

DETECTION CIRCUIT FOR MIXED ASYNCHRONOUS AND SYNCHRONOUS MEMORY OPERATION

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention is related generally to the field of integrated
5 circuits, and more particularly, to circuitry for detecting asynchronous and synchronous
memory operations in a memory device.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A class of memory devices called pseudo-static memory are typically
memory devices that are functionally equivalent to static random access memory
10 (SRAM) devices, but have a memory core based on conventional dynamic random
access memory (DRAM) cells. In general, these memory devices can be operated in the
same manner one would operate a conventional SRAM. As is well known in the art, a
major distinction between the two types of memory cells is that DRAM memory cells
need to be periodically refreshed to maintain the stored data, whereas SRAM memory
15 cells do not. Consequently, pseudo-static memory devices include internal refresh
circuitry to perform the necessary refresh operations of the DRAM memory core.
However, refresh operations are transparent to the user, so that the devices appear as not
needing refresh operations.

Although there appear to be disadvantages in employing a DRAM
20 memory core over an SRAM memory core because of the need for periodic refresh
operations to be performed, there are, however, significant advantages in other respects.
For example, memory density for a DRAM memory array can be much greater than that
for a SRAM memory array. In the case of a DRAM memory cell, only one transfer gate
and a storage device, typically a capacitor, is necessary to store one bit of data. In
25 contrast, conventional SRAM memory cells can have as many as six transistors per
memory cell. Additionally, the simple structure and smaller size of DRAM memory
cells translate into less complicated manufacturing processes, and consequently, lower
fabrication costs when compared to the SRAM memory cell. In turn, memory devices

employing DRAM memory cores are considerably cheaper than SRAM memory devices having equivalent memory capacities.

In an effort to integrate a DRAM memory core into a memory device that is functionally equivalent to an SRAM device, the operational differences between the two types of memory need to be addressed. For example, one difference, as previously discussed, is that DRAM memory cells need to be refreshed periodically or the data stored by the memory cells will be lost. As a result, additional circuitry must be included in the memory device to support refresh operations, but should maintain refresh transparency to the user.

Another difference between an SRAM memory core and a DRAM memory core is that once a memory access operation for a conventional DRAM memory core has begun, the entire access cycle needs to be completed or data will be lost. That is, a DRAM access cycle begins with a row of memory cells in the array being activated, and the respective charge state of the memory cells for the activated row are sensed and amplified. A particular memory cell is selected by coupling a column to an input/output line. Consequently, the memory cell at the intersection of the activated row and the selected column is accessed. At this time, data can be read from or written to the particular memory cell. Following the read or write operation, the row of memory cells is deactivated, thus, the charge states that were initially sensed and amplified are stored by the respective capacitors of the memory cells. As is generally known, the process of sensing the charge state of the memory cells is destructive. Unless the DRAM access cycle is completed by amplifying the charge state and properly deactivating the row, the data stored by the memory cells of the activated row will be lost.

In contrast, for a conventional asynchronous SRAM memory device, the SRAM sense operation is non-destructive and does not have the same type of access cycle as a conventional DRAM memory device. Consequently, random memory addresses may be asserted to the SRAM memory device without timing restriction, and data is always expected to be returned in a certain time thereafter. This time is typically referred to as the address access time t_{AA} .

Yet another difference between memory devices having an SRAM memory core and those having a DRAM memory is that access times for DRAM memory cores are generally longer than the access times for SRAM memory cores. Asynchronous access of a DRAM memory core requires more time to provide valid data
5 because of the time required to complete the access cycle. Although conventional DRAM devices often provide advanced access modes to decrease average access times, such as page mode access, valid memory addresses must nevertheless be provided for each data access. As a result, the minimum access time of a memory device will be limited by the setup time for providing valid and stable memory addresses, which in
10 some cases, can take a relatively long time.

Synchronous DRAM (SDRAM) devices, which operate according to a periodic clock signal and have pipelined architectures to provide shorter average access times than asynchronous DRAM devices. Memory access times for SDRAM devices are generally lower because the pipelining of internal memory operations allow for
15 different stages of a DRAM memory access operation to be executed in parallel, as well known in the art. This allows for new memory commands to be initiated prior to the completion of previous memory commands. As a result, conventional SDRAM devices can provide modes of operation that cannot be replicated by their asynchronous DRAM counterparts. For example, SDRAM devices have a data burst mode where new data
20 can be output each period of a clock signal after an initial memory access without the need to provide any memory addresses other than for the first memory location. That is, data stored at the starting memory location is accessed, and data from sequential memory locations are thereafter accessed without the need to provide further memory addresses.

25 Despite the aforementioned disadvantages, in many instances, it is still desirable to employ memory devices having a DRAM memory core for the advantages previously discussed. Therefore, it is desirable to have circuitry that can be employed in a memory device that provides the asynchronous functionality of an SRAM device, and which accommodates the scheduled events of accessing a DRAM memory core.
30 Moreover, in many applications, it is desirable for the circuitry to automatically detect

whether an asynchronous or synchronous memory access operation is requested without the use of a flag or dedicated control signal that instructs the memory device to expect an asynchronous or synchronous memory access operation. In this manner, a memory device having such circuitry can be used as a companion device with existing types of
5 conventional memory devices.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a memory access mode detection circuit that detects and initiates memory access modes for a memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal. The memory access mode
10 detection circuit includes a mode detection circuit that receives the memory address signals, the control signals, and the clock signal. The mode detection circuit generates a first mode detection signal in response to receipt of the memory address signals or a first combination of control signals, which can indicate an asynchronous access request. A delay circuit further included in the memory access mode detection circuit is coupled
15 to the mode detection circuit and generates a delayed first mode detection signal a time delay after receipt of the first mode detection signal to initiate a first mode access operation. The mode detection circuit further generates a second mode detection signal to initiate a second mode memory access operation in response to receipt to a second combination of control signals and an active clock signal, which can indicate a
20 synchronous access request. In response to receiving the second mode detection signal, the delay circuit resets the time delay and does not generate the delayed first mode detection signal, in effect canceling the asynchronous access and starting a synchronous access instead.

In another aspect of the invention, a method for initiating a memory
25 access operation in a memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, is provided. A first mode detection pulse is generated in response to receiving memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of a first mode memory access operation, which can represent an asynchronous access. A first mode activation pulse to initiate the first mode memory access operation is

generated a time delay following the first mode detection pulse. A second mode detection pulse is generated in response to receiving a clock signal and a second combination of the control signals indicative of a second mode memory access operation, which can represent a synchronous transaction. The second mode detection pulse is then used to suppress the generation of the delayed first mode detection pulse, and initiate the second mode memory access operation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a functional block diagram of an asynchronous/synchronous detection circuit according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 2 is a functional block diagram of an embodiment of a delay circuit that can be used in the detection circuit of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a signal timing diagram illustrating various signals applied to the detection circuit of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a functional block diagram of a portion of a memory device including an asynchronous/synchronous detection circuit according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 5 is a functional block diagram of a computer system including memory devices of Figure 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments of the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which are shown, by way of illustration, specific exemplary embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. In other instances, well-known circuits, control signals, and timing protocols have not been shown in detail in order to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the invention. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention. Other embodiments may be utilized and modifications may be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the present invention. The following detailed description is, therefore, not to

be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims.

Figure 1 illustrates an asynchronous/synchronous mode detection circuit 100 according to an embodiment of the present invention. The detection circuit 100 can be employed in a memory device that is functionally equivalent to an SRAM device, but uses a DRAM memory core. As will be explained in more detail below, a significant benefit provided by embodiments of the present invention is the automatic detection of synchronous/asynchronous operation. The detection circuit 100 also allows for the memory device to be operated synchronously as well. Included in the detection circuit 100 is asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 to which address signals ADDR<0:n> and control signals are provided. As illustrated in Figure 1, the control signals provided to the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 include conventional control signals, such as a chip enable signal CE*, an address valid signal ADV*, an output enable signal OE*, and a write enable signal WE*. The asterisk "*" indicates that the respective control signal is an active low signal, that is, the signal is considered active when at a LOW logic level. The ADDR<0:n> signals and the CE*, ADV*, OE*, and WE* signals are conventional, and are known by those of ordinary skill in the art.

Further included in the detection circuit 100 is synchronous mode detection circuitry 120, which receives the CE*, ADV*, OE*, and WE* signals. The synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 also receives a periodic clock signal CLK that is used by the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 to synchronize operation of the memory device. For example, the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 includes control signal latches (not shown) that latch the logic state of the CE*, ADV*, OE*, and WE* signals in response to transitions of the CLK signal, such as the rising edge of the CLK signal, the falling edge of the CLK signal, or in some embodiments, on both the rising and falling edges of the CLK signal. The asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 and the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 are of conventional design known by those of ordinary skill in the art.

It will be appreciated the previously described control signals have been provided by way of example, and that alternative control signals may be provided to the

asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 and the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 without departing from the scope of the present invention.

A refresh timer 130 is also included in the detection circuit 100. The refresh circuit 130 is coupled to receive a pulse PULSE_ASYNC from the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 and a pulse PULSE_SYNC from the synchronous control circuitry 110. As will be explained in more detail below, the refresh timer 130 generates an output pulse PULSE_OUT a time delay t_d after the falling edge of the last (*i.e.*, most recent) PULSE_ASYNC pulse from the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110. However, in the event a PULSE_SYNC pulse is generated by the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 prior to the time delay t_d elapsing, the refresh timer 130 will be reset and deactivated to prevent a PULSE_OUT pulse from being generated by the refresh timer 130. A two-input Boolean logic OR gate 140 is coupled to receive the PULSE_OUT and PULSE_SYNC pulses from the refresh timer 130 and the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120, respectively. An output of the OR gate 140 is coupled to provide an activation pulse ACT_PULSE to conventional DRAM activation circuitry 150 in order to initiate an access operation in the DRAM memory core (not shown).

By way of background, a memory access operation is initiated in a conventional SRAM device by enabling the SRAM device with an active (LOW logic level) CE* signal, and asserting a memory address. In some applications, an ADV* signal is used to indicate to the SRAM that the memory address is valid, and can be latched to initiate the memory operation. The type of access, that is, whether a read operation or a write operation is executed, is controlled by the logic levels of the other control signals. For example, a read operation is typically executed in response to the WE* signal having a HIGH logic state at the time the memory address is asserted. In contrast, a write operation is executed in response to the WE* signal having a LOW logic state at the time the address is asserted. With respect to a read operation for an SRAM device, read data is expected to be returned from the memory device a certain time after the asserted memory address has been held valid for the minimum time. The maximum time required for the read data to be returned is typically referred to as the

address access time t_{AA} . In the event a new address is asserted before the access operation is complete, the previous access operation is aborted, and a new access operation is initiated for the memory location of the newly asserted address.

As previously discussed, in a conventional DRAM memory core,
5 accessing memory locations in the DRAM memory core is a destructive operation. That is, when a row of memory is accessed, the data stored by the memory cells of that row are essentially erased, and must be written back to the memory cells prior to the completion of the memory access cycle. As a result, it is typically the case that conventional DRAM memory cores are not well suited for use in memory devices that
10 will be accessed in the manner of an SRAM device because of the asynchronous manner in which memory access operations can be initiated in the SRAM device. That is, although the previously described situation of asserting a new memory address prior to the completion of a memory access operation is easily accommodated by conventional SRAM memory cores, this is not the case with a conventional DRAM memory core. As
15 previously explained, the destructive nature of an access operation for a conventional DRAM memory core requires that a memory access operation that is initiated must be allowed to complete or risk loss of data. The detection circuit 100 can be employed to accommodate the use of a DRAM memory core with a conventional SRAM memory interface.

20 The detection circuit 100, however, can be used in a memory device having a conventional DRAM memory core to convert randomly scheduled address transitions, which conventionally used to initiate SRAM access operations, into scheduled events that are suitable for conventional DRAM memory cores. The detection circuit 100 further provides a mechanism for memory devices having
25 conventional DRAM memory cores to be accessed both asynchronously in the manner of an SRAM address interface as well as synchronously to provide the benefits of conventional synchronous DRAM devices. The operation of the detection circuit 100 will be discussed with respect to an asynchronous access operation of a conventional SRAM address interface, followed by a synchronous memory access operation, and then
30 a memory access operation where an asynchronous access operation is immediately

followed by a synchronous access operation. A memory access operation that includes transitioning from an asynchronous to a synchronous memory access operation can be referred to as a mixed mode operation. Embodiments of the present invention automatically detect transitions in mixed mode operations. That is, detection of
5 asynchronous and synchronous memory access operations can be made without any externally supplied flags that instruct a memory device to expect either an asynchronous or synchronous memory access operation.

As previously discussed, a memory access to an SRAM device is initiated upon activating the memory device by a LOW CE* signal and asserting a
10 memory address. Thus, upon receiving a newly asserted memory address and a LOW CE* signal, the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 generates a PULSE-SYNC pulse that is provided to the refresh timer 130 to initiate the time delay t_d . After the time t_d has elapsed, the refresh timer 130 generates a PULSE_OUT pulse that is provided through the OR gate 140 as the ACT_PULSE pulse to the DRAM activation
15 circuits 150. In response to receiving the ACT_PULSE, the DRAM activation circuits 150 initiate an access operation to the memory location in the DRAM memory core corresponding to the memory address asserted to the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110.

The value of the refresh timer 130 will now be explained. The
20 asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 generates a PULSE_ASYNC pulse in response to receiving a new memory address, regardless of whether the new memory address is being asserted prior to the completion of a memory access cycle. The refresh timer 130 inserts a time delay t_d of suitable length to ensure that any previously initiated memory access operation will have sufficient time to complete. In the event the refresh
25 timer 130 is reset by the PULSE_ASYNC pulse generated by the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 before t_d elapses, the time delay t_d is reset so that the delay is measured from receipt of the most recent PULSE_ASYNC pulse. By selecting the time delay t_d to be long enough to allow a memory access operation to complete, the refresh timer 130 ensures that a memory access operation will not be interrupted prior to its
30 completion. That is, since the time t_d is always reset upon the receipt of a

PULSE_ASYNC pulse, the refresh timer 130 ensures that an ACT_PULSE (*i.e.*, a PULSE_OUT pulse) will not be provided to the DRAM activation circuits 150 in response to the assertion of a memory address any sooner than the time t_d has elapsed, which, as previously discussed, is selected to allow a memory access operation to
5 complete. In a particular embodiment of the present invention, the delay t_d is approximately 25 ns, which still allows for a memory device employing a DRAM memory core to have an access time t_{AA} of 60 ns.

Figure 2 illustrates a delay circuit timer 220 that can be included in the refresh timer 130 (Figure 1). The delay circuit 220 includes a plurality of delay stages
10 240. Each delay stage 240 has a delay input and a reset input, and further has a delay output. As will be explained in more detail below, a reset circuit (not shown) also included in the refresh timer will be used to reset the delay circuit timer 220 in response to receiving a PULSE_SYNC pulse from the synchronous mode detection circuit 120. However, the reset circuit, which can be designed by those ordinarily skilled in the art,
15 will not be discussed with respect to the delay circuit timer 220 in order to avoid unnecessarily complicating the description of the delay circuit timer 220.

In operation, a delay stage 240 provides an output signal that is similar to the signal applied to the delay input except that it is delayed by a time t_{dd} . A first delay stage 240 receives the PULSE_ASYNC signal at both its delay input and reset input.
20 Subsequent delay stages 240 are coupled such that the delay input is coupled to the delay output of the previous delay stage 240. The reset input of each of the delay stages 240 is coupled to receive the PULSE_ASYNC signal, and the delay output of the last delay stage 240 is coupled to a first input of a two-input NOR gate 250. A second input of the NOR gate 250 is coupled to receive the PULSE_ASYNC signal. An output of
25 the NOR gate 250 is coupled to a conventional pulse generator 254 through an inverter 252. The pulse generator 254 generates the pulse PULSE_OUT in response to the falling edge of the signal output by the inverter 252. The PULSE_OUT signal, as previously mentioned, is provided to the DRAM activation circuits 150 through the OR gate 140 to start an access operation to a conventional DRAM memory core.

In operation, the delay circuit 220 generates a PULSE_OUT pulse a time delay t_d after the falling edge of the most recent PULSE_ASYNC pulse. The time delay t_d is approximately the sum of the delay t_{dd} of each delay stage 240. In an effort to simplify explanation of the delay circuit 220, any gate delays have been ignored.

5 However, it will be appreciated that some time will be added to the time delay t_d because of the gate delays. When the delay circuit 220 receives an PULSE_ASYNC pulse, on the falling edge of the PULSE_ASYNC pulse, the delay circuit begins counting the time delay t_d . That is, for the first delay stage 240 in the chain, its delay output will go LOW t_{dd} after the falling edge of the PULSE_ASYNC pulse. The delay

10 output of the second delay stage 240 will go LOW t_{dd} after the falling edge of the delay output of the first delay stage 240. Thus, the falling edge of the PULSE_ASYNC pulse will trickle through the chain of delay stages 240 until being applied to the input of the NOR gate 250. Note that during this time, the output of the inverter 252 has remained HIGH. Not until the delay output of the last delay stage 240 goes LOW, which occurs t_d

15 after the falling edge of the PULSE_ASYNC signal, will the output of the inverter 252 go LOW. When this does occur, the pulse generator 254 then generates a PULSE_OUT pulse.

In the event a second PULSE_ASYNC pulse is received by the delay circuit 220 before the t_d timing count has elapsed, the delay stages 240 of the timing

20 chain are reset by causing the delay output of each of the delay stages 240 to go HIGH again in response to the new PULSE_ASYNC pulse. As a result, the t_d countdown will begin again in response to the falling edge of the new PULSE_ASYNC pulse, as previously described. In effect, the pulse generator 254 will not generate a PULSE_OUT pulse until t_d after the falling edge of the last PULSE_ASYNC pulse

25 provided to the delay circuit 220.

A more detailed description of the delay circuit 220 is provided in commonly assigned, co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/102,221, entitled ASYNCHRONOUS INTERFACE CIRCUIT AND METHOD FOR A PSEUDO-STATIC MEMORY DEVICE to Lovett *et al.*, filed March 19, 2002. It will be

appreciated, however, that the refresh timer 130 can include delay circuitry other than that shown in Figure 2, that is well known by those of ordinary skill in the art.

With respect to a synchronous memory access operation, the detection circuit 100 includes synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 that can be used to
5 initiate synchronous memory access operations of a conventional DRAM memory core. With reference to Figure 1, the combination of the logic levels of control signals and provision of a periodic clock signal CLK to the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 initiate such an operation. The synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 is conventional in design, and the design of suitable synchronous mode detection circuitry
10 120 is known by those of ordinary skill in the art. Upon receiving the correct combination of logic signals of the control signals, and provision of a CLK signal, the synchronous control circuitry generates a PULSE_SYNC pulse that is provided to the refresh timer 130 and the OR gate 140. The resulting PULSE_SYNC pulse is provided to the DRAM activation circuits 150 through the OR gate 140 as the ACT_PULSE,
15 which initiates memory access to the DRAM memory core. It will be appreciated that the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 provides internal control signals (not shown) in addition to the PULSE_SYNC pulse shown in Figure 1 in order to execute a synchronous memory access operation. However, the internal control signals are conventional in nature, and have not been shown in order to avoid unnecessarily
20 obscuring the invention.

As an example of a combination of control signals that can be used to initiate a synchronous memory access operation, in a particular embodiment of the present invention, a synchronous memory write operation is requested when the CE* and WE* signals are at a logic LOW, the OE* signal is at a HIGH logic level, and an
25 active CLK signal is provided to the synchronous control circuitry. The requested memory address is asserted, and the ADV* signal is LOW to indicate that the memory address is valid and should be latched by an address buffer (not shown). After initiation of the synchronous memory write operation, the ADV* and WE* signals can return to a HIGH logic level. A burst write operation can continue as long as the CE* signal is at a

LOW logic level and an active CLK signal is provided to the synchronous mode detection circuit 120.

As previously mentioned, the PULSE_SYNC pulse generated by the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 is provided to the refresh timer 130 as well as to the OR gate 140. As will be explained below, the PULSE_SYNC pulse is provided to reset the refresh timer 130 before a PULSE_OUT pulse can ever be generated by the refresh timer 130. Instead, the PULSE_SYNC pulse provided to the OR gate 140 by the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 is used as the ACT_PULSE pulse to initiate a synchronous memory access operation immediately.

Operation of the detection circuit 100 during a mixed mode operation will be explained with reference to the timing diagram of Figure 3. The timing diagram illustrates the relative timing of various signals applied to the detection circuit 100 in transitioning from an asynchronous memory read operation to a synchronous memory write operation. The timing diagram of Figure 3 is being provided by way of example, and should not be interpreted as limiting the scope of the present invention to a particular embodiment.

The asynchronous memory access cycle is initiated at a time T0 by providing a LOW logic level CE* signal (*i.e.*, chip enable), asserting a memory address and strobing the ADV* signal LOW to indicate that the memory address input is valid. The asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110 (Figure 1) generates a PULSE_ASYNC pulse in response to the assertion of the memory address, which begins a time delay t_d 330 of the refresh timer 130. As shown in the timing diagram of Figure 3, the time delay t_d 330 is approximately 25 ns. When the time delay t_d 330 elapses, a PULSE_OUT pulse is generated at a time T1 by the refresh timer 130 and provided through the OR gate 140 to the DRAM activation circuits 150 as an ACT_PULSE pulse to initiate a memory access operation in the DRAM memory core. After the time t_{AA} elapses, that is, the minimum access time for the memory device, the OE* signal (*i.e.*, output enable) is made active by changing it to a logic LOW level at a time T2. In response, valid read data 340 is provided at the input/output (IO) terminals of the memory device. At a time T3, the IO terminals are placed in a high impedance state by

returning the OE* signal to a HIGH logic level, and the memory device is put in a standby state by changing the CE* signal to a HIGH logic level. The time T3 represents the end of the asynchronous memory access cycle.

In the present example shown in Figure 3, the transition from the asynchronous memory access mode to a synchronous memory access mode occurs on the rising edge of the CLK signal following a time T4, that is, when the CE* signal becomes active, or more specifically, when the CE* signal goes LOW. As will be discussed in more detail below, when the CE* signal becomes active at the time T4, it is assumed that an asynchronous memory access operation will be executed until a rising edge of the CLK signal in combination with the ADV* signal is detected. At that time, the asynchronous memory access operation is cancelled, and a synchronous memory access operation is initiated instead. It will be appreciated by those ordinarily skilled in the art that where the time delay t_d 330 is approximately 25 ns, a maximum time of 25 ns can elapse from the time the CE* signal becomes active at the time T4 and the time when the rising edge of the CLK signal is detected. Otherwise, the asynchronous memory access operation that is assumed to have been initiated will begin in the DRAM memory core before the synchronous memory access operation.

At the time T4, the memory device is enabled by changing the logic level of the CE* signal to LOW, and a write operation is indicated by strobing the WE* signal LOW. A memory address is also asserted and the ADV* signal is strobed LOW to signal that the address input is valid. At a time T5, a synchronous write operation in the DRAM memory core is initiated when, in response to a rising edge of the CLK signal, the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120 (Figure 1) detects the active CE* and WE* signals and generates a PULSE_SYNC pulse that is provided to the DRAM activation circuits 150 through the OR gate 140. The memory address is latched on the rising edge of the CLK signal as well. At a time T6, the ADV* and WE* are returned to a HIGH logic level, while the CE* signal remains at a LOW logic level to indicate that the requested synchronous memory write operation should not be terminated.

At the time T4, as part of enabling the memory device, the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110, which also received the CE*, ADV*, and address signals,

will generate a PULSE_ASYNC pulse. The PULSE_ASYNC pulse is generated in response to the CE* signal becoming active at the time T4, and an asynchronous memory access operation is started on the refresh timer 130 (Figure 1). Before the asynchronous memory access operation is initiated in the DRAM memory core by the generation of the PULSE_OUT pulse after the time delay t_d elapses, a PULSE_SYNC pulse generated by the synchronous detection circuitry 120 at a time T5 cancels the queued asynchronous memory access operation. The PULSE_ASYNC pulse is automatically generated in response to the assertion of the memory address. As a result, the refresh timer will begin the time delay. Consequently, in order to prevent a PULSE_OUT pulse from being generated and interrupting the synchronous memory write operation, which as previously discussed is initiated at the time T5, the refresh timer 130 is reset and disabled by the PULSE_SYNC pulse generated by the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120. As a result, a PULSE_OUT pulse is never generated by the refresh timer 130.

At a time T7, write data 360 present on the IO terminals is latched and written to the location in the DRAM memory core corresponding to the memory address latched at the time T5. As previously discussed, while the CE* signal remains at a LOW logic level, the synchronous memory write operation will continue. The synchronous memory access operations can be terminated by returning the CE* signal to a HIGH logic level, and transition back to an asynchronous memory access can be accomplished by disabling the CLK signal.

Figure 4 illustrates a portion of a memory device 500 according to an embodiment of the present invention. The memory device 500 is an asynchronous pseudo-static SRAM that includes a conventional DRAM memory array 502. The memory device 500 can be operated asynchronously or synchronously. The memory device 500 includes a command decoder 506 that receives memory commands through a command bus 508 which generates internal control signals within the memory device 500 to carry out various memory operations. The command bus 508 is also coupled to an asynchronous/synchronous detection circuit 512 that is in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Examples of the signals received over the

command bus 508 include CE*, ADV*, OE*, and WE* signals, as previously described. However, it will be appreciated by those ordinarily skilled in the art that changes to the particular signals provided to the memory device 500 over the command bus 508 will not depart from the scope of the present invention. Row and column address signals are provided to an address buffer 510 of the memory device 500 through an address bus 520, as well as to the detection circuit 512.

As previously described, the detection circuit 512 generates an ACT_PULSE pulse to initiate an access operation to the memory array 502. Although previously described as being provided to DRAM activation circuits 150 (Figure 1), as illustrated in Figure 4, the ACT_PULSE pulse is provided to the command decoder 506 to initiate a memory access operation in Figure 5. It will be appreciated, however, that the ACT_PULSE signal can be provided to alternative or additional functional blocks of a conventional memory device without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The row and column addresses are provided by the address buffer 510 for decoding by a row address decoder 524 and a column address decoder 528, respectively. Memory array read/write circuitry 530 are coupled to the array 502 to provide read data to a data output buffer 534 via a input-output data bus 540. Write data are applied to the memory array 502 through a data input buffer 544 and the memory array read/write circuitry 530. The command controller 506 responds to memory commands applied to the command bus 508 to perform various operations on the memory array 502. In particular, the command controller 506 is used to generate internal control signals to read data from and write data to the memory array 502. The data read from the memory array 502 are transferred to the output buffer 534 and provided on data input/output (IO) lines 550. In a write operation, the addressed memory cell is accessed and data provided on the IO lines 550 to the data input buffer 544 are stored in the memory array 502.

Figure 5 is a block diagram of a computer system 600 including computer circuitry 602 that contains the memory device 500 of Figure 4. The computer circuitry 602 performs various computing functions, such as executing specific software

to perform specific calculations or tasks. In addition, the computer system 600 includes one or more input devices 604, such as a keyboard, coupled to the computer circuitry 602 to allow an operator to interface with the computer system. Typically, the computer system 600 also includes one or more output devices 606 coupled to the computer circuitry 602, such output devices typically being a display device. One or more data storage devices 608 are also typically coupled to the computer circuitry 602 to store data or retrieve data. Examples of storage devices 608 include hard disks and non-volatile memory. The computer system 600 also includes a wireless communication link 610 through which the computer circuitry can send and receive data through a wireless medium. The computer circuitry 602 is typically coupled to the memory device 500 through appropriate address, data, and control busses to provide for writing data to and reading data from the memory.

From the foregoing it will be appreciated that, although specific embodiments of the invention have been described herein for purposes of illustration, various modifications may be made without deviating from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the embodiment of the present invention described in Figure 1 includes a two-input OR gate 140 that provides the ACT_PULSE pulse to the DRAM activation circuits 150 to initiate a memory access operation based on either a PULSE_OUT pulse from the refresh timer 130 or a PULSE_SYNC pulse from the synchronous mode detection circuitry 120. However, in an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the OR gate 140 will not be included, and the PULSE_OUT and PULSE_SYNC pulses will be provided to DRAM activation circuitry directly to initiate either an asynchronous memory access operation or a synchronous memory access operation, respectively. Moreover, the embodiment of Figure 1 illustrates separate functional blocks for the asynchronous mode detection circuitry 110, synchronous mode detection circuitry 120, refresh timer 130, OR gate 140 and DRAM activation circuits 150. However, it will be appreciated by those ordinarily skilled in the art that the various functional blocks may be combined into different arrangements than that shown in Figure 1, and still remain in the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the invention is not limited except as by the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. Mode detection circuitry for initiating a memory access operation in a memory device receiving memory address signals and control signals, the detection circuitry comprising:

a first mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals and the control signals, and in response to receipt of a first combination of control signals and the memory address signals, generating a first mode detection signal to be provided at first mode output node;

a second mode detection circuit coupled to receive the control signals and a clock signal, and in response to receipt of a second combination of control signals and an active clock signal, generating a second mode detection signal to be provided at a second mode output node;

a refresh timer having an activation node coupled to the first mode output node, a disable node coupled to the second mode output node, and further having an timer output node at which a first mode activation signal is provided, the refresh timer generating the first mode activation signal a time delay following receipt of the last received first mode detection signal and further suppressing generation of the first mode activation signal in response to receipt of the second mode detection signal; and

an output circuit having first and second input nodes coupled to the timer output node and the second mode output node, respectively, the output circuit further having an activation signal node at which an activation signal is provided to initiate a memory access operation in response to receipt of the first mode activation signal or the second mode detection signal.

2. The mode detection circuitry of claim 1 wherein the first mode detection signal, the second mode detection signal, the first mode activation signal, and the activation signal comprise a first mode detection pulse, a second mode detection pulse, a first mode activation pulse, and an activation pulse.

3. The mode detection circuitry of claim 1 wherein the output circuit comprises a two-input OR gate.

4. The mode detection circuitry of claim 1 wherein the first mode detection circuit generates a first mode detection signal in response to receipt of a first combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous memory access operation.

5. The mode detection circuitry of claim 1 wherein the second mode detection circuit generates a second mode detection signal in response to receipt of a second combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous memory access operation.

6. The mode detection circuitry of claim 1 wherein the refresh timer comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the first mode output node to receive the first mode detection signal and a last delay stage having an output at which the first mode activation signal is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the disable node and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the first mode activation signal in response to receipt of the second mode detection signal.

7. A memory access mode circuit for a multi-mode memory device receiving memory address signals and control signals, the memory access mode circuit comprising:

a first mode detection circuit for detecting a first memory access mode and generating in response thereto a first mode detection pulse;

a second mode detection circuit for detecting a second memory access mode and generating in response thereto a second mode detection pulse;

a delay circuit coupled to the first mode detection circuit for generating a delayed first mode detection pulse a time delay after receipt of the last first mode detection pulse, the delay circuit further coupled to the second mode detection circuit to reset delay circuit in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse; and

memory access activation circuitry coupled to the delay circuit and the second mode detection circuit, the memory access activation circuitry activating a first memory access operation in response to receipt of the delayed first mode detection pulse and activating a second memory access operation in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse.

8. The memory access mode circuit of claim 7 wherein the first mode detection circuit comprises an asynchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and address signal nodes at which the memory address signals are received, the asynchronous mode detection circuit generating the first mode detection pulse in response to receipt of either memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous mode access operation.

9. The memory access mode circuit of claim 7 wherein the second mode detection circuit comprises a synchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and a clock node at which a clock signal is received, the synchronous mode detection circuit generating the second mode detection pulse in response to receipt of an active clock signal and a combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous mode access operation.

10. The memory access mode circuit of claim 7 wherein the first memory access operation comprises an asynchronous memory access operation and the second memory access operation comprises a synchronous memory access operation.

11. The memory access mode circuit of claim 7 wherein the delay circuit comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the first mode detection circuit to receive the first mode detection pulse and a last delay stage having an output at which the delayed first mode detection pulse is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the second mode detection circuit and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the delayed first mode detection pulse in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse.

12. A memory access mode detection circuit for a memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, the memory access mode detection circuit comprising:

a mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals, and the clock signal, the mode detection circuit generating a first mode detection signal in response to receipt of the memory address signals and a first combination of control signals further and generating a second mode detection signal to initiate a second mode memory access operation in response to receipt to a second combination of control signals and an active clock signal; and

a delay circuit coupled to the mode detection circuit for generating a delayed first mode detection signal a time delay after receipt of the first mode detection signal to initiate a first mode memory access operation and, in response to receiving the second mode detection signal, resetting the time delay to prevent generation of the delayed first mode activation signal.

13. The memory access mode detection circuit of claim 12 wherein the first mode memory access operation comprises an asynchronous memory access operation and the second mode memory access operation comprises a synchronous memory access operation.

14. The memory access mode circuit of claim 12 wherein the mode detection circuit comprises:

an asynchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and address signal nodes at which the memory address signals are received, the asynchronous mode detection circuit generating the first mode detection signal in response to receipt of either memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous mode access operation; and

a synchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and a clock node at which a clock signal is received, the synchronous mode detection circuit generating the second mode detection signal in response to receipt of an active clock signal and a combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous mode access operation.

15. The memory access mode detection circuit of claim 12 wherein the delay circuit comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the mode detection circuit to receive the first mode detection signal and a last delay stage having an output at which the delayed first mode detection signal is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the mode detection circuit and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the delayed first mode detection signal in response to receipt of the second mode detection signal.

16. A memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, the memory device comprising:

an array of volatile memory cells;

memory array access circuitry coupled to the array of volatile memory cells for accessing the memory array; and

a memory access mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals and the clock signal, the memory access mode detection circuit comprising:

a mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals, and the clock signal, the mode detection circuit generating a first mode detection signal to initiate a first mode memory access operation in response to receipt to the memory address signals and a first combination of control signals and generating a second mode detection signal to initiate a second mode memory access operation in response to receipt to a second combination of control signals and an active clock signal; and

a delay circuit coupled to the mode detection circuit for generating a delayed first mode detection signal a time delay after receipt of the first mode detection circuit and, in response to receiving the second mode detection signal, resetting the time delay and generating a second mode activation signal to initiate a second mode access operation.

17. The memory device of claim 16 wherein the first mode memory access operation comprises an asynchronous memory access operation and the second mode memory access operation comprises a synchronous memory access operation.

18. The memory device of claim 16 wherein the mode detection circuit of the memory access mode detection circuit comprises:

an asynchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and address signal nodes at which the memory address signals are received, the asynchronous mode detection circuit generating the first mode detection signal in response to receipt of either memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous mode access operation; and

a synchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and a clock node at which a clock signal is received, the synchronous mode detection circuit generating the second mode detection signal in response to receipt of an active clock signal and a combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous mode access operation.

19. The memory device of claim 16 wherein the delay circuit of the memory access mode detection circuit comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the mode detection circuit to receive the first mode detection signal and a last delay stage having an output at which the delayed first mode detection signal is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the mode detection circuit and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the delayed first mode detection signal in response to receipt of the second mode detection signal.

20. The memory device of claim 16 wherein the array of volatile memory cells comprises an array of DRAM memory cells having access thereto limited by completion of an access cycle including a sequence of access events.

21. The memory device of claim 20 wherein the memory array access circuitry comprises DRAM array access circuitry for accessing the array of DRAM memory cells in accordance with the sequence of access events.

22. A memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, the memory device comprising:

an array of volatile memory cells;

memory array access circuitry coupled to the array of volatile memory cells for accessing the memory array; and

a memory access mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals and the clock signal, the memory access mode detection circuit comprising:

a first mode detection circuit for detecting a first memory access mode and generating in response thereto a first mode detection pulse;

a second mode detection circuit for detecting a second memory access mode and generating in response thereto a second mode detection pulse;

a delay circuit coupled to the first mode detection circuit for generating a delayed first mode detection pulse a time delay after receipt of the last first mode detection pulse, the delay circuit further coupled to the second mode detection circuit to reset delay circuit in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse; and

memory access activation circuitry coupled to the delay circuit and the second mode detection circuit, the memory access activation circuitry activating a first memory access operation in response to receipt of the delayed first mode detection pulse and activating a second memory access operation in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse.

23. The memory device of claim 22 wherein the first mode detection circuit of the memory access mode circuit comprises an asynchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and address signal nodes at which the memory address signals are received, the asynchronous mode detection circuit generating the first mode detection pulse in response to receipt of either memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous mode access operation.

24. The memory device of claim 22 wherein the second mode detection circuit of the memory access mode circuit comprises a synchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and a clock node at which a clock signal is received, the synchronous mode detection circuit generating the second mode detection pulse in response to receipt of an active clock signal and a combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous mode access operation.

25. The memory device of claim 22 wherein the first memory access operation comprises an asynchronous memory access operation and the second memory access operation comprises a synchronous memory access operation.

26. The memory device of claim 22 wherein the delay circuit of the memory access mode circuit comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the first mode detection circuit to receive the first mode detection pulse and a last delay stage having an output at which the delayed first mode detection pulse is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the second mode detection circuit and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the delayed first mode detection pulse in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse.

27. The memory device of claim 22 wherein the array of volatile memory cells comprises an array of DRAM memory cells having access thereto limited by completion of an access cycle including a sequence of access events.

28. The memory device of claim 27 wherein the memory array access circuitry comprises DRAM array access circuitry for accessing the array of DRAM memory cells in accordance with the sequence of access events.

29. A computer system, comprising:

a data input device;

a data output device;

a processor coupled to the data input and output devices; and

a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, the memory device comprising:

an array of volatile memory cells;

memory array access circuitry coupled to the array of volatile memory cells for accessing the memory array; and

a memory access mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals and the clock signal, the memory access mode detection circuit comprising:

a mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals, and the clock signal, the mode detection circuit generating a first mode detection signal to initiate a first mode memory access operation in response to receipt to the memory address signals and a first combination of control signals and generating a second mode detection signal to initiate a second mode memory access operation in response to receipt to a second combination of control signals and an active clock signal; and

a delay circuit coupled to the mode detection circuit for generating a delayed first mode detection signal a time delay after receipt of the first mode detection circuit and, in response to receiving the second mode detection signal, resetting the time delay and generating a second mode activation signal to initiate a second mode access operation.

30. The computer system of claim 29 wherein the first mode memory access operation of the memory device comprises an asynchronous memory access operation and the second mode memory access operation comprises a synchronous memory access operation.

31. The computer system of claim 29 wherein the mode detection circuit of the memory device comprises:

an asynchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and address signal nodes at which the memory address signals are received, the asynchronous mode detection circuit generating the first mode detection signal in response to receipt of either memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous mode access operation; and

a synchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and a clock node at which a clock signal is received, the synchronous mode detection circuit generating the second mode detection signal in response

to receipt of an active clock signal and a combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous mode access operation.

32. The computer system of claim 29 wherein the delay circuit of the memory device comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the mode detection circuit to receive the first mode detection signal and a last delay stage having an output at which the delayed first mode detection signal is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the mode detection circuit and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the delayed first mode detection signal in response to receipt of the second mode detection signal.

33. The computer system of claim 29 wherein the array of volatile memory cells of the memory device comprises an array of DRAM memory cells having access thereto limited by completion of an access cycle including a sequence of access events.

34. The computer system of claim 33 wherein the memory array access circuitry of the memory device comprises DRAM array access circuitry for accessing the array of DRAM memory cells in accordance with the sequence of access events.

35. A computer system, comprising
a data input device;
a data output device;
a processor coupled to the data input and output devices; and
a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, the memory device comprising:
an array of volatile memory cells;

memory array access circuitry coupled to the array of volatile memory cells for accessing the memory array; and

a memory access mode detection circuit coupled to receive the memory address signals, the control signals and the clock signal, the memory access mode detection circuit comprising:

a first mode detection circuit for detecting a first memory access mode and generating in response thereto a first mode detection pulse;

a second mode detection circuit for detecting a second memory access mode and generating in response thereto a second mode detection pulse;

a delay circuit coupled to the first mode detection circuit for generating a delayed first mode detection pulse a time delay after receipt of the last first mode detection pulse, the delay circuit further coupled to the second mode detection circuit to reset delay circuit in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse; and

memory access activation circuitry coupled to the delay circuit and the second mode detection circuit, the memory access activation circuitry activating a first memory access operation in response to receipt of the delayed first mode detection pulse and activating a second memory access operation in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse.

36. The computer system of claim 35 wherein the first mode detection circuit of the memory device comprises an asynchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and address signal nodes at which the memory address signals are received, the asynchronous mode detection circuit generating the first mode detection pulse in response to receipt of either memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous mode access operation.

37. The computer system of claim 35 wherein the second mode detection circuit of the memory device comprises a synchronous mode detection circuit having control signal nodes at which the control signals are received and a clock node at which a clock

signal is received, the synchronous mode detection circuit generating the second mode detection pulse in response to receipt of an active clock signal and a combination of control signals indicative of a synchronous mode access operation.

38. The computer system of claim 35 wherein the first memory access operation of the memory device comprises an asynchronous memory access operation and the second memory access operation comprises a synchronous memory access operation.

39. The computer system of claim 35 wherein the delay circuit of the memory device comprises:

a chain of delay stages having a first delay stage coupled to the first mode detection circuit to receive the first mode detection pulse and a last delay stage having an output at which the delayed first mode detection pulse is provided, each delay stage having first and second inputs and an output and delaying a falling edge of a signal applied to either of the first or second inputs from propagating to its output by a stage time delay; and

a reset circuit coupled to the second mode detection circuit and the chain of delay stages, the reset circuit disabling the chain of delay stages to prevent output of the delayed first mode detection pulse in response to receipt of the second mode detection pulse.

40. The computer system of claim 35 wherein the array of volatile memory cells of the memory device comprises an array of DRAM memory cells having access thereto limited by completion of an access cycle including a sequence of access events.

41. The computer system of claim 40 wherein the memory array access circuitry of the memory device comprises DRAM array access circuitry for accessing the array of DRAM memory cells in accordance with the sequence of access events.

42. A method for initiating a memory access operation in a memory device receiving memory address signals, control signals and a clock signal, the method comprising:

generating a first mode detection pulse in response to receiving memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of a first mode memory access operation;

delaying the last generated first mode detection pulse a time delay to generate a first mode activation pulse to initiate the first mode memory access operation;

generating a second mode detection pulse in response to receiving a clock signal and a second combination of the control signals indicative of a second mode memory access operation;

suppressing the generation of the delayed first mode detection pulse; and

initiating the second mode memory access operation in response to the second mode detection pulse.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein generating a first mode detection pulse in response to receiving memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of a first mode memory access operation comprises generating a first mode detection pulse in response to receiving memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous memory access operation.

44. The method of claim 42 wherein generating a second mode detection pulse in response to receiving a clock signal and a second combination of the control signals indicative of a second mode memory access operation comprises generating a second mode detection pulse in response to receiving a clock signal and a second combination of the control signals indicative of a synchronous memory access operation.

45. The method of claim 42 wherein delaying the last generated first mode detection pulse a time delay to generate a first mode activation pulse to initiate the first mode memory access operation comprises initiating a delay sequence based on the falling edge of the first mode detection pulse, and resetting the delay sequence in response to the falling edge

of any new first mode detection pulses prior to completion of the delay sequence and restarting the delay sequence from the falling edge of the first mode detection pulse, and suppressing the generation of the delayed first mode detection pulse comprises resetting the delay sequence and inhibiting the generation of the first mode activation pulse.

46. The method of claim 42 wherein initiating the second mode access operation in response to the second mode detection pulse comprises initiating a synchronous DRAM memory access cycle.

47. A method for activating a memory access operation in a memory device having a DRAM memory cell core and receiving memory address signals, control signals, and a clock signal, the method comprising:

in response to receipt of the memory address signals or a first combination of control signals indicative of a first mode memory access operation, generating a first mode activation signal a time delay after receipt of the last memory address signals or the first combination of control signals, the time delay sufficiently long to allow for a first mode memory access operation in the DRAM memory cell core to complete; and

in response to receipt of an active clock signal and a second combination of control signals indicative of a second mode memory access operation, generating a second mode activation signal to initiate a second mode memory access operation in the DRAM memory cell core and to prevent the generation of the first mode activation signal.

48. The method of claim 47 wherein generating a first mode activation signal in response to receipt of the memory address signals or the first combination of control signals indicative of the first mode memory access operation comprises generating the first mode activation signal in response to receipt of the memory address signals or a combination of control signals indicative of an asynchronous memory access operation.

49. The method of claim 47 wherein generating a second mode activation signal in response to receiving an active clock signal and a second combination of control

signals indicative of a second mode memory access operation comprises generating a second mode activation signal in response to receiving an active clock signal and a second combination of the control signals indicative of a synchronous memory access operation.

50. The method of claim 47 wherein generating the first mode activation signal a time delay after receipt of the last memory address signals or the first combination of control signals comprises:

generating a transition detection pulse in response to detecting a transition in the memory address signals or the first combination of control signals;

initiating a delay sequence based on the falling edge of the transition detection pulse;

resetting the delay sequence in response to the falling edge of a new transition detection pulse generated prior to completion of the delay sequence and restarting the delay sequence from the falling edge of the new transition detection pulse; and

generating a first mode activation sequence in response to the completion of the delay sequence.