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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **SMART
EDGE INVESTMENTS LIMITED** [CN/CN]; 21st
Floor, Chinachem Tower, 34-37 Connaught Road, Central,
Hong Kong (CN).
- (72) Inventor; and
- (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **WILLIAMS, Adam**
[GB/CN]; 21st Floor, Chinachem Tower, 34-37 Connaught
Road, Central, Hong Kong (CN).
- (74) Agent: **SHENZHEN ZHONGYI PATENT AND
TRADEMARK OFFICE**; 4th FL. West (PO Box No.5),
Old Special Zone Newspaper Building, No. 1014, Shen-
zhen Rd., C., Futian, Shenzhen, Guangdong 518028 (CN).

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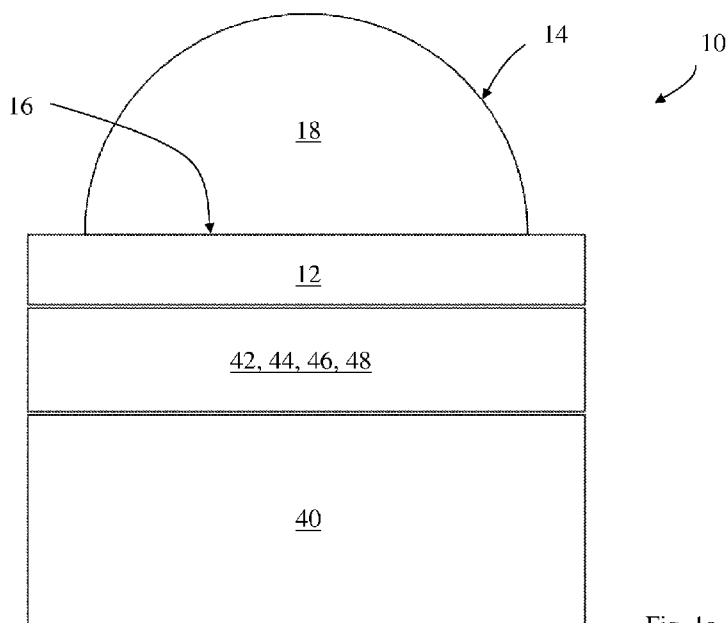


Fig. 1a

(57) Abstract: Provided is an optical device such as a camera having an image sensor and a lens/mirror system or the like for capturing a very wide angle image such as a panoramic image and directing it towards a planar photo-sensitive surface of the image sensor. The image sensor converts the captured image, which may be a moving image, into an electrical or electronic signal or signals. The image sensor has a plurality of photo sensors or pixels arranged on a photo-sensitive surface thereof in a generally circular arrangement. The plurality of photo sensors or pixels is addressable or identifiable such that a window portion of a captured image can be defined by references to addresses or identifiers of respective photo sensors or pixels. The camera may form part of an integrated or distributed system including means for converting said electrical signal into digital image data and means for buffering or storing said digital image data. The system may also include input means for receiving a selection of a window portion of said very wide angle image and means for retrieving digital image data comprising said selected window portion from said buffer or storage means and

transmitting said retrieved digital image data to an information processing means for display and/or further processing. An image projection system is also disclosed sharing many of the novel technical features of the camera.