Quantum Well Infrared Photodetectors (QWIP)

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There has been a lot of interest in III-V long wavelength detectors in the $\lambda = 8$ - $12 \, \mu m$ spectral range as alternatives to HgCdTe.\textsuperscript{1-6} Recently high performance quantum well infrared photodetectors (QWIP) have been demonstrated. They have a responsivity of $R = 1.2 \, A/W$, and a detectivity $D^*_\lambda = 2 \times 10^{10} \, \text{cm Hz}^{1/2} / \text{W}$ at 68 K for a QWIP with a cutoff wavelength of $\lambda_c = 10.7 \, \mu m$ and a $R = 1.0 \, A/W$, and $D^*_\lambda = 2 \times 10^{10} \, \text{cm Hz}^{1/2} / \text{W}$ at $T = 77 \, K$ for $\lambda_c = 8.4 \, \mu m$. These detectors consist of 50 periods of MBE grown layers doped $n = 1 \times 10^{18} \, \text{cm}^{-3}$ having GaAs quantum well widths of $40 \, \AA$ and barrier widths of $500 \, \AA$ of Al$_x$Ga$_{1-x}$As.

Due to the well-established GaAs growth and processing techniques these detectors have the potential for large, highly uniform, low cost, high performance arrays as well as monolithic integration with GaAs electronics, high speed and radiation hardness.

Our latest results on the transport physics, device performance and arrays will be discussed.

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QWIP

Research
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LWIR GaAs Quantum Well Detectors

Esaki, Sakaki
Smith, Chiu, Margalit, Yariv, Cho
Coon, Karunasiri
Goosen, Lyon
Capasso, Mohammed, Cho
Kastalsky, Duffield, Allen, Harbison
Janousek, Daugherty, Bloss, Rosenbluth,
O’Loughlin, Kauter, DeLuccia, Perry
Woodall
Wu, Sato, Wen
Maserjian
Döhler
Mii, Karunasiri, Wang, Bai
Abstreiter et al.
MATERIAL FOR 10 \( \mu \text{m} \) DETECTORS
HgCdTe DETECTORS

• DIFFICULT GROWTH AND PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY
• POOR UNIFORMITY OF ARRAYS
• LOW QUALITY CdTe SUBSTRATES

GaAs DOPED QUANTUM WELL DETECTORS

• PERFORMANCE COMPARABLE TO HgCdTe
• MATURE GROWTH AND PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY
• EXCELLENT 3” GaAs SUBSTRATES
• MONOLITHIC INTEGRATION WITH GaAs ELECTRONICS

MONOLITHICALLY INTEGRATED
GaAs QUANTUM WELL DETECTOR ARRAY
AND IMAGE PROCESSING ELECTRONICS

10 \( \mu \text{m} \) RADIATION
VERTICALLY INTEGRATED GaAs QUANTUM WELL INFRARED SPECTROMETER

INFRARED RADIATION

RESPONSIVITY

WAVELENGTH $\lambda$ (\(\mu\text{m}\))

$\lambda_1$

$\lambda_2$

$\lambda_3$

SUBSTRATE

GaAs WELL

Al$_{0.34}$Ga$_{0.66}$As BARRIER

40 Å

300 Å

40 Å GaAs WELL
$T = 77\, K$

$V_b = 3\, V$

$L_b = 500\, \text{Å}$

$T = 77\, K$

Normalized Responsivity, $R$

Responsivity $R (A/W)$
DARK CURRENT CALCULATION

\[ n(V) = \frac{m^*}{\pi \hbar^2 L_p} \int_{E_0}^{\infty} f(E) T(E) dE \]

\[ E > E_b \text{ Thermionic} \]

\[ E < E_b \text{ Tunneling} \]

\[ I_D = nevA \]
\[ \lambda_c = 10.7 \, \mu m \]
\[ D^* = 1 \times 10^{10} \, \text{cm} \sqrt{\text{Hz}} / \text{W} \]
\[ T = 68 \, \text{K} \]

\[ \lambda_c = 10.0 \, \mu m \]
\[ D^*(\text{theory}) > 10^{10} \, \text{cm} \sqrt{\text{Hz}} / \text{W} \]
\[ T = 77 \, \text{K} \]
a) ZERO BIAS
b) FORWARD BIAS
c) REVERSE BIAS
Optical Gain

\[ g = \frac{\tau_L}{\tau_T} = \frac{L}{\ell} \]
n+ GaAs
0.5 μm CONTACT LAYER

2.8V

Au-Ge CONTACTS

SEMI-INSULATING GaAs SUBSTRATE

WAVELENGTH (μm)

RESPONSIVITY (A/W)

T = 25K

20 QW @ 2.8V

2 QW @ 0.4V

WAVELENGTH (μm)
NOISE EQUIVALENT TEMPERATURE CHANGE

\[ \text{NE\Delta T} = \frac{(A\Delta f)^{1/2}}{D^* (dP_b/dT) \sin^2(\theta/2)} \]

\[ A = (50 \, \mu\text{m})^2 \]

\[ \Delta f = 60 \, \text{Hz} \]

\[ f/2 \text{ optics (} \theta/2 = 14^\circ \) \]

\[ D^* = 1 \times 10^{10} \, \text{cm} \sqrt{\text{Hz}}/\text{W} \]

\[ \text{NE\Delta T} = 0.01 \, \text{K} \]
ARRAY NONUNIFORMITY

To Obtain Background Limited Array Performance

\[ U < \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} \]

\( U \) = uniformity

\( N \) = number of photoelectrons

\( N = 10^6 \Rightarrow U < 0.1\% \)

\[ (\text{NEAT})_U = \frac{T_B^2 \lambda U}{1.44} \]

\( T_B = 295 \text{ K}, \lambda = 10 \mu\text{m}, U = 0.1\% \)

\[ (\text{NEAT})_U = 0.06 \text{ K} \]
$T = 77K$

$37 = 95\%$
64 X 64 ARRAY 50 μm PIXELS
Conclusions

- Demonstrated detectors having $\lambda_c = 4$–13.5 $\mu m$
- Spectral width $\Delta \nu / \nu = 13\% – 36\%$
- $D_{BB} = 1 \times 10^{10} cm \sqrt{Hz} / W$ $T = 68 K$ $\lambda_c = 10.7 \mu m$
- $D_{BB} = 3 \times 10^{10} cm \sqrt{Hz} / W$ $T = 77 K$ $\lambda_c = 8.4 \mu m$
- $D_{BB} = 1 \times 10^{13} cm \sqrt{Hz} / W$ $T < 40 K$ $\lambda_c = 10.7 \mu m$
- $D^*$ sufficiently large (arrays uniformity limited)
- Calculated dark current (thermionic, tunneling)
- Hot electron continuum transport resonances
- High speed $\tau < 200$ psec
- Optical gain
- Graded barrier tunable spectral response
- Demonstrated grating detectors
- High uniformity
- Large arrays
- Camera demonstration