MICROELECTRONIC DEVICES WITH THROUGH-SUBSTRATE INTERCONNECTS AND ASSOCIATED METHODS OF MANUFACTURING

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present technology is directed generally to microelectronic devices with through-substrate interconnects and associated methods of manufacturing.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Semiconductor dies typically include a plurality of integrated circuits, bond-pads coupled to the integrated circuits, and metal routing layers for routing electrical signals between the bond-pads and external contacts. Fabricating and packaging such semiconductor dies include forming interconnects to electrically couple the bond-pads and/or metal routing layers to externally devices (e.g., a lead frame, a printed circuit board, etc.).

[0003] In some applications, the interconnects extend completely through or through a significant portion of the semiconductor dies (commonly referred to as "through-substrate interconnects"). One conventional process for forming through-substrate interconnects can include forming deep vias on the front and/or back side of a die in alignment with corresponding bond-pads. The vias are then filled with a conductive material (e.g., copper). Solder balls and/or other external electrical contacts are subsequently attached to the through-substrate interconnects.

[0004] The through-substrate interconnects may be formed (1) prior to integrating processing (commonly referred to as a "via-first" process), or (2) after the integration processing has been substantially completed (commonly referred to as a "via-last" process). However, both the via-first and via-last processes have certain drawbacks, as discussed in more detail later. Accordingly, several improvements to the process of through-substrate formation may be desirable.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] Figure 1 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a microelectronic package with stacked dies in accordance with embodiments of the technology.

[0006] Figures 2A-2N are schematic cross-sectional views of a portion of a semiconductor substrate undergoing a process useful for forming several embodiments of the semiconductor dies shown in Figure 1 in accordance with embodiments of the technology.

[0007] Figures 3A-3F are schematic cross-sectional views of a portion of a semiconductor substrate undergoing a process useful for forming several embodiments of the semiconductor dies shown in Figure 1 in accordance with additional embodiments of the technology.

[0008] Figures 4A-4F are schematic cross-sectional views of a portion of a semiconductor substrate undergoing a process useful for forming several embodiments of the semiconductor dies shown in Figure 1 in accordance with yet additional embodiments of the technology.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0009] Several embodiments of the present technology are described below with reference to processes for forming through vias and conductive routing layers in semiconductor substrates. Many details of certain embodiments are described below with reference to semiconductor dies. The term "semiconductor substrate" is used throughout to include a variety of articles of manufacture, including, for example, individual integrated circuit dies, imager dies, sensor dies, and/or dies having other semiconductor features.

[0010] Several of the processes described below may be used to form through vias and conductive routing layers in an individual die or in a plurality of dies, on a wafer or portion of a wafer. The wafer or wafer portion (e.g., wafer form) can include an unsingulated wafer or wafer portion, or a repopulated carrier wafer. The repopulated carrier wafer can include an adhesive material (e.g., a flexible adhesive) surrounded by a generally rigid frame having a perimeter shape that is comparable to that of an unsingulated wafer and can include singulated elements (e.g., dies) surrounded by the adhesive.

[0011] Many specific details of certain embodiments are set forth in Figures 1-4F and the following text to provide a thorough understanding of these embodiments. Several other embodiments can have configurations, components, and/or processes different from those

described below. A person skilled in the relevant art, therefore, will appreciate that additional embodiments may be practiced without several of the details of the embodiments shown in Figures 1-4F.

[0012] Figure 1 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a portion of a microelectronic package 100 in accordance with embodiments of the technology. As shown in Figure 1, the microelectronic package 100 can include a plurality of semiconductor dies 102 stacked in series with a plurality of conductive couplers 104 (e.g., solder balls). Four semiconductor dies 102 (identified individually as first, second, third, and fourth semiconductor dies 102a-102d, respectively) are shown in Figure 1 for illustration purposes. In other embodiments, the microelectronic package 100 can include any other desired number of semiconductor dies 102 coupled to one another with wirebonds, solder balls, conductive tapes, and/or other suitable electrical connectors.

[0013] The semiconductor dies 102 can individually include a semiconductor substrate 106 carrying a signal routing structure 108 proximate to a first side 106a of the semiconductor substrate 106, a plurality of bond-pads 112 (identified individually as first to fifth bond-pads 112a-112e, respectively) on the signal routing structure 108, and a plurality of through-substrate interconnects 110 (identified individually as first to fourth interconnects 110a-110d, respectively) extending between the first side 106a and a second side 106b of the semiconductor substrate 106. The semiconductor dies 102 can also include an input/output ("I/O") buffer 114 associated with the first through-substrate interconnect 110a and a chip-select ("C/S") buffer 116 associated with the second, third, and fourth through-substrate interconnects 110b-110d.

[0014] The through-substrate interconnects 110 can be selectively connected to certain metallization layers (not shown in Figure 1) in the signal routing structures 108 for carrying electrical signals between the first and second sides 106a and 106b of the semiconductor dies 102. Details of several embodiments of a process for forming the signal routing structures 108 and the through-substrate interconnects 110 are discussed in more detail below with reference to Figures 2A-4F.

[0015] The conductive couplers 104 can interface with corresponding bond-pads 112 based on a desired signal routing scheme. As shown in Figure 1, not all of the bond-pads 112 are electrically coupled to one of the conductive couplers 104. For example, the first through-substrate interconnect 110a of the first semiconductor die 102a is electrically coupled via the

conductive couplers 104 and the first bond-pad 112a of the first semiconductor die 102a. In contrast, the second bond-pad 112b of all the semiconductor dies 102, the third bond-pad 112c of the third semiconductor die 102c, and the third and fourth bond-pads 112c and 112d of the fourth semiconductor die 102d are not electrically coupled to any of the conductive couplers 104. Instead, the signal routing structure 108 routes a chip-select signal (and/or other suitable signals) received at the second bond-pad 112b of the first semiconductor die 102a to the C/S buffer 116 of the fourth semiconductor die 102d via the second through-substrate interconnect 110b of the first semiconductor die 102a, the third through-substrate interconnect 110c of the second semiconductor die 102b, and the fourth through-substrate interconnect 110d of the third semiconductor die 102c.

[0016] In operation, the electrically coupled first through-substrate interconnect 110a of the semiconductor dies 102 forms an electrical path for carrying input/output signals to all the semiconductor dies 102. The signal routing structures 108 of the individual semiconductor dies 102 route the input/output signals to the individual I/O buffers 114 of the semiconductor dies 102 from the electrical path. The signal routing structure 108 can also route a chip-select signal (and/or other suitable signals) to a selected semiconductor die 102 to enable processing the input/output signals received at the I/O buffer 114 at a selected semiconductor die 102. For example, the signal routing structure 108 routes a chip-select signal received at the fifth bond-pad 112e to the C/S buffer 116 of the first semiconductor die 102a to enable the first semiconductor die 102a to process the received input/output signals. In another example, the signal routing structure 108 can also route a chip-select signal received at the fourth bond-pad 112d to the second semiconductor die 102b via the fourth through-substrate interconnect 110d of the first semiconductor die 102a.

[0017] In accordance with conventional techniques, the through-substrate interconnects 110 may be formed based on a via-first process or a via-last process. However, the inventors have recognized that both the via-first and via-last processes have certain drawbacks. For example, the via-last process may not adequately accommodate routing the chip-select signals because such modification may significantly add cost and/or complexity to the manufacturing process. For example, techniques that may be used to route signals at the last metallization layer can include (1) controlling the formation (or the lack of formation) of conductive bumps to an adjacent semiconductor die 102; (2) routing the signals back down to the lower metallization layers; (3) adding control gates (e.g., MOSFET) to the signal routing structure 108; (4)

patterning each of the semiconductor dies 102 differently; and (5) adding a redistribution layer (not shown) on the semiconductor dies 102.

[0018] The inventors also recognized that the via-first process may negatively impact the electrical reliability of the semiconductor dies 102 because the electrical contacts between the signal routing structures 108 and integrated circuits (not shown) in the semiconductor dies 102 may be damaged during formation of the signal routing structures 108. Several embodiments of a process for addressing at least some of the foregoing drawbacks of the via-first and via-last processes are discussed below with reference to Figures 2A-2N.

[0019] Figures 2A-2N are schematic cross-sectional views of a portion of a semiconductor substrate 106 undergoing a process for forming several embodiments of the semiconductor dies 102 shown in Figure 1 in accordance with embodiments of the technology. In the following description, similar processing operations may utilize generally similar processing techniques. As a result, suitable techniques for performing the processing operations (e.g., patterning a deposited material, removing portions of dielectric materials, depositing a conductive material, etc.) are described only once for brevity.

[0020] As shown in Figure 2A, the process can include forming an integrated circuit 118 in and/or on the first side 106a of the semiconductor substrate 106. In the illustrated embodiment, the integrated circuit 118 is shown schematically as a field-effect transistor having a source 120a, a drain 120b, and a gate 122 for illustration purposes. In other embodiments, the integrated circuit 118 can also include vertical transistors, three-dimensional transistors, capacitors, and/or other suitable electrical components forming a dynamic random access memory (DRAM) and/or other suitable electronic devices.

[0021] The process can include forming an insulator 124 on the semiconductor substrate 106. In the illustrated embodiment, the insulator 124 includes four layers of silicon oxide, silicon nitride, and/or other suitable dielectrics (identified individually as first to fourth insulation materials 124a-124d, respectively). In other embodiments, the insulator 124 can also include another desired number of dielectric and/or other suitable insulation materials. Techniques for forming the insulator 124 can include thermal oxidation, chemical vapor deposition ("CVD"), atomic layer deposition ("ALD"), spin-on glass, and/or other suitable techniques.

[0022] The process can also include forming a conductive link 126 in the insulator 124 that is electrically connected to the integrated circuit 118. In one embodiment, forming the conductive link 126 includes patterning the insulator 124 with photolithography and/or other suitable techniques, and removing a portion of the patterned insulator 124 to form an aperture 127 via wet etching, dry etching, reactive ion etching, and/or other suitable techniques. The aperture 127 may then be filled with a conductive material 129 (e.g., copper, aluminum, gold, and/or other suitable conductive materials) via physical vapor deposition (PVD), CVD, ALD, electroplating, and/or other suitable techniques. In other embodiments, forming the conductive link 126 may include other processing operations in addition to or in lieu of the foregoing operations.

[0023] The process can include forming the first metallization layer 128a by forming a first dielectric 130 on the insulator 124, patterning the first dielectric 130 according to a desired metal routing profile, removing a portion of the first dielectric 130 to form trenches, channels, and/or other openings 135 in the first dielectric 130, and depositing a conductive material 137 (e.g., copper, aluminum, gold, and/or other suitable conductive materials) in the openings 135. The process can then include forming a first barrier 132 (e.g., BLOK provided by Applied Materials, Inc., Santa Clara, California) on the first metallization layer 128a and depositing a second dielectric 134 (e.g., silicon oxide) on the first barrier 132. The second dielectric 134 includes a first surface 134a proximate to the first barrier 132 and a second surface 134b opposite the first surface 134a.

[0024] After forming the first metallization layer 128a, Figures 2B-2H illustrate a through-substrate interconnect formation process module (hereinafter referred to as the "TSV module") for forming a through-substrate interconnect 110 (Figure 1) in the semiconductor substrate 106. As shown in Figure 2B, the TSV module can include depositing a first photoresist 136 on the second dielectric 134 via spin coating and/or other suitable techniques. The first photoresist 136 can then be patterned to form a first opening 138. As used herein, the term "photoresist" generally refers to a material that can be chemically modified when exposed to electromagnetic radiation. The term encompasses both positive photoresist that is configured to be soluble when activated by the electromagnetic radiation and negative photoresist that is configured to be insoluble when activated by light.

[0025] As shown in Figure 2C, the TSV module can include forming an interconnect aperture 140 in the semiconductor substrate 106. The interconnect aperture 140 can be formed

by removing material from the first dielectric 130, the first barrier 132, the second dielectric 134, the insulator 124, and at least a portion of the semiconductor substrate 106 via the opening 138 in a continuous operation. In other embodiments, forming the interconnect aperture 140 can include a first material removal operation (e.g., using wet etching) to remove a portion of the first dielectric 130, the first barrier 132, the second dielectric 134, and the insulator 124, and a second material removal operation (e.g., using reactive ion etching) to remove a portion of the semiconductor substrate 106.

[0026] As shown in Figure 2D, the TSV module can further include removing the first photoresist 136 and sequentially forming an aperture insulator 142, an aperture barrier 144, and a seed material 146 in the interconnect aperture 140. The aperture insulator 142 can include silicon oxide, silicon nitride, and/or other suitable insulation materials formed via thermal oxidation, CVD, ALD, and/or other suitable techniques. The aperture barrier 144 can include tantalum (Ta), tungsten (W), titanium nitride (TiN), and/or other suitable barrier materials formed via pulsed chemical vapor deposition ("pCVD"), ionic physical vapor deposition ("iPVD"), ALD, and/or other suitable techniques. The seed material 144 can include copper, tungsten, and/or other suitable conductive materials deposited via pCVD, iPVD, ALD, and/or other suitable techniques.

[0027] As shown in Figure 2E, the TSV module can also include depositing a second photoresist 148 on the seed material 146. The second photoresist 148 can then be patterned to form a second opening 150. As shown in Figure 2F, the TSV module can include filling the interconnect aperture 140 with a first conductive material 152 via the second opening 150 to form the through-substrate interconnect 110. The first conductive material 152 includes a first portion 152a in the interconnect aperture 140 and a second portion 152b extending beyond the second dielectric 134. The first conductive material 152 can include copper, aluminum, tungsten, gold, and/or alloys of the foregoing constituents. In particular embodiments, the first conductive material 152 includes electrolytic copper introduced into the interconnect aperture 140. The electrolytic copper has an enhanced purity when compared to electrolessly disposed materials, and when compared to solder. For example, the first conductive material 152 can be at least 90% copper and in some cases 99% copper. The second photoresist 148 may then be removed.

[0028] As shown in Figure 2G, the second portion 152b (Figure 2F) of the first conductive material 152 can be subsequently removed such that the first portion 152a of the first conductive

material 152 is generally planar with the second surface 134b of the second dielectric 134. Techniques for removing the second portion 152b of the first conductive material 152 can include chemical-mechanical polishing ("CMP"), electrochemical-mechanical polishing ("ECMP"), and/or other suitable techniques. As shown in Figure 2H, the TSV module can optionally include depositing a second barrier 154 (e.g., BLOK provided by Applied Materials, Inc., Santa Clara, California) on the second surface 134b of the second dielectric 134 and the first portion 152a of the first conductive material 152. In other embodiments, depositing the second barrier 154 may be omitted.

[0029] Even though the TSV module discussed above includes depositing and patterning the second photoresist 148, in certain embodiments, the second photoresist 148 may be omitted. Instead, the TSV module can include depositing the first conductive material 152 with the first portion 152a in the interconnect aperture 140 and the second portion 152b substantially covering the second surface 134b of the second dielectric 134. Subsequently, at least a part of the second portion 152b may be removed to yield the through-substrate interconnect 110 as shown in Figure 2G.

[0030] Following the TSV module, the process can include forming a second metallization layer. As shown in Figure 2I, the process can include forming a third dielectric 156 on the optional second barrier 154. The third dielectric 156 includes a first surface 156a proximate to the optional second barrier 154 and a second surface 156b opposite the first surface 156a. Then, a plurality of first vias 159 to the first metallization layer 128a may be formed through the third dielectric 156, the optional second barrier 154, and the second dielectric 134.

[0031] The process can then include depositing a third photoresist 158 on the third dielectric 156 and patterning the third photoresist 158 to form third openings 160 corresponding to a desired routing profile for a second metallization layer 128b (not shown). As shown in Figure 2J, the process can include removing a portion of the third dielectric 156 and optionally a portion of the second barrier 154 to form openings 162. The openings 162 expose at least a part of the second surface 134b of the second dielectric 134 and the upper surface of the first portion 152a of the first conductive material 152.

[0032] As shown in Figure 2K, the process can include filling the openings 162 and first vias 159 with a second conductive material 164 and subsequently removing excess second conductive material 164 external to the openings 162 such that the second conductive material

164 is generally planar with the second surface 156b of the third dielectric 156. In the illustrated embodiment, the second conductive material 164 includes a first portion 164a, a second portion 164b extending laterally away from the first portion 164a, and a third portion 164c in the first vias 159. The first portion 164a of the second conductive material 164 is in direct physical contact with the first portion 152a of the first conductive material 152 of the through-substrate interconnect 110. The third portion 164c of the second conductive material 164 electrically connects the second portion 164b and the first metallization layer 128a.

[0033] In one embodiment, the second conductive material 164 includes the same composition (e.g., copper) as the first conductive material 152. As a result, the first and second conductive materials 152 and 164 may be generally homogeneous (a phantom line is used in Figure 2K to show an artificial demarcation between the first and second conductive materials 152 and 164). In other embodiments, the second conductive material 164 may include a composition at least partially different than the first conductive material 152. As a result, the first metallization layer 128a is electrically connected to the through-substrate interconnect 110 via the second conductive material 164.

[0034] After forming the second metallization layer 128b, the process can include forming additional metallization layers on the semiconductor substrate 106. For example, Figures 2L and 2M illustrate operations of forming a third metallization layer 128c. As shown in Figure 2L, the process can include depositing a fourth dielectric 166 on the second surface 156b of the third dielectric 156 and the second metallization layer 128b. The deposited fourth dielectric 166 has a first surface 166a proximate to the third dielectric 156 and a second surface 166b opposite the first surface 166a. The process can then include patterning and removing a portion of the fourth dielectric 166 to form a plurality of second vias 168 extending from the second surface 166b of the fourth dielectric 166 to the second metallization layer 128b.

[0035] The third metallization layer 128c can then be formed following operations generally similar to those described with reference to Figures 2I and 2J. As shown in Figure 2M, the third metallization layer 128c includes a third conductive material 170 electrically connected to the second metallization layer 128b via the second vias 168. In the illustrated embodiment, the third conductive material 170 has the same composition (e.g., copper) as the first and second conductive materials 152 and 164. In other embodiments, the third dielectric material 170 may have a composition different from the first and/or second dielectric materials 152 and 164.

[0036] In certain embodiments, the process can also include processing the semiconductor substrate 106 to form additional features in and/or on the semiconductor substrate 106. For example, as shown in Figure 2N, a portion of the semiconductor substrate 106 can be removed from the second side 106b using a mechanical or chemical-mechanical technique to expose the through-substrate interconnect 110. A conductive component 172 (e.g., a conductive pillar, a solder ball, a solder bump, a redistribution layer, a through-silicon via stud, and/or other suitable interconnect devices) can then be attached to the through-substrate interconnect 110 for interconnecting with an external component (not shown).

[0037] Even though only first, second and third metallization layers 128a, 128b, and 128c are illustrated in Figures 2A-2M, in certain embodiments, the process can include forming four, five, or any desired number of metallization layers by repeating at least some of the operations discussed above with reference to Figures 2L and 2M. In these embodiments, the through-substrate interconnect 110 may be electrically connected to the second metallization layer 128b, the third metallization layer 128c, or the N-1 metallization layer (not shown).

[0038] Several embodiments of the foregoing process can reduce the risk of damaging the electrical connection between the first metallization layer 128a and the conductive link 126. The inventors have observed that forming the through-substrate interconnect 110 before forming the first metallization layer 128a can result in a defective electrical connection between the first metallization layer 128a and the conductive link 126. Without being bound by theory, it is believed that several operations during the formation of the first metallization layer 128a (e.g., deposition of the conductive material, removal of excess conductive material, etc.) may physically weaken and/or damage the electrical connection between the first metallization layer 128a and the conductive link 126. As a result, by forming the through-substrate interconnect 110 subsequent to forming the first metallization layer 128a, the risk of creating a defective electrical connection may be lowered.

[0039] Several embodiments of the foregoing process can also be more cost-effective and flexible when compared to conventional techniques. For example, the selection of electrical connection between the through-substrate interconnect 110 and the metallization layers may be postponed until later processing stages than the via-first process. As a result, the number of generic intermediate products (i.e., semiconductor dies with partially formed metallization layers) may be increased to enable a production manager to continue producing the

semiconductor dies 102 before making a decision concerning the final connection configuration of the semiconductor dies 102.

[0040] Even though specific operations are discussed above with reference to Figures 2A-2N for forming and connecting the second metallization layer 128b to the through-substrate interconnect 110, in other embodiments, the second metallization layer 128b may be formed and connected to the through-substrate interconnect 110 with additional and/or different process operations. For example, Figures 3A-3F are schematic cross-sectional views of a portion of a semiconductor substrate undergoing a process useful for forming several embodiments of the semiconductor dies 102 shown in Figure 1 in accordance with additional embodiments of the technology. As shown in Figure 3A, the process can include forming the integrated circuit 118 in and/or on the semiconductor substrate 106, forming the conductive link 126, the first metallization layer 128a, and the first barrier 132 on the first metallization layer 128a, as discussed above with reference to Figure 2A.

[0041] Unlike the embodiment shown in Figure 2A, the process shown in Figure 3B can include utilizing the TSV module, as discussed above with reference to Figures 2B-2H, before depositing the second dielectric 134 on the first barrier 132. Subsequently, the second dielectric 134 may be formed on the first barrier 132 and the through-substrate interconnect 110. As a result, the through-substrate interconnect 110 may be generally planar with the first barrier 132 and may be in direct contact with the first surface 134a of the second dielectric 134.

[0042] As shown in Figure 3C, the process can include depositing the third dielectric 156 on the second dielectric 134. As a result, the first surface 156a of the third dielectric 156 can be in direct contact with the second surface 134b of the second dielectric 134. The process can include forming a plurality of access vias 180 in the second and third dielectrics 134 and 156 through the third dielectric 156, the second dielectric 134, and the barrier 132. The access vias 180 include (1) a first group 180a of access vias 180 that generally correspond to the through-substrate interconnect 110; and (2) a second group 180b of access vias 180 that generally correspond to the first metallization layer 128a.

[0043] The process can then include depositing a photoresist 182 on the third dielectric 156 and patterning the photoresist 182 to form openings 184 corresponding to a desired routing profile for the second metallization layer 128b. As shown in Figure 3E, the process can include removing a portion of the third dielectric 156 to form openings 186. The openings 186 expose

at least a part of the second surface 134b of the second dielectric 134 and are in communication with at least some of the access vias 180.

[0044] As shown in Figure 3F, the process can include filling the openings 186 and the access vias 180 with the second conductive material 164. Excess second conductive material 164 external to the openings 186 may then be removed such that the second conductive material 164 is generally planar with the second surface 156b of the third dielectric 156. The second conductive material 164 includes a first portion 164a, a second portion 164b extending laterally away from the first portion 164a, a third portion 164c in the first group 180a of the access vias 180, and a fourth portion 164d in the second group 180b of the access vias 180. The third portion 164c of the second conductive material 164 electrically connects the first portion 164a of the second conductive material 164 to the through-substrate interconnect 110. The fourth portion 164d of the second conductive material 164 electrically connects the second portion 164b of the second conductive material 164 to the first metallization layer 128a. The process can then include forming additional metallization layers and performing subsequent processing as discussed with reference to Figures 2L-2N.

[0045] Figures 4A-4F are schematic cross-sectional views of a portion of a semiconductor substrate 100 undergoing a process useful for forming several embodiments of the semiconductor dies 102 shown in Figure 1 in accordance with yet additional embodiments of the technology. As shown in Figure 4A, the process can include forming the integrated circuit 118 in and/or on the semiconductor substrate 106, forming the conductive link 126, the first metallization layer 128a, and the first barrier 132 on the first metallization layer 128a, as discussed above with reference to Figure 2A. The process can also include forming the second metallization layer 128b, as discussed above with reference to Figures 2H-2K. The process can then optionally include depositing the second barrier 154 on the second metallization layer 128b.

[0046] As shown in Figure 4B, the process can include forming the fourth dielectric 166 on the second barrier 154 and depositing a photoresist 190 on the fourth dielectric 166. The photoresist 190 can then be patterned to form openings 192 corresponding to a portion of the second metallization layer 128b and the through-substrate interconnect 110 (not shown). As a result, a portion of the fourth dielectric 166 and the underlying second barrier 154 is exposed in the opening 192 (hereinafter referred to as the exposed portion 194).

[0047] As shown in Figure 4C, the process can include forming the interconnect aperture 140 in the semiconductor substrate 106 and removing the exposed portion 194 (Figure 4B). In one embodiment, the interconnect aperture 140 may be formed and the exposed portion 194 may be removed in one continuous operation using a phase-shift mask, leaky-chrome mask, and/or other suitable techniques. In another embodiment, the interconnect aperture 140 may be formed by etching with a first mask (not shown) generally corresponding to the interconnect aperture 140. The exposed portion 194 may be removed with a second mask (not shown) generally corresponding to the exposed portion 194. In other embodiments, the exposed portion 194 may be removed via other suitable techniques.

[0048] As shown in Figure 4D, the process can include forming the aperture insulator 142 in the interconnect aperture 140. In the illustrated embodiment, the aperture insulator 142 includes a first portion 142a in the interconnect aperture 140 and a second portion 142b external to the interconnect aperture 140. The second portion 142b at least partially overlaps and is in direct contact with the second metallization layer 128b. In other embodiments, the aperture insulator 142 may only include the first portion 142a by using, for example, a photomask generally corresponding to the interconnect aperture 140 that was used when forming the aperture insulator 142.

[0049] As shown in Figure 4E, the process can include at least partially removing the second portion 142b of the aperture insulator 142 and exposing the second metallization layer 128b. In one embodiment, the second portion 142b may be partially removed via a spacer etch. As a result, a part 142c of the second portion 142b remains on the second metallization layer 128b. In other embodiments, the second portion 142b may be partially removed via laser ablation and/or other suitable techniques. In further embodiments, the second portion 142b may be completely removed.

[0050] The process can then include depositing the aperture barrier 144 and the seed material 146 in the interconnect aperture 140, as discussed above with reference to Figures 2C. Then, the process can include filling the interconnect aperture 140 with the first conductive material 152, and removing excess first conductive material 152 from the fourth dielectric 166.

[0051] As shown in Figure 4F, the through-substrate interconnect 110 includes a vertical section 110a in the interconnect aperture 140 and a horizontal section 110b external to the interconnect aperture 140. The horizontal section 110b extends laterally toward the second

metallization layer 128b such that at least a portion of the horizontal section 110b is in direct contact with a top surface of the second metallization layer 128b. The process can optionally include forming a third barrier 196 on the fourth dielectric 166 and the through-substrate interconnect 110. The process can then include forming additional metallization layers and performing subsequent processing as discussed with reference to Figures 2L-2N to yield the semiconductor die 102 shown in Figure 4E.

[0052] From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that specific embodiments of the technology have been described herein for purposes of illustration, but that various modifications may be made without deviating from the technology. Many of the elements of one embodiment may be combined with other embodiments in addition to or in lieu of the elements of the other embodiments. Accordingly, the technology is not limited except as by the appended claims.

CLAIMS

I/We claim:

1. A semiconductor device, comprising:

a semiconductor substrate;

first and second metallization layers, the second metallization layer being spaced apart from the semiconductor substrate with the first metallization layer therebetween; and

a conductive interconnect extending at least partially through the semiconductor substrate;

wherein the first metallization layer is in electrical contact with the conductive interconnect via the second metallization layer.

2. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the semiconductor substrate includes a first side and a second side;

the second metallization layer includes a first portion generally corresponding to the conductive interconnect and a second portion extending laterally from the first portion; and

the semiconductor device also includes:

an insulation between the first side of the semiconductor substrate and the first metallization layer;

an integrated circuit on or in the semiconductor substrate;

a conductive link at least partially in the insulation, the conductive link being between the integrated circuit and the first metallization layer;

a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers; and

the dielectric includes a conductive via directly between the first metallization layer and the second portion of the second metallization layer;

the conductive interconnect includes a first end and a second end, the first end of the conductive interconnect being in direct contact with the first portion of the second metallization layer; and

a solder ball attached to the second end of the conductive interconnect at the second side of the semiconductor substrate.

3. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the semiconductor substrate includes a first side and a second side;

the second metallization layer includes a first portion generally corresponding to the conductive interconnect and a second portion extending laterally from the first portion; and

the semiconductor device also includes:

an insulation between the first side of the semiconductor substrate and the first metallization layer;

an integrated circuit on or in the semiconductor substrate;

a conductive link at least partially in the insulation, the conductive link extending between the integrated circuit and the first metallization layer; and

a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers;

the conductive interconnect includes a first end and a second end opposite the first end;

the dielectric includes a first conductive via and a second conductive via spaced apart from the first conductive via, the first conductive via being directly between the first metallization layer and the second portion of the second metallization layer, the second conductive via being directly between the first portion of the second metallization layer and the first end of the conductive interconnect; and

a solder ball attached to the second end of the conductive interconnect at the second side of the semiconductor substrate.

4. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the semiconductor substrate includes a first side and a second side;

the second metallization layer includes a first metallization surface opposite a second metallization surface; and

the semiconductor device also includes:

an insulation between the first side of the semiconductor substrate and the first metallization layer;

an integrated circuit on or in the semiconductor substrate;

a conductive link at least partially in the insulation, the conductive link being between the integrated circuit and the first metallization layer;

a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers; and

the dielectric includes a conductive via directly between the first metallization layer and the second metallization layer;

the conductive interconnect includes:

an aperture extending at least partially between the first and second sides of the semiconductor substrate;

a first section of a conductive material in the aperture;

a second section of the conductive material external to the aperture;

the second section of the conductive material extending laterally on the first section; and

the second section is in direct contact with at least a portion of the second metallization surface of the second metallization layer; and

a solder ball attached to the second end of the conductive interconnect at the second side of the semiconductor substrate.

5. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the semiconductor device also includes a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers; and

the conductive interconnect includes a first end and a second end, the first end of the conductive interconnect being generally planar with the second surface of the dielectric, the second end being opposite the first end.

6. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the semiconductor device also includes a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers; and

the conductive interconnect includes a first end and a second end, the first end of the conductive interconnect being in direct contact with the second metallization layer, the second end being opposite the first end.

7. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the second metallization layer includes a first portion generally corresponding to the conductive interconnect and a second portion extending laterally from the first portion;

the semiconductor device also includes a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers, the dielectric having a first surface in direct contact with the first metallization layer and a second surface in direct contact with the second portion of the second metallization layer; and

the conductive interconnect includes a first end and a second end, the first end of the conductive interconnect being in direct contact with the first portion of the second metallization layer, the second end being opposite the first end.

8. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the first metallization layer includes a first metallization surface proximate to the semiconductor substrate and a second metallization surface opposite the first metallization surface; and

the conductive interconnect includes a first end and a second end, the first end of the conductive interconnect being generally flush with the second metallization surface of the first metallization layer, the second end being opposite the first end.

9. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein:

the semiconductor device also includes a dielectric between the first and second metallization layers, the dielectric having a first surface in direct contact with the first metallization layer and a second surface opposite the first surface, the second surface being in direct contact with the second metallization layer;

the dielectric includes a first conductive via and a second conductive via spaced apart from the first conductive via;

the first conductive via is directly between the first metallization layer and the second metallization layer; and

the second conductive via is directly between the second metallization layer and the conductive interconnect.

10. The semiconductor device of claim 1 wherein the conductive interconnect includes:

an aperture extending at least partially in the semiconductor substrate;

a first section of a conductive material in the aperture;

a second section of the conductive material external to the aperture; and

the second section of the conductive material extending laterally from the aperture and is in direct contact with the second metallization layer.

11. A semiconductor device, comprising:

a semiconductor substrate;

a plurality of metal routing layers carried by the semiconductor substrate, the plurality of metal routing layers including 1, 2, …, N (N is a positive integer greater than 3) metal routing layers; and

a conductive interconnect extending at least partially through the semiconductor substrate, the conductive interconnect including an end proximate to the metal routing layers;

wherein the end of the conductive interconnect extends beyond or is generally flush with at least the first metal routing layer.

12. The semiconductor device of claim 11 wherein the end of the conductive interconnect extends beyond or is generally flush with the N-2 metal routing layer.

13. The semiconductor device of claim 11 wherein:

the end of the conductive interconnect extends beyond or is generally flush with the N-2 metal routing layer; and

the N-1 metal routing layer electrically connects the N-2 metal routing layer to the conductive interconnect.

14. The semiconductor device of claim 11 wherein the end of the conductive interconnect is in direct contact with the N-1 metal routing layer.

15. The semiconductor device of claim 11, further comprising a conductive via between the end of the conductive interconnect and the N-1 metal routing layer.

16. The semiconductor device of claim 11 wherein the end of the conductive interconnect includes a first section and a second section extending laterally from the first section, the second section being in direct contact with the N-1 metal routing layer.

17. A method for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

forming a first metallization layer on a semiconductor substrate;

forming an interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the first metallization layer is formed;

filling the interconnect aperture with a conductive material; and

forming a second metallization layer on the first metallization layer, the second metallization layer being in electrical contact with the conductive material in the interconnect aperture.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes:

depositing a first dielectric on the first metallization layer;

patterning the first dielectric and forming an opening generally corresponding to the interconnect aperture; and

etching the first dielectric and the semiconductor substrate via the opening;

filling the interconnect aperture includes:

introducing a first conductive material in the interconnect aperture; and

removing excess first conductive material external to the interconnect aperture; and

forming a second metallization layer includes:

depositing a second dielectric on the first dielectric and the conductive material in the interconnect aperture;

patterning the deposited second dielectric based on a desired profile of the second metallization layer; and

forming a via and a depression in the patterned second dielectric, the via exposing at least a portion of the first metallization layer, the depression exposing at least a portion of the first conductive material in the interconnect aperture; and

filling the via and the depression with a second conductive material, the second conductive material having a first portion in direct contact with the first conductive material in the interconnect aperture and a second portion in the via in direct contact with the first metallization layer.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes:

patterning the semiconductor substrate with the first metallization layer and forming an opening generally corresponding to the interconnect aperture; and

etching the semiconductor substrate via the opening;

filling the interconnect aperture includes:

introducing a first conductive material in the interconnect aperture; and

removing excess first conductive material external to the interconnect aperture; and

forming a second metallization layer includes:

depositing a first dielectric on the first metallization layer and the first conductive material in the interconnect aperture;

forming a first via and a second via in the first dielectric, the first via exposing at least a portion of the first metallization layer, the second via exposing at least a portion of the first conductive material in the interconnect aperture;

depositing a second dielectric on the first dielectric;

patterning the deposited second dielectric based on a desired profile of the second metallization layer;

forming a depression in the patterned second dielectric, the depression generally corresponding the to desired profile of the second metallization layer; and

filling the first and second vias and the depression with a second conductive material.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein:

forming a second metallization layer includes:

depositing a first dielectric on the first metallization layer;

patterning the first dielectric based on a desired profile of the second metallization layer;

forming a via and a depression in the first dielectric, the depression generally corresponding to the desired profile of the second metallization layer; and

filling the via and the depression with a first conductive material; and

forming an interconnect aperture includes:

depositing a second dielectric on the second metallization layer and the first dielectric;

patterning the second dielectric and forming an opening generally corresponding to the interconnect aperture and at least a portion of the second metallization layer;

etching the first and second dielectrics and the semiconductor substrate via the opening;

depositing an insulation material in the interconnect aperture and on the second metallization layer;

removing at least a portion of the insulation material on the second metallization layer; and

filling the interconnect aperture with a second conductive material via the opening, at least a portion of the second conductive material being in direct contact with the second metallization layer.

21. The method of claim 17 wherein:

the conductive material is a first conductive material; and

forming a second metallization layer includes:

depositing a dielectric on the conductive material in the interconnect aperture;

forming a depression in the dielectric, the depression exposing at least a portion of the conductive material in the interconnect aperture; and

filling the depression with a second conductive material, the second conductive material having a first portion in direct contact with the first conductive

material in the interconnect aperture and a second portion extending laterally from the first portion.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein:

the conductive material is a first conductive material; and

forming a second metallization layer includes:

depositing a dielectric on the first metallization layer and the first conductive material in the interconnect aperture;

forming a first via and a second via in the dielectric, the first via exposing at least a portion of the first metallization layer, the second via exposing at least a portion of the first conductive material in the interconnect aperture; and

filling the first and second vias with a second conductive material.

23. The method of claim 17 wherein:

the conductive material is a first conductive material; and

forming an interconnect aperture includes:

depositing a dielectric on the second metallization layer;

forming the interconnect aperture through the dielectric and the semiconductor substrate;

exposing at least a portion of the second metallization layer; and

depositing a second conductive material in the interconnect aperture and onto the exposed portion of the second conductive material.

24. A method for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

forming a first, second, …, and N^{th} metallization layers on a semiconductor substrate, N being a positive integer not less than 3;

forming an interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate at least after the first metallization layer is formed; and

filling the interconnect aperture with a conductive material, the conductive material being in electrical contact with at least one of the metallization layers.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein forming an interconnect aperture includes forming the interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the N-2 metallization layer is formed.

26. The method of claim 24 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes forming the interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the N-2 metallization layer is formed; and

forming a first, second, …, and N^{th} metallization layers includes forming the N-1 metallization layer after filling the interconnect aperture with the conductive material.

27. The method of claim 24 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes forming the interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the N-2 metallization layer is formed;

forming a first, second, …, and N^{th} metallization layers includes forming the N-1 metallization layer after filling the interconnect aperture with the conductive material; and

the method further includes directly contacting the N-1 metallization layer with the conductive material in the interconnect aperture.

28. The method of claim 24 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes forming the interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the N-2 metallization layer is formed;

forming a first, second, …, and N^{th} metallization layers includes forming the N-1 metallization layer after filling the interconnect aperture with the conductive material; and

the method further includes forming a conductive via directly between the N-1 metallization layer and the conductive material in the interconnect aperture.

29. The method of claim 24 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes forming the interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the N-1 metallization layer is formed; and

filling the interconnect aperture includes filling the interconnect aperture with the conductive material with a first portion in direct contact with the N-1 metallization layer and a second portion in the interconnect aperture.

30. The method of claim 24 wherein:

forming an interconnect aperture includes forming the interconnect aperture at least partially in the semiconductor substrate after the N-1 metallization layer is formed;

the method further includes exposing at least a portion of the N-1 metallization layer; and

filling the interconnect aperture includes introducing the interconnect aperture into the interconnect aperture and onto the exposed portion of the N-1 metallization layer.