

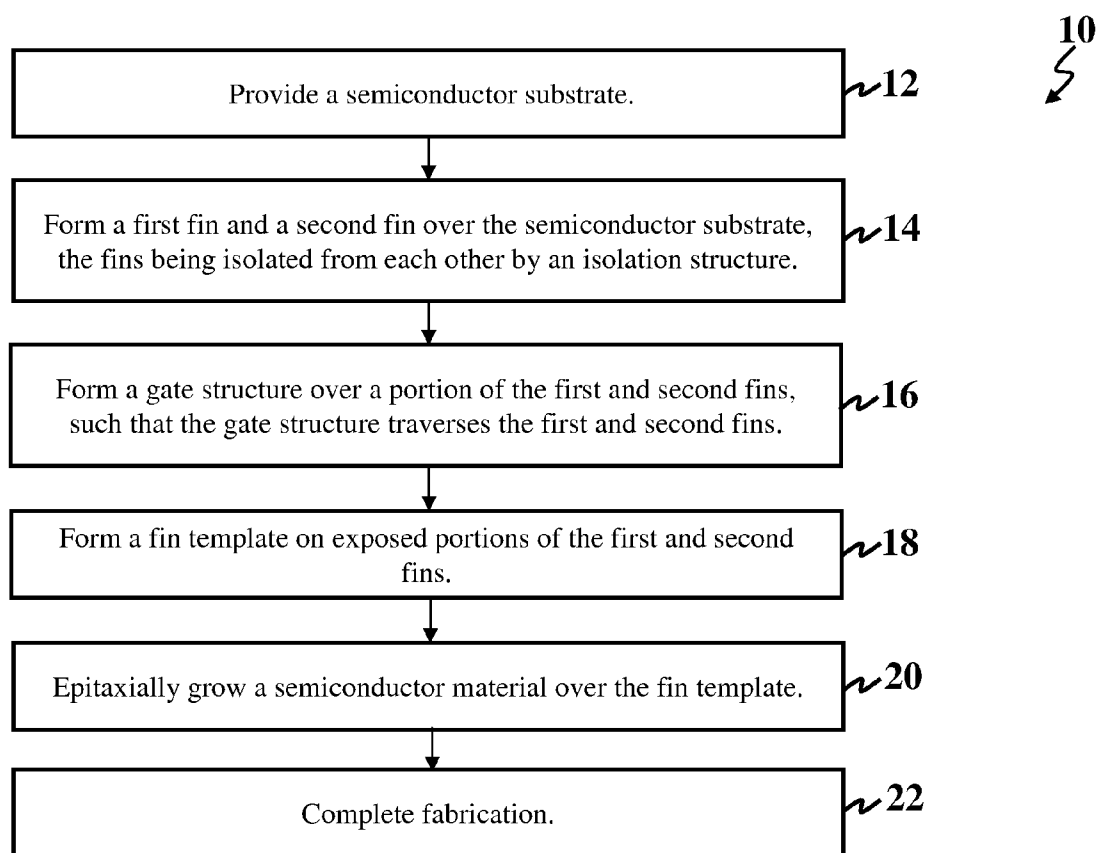


FIG. 1

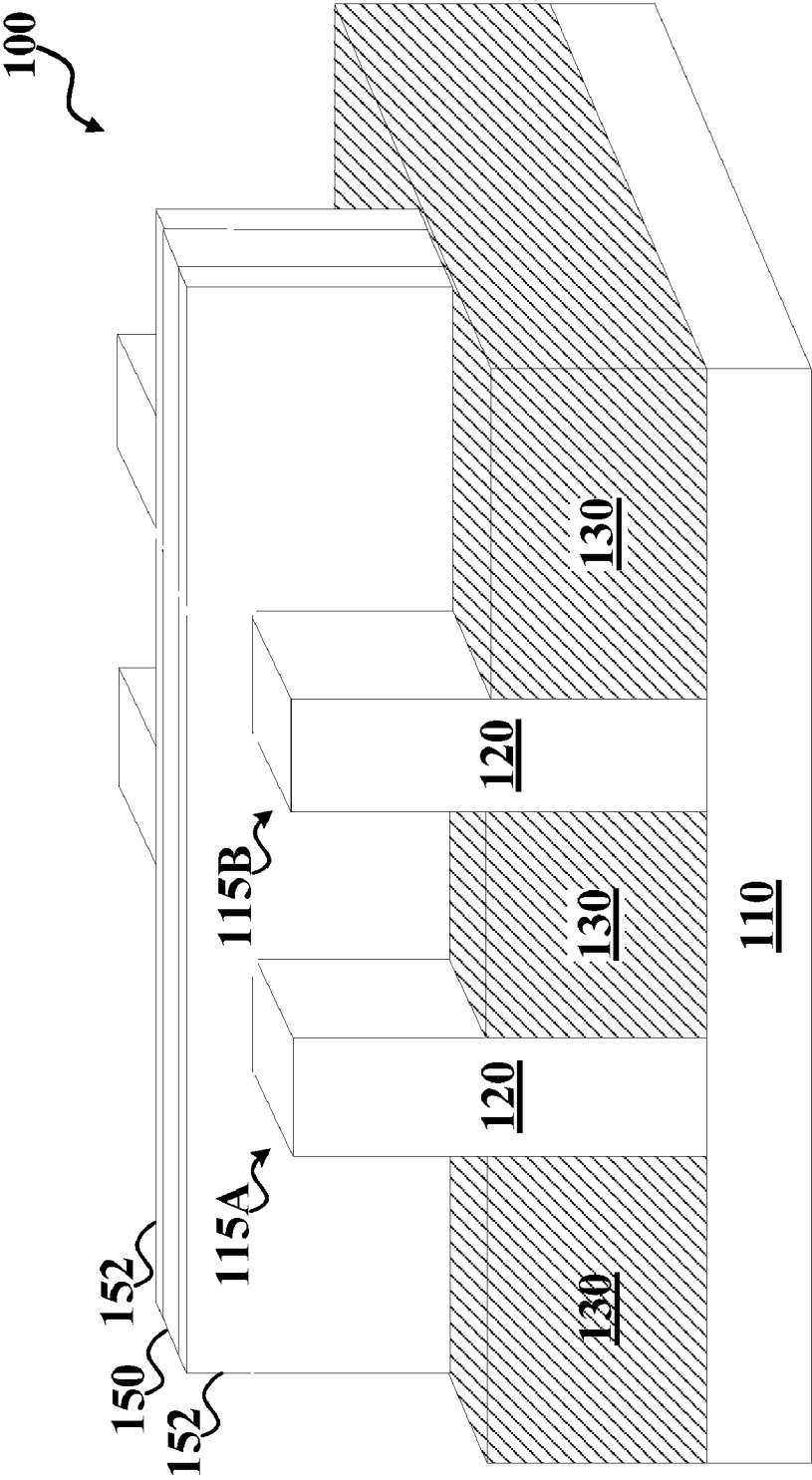


FIG. 2

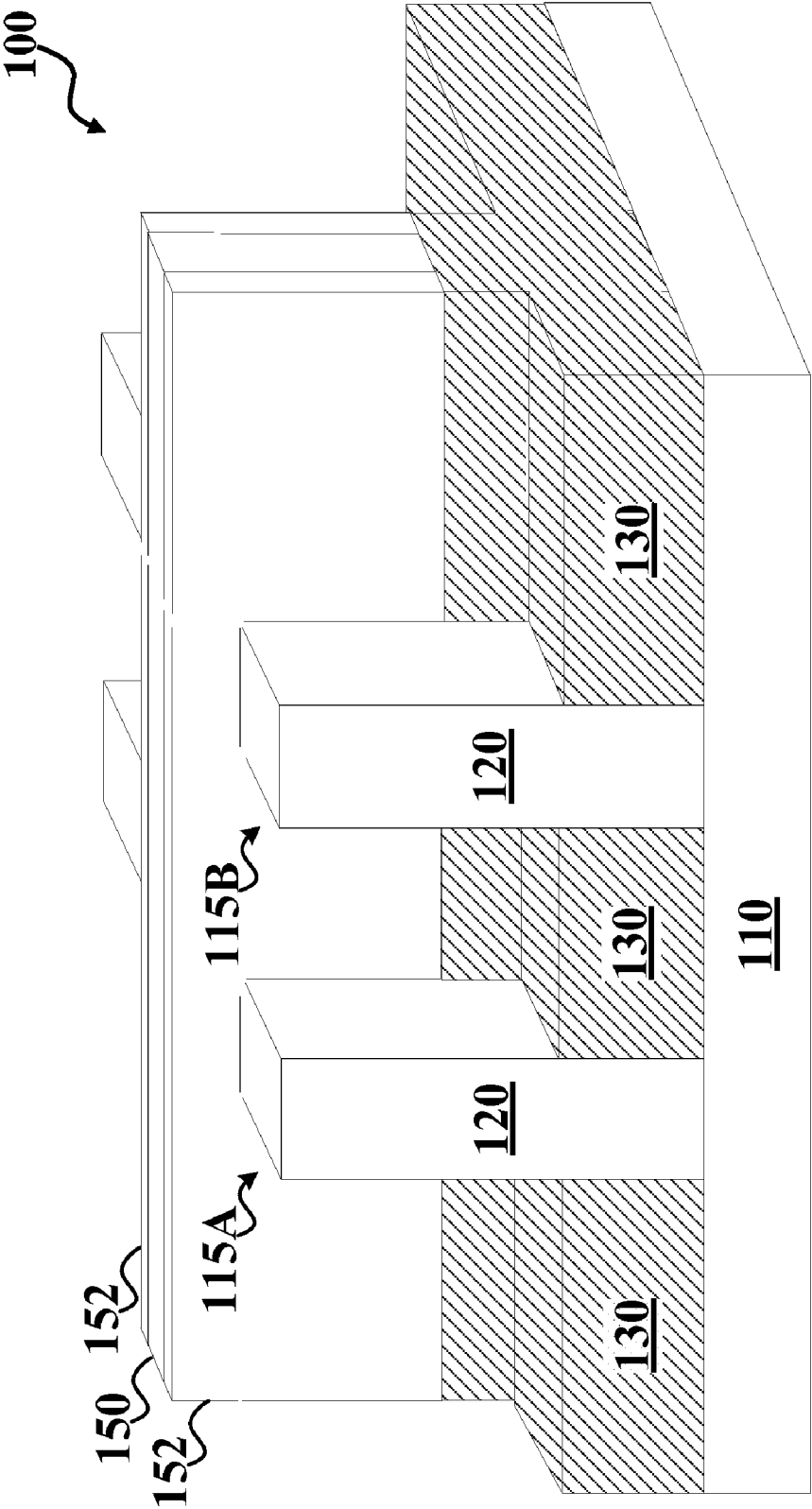


FIG. 3

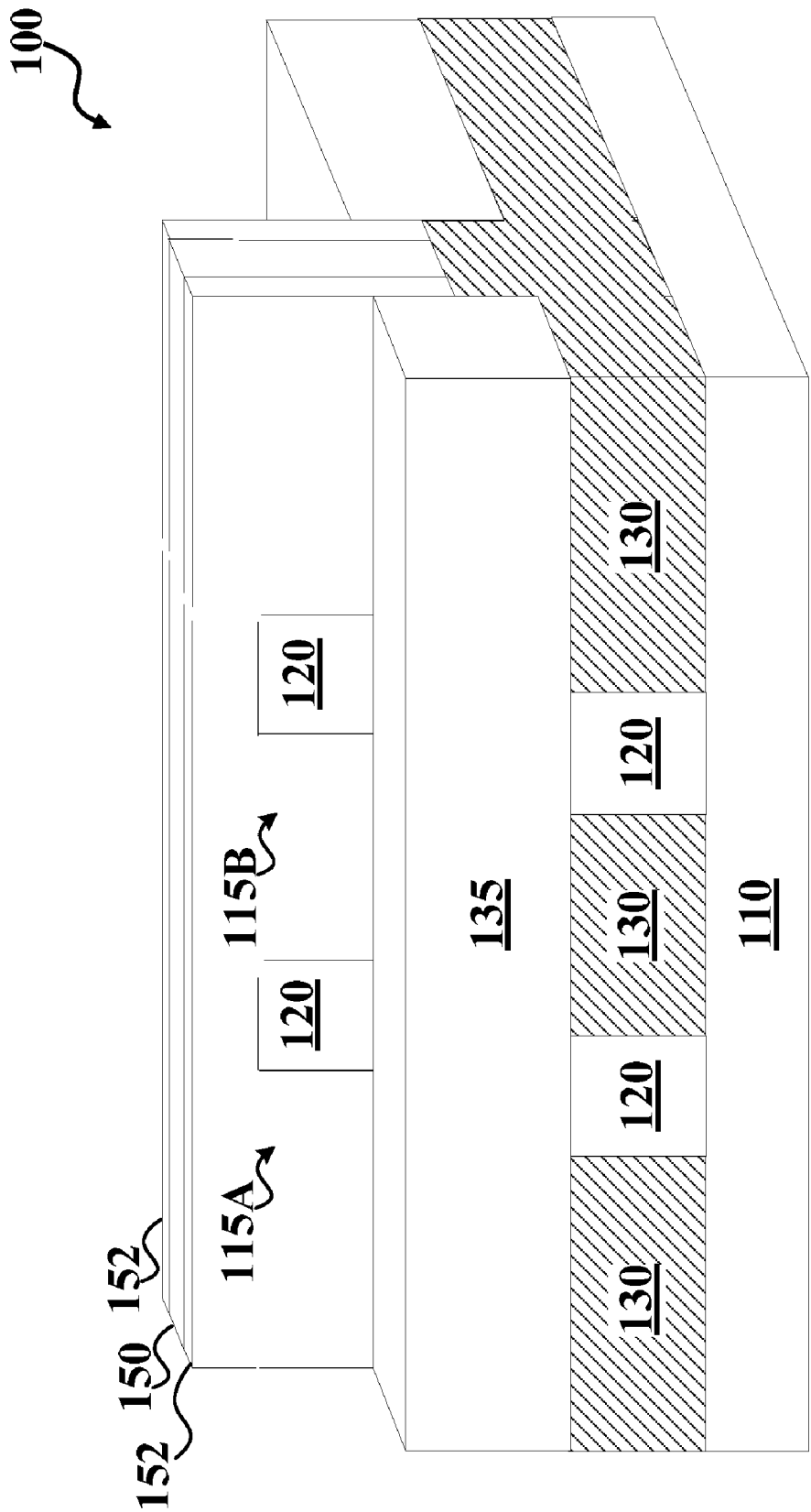


FIG. 5

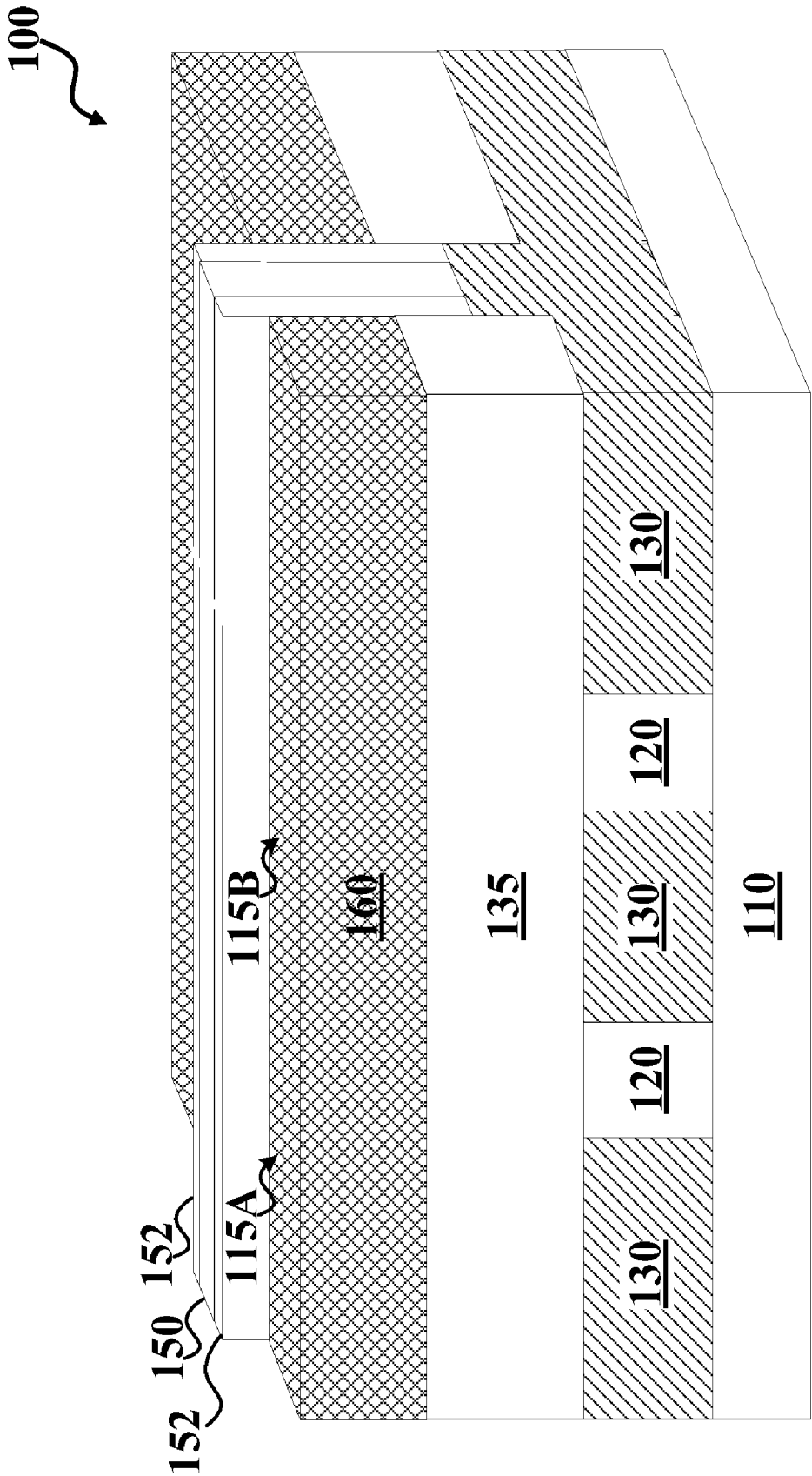


FIG. 6

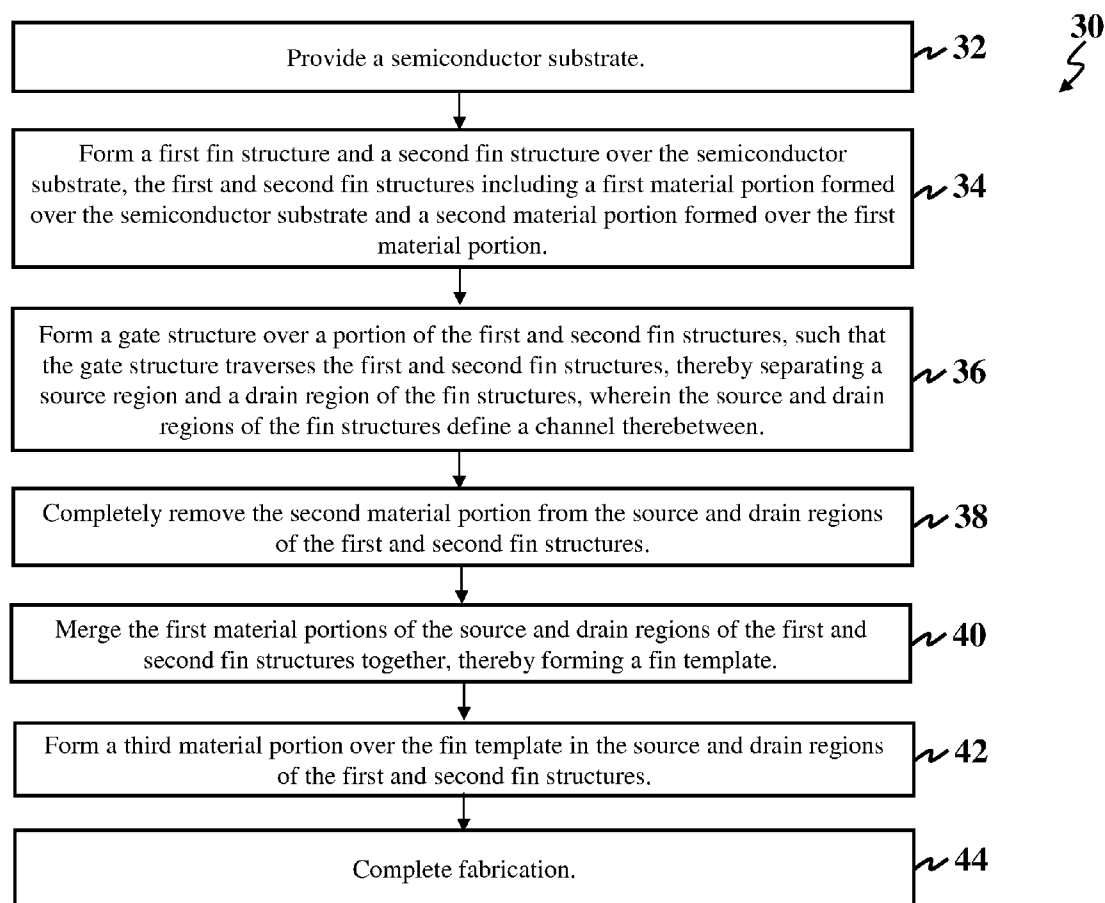


FIG. 7

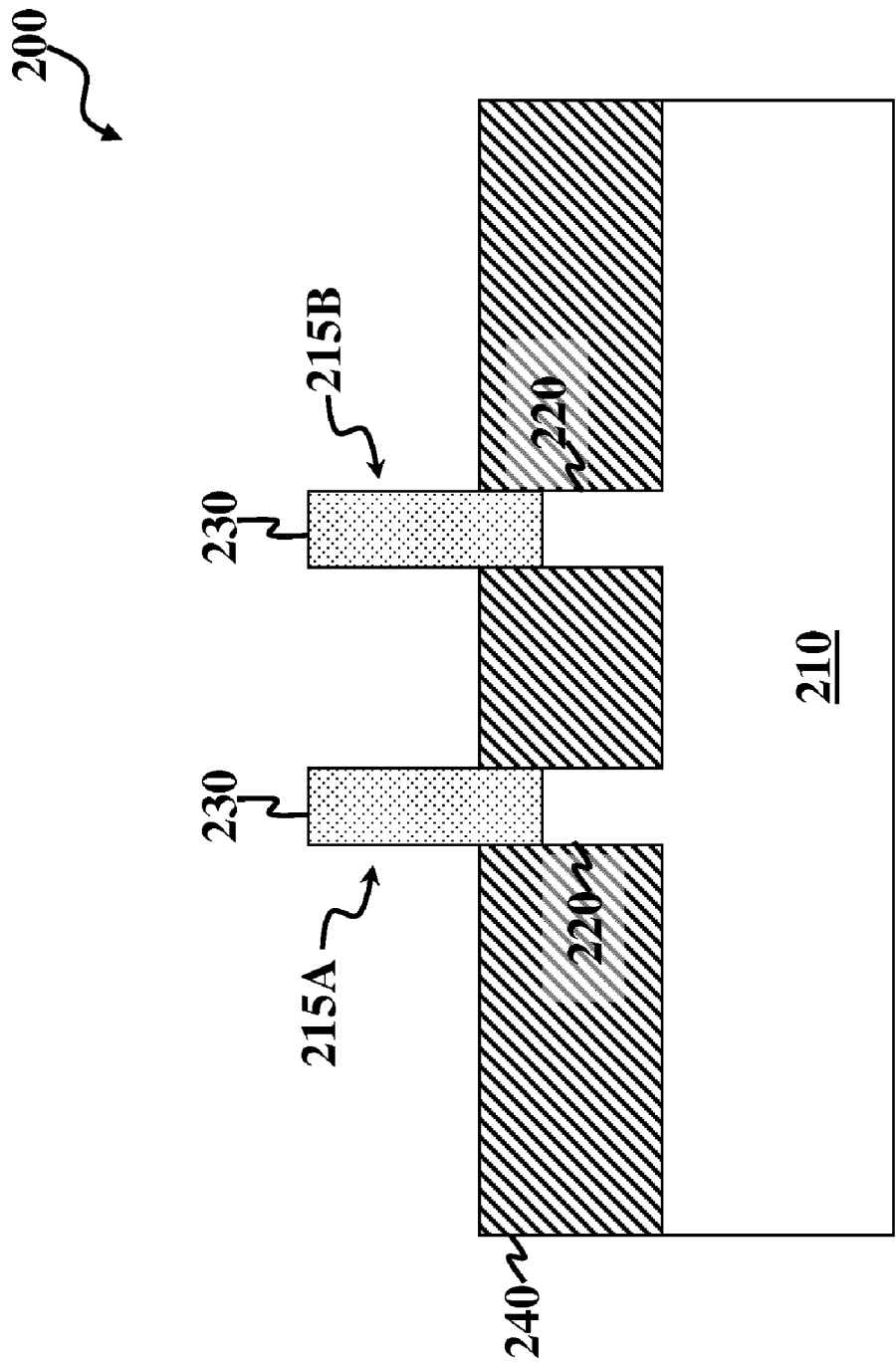


FIG. 8B

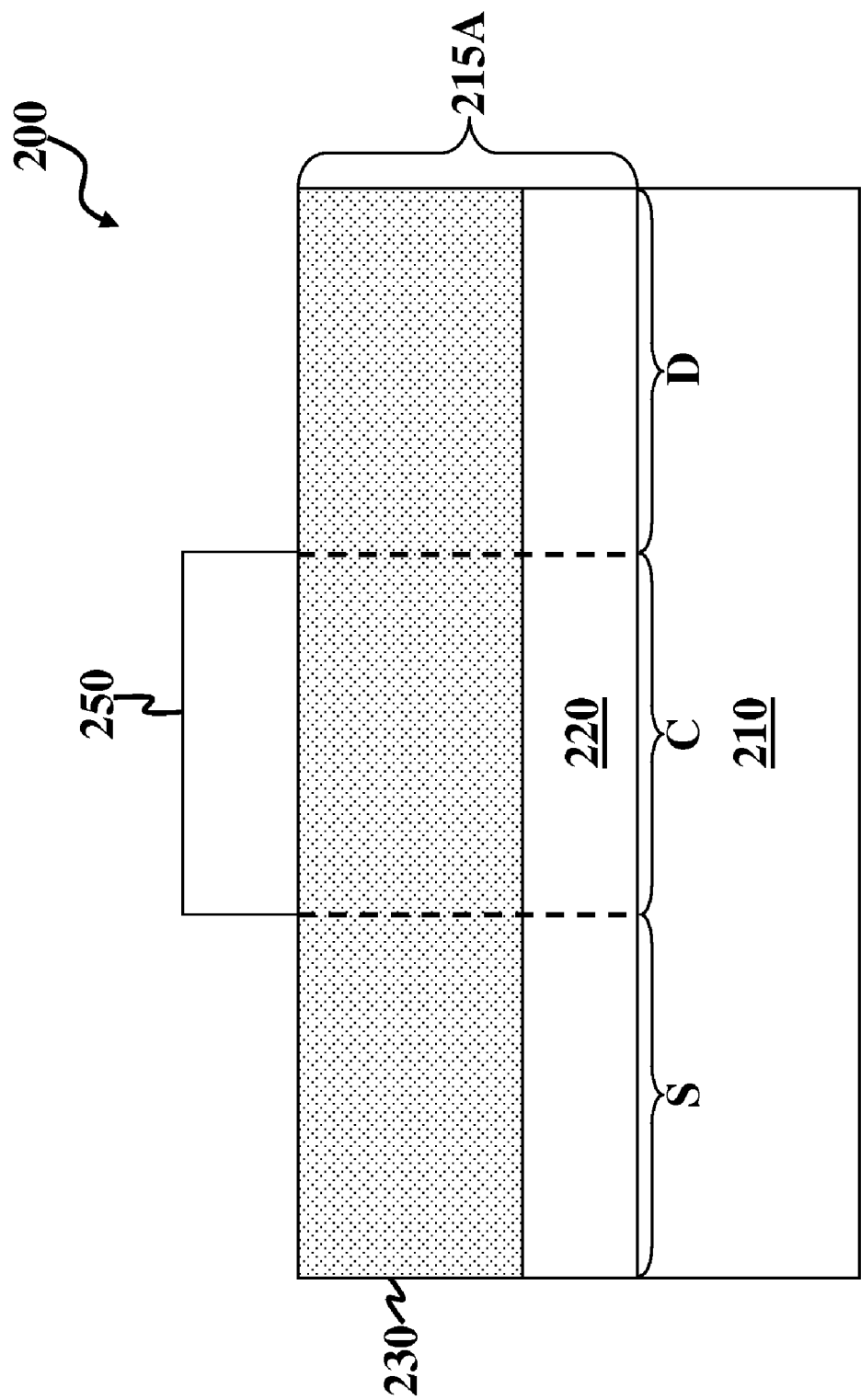


FIG. 8C

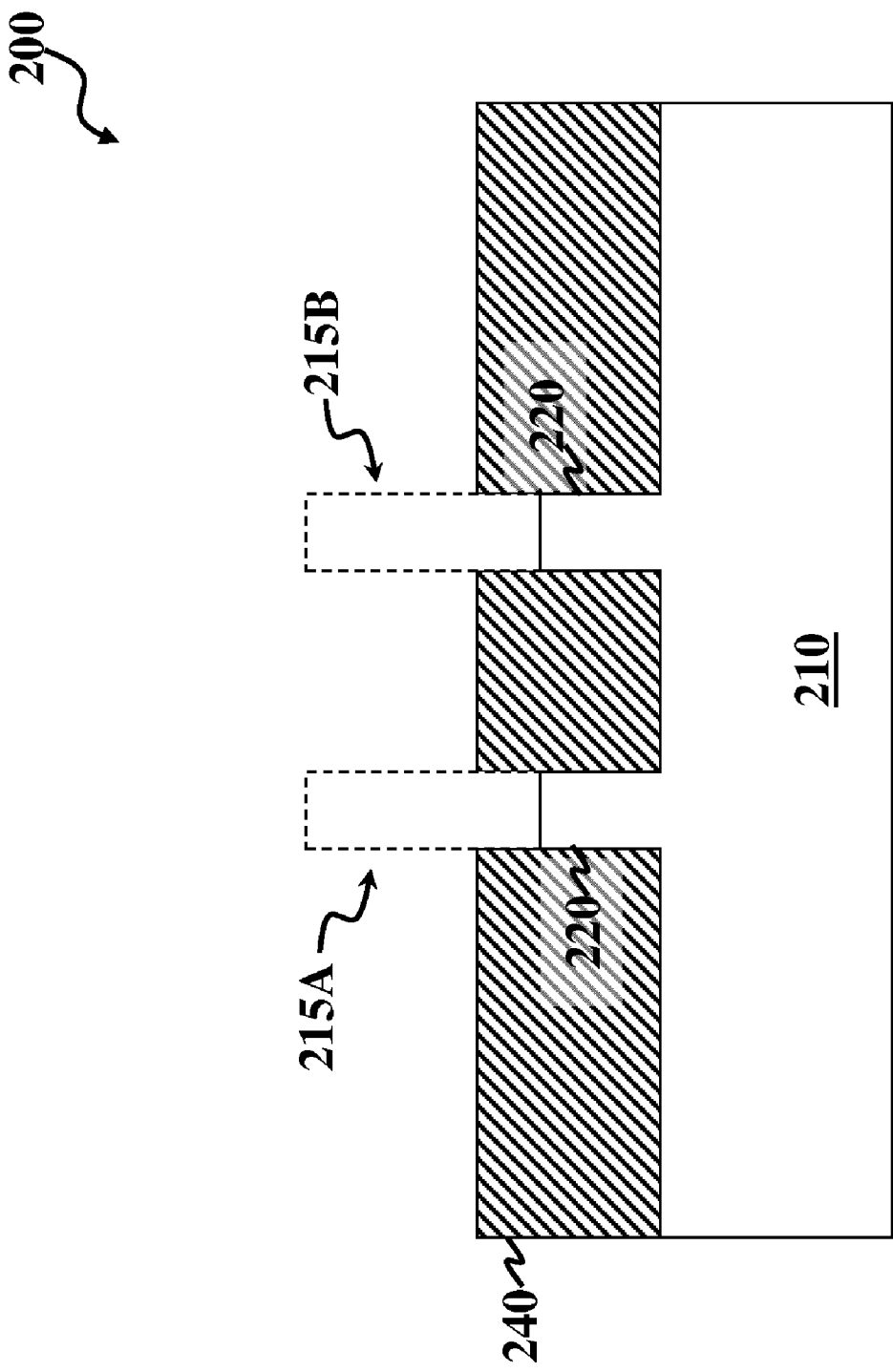


FIG. 9B

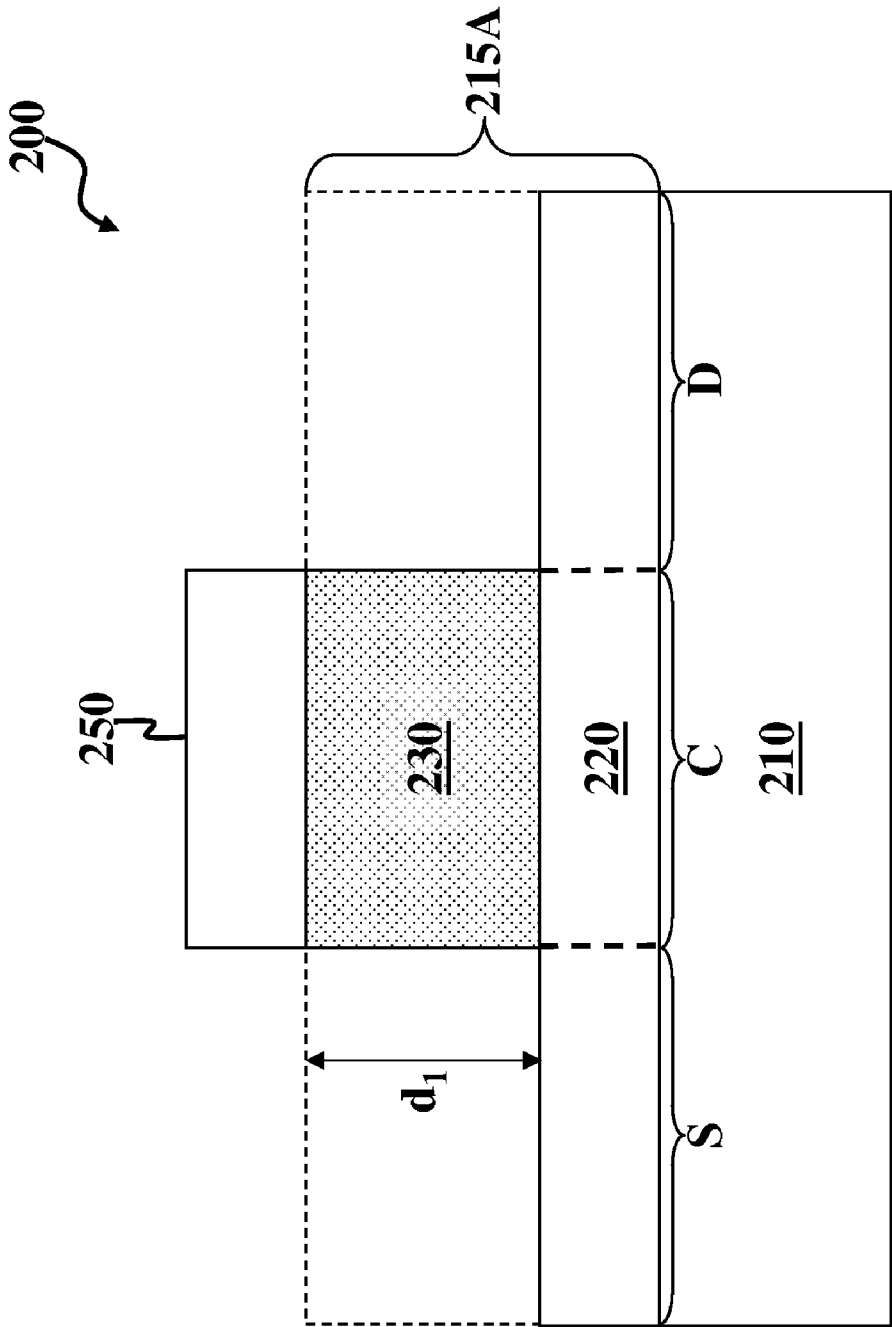


FIG. 9C

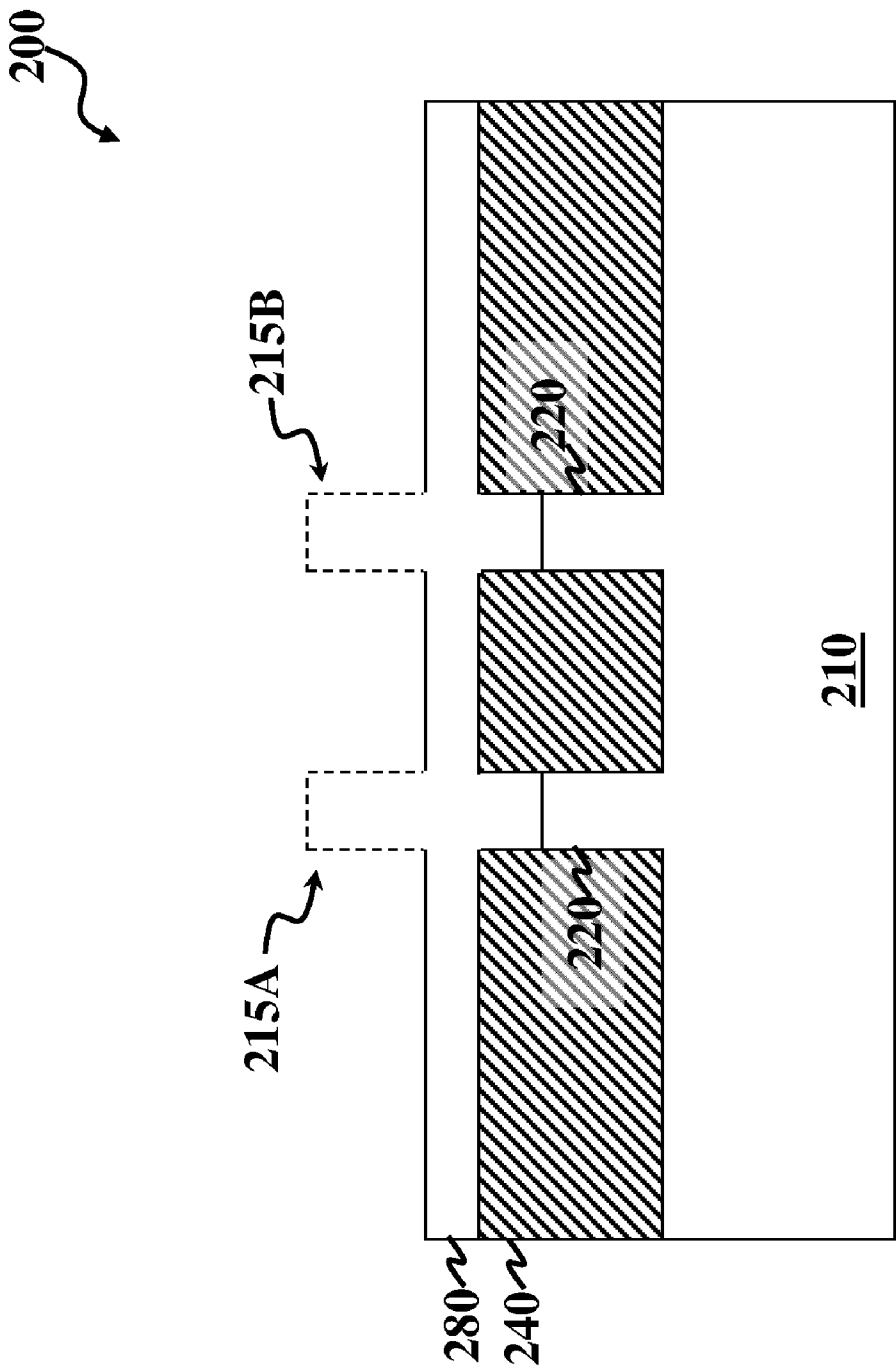


FIG. 10B

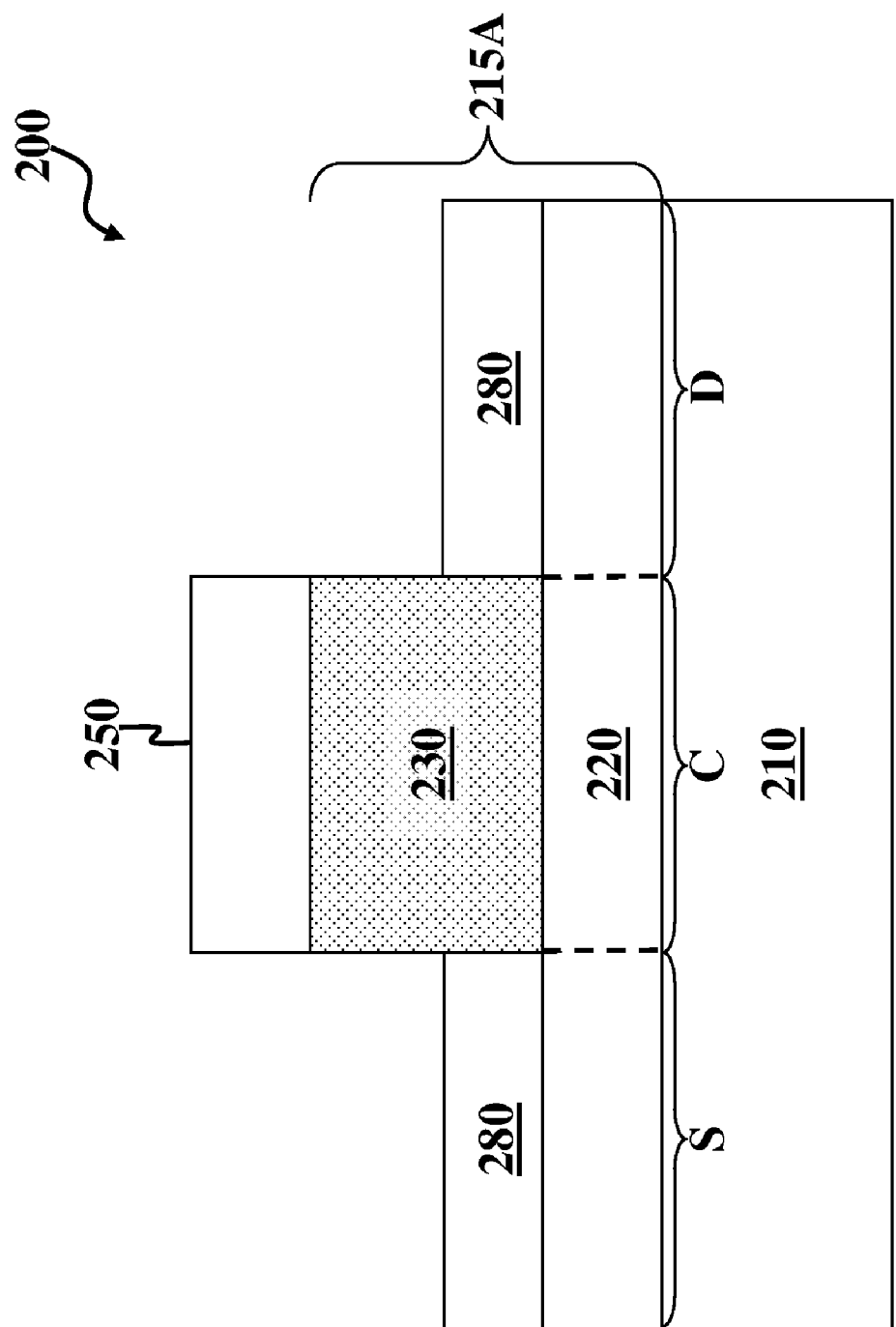


FIG. 10C

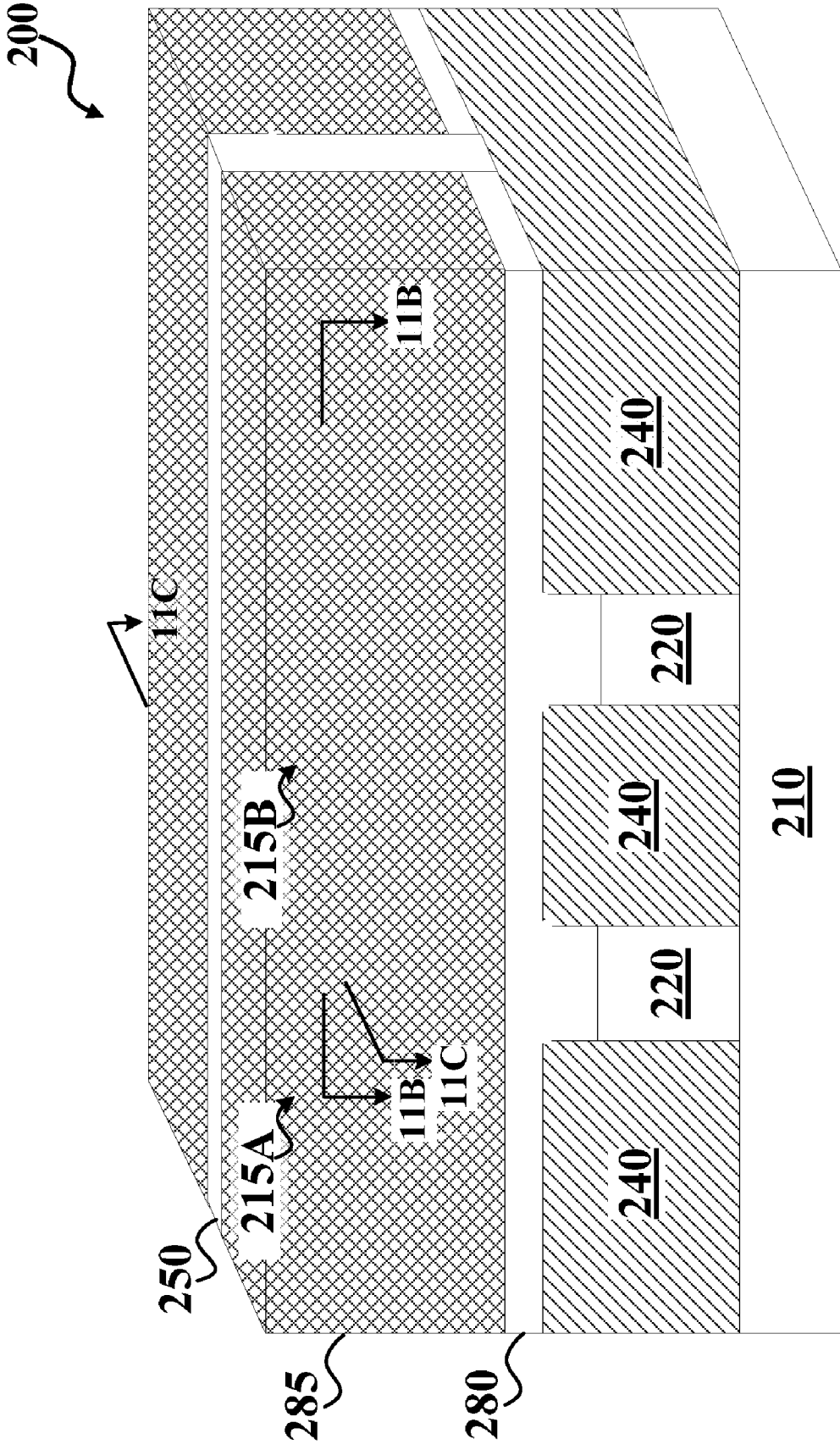


FIG. 11A

200

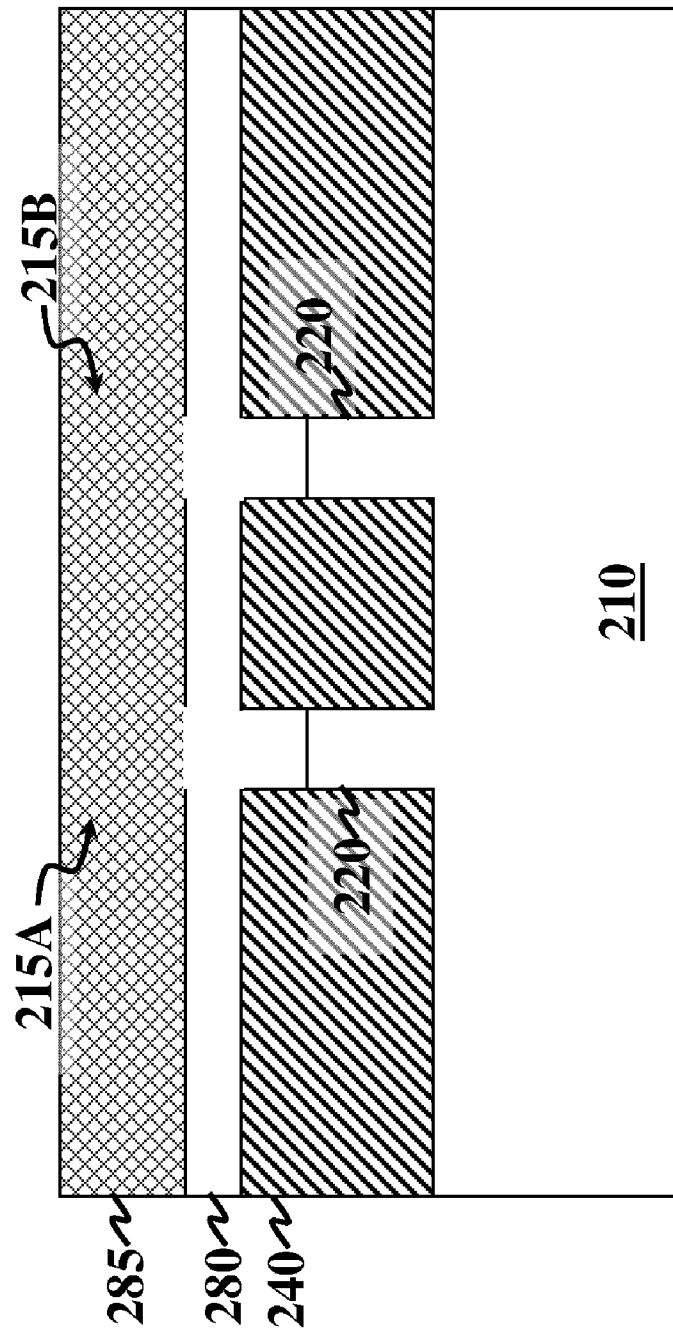


FIG. 11B

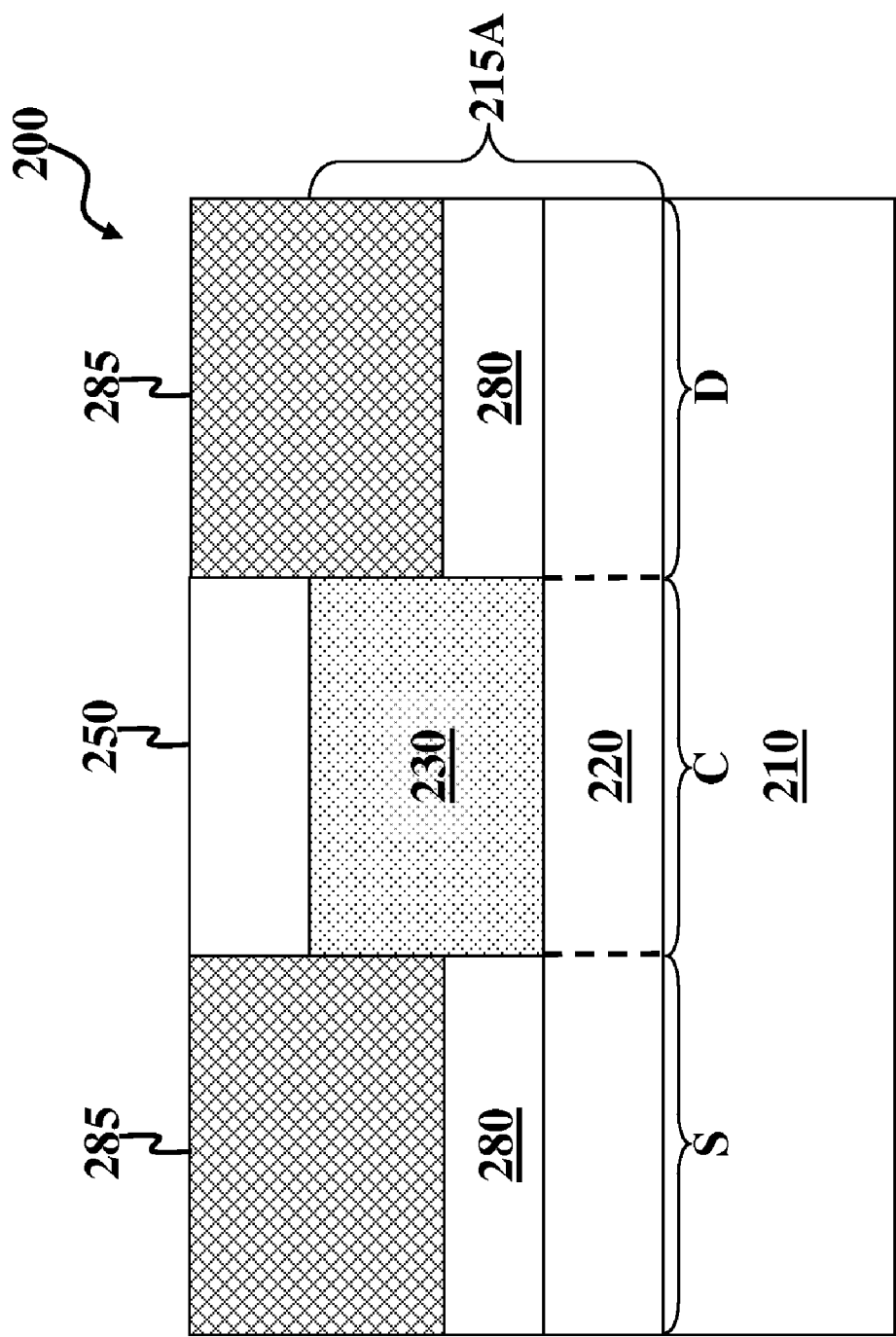


FIG. 11C

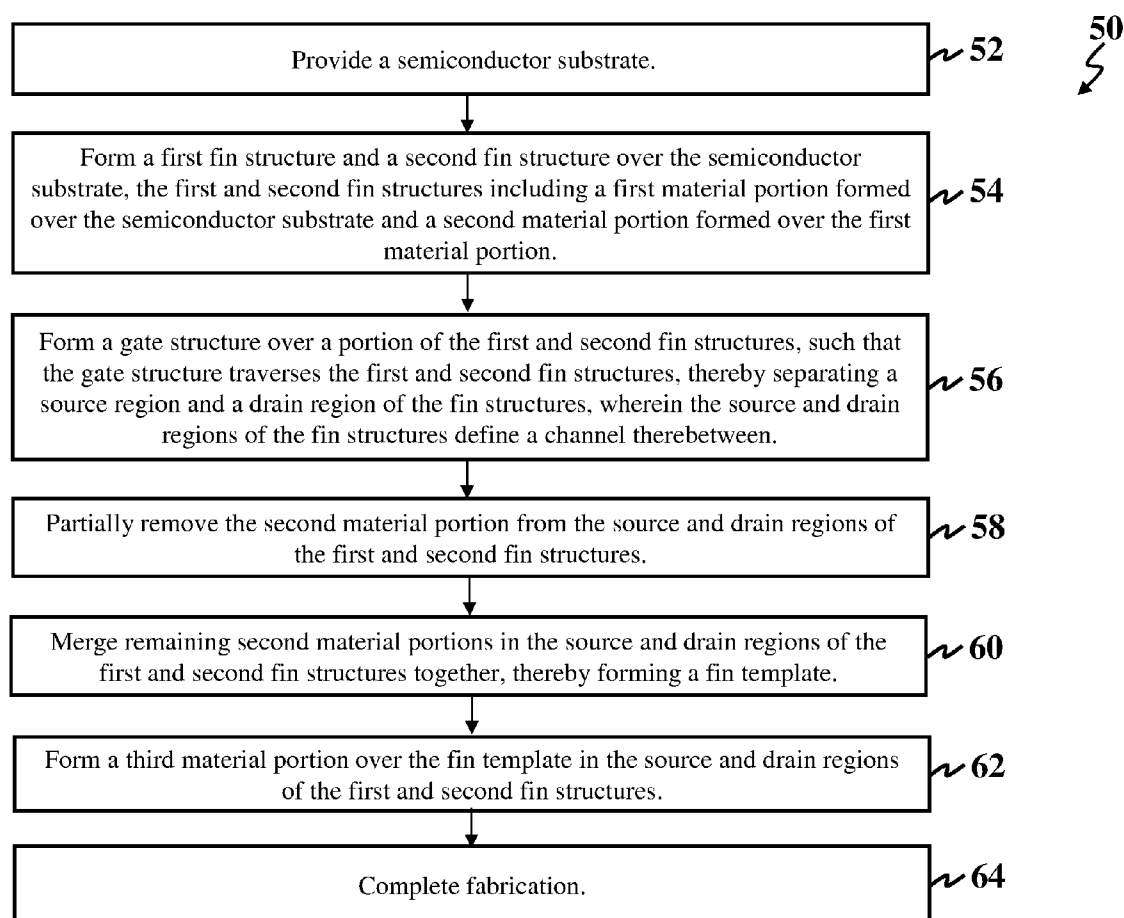


FIG. 12

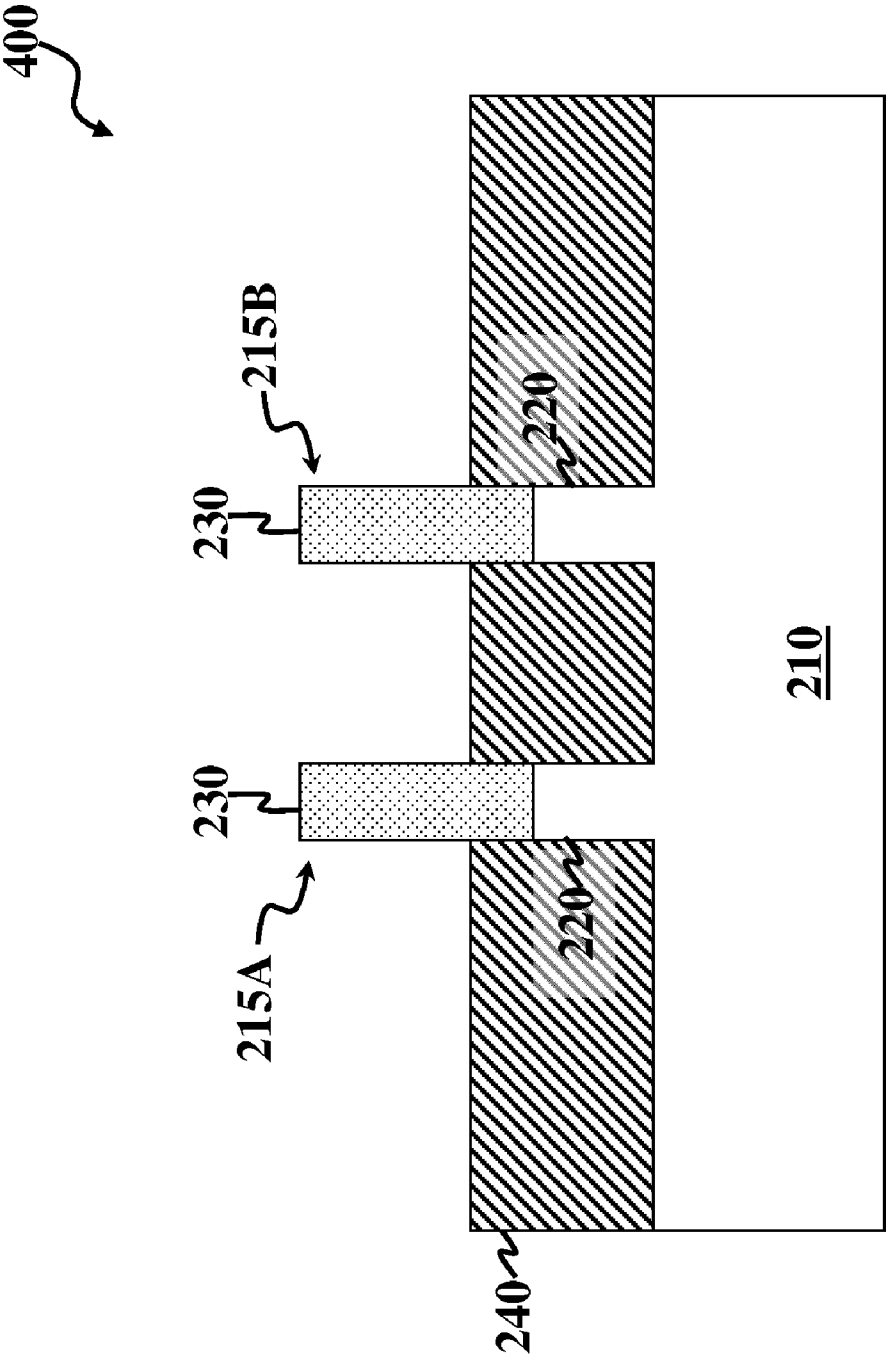


FIG. 13B

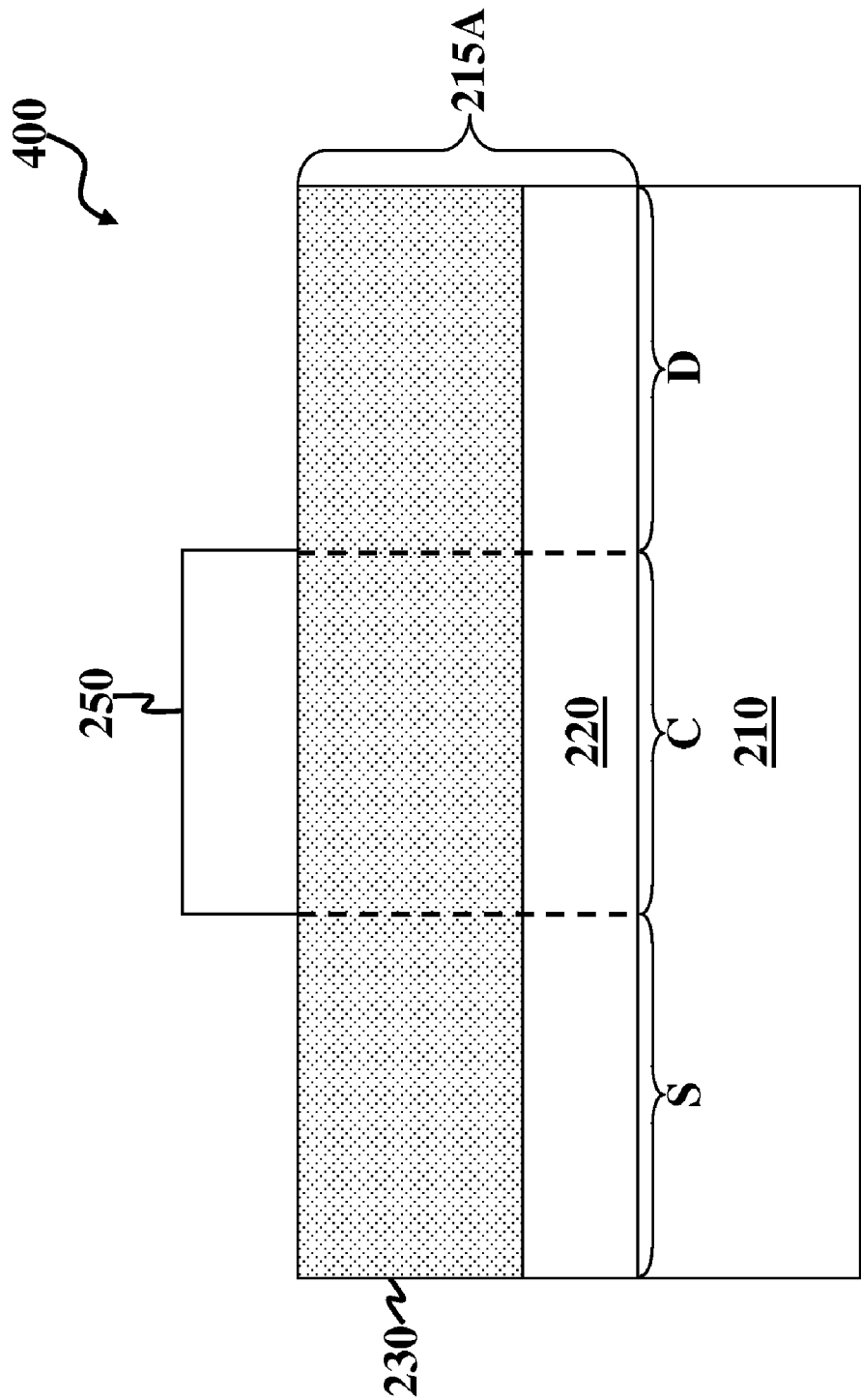


FIG. 13C

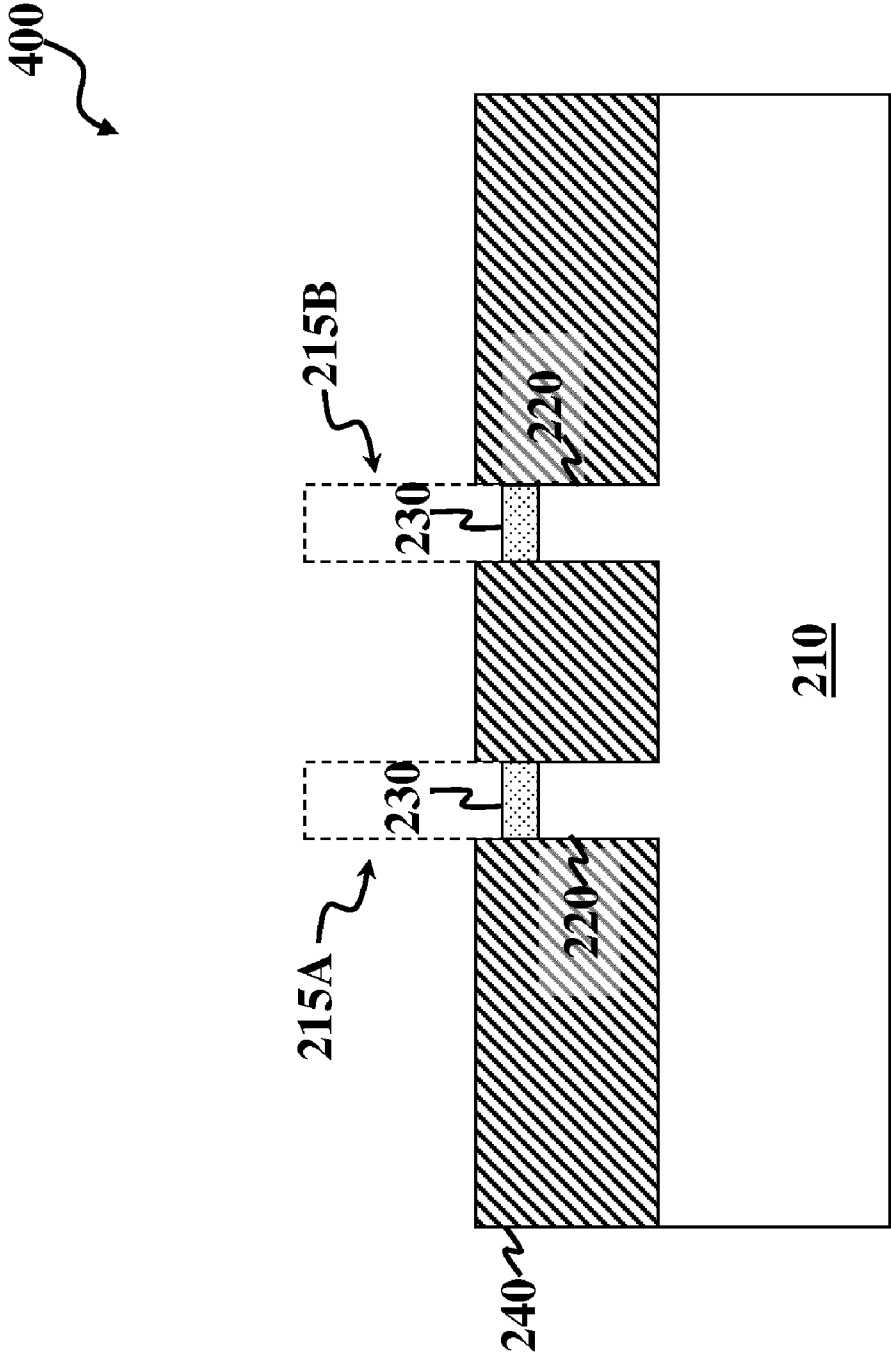


FIG. 14B

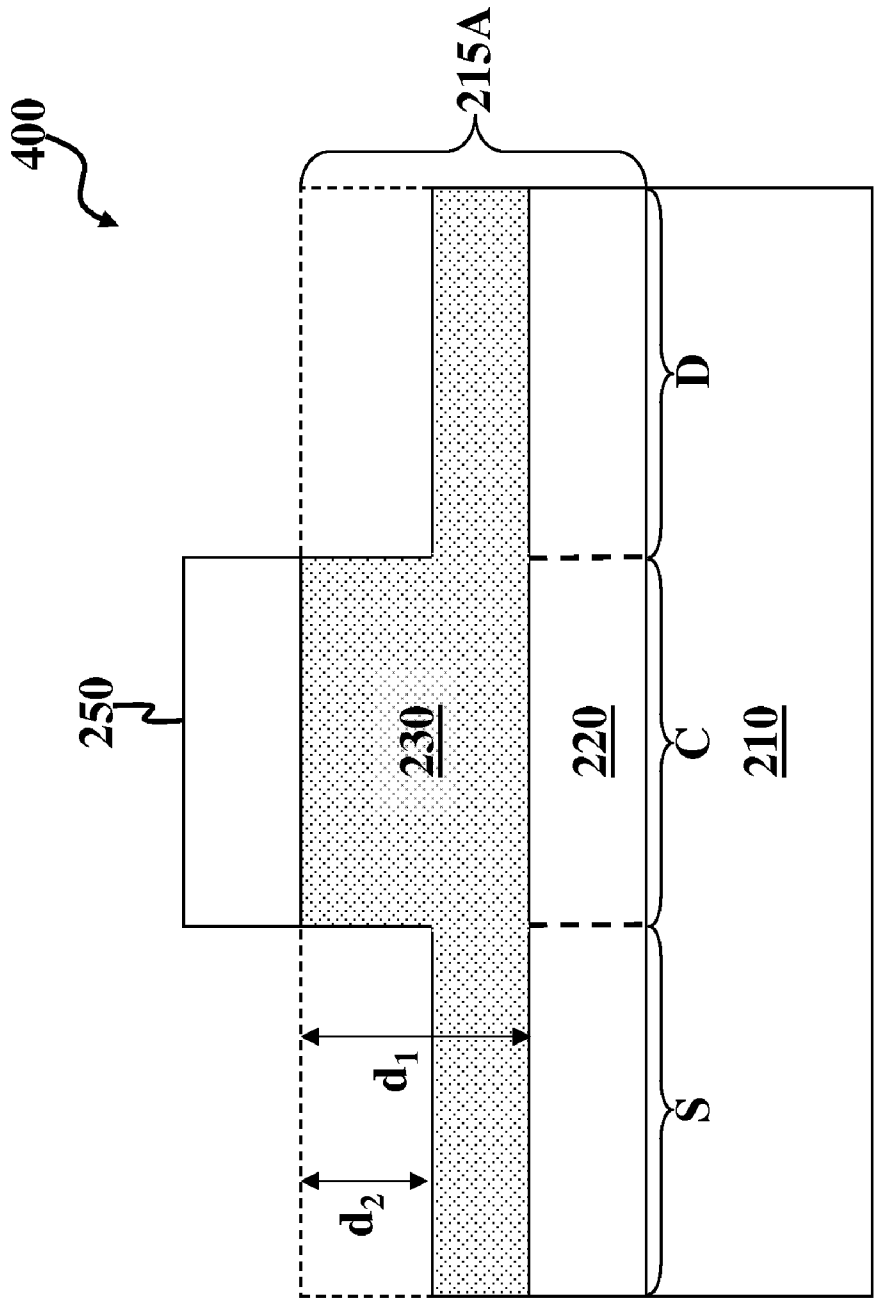


FIG. 14C

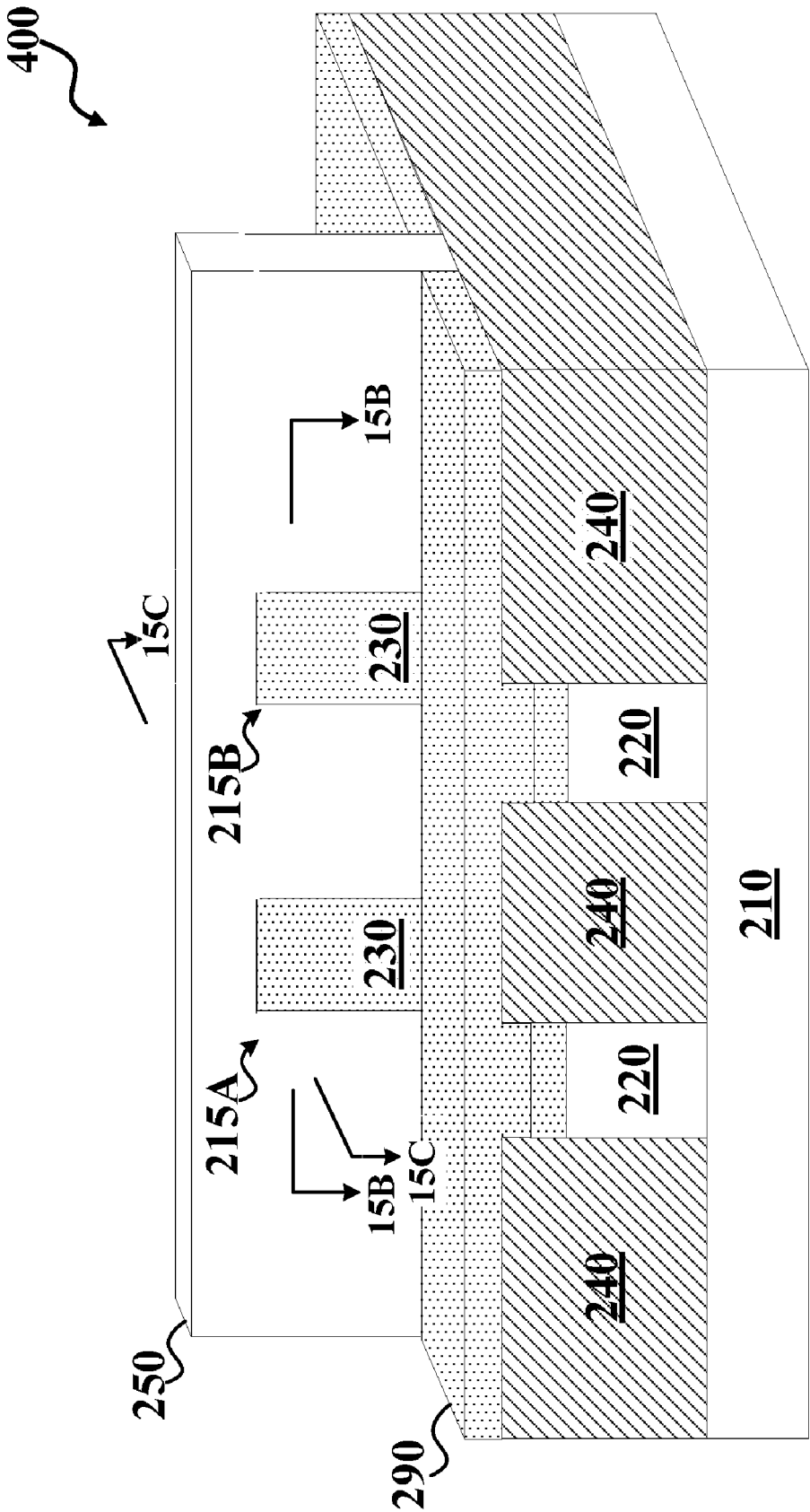


FIG. 15A

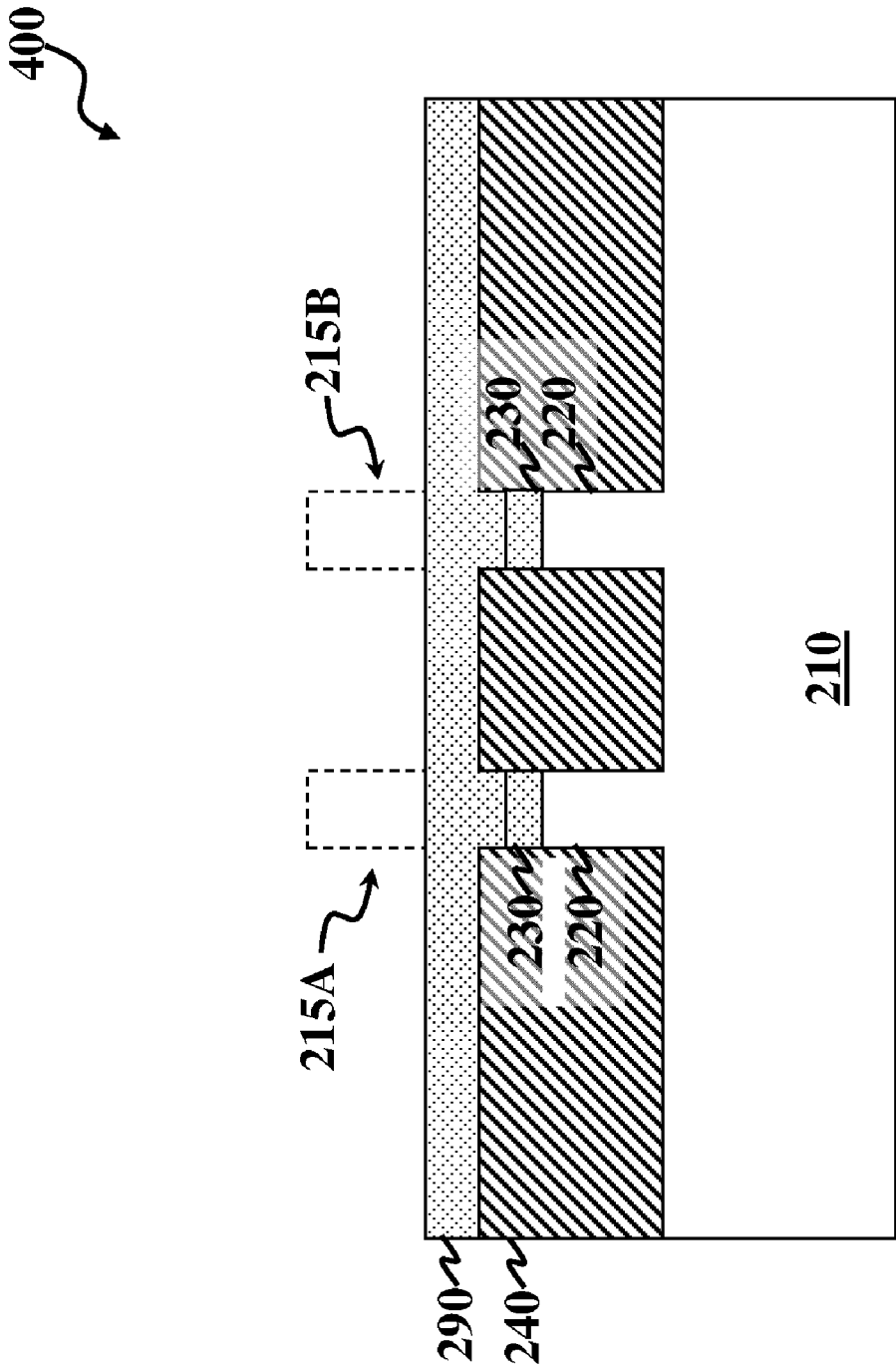


FIG. 15B

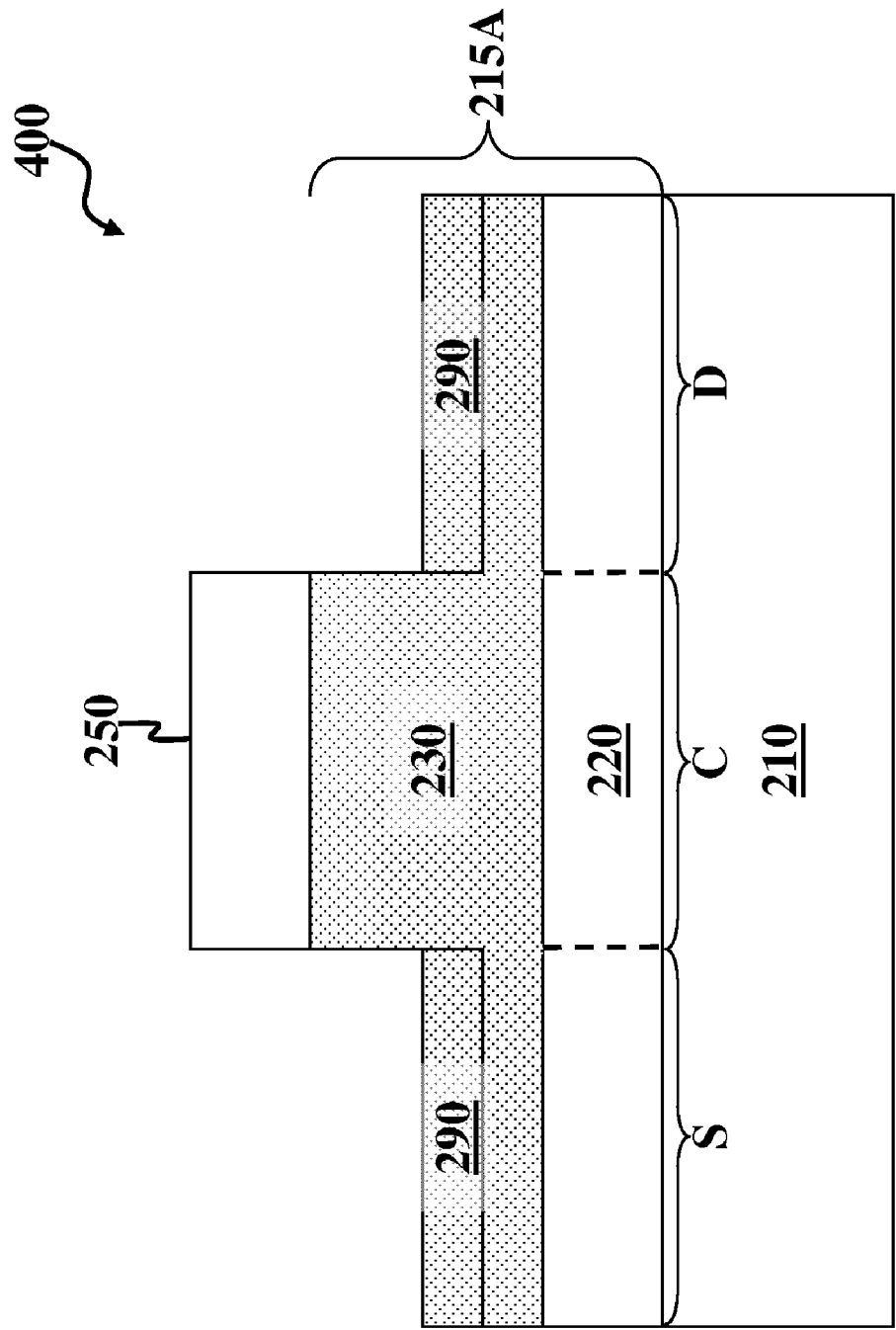


FIG. 15C

400

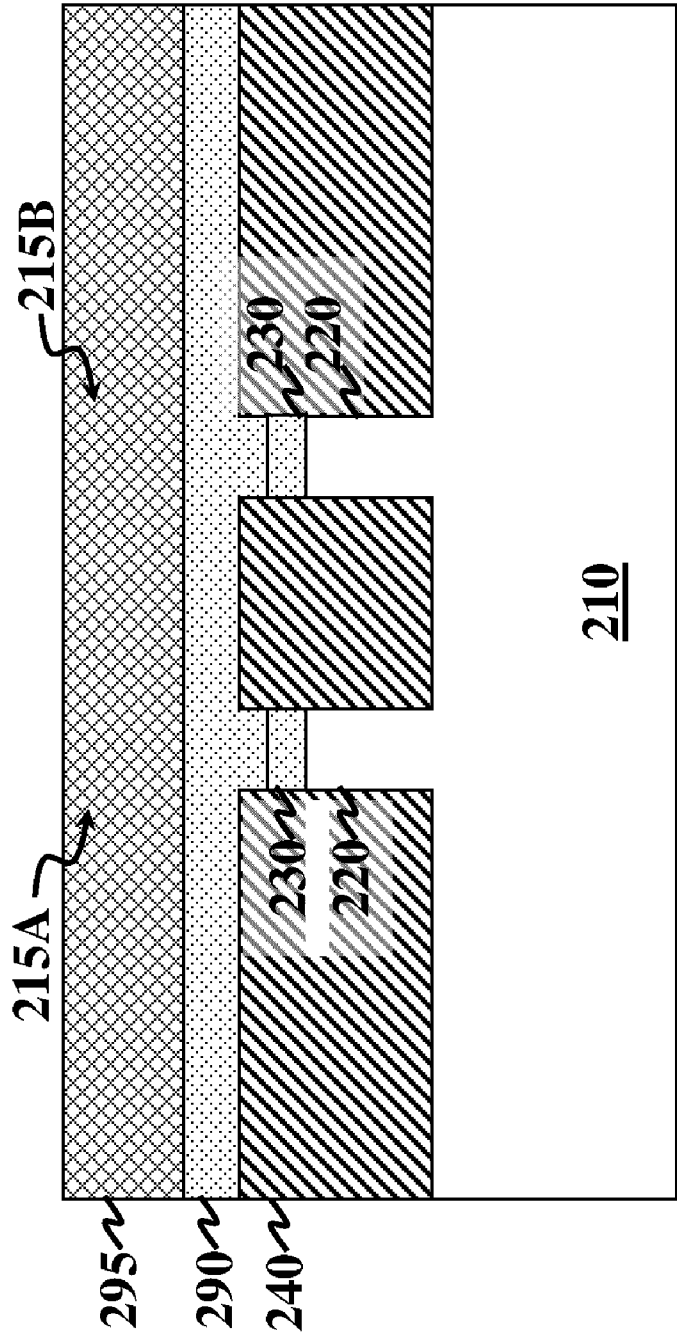


FIG. 16B

FIN-LIKE FIELD EFFECT TRANSISTOR (FINFET) DEVICE AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING SAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present disclosure is related to commonly-assigned U.S. patent application entitled Fin-Like Field Effect Transistor (FinFET) Device and Method of Manufacturing Same (Attorney Docket No. 2010-0693/24061.1546), filed Oct. 18, 2010, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

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 have resulted in the development of three dimensional designs, such as fin-like field effect transistors (FinFETs). A typical FinFET is fabricated with a thin "fin" (or fin structure) extending from a substrate, for example, etched into a silicon layer of the substrate. The channel of the FinFET is formed in the vertical fin. A gate is provided over (e.g., wrapping) the fin. It is beneficial to have a gate on both sides of the channel allowing gate control of the channel from both sides. FinFET devices also include strained source/drain features to enhance carrier mobility and improve device performance. The strained source/drain features typically use epitaxial (epi) silicon germanium (SiGe) in p-type devices and epi silicon (Si) in n-type devices. FinFET devices provide numerous advantages, including reduced short channel effects and increased current flow. Although existing FinFET devices and methods for fabricating FinFET devices have been generally adequate for their intended purposes, as device scaling down continues, they have not been entirely satisfactory in all respects.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] 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.

[0004] FIG. 1 is a flow chart of a method for fabricating a fin-like field effect transistor (FinFET) device according to aspects of the present disclosure.

[0005] FIGS. 2-6 are perspective views of a FinFET device at various fabrication stages according to the method of FIG. 1.

[0006] FIG. 7 is a flow chart of another method for fabricating a FinFET device according to aspects of the present disclosure.

[0007] FIGS. 8A, 9A, 10A, and 11A are perspective views of a FinFET device at various fabrication stages according to the method of FIG. 7.

[0008] FIGS. 8B, 9B, 10B, and 11B are diagrammatic cross-sectional views of the FinFET device illustrated in FIGS. 8A, 9A, 10A, and 11A, respectively.

[0009] FIGS. 8C, 9C, 10C, and 11C are diagrammatic cross-sectional views of the FinFET device illustrated in FIGS. 8A, 9A, 10A, and 11A, respectively.

[0010] FIG. 12 is a flow chart of yet another method for fabricating a FinFET device according to aspects of the present disclosure.

[0011] FIGS. 13A, 14A, 15A, and 16A are perspective views of a FinFET device at various fabrication stages according to the method of FIG. 12.

[0012] FIGS. 13B, 14B, 15B, and 16B are diagrammatic cross-sectional views of the FinFET device illustrated in FIGS. 13A, 14A, 15A, and 16A, respectively.

[0013] FIGS. 13C, 14C, 15C, and 16C are diagrammatic cross-sectional views of the FinFET device illustrated in FIGS. 13A, 14A, 15A, and 16A, respectively.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0014] 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.

[0015] FIG. 1 is a flow chart of a method 10 for fabricating an integrated circuit device according to various aspects of the present disclosure. In the depicted embodiment, the method 10 fabricates an integrated circuit device that includes a fin-like field effect transistor (FinFET) device. The method 10 begins at block 12 where a semiconductor substrate is provided. At block 14, a first fin and a second fin are formed over the semiconductor substrate. An isolation structure is formed to isolate the first and second fins. At block 16, a gate structure is formed over a portion of the first and second fins. The gate structure traverses the first and second fins. At block 18, a fin template is formed on exposed portions of the first and second fins. At block 20, a semiconductor material is epitaxially grown over the fin template. The method 10 continues with block 22 where fabrication of the integrated circuit device is completed. Additional steps can be provided before, during, and after the method 10, and some of the steps described can be replaced or eliminated for other embodiments of the method. The discussion that follows illustrates various embodiments of an integrated circuit device that can be fabricated according to the method 10 of FIG. 1.

[0016] FIGS. 2-6 provide various perspective views of a FinFET device 100, in portion or entirety, at various stages of fabrication according to the method 10 of FIG. 1. The term FinFET device refers to any fin-based transistor, such as a fin-based, multi-gate transistor. The FinFET device 100 may be included in a microprocessor, memory cell, and/or other integrated circuit device. FIGS. 2-6 have been simplified for the sake of clarity to better understand the inventive concepts of the present disclosure. Additional features can be added in the FinFET device 100, and some of the features described below can be replaced or eliminated in other embodiments of the FinFET device 100.

[0017] Referring to FIG. 2, the FinFET device 100 includes a substrate (wafer) 110. In the depicted embodiment, the substrate 110 is a bulk silicon substrate. Alternatively or additionally, the substrate 110 includes an elementary semiconductor, such as silicon or germanium in a crystalline structure; a compound semiconductor, such as silicon carbide, gallium arsenic, gallium phosphide, indium phosphide, indium arsenide, and/or indium antimonide; or combinations thereof. Alternatively, the substrate 110 is a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) substrate. The SOI substrate can be fabricated using separation by implantation of oxygen (SIMOX), wafer bonding, and/or other suitable methods. The substrate 110 may include various doped regions and other suitable features.

[0018] The FinFET device 100 includes fin structure 115A and 115B that extend from the substrate 110. In the depicted embodiment, the fin structures 115A and 115B include fins 120. The fins 120 include silicon (Si), and accordingly, may also be referred to as Si fins. The fin structures 115A and 115B may include other material portions. The fins 120 include a source region, a drain region, and a channel defined between the source and drain regions. The fins 120 are formed by implementing a lithography and etching process. For example, beginning with the substrate 110, a lithography and etching process forms trenches in the substrate 110, thereby forming fins 120, which extend from the substrate 110. The lithography process may include photoresist coating (e.g., spin-on coating), soft baking, mask aligning, exposure, post-exposure baking, developing the photoresist, rinsing, drying (e.g., hard baking), other suitable processes, or combinations thereof. For example, the fin portions 120 may be formed by forming a photoresist layer (resist) overlying the substrate 110, exposing the resist to a pattern, performing a post-exposure bake process, and developing the resist to form a masking element including the resist. The masking element may then be used to etch the fins 120 into the silicon substrate 110. The etching process may be a dry etching process, wet etching process, other suitable etching process, or combinations thereof. For example, the fins 120 may be etched into the substrate 110 using a reactive ion etch (RIE). Alternatively, the lithography process could be implemented or replaced by other methods, such as maskless photolithography, electron-beam writing, ion-beam writing, and/or nanoimprint technology. The fins 120 may be formed by a double-patterning lithography (DPL) process. DPL is a method of constructing a pattern on a substrate by dividing the pattern into two interleaved patterns. DPL allows enhanced feature (e.g., fin) density. Various DPL methodologies may be used including double exposure (e.g., using two mask sets), forming spacers adjacent features and removing the features to provide a pattern of spacers, resist freezing, and/or other suitable processes. It is noted that the term “fin structure” in the depicted embodiment refers to individual fins of the FinFET device 100. However, the term “fin structure” may also refer to the fins collectively, and thus, fin structure may also refer to fin structures 115A and 115B collectively. Further, though the depicted embodiment illustrates two fins, the FinFET device 100 may include fewer or more fins depending on design requirements of the FinFET device 100.

[0019] Isolation features 130, such as shallow trench isolation (STI) structures, surround the fin structures 115A and 115B (in the depicted embodiment, the fins 120), isolating the fins 120 from each other and other not-illustrated integrated circuit devices. The isolation features 130 may be formed by

partially filling trenches surrounding the fins 120 with an insulating material, such as silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, other suitable material, or combinations thereof. The filled trench may have a multi-layer structure, for example, a thermal oxide liner layer with silicon nitride filling the trench. In the depicted embodiment, the isolation features 130 include an oxide material.

[0020] The FinFET device 100 includes a gate structure 150. The gate structure 150 traverses the fins 120, and in the depicted embodiment, is formed on a central portion of the fins 120. The gate structure 150 may include a gate dielectric layer and a gate electrode. The gate dielectric layer includes a dielectric material, such as silicon oxide, high-k dielectric material, other suitable dielectric material, or combinations thereof. Examples of high-k dielectric material include HfO_2 , HfSiO , HfSiON , HfTaO , HfTiO , HfZrO , zirconium oxide, aluminum oxide, hafnium dioxide-alumina ($\text{HfO}_2\text{—Al}_2\text{O}_3$) alloy, other suitable high-k dielectric materials, or combinations thereof. The gate electrode includes polysilicon and/or a metal including Al, Cu, Ti, Ta, W, Mo, TaN, NiSi, CoSi, TiN, WN, TiAl, TiAlN, TaCN, TaC, TaSiN, other conductive materials, or combinations thereof. The gate structure 150, such as the gate electrode, may be formed in a gate first or gate last process. The gate structure 150 may include numerous other layers, for example, capping layers, interface layers, diffusion layers, barrier layers, hard mask layers, or combinations thereof.

[0021] The gate structure 150 is formed by a suitable process, including deposition, lithography patterning, and etching processes. The deposition processes include chemical vapor deposition (CVD), physical vapor deposition (PVD), atomic layer deposition (ALD), high density plasma CVD (HDPCVD), metal organic CVD (MOCVD), remote plasma CVD (RPCVD), plasma enhanced CVD (PECVD), low-pressure CVD (LPCVD), atomic layer CVD (ALCVD), atmospheric pressure CVD (APCVD), plating, other suitable methods, or combinations thereof. The lithography patterning processes include photoresist coating (e.g., spin-on coating), soft baking, mask aligning, exposure, post-exposure baking, developing the photoresist, rinsing, drying (e.g., hard baking), other suitable processes, or combinations thereof. Alternatively, the lithography exposing process is implemented or replaced by other methods, such as maskless photolithography, electron-beam writing, or ion-beam writing. In yet another alternative, the lithography patterning process could implement nanoimprint technology. The etching processes include dry etching, wet etching, and/or other etching methods.

[0022] Spacers 152 are disposed on the sidewalls of the gate structure 150, such as along the gate electrode. The spacers 152 include a dielectric material, such as silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, other suitable material, or combinations thereof. The spacers may include a multi-layer structure, such as a multi-layer structure including a silicon nitride layer and a silicon oxide layer. The spacers are formed by a suitable process to a suitable thickness. For example, in the depicted embodiment, spacers 152 may be formed by depositing a silicon nitride layer and then dry etching the layer to form the spacers 152 as illustrated in FIG. 2. Before or after forming the spacers 152, implantation, diffusion, and/or annealing processes may be performed to form lightly doped source and drain (LDD) features in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B.

[0023] Referring to FIG. 3, a process is performed to recess the isolation features 130. For example, an etching process is applied to recess the isolation features 130. The etching process is a dry etching process, wet etching process, other etching process, or combinations thereof. In the depicted embodiment, the etching process selectively etches the isolation features 130 and implements processing parameters that avoid etching the silicon nitride spacers 152. For example, in the depicted embodiment, the etching process uses a hydrofluoric acid (HF) etching solution of a suitable concentration (for example, 100:1). In an example, the HF solution recesses the isolation features 130 about 100 Å. Alternatively, other etching solutions may be used to effectively recess the isolation features 130.

[0024] Referring to FIG. 4, a fin template 135 is formed on exposed portions of the fins 120. For example, the fin template 135 is formed by merging together the fins 120 of the FinFET device 100. In the depicted embodiment, merging the fins 120 together is achieved by epitaxially (epi) growing a semiconductor material on exposed portions of the fins 120 in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B. The semiconductor material is epitaxially grown by an epi process until the fins 120 of the fin structures 115A and 115B are merged together to form the fin template 135. The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., vapor-phase epitaxy (VPE) and/or ultra-high vacuum CVD (UHV-CVD)), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors. In the depicted embodiment, the fin template 135 is silicon formed by a silicon epitaxial deposition process. The fin template 135 can be referred to as a bulk-like Si template. Alternatively, the fin template 135 could be silicon germanium (SiGe) formed by a silicon germanium epitaxial deposition process. The fin template 135 may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. For example, the epi silicon fin template 135 may be doped with phosphorous (to form a Si:P epi layer). The doped epitaxial layer may have a gradient doping profile. A chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) process may be performed to planarize the fin template 135. Though the fins 120 and fin template 135 are depicted separately, it is understood that “fin template” can refer to the newly grown epi semiconductor material alone (depicted as fin template 135) or the newly grown epi semiconductor material combined with the initial fins (depicted as fins 120).

[0025] Referring to FIG. 5, a process is performed to recess the fin template 135. For example, an etching process is applied to the fin template 135 to etch back the fin template 135. The etching process is a dry etching process, wet etching process, other etching process, or combinations thereof. In an example, the etching process uses a mixture of HBr, Cl₂, and O₂. Alternatively, other etching process mixtures may be used to effectively recess the fin template 135. A radio frequency (RF) bias power of the etching process may be about 30 Watts (W) to about 400 W. The fin template 135 is etched back sufficiently to expose the channels of the fin structures 115A and 115B as illustrated in FIG. 5. This ensures that later-formed raised source and drain features (semiconductor material 160) can effectively introduce strain into the channels of the fins structures 115A and 115B.

[0026] Referring to FIG. 6, a semiconductor material 160 is epitaxially grown over the fin template 135. In the depicted

embodiment, a semiconductor material is epi grown on the exposed fin template 135 in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B. The epi grown semiconductor material 160 generates channel strain for the fin structures 115A and 115B. The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., vapor-phase epitaxy (VPE) and/or ultra-high vacuum CVD (UHV-CVD)), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors. In the depicted embodiment, the semiconductor material 160 is silicon germanium (SiGe) formed by a silicon germanium epitaxial deposition process. Alternatively, the semiconductor material 160 could be silicon formed by a silicon epitaxial deposition process. The semiconductor material 160 may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. A CMP process may be performed to planarize the semiconductor material 160. The semiconductor material 160 may be referred to as raised source and drain features of the source and drain regions of the fin structure 115A and 115B. It should be noted that the fin template 135 in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B may also be considered as part of the raised source and drain features. Before or after forming the semiconductor material 160, implantation, diffusion, and/or annealing processes may be performed to form heavily doped source and drain (HDD) features in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B.

[0027] Conventional FinFET devices form raised source and drain features (for example, semiconductor material 160) on unmerged fins, such as the fins 120 as illustrated in FIG. 2. As technology nodes continually scale down, a width of the unmerged fins, such as the fins 120, continues to decrease, for example, to about 15 nm and below. It has been observed that the raised source and drain features grown on the exposed surfaces of the unmerged fins, such as along the width of the unmerged fins, provides insufficient strain as technology nodes decrease. For example, the strain provided by the raised source and drain features formed over unmerged fins tend to relax along the width direction of the unmerged fins. This can occur because of space between adjacent unmerged fins (in other words, free space). As the strain (stress) relaxes in the fin width direction, defects and dislocations may occur in the raised source and drain features, negatively effecting device performance. In contrast, to remedy the stress relaxation issues inherent in conventional FinFET devices, the disclosed method 10 merges fins 120 together to form the fin template 135 for FinFET device 100. The method 10 provides a self-aligned source/drain template growth scheme that can be easily implemented into integrated circuit processing and provide maximum raised source and drain features for enhancing FinFET device performance. In particular, the fin template 135 provides a planar-like source and drain area for forming the raised source/drain features in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B. This provides minimal stress relaxation along the fin width direction and achieves planar-like channel strain. The disclosed FinFET device 100 can thus provide maximum strain to the channels of the fin structures 115A and 115B with limited (or sometimes no) defects and/or dislocations.

[0028] The FinFET device 100 may include additional features, which may be formed by subsequent processing. For example, silicide features may be formed in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 115A and 115B. The silicide

features may be formed by a silicidation process, such as a self-aligned silicide (salicide) process. Various contacts/vias/lines and multilayer interconnect features (e.g., metal layers and interlayer dielectrics) may be formed over the substrate **110**, configured to connect the various features or structures of the FinFET device **100**. The additional features may provide electrical interconnection to the device **100** including the gate structure **150**. For example, a multilayer interconnection includes vertical interconnects, such as conventional vias or contacts, and horizontal interconnects, such as metal lines. The various interconnection features may implement various conductive materials including copper, tungsten, and/or silicide. In one example, a damascene and/or dual damascene process is used to form a copper related multilayer interconnection structure.

[0029] FIG. 7 is a flow chart of a method **30** for fabricating an integrated circuit device according to various aspects of the present disclosure. In the depicted embodiment, the method **30** fabricates an integrated circuit device that includes a fin-like field effect transistor (FinFET) device. The method **30** begins at block **32** where a semiconductor substrate is provided. At block **34**, a first fin structure and a second fin structure is formed over the semiconductor substrate. More specifically, a first material portion of the first and second fin structures is formed over the semiconductor substrate, and a second material portion of the first and second fin structures is formed over the first material portion. At block **36**, a gate structure is formed over a portion of the first and second fin structures. The gate structure traverses the first and second fin structures, separating a source region and a drain region of the first and second fin structures. A channel is defined between the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures. At block **38**, the second material portion is completely removed from the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures. At block **40**, the first material portions of the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures are merged together to form a fin template. At block **42**, a third material portion is formed over the fin template in the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures. The method **30** continues with block **44** where fabrication of the integrated circuit device is completed. Additional steps can be provided before, during, and after the method **30**, and some of the steps described can be replaced or eliminated for other embodiments of the method.

[0030] FIGS. 8A-8C, 9A-9C, 10A-10C, and 11A-11C provide various views of a FinFET device **200**, in portion or entirety, at various stages of fabrication according to the method **30** of FIG. 7. The term FinFET device refers to any fin-based transistor, such as a fin-based, multi-gate transistor. The FinFET device **200** may be included in a microprocessor, memory cell, and/or other integrated circuit device. In the depicted embodiment, the FinFET device **200** is a p-type metal-oxide-semiconductor (PMOS) FinFET device. FIGS. 8A-8C, 9A-9C, 10A-10C, and 11A-11C have been simplified for the sake of clarity to better understand the inventive concepts of the present disclosure. Additional features can be added in the FinFET device **200**, and some of the features described below can be replaced or eliminated in other embodiments of the FinFET device **200**.

[0031] FIG. 8A is a perspective view of the FinFET device **200**, FIG. 8B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **200** taken along line 8B-8B in FIG. 8A, and FIG. 8C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **200** taken along line 8C-8C in FIG. 8A. The

FinFET device **200** includes a substrate (wafer) **210**. In the depicted embodiment, the substrate **210** is a bulk silicon substrate. Alternatively or additionally, the substrate **210** includes an elementary semiconductor, such as silicon or germanium in a crystalline structure; a compound semiconductor, such as silicon carbide, gallium arsenic, gallium phosphide, indium phosphide, indium arsenide, and/or indium antimonide; or combinations thereof. Alternatively, the substrate **210** is a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) substrate. The SOI substrate can be fabricated using separation by implantation of oxygen (SIMOX), wafer bonding, and/or other suitable methods. The substrate **210** may include various doped regions and other suitable features.

[0032] The FinFET device **200** includes fin structures **215A** and **215B** that extend from the substrate **210**. In the depicted embodiment, the fin structures **215A** and **215B** include fin portions **220** and **230**. The fin portions **220** include silicon (Si), and the fin portions **230** include silicon germanium (SiGe). The SiGe concentration of the fin portion **230** may be represented by $\text{Si}_{1-x}\text{Ge}_x$, where x represents Ge composition in atomic percent. In the depicted embodiment, x is less than or equal to 1, and greater than or equal to 0. FIG. 8C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **200** taken along a channel of the fin structure **215A**, which depicts a source region S and a drain region D of the fin structure **215A**. A channel region C is defined between the source and drain regions. Fin structure **215B** similarly includes source, drain, and channel regions. It is noted that the term “fin structure” in the depicted embodiment refers to individual fins of the FinFET device **200**. However, the term “fin structure” may also refer to the fins collectively, and thus, fin structure may also refer collectively to fin structures **215A** and **215B**. Further, though the depicted embodiment illustrates two fins, the FinFET device **200** may include fewer or more fins depending on design requirements of the FinFET device **200**.

[0033] The fin structures **215A** and **215B**, including fin portions **220** and **230**, are formed by a suitable process. In one example, the fin structures **215A** and **215B** are formed by implementing a lithography and etching process to form the fin portion **220**, and implementing an epitaxial growth process to form the fin portion **230**. For example, beginning with the substrate **210**, a lithography and etching process forms trenches in the substrate **210**, thereby forming fin portions **220** (referred to as Si fin portions) of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**, which extend from the substrate **210**. The lithography process may include photoresist coating (e.g., spin-on coating), soft baking, mask aligning, exposure, post-exposure baking, developing the photoresist, rinsing, drying (e.g., hard baking), other suitable processes, or combinations thereof. For example, the fin portions **220** may be formed by forming a photoresist layer (resist) overlying the substrate **210**, exposing the resist to a pattern, performing a post-exposure bake process, and developing the resist to form a masking element including the resist. The masking element may then be used to etch the fin portions **220** into the silicon substrate **210**. The etching process may be a dry etching process, wet etching process, other suitable etching process, or combinations thereof. For example, the fin portions **220** may be etched into the substrate **210** using a reactive ion etch (RIE). Alternatively, the lithography process could be implemented or replaced by other methods, such as maskless photolithography, electron-beam writing, ion-beam writing, and/or

nanoimprint technology. The fin portions **220** may be formed by a DPL process, which is described above.

[0034] After the fin portions **220** are etched into the substrate **210**, an insulation layer can be formed over the substrate **210**, including over the fin portions **220**. The insulation layer fills the trenches in the substrate **210**. Portions of the insulation layer are then removed to form openings in the insulation layer that expose a top surface of the fin portions **220**. A semiconductor material can be epitaxially (epi) grown on the exposed surfaces of the fin portions **220** to form fin portions **230** of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**. The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., vapor-phase epitaxy (VPE) and/or ultra-high vacuum CVD (UHV-CVD)), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors, which interact with the composition of the fin portions **220** (in other words, interact with the Si fin portions **220**). In the depicted embodiment, the fin portions **230** include silicon germanium (SiGe) formed by a silicon germanium epitaxial deposition process. Alternatively, the fin portions **230** could comprise epitaxially grown silicon. The fin portions **230** may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. For example, an epi silicon fin portion may be doped with phosphorous (to form a Si:P epi layer). The doped epitaxial layer may have a gradient doping profile. A CMP process may be performed to planarize the fin portions **230**. Thereafter, the remaining insulation layer may be subjected to an etch back process, or a CMP process, thereby forming isolation features (such as isolation features **240**).

[0035] In another example, the fin structures **215A** and **215B** are formed by implementing a lithography and etching process to form the fin portion **220**, and implementing a condensation process to form the fin portion **230**. The condensation process may implement the methods described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/702,862, entitled Bottom-Notched SiGe FinFET Formation by Condensation Method, filed Feb. 9, 2010, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. For example, beginning with the substrate **210**, a lithography and etching process forms trenches in the substrate **210**, thereby forming fin portions **220** (referred to as Si fin portions) of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**, which extend from the substrate **210**. The lithography and etching process may be similar to that described above. Thereafter, an insulation layer can be formed over the substrate **210**, filling in the trenches. The insulation layer may be subjected to an etch back process to form isolation features (such as isolation features **240**). A semiconductor material is then epitaxially (epi) grown on the exposed fin portions **220**. For example, SiGe is grown on the exposed fin portions **220** by an epitaxial process, similar to the epitaxial processes described above. Thereafter, a SiGe condensation process causes Ge from the SiGe material to diffuse into fin portions **220** (Si fins), forming fin portions **230**. Thereafter, the isolation features may be subjected to an etch back process, or a CMP process.

[0036] Isolation features **240**, such as shallow trench isolation (STI) structures, surround the fin structures **215A** and **215B**, isolating the fin structures **215A** and **215B** from each other and other not-illustrated integrated circuit devices. The isolation features **240** may be formed by partially filling trenches surrounding the fin structures **215A** and **215B** with an insulating material, such as silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, other suitable material, or combinations

thereof. The filled trench may have a multi-layer structure, for example, a thermal oxide liner layer with silicon nitride filling the trench.

[0037] The FinFET device **200** includes a gate structure **250**. The gate structure **250** traverses the fin structures **215A** and **215B**, and in the depicted embodiment, is formed on a central portion of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**. The gate structure **250** may include a gate dielectric layer and a gate electrode. The gate dielectric layer includes a dielectric material, such as silicon oxide, high-k dielectric material, other suitable dielectric material, or combinations thereof. Examples of high-k dielectric material include HfO₂, HfSiO, HfSiON, HfTaO, HfTiO, HfZrO, zirconium oxide, aluminum oxide, hafnium dioxide-alumina (HfO₂—Al₂O₃) alloy, other suitable high-k dielectric materials, or combinations thereof. The gate electrode includes polysilicon and/or a metal including Al, Cu, Ti, Ta, W, Mo, TaN, NiSi, CoSi, TiN, WN, TiAl, TiAlN, TaCN, TaC, TaSiN, other conductive materials, or combinations thereof. The gate structure **250**, such as the gate electrode, may be formed in a gate first or gate last process. The gate structure **250** may include numerous other layers, for example, capping layers, interface layers, diffusion layers, barrier layers, hard mask layers, or combinations thereof.

[0038] The gate structure **250** is formed by a suitable process, including deposition, lithography patterning, and etching processes. The deposition processes include CVD, PVD, ALD, HDPCVD, MOCVD, RPCVD, PECVD, LPCVD, ALCVD, APCVD, plating, other suitable methods, or combinations thereof. The lithography patterning processes include photoresist coating (e.g., spin-on coating), soft baking, mask aligning, exposure, post-exposure baking, developing the photoresist, rinsing, drying (e.g., hard baking), other suitable processes, or combinations thereof. Alternatively, the lithography exposing process is implemented or replaced by other methods, such as maskless photolithography, electron-beam writing, and ion-beam writing. In yet another alternative, the lithography patterning process could implement nanoimprint technology. The etching processes include dry etching, wet etching, and/or other etching methods.

[0039] Spacers (not illustrated) may be disposed on the sidewalls of the gate structure **250**, such as along the gate electrode. The spacers may be similar to spacers **152** described above with reference to FIG. 2. For example, the spacers include a dielectric material, such as silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, other suitable material, or combinations thereof. The spacers may include a multi-layer structure, such as a multi-layer structure including a silicon nitride layer and a silicon oxide layer. The spacers are formed by a suitable process to a suitable thickness. For example, spacers may be formed by depositing silicon nitride and silicon oxide layers and then dry etching the layers to form the spacers. Before or after the spacers are formed, implantation, diffusion, and/or annealing processes may be performed to form LDD features in the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**.

[0040] FIG. 9A is a perspective view of the FinFET device **200**, FIG. 9B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **200** taken along line 9B-9B in FIG. 9A, and FIG. 9C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **200** taken along line 9C-9C in FIG. 9A. In FIGS. 9A-9C, the fin portions **230** are completely removed from the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**. More specifically, an etching process completely removes the

fin portions 230 from the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B, exposing the fin portions 220. The etching process is a dry etching process, wet etching process, other etching process, or combinations thereof. In an example, the etching process uses a mixture of HBr, Cl_2 , and O_2 . Alternatively, other etching process mixtures may be used to effectively remove the fin portions 230. A radio frequency (RF) bias power of the etching process may be about 30 Watts (W) to about 400 W. A lithography and etching process may be implemented to provide a protective layer over various features of the FinFET device 200 (for example, the gate structure 250 and/or isolation features 240) to prevent the protected features from being affected by the etching process. As illustrated in FIG. 9C, the fin portion 230 remains in the channel of the fin structures 215A and 215B, confined by the gate structure 250. The removed fin portions 230 form trenches in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B. The trench sidewalls may be defined by fin portions 220, isolation features 240, remaining fin portion 230 in the channel region, and/or protective layer (if formed). In the depicted embodiment, a depth (d_1) of the trenches extends from an initial top surface of the fin portions 230 to a top, exposed surface of the fin portion 220. Where a protective layer is provided, d_1 may extend from a top surface of the protective layer to the top, exposed surface of the fin portion 220. Other means of determining the trench depth may be used.

[0041] FIG. 10A is a perspective view of the FinFET device 200, FIG. 10B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 200 taken along line 10B-10B in FIG. 10A, and FIG. 10C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 200 taken along line 10C-10C in FIG. 10A. In FIGS. 10A-10C, the fin portions 220 in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B are merged together to form a fin template 280. For example, the fin template 280 may be formed by a process similar to that described above with reference to FIG. 5. In the depicted embodiment, a semiconductor material is epitaxially (epi) grown on the exposed fin portions 220 in the source and drain regions, until the fin portions 220 of the fin structures 215A and 215B are merged together to form the fin template 280. The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., VPE and/or UHV-CVD), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors. In the depicted embodiment, the fin template 280 is silicon formed by a silicon epitaxial deposition process. Alternatively, the fin template 280 could be silicon germanium (SiGe) formed by a silicon germanium epitaxial deposition process. The fin template 280 may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. For example, an epi silicon fin portion may be doped with phosphorous (to form a Si:P epi layer). The doped epitaxial layer may have a gradient doping profile. A CMP process may be performed to planarize the fin template 280. Though the fin template 280 and fin portions 220 are depicted separately, it is understood that "fin template" can refer to the newly grown epi semiconductor material alone (depicted as fin template 280) or the newly grown epi semiconductor material combined with the initial fin portions (depicted as fin portions 220). Similar to the fin template 135 described above with reference to FIGS. 2-6, the fin template 280 can minimize stress relaxation along a width of the fin structures 215A

and 215B, maximizing strain to the channels of fin structures 215A and 215B and enhancing device performance.

[0042] FIG. 11A is a perspective view of the FinFET device 200, FIG. 11B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 200 taken along line 11B-11B in FIG. 11A, and FIG. 11C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 200 taken along line 11C-11C in FIG. 11A. In FIGS. 11A-11C, a fin portion 285 is formed over the fin template 280, providing the fin structures 215A and 215B with fin portion 285. For example, a semiconductor material is epitaxially (epi) grown on the fin template 285. The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., VPE and/or UHV-CVD), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors, which interact with the composition of the fin template 280 (in other words, interact with the Si fin template 280). In the depicted embodiment, the fin portion 285 is silicon germanium (SiGe) formed by a silicon germanium epitaxial deposition process. The SiGe concentration of the fin portion 285 is represented by $\text{Si}_{1-y}\text{Ge}_y$, where y represents Ge composition in atomic percent. In the depicted embodiment, y is less than or equal to 1, and greater than or equal to 0. The fin portion 285 may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. The doped epitaxial layer may have a gradient doping profile. A CMP process may be performed to planarize the fin portion 285. Further, before or after forming the fin portion 285, implantation, diffusion, and/or annealing processes may be performed to form HDD features in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B.

[0043] As illustrated in FIGS. 11A-11C, the fin structures 215A and 215B include fin portions 220, fin portions 230, fin template 280, and fin portions 285. More specifically, the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B include fin portions 220, fin template 280, and fin portions 285. The channel of the fin structures 215A and 215B includes fin portion 220 and fin portion 230. The fin template 280 and/or fin portions 285 in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B are alternatively referred to as strained source and drain features of the FinFET device 200. In the depicted embodiment, fin portions 220 include Si, fin template 280 includes Si, fin portions 230 include $\text{Si}_{1-x}\text{Ge}_x$, and fin portions 285 include $\text{Si}_{1-y}\text{Ge}_y$. The fin portions 285 provide compressive stress to the channel of the fin structures 215A and 215B, enhancing hole mobility in the PMOS FinFET device 200. In the depicted embodiment, y is independent of x in PMOS FinFET device 200. Accordingly, the fin portions 285 may include any Ge concentration and still achieve the compressive strain desired for PMOS FinFET devices. By forming the fin portions 285 over the Si fin portions (fin template 280), compressive strain is achieved regardless of the SiGe concentration of the channel. For example, compressive strain from the Si fin template 280 on the $\text{Si}_{1-y}\text{Ge}_y$ fin portions 285 cause the fin portions 285 to push/stress the channel/fin portions 230, providing uniaxial stress to the channel of the FinFET device 200.

[0044] The FinFET device 200 may include additional features, which may be formed by subsequent processing. For example, silicide features may be formed in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B, specifically on fin portions 285. The silicide features may be formed by a silicidation process, such as a self-aligned silicide (salicide)

process. Various contacts/vias/lines and multilayer interconnect features (e.g., metal layers and interlayer dielectrics) may be formed over the substrate 210, configured to connect the various features or structures of the FinFET device 200. The additional features may provide electrical interconnection to the device 200 including the gate structures 250. For example, a multilayer interconnection includes vertical interconnects, such as conventional vias or contacts, and horizontal interconnects, such as metal lines. The various interconnection features may implement various conductive materials including copper, tungsten, and/or silicide. In one example, a damascene and/or dual damascene process is used to form a copper related multilayer interconnection structure.

[0045] FIG. 12 is a flow chart of a method 50 for fabricating an integrated circuit device according to various aspects of the present disclosure. In the depicted embodiment, the method 50 fabricates an integrated circuit device that includes a FinFET device. The method 50 begins at block 52 where a semiconductor substrate is provided. At block 54, a first fin structure and a second fin structure is formed over the semiconductor substrate. More specifically, a first material portion of the first and second fin structures is formed over the semiconductor substrate, and a second material portion of the first and second fin structures is formed over the first material portion. At block 56, a gate structure is formed over a portion of the first and second fin structures. The gate structure traverses the first and second fin structures, separating a source region and a drain region of the first and second fin structures. A channel is defined between the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures. At block 58, the second material portion is partially removed from the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures. At block 60, remaining second material portions in the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures are merged together to form a fin template. At block 62, a third material portion is formed over the fin template in the source and drain regions of the first and second fin structures. The method 600 continues with block 64 where fabrication of the integrated circuit device is completed. Additional steps can be provided before, during, and after the method 50, and some of the steps described can be replaced or eliminated for other embodiments of the method.

[0046] FIGS. 13A-13C, 14A-14C, 15A-15C, and 16A-16C provide various views of a FinFET device 400, in portion or entirety, at various stages of fabrication according to the method 50 of FIG. 12. The FinFET device 400 may be included in a microprocessor, memory cell, and/or other integrated circuit device. In the depicted embodiment, the FinFET device 400 is an NMOS FinFET device. The FinFET device 400 of 13A-13C, 14A-14C, 15A-15C, and 16A-16C is similar in many respects to the FinFET device 200 of FIGS. 8A-8C, 9A-9C, 10A-10C, and 11A-11C. Accordingly, similar features in FIGS. 8A-8C, 9A-9C, 10A-10C, 11A-11C, 13A-13C, 14A-14C, 15A-15C, and 16A-16C are identified by the same reference numerals for clarity and simplicity. FIGS. 13A-13C, 14A-14C, 15A-15C, and 16A-16C have been simplified for the sake of clarity to better understand the inventive concepts of the present disclosure. Additional features can be added in the FinFET device 400, and some of the features described below can be replaced or eliminated in other embodiments of the FinFET device 400.

[0047] FIG. 13A is a perspective view of the FinFET device 400, FIG. 13B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 400 taken along line 13B-13B in FIG. 13A,

and FIG. 13C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 400 taken along line 13C-13C in FIG. 13A. The FinFET device 400 includes the substrate 210, fin structures 215A and 215B including fin portions 220 and 230, isolation features 240, and gate structure 250. The fin structures 215A and 215B include a source region, a drain region, and a channel defined between the source and drain regions.

[0048] FIG. 14A is a perspective view of the FinFET device 400, FIG. 14B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 400 taken along line 14B-14B in FIG. 14A, and FIG. 14C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 400 taken along line 14C-14C in FIG. 14A. In FIGS. 14A-14C, the fin portion 230 is removed from the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B. In contrast to the FinFET device 200 of FIGS. 9A-9C, in the depicted embodiment, an etching process partially removes the fin portions 230 from the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B. Accordingly, some of the fin portions 230 remains in the source and drain regions. The etching process is a dry etching process, wet etching process, other etching process, or combinations thereof. In an example, the etching process uses a mixture of HBr, Cl₂, and O₂. Alternatively, other etching process mixtures may be used to partially remove fin portions 230. A radio frequency (RF) bias power of the etching process may be about 30 Watts (W) to about 400 W. A lithography and etching process may be implemented to provide a protective layer over various features of the FinFET device 400 (for example, the gate structure 250 and/or isolation features 240) to prevent the protected features from being affected by the etching process. As illustrated in FIG. 14C, the fin portion 230 remains in the channel of the fin structures 215A and 215B, confined by the gate structure 250, and some of the fin portions 230 remains in the source and drain regions. The removed fin portions 230 can form trenches in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B. The trench sidewalls may be defined by remaining fin portions 230 (in the source, drain, and channel regions), isolation features 240, and/or protective layer (if formed). In the depicted embodiment, a depth (d₂) of the trenches extends from an initial top surface of the fin portions 230 to a top, exposed surface of the fin portions 230. Where a protective layer is provided, d₂ may extend from a top surface of the protective layer to the top, exposed surface of the fin portions 230. The depth d₁ indicates the depth of the trenches in the source and drain regions of the FinFET device 200. Considering d₁ and d₂, the FinFET device 200 has a deeper trench (or recess) than the FinFET device 400. As will be described further below, the trench depth can be controlled to achieve various source and drain features for the fin structures, such that different kinds of channel strain can be achieved for different FinFET devices.

[0049] FIG. 15A is a perspective view of the FinFET device 400, FIG. 15B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 400 taken along line 15B-15B in FIG. 15A, and FIG. 15C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device 400 taken along line 15C-15C in FIG. 15A. In FIGS. 15A-15C, the fin portions 230 remaining in the source and drain regions of the fin structures 215A and 215B are merged together to form a fin template 290. For example, the fin template 290 may be formed by a process similar to that described above with reference to FIGS. 10A-10C. In the depicted embodiment, a semiconductor material is epitaxially (epi) grown on the fin portions 230 remaining in the source and drain regions. The semiconductor material is epi-

taxially grown until the fin portions **230** of the fin structures **215A** and **215B** are merged together to form the fin template **290**. Though the fin template **290** and fin portions **230** remaining in the source and drain regions are depicted separately, “fin template” may refer to the newly grown epi semiconductor material alone (depicted as fin template **290**) or the newly grown epi semiconductor material combined with the initial fin portions (depicted as fin portions **230** remaining in the source and drain regions). The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., VPE and/or UHV-CVD), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors. In the depicted embodiment, the fin template **290** includes silicon germanium (SiGe) formed by a silicon germanium epitaxial deposition process. Alternatively, the fin template **290** could include epitaxially grown silicon. The fin template **290** may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. The doped epitaxial layer may have a gradient doping profile. A CMP process may be performed to planarize the fin template **290**. Similar to the fin template **135** described above with reference to FIGS. 2-6, the fin template **290** can minimize stress relaxation along a width of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**, maximizing strain to the channels of fin structures **215A** and **215B** and enhancing device performance.

[0050] FIG. 16A is a perspective view of the FinFET device **400**, FIG. 16B is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **400** taken along line 16B-16B in FIG. 16A, and FIG. 16C is a diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the FinFET device **400** taken along line 16C-16C in FIG. 16A. In FIGS. 16A-16C, a fin portion **295** is formed over the fin template **290**, providing the fin structures **215A** and **215B** with the fin portion **295**. For example, a semiconductor material is epitaxially (epi) grown on the fin template **290**. The epitaxy process may use CVD deposition techniques (e.g., VPE and/or UHV-CVD), molecular beam epitaxy, and/or other suitable processes. The epitaxy process may use gaseous and/or liquid precursors. In the depicted embodiment, the fin portion **295** includes epitaxially grown SiGe. The SiGe concentration of the fin portion **295** may be represented by $\text{Si}_{1-z}\text{Ge}_z$, where z represents Ge composition in atomic percent. In the depicted embodiment, z is less than or equal to 1, and greater than or equal to 0. Alternatively, the fin portion **295** could include epitaxially grown Si. The fin portion **295** may be doped during deposition (growth) by adding impurities to the source material of the epitaxy process or subsequent to its deposition growth process by an ion implantation process. The doped epitaxial layer may have a gradient doping profile. A CMP process may be performed to planarize the fin portion **295**. Further, before or after forming the fin portion **295**, implantation, diffusion, and/or annealing processes may be performed to form HDD features in the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**.

[0051] As illustrated in FIGS. 16A-16C, the fin structures **215A** and **215B** include fin portions **220**, fin portions **230**, fin template **290**, and fin portions **295**. More specifically, the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B** include fin portions **220**, **230**, **290**, and **295**. The channel of the fin structures **215A** and **215B** includes fin portions **220** and **230**. The fin portions **230**, **290**, and/or **295** in the source and drain regions are alternatively referred to as strained source and drain features of the FinFET device **400**. In the

depicted embodiment, fin portions **220** include Si, fin portions **230** and **290** include $\text{Si}_{1-x}\text{Ge}_x$, and fin portions **295** include $\text{Si}_{1-z}\text{Ge}_z$, where z is less than x . The fin portions **230**, **290**, and **295** provide tensile stress to the channel of the fins structures **215A** and **215B**, enhancing electron mobility in the channel of the NMOS FinFET device **400**.

[0052] The FinFET device **400** may include additional features, which may be formed by subsequent processing. For example, silicide features may be formed in the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B**, specifically on fin portions **295**. The silicide features may be formed by a silicidation process, such as a self-aligned silicide (salicide) process. Various contacts/vias/lines and multilayer interconnect features (e.g., metal layers and interlayer dielectrics) may be formed over the substrate **210**, configured to connect the various features or structures of the FinFET device **400**. The additional features may provide electrical interconnection to the device **400** including the gate structure **250**. For example, a multilayer interconnection includes vertical interconnects, such as conventional vias or contacts, and horizontal interconnects, such as metal lines. The various interconnection features may implement various conductive materials including copper, tungsten, and/or silicide. In one example, a damascene and/or dual damascene process is used to form a copper related multilayer interconnection structure.

[0053] Thus, the present disclosure provides integrated circuit devices that can exhibit maximized strain to their channels, and methods for fabricating the integrated circuit devices with maximized strain. Maximized strain can be achieved by incorporating a fin template in the integrated circuit devices. It is understood that different embodiments may have different advantages, and that no particular advantage is necessarily required of any embodiment. It should also be noted that the FinFET device **100**, PMOS FinFET device **200**, and/or NMOS FinFET device **400** can be fabricated in a single integrated circuit device using the methods **10**, **30**, and **50** described above. Referring to FinFET devices **200** and **400**, by controlling source and drain trench depth (for example, d_1 and d_2) for the epi source and drain features, strain for both PMOS and NMOS FinFET devices can be achieved and optimized. For example, as described above, fin portions **230** are completely removed from the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B** in FinFET device **200**, yet are partially removed from the source and drain regions of the fin structures **215A** and **215B** in FinFET device **400**. This provides different starting substrates for forming the fin templates, such that different types of strain can be achieved. Accordingly, the trench depth can be tuned to independently optimize performance of each FinFET device in an integrated circuit device. Further, the fin templates in the PMOS and NMOS FinFET devices can minimize stress relaxation along a width of the fin structures.

[0054] The present disclosure provides for many different embodiments. For example, the present disclosure provides methods for fabricating an integrated circuit device. In an embodiment, a method includes providing a semiconductor substrate; forming a plurality of fins over the semiconductor substrate, the fins being isolated from each other by an isolation structure; forming a gate structure over a portion of each fin, such that the gate structure traverses the plurality of fins; forming a fin template on exposed portions of the fins; and epitaxially (epi) growing a semiconductor material over the fin template. Forming the fin template can include epitaxially growing another semiconductor material on exposed portions

of each of the fins, such that the fins are merged together. The method can further include etching back the isolation structure before forming the fin template. The method can further include forming spacers on sidewalls of the gate structure. The etching back of the isolation structure may use an etching process that selectively etches the isolation structure. In an example, epitaxially growing the semiconductor material on exposed portions of the fins includes epitaxially growing silicon, and epitaxially growing the semiconductor material over the fin template includes epitaxially growing silicon germanium.

[0055] The method may further include etching back the fin template before epitaxially growing the semiconductor material over the fin template. In an example, the gate structure separates a source region and a drain region of each of the fins, wherein a channel is defined between the source and drain regions of each fin. Etching back the fin template may include exposing a portion of the channel of each of the fins. In an example, forming the plurality of fins includes forming the fins having a first material portion and a second material portion, each of the fins including a source region and a drain region separated by the gate structure, wherein the source and drain regions of each fin define a channel therebetween. The method may include completely removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the fins before forming the fin template and/or partially removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the fins before forming the fin template.

[0056] In another embodiment, a method includes providing a semiconductor substrate; forming a first fin structure and a second fin structure over the semiconductor substrate; forming a gate structure over a portion of the first and second fin structures, such that the gate structure traverses the first and second fin structures; epitaxially growing a first semiconductor material on exposed portions of the first and second fin structures, such that the exposed portions of the first and second fin structures are merged together; and epitaxially growing a second semiconductor material over the first semiconductor material. The method may further include forming an isolation structure between the first and second fin structures, such that the first and second fin structures are isolated from one another, and etching back the isolation structure before epitaxially growing the first semiconductor material. The method may include etching back the first semiconductor material before epitaxially growing the second semiconductor material. In an example, the epitaxially growing the first semiconductor material includes epitaxially growing silicon, and the epitaxially growing the second semiconductor material includes epitaxially growing silicon germanium. The method may include removing a portion of the first and second fin structures before epitaxially growing the first semiconductor material. In an example, the first and second fins include a first material portion and a second material portion, the first and second fins each have a source region and a drain region separated by the gate structure, and the source and drain regions of each fin defining a channel therebetween. In this example, removing the portion of the first and second fins may include completely removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the first and second fins and/or partially removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the first and second fins.

[0057] An integrated circuit device is formed by the methods described herein. In an embodiment, the integrated circuit device includes a semiconductor substrate; a first fin and a

second fin disposed over the semiconductor substrate; an isolation structure disposed between the first and second fins, such that the first and second fins are isolated from each other; a gate structure disposed over a portion of the first and second fins, the gate structure traversing the first and second fins, thereby separating a source region and a drain region of the first and second fins; a first epitaxial semiconductor layer disposed over another portion of the first and second fins; and a second epitaxial semiconductor layer disposed over the first epitaxial semiconductor layer, wherein the source and drain regions of the first and second fins include a portion of the first and second epitaxial semiconductor layers. The source and drain regions of each of the first and second fins defines a channel therebetween. The channel may be in contact with the first and second epitaxial semiconductor layers. In an example, the first and second fins include silicon, the first epitaxial semiconductor layer includes silicon, and the second epitaxial semiconductor layer includes silicon germanium.

[0058] The foregoing outlines features of several embodiments so that those skilled in the art may better understand the aspects of the present disclosure. Those skilled in the art should appreciate that they may readily use the present disclosure as a basis for designing or modifying other processes and structures for carrying out the same purposes and/or achieving the same advantages of the embodiments introduced herein. Those skilled in the art should also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure, and that they may make various changes, substitutions, and alterations herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

providing a semiconductor substrate;

forming a plurality of fins over the semiconductor substrate, the fins being isolated from each other by an isolation structure;

forming a gate structure over a portion of each fin, such that the gate structure traverses the plurality of fins;

forming a fin template on exposed portions of the fins; and epitaxially (epi) growing a semiconductor material over the fin template.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the forming the fin template includes epitaxially growing another semiconductor material on exposed portions of each of the fins, such that the fins are merged together.

3. The method of claim 2 further including etching back the isolation structure before forming the fin template.

4. The method of claim 3 further including:

forming spacers on sidewalls of the gate structure; and wherein the etching back the isolation structure includes using an etching process that selectively etches the isolation structure.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein:

the epitaxially growing the semiconductor material on exposed portions of the fins includes epitaxially growing silicon; and

the epitaxially growing the semiconductor material over the fin template includes epitaxially growing silicon germanium.

6. The method of claim 1 further including etching back the fin template before epitaxially growing the semiconductor material over the fin template.

7. The method of claim **6** wherein:
the gate structure separates a source region and a drain region of each of the fins, the source and drain regions of each fin defining a channel therebetween; and
the etching back the fin template includes exposing a portion of the channel of each of the fins.

8. The method of claim **1** wherein the forming the plurality of fins includes forming the fins having a first material portion and a second material portion, each of the fins including a source region and a drain region separated by the gate structure, the source and drain regions of each fin defining a channel therebetween.

9. The method of claim **8** further including completely removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the fins before forming the fin template.

10. The method of claim **8** further including partially removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the fins before forming the fin template.

11. A method comprising:
providing a semiconductor substrate;
forming a first fin structure and a second fin structure over the semiconductor substrate;
forming a gate structure over a portion of the first and second fin structures, such that the gate structure traverses the first and second fin structures;
epitaxially growing a first semiconductor material on exposed portions of the first and second fin structures, such that the exposed portions of the first and second fin structures are merged together; and
epitaxially growing a second semiconductor material over the first semiconductor material.

12. The method of claim **11** further including:
forming an isolation structure between the first and second fin structures, such that the first and second fin structures are isolated from one another; and
etching back the isolation structure before epitaxially growing the first semiconductor material.

13. The method of claim **11** further including etching back the first semiconductor material before epitaxially growing the second semiconductor material.

14. The method of claim **11** wherein:
the epitaxially growing the first semiconductor material includes epitaxially growing silicon; and
the epitaxially growing the second semiconductor material includes epitaxially growing silicon germanium.

15. The method of claim **11** further including removing a portion of the first and second fin structures before epitaxially growing the first semiconductor material.

16. The method of claim **15** wherein:
the first and second fins include a first material portion and a second material portion, the first and second fins each having a source region and a drain region separated by the gate structure, the source and drain regions of each fin defining a channel therebetween; and
the removing the portion of the first and second fins includes completely removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the first and second fins.

17. The method of claim **15** wherein:
the first and second fins include a first material portion and a second material portion, the first and second fins each having a source region and a drain region separated by the gate structure, the source and drain regions of each fin defining a channel therebetween; and
the removing the portion of the first and second fins includes partially removing the second material portion from the source and drain regions of the first and second fins.

18. A integrated circuit device comprising:
a semiconductor substrate;
a first fin and a second fin disposed over the semiconductor substrate;
an isolation structure disposed between the first and second fins, such that the first and second fins are isolated from each other;
a gate structure disposed over a portion of the first and second fins, the gate structure traversing the first and second fins, thereby separating a source region and a drain region of the first and second fins;
a first epitaxial semiconductor layer disposed over another portion of the first and second fins; and
a second epitaxial semiconductor layer disposed over the first epitaxial semiconductor layer, wherein the source and drain regions of the first and second fins include a portion of the first and second epitaxial semiconductor layers.

19. The integrated circuit device of claim **18** wherein the source and drain regions of each of the first and second fins defines a channel therebetween, the channel being in contact with the first and second epitaxial semiconductor layers.

20. The integrated circuit device of claim **18** wherein:
the first and second fins include silicon;
the first epitaxial semiconductor layer includes silicon; and
the second epitaxial semiconductor layer includes silicon germanium.

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