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SPECIFICATION

LOW PROFILE ELECTRICAL CONNECTOR FOR A PGA PACKAGE AND TERMINALS THEREFOR

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates generally to an electrical connector and, more particularly, to an electrical connector for connecting a pin grid array ("PGA") package, to a printed circuit board.

Background of the Invention

10 A typical PGA includes a silicon chip, a package including conductive and non-conductive components and a plurality of pins depending downward from a bottom surface of the package. Conventionally, electrical connectors for PGA's include a base housing having an array of terminal receiving cavities, a plurality of terminals mounted in the terminal receiving cavities and a cover slidably mounted on the base housing. The cover has through holes therein adapted for insertion of the
15 pins of the PGA therethrough. In operation, the cover is initially positioned in a first or pin receiving position. The pins of the PGA are then inserted through the holes in the cover. Some type of actuator is then typically actuated in order to slide the cover and the PGA with its associated pins linearly so that the pins engage the terminals contained within the base housing. An example of a connector of this type is
20 disclosed in Japanese Patent Publication No. 2689325.

 The typical terminal of the connector of this type has a solder tail for soldering within a hole in a printed circuit board and of a contact piece for engaging a pin of the PGA. An engaging or retention portion is positioned between the solder tail and the contact piece for engaging the base housing in order to retain the terminal in the base
25 housing.

 With the typical electrical connector for the PGA package, each terminal is formed into the configuration in which the contact piece, the engaging portion and the solder tail are linear as set forth above. Therefore, the terminal length is generally



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long, and the thickness of the base housing is generally similar to the length of the contact piece and the engaging portion. As a result, a reduction in the height of the overall electrical connector is generally difficult without also shrinking the height of the terminal.

5 Summary of the Invention

 The present invention is intended to solve the problems set forth above. Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide an electrical connector for a PGA package having a structure adapted for the reduction of the height thereof.

 To accomplish the above-mentioned object, the present invention
10 contemplates the provision of a structure in which the contact piece and the engaging piece for retaining the terminal within the base housing are provided in parallel. The invention may also utilize a slidable cover formed of sheet metal with an insulative coating thereon.

 A zero insertion force electrical connector for mounting on a circuit member
15 and receiving a device having an array of conductive pin terminals includes a base housing having a generally planar lower surface and a plurality of terminal-receiving cavities corresponding to the array of pin terminals. A cover is slidably mounted on the base housing. The cover is movable between a first insertion position and a
20 second engagement position and includes a plurality of through holes therein arranged in an array corresponding to the array of pin terminals for receiving the pin terminals in the through holes. A plurality of stamped and formed conductive terminals are provided with one terminal mounted in each of the cavities. Each terminal includes a generally planar base positioned generally adjacent the lower surface of the base
25 housing and oriented generally parallel to the plane of the lower surface. A mounting portion of the terminal is provided for securing the terminal in the base housing and a tail section is provided for contacting a conductive portion of the circuit member. A contact structure is configured for engaging a portion of a respective one of the pin terminals. The contact structure includes a pair of parallel, spaced apart spring arms that extend generally perpendicularly from the base. An actuating structure may be

provided to slide the cover along the base housing between the first insertion position at which the pin terminals inserted into the through holes in the cover are spaced from the terminals and the second engagement position at which the pin terminals inserted into the through holes in the cover engage the contact structures of the terminals to effect electrical connection between the pin terminals and the circuit member.

If desired, the base housing may be generally planar and made of plastic. The plane of the base housing is generally parallel to the plane of the lower surface of the base housing. The cover may be generally planar also. The mounting portion of each the terminal may extend generally perpendicular to the base of the terminal. The mounting portion of each terminal may also be positioned within a recess in the lower surface of the base housing. The tail section of each terminal may extend from the base of the terminal. In addition, the tail section may include a first arcuate section extending from the base and a second generally linear section extending from the first arcuate section generally away from the lower surface of the base housing at an oblique angle relative to the plane thereof whereby a surface mount portion of the tail section is positioned beneath the base. If desired, the spring arms of the contact structure may extend towards the cover.

With the electrical connector for the PGA package according to the present invention, each terminal is formed by independently arranging respective spring contact and engaging piece in parallel. Accordingly, the length of the terminal can be shortened without sacrificing the effective length of the spring contact, and the housing board can be also made low-profile.

Brief description of the drawings

The present invention will be understood more fully from the detailed description set forth below and from the accompanying drawings of the preferred embodiment of the present invention in which:

5 Fig. 1 is an exploded perspective view of a preferred embodiment of an electrical connector for a PGA according to the present invention with one of the terminals enlarged for clarity;

 Fig. 2 is an enlarged fragmented top plan view of the preferred embodiment of the base housing and terminals according to the present invention with certain
10 terminals removed for clarity;

 Fig. 3 is a partially enlarged section generally along line 3-3 of Fig. 2 showing the electrical connector of Fig. 1 mounted on a printed circuit board with the cover positioned in the engagement position;

 Fig. 4 is a perspective view a second embodiment of the electrical connector
15 according to the present invention;

 Fig. 5 is a fragmented perspective view showing the position of the cover relative to the base housing and a terminal with the cover in the insertion position; and

 Fig. 6 is a fragmented perspective view showing the position of the cover relative to the base housing and a terminal with the cover in the engagement position.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments

The present invention is discussed hereinafter in detail in terms of the preferred embodiments of the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, to those skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In some instances, well-known structures are not shown in detail in order to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the present invention.

Fig. 1 is an exploded view of a preferred embodiment of an electrical connector 1 for a PGA package. A slightly different embodiment is shown assembled in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 1, an electrical connector 1 for receiving a PGA includes a base housing 2, a plurality of terminals 3 mounted in terminal receiving cavities 7 in the base housing 2, and a slidable cover 4 mounted on the upper side of the base housing..

The base housing 2 is molded of dielectric plastic as a thin, generally rectangular plate. One end includes a mounting portion 6 for receiving an actuating lever 5 that drives the cover 4 back and forth in a linear fashion. Terminal receiving cavities 7 are formed in a grid array fashion over generally the entire area of the base housing 2 other than mounting portion 6 and as otherwise described below. The terminal receiving cavities 7 formed in grid array fashion are offset one half pitch in adjacent rows in both longitudinal and transverse directions as shown in Fig. 2. In other words, the cavities are located in a staggered fashion as a whole. By this arrangement, it becomes possible to make the distance "A" along diagonal rows of terminals indicated in Fig. 2 as short as possible (for example, 1.27mm).

A conductive terminal 3 is mounted within each terminal receiving cavity 7. As best shown in Fig. 1, each terminal 3 is stamped and formed of sheet metal, and includes a generally U-shaped spring contact 10 formed of a base piece 8 and a pair of contact arms 9 extending up from the base piece. A terminal retention piece 11 also extends upwardly from the base piece generally in parallel with the contact arms 9 for engaging a recess 14 in the lower surface 2a of base housing 2 in an interference fit in

order to retain the terminal in the housing. The distal end of each contact arm 9 is inwardly bulged to form a contact portion 9a that engages a pin 15 of a PGA.

Furthermore, a solder tail 12 extends from an edge of the base piece 8 opposite retention piece 11. The solder tail extends initially away from base piece 11 and then
5 curves downward until it angles downward relative to the lower surface 2a of the base housing 6 in a generally linear manner to provide an appropriate tail for surface mount soldering on the surface of a printed circuit board 13. An end portion of the solder tail may extend upwards. An opening 8a (elliptical in Fig. 1 and round in Figs. 5 and 6) is provided in base piece 8 in order to permit inspection of the surface mount tail 12
10 from above once the base housing 2 and terminals 3 are soldered to printed circuit board 13 but before the cover 4 is mounted to the base housing.

In a bottom surface 2a of the housing board 2, recesses 14 are formed adjacent to the cavities 7 for receiving the terminal retention pieces 11. Each terminal 3 is mounted from the bottom of base housing 2 through bottom surface 2a, and fixed in
15 the base housing by an interference fit between the retention piece 11 and the recess 14. The cavities 7 are formed with a first insertion section or space 7a at which a pin 15 of a PGA may be inserted with zero insertion force and a second engagement section or space 7b which receives contact arms 9 of terminal 3.

The cover 4 is formed in a generally rectangular plate configuration having a size generally similar to that of the base housing 2 as shown in the drawings. In the preferred embodiment, the cover 4 is formed of metal sheet (aluminum, stainless steel or the like). The cover 4 may be formed with the side edge portions 4a formed into a channel shaped configuration in cross section as shown in Fig. 1 or with the side edge portions 4b formed into an L-shaped configuration in cross section as shown in Fig. 4
20 for engaging with the side edge of the base housing 2. As such, the side edge portions are adapted to guide the cover 4 as it slides in the direction of arrow 16 (Fig. 4) by operating the lever 5.

Substantially, the entire area of the cover 4 has through holes 18 provided in a grid array fashion corresponding to the terminal receiving cavities 7 of the base
30 housing 2. The through holes 18 are adapted for insertion of the pins 15 of the PGA

and, as best seen in Fig. 3, include counter bores or tapered sections 19 on the top surface of cover 4 and straight holes 20 extending from the counter bores 19 to the lower surface of the cover. The rear edge portion 17 of the cover 4 may be constructed with a stiffener 21 mounted with rivets 22 as shown in Fig. 1. In the alternative, the cover may be formed as a one-piece structure as shown in Fig. 4. The cover 4 formed of metal sheet is coated by an insulating coating or material such as an oxide film or the like to prevent it from electrically conducting with the pins 15 inserted into the through holes 18.

As shown in Fig. 1, an L-shaped actuating lever 5 includes crank bar or cam portion 23 and operating lever portion 24. The center section of the crank bar portion 23 is inserted into the mounting portion 6 of the base housing 2, and opposite end portions thereof are inserted into holes 25 formed in the engaging portions 17 of the cover 4. Snap rings 26 are mounted onto ends of crank bar portion 23 in order to secure the lever in the connector 1. By rotating the operating lever portion 24 of the lever 5 as indicated by arrow 27 of Fig. 4, the cover 4 slides back and forth as indicated by arrow 16. This sliding movement is consistent with the orientation of the rows of the terminal receiving cavities 7 and the terminals 3. The lever 5 rotates between an insertion position in which the operating lever portion 24 is vertical (as shown in Fig. 1) and an engagement position in which the operating lever portion 24 is horizontal (as shown in Fig. 4).

As set forth above, a plurality of the through holes 18 are formed in the cover 4 in a grid array fashion. However, there are some blank locations 28 in which through holes are not formed in the grid on the cover. In addition, there are some blank locations 29 on base housing 2 in which no terminal receiving cavities are formed. The blank locations 28 on cover 4 correspond to the blank locations 29 on base housing 2. A projection 30 extends from the bottom surface 2a of base housing 2 at a location aligned with each blank location 29 as shown in Figs. 2 and 3. A compliant pin 31 includes a press-fit retention section 32 that is secured within a recess in each projection 30 on the bottom surface 2a.

Fig. 3 shows the preferred embodiment of the electrical connector 1 mounted on printed circuit board 13. Each compliant pin 31 projecting from the bottom surface 2a of the base housing 2 is engaged with an engaging hole 33 in the printed circuit board 13. In conjunction therewith, the solder tails 12 of the terminals 3 that are
5 arranged in a staggered fashion along the bottom surface 2a of the base housing 2 are positioned to be surface mount soldered to circuit pads (not shown) on the printed circuit board 13.

Figs. 5 and 6 illustrate the position of the cover 4 relative to the base housing 2 and the terminals 3 in the insertion and engagement positions of the operating portion 24 of the lever 5. Namely, Fig. 5 is an illustration showing the condition in the
10 insertion position of the operating portion 24. It can be seen that the through hole 18 in cover 4 is aligned with insertion section 7a so that pin 15 of the PGA may be inserted into through hole 18 without engaging contact arms 9 of terminal 3. This permits the insertion of the PGA into the connector 1 with essentially zero insertion
15 force.

By rotating operating lever 24 towards its engagement position, the cover 4 can be slidingly moved as indicated by arrow 16a to the position where the through hole 18 of the cover 4 is aligned with the spring contact 10 of the terminal 3. Fig. 6 shows this condition in which the operating portion 24 of lever 5 is in the engagement
20 position. At such engagement position, the through holes 18 in the cover 4 are aligned with the contact arms 9 of terminals 3. As the cover slides from the insertion position (Fig. 5) to the engagement position (Fig. 6), the pins located within the through holes 18 slide over ramps 9b of terminal 3 while deflecting the contact arms 9. Ultimately, the pins are positioned between and engage contact portions 9a of the
25 terminal 3. Upon rotating the operating lever 24 from the engagement position toward the insertion position, the cover 4 slides as indicated by arrow 16b to move the through hole 18 with the pin 15 therein to the insertion section 7a of the terminal receiving cavity 7 in order to permit the PGA to be removed from the connector 1.

When the PGA is connected to the printed circuit board 13 via the electrical
30 connector 1, the PGA is placed on the cover 4 after the operating portion 24 of the

lever 5 is in the insertion position, and the pins 15 are inserted into the insertion section 7a of the contact holes 7 via the through holes 18 of the cover 4. Each pin 15 is generally positioned between the spring contact 10 of each terminal 3 and the terminal retention piece 11.

5 When the operating portion 24 of the lever 5 is moved to the engagement position, the cover 4 and PGA mounted thereon slides in the direction of arrow 16a of Fig. 5. Accordingly, the pins 15 and the overall PGA slide in the identical direction so that each pin 15 is moved into engagement with the spring contact 10 of its corresponding terminal 3. As a result, the pins 15 are engaged with the contact portions 9a of the contact arms 9 and placed into the condition where they are
10 connected with the circuits of the printed circuit board 13 via the terminals 3.

 Each terminal 3 is configured whereby the spring contact 10 and engaging piece 11 are generally in parallel. Therefore, the contact arms 9 can achieve the desired spring characteristics by having an effective spring length generally similar to
15 the thickness of the base housing 2. By removing the terminal retention section 11 from the electrical path and by providing redundant contact arms 9, improved electrical characteristics are provided.

 Since the overall length of the effective spring length of the contact arms 9 can be made generally similar to the thickness of the base housing 2, the length of the
20 contact arms 9 and the thickness of the base housing 2 can be reduced as long as spring performance necessary for the desired electrical conduction can be provided. Therefore, reduction of the height of the electrical connector 1 can be achieved. Furthermore, by shortening the length of the contact arms 9 and by providing redundant parallel electrical paths, the inductance of the terminals 3 can be reduced
25 which improves the connector's ability to transmit high speed signals. It should be noted that forming the cover 4 of metal sheet also contributes to a reduction of height or thickness of the electrical connector 1 since the cover 4 can provide the necessary strength even though it is extremely thin.

 When the pins 15 of the package are moved into contact with the spring
30 contacts 10 of the terminals 3 upon operation of the lever 5 as set forth above, stress is

exerted in the sliding direction relative to the terminals 3 and the base housing 2. The compliant pins 31 engaged with the printed circuit board 13 to resist this stress.

Accordingly, excessive stress on the soldering portions of the solder tails 12 of the terminals 3 is avoided which can cause an incomplete connection due to peeling off of the soldering tails 12 from the pads on the circuit board 13.

Upon rotating lever 5 to the insertion position, the pins 15 of the PGA are moved away from engagement with the spring contacts 10 as indicated by arrow 16b in Fig. 6 to permit removal of the PGA from connector 1 without necessitating a large withdrawal force. Again, the compliant pins 31 can protect the soldering portions of the solder tails 12.

Although the foregoing preferred embodiment shows the contact piece 10 of each terminal 3 having a generally U-shaped configuration with the bottom piece 8 and a pair of the contact arms 9, one arm could be removed so that the contact piece is not generally U-shaped but rather L-shaped.

Furthermore, the form of the solder tail 12 of each terminal 3 is also not limited to the configuration adapted for surface mount soldering. The solder tails may be formed as pins that extend into through holes in the printed circuit board 13 and soldered by wave soldering.

Although the present invention has been illustrated and described with respect to exemplary embodiment thereof, it should be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing and various other changes, omissions and additions may be made therein and thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as set forth in the appended claims.

What is claimed is

1. A zero insertion force electrical connector for mounting on a circuit member and receiving a device having an array of conductive pin terminals, said electrical connector comprising:

5 a base housing having a generally planar lower surface and a plurality of terminal-receiving cavities corresponding to the array of pin terminals;

a cover slidably mounted on said base housing, said cover being movable between a first insertion position and a second engagement position, said cover having a plurality of through holes therein arranged in an array corresponding to the array of pin terminals for receiving said pin terminals in said through holes;

10 a plurality of stamped and formed conductive terminals, one of said terminals being mounted in each of said cavities, each said terminal including

a generally planar base, said base being positioned generally adjacent said lower surface of the base housing and oriented generally parallel to the plane of said lower surface,

15 a mounting portion for securing said terminal in said base housing,

a tail section for contacting a conductive portion of said circuit member, and

a contact structure configured for engaging a portion of a respective one of said pin terminals, said contact structure including a pair of parallel, spaced apart spring arms extending generally perpendicularly from said base; and

20 an actuating structure to slide the cover along said base housing between said first insertion position at which said pin terminals inserted into said through holes in said cover are spaced from said terminals and said second engagement position at which said pin terminals inserted into said through holes in said cover engage said contact structures of said terminals to effect electrical connection between said pin terminals and said circuit member.

25 2. The electrical connector of claim 1 wherein said base housing is generally planar and made of plastic, the plane of said base housing being generally parallel to the plane of the lower surface of said base housing.

3. The electrical connector of claim 2 wherein said cover is generally planar.

4. The electrical connector of claim 1 wherein said mounting portion of each said terminal extends generally perpendicular to said base of the terminal.

5 5. The electrical connector of claim 4 wherein the mounting portion of each terminal is positioned within a recess in the lower surface of the base housing.

6. The electrical connector of claim 1 wherein said tail section extends from the base of the terminal.

10 7. The electrical connector of claim 1 wherein said tail section includes a first arcuate section extending from said base and a second generally linear section extending from said first arcuate section generally away from said lower surface of the base housing at an oblique angle relative to the plane thereof whereby a surface mount portion of said tail section is positioned beneath said base.

15 8. The electrical connector of claim 1 wherein said spring arms of said contact structure extend towards said cover.

9. A zero insertion force electrical connector for mounting on a circuit member and receiving a device having an array of conductive pin terminals, said electrical connector comprising:

a generally planar base housing having a generally planar lower surface;

5 a generally planar cover mounted on said base housing, said cover being movable between a first insertion position and a second engagement position, said cover having a plurality of through holes therein arranged in an array corresponding to the array of pin terminals for receiving said pin terminals in said through holes;

10 a plurality of stamped and formed conductive terminals mounted to the base housing, each said terminal including

a generally planar base, said base being positioned generally adjacent said lower surface of the base housing and oriented generally parallel to the plane of said base housing,

15 a mounting portion extending generally perpendicular to said base for securing said terminal to said base housing,

a tail section extending from said base for contacting a conductive portion of said circuit member, and

20 a contact structure configured for engaging a portion of a respective one of said pin terminals, said contact structure including at least one spring arm extending generally perpendicularly from said base towards said cover.

10. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein the mounting portion of each terminal is positioned within a recess in the lower surface of the base housing.

11. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein said tail section includes a first arcuate section extending from said base and a second generally linear section
25 extending from said first arcuate section generally away from said lower surface of the base housing at an oblique angle relative to the plane thereof whereby a surface mount portion of said tail section is positioned beneath said base.

12. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein said contact structure includes a pair of parallel, spaced apart spring arms.

13. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein said spring arms of said contact structure extend towards said cover.

5 14. The electrical connector of claim 9 further including an actuating structure to slide the cover along said base housing between said first insertion position at which said pin terminals inserted into said through holes in said cover are spaced from said terminals and said second engagement position at which said pin terminals inserted into said through holes in said cover engage said contact structures
10 of said terminals to effect electrical connection between said pin terminals and said circuit member.

15 15. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein said base housing is made of plastic and the plane of said base housing is generally parallel to the plane of the lower surface of said base housing.

16 16. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein said cover is slidably mounted on said base housing.

17. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein the mounting portion of each terminal is positioned within a recess in the lower surface of the base housing.

20 18. The electrical connector of claim 9 wherein said tail section includes a first arcuate section extending from said base and a second generally linear section extending from said first arcuate section generally away from said lower surface of the base housing at an oblique angle relative to the plane thereof whereby a surface mount portion of said tail section is positioned beneath said base.

19. A conductive terminal for use with an electrical connector that is mounted on a circuit member and receives a device having an array of conductive pin terminals, said terminal comprising:

a generally planar base;

5 a mounting portion extending generally perpendicular to said base for securing the terminal in a housing component of the electrical connector;

a tail section extending from said base for soldering to a conductive portion of the circuit member; and

10 a contact structure configured for engaging a portion of a respective one of said pin terminals, the contact structure including a pair of parallel, spaced apart spring arms extending generally perpendicularly from the base.

20. The conductive terminal of claim 19 wherein said tail section includes a first arcuate section extending from said base and a second generally linear section extending from said first arcuate section generally away from said contact structure at an oblique angle relative to the plane of said base whereby a surface mount portion of said tail section is positioned beneath said base.

21. The conductive terminal of claim 20 wherein said base includes first and second ends, said mounting portion extending from said base generally adjacent said first end and said tail section extending from said base generally adjacent said second end.

22. The conductive terminal of claim 19 wherein said base includes first and second ends, said mounting portion extending from said base generally adjacent said first end and said tail section extending from said base generally adjacent said second end.

23. The conductive terminal of claim 19 wherein said terminal is stamped and formed of sheet metal.