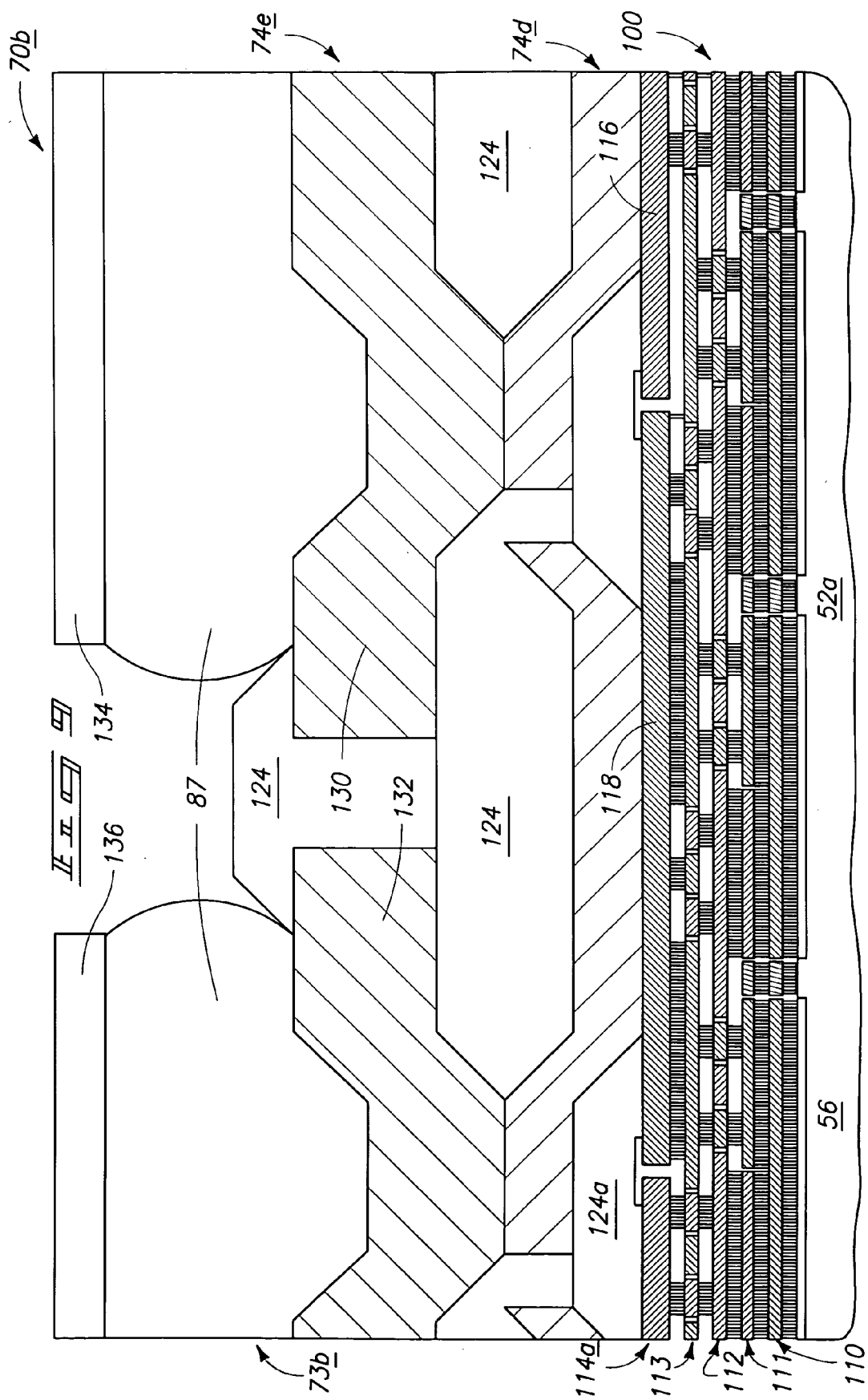


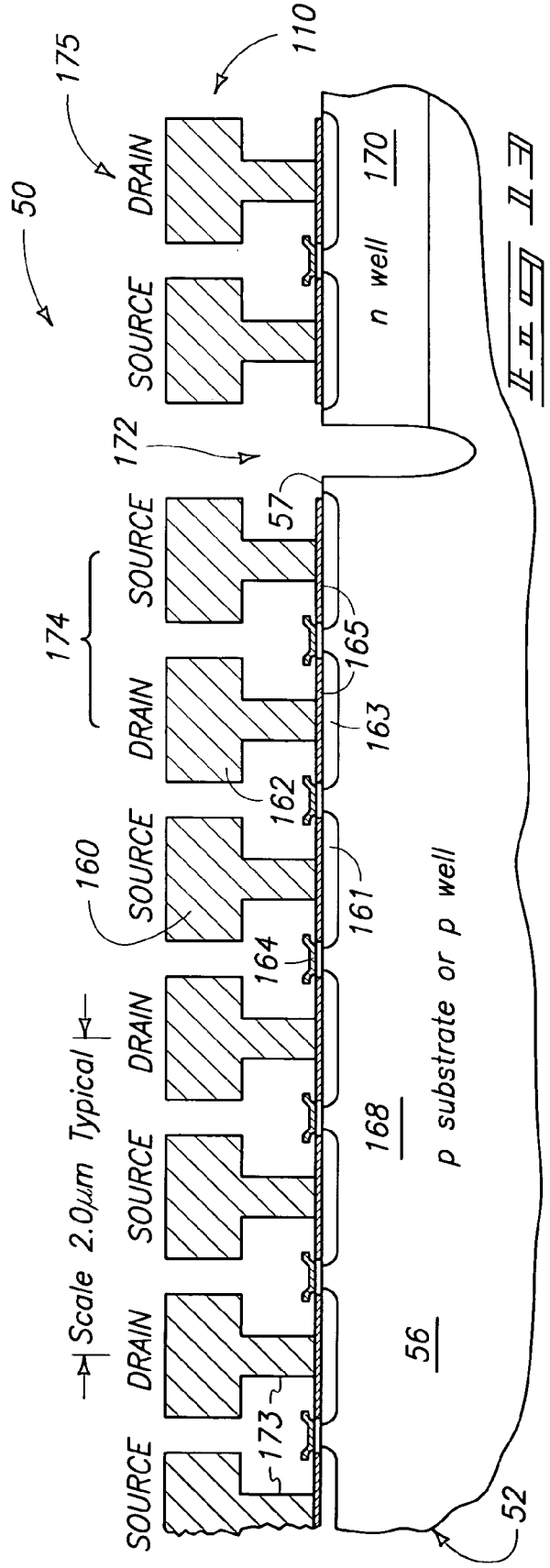
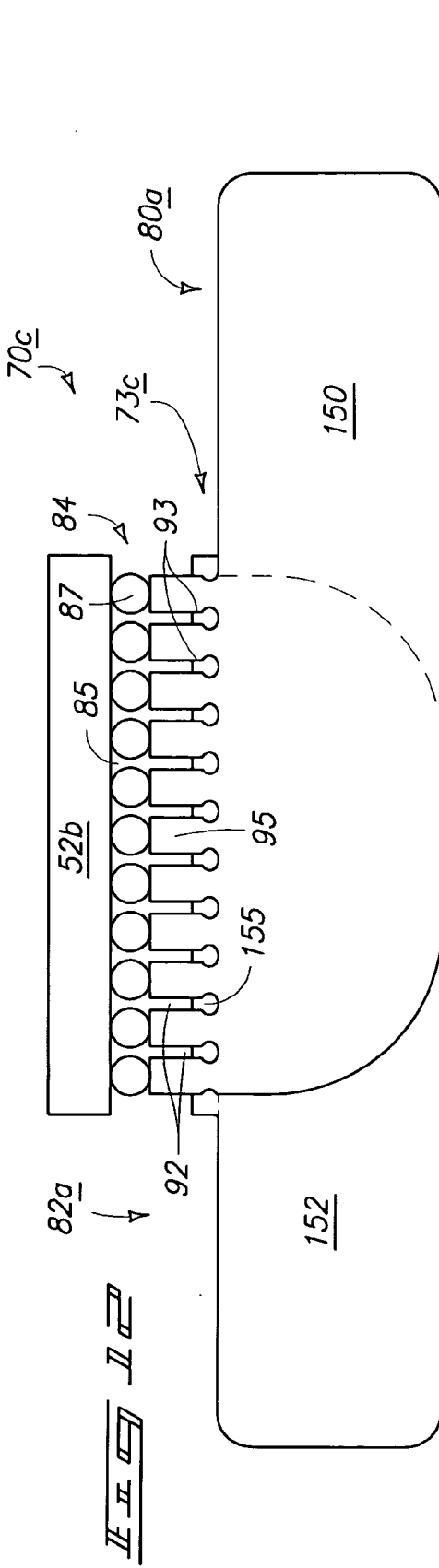












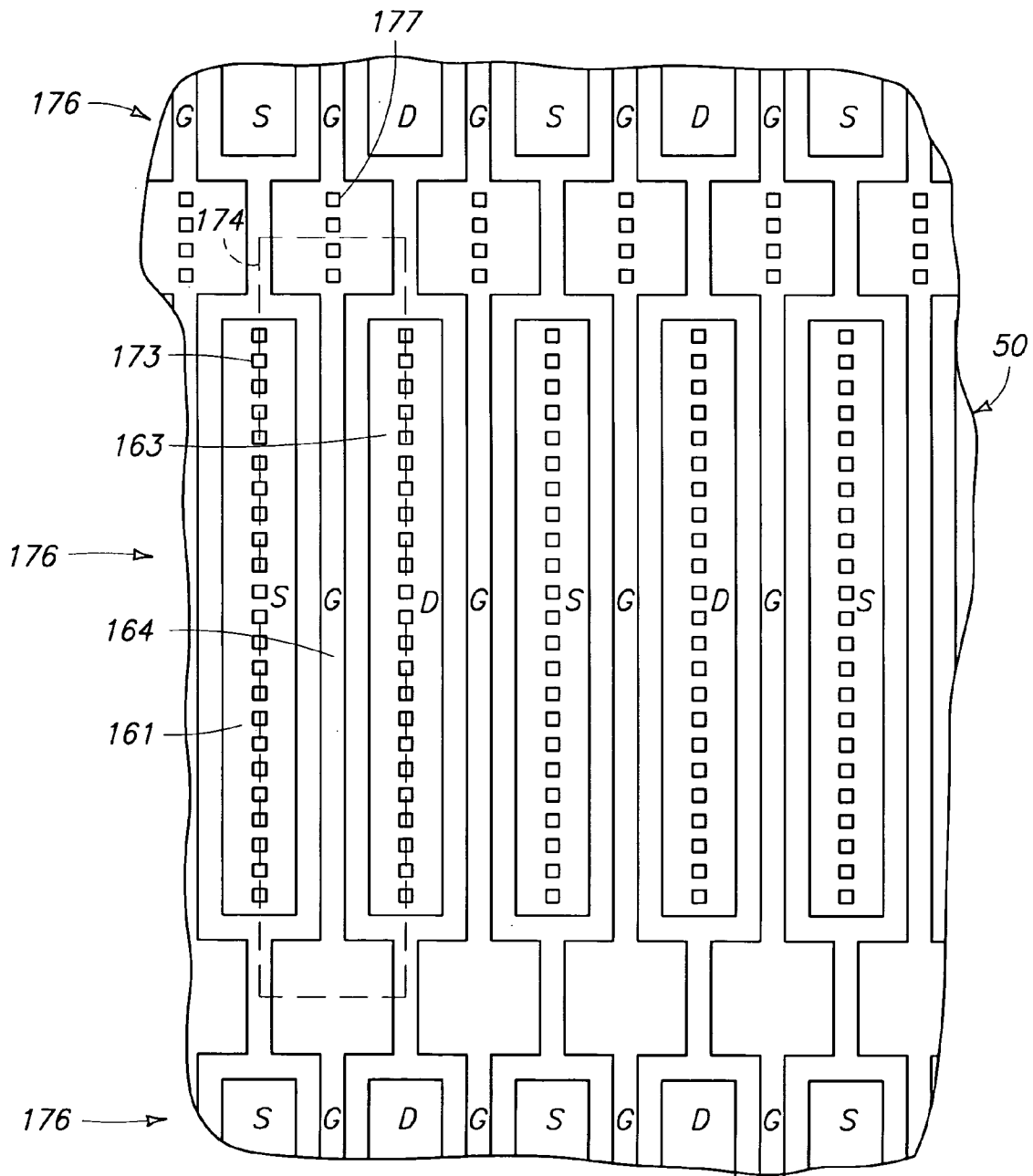
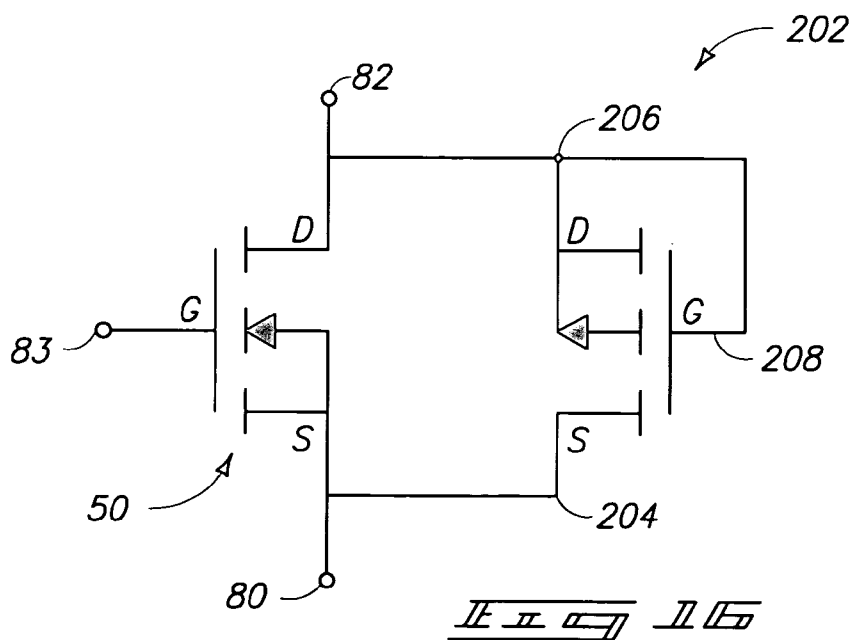
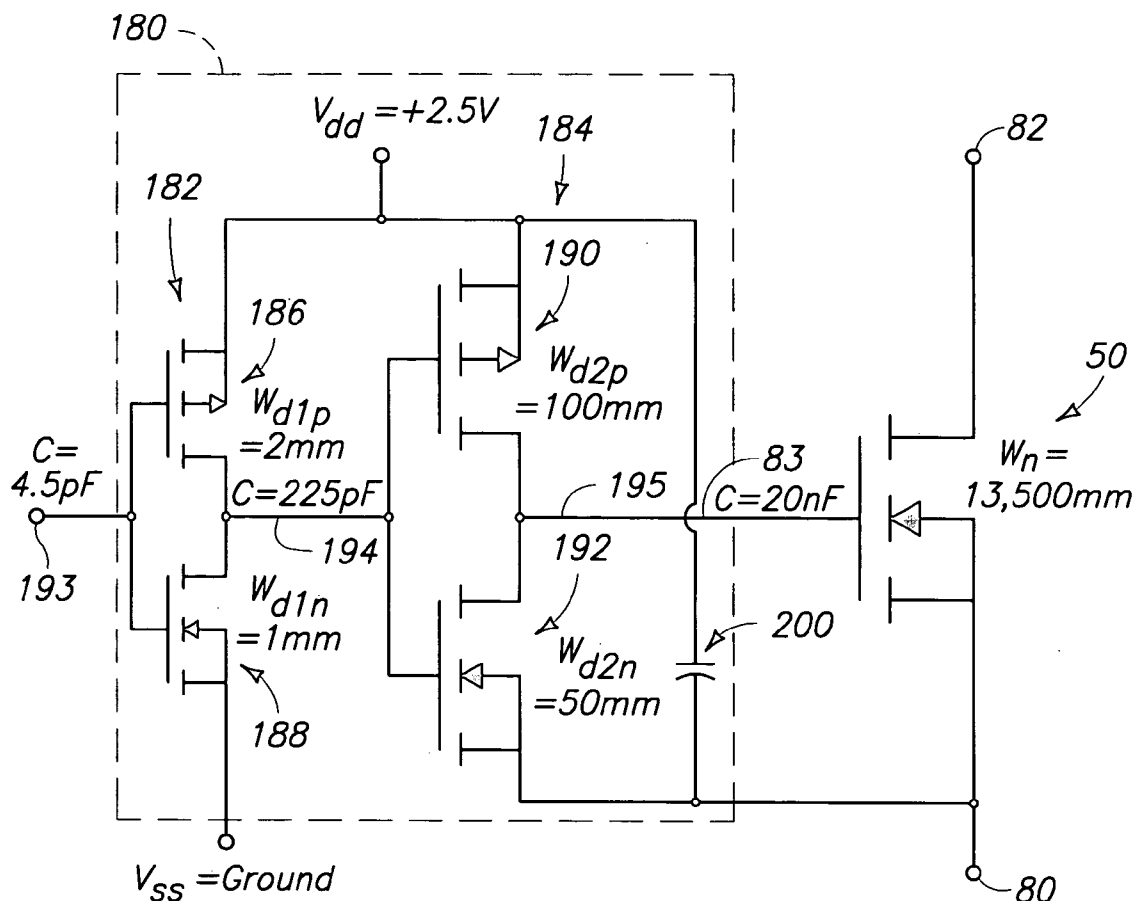
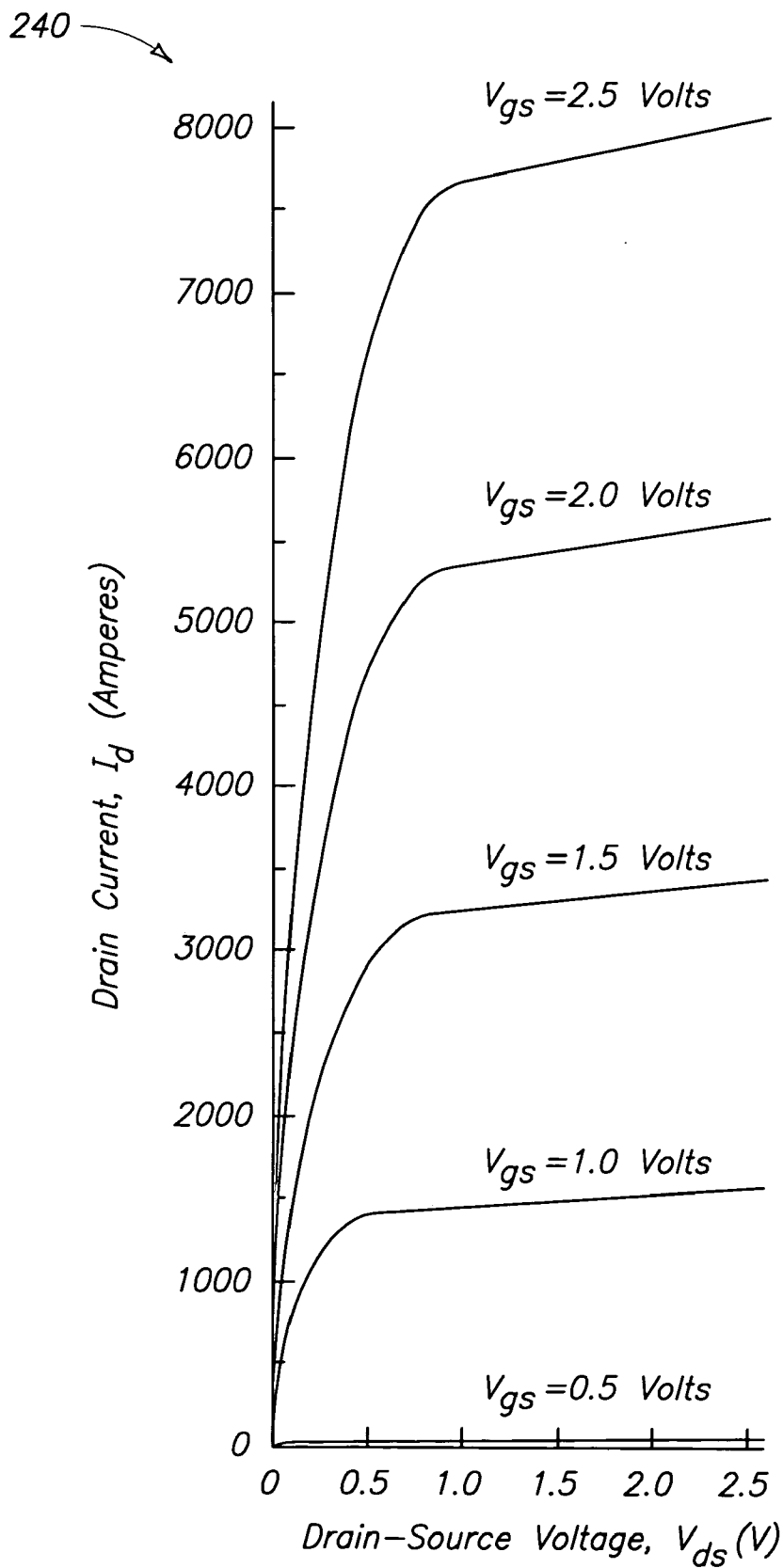
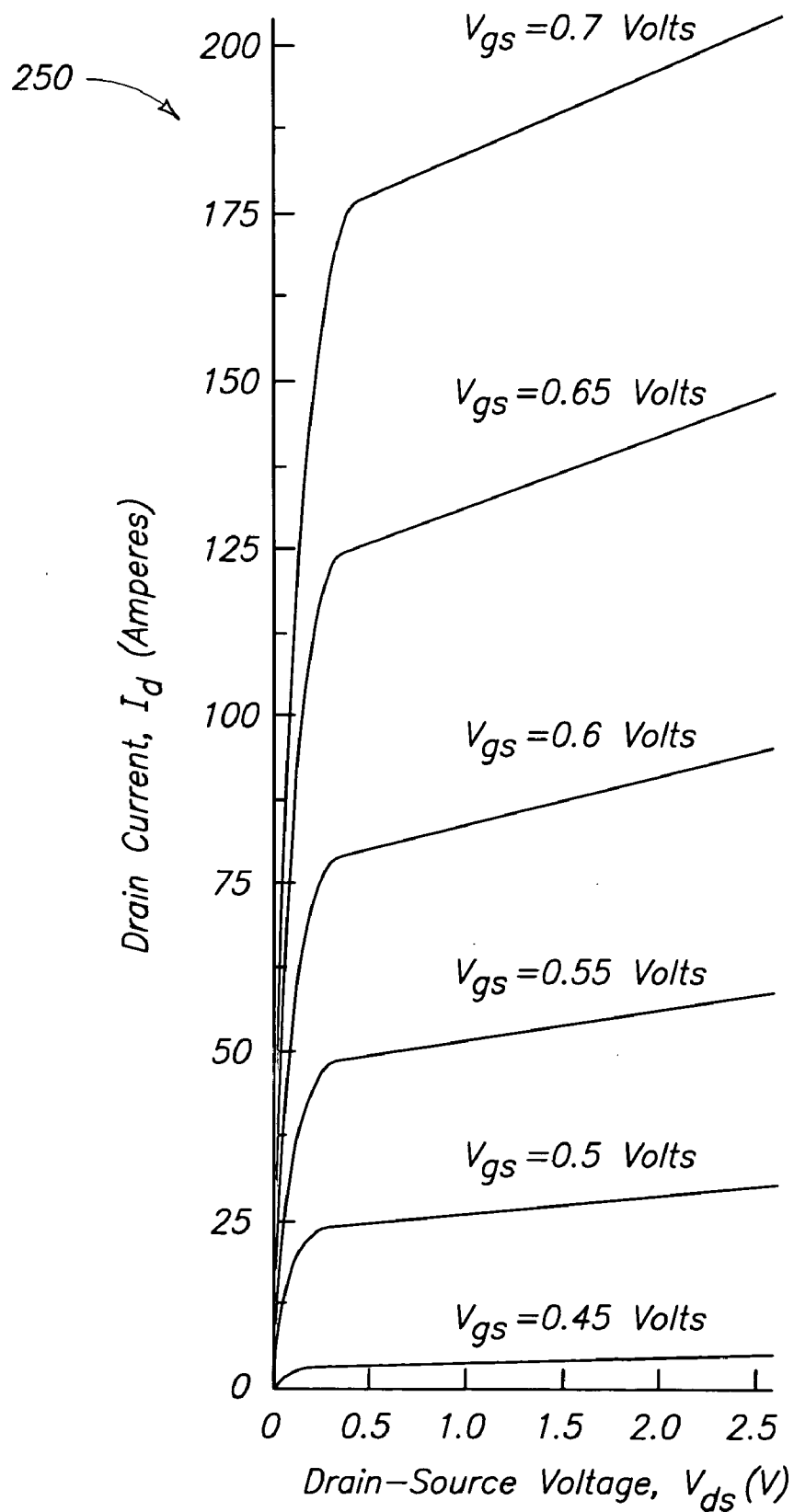


Figure 11

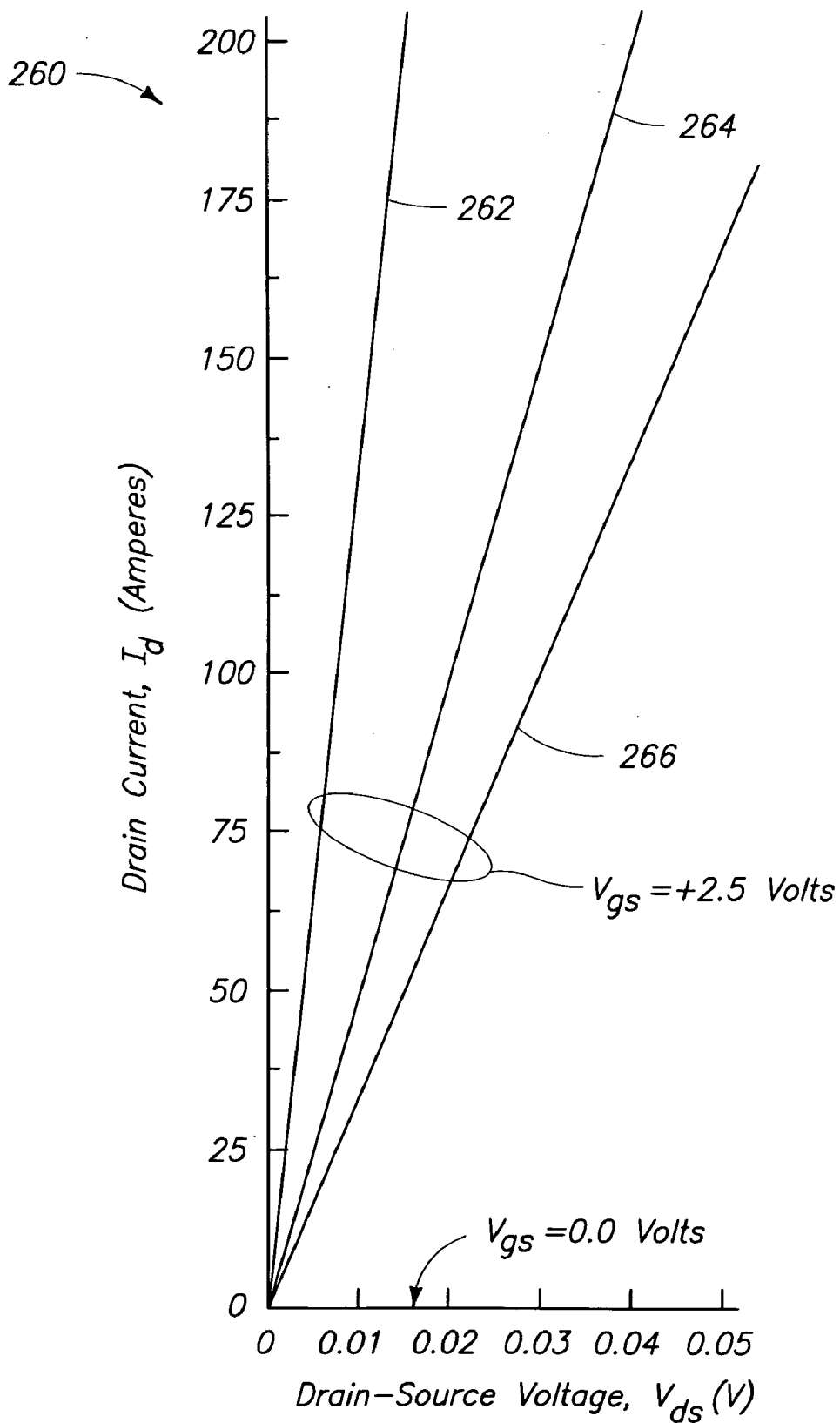




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**POWER SEMICONDUCTOR SWITCHING
DEVICES AND POWER SEMICONDUCTOR
DEVICES**

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/217,860, which was filed on Jul. 13, 2000, titled "Low Cost Ultra-Low On-Resistance High-Current Switching MOSFET for Low Voltage Power Conversion", naming Richard C. Eden and Bruce A. Smetana as inventors, and which is incorporated by reference herein.

PATENT RIGHTS STATEMENT

[0002] This invention was made with Government support under Contract No. MDA-904-99-C-2644/0000 awarded by the Maryland Procurement Office of the National Security Agency (NSA). The Government has certain rights in this invention.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0003] This invention relates to power semiconductor switching devices, power converters, integrated circuit assemblies, integrated circuitry, current switching methods, methods of forming a power semiconductor switching device, power conversion methods, power semiconductor switching device packaging methods, and methods of forming a power transistor.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Computational power of digital processing circuitry is related to the conversion of input DC power to waste heat. As digital computational powers increase, the associated power consumption and heat generated by processing devices also increase. Power supply voltages of logic circuits have been reduced from 5 Volts to 1.2 Volts or less to alleviate excessive generation of heat and power consumption. However, reduction of power supply voltages has complicated other issues of power supply and distribution to logic circuits. For example, electrical resistance between power supplies and logic circuits has a more significant impact upon efficiency as supply voltages continued to be reduced.

[0005] Some designs have provided power to PC boards at high voltages (e.g., 48 Volts) and then utilize on-board converters to convert the received high voltage energy to 1.2 Volt or other low voltage supply energy for application to logic circuits. To minimize the size of such converters, the stored energy requirements in the magnetics and capacitors can be reduced by increasing the switching frequency of the converter. However, conventional power semiconductor configurations utilized in converters and capable of handling relatively large currents can not typically switch efficiently at the desired switching speeds.

[0006] FIG. 1 depicts a conventional vertical geometry power MOSFET device having a plurality of n+ source contact regions 3 which lie within p (body) regions 3P (typically formed as hexagonal islands), where both the p (body) regions 3P and the n+ source contact regions 3 are electrically connected to the upper source contact metal 3M. The gate conductors 2 are insulated from source contact

metal 3M under which they lie by the insulator 3I and from the silicon substrate by the thin gate insulator 2I. The gate conductors 2 cover the regions between the p (body) regions 3P, extending across the edge (surface channel) portion of the perimeter of the p (body) regions 3P to the n+ source regions 3. When the gate conductors 2 are biased more positively than the threshold voltage of this conventional n-channel power MOSFET, electron flow through these surface channel regions is induced which results in electron flow along indicated paths 4. Electron paths 4 are formed from the adjacent n+ source regions 3 horizontally through the surface channel, vertically through the n- drain drift region 5N to the n+ drain region 5 to the bottom drain metallization contact 6 shown in FIG. 1. This current flow path leads to values of source-drain ON resistance that are higher than desired for efficient low voltage power conversion applications.

[0007] The equivalent circuit of a conventional power MOSFET illustrated in FIG. 1 is depicted in FIG. 2. A p-n body diode 7 is provided from the source 3 to the drain 6 and comprises the p body region 3P and the n- and n+ drain regions 5N and 5 shown in FIG. 1. The body diode 7 is a relatively large p-n-n+ diode with a very large diffusion charge storage capacity Q_d . Accordingly, when the body diode 7 is first reversed biased after heavy forward conduction, a large transient reverse current i_r flows for a substantial period of time $t_r = Q_d / i_r$ which can limit usable switching frequencies.

[0008] There exists needs for improved semiconductor devices and methodologies which overcome problems associated with conventional arrangements.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The patent or application file contains at least one drawing executed in color. Copies of this patent or patent application publication with color drawing(s) will be provided by the Office upon request and payment of necessary fees.

[0010] Preferred embodiments of the invention are described below with reference to the following accompanying drawings.

[0011] FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a conventional vertical power MOSFET device.

[0012] FIG. 2 is a schematic representation of the conventional power MOSFET equivalent circuit.

[0013] FIG. 3 is schematic illustration of an exemplary synchronous rectification power converter.

[0014] FIG. 4 is an illustrative representation of exemplary components formed upon a monolithic semiconductor die.

[0015] FIG. 5 is a side cross-sectional view of an exemplary high-current, low resistance area interconnect die package assembly.

[0016] FIG. 6 is another (top) cross-sectional view of the high-current, low resistance area interconnect die package assembly of FIG. 5.

[0017] FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of an alternative high-current, low resistance area interconnect die package assembly.

[0018] FIG. 8 is a detailed cross-sectional view of the package and a planar high-current silicon switch die of FIG. 5 or FIG. 7.

[0019] FIG. 8A is another cross-sectional view of a portion of the integrated circuit assembly of FIG. 8.

[0020] FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of another alternative exemplary configuration of an integrated circuit assembly.

[0021] FIG. 10 is a plan view of an exemplary semiconductor die provided in a flip-chip arrangement.

[0022] FIG. 11 is a side view of an exemplary integrated circuit assembly including the integrated circuit die of FIG. 10.

[0023] FIG. 12 is another side view of the integrated circuit assembly shown in FIG. 11.

[0024] FIG. 13 is an illustrative representation depicting a plurality of exemplary planar MOSFET devices of a power semiconductor switching device.

[0025] FIG. 14 is a plan view of an exemplary arrangement of the planar MOSFET transistors of FIG. 13 fabricated within a semiconductor die.

[0026] FIG. 15 is a schematic representation of an exemplary gate driver amplifier coupled with the power semiconductor switching device.

[0027] FIG. 16 is a schematic representation of an exemplary active diode p-channel MOSFET coupled with the power semiconductor switching device.

[0028] FIG. 17 is a graphical representation depicting drain currents versus a plurality of drain-source voltages of an exemplary power semiconductor switching device.

[0029] FIG. 18 is another graphical representation depicting drain currents versus additional drain-source voltages of the exemplary power semiconductor switching device graphed in FIG. 17.

[0030] FIG. 19 is yet another graphical representation depicting drain currents versus drain-source voltages of the exemplary power semiconductor switching device graphed in FIG. 17 and FIG. 18.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0031] This disclosure of the invention is submitted in furtherance of the constitutional purposes of the U.S. Patent Laws "to promote the progress of science and useful arts" (Article 1, Section 8).

[0032] Like reference numerals represent like components with differences therebetween being represented by a convenient suffix, such as "a".

[0033] Referring to FIG. 3, a switching power converter 10 is depicted according to exemplary aspects of the present invention. The switching power converter 10 illustrated in FIG. 3 is configured as a synchronous rectification power converter. Other configurations of power converter 10 are possible. The illustrated embodiment of power converter 10 includes a transformer 12 comprising a primary side 14 and a secondary side 16. Power converter 10 is configured to implement DC to DC power conversion operations. High-

current, low "on" resistance planar MOSFET power semiconductor switching devices illustrated as reference 50 provided according to aspects of the present invention are included on the secondary side 16 of power converter 10 in the depicted embodiment. In a conventional diode rectified power converter, the switches 50 would be replaced by a pair of Schottky diode rectifiers with their anodes grounded.

[0034] Primary side 14 comprises a center-tapped primary transformer winding 20 coupled with plural primary switching devices 22, 24 and primary terminals 26. Switching devices 22, 24 are implemented intermediate one of primary terminals 26 and primary transformer winding 20.

[0035] Secondary side 16 includes a center-tapped secondary transformer winding 30 coupled with a plurality of secondary switches 32, 34 and secondary terminals 36. Primary side 14 receives electricity via terminals 26 at a first voltage and a first current in one implementation of power converter 10. Secondary transformer winding 30 is coupled with primary transformer winding 20 and is configured to provide electricity at a second voltage different than the first voltage and a second current different than the first current to terminals 36. For example, in the depicted exemplary embodiment, primary side 14 is configured to receive electricity at a first voltage greater than the voltage provided upon secondary side 16. In addition, primary side 14 receives current having a magnitude less than the magnitude of current provided at terminals 36.

[0036] In one exemplary application, power converter 10 is implemented to provide electricity to an associated micro-processor and/or other processing device(s) in a low voltage application (e.g., 1.2 Volts, 2.5 Volts) wherein utilization of diodes, for example in a diode rectification power converter, is rendered inefficient by the excessive voltage drops across the diode rectifier switching devices. For example, power converter 10 may be utilized in a personal computer, server, work station or other processing and logic circuitry applications, including low voltage, high current applications.

[0037] As shown, a controller 38 is provided coupled with primary switches 22, 24, secondary switches 32, 34 and secondary terminals 36. Controller 38 is configured to monitor output voltage and current via secondary terminals 36 to control operations of power converter 10. For example, controller 38 controls the timing of switching operations of primary switches 22, 24 and secondary switches 32, 34 to implement appropriate power conversion operations and to maintain the voltage and current of electricity within secondary side 16 in a desired range.

[0038] As described in detail below, secondary switches 32, 34 are configured to withstand power currents. Exemplary power currents include currents experienced within power devices which are greater than typical signaling currents which are usually a few tens of milliamps. Exemplary power currents are greater than one Ampere and reach magnitudes of 100 Amperes-200 Amperes or greater in exemplary configurations. Secondary switches 32, 34 are implemented as power semiconductor switching devices 50 described herein according to additional aspects of the invention. Such devices 50 may be configured to accommodate currents approaching or exceeding 1000 Amperes in exemplary configurations.

[0039] Power semiconductor switching devices 50 comprise high current devices having ultra low ON resistance

values (R_{on}) in exemplary configurations. Utilizing power semiconductor switching devices **50** described herein, R_{on} values less than 0.00015 Ohms are possible for configurations capable of handling 200 Amperes. Accordingly, it is favorable to use the low voltage, high current power devices **50** as secondary switches **32, 34** having low R_{on} values for improved efficiency.

[0040] In the depicted power converter applications, controller **38** is configured to sense output voltages and currents at terminals **36**. Responsive to such monitoring, controller **38** applies control signals to primary switches **22, 24** and secondary switches **32, 34** to control the operation of the switches to maintain the voltages and currents at terminals **36** within a desired range. As illustrated, controller **38** applies control signals to the gates of secondary switches **32, 34** implemented as power semiconductor switching devices **50** according to exemplary aspects of the invention.

[0041] Referring to FIG. 4, an exemplary configuration of secondary switches **32, 34** configured as power semiconductor switching devices **50** according to aspects of the present invention is illustrated. Power semiconductor switching devices **50** individually comprise a power MOSFET transistor which may be formed by a plurality of MOSFET transistors coupled in parallel according to additional aspects of the invention. One common control signal is utilized to control the individual MOSFET transistors of the power device **50**. Exemplary MOSFET transistors utilized to form an individual one of the power semiconductor switching devices **50** are described below as reference **174** in FIG. 13 and FIG. 14. Such transistors are implemented as planar, horizontally configured n-channel MOSFET devices in one exemplary aspect.

[0042] FIG. 4 depicts a monolithic semiconductor die **52** containing plural power semiconductor switching devices **50** according to one embodiment. The semiconductor die **52** is fabricated from a monolithic semiconductive substrate **56** in the described exemplary embodiment. For example, semiconductor die **52** is formed from a semiconductive wafer (not shown) such as silicon, silicon carbide, gallium arsenide or other appropriate semiconductive substrate.

[0043] In the described embodiment, portions of semiconductive substrate **56** are doped with a p-type dopant providing a p-substrate or p-well. In addition, an n-well may also be formed within semiconductive substrate **56**. As described further below, n-channel MOSFET devices are formed within portions of substrate **56** comprising p-type portions or wells of substrate **56** and p-channel MOSFET devices are formed within n-type portions or wells of substrate **56**. P-type and n-type portions of substrate **56** are shown in FIG. 13 for example.

[0044] The depicted monolithic semiconductor die **52** also comprises auxiliary circuitry **54** according to aspects of the present invention. Auxiliary circuitry **54** is circuitry apart from circuitry comprising power semiconductor switching devices **50**. In some applications, auxiliary circuitry **54** is coupled with and favorably utilized in conjunction with power devices **50**. For example, auxiliary circuitry **54** comprises controller circuitry or driver circuitry to control power semiconductor switching devices **50**. In other applications, auxiliary circuitry **54** is not coupled with and is unrelated to operations of power semiconductor switching devices **50**. In some configurations, auxiliary circuitry **54** is implemented as application specific integrated circuitry (ASIC).

[0045] The depicted semiconductor die **52** is illustrated with respect to the power converter **10** application of FIG. 3. Other configurations of semiconductor die **52** including other arrangements of power semiconductor switching devices **50** and auxiliary circuitry **54** configured for other applications are possible. In the illustrated exemplary configuration, auxiliary circuitry **54** formed upon monolithic semiconductor die **52** and comprising controller **38** and gate amplifiers **60** are configured to couple with at least one of the electrical contacts (i.e., gate contact in the arrangement of FIG. 4) of the respective power semiconductor switching devices **50**.

[0046] Regardless of the application of die **52** or power devices **50**, aspects of the present invention provide auxiliary circuitry **54** upon monolithic semiconductor die **52** including power semiconductor switching devices **50**. Fabrication of power semiconductor switching devices **50** using common CMOS processing methodologies according to aspects of the present invention or other processing techniques facilitates formation of auxiliary circuitry **54** using similar processing methodologies upon monolithic semiconductor die **52**. For example, if CMOS processes are used to form devices **50**, such CMOS processes can also be utilized to form auxiliary circuitry **54**, if desired. Power semiconductor switching devices **50** may be fabricated simultaneously with auxiliary circuitry **54** in such arrangements. The capability to provide auxiliary circuitry **54** upon the semiconductor die **52** is enabled by the fabrication of power semiconductor switching devices **50** comprising planar MOSFET devices according to aspects of the present invention which may be fabricated within a standard CMOS foundry ordinarily used to fabricate small-signal digital or analog circuits.

[0047] Apart from the illustrated fabrication efficiencies of power semiconductor switching devices **50** and auxiliary circuitry **54**, there may be other reasons to provide auxiliary circuitry **54** upon the same semiconductor die **52** as devices **50**. For example, and as described further below, exemplary configurations of power semiconductor switching devices **50** individually comprise a plurality of MOSFETs, including for example, thousands of parallel-coupled MOSFETs (a plurality of MOSFET switching devices of individual power devices **50** are depicted in exemplary configurations in FIG. 13 and FIG. 14). Provision of auxiliary circuitry **54** including control circuitry and driver circuitry upon the same die **52** as devices **50** advantageously facilitates driving the gate capacitances of the individual MOSFETs comprising power devices **50** and minimizes the capacitance which must be driven by external control circuitry such as the outputs from the converter controller **38**. Further details regarding driving gate capacitances of devices **50** are described below and other advantages may be gained by providing auxiliary circuitry **54** upon monolithic substrate **56**.

[0048] In particular, it may be desired to provide converter controller **38** adjacent to the secondary side **16** in synchronous rectifier switching applications. According to embodiments described herein, auxiliary circuitry **54** is configured as converter controller **38** provided upon die **52** including power devices **50**. Providing controller **38** adjacent to devices **50** is advantageous to significantly reduce parts count in providing power converter products. Controller circuitry **38** may be implemented using analog or digital control circuit configurations.

[0049] As mentioned above, power converter controller **38** provides respective control signals to control the operation of secondary switches **32, 34** implemented as power semiconductor switching devices **50** upon die **52** according to aspects of the present invention. Controller **38** is also configured to apply control signals externally of semiconductor die **52**. For example, controller **38** is arranged in the exemplary configuration to apply control signals (Φ_{p1} , Φ_{p2}) to primary switches **22, 24** to control switches **22, 24**, generally through some type of isolation device to enable isolation between the input side **14** and output side **16** grounds of power converter **10**. Power controller **38** is also coupled with output terminals **36** to sense voltages and currents within the secondary side **16** of power converter **10**. Bond pads (not shown) are provided upon semiconductor die **52** to provide coupling of die **52** with external circuitry including terminals **36** and isolation devices coupling to primary switches **22, 24**.

[0050] As discussed above, auxiliary circuitry **54** further includes gate driver amplifier circuits **60** coupled intermediate controller **38** and respective power semiconductor switching devices **50**. Gate driver amplifier circuits **60** operate to improve power conversion operations or other operations requiring controlled switching of power semiconductor devices **50**. Further details regarding an exemplary configuration of amplifiers **60** are discussed below in **FIG. 15** as reference **180**.

[0051] As mentioned above and according to aspects of the invention, power semiconductor switching devices **50** may be individually implemented as a plurality of parallel-coupled MOSFETs including parallel-coupled gates, parallel-coupled sources and parallel-coupled drains. Gate driver amplifier circuits **60** are configured to provide respective control signals to the parallel-coupled gates of the MOSFETs of power semiconductor switching devices **50**. Depending upon the application of power devices **50** (e.g., application within power converter **10**) significant input currents may be required to drive the MOSFET gates of individual power semiconductor switching devices **50**. Utilization of gate driver amplifiers **60** according to aspects of the invention facilitates driving these input currents and minimizes the capacitance which must be driven by the control circuitry controlling the gates of power semiconductor switching devices **50** providing improved switching speeds.

[0052] Further, large current spikes involved in charging and discharging gate capacitance of power semiconductor switching devices **50** comprising numerous parallel-coupled MOSFETs places demands on available current and provides a serious limitation to timing precision and practical switching speeds. In some configurations, (e.g., some configurations of power semiconductor switching devices **50** comprise 500,000 MOSFET devices or more arranged in parallel as described below) 20 nF gate capacitances are driven. The utilization of gate driver amplifiers **60** upon semiconductor die **52** reduces the capacitance at the gate control input to the gate drive amplifiers **60** to 4.5 pF of a 500,000 MOSFET device **50** which may be easily controlled directly from digital timing circuits such as controller **38** to precisions of a few nanoseconds.

[0053] Alternative auxiliary circuitry **54** includes zero-current switching/timing circuitry to detect the absence of

currents within secondary inductive device **30**. Zero-current switching/timing circuitry may be utilized to determine proper moments in time for controlling switching of secondary switches **32, 34**.

[0054] According to additional aspects, auxiliary circuitry **54** includes load protection circuitry configured to detect voltage overage conditions and current overage conditions. Controller **38** coupled with appropriate load protection circuitry controls operation of power semiconductor switching devices **50** responsive thereto, including opening or closing appropriate switching devices **22, 24, 32, 34**.

[0055] According to additional aspects, auxiliary circuitry **54** includes protection circuitry configured to detect drain-source or gate-source voltage overage conditions within devices **50** which could potentially be damaging to the devices and to institute corrective action such as to mitigate the over voltage conditions. Implementation of this function requires coupling from the drains of the power semiconductor switching devices **50** through some type of internal or external voltage discrimination elements (such as a Zener diodes or transient voltage suppression (TVS) circuitry) back to either auxiliary inputs on the respective gate drive amplifiers **60** or to the controller **38** (**FIG. 3**). When the voltage discrimination element provides feedback that a dangerous overvoltage condition exists at the drain of one of power MOSFET devices **32** or **34**, the protection circuitry functions to generate a gate voltage on that device such as to cause a momentary drain current pulse capable of suppressing the overvoltage condition in the manner of an active snubber circuit.

[0056] Exemplary configurations of zero-current switching/timing circuitry, load protection circuitry, active snubber circuitry or other configurations of auxiliary circuitry **54** are implemented as application specific integrated circuitry (ASIC) as mentioned above.

[0057] The depicted exemplary configuration of device **50** within semiconductor die **52** is provided for discussion purposes with respect to the exemplary power converter **10** application. Other configurations are possible including provision of a single power semiconductor switching device **50**, additional power semiconductor switching devices **50** and/or other associated auxiliary circuitry **54** upon an appropriate semiconductor die **52**. Other power conversion configurations and other applications of power semiconductor switching devices **50** described herein are possible. Power semiconductor switching devices **50** are usable in other low voltage, high current applications apart from exemplary applications described herein.

[0058] Aspects of the present invention also provide devices and methods for packaging of power semiconductor switching devices **50** and semiconductor die **52** including devices **50**. As set forth above, devices **50** according to exemplary configurations comprise plural MOSFET devices coupled in parallel. Examples of such MOSFETs are depicted in **FIG. 13** and **FIG. 14** as planar, horizontally configured MOSFETs having high-current power electrodes (e.g., source and drain) provided adjacent on a common surface as opposed to conventional power MOSFETs wherein the source is provided upon an upper surface and the drain is provided upon an opposing lower surface, as illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

[0059] Various exemplary packaging configurations and integrated circuit assemblies according to aspects of the

present invention are described hereafter with reference to **FIG. 5-FIG. 12**. The illustrated configurations are exemplary and other packaging or assembly arrangements are possible for power semiconductor switching devices **50**, including other combinations of the various layers and electrical connections depicted in **FIG. 5-FIG. 12**.

[0060] Referring to **FIG. 5** and **FIG. 6**, a first exemplary integrated circuit assembly **70** is shown. Integrated circuit assembly **70** includes semiconductor die **52** including one or more power semiconductor switching device **50** and auxiliary circuitry **54** (if circuitry **54** is provided within die **52**). In the illustrated example, semiconductor die **52** is implemented in a flip chip configuration. Other packaging designs of semiconductor die **52** are possible.

[0061] Integrated circuit assembly **70** further includes a package **73** coupled with semiconductor die **52**. Package **73** comprises one or more intermediate layer **74**, a source plane **76**, and a drain plane **78** (plural layers **74**, **74a** are illustrated in the exemplary package configuration of **FIG. 5** and one intermediate layer is shown in the exemplary arrangement of **FIG. 3** in Appendix A).

[0062] Intermediate layer(s) **74** comprise "fineline" layer(s) in the illustrated exemplary embodiment. For example, intermediate layer(s) **74** are implemented as plated copper planes (5-10 microns typical). Intermediate layer(s) **74** are capable of being patterned to horizontal feature sizes sufficiently small as to allow area array contact to the semiconductor die **52**. Intermediate layer(s) **74** which provide electrical conduction in a horizontal direction may be referred to as horizontal interconnect layers.

[0063] In one exemplary embodiment, drain plane **78** is implemented as a plated copper plane (0.010 inches or 250 microns typical) and plane **76** is implemented as a source plane comprising copper-invar-copper (0.030 inches or 750 microns typical). Other configurations of layer(s) **74** and planes **76**, **78** are possible.

[0064] For example, the drain plane **78** may be divided into two or more portions in an exemplary alternative configuration wherein individual portions service respective portions (e.g., halves) of the area of die **52** and coupled with two separate drain contact areas. In such an arrangement, a die containing two power devices **50** as illustrated in **FIG. 4** could be accommodated (whereas the illustration of **FIG. 5** and **FIG. 6** shows only a single high-current drain contact **82**, along with the single high-current source contact **80**, suitable for a die **52** having a single power device **50** in the depicted exemplary configuration).

[0065] In addition, the integrated circuit assembly **70** includes a single terminal source contact **80** and a single terminal drain contact **82** in the depicted exemplary configuration. Opposing ends of planes **76**, **78** define terminal contacts **80**, **82** in the exemplary configuration. Terminal contacts **80**, **82** are configured to couple with devices external of assembly **70** upon installation of assembly **70** into final products (e.g., terminal contacts **80**, **82** couple with a motherboard in an exemplary computer application).

[0066] Referring to **FIG. 6**, one or more gate lead replaces a drain solder ball in the array to provide connectivity to the gate of device **50**. The package lead which attaches to the gate may be fabricated in layer **74** if the gate ball is at the perimeter. **FIG. 6** depicts further details of the package **73**

of **FIG. 5** looking downward through a cross-sectional line passing through intermediate layer **74a**. Die **52** and gate contact **89** fabricated using layer **74** are shown in **FIG. 6** for illustrative purposes.

[0067] A plurality of electrical interconnects **84** are depicted which couple intermediate semiconductor die **52** and intermediate layer **74** of package **73**. Exemplary electrical interconnects **84** include respective gate, source and drain solder balls **87** coupled with respective mating pads fabricated in intermediate layer **74** in one exemplary configuration. Intermediate layer **74** also provides contact to the gate (as mentioned above) and other lower current connections to the semiconductor die **52** as well as providing external package connection pads for coupling these to a circuit board through suitable connections and can form, in conjunction with solder balls **87** and intermediate layer **74a** if desired, the electrical connection between lower current connections of die **52** and their respective external package pads. Electrical interconnects **84** coupled with respective source, drain, gate and other bond pads of semiconductor die **52** (not shown) provide connectivity of such bond pads to intermediate layer **74**.

[0068] As shown in the depicted embodiment, intermediate layer **74a** is spaced from semiconductor die **52** including power semiconductor switching devices **50** therein. Intermediate layer **74a** provides proper coupling of source bond pads of semiconductor die **52** with source plane **76** and permits coupling of drain bond pads of semiconductor die **52** with drain plane **78**.

[0069] Intermediate layer **74a** is generally implemented as a source plane in the described embodiment. Layer **74a** is coupled with source plane **76** and source terminal contact **80** using a plurality of via conductors **90** within vias **88** passing through, but insulated from, drain plane **78**. Via conductors **90** provide connectivity of source plane **76** with the proper associated source electrical interconnects **84** and source portions of intermediate layer **74a**.

[0070] As shown, layer **74a** includes a plurality of vias **86**. Portions **77** of layer **74a** within vias **86** and electrically insulated from the remainder of layer **74a** provide connectivity of respective drain bond pads of die **52** to drain plane **78**. Portions of layer **74a** within vias **86** provide lateral, horizontal matching of drain bond pads and respective drain interconnects **84** to drain plane **78** as shown illustrating layer **74a** as a horizontal interconnect layer.

[0071] Electrical interconnects **84** couple source bond and drain pads of semiconductor die **52** with respective portions of layer **74** in the depicted embodiment. Although not illustrated, an appropriate insulative dielectric material may be provided within vias **86**, **88**, intermediate source plane **76** and drain plane **78**, and intermediate source and drain portions of layer **74a**. Further, dielectric material may be provided at other desired locations to provide appropriate electrical insulation, such as between planes **76** and **78**, between plane **78** and layer **74a**, and between layers **74** and **74a**. Insulative underfill material may also be provided beneath semiconductor die **52** to protect solder balls **87** and semiconductor die **52**.

[0072] As illustrated, **FIG. 5** and **FIG. 6** depict an exemplary integrated circuit assembly **70** comprising an area array bumped flip-chip configuration of die **52** mounted to a

fineline augmented package 73. The high density solder bump array may be provided directly upon die pads of semiconductor die 52 and contact a mating high density pad array patterned in layer 74 over layer 74a of package 73.

[0073] Package metallization layers thick enough to handle some high source and drain currents can not be patterned fine enough to directly mate to some chip solder bump pitches. Accordingly, in some embodiments, one or more intermediate layer (comprising fineline additive copper/polymer interconnect layers in one embodiment as mentioned above) is implemented to provide an exemplary solution to feature size mismatch of semiconductor die 52 and package 73.

[0074] The intermediate layers are implemented to include pattern plated copper conductor layers with patterned benzocyclobutene (BCB) sold under the trademark CYCLOTENE available from the Dow Chemical Company, and comprising appropriate dielectric layers in one exemplary embodiment. Other patternable dielectric materials such as polyimide could also be used as an alternative to BCB. The described exemplary intermediate layer 74 is capable of being patterned with requisite area bump array feature sizes which are thicker than on-chip metal layers (e.g., typically 5-20 microns of copper compared to 0.4-0.8 microns of aluminum upon a CMOS die). However, such are not as thick as 10 mils (254 microns) or more of copper upon main packaging layers implemented as planes 76, 78 in the described embodiment where undivided source and drain currents pass from the package contacts. Further details regarding similar or alternative configurations of package 73 are illustrated below and in FIG. 6A and FIG. 6B of the Appendix and described in the associated text thereof.

[0075] Referring to FIG. 7, an alternative configuration of integrated circuit assembly is illustrated as reference 70a. Integrated circuit assembly 70a may be utilized in applications having finer solder ball pitch compared to assembly 70. Integrated circuit assembly 70a includes package 73a including a plurality of intermediate layers depicted as references 74b, 74c. Plural intermediate layers 74b, 74c comprising fineline layers for example and configured as horizontal interconnect layers as shown provide additional flexibility in accommodating feature size mismatch of semiconductor die 52 and package 73a. Additional horizontal interconnect layers for example implemented as additional intermediate layers are utilized in other embodiments if desired to couple additional source and drain bond pads of the semiconductor die 52 with an associated package. Alternatively, in other configurations, the packages are provided with no horizontal interconnect layers and source and drain pads of semiconductor die 52 are coupled with respective source and drain planes 76, 78 using appropriate via conductors 90 or other appropriate configurations.

[0076] Layers 74b, 74c configured as horizontal interconnect layers provide proper connectivity of source and drain electrical interconnects 84a implemented as solder balls 87 with the respective appropriate planes 76, 78a. Layer 74b provides lateral, horizontal alignment for drain connections while layer 74c provides lateral, horizontal alignment for source connections.

[0077] Via conductors 90 provide electrical coupling of appropriate portions of layer 74c with source plane 76. The number of via conductors 90 and vias 88 may be varied

according to magnitude of currents to be conducted. Although not shown in FIG. 7, appropriate insulative material is provided in assembly 70a to effectively insulate source and drain conductors of die 52 and package 73a.

[0078] The integrated circuit assemblies depicted herein minimize resistance intermediate source and drain terminal contacts 80, 82. In the exemplary configuration of FIGS. 5 and 6, for example, a total (source+drain) package resistance of approximately 0.0001 Ohms is observed between source and drain terminals 80, 82 in a configuration having a 4 mm×4 mm square semiconductor die 52 having a total of 256 solder balls on a 250 micron pitch (in accordance with the geometry shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B of Appendix A) of a device 50 implemented as a planar MOSFET and comprised of 500,000 MOSFET devices coupled in parallel capable of conducting currents of approximately 200 Amperes. If a finer solder bump pitch, such as 1600 solder balls on a 100 micron pitch were used with the same sized semiconductor die 52 using a finer package contact array pitch as illustrated in FIG. 7 but with the same thicknesses of intermediate layer(s) 74 and planes 76, 78 cited in conjunction with FIGS. 5 and 6, the calculated total (source+drain) package resistance is approximately 0.00008 Ohms. (As shown in FIG. 10 of Appendix A, the modest 23% calculated reduction in package resistance from 103 microOhms to 80 microOhms by going from 256 to 1600 solder balls is accompanied by a calculated reduction in on-chip metallization [the resistance of the metallization layers on the semiconductor die 52] resistance by a factor of 3.7 from 111 microOhms to 30 microOhms).

[0079] FIG. 8 and FIG. 9 depict cross-sectional views of exemplary assemblies for power semiconductor switching devices 50 capable of conducting currents in excess of 200 Amperes and comprising approximately 500,000 planar switching MOSFET devices 174 coupled in parallel (only three n-channel devices 174 are shown in each of FIG. 8 and FIG. 9, while FIG. 8A shows an end view of 8 of these n-channel devices). The assembly 70 of FIG. 8 generally corresponds to the assembly depicted in FIG. 5 and FIG. 6. Further details of similar or alternative constructions of FIG. 8 are illustrated as FIG. 3 in the Appendix and described in the associated text therein. Further details of assembly 70b of FIG. 9 are illustrated in FIG. 7 of the Appendix and described in the associated text therein.

[0080] Referring to FIG. 8, details of an exemplary 5-layer IC metallization system 100 are depicted upon a CMOS semiconductor die 52. The illustrated metallization 100 may be utilized within the assemblies 70, 70a, 70b, 70c and in conjunction with packages 73, 73a, 73b, 73c (or other assembly and package configurations) although the metallization 100 of FIG. 8 is depicted with reference to assembly 70 and package 73. FIG. 8 depicts a cross-sectional view through planar MOSFET channel stripes and source and drain buss bar stripes of metallization 100 looking in an "X" direction. The depicted semiconductor die 52 includes a plurality of source\drain regions 101 and gate regions 102 therebetween to form plural MOSFETs 174. Source\drain regions 101 and gate regions 102 are preferably implemented as silicide regions, comprising polysilicide for example, formed adjacent to a surface 57 of substrate 56.

[0081] Semiconductor die 52 is coupled with an exemplary package 73. Electrical interconnects 84 comprise sol-

der balls **87** having a bump pitch of 50-250 microns utilizing normal or fine bump pitch technology in exemplary configurations providing connectivity of die **52** and package **73**. Further, an intermediate layer **74a** is also depicted within package **73**.

[0082] Metallization **100** includes plural metal layers including a first metal layer **110**, a second metal layer **111**, a third metal layer **112**, a fourth metal layer **113** and a fifth metal layer **114** elevationally above surface **57** of semiconductive substrate **56**. First metal layer **110** depicts source and drain “Y” stripes having dimensions of approximately 25 microns by 0.75 microns. Second metal layer **111** depicts source and drain “X” buss bars having dimensions of approximately 12 microns while portions corresponding to gate **102** have a dimension of 2.5 microns. Third metal layer **112** depicts a source plane with drain holes having dimensions of approximately 3 microns by 3 microns. Fourth metal layer **113** depicts a drain plane having source holes having dimensions of approximately 3 microns by 3 microns. Fifth metal layer **114** depicts a source and drain checkerboard configuration with ball pads comprising source pads **116** and drain pads **118**.

[0083] Further details of metallization **100** of a 200 Ampere NMOS switching power transistor are discussed in the Appendix. Details of an exemplary metal layer **110** are discussed in the Appendix with reference to **FIG. 4B** and the associated text thereof. Further details of an exemplary metal layer **111** are discussed in the Appendix with reference to **FIG. 4C** and the associated text thereof. Further details of an exemplary metal layer **112** are discussed in the Appendix with reference to **FIG. 4D** and **FIG. 5A** and the associated text thereof. Further details of an exemplary metal layer **113** are discussed in the Appendix with reference to **FIG. 5B** and the associated text thereof. Further details of an exemplary metal layer **114** are discussed in the Appendix with reference to **FIG. 5C** and **FIG. 5D** and the associated text thereof.

[0084] The illustrated intermediate layer **74** comprising a fine line plated copper layer provides package solder bump drain and source contact pads **122**. In the illustrated embodiment, layer **74** is spaced from substrate **56** comprising one or more power semiconductor switching device **50**. As described previously, this space may be filled with insulative underfill material.

[0085] **FIG. 8A** depicts an illustrative representation of first and second metal layers **110**, **111** looking in “Y” direction while **FIG. 8** and **FIG. 9** look in an “X” direction. Portion **117** of layer **111** comprises a drain buss bar while portion **119** of layer **111** comprises a source buss bar.

[0086] In an alternative embodiment to that illustrated in **FIGS. 5, 6, 7** and **8**, the intermediate layers may be fabricated on the semiconductor die **52a** instead of within the package **73**. Referring to **FIG. 9**, an alternative assembly **70b** and package **73b** are shown. Plural intermediate layers **74d**, **74e** are depicted formed upon semiconductor die **52a** and metallization **100** including layers **110**, **111**, **112**, **113** and **114a**. Layer **74d** comprises portions electrically coupled with respective source bond pads **116** and drain bond pads **118** of metallization **114a**. In **FIG. 9** the area density or pitch of electrical couplings between the semiconductor die metallization **114a** and the layer **74d** need not be limited to the solder bump density, which allows much higher area array pad **116**, **118** densities to be utilized (e.g., pad pitches of 40

microns or smaller, or 10,000 or more on a 4 mm×4 mm semiconductor die **52a**), which substantially reduces the contribution of on-chip metallization **100** resistance to the overall chip plus package R_{on} . The tight mechanical coupling in **FIG. 9** between the layers **74d**, **74e** and/or their associated dielectric layers **124a**, **124** with the chip metallization **100** over substantially the complete area of the semiconductor die **52a** in one possible embodiment is anticipated to offer improved robustness and potentially improved reliability over the fine-pitch solder bump approach of **FIG. 7** or **FIGS. 5, 6** and **8**. BCB inter-layer dielectric **124** provides electrical insulation of source and drain electrical connections. Other patternable dielectric materials such as polyimide could be used here in place of BCB. Layer **74e** comprises integrated circuit source bond pads **130** and drain bond pads **132** coupled with respective portions of layer **74d**. Solder balls **87** are coupled with respective source bond pads **130** and drain bond pads **132**. Solder balls **87** are additionally coupled with source solder pads **134** and drain solder pads **136** of an external package to provide electrical connectivity to the external package (only portions of one pair of pads **130**, **132** and one pair of pads **134**, **136** are shown in **FIG. 9**). Exemplary external packages include source and drain planes **76**, **78** coupled with source and drain terminal contacts **80**, **82** as described previously, or the package configuration **73c** shown in **FIG. 11**. Other package configurations are possible which will, in their structure, incorporate pads **134**, **136**.

[0087] In an exemplary embodiment, fine line copper/polymer intermediate layers **74d**, **74e** are added to a completed or semi-fabricated semiconductor die **52a** in a full-wafer process according to exemplary aspects of the present invention. Because of the very low sheet resistance of the fine line copper planes **74d** and **74e**, relatively coarse pitches may be utilized in joining the semiconductor die **52** to relatively heavy package metallization features without compromising ON resistance values (R_{on}). Such permits mating of semiconductor die **52** to relatively simple and commercially available packages using coarse-pitch solder bump, solder patch or other joining technologies.

[0088] Referring to **FIG. 10**, a lower surface of another arrangement of semiconductor die **52b** is depicted in a flip-chip configuration comprising a plurality of solder balls **87** arranged in an array. As depicted, source pads of semiconductor die **52b** and solder balls coupled therewith and drain pads of semiconductor die **52b** and solder balls coupled therewith are depicted in alternating columns **140**, **142**, respectively.

[0089] A column **144** comprises both source solder balls (S), kelvin source and drain solder balls (K_S , K_D), temperature sensing diode solder balls (D_P , D_N), gate drive amplifier solder ball connections including ground (V_{SS}), input (G_{in}), and 2.5 Volts (V_{DD}) in one exemplary embodiment.

[0090] In an alternative embodiment, one or more columns of drain **142** or source **140** solder balls can be assigned to V_{dd} in order to reduce the inductance and resistance of the V_{dd} connection. This can be accommodated at the external contact level of **FIG. 12** by running the metal layers contacting these V_{dd} columns out the bottom direction in **FIG. 12** (in which the source and drain are on the right and left sides), or the V_{dd} contact might be extended to the right beyond the source contact region.

[0091] Referring to FIG. 11, an alternative package 73c of assembly 70c is depicted for coupling with electrical interconnects 84 comprising solder balls 87. Package 73c is implemented as a vertically laminate package comprising a plurality of conductive layers including source conductive layers 150 and drain conductive layers 152 in an alternating arrangement to couple with solder balls 87 of the flip-chip configuration of semiconductor die 52b shown in FIG. 10. Layer 154 corresponds to the column 144 of miscellaneous solder ball connections described above. Package 73c may also be utilized in conjunction with other die configurations, including the arrangements of semiconductor die 52 described above, and die 52a having intermediate layers 74 illustrated in FIG. 9. Other assembly configurations of dies and packages are possible.

[0092] Still referring again to FIG. 11, a plurality of alternating dielectric layers 153, 155 are provided intermediate appropriate conductive layers 150, 152, 154 as shown. In one convenient exemplary fabrication approach, dielectric layers 153 comprise PC board layers to which the conductive layers 150, 152 are bonded, while dielectric layers 155 comprise B-stage adhesive layers which are used to bond the various PC board layers together using, for example, the same type of lamination processes used to fabricate multi-layer printed circuit boards. In FIG. 11 the metal layers are shown extending a substantial distance 92 above the extent of the circuit board and inter-board adhesive layers in the area where contact to the solder balls is made. Typically this "pullback" region 92 from which the PCB and inter-board adhesive layers are absent can be fabricated by means of an etching or other removal process after the vertical laminate package is fabricated. This form of embodiment of the invention is anticipated to offer potential benefits in reducing stress on the solder balls due to differential thermal expansion between the semiconductor die 52b and the package 73c by allowing the metal layers 150, 152 to bend in the lateral direction in FIG. 11. This beneficial mechanical compliance can be achieved in the opposite direction (that is, in the lateral direction in FIG. 12) by patterning, for example, suitably shaped vertical slots 93 in the source and drain metal planes 150, 152 between the solder ball contact areas, such that the solder ball contacts are made at the top of metal "towers" which have substantial freedom to bend.

[0093] Flip-chip mounting large silicon die directly to copper or thick PCB materials may cause severe reliability problems because of the large differences in CTE between the materials (Si=3 ppm/° C., Cu=16.6 ppm/° C., PCB=19 to 32 ppm/° C.) which fatigues and breaks solder balls on thermal cycling. In a typical PCB process, the metals are backed by a PCB dielectric. In one fabrication method, the structure as shown is originally fabricated with the PCB dielectrics going all of the way to the top. The PCB dielectrics are etched away or otherwise removed to provide flexible metal towers 95.

[0094] Referring to FIG. 12, vertical laminate package 73c is illustrated in a side view coupled with semiconductor die 52b and electrical interconnects 84. A source layer 150, shown in solid outline, is coupled with electrical interconnects 84 comprising source solder balls and extends to the right to provide source terminal 80a. A drain conductive layer 152 is depicted extending in an opposite direction from source conductive layer 150 to provide drain terminal 82a.

Both source 150 and drain 152 layers may be patterned with vertical slots 93 or other suitable compliance patterning features between solder balls to achieve lateral compliance, particularly when used in conjunction with the pullback 92 of the PCB and inter-layer dielectrics from the ends of the conductor towers 95 on which solder ball contact is made. Suitable electrically insulative underfill material, not shown in FIG. 12, may be provided intermediate die 52b and package 73c.

[0095] A vertical laminate package 73c provides ultra-low ON resistance (R_{on}) performance. As shown in FIG. 12, orientation of alternating conductive metal layers 150, 152 in a laminate stack perpendicular to a surface of semiconductor die 52b permits very large reductions in package metal resistance by extending the package structure vertically. Package 73c depicted in FIG. 12 may be utilized by providing electrical interconnects 84 directly upon semiconductor die 52 (e.g., flip chip arrangement) or with the utilization of additive fine-line metallization layers 74d, 74e upon semiconductor die 52a as described above in the exemplary configuration of FIG. 9.

[0096] Packaging concepts described herein provide high current conduction while also taking advantage of low R_{on} capabilities of deep submicron lateral MOSFET devices realized not only at the semiconductor device level but also at the packaged device level. Currents applied to individual power semiconductor switching devices 50 are divided into a large number of parallel paths with increasing metallization or other conductor thicknesses as the number of paths decreases. For example, it has been demonstrated that 250,000 individual MOSFET source and drain electrodes are coupled with 256 solder ball contacts through the utilization of layers of metallization 100 described above upon semiconductor die 52. The packaging coupled with the semiconductor die further reduces the number of contacts from 256 in the given example to a single source terminal contact and a single drain terminal contact comprising high current package leads.

[0097] Referring to FIG. 13, details regarding exemplary transistors 174 utilized to form an exemplary power semiconductor switching device 50 are illustrated. As described above, aspects of the present invention provide power semiconductor switching device 50 comprising a plurality of transistors 174 coupled in parallel to conduct the large currents (1-1000 Amperes) typically experienced in power applications. The number of transistors 174 provided to form a single device 50 is varied depending upon the particular application of power semiconductor switching device 50 and the magnitude of currents to be switched. Six n-channel transistors 174 are depicted in FIG. 13 for discussion purposes.

[0098] Semiconductor die 52 includes transistors 174 fabricated using deep submicron CMOS integrated circuit processes according to exemplary aspects of the present invention. CMOS integrated circuit metallization layers (FIG. 8 and FIG. 9) are provided upon die 52 and are optimally patterned for distributing high currents with low resistance and maximum current handling capability as described previously in exemplary embodiments.

[0099] The present invention provides planar high-current (i_{max} =1 to 1000 Amperes) switching MOSFET devices having very low ON resistance (R_{on} =10 micro ohms to 1

milliohm typical) and relatively low gate drive power requirements for very high efficiency in low voltage power conversion applications. As described above, the planar device structure of transistors 174 comprising power semiconductor switching device 50 provides structures wherein current flows between closely spaced (e.g., 0.1 to 0.5 microns) source and drain electrodes on the same (top) surface of the semiconductor die 52. Accordingly, aspects of the present invention provide devices 50 comprising high current, low R_{on} parallel-coupled MOSFETs fabricated upon a relatively small semiconductor die 52 using submicron to deep submicron CMOS integrated circuit foundry processes.

[0100] FIG. 13 depicts a portion of the exemplary power semiconductor switching device 50 comprising plural planar, horizontal geometry high current switching MOSFET devices implemented in a CMOS process. Power semiconductor switching device 50 is fabricated within a monolithic semiconductive substrate 56, such as silicon, comprising die 52.

[0101] Portions of substrate 56 are formed to comprise p-type substrate material 168 or p-wells in which to form n-channel devices 174. In addition, other portions of substrate 56 may be n-type doped to form n wells 170 to enable the formation of p-channel devices 175 if desired. An inter-layer dielectric-filled trench region 172 is typically provided for lateral electrical isolation of n wells 170 from p-type substrate material or p wells 168.

[0102] First metal layer 110 of metallization 100 is depicted in FIG. 13 comprising source electrodes 160 and drain electrodes 162 coupled with respective source/diffusion regions 161, 163 which correspond to diffusion regions 101. Gate electrodes 164 are provided intermediate opposing source and drain electrodes 160, 162 and insulated from the semiconductor by a thin gate oxide to form n-channel transistors 174.

[0103] A plurality of source regions 161 and drain regions 163 are formed in p-type substrate 168 for the formation of n-channel devices 174. Regions 161, 163 are doped with an n-type dopant to form n+ source and drain regions in the exemplary embodiment. A polysilicide layer 165 may be provided intermediate electrodes 160, 162 and respective diffusion regions 161, 163 in one embodiment to minimize resistances therebetween. In FIG. 13, the via conductors 173 between the first level metal 110 and the polysilicide layer 165 are shown as part of the source electrodes 160 and drain electrodes 162. Gate electrodes 164 individually comprise polysilicide in one embodiment which are configured to couple with layers of metallization 100. As utilized herein, the term "source" refers to structures including electrically conductive structures proximately coupled with a source of the power transistor and including source contact 160 and/or source region 161 for example and the term "drain" refers to structures including electrically conductive structures proximately coupled with a drain of the power transistor and including drain contact 162 and/or drain region 163 for example.

[0104] Source and drain regions 161, 163 are individually utilized to form a plurality of adjacent transistors 174 in the depicted exemplary embodiment. For example, a given source electrode 160 and source region 161 are utilized to form a transistor 174 with the drain electrode 162 and drain region 163 to the right as well as being utilized in combi-

nation with the drain electrode 162 and drain region 163 to the left of the given source electrode 160 to form another transistor device 174. Accordingly, in a power device 50 configured according to this exemplary aspect and having x number of transistors 174 coupled in parallel, x gates 164, x/2 source electrodes 160 and x/2 drain electrodes 162 are utilized.

[0105] As depicted, semiconductive substrate 56 has a surface 57. Source electrode 160, source region 161, drain electrode 162, drain region 163 and gate electrode 164 are formed adjacent to surface 57 in the depicted embodiment according to the horizontal planar configuration of CMOS-implemented transistors 174.

[0106] Source regions 161 may be connected with the p-wells in order to avoid or minimize potential problems with floating p-wells at excessive dV/dt occurrences. Other configurations of transistors 174 are possible.

[0107] Power semiconductor switching devices 50 individually comprise a plurality of planar horizontally configured submicron MOSFET transistors 174 individually including a source electrode 160, drain electrode 162, and gate electrode 164. According to one exemplary embodiment, a single power semiconductor switching device 50 comprises 500,000 or more transistors 174 coupled in parallel to provide a low voltage, high current power device 50. In such an embodiment, source electrodes 160 of transistors 174 are coupled in parallel, drain electrodes 162 are coupled in parallel and gate electrodes 164 are coupled in parallel. Provision of parallel coupled n-channel devices 174 enables power device 50 to conduct currents in excess of one Ampere. An exemplary device 50 comprising 500,000 transistors 174 coupled in parallel on a 4 mm×4 mm silicon die 52 enables conduction of currents up to approximately 200 Amperes.

[0108] The number of transistors 174 implemented within a given device 50 varies depending upon the application or implementation of device 50, as well as the width selected for the individual transistors to be paralleled (taken as 25 microns for the examples cited herein). The current handling capability, die size and R_{on} values for a device 50 vary corresponding to the numbers of transistors 174 utilized. For example, a very small semiconductor die 52 having an approximate area of 0.16 mm² provides approximately 5,000 parallel-coupled transistors 174 which conduct currents of approximately 2 Amperes with an R_{on} of approximately 0.01-0.02 Ohms (inclusive of n-channel MOSFET ON resistance and on-chip metallization resistance, but not including package resistance), while a die of 1.6 mm² provides approximately 50,000 parallel-coupled transistors 174 enabling conduction of currents of approximately 20 Amperes with an R_{on} of approximately 0.001-0.002 Ohms, and a die area of 16 mm² provides approximately 500,000 parallel-coupled transistors 174 which enables conduction of currents of approximate 200 Amperes with an R_{on} of approximately 0.0001-0.0002 Ohms, and a die area of 80 mm² provides approximately 2,500,000 parallel-coupled transistors 174 which conduct currents of approximately 1000 Amperes with an R_{on} of approximately 0.00004-0.00008 Ohms. Further details of FIG. 13 are discussed in the Appendix with reference to FIG. 1B and the associated text thereof.

[0109] FIG. 14 depicts an elevational plan view of a region of an exemplary semiconductor die 50 illustrating

n-channel transistors **174** forming power semiconductor switching device **50**. The illustrated region includes a plurality of rows **176** individually including a plurality of transistors **174**. The number of rows **176** is varied and the number of transistors **174** within a row **176** is varied depending upon the implementation of device **50**, the magnitude of currents to be conducted and desired R_{on} values. In one exemplary implementation of power device **50** having a row **176** height of 25 microns (corresponding to the width of each of the individual transistors), 500,000 transistors **174**, 250,000 source regions **161**, 250,000 drain regions **163** and 500,000 gates **164** are provided in a 4 mm×4 mm (16 mm²) die size as implemented in a nominal 0.24 micron feature size CMOS process. The R_{on} and number of transistors in a given die size are typically closely tied to the IC feature size. The number of transistors also depends on the selection of row height.

[0110] FIG. 14 depicts transistors **174** upon surface **57** of substrate **56** (FIG. 13). Source regions **161**, drain regions **163** and gates **164** include polysilicide **165** (FIG. 13). A plurality of via conductors **173** are provided upon respective source regions **161** and drain regions **163** and via conductors **177** are provided upon gates **164** to provide vertical connectivity to first metal layer **110** elevationally over substrate **56** as shown in FIG. 8 and FIG. 9, for example.

[0111] Individual rows **176** provide transistors **174** individually having a channel length of approximately 25 microns. In an exemplary nominal 0.24 micron feature size commercial CMOS process using aluminum metallization, individual rows **176** provide $W=250$ microns of NFET width in a 10 micron horizontal distance. Polysilicide **165** (FIG. 13) comprising source regions **161** and drain regions **163** provides ohmic contacts of 4 Ohms/Sq. Via conductors **173**, **177** provide 7.5 Ohms/cut to reduce current path resistance. Polysilicide comprising gate **164** provides an ohmic contact of 7 Ohms/Sq. In the described exemplary configuration, metal layers **110**, **111**, **112** and **113** (FIG. 8 or FIG. 9) have sheet resistances of 0.08 Ohms/Sq., while the top metal layer **114** has a sheet resistance of 0.04 Ohms/Sq., with a via resistance of 5 Ohms/cut between all metal layers. Other constructions of transistors **174** and connections to transistors **174** are possible. In particular, the R_{on} and current carrying capacity of the devices could be improved if a CMOS or other IC process using copper, rather than aluminum, metallization is used for fabrication. Further details regarding substantially similar or alternative constructions of FIG. 14 are discussed in the Appendix with reference to FIG. 4A and the associated text thereof.

[0112] Referring to FIG. 15, power semiconductor switching device **50** is illustrated as a power transistor having source terminal contact **80**, drain terminal contact **82** and a gate electrode **83**. Power semiconductor switching device **50** is coupled with an exemplary gate driver amplifier **180** utilized to drive the gate electrode of power device **50** coupled with a plurality of parallel-coupled gates of transistors **174**. Amplifier **180** is one exemplary configuration of amplifiers **60** described above. More specifically, gate driver amplifier **180** may be implemented as auxiliary circuitry **54** upon semiconductor die **52** in one configuration as described above and corresponding to amplifiers **60** of FIG. 4.

[0113] The illustrated exemplary gate driver amplifier **180** includes a first stage **182** and a second stage **184**. First driver

stage **182** includes a p-channel device **186** wherein $W_{d1p}=2$ mm and an n-channel device **188** wherein $W_{d1n}=1$ mm. Second driver stage **184** includes a p-channel device **190** wherein $W_{d2p}=100$ mm and an n-channel device **192** having $W_{d2n}=50$ mm.

[0114] An input node **193** is configured to receive control signals from an appropriate source, such as power converter controller **38**, in one embodiment. In the configuration wherein power semiconductor switching device **50** comprises 540,000 n-channel devices an input capacitance at node **193** is approximately 4.5 pF. At a node **194** intermediate first stage **182** and second stage **184**, a capacitance of approximately 225 pF is present. Node **195** of second driver stage **184** is coupled with gate terminal **83** of power semiconductor switching device **50** where a capacitance of approximately 20 nF is present.

[0115] Power semiconductor switching device **50** comprising 540,000 transistors **174** coupled in parallel provides $W_n=13,500$ mm. Power semiconductor switching device **50** conducts currents of 200 Amperes in the depicted embodiment with a 5 mm×5 mm die size and can accommodate currents of 1000 Amperes if the switching device, amplifier and die size are scaled up to a 10 mm×10 mm die size. In the exemplary 0.24 micron CMOS process, V_{DD} is approximately 2.5 Volts and V_{SS} ground in the illustrated arrangement, assuming the source terminal **80** to be near ground potential as used in FIGS. 3 and 4.

[0116] According to certain aspects of the invention, a bypass capacitor **200** is coupled with the source of power semiconductor switching device **50** and V_{DD} . Bypass capacitor **200** is greater than or equal to 20 nF in the depicted exemplary embodiment. Bypass capacitor **200** is configured to provide adequate pulse current to charge a capacitance of the gates of paralleled coupled transistors **174** of power semiconductor switching device **50** responsive to control signals received via input **193**.

[0117] In one embodiment of this invention, bypass capacitor **200** is implemented monolithically on a CMOS chip using gate to channel capacitance of a large number of large gatelength (e.g., $L_g=10$ microns) n-channel MOSFETs in parallel with their common gate electrode connected to V_{dd} **184** and their source and drain electrodes connected to the output source electrode **80**.

[0118] In addition, connecting the source of n-channel device **192** with the source of power semiconductor switching device **50** obviates a need for a separate body diode inasmuch as power semiconductor switching device **50** turns on if the drain **82** thereof becomes substantially more negative than the source **80**. Alternative body diode configurations are described below. Further details of the exemplary circuitry of FIG. 15 are described below with reference to FIG. 8 of the Appendix and the associated text of the Appendix.

[0119] Referring to FIG. 16, power semiconductor switching device **50** is depicted coupled with an active diode connected p-channel MOSFET **202**. The drain **206** and gate **208** of the p-channel MOSFET **202** are connected as illustrated to provide a body diode circuit turning on when the drain **206** becomes more negative than the source **204** by an amount greater than the threshold voltage V_t of transistor **202**. As opposed to a conventional prior art vertical geom-

entry power MOSFET of FIGS. 1 and 2 in which the diffusion stored charge, Q_d in the body diode 7 can be very large, and a serious limitation to switching speed and efficiency, the stored charge in exemplary devices 50 according to aspects of this invention (e.g., FIG. 16) is very small, principally that stored in the gate capacitance of the switching device 50.

[0120] If the gate 83 of power semiconductor switching device 50 is constrained to go no more negative than the source 80, it inherently acts as a body diode and transistor 202 may be omitted if desired. As a consequence, with the gate driver amplifier configuration of FIG. 15, in which the voltage at the gate terminal 83 of the switching device 50 is constrained to go no more negative than that at its source 80, this n-channel MOSFET active body diode is obtained automatically in the switching device 50. For this exemplary device 50, the stored charge that is removed in switching from a 200 Ampere active body diode current (typically at $V_{ds}=-0.75$ Volts) to $V_{ds}=0$ Volts is less than about 15 nanoCoulombs, which is far less than for conventional prior art vertical geometry power MOSFET devices (FIGS. 1 and 2). Alternatively, device 202 is implemented as an n-channel MOSFET in another embodiment with the gate 208 thereof connected to the source 204 thereof to also serve as an active body diode circuit. Body diode circuit implementations are coupled with the source 80 and drain 82 of the power semiconductor switching device 50 in the depicted embodiment to conduct free wheeling currents which may be present within power converter 10 during switching operations or present during operations in other applications. Further details of FIG. 16 are discussed in the Appendix with reference to FIG. 2B and the associated text thereof. Other circuit configurations to conduct free wheeling currents are possible.

[0121] Aspects of the present invention provide a plurality of planar, horizontally configured MOSFET devices 174 configured to form a power semiconductor switching device 50 having contacts including a high-current source terminal contact 80 and high-current drain terminal contact 82 on a common surface 57 of a semiconductor die 52. Additional aspects enable electrical connectivity of terminal contacts 80, 82 to devices provided upon the common surface 57 of semiconductor die 52 using convenient package configurations. Other aspects of the invention are contemplated and provided, some of which are described above and in the attached Appendix, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

[0122] For comparison purposes, power semiconductor switching devices 50 configured according to exemplary aspects of the present invention including an exemplary 0.24 micron feature size (0.19 micron L_{eff}) CMOS process are discussed below with respect to a conventional vertical power MOSFET (FIG. 1) having equivalent ON resistance R_{on} values. Power semiconductor switching devices 50 of some aspects of the invention have twenty four times smaller die area than conventional vertical arrangements, approximately thirty times less gate capacitance, 478 times lower gate drive power at a given frequency (P_{gate}/f_{clock}), and the exemplary semiconductor die configurations described herein may be fabricated by a standard CMOS integrated circuit foundry if desired as opposed to processes to form vertical conventional configurations.

[0123] FIG. 17-FIG. 19 depict respective graphical representations 240, 250, 260 of electrical performance characteristics of an exemplary power semiconductor switching device 50 which embodies aspects of the present invention. The graphed power device 50 comprises a 200 Ampere power device 50 having 514,000 n-channel MOSFETs 174 providing $W=12,850,000$ microns and $L_{eff}=0.19$ microns.

[0124] FIG. 17 depicts drain currents of the exemplary power device 50 for values of $V_{GS}=0.5-2.5$ Volts in 0.5 Volt increments over its nominal 0 to 2.5 Volt drain voltage range and over an $I_d=0$ to 8000 Ampere range high enough to include its $I_{dss}=7700$ Ampere saturated drain current at $V_{gs}=+2.5$ Volt value. Note that sustained operation at high values of drain currents (e.g., above 200 Amperes) may not be possible because of metal migration reliability issues, and operation at combinations of high drain voltages and drain currents should be kept of short duration because of thermal power dissipation and energy absorption limitations.

[0125] FIG. 18 depicts drain currents of the exemplary power device 50 for values of $V_{GS}=0.45-0.7$ Volts in 0.05 Volt increments over its nominal 0 to 2.5 Volt drain voltage range and over the $I_d=0$ to 200 Ampere range within which sustained operation is specified (subject to power dissipation and energy absorption limitations).

[0126] FIG. 19 depicts drain currents for a V_{GS} value of 2.5 Volts over the $I_d=0$ to 200 Ampere range within which sustained operation is specified and over the 0 to 0.05 Volt drain voltage range within which sustained operation is normally seen for a device of this size when the device is ON ($V_{gs}=+2.5$ Volts) in the exemplary power conversion applications of the type illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4.

[0127] Reference 262 of FIG. 19 depicts, at any given drain current within transistors 174 of an exemplary power device 50, the voltage drop, V_{ds} , measured from the transistor drain contact 163 to source contact 161 in FIG. 13 assuming approximately equal sharing of total current I_d between all transistors 174. The slope of this line is the R_{on} of the transistor devices 174 themselves, exclusive of on-chip or package metal resistance.

[0128] Reference 264 depicts, at any given drain current, the voltage drop, V_{ds} , measured from the chip drain pads 118 to source pads 116 in FIG. 8, assuming approximately equal sharing of total current I_d between all source 116 and drain 117 pads. The slope of this line is the R_{on} of the transistor devices 174 themselves plus that of the on-chip metallization 100 for the case of a 4 mm×4 mm die having a total of 256 solder balls, exclusive of package metal resistance.

[0129] Reference 266 depicts at any given drain current, the voltage drop, V_{ds} , measured from the package drain contact 82 to package source contact 80 in FIGS. 5 and 6, assuming uniform distribution of current across the width of these package contacts 80, 82, for the case of a 4 mm×4 mm die having a total of 256 solder balls and the package metallization thicknesses discussed in conjunction with FIGS. 5 and 6, and in Appendix A. The slope of this line is the total R_{on} of the packaged transistor inclusive of the transistor devices 174 themselves plus that of the on-chip metallization 100 and the package metal resistance.

[0130] In compliance with the statute, the invention has been described in language more or less specific as to structural and methodical features. It is to be understood,

however, that the invention is not limited to the specific features shown and described, since the means herein disclosed comprise preferred forms of putting the invention into effect. The invention is, therefore, claimed in any of its forms or modifications within the proper scope of the appended claims appropriately interpreted in accordance with the doctrine of equivalents.

1. A power semiconductor switching device comprising:
 - a semiconductive substrate having a surface;
 - a power transistor having a planar configuration and comprising a plurality of electrically coupled sources and a plurality of electrically coupled drains formed using the semiconductive substrate and adjacent to the surface; and
 - an energy storage device coupled with the power transistor and configured to assist switching of the power transistor.
2. The device of claim 1 wherein the power transistor comprises at least one thousand electrically coupled sources and at least one thousand electrically coupled drains.
3. The device of claim 1 wherein the power transistor comprises a plurality of electrically coupled gates.
4. The device of claim 1 wherein the power transistor is configured to conduct power currents in excess of one Ampere.
5. The device of claim 1 wherein the semiconductive substrate comprises a flip chip semiconductive die.
6. The device of claim 1 further comprising a body diode circuit coupled intermediate the sources and the drains.
7. The device of claim 6 wherein the body diode circuit comprises a n-channel field effect transistor having a gate and a source electrically coupled.
8. The device of claim 6 wherein the body diode circuit comprises a p-channel field effect transistor.
9. The device of claim 1 wherein the power transistor comprises a plurality of parallel-coupled field effect transistors.
10. The device of claim 1 further comprising a V_{dd} contact, and wherein the energy storage device comprises a bypass capacitor electrically coupled with the V_{dd} contact and the sources.
11. The device of claim 10 wherein the power transistor comprises a plurality of gates, and the bypass capacitor is configured to charge a capacitance of the gates to assist the switching of the power transistor.
12. The device of claim 1 wherein the power transistor comprises a plurality of planar MOSFET devices.
13. A power semiconductor device comprising:
 - a semiconductive substrate;
 - a semiconductor device comprising at least one thousand planar field effect transistors formed using the substrate and wherein individual ones of the field effect transistors include a source and a drain electrically coupled with other sources and drains of the other planar field effect transistors; and
 - a circuit configured to selectively conduct currents intermediate a source and a drain of the semiconductor device.
14. The device of claim 13 wherein the at least one thousand planar field effect transistors individually include a

gate, and the gates of the at least one thousand planar field effect transistors are electrically coupled to receive a common control signal.

15. The device of claim 13 wherein the semiconductor device is configured to conduct power currents in excess of one Ampere.

16. The device of claim 13 wherein the semiconductive substrate comprises a flip chip semiconductive die.

17. The device of claim 13 wherein the circuit comprises a body diode circuit coupled intermediate the sources and the drains of the planar field effect transistors.

18. The device of claim 17 wherein the body diode circuit comprises a n-channel field effect transistor having a gate and a source electrically coupled.

19. The device of claim 17 wherein the body diode circuit comprises a p-channel field effect transistor.

20. The device of claim 13 further comprising:

a V_{dd} contact; and

a bypass capacitor electrically coupled with the V_{dd} contact and the sources.

21. The device of claim 20 wherein the power transistor comprises a plurality of gates, and the bypass capacitor is configured to charge a capacitance of the gates.

22. The device of claim 13 wherein the at least one thousand planar field effect transistors comprise MOSFET devices.

23. A power semiconductor switching device comprising a plurality of planar submicron field effect transistor devices coupled in parallel and configured to selectively conduct power currents in excess of one Ampere; and

an energy storage device configured to assist switching of the field effect transistor devices.

24. A power semiconductor switching device comprising a plurality of field effect transistors having source contacts and drain contacts formed adjacent to a common surface of a semiconductive substrate and configured to selectively conduct power currents in excess of one Ampere, wherein gates of the field effect transistors are constrained to have a voltage substantially equal to or more positive than a voltage of the source contacts and with respect to a common voltage reference.

25. A power semiconductor switching device comprising:

a monolithic semiconductive substrate having a surface;

a power transistor comprising a source and a drain formed using a monolithic semiconductive substrate and the source and the drain are formed adjacent to the surface; and

an energy storage device formed using the monolithic semiconductive substrate and configured to assist switching of the power transistor.

26. A power semiconductor switching device comprising a flip chip configuration configured to conduct power currents in excess of one Ampere; and wherein semiconductive circuitry of the flip chip configuration configured to implement the conduction of the power currents is further configured to form body diode circuitry.

27-50. (canceled)

51. The device of claim 1 wherein the energy storage device comprises a bypass capacitor.

52. The device of claim 1 wherein the energy storage device is configured to charge a gate capacitance of the power transistor to assist the switching of the power transistor.

53. The device of claim 1 wherein the energy storage device is formed using the semiconductive substrate comprising a monolithic substrate.

54. The device of claim 13 wherein the circuit is configured to conduct free wheeling currents.

55. The device of claim 13 wherein the circuit is configured to conduct currents when a voltage at a drain of the power transistor is more negative than a source of the power transistor with respect to a common voltage reference.

56. The device of claim 13 wherein the circuit comprises an active diode connected field effect transistor.

57. The device of claim 56 wherein the active diode field effect transistor comprises a p-channel device having a gate of the p-channel device electrically coupled with a drain of the p-channel device.

58. The device of claim 13 wherein the circuit is configured to enable the semiconductor device to switch at an increased switching speed compared with a switching speed of the semiconductor device in the absence of the circuit.

59. The device of claim 23 wherein the energy storage device comprises a bypass capacitor.

60. The device of claim 23 wherein the energy storage device is configured to charge a gate capacitance of the field effect transistor devices to assist the switching of the field effect transistor devices.

61. The device of claim 25 wherein the energy storage device comprises a bypass capacitor.

62. The device of claim 25 wherein the energy storage device is configured to charge a gate capacitance of the power transistor to assist the switching of the power transistor.

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