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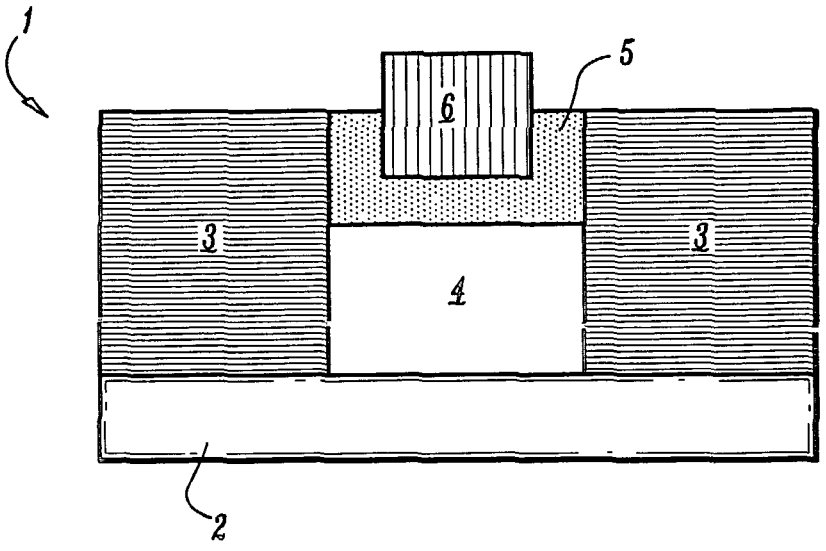
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(54) Title: STRUCTURE AND METHOD TO PRESERVE STI DURING ETCHING



(57) Abstract: Disclosed is a method of protecting a semiconductor shallow trench isolation (STI) oxide from etching, the method comprising lowering, if necessary, the upper suface of said STI oxide to a level below that of adjacent silicon active areas, depositing a nitride liner upon said STI oxide and adjacent silicon active areas in a manner effective in defining a depression above said STI oxide, filling said depression with a protective film, and removing said nitride layer from said adjacent active areas.

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