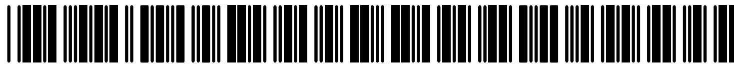

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(54) **FINFET AND METHOD OF FABRICATING THE SAME**

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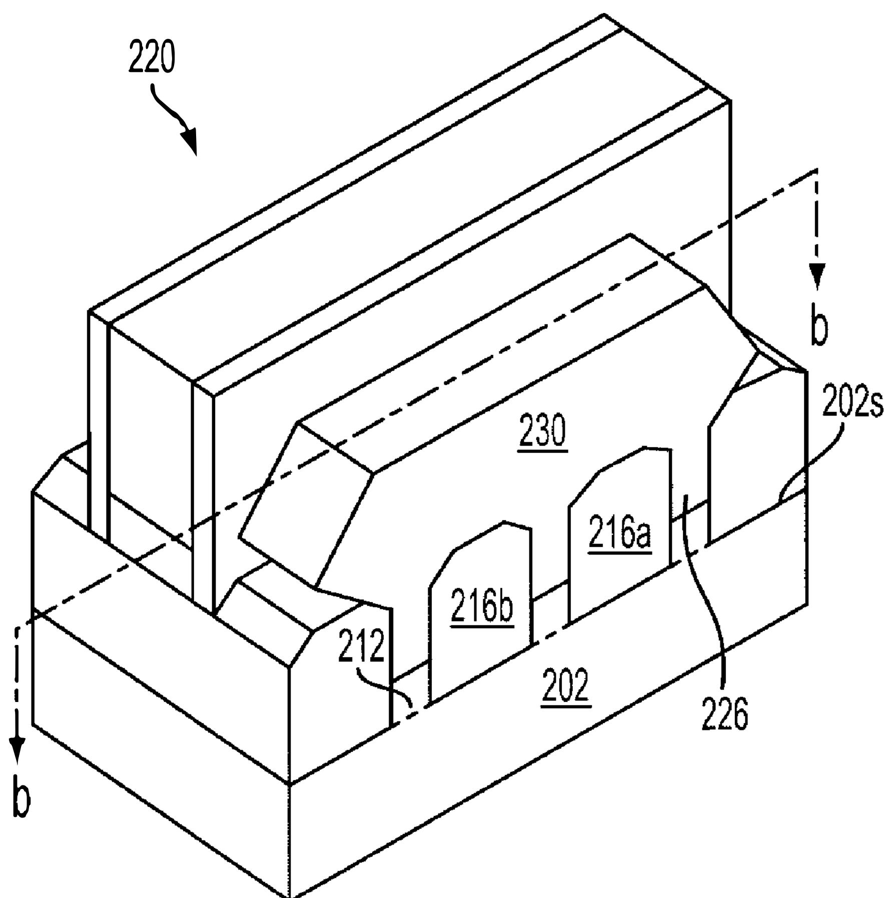
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The disclosure relates to a fin field effect transistor (FinFET). An exemplary structure for a FinFET comprises a substrate comprising a top surface; a first insulation region and a second insulation region over the substrate top surface comprising tapered top surfaces; a fin of the substrate extending above the substrate top surface between the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a recessed portion having a top surface lower than the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a non-recessed portion having a top surface higher than the tapered top surfaces; and a gate stack over the non-recessed portion of the fin.



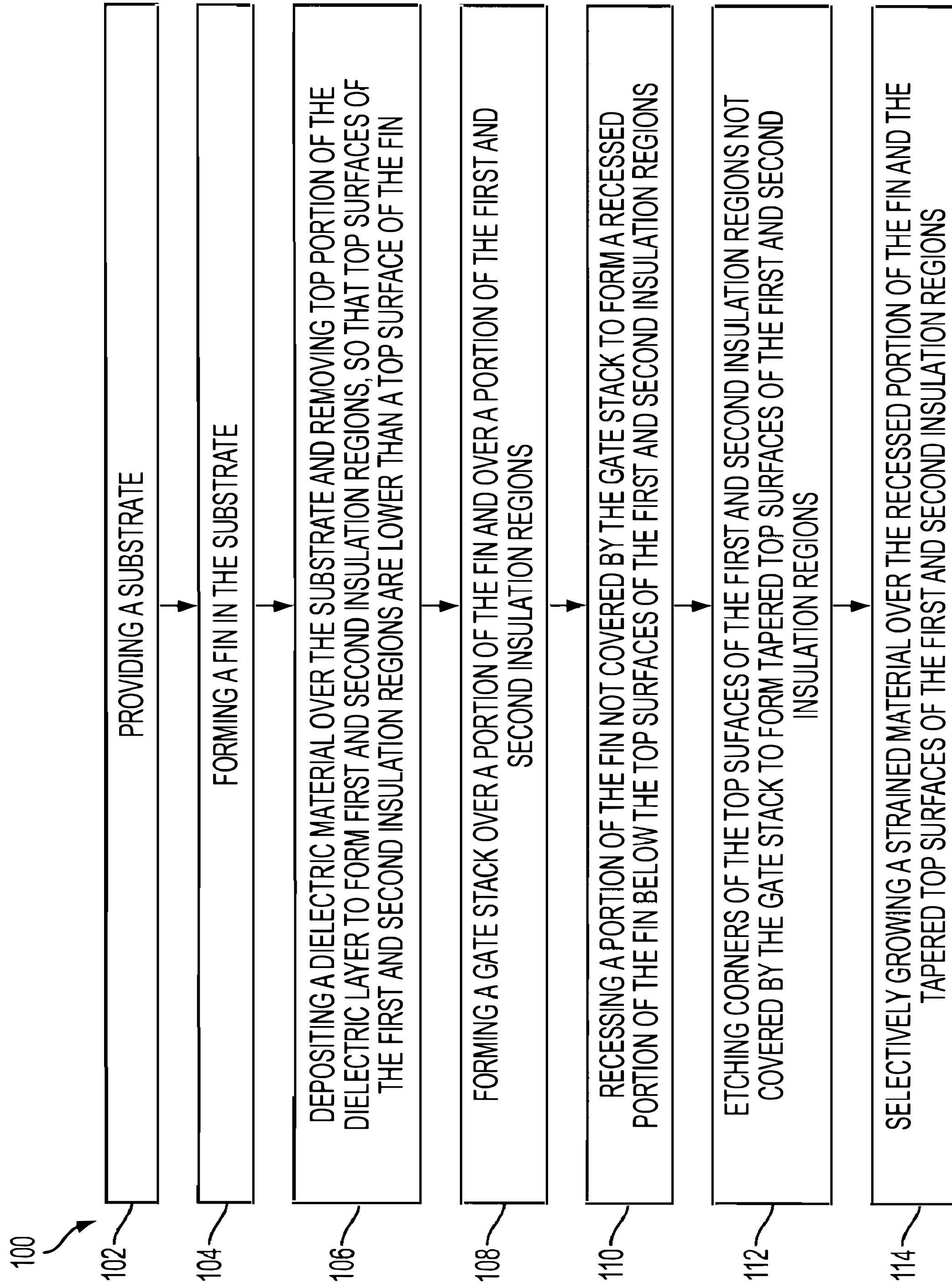


FIG. 1

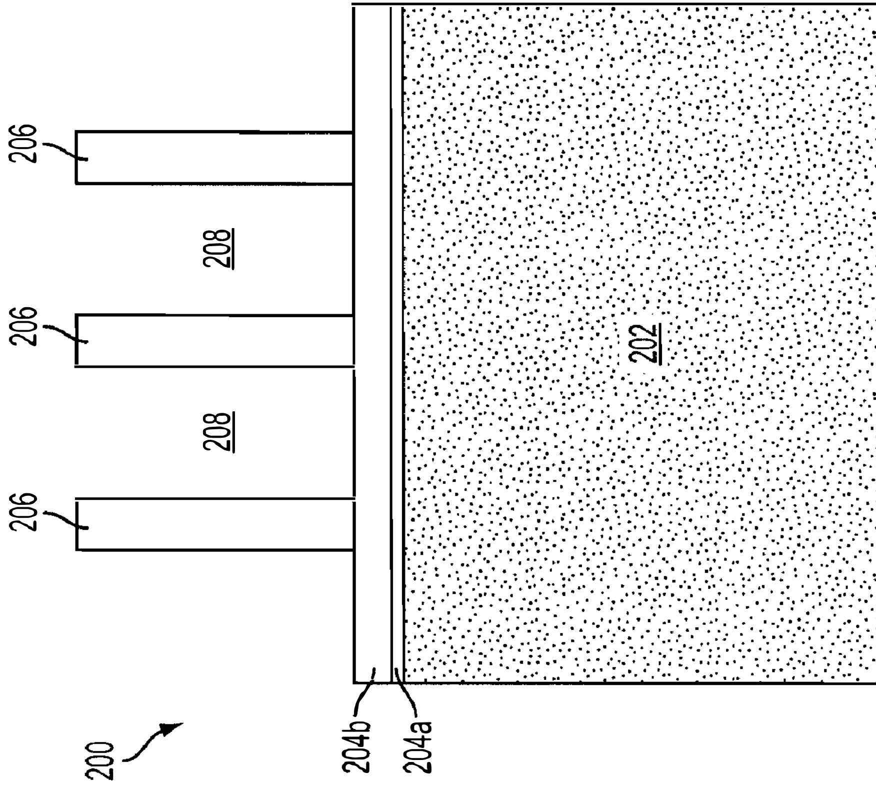


FIG. 2B

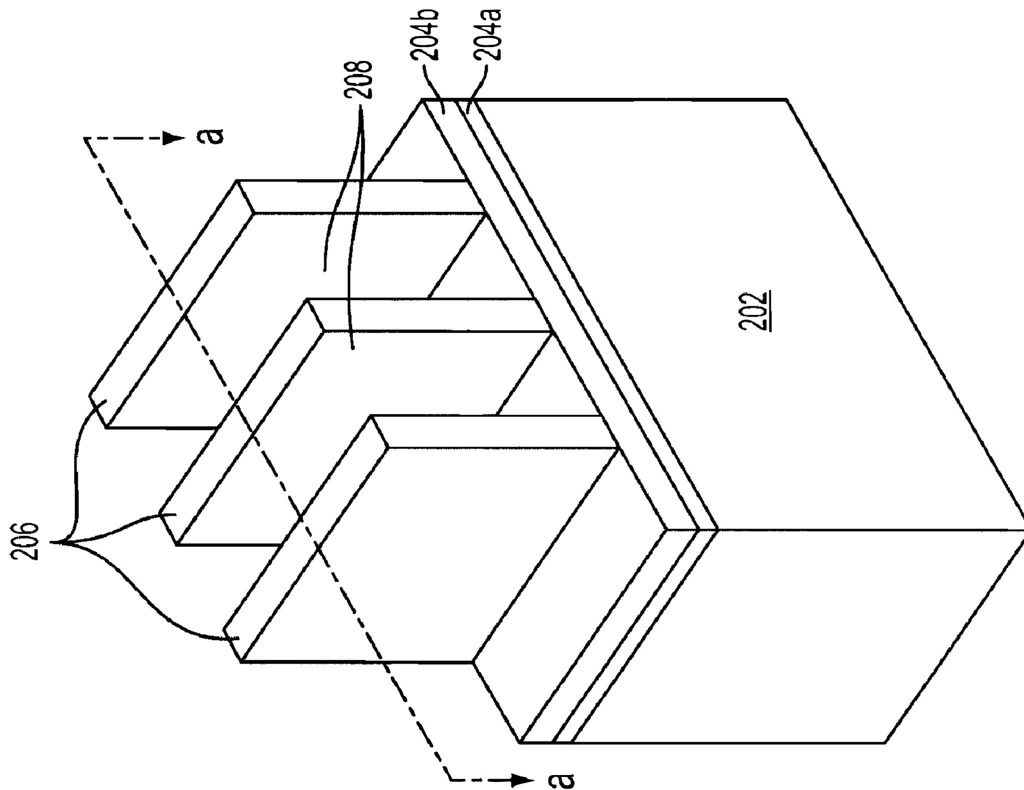


FIG. 2A

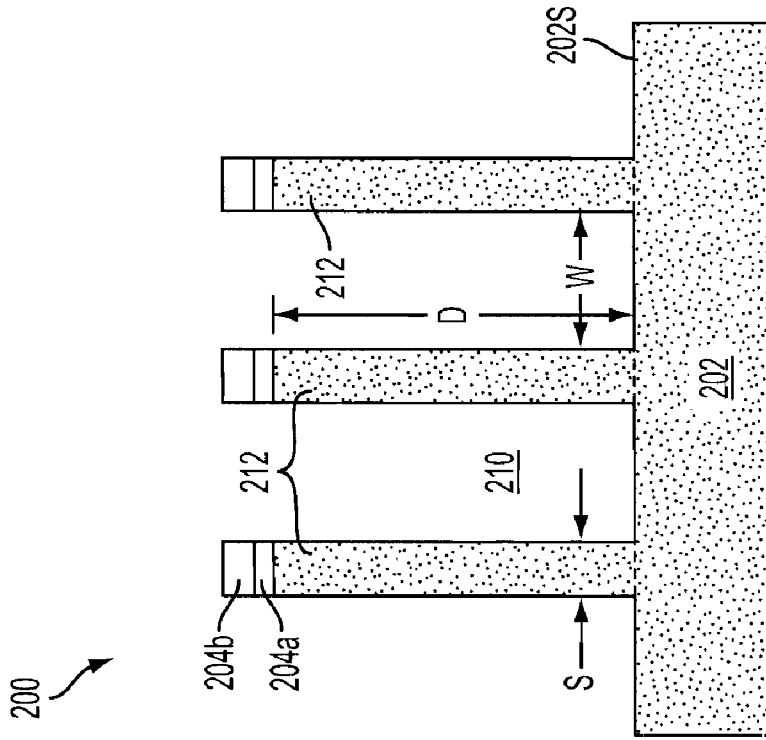


FIG. 3B

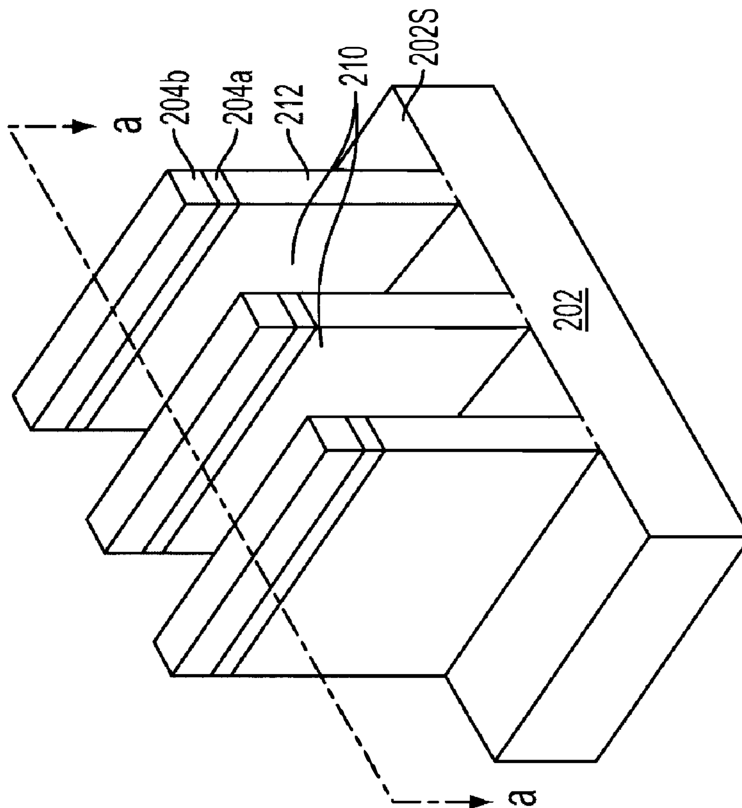


FIG. 3A

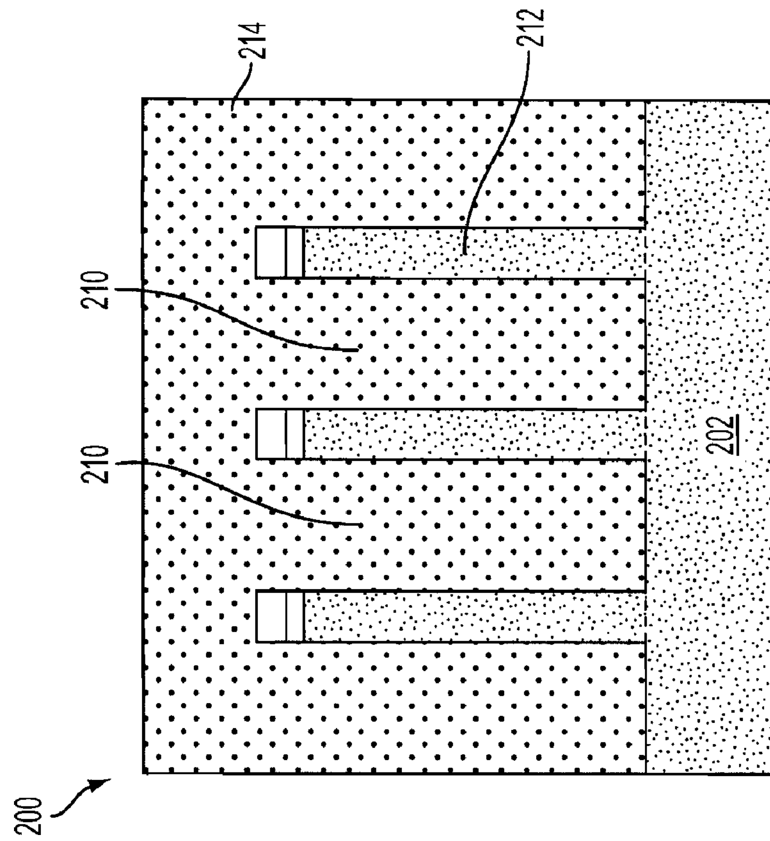


FIG. 4B

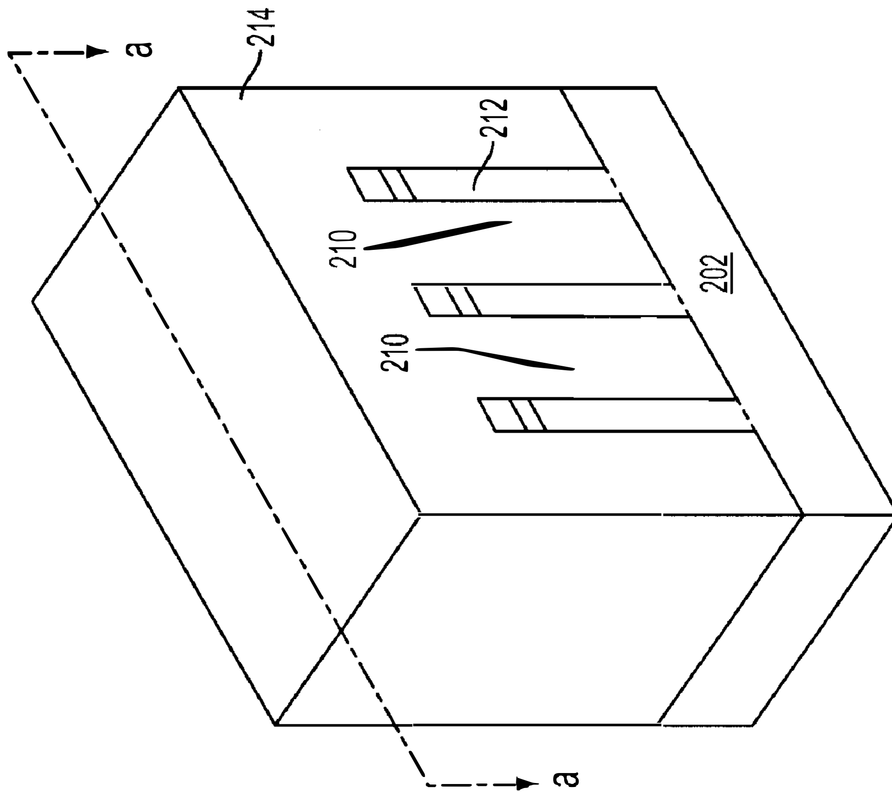


FIG. 4A

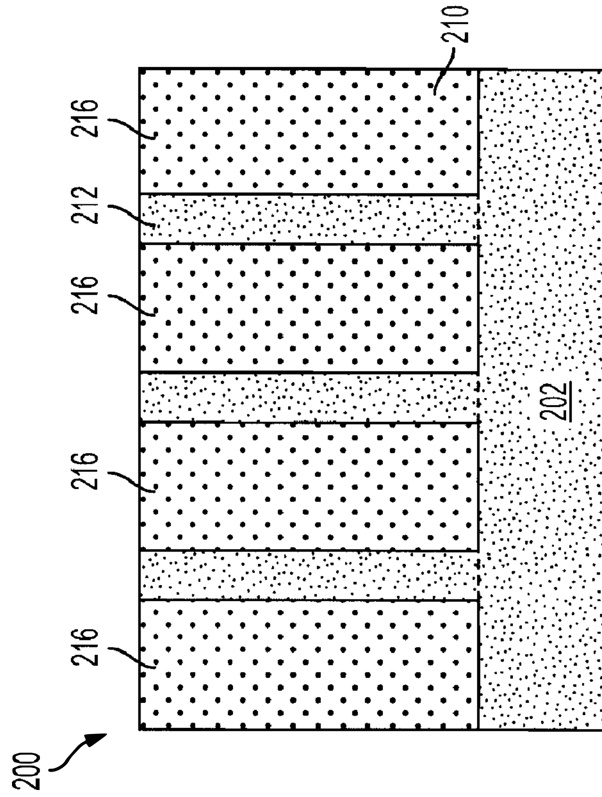


FIG. 5B

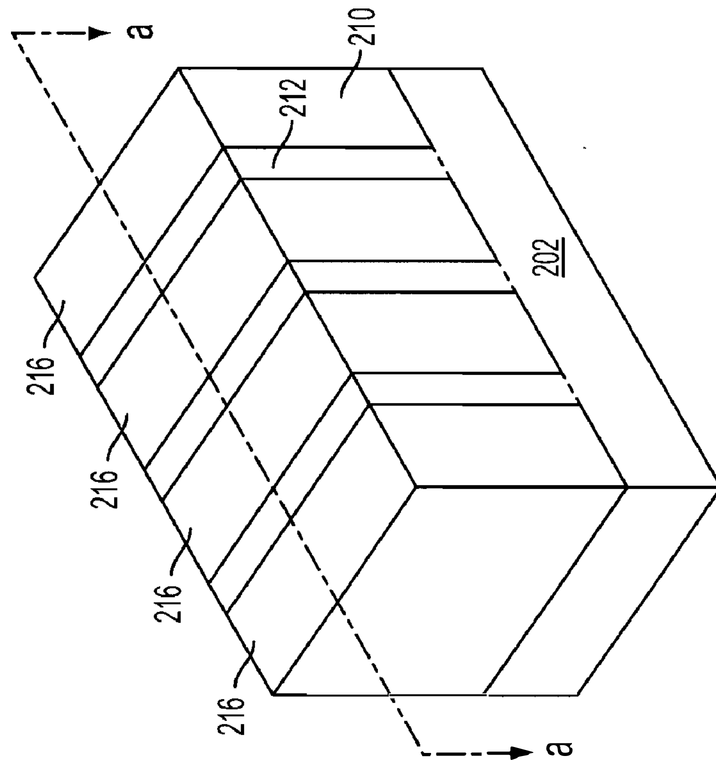


FIG. 5A

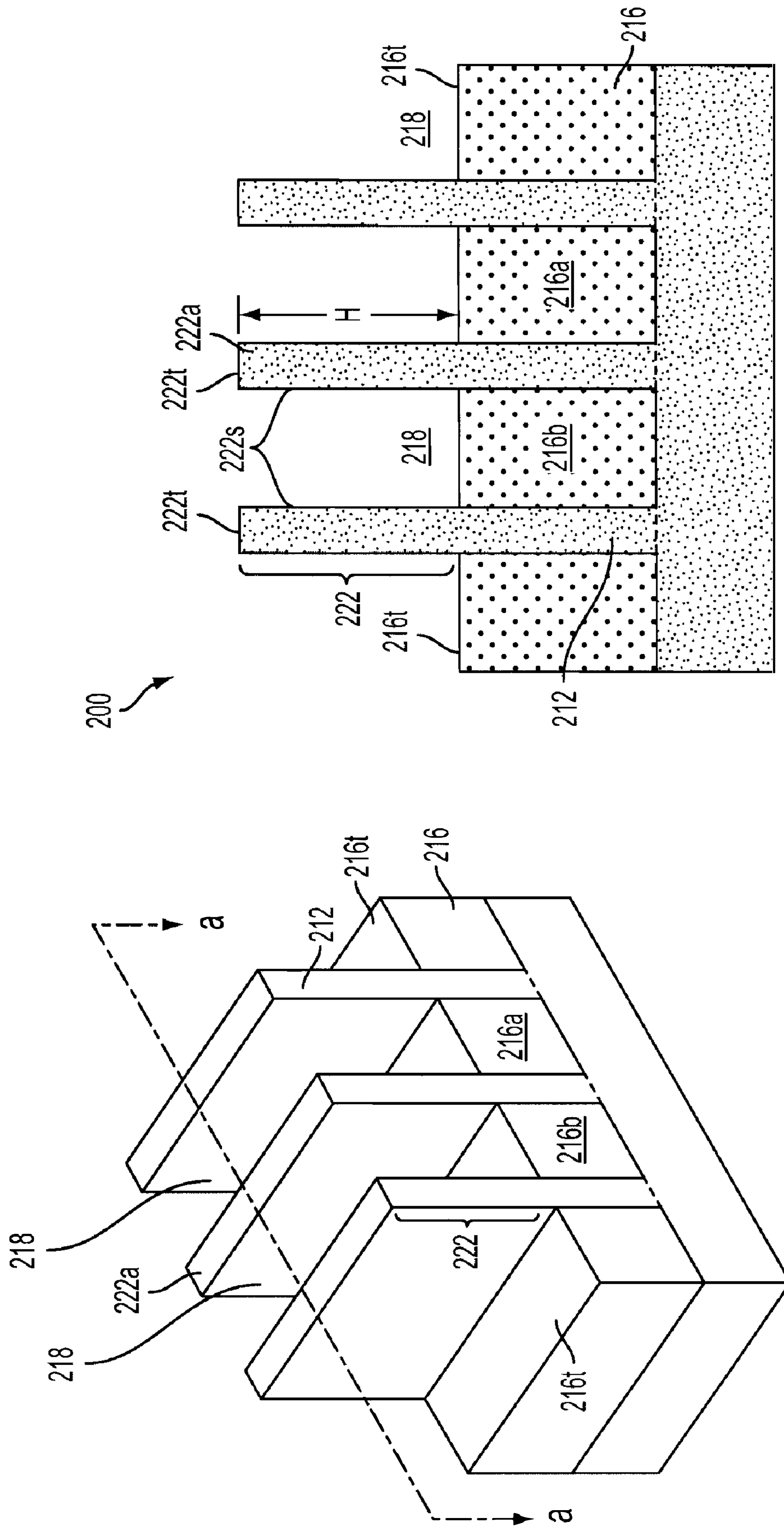


FIG. 6A

FIG. 6B

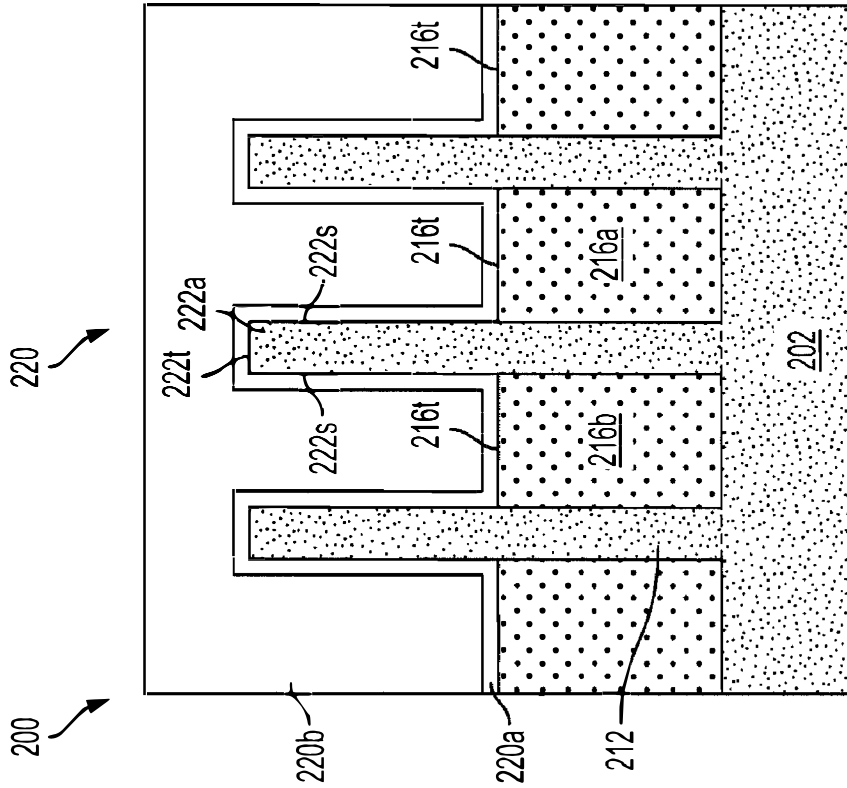


FIG. 7B

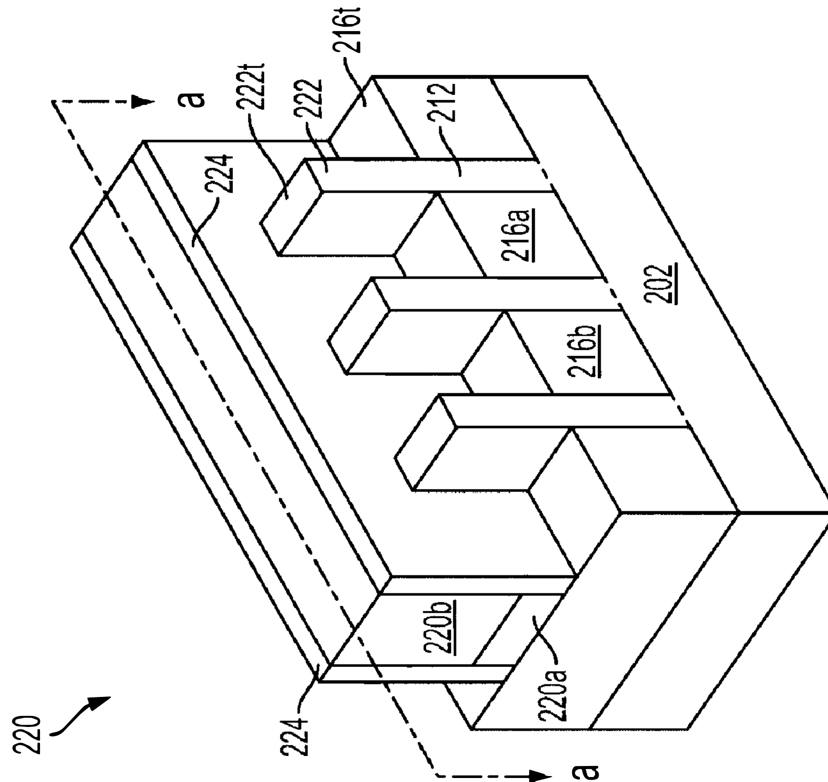


FIG. 7A

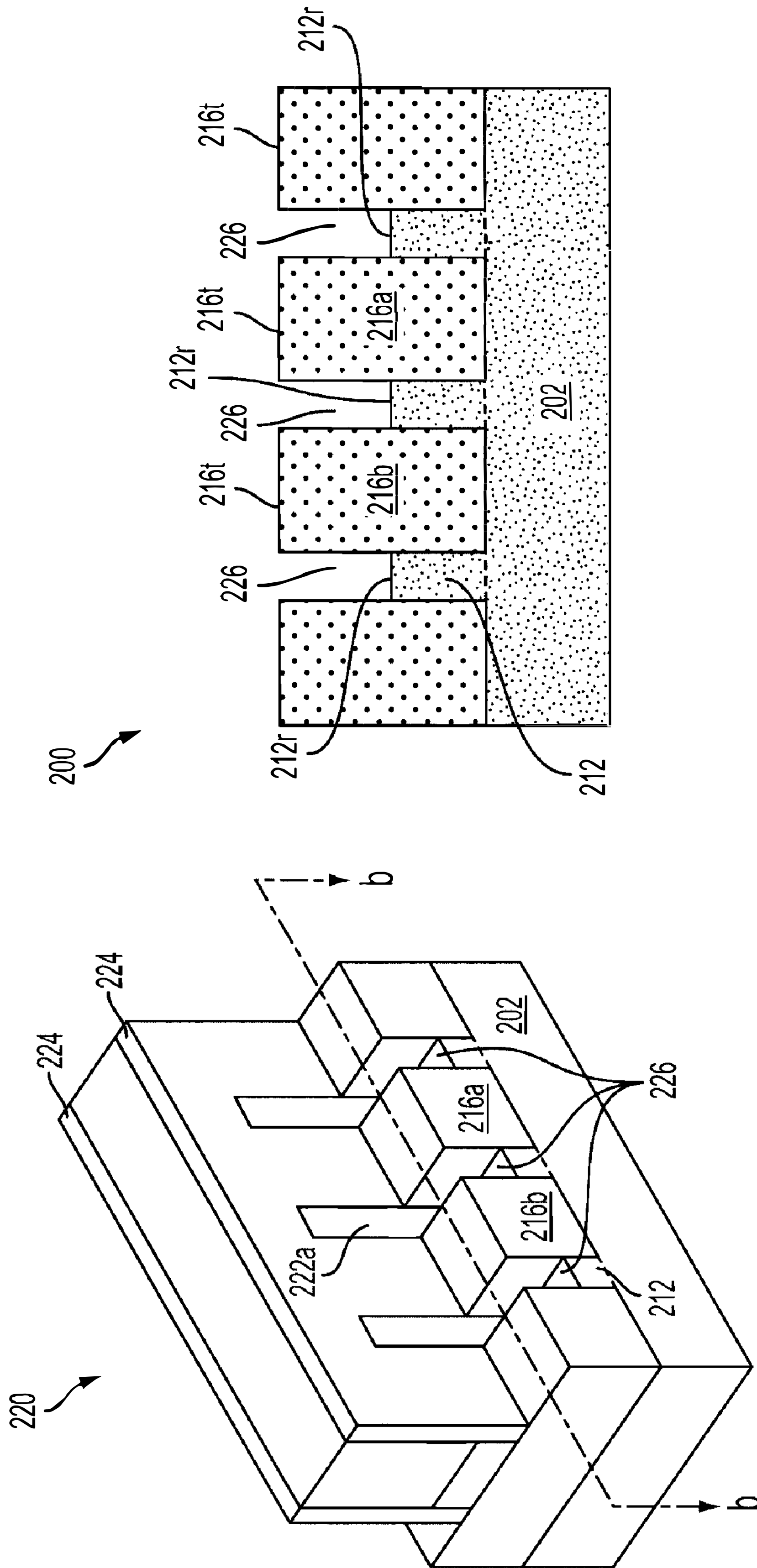


FIG. 8A

FIG. 8B

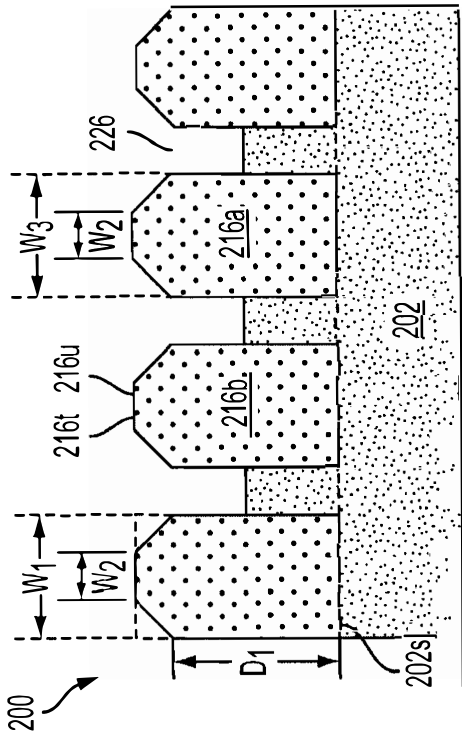


FIG. 9B

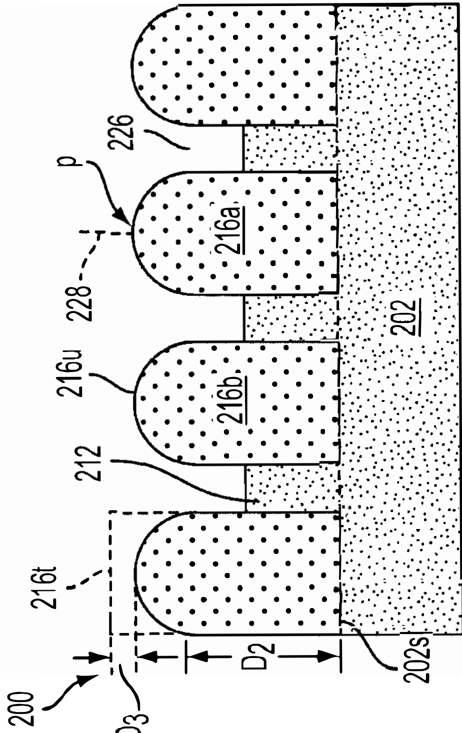


FIG. 9C

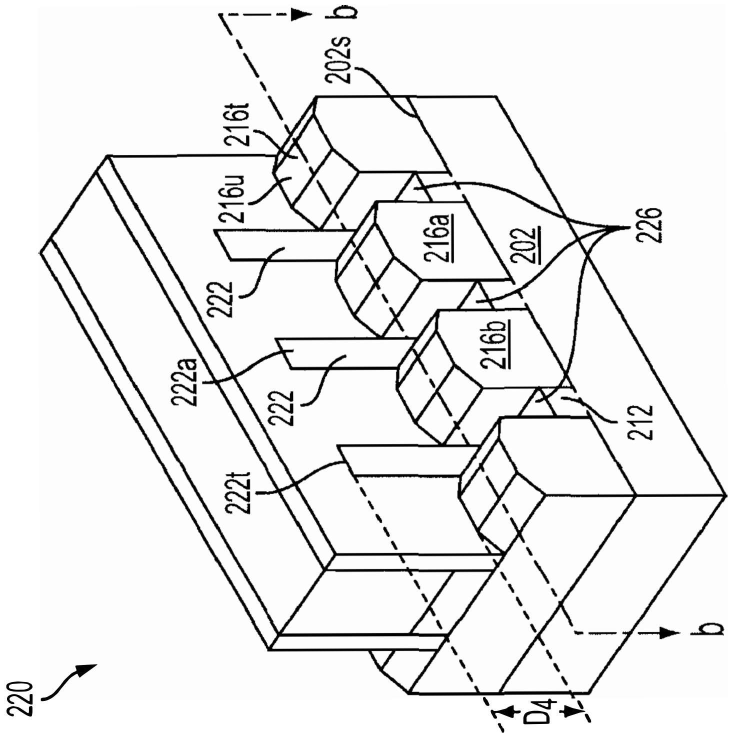


FIG. 9A

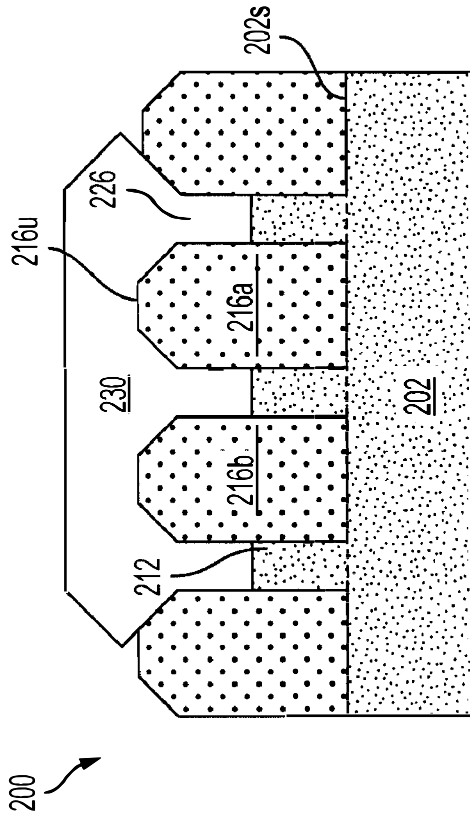


FIG. 10B

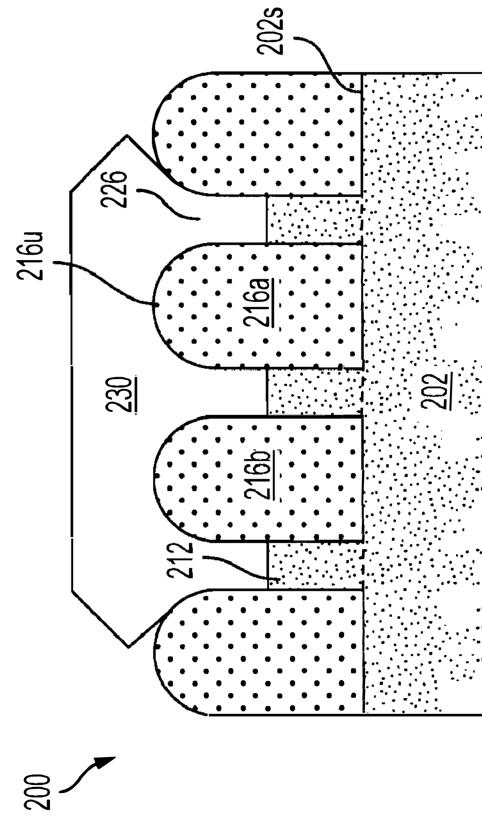


FIG. 10C

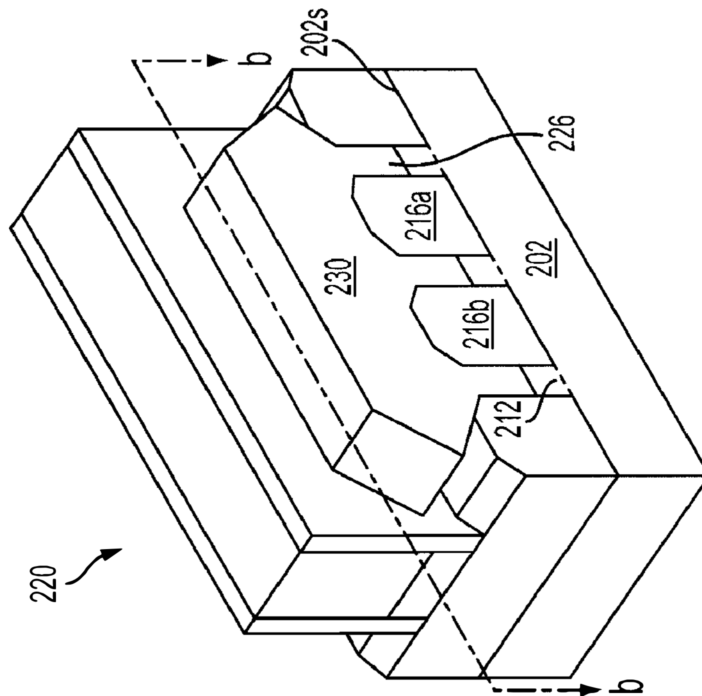


FIG. 10A

FINFET AND METHOD OF FABRICATING THE SAME

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The disclosure relates to integrated circuit fabrication, and more particularly to a fin field effect transistor.

BACKGROUND

[0002] As the semiconductor industry has progressed into nanometer technology process nodes in pursuit of higher device density, higher performance, and lower costs, challenges from both fabrication and design issues have resulted in the development of three-dimensional designs, such as a fin field effect transistor (FinFET). A typical FinFET is fabricated with a thin vertical "fin" (or fin structure) extending from a substrate formed by, for example, etching away a portion of a silicon layer of the substrate. The channel of the FinFET is formed in this vertical fin. A gate is provided over (e.g., wrapping) the fin. Having a gate on both sides of the channel allows gate control of the channel from both sides. In addition, strained materials in recessed source/drain (S/D) portions of the FinFET utilizing selectively grown silicon germanium (SiGe) may be used to enhance carrier mobility.

[0003] However, there are challenges to implementation of such features and processes in complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) fabrication. For example, non-uniform distribution of strained materials causes non-uniformity of strains applied to the channel region of the FinFET, thereby increasing the likelihood of device instability and/or device failure.

[0004] Accordingly, what are needed are an improved device and a method for fabricating a strained structure.

SUMMARY

[0005] In one embodiment, a fin field effect transistor (FinFET) comprises a substrate comprising a top surface; a first insulation region and a second insulation region over the substrate top surface comprising tapered top surfaces; a fin of the substrate extending above the substrate top surface between the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a recessed portion having a top surface below the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a non-recessed portion having a top surface higher than the tapered top surfaces; and a gate stack over the non-recessed portion of the fin.

[0006] In another embodiment, a fin field effect transistor (FinFET) comprises a substrate comprising a top surface; a first insulation region and a second insulation region over the substrate top surface comprising tapered top surfaces, wherein the tapered top surfaces comprise a highest point in the middle of the tapered top surfaces; a fin of the substrate extending above the substrate top surface between the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a recessed portion having a top surface below the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a non-recessed portion having a top surface higher than the tapered top surfaces; and a gate stack over the non-recessed portion of the fin.

[0007] In still another embodiment, a method for fabricating a fin field effect transistor (FinFET) comprises providing a substrate having a first insulation region and a second insulation region having respective top surfaces, and a fin between the first and second insulation regions, wherein the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions are below a top surface of the fin; forming a gate stack over a portion of the fin and over a portion of the first and second insulation regions; recessing a portion of the fin not covered by the gate stack to form a recessed portion of the fin below the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions; etching corners of the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions not covered by the gate stack to form tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions; and selectively growing a strained material over the recessed portion of the fin and the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions.

[0008] A detailed description is given in the following embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The present disclosure is best understood from the following detailed description when read with the accompanying figures. It is emphasized that, in accordance with the standard practice in the industry, various features are not drawn to scale and are used for illustration purposes only. In fact, the dimensions of the various features may be arbitrarily increased or reduced for clarity of discussion.

[0010] FIG. **1** is a flowchart illustrating a method of fabricating a FinFET according to various aspects of the present disclosure; and

[0011] FIGS. **2**A-**10**C are perspective and cross-sectional views of a FinFET at various stages of fabrication according to various embodiments of the present disclosure.

DESCRIPTION

[0012] It is understood that the following disclosure provides many different embodiments, or examples, for implementing different features of the invention. Specific examples of components and arrangements are described below to simplify the present disclosure. These are, of course, merely examples and are not intended to be limiting. For example, the formation of a first feature over or on a second feature in the description that follows may include embodiments in which the first and second features are formed in direct contact, and may also include embodiments in which additional features may be formed between the first and second features, such that the first and second features may not be in direct contact. In addition, the present disclosure may repeat reference numerals and/or letters in the various examples. This repetition is for the purpose of simplicity and clarity and does not in itself dictate a relationship between the various embodiments and/or configurations discussed.

[0013] Referring to FIG. **1**, illustrated is a flowchart of a method **100** of fabricating a fin field effect transistor (FinFET) according to various aspects of the present disclosure. The method **100** begins with step **102** in which a substrate is provided. The method **100** continues with step **104** in which a fin is formed in the substrate. The method **100** continues with step **106** in which a dielectric material is deposited over the substrate and top portion of the dielectric layer is removed to form first and second insulation regions, so that top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions are below a top surface of the fin. The method **100** continues with step **108** in which a gate stack is formed over a portion of the fin and over a portion of the first and second insulation regions. The method **100** continues with step **110** in which a portion of the fin not covered by the gate stack is recessed to form a recessed portion of the fin below the top surfaces of the first and second

insulation regions. The method **100** continues with step **112** in which corners of the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions not covered by the gate stack is etched to form tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions. The method **100** continues with step **114** in which a strained material is selectively grown over the recessed portion of the fin and the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions.

[0014] As employed in the present disclosure, the FinFET **200** refers to any fin-based, multi-gate transistor. The FinFET **200** may be included in a microprocessor, memory cell, and/or other integrated circuit (IC). It is noted that the method of FIG. **1** does not produce a completed FinFET **200**. A completed FinFET **200** may be fabricated using complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) technology processing. Accordingly, it is understood that additional processes may be provided before, during, and after the method **100** of FIG. **1**, and that some other processes may only be briefly described herein. Also, FIGS. **1** through **10**C are simplified for a better understanding of the inventive concepts of the present disclosure. For example, although the figures illustrate the FinFET **200**, it is understood the IC may comprise a number of other devices comprising resistors, capacitors, inductors, fuses, etc.

[0015] Referring to FIGS. **2**A-**10**C, illustrated are various perspective and cross-sectional views of the FinFET **200** at various stages of fabrication according to various embodiments of the present disclosure.

[0016] FIG. **2**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** having a substrate **202** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **2**B is a cross-sectional view of a FinFET taken along the line a-a of FIG. **2**A. In one embodiment, the substrate **202** comprises a crystalline silicon substrate (e.g., wafer). The substrate **202** may comprise various doped regions depending on design requirements (e.g., p-type substrate or n-type substrate). In some embodiments, the doped regions may be doped with p-type or n-type dopants. For example, the doped regions may be doped with p-type dopants, such as boron or BF_2; n-type dopants, such as phosphorus or arsenic; and/or combinations thereof. The doped regions may be configured for an n-type FinFET, or alternatively configured for a p-type FinFET.

[0017] In some alternative embodiments, the substrate **202** may be made of some other suitable elemental semiconductor, such as diamond or germanium; a suitable compound semiconductor, such as gallium arsenide, silicon carbide, indium arsenide, or indium phosphide; or a suitable alloy semiconductor, such as silicon germanium carbide, gallium arsenic phosphide, or gallium indium phosphide. Further, the substrate **202** may include an epitaxial layer (epi-layer), may be strained for performance enhancement, and/or may include a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) structure.

[0018] The fins are formed by etching into the substrate **202**. In one embodiment, a pad layer **204***a* and a mask layer **204***b* are formed on the semiconductor substrate **202**. The pad layer **204***a* may be a thin film comprising silicon oxide formed, for example, using a thermal oxidation process. The pad layer **204***a* may act as an adhesion layer between the semiconductor substrate **202** and mask layer **204***b*. The pad layer **204***a* may also act as an etch stop layer for etching the mask layer **204***b*. In at least one embodiment, the mask layer **204***b* is formed of silicon nitride, for example, using low-pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD) or plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD). The mask layer **204***b* is used as a hard mask during subsequent photolithography processes. A photo-sensitive layer **206** is formed on the mask layer **204***b* and is then patterned, forming openings **208** in the photo-sensitive layer **206**.

[0019] FIG. **3**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **3**B is a cross-sectional view of a FinFET taken along the line a-a of FIG. **3**A. The mask layer **204***b* and pad layer **204***a* are etched through openings **208** to expose underlying semiconductor substrate **202**. The exposed semiconductor substrate **202** is then etched to form trenches **210** with top surfaces **202***s* of the semiconductor substrate **202**. Portions of the semiconductor substrate **202** between trenches **210** form semiconductor fins **212**. Trenches **210** may be strips (viewed from in the top of the FinFET **200**) parallel to each other, and closely spaced with respect to each other. Trenches **210** each have a width W, a depth D, and are spaced apart from adjacent trenches by a spacing S. For example, the spacing S between trenches **210** may be smaller than about 30 nm. The photo-sensitive layer **206** is then removed. Next, a cleaning may be performed to remove a native oxide of the semiconductor substrate **202**. The cleaning may be performed using diluted hydrofluoric (DHF) acid.

[0020] In some embodiments, depth D of the trenches **210** may range from about 2100 Å to about 2500 Å, while width W of the trenches **210** ranges from about 300 Å to about 1500 Å. In an exemplary embodiment, the aspect ratio (D/W) of the trenches **210** is greater than about 7.0. In some other embodiments, the aspect ratio may even be greater than about 8.0. In yet some embodiments, the aspect ratio is lower than about 7.0 or between 7.0 and 8.0. One skilled in the art will realize, however, that the dimensions and values recited throughout the descriptions are merely examples, and may be changed to suit different scales of integrated circuits.

[0021] Liner oxide (not shown) is then optionally formed in the trenches **210**. In an embodiment, liner oxide may be a thermal oxide having a thickness ranging from about 20 Å to about 500 Å. In some embodiments, liner oxide may be formed using in-situ steam generation (ISSG) and the like. The formation of liner oxide rounds corners of the trenches **210**, which reduces the electrical fields, and hence improves the performance of the resulting integrated circuit.

[0022] FIG. **4**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **4**B is a cross-sectional view of the FinFET taken along the line a-a of FIG. **4**A. Trenches **210** are filled with a dielectric material **214**. The dielectric material **214** may include silicon oxide, and hence is also referred to as oxide **214** in the present disclosure. In some embodiments, other dielectric materials, such as silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, fluoride-doped silicate glass (FSG), or a low-K dielectric material, may also be used. In an embodiment, the oxide **214** may be formed using a high-density-plasma (HDP) CVD process, using silane (SiH_4) and oxygen (O_2) as reacting precursors. In other embodiments, the oxide **214** may be formed using a sub-atmospheric CVD (SACVD) process or high aspect-ratio process (HARP), wherein process gases may comprise tetraethylorthosilicate (TEOS) and/or ozone (O_3). In yet other embodiments, the oxide **214** may be formed using a spin-on-dielectric (SOD) process, such as hydrogen silsesquioxane (HSQ) or methyl silsesquioxane (MSQ).

[0023] FIGS. **4**A and **4**B depict the resulting structure after the deposition of the dielectric material **214**. A chemical mechanical polish is then performed, followed by the removal

of the mask layer **204***b* and pad layer **204***a*. The resulting structure is shown in FIGS. **5**A and **5**B. FIG. **5**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **5**B is a cross-sectional view of the FinFET taken along the line a-a of FIG. **5**A. The remaining portions of the oxide **214** in the trenches **210** are hereinafter referred to as insulation regions **216**. In at least one embodiment the mask layer **204***b* is formed of silicon nitride, the mask layer **204***b* may be removed using a wet process using hot H_3PO_4, while pad layer **204***a* may be removed using diluted HF acid, if formed of silicon oxide. In some alternative embodiments, the removal of the mask layer **204***b* and pad layer **204***a* may be performed after the recessing of the insulation regions **216**, which recessing step is shown in FIGS. **6**A and **6**B.

[0024] The CMP process and the removal of the mask layer **204***b* and pad layer **204***a* produce the structure shown in FIGS. **5**A/**5**B. As shown in FIGS. **6**A and **6**B, the insulation regions **216** are recessed by an etching step, resulting in recesses **218**. In one embodiment, the etching step may be performed using a wet etching process, for example, by dipping the substrate **202** in hydrofluoric acid (HF). In another embodiment, the etching step may be performed using a dry etching process, for example, the dry etching process may be performed using CHF_3 or BF_3 as etching gases.

[0025] The remaining insulation regions **216** may comprise flat top surfaces **216***t*. The remaining insulation regions **216** may comprise first isolation region **216***a* and second isolation region **216***b*. Further, the upper portions **222** of the semiconductor fins **212** protruding over the flat top surfaces **216***t* of the remaining insulation regions **216** thus are used to form channel regions of the FinFETs **200**. The upper portions **222** of the semiconductor fins **212** may comprise top surfaces **222***t* and sidewalls **222***s*. Height H of the upper portions **222** of the semiconductor fins **212** may range from 15 nm to about 50 nm. In some embodiments, the height H is greater than 50 nm or smaller than 15 nm. For simplicity, the upper portion **222** of the semiconductor fin **212** between the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b* is hereinafter referred to as channel fin **222***a* to illustrate each upper portion of the semiconductor fin **212**, wherein the flat top surfaces **216***t* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b* are lower than the top surface **222***t* of the semiconductor fin **212**.

[0026] The process steps up to this point have provided the substrate **202** having the first insulation region **216***a* and the second insulation region **216***b* having respective top surfaces **216***t*, and a fin **212** between the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b*, wherein the top surfaces **216***t* of the first and second insulation regions are lower than a top surface **222***t* of the fin **212**.

[0027] FIG. **7**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **7**B is a cross-sectional view of the FinFET taken along the line a-a of FIG. **7**A. A gate stack **220** is formed over the substrate **202** over the top surface **222***t* and sidewalls **222***s* of a non-recessed portion of the channel fin **222***a* and extending to the flat top surfaces **216***t* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b*. In some embodiments, the gate stack **220** comprises a gate dielectric layer **220***a* and a gate electrode layer **220***b* over the gate dielectric layer **220***a*.

[0028] In FIGS. **7**A and **7**B, the gate dielectric **220***a* is formed to cover the top surface **222***t* and sidewalls **222***s* of the channel fin **222***a*. In some embodiments, the gate dielectric layer **220***a* may include silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxy-nitride, or high-k dielectrics. High-k dielectrics comprise metal oxides. Examples of metal oxides used for high-k dielectrics include oxides of Li, Be, Mg, Ca, Sr, Sc, Y, Zr, Hf, Al, La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, Lu, and/or mixtures thereof. In the present embodiment, the gate dielectric layer **220***a* is a high-k dielectric layer with a thickness in the range of about 10 to 30 angstroms. The gate dielectric layer **220***a* may be formed using a suitable process such as atomic layer deposition (ALD), chemical vapor deposition (CVD), physical vapor deposition (PVD), thermal oxidation, UV-ozone oxidation, or combinations thereof. The gate dielectric layer **220***a* may further comprise an interfacial layer (not shown) to reduce damage between the gate dielectric layer **220***a* and channel fin **222***a*. The interfacial layer may comprise silicon oxide.

[0029] The gate electrode layer **220***b* is then formed on the gate dielectric layer **220***a*. In at least one embodiment, the gate electrode layer **220***b* covers the upper portion **222** of more than one semiconductor fin **212**, so that the resulting FinFET **200** comprises more than one fin. In some alternative embodiments, each of the upper portions **222** of the semiconductor fins **212** may be used to form a separate FinFET **200**. In some embodiments, the gate electrode layer **220***b* may comprise a single layer or multilayer structure. In the present embodiment, the gate electrode layer **220***b* may comprise poly-silicon. Further, the gate electrode layer **220***b* may be doped poly-silicon with the uniform or non-uniform doping. In some alternative embodiments, the gate electrode layer **220***b* may include a metal such as Al, Cu, W, Ti, Ta, TiN, TiAl, TiAlN, TaN, NiSi, CoSi, other conductive materials with a work function compatible with the substrate material, or combinations thereof. In the present embodiment, the gate electrode layer **220***b* comprises a thickness in the range of about 30 nm to about 60 nm. The gate electrode layer **220***b* may be formed using a suitable process such as ALD, CVD, PVD, plating, or combinations thereof.

[0030] Still referring to FIG. **7**A, the FinFET **200** further comprises a dielectric layer **224** formed over the substrate **202** and along the side of the gate stack **220**. In some embodiments, the dielectric layer **224** may include silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxy-nitride, or other suitable material. The dielectric layer **224** may comprise a single layer or multilayer structure. A blanket layer of the dielectric layer **224** may be formed by CVD, PVD, ALD, or other suitable technique. Then, an anisotropic etching is performed on the dielectric layer **224** to form a pair of spacers **224** on two sides of the gate stack **220**. The dielectric layer **224** comprises a thickness ranging from about 5 to 15 nm.

[0031] FIG. **8**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **8**B is a cross-sectional view of the FinFET taken along the line b-b of FIG. **8**A. The portion of the semiconductor fin **212** not covered by the gate stack **220** and spacers **224** formed thereover are recessed to form a recessed portion **226** of the fin **212** having a top surface **212***r* below the flat top surfaces **216***t* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b*. In one embodiment, using the pair of spacers **224** as hard masks, a biased etching process is performed to recess top surface **222***t* of the channel fin **222***a* that are unprotected or exposed to form the recessed portion **226** of the semiconductor fin **212**. In an embodiment, the etching process may be performed under a pressure of about 1 mTorr to 1000 mTorr, a power of about 50 W to 1000 W, a bias voltage of about 20 V to 500 V, at a temperature of about 40° C. to 60° C., using

a HBr and/or Cl2 as etch gases. Also, in the embodiments provided, the bias voltage used in the etching process may be tuned to allow better control of an etching direction to achieve desired profiles for the recessed portion **226** of the semiconductor fin **212**.

[0032] FIG. **9**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **9**B is a cross-sectional view of the FinFET taken along the line b-b of FIG. **9**A. Subsequent to the formation of the recessed portion **226** of the semiconductor fin **212**, corners of the flat top surfaces **216***t* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b* not covered by the gate stack **220** are etched to form tapered top surfaces **216***u* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b*. In one embodiment, the etching step may be performed using a wet etching process, for example, by dipping the substrate **202** in hydrofluoric acid (HF). In another embodiment, the etching step may be performed using a non-biased dry etching process, for example, the dry etching process may be performed using CHF_3 or BF_3 as etching gases.

[0033] In one embodiment, the tapered top surfaces **216***u* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b* comprise a flat portion and sloped or bevelled sidewalls (shown in FIGS. **9**A and **9**B). Therefore, a width W_2 of the flat portion of the tapered top surface **216***u* is less than a maximum width W_1 of the flat top surface **216***u*. In one embodiment, a ratio of the width W_2 of the flat portion to a maximum width W_3 of the first insulation region **216***a* is from 0.05 to 0.95. Further, a distance D_1 of a lowest point of the tapered top surface **216***u* and the top surface **202***s* of the substrate **202** is in the range of about 100 to 200 nm.

[0034] FIG. **9**C is a cross-sectional view of another FinFET **200** embodiment. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. **9**C, the corners of the flat top surfaces **216***t* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b* not covered by the gate stack **220** are further removed until the flat portion of the tapered top surface **216***u* disappear to form a curved top portion of the tapered top surface **216***u* (shown in FIG. **9**C). It is observed that the space between the neighboring semiconductor fins **212** have a middle line **228**, and the curved top portion of the tapered top surface **216***u* close to the middle line **228** is higher than the curved top portion of the tapered top surface **216***u* close to the semiconductor fins **222**. In other words, the tapered top surfaces **216***u* comprise a highest point P in the middle of the tapered top surfaces **216***u*. Further, a distance D_2 of a lowest point of the tapered top surface **216***u* and the top surface **202***s* of the substrate **202** is in the range of about 100 to 200 nm. In one embodiment, the flat top surface **216***t* is coplanar with the highest point P of the tapered top surface **216***u*. In another embodiment, the flat top surface **216***t* is higher than the highest point P of the tapered top surface **216***u*. A distance D_3 between the flat top surface **216***t* and the highest point P of the tapered top surface **216***u* is in the range of about 0.1 to 0.3 nm. In still another embodiment, the semiconductor fin **212** further comprises a non-recessed portion under a gate stack **220** having a top surface **222***t* higher than the tapered top surfaces **216***u*. A distance D_4 between the top surface **222***t* of the non-recessed portion of the semiconductor fin **212** and the highest point P of the tapered top surface **216***u* is in the range of about 100 to 200 nm.

[0035] FIG. **10**A is a perspective view of the FinFET **200** at one of various stages of fabrication according to an embodiment, and FIG. **10**B is a cross-sectional view of the FinFET taken along the line b-b of FIG. **10**A. FIG. **10**C is a cross-sectional view of another FinFET **200** embodiment having strained material **230** formed over the structure depicted in FIG. **9**C. Then, the structures depicted in FIGS. **10**A, **10**B, and **10**C are produced by selectively growing a strained material **230** over the recessed portion **226** of the semiconductor fin **212** and extending over the tapered top surfaces **216***u* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b*. Since the lattice constant of the strained material **230** is different from the substrate **202**, the channel region of the semiconductor fin **212** is strained or stressed to enable carrier mobility of the device and enhance the device performance. In at least one embodiment, the strained material **230**, such as silicon carbon (SiC), is epi-grown by a LPCVD process to form the source and drain regions of the n-type FinFET. The LPCVD process is performed at a temperature of about 400 to 800° C. and under a pressure of about 1 to 200 Torr, using Si_3H_8 and SiH_3CH as reaction gases. In at least another embodiment, the strained material **230**, such as silicon germanium (SiGe), is epi-grown by a LPCVD process to form the source and drain regions of the p-type FinFET. The LPCVD process is performed at a temperature of about 400 to 800° C. and under a pressure of about 1 to 200 Torr, using SiH_4 and GeH_4 as reaction gases.

[0036] In the present embodiment, the selective growth of the strained material **230** continues until the material **230** extends vertically a distance ranging from about 10 to 100 nm above the surface **202***a* of the substrate **202** and extends laterally over the tapered top surfaces **216***u* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b*. It should be noted that tapered top surfaces **216***u* of the first and second insulation regions **216***a*, **216***b* make it easier for growth precursors to reach the growth surface during selective growth of the strained material **230** from different recessed portions **226** of the semiconductor fins **212** to eliminate voids under the merged strained materials **230**. In some embodiments, the voids under the merged strained materials **230** reduce strain efficiency of the strained materials **230**, i.e., the strained materials **230** with voids provide less strain into channel region of the FinFET than the configuration having no void formed in the strained materials **230**, thereby increasing the likelihood of device instability and/or device failure. In the present embodiment, the strained material **230** has a substantially flat surface as the strained materials **230** grown from different recessed portions **226** are merged. Accordingly, the present method of fabricating a FinFET **200** may fabricate a reduced-void strained structure to enhance carrier mobility and the device performance.

[0037] It is understood that the FinFET **200** may undergo further CMOS processes to form various features such as contacts/vias, interconnect metal layers, dielectric layers, passivation layers, etc. It has been observed that the modified insulation and strained structure provides a given amount of strain into channel region of a FinFET, thereby enhancing the device performance.

[0038] While the invention has been described by way of example and in terms of the preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments. To the contrary, it is intended to cover various modifications and similar arrangements (as would be apparent to those skilled in the art). Therefore, the scope of the appended claims should be accorded the broadest interpretation so as to encompass all such modifications and similar arrangements.

What is claimed is:

1. A fin field effect transistor (FinFET) comprising:

a substrate comprising a top surface;

a first insulation region and a second insulation region over the substrate top surface comprising tapered top surfaces;

a fin of the substrate extending above the substrate top surface between the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a recessed portion having a top surface lower than the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions, wherein the fin comprises a non-recessed portion having a top surface higher than the tapered top surfaces; and

a gate stack over the non-recessed portion of the fin.

2. The FinFET of claim **1**, wherein the tapered top surfaces comprise a flat portion and tapered sidewalls.

3. The FinFET of claim **2**, wherein a ratio of a width of the flat portion to a maximum width of the first insulation region is from 0.05 to 0.95.

4. The FinFET of claim **1**, wherein the tapered top surfaces comprise a curved top portion.

5. The FinFET of claim **1**, wherein the tapered top surfaces comprise a highest point in the middle of the tapered top surfaces.

6. The FinFET of claim **1**, wherein a distance of a lowest point of the tapered top surface and the top surface of the substrate is in the range of about 100 to 200 nm.

7. The FinFET of claim **1**, wherein the first insulation region further comprises a portion under a gate stack having a flat top surface.

8. The FinFET of claim **7**, wherein a width of a flat portion of the tapered top surface is less than a maximum width of the flat top surface.

9. The FinFET of claim **7**, wherein the flat top surface is coplanar with a highest point of the tapered top surface.

10. The FinFET of claim **7**, wherein the flat top surface is higher than a highest point of the tapered top surface.

11. The FinFET of claim **10**, wherein a distance between the flat top surface and the highest point of the tapered top surface is in the range of about 0.1 to 0.3 nm.

12. The FinFET of claim **1**, wherein a distance between the top surface of the non-recessed portion of the fin and a highest point of the tapered top surface is in the range of about 100 to 200 nm.

13. The FinFET of claim **1** further comprising:

a strained material over the recessed portion of the fin, wherein the strained material has a substantially flat surface.

14. A method of fabricating a fin field effect transistor (FinFET) comprising:

providing a substrate having a first insulation region and a second insulation region having respective top surfaces, and a fin between the first and second insulation regions, wherein the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions are below a top surface of the fin;

forming a gate stack over a portion of the fin and over a portion of the first and second insulation regions;

recessing a portion of the fin not covered by the gate stack to form a recessed portion of the fin below the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions;

etching corners of the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions not covered by the gate stack to form tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions; and

selectively growing a strained material over the recessed portion of the fin and the tapered top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions.

15. The method of claim **14**, wherein the strained material is grown to have a substantially flat surface.

16. The method of claim **14**, wherein the etching corners of the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions not covered by the gate stack is performed using a wet etching process.

17. The method of claim **16**, wherein the wet etching process comprises etching corners of the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions not covered by the gate stack in a solution comprising HF.

18. The method of claim **14**, wherein the etching corners of the top surfaces of the first and second insulation regions not covered by the gate stack is performed using a non-biased dry etching process.

19. The method of claim **18**, wherein the non-biased dry etching process is performed using CHF_3 as etching gases.

20. The method of claim **18**, wherein the non-biased dry etching process is performed using BF_3 as etching gases.

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