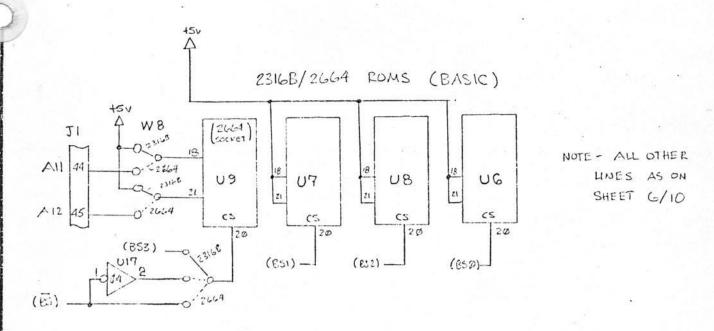


2114 - RAM CHIPS

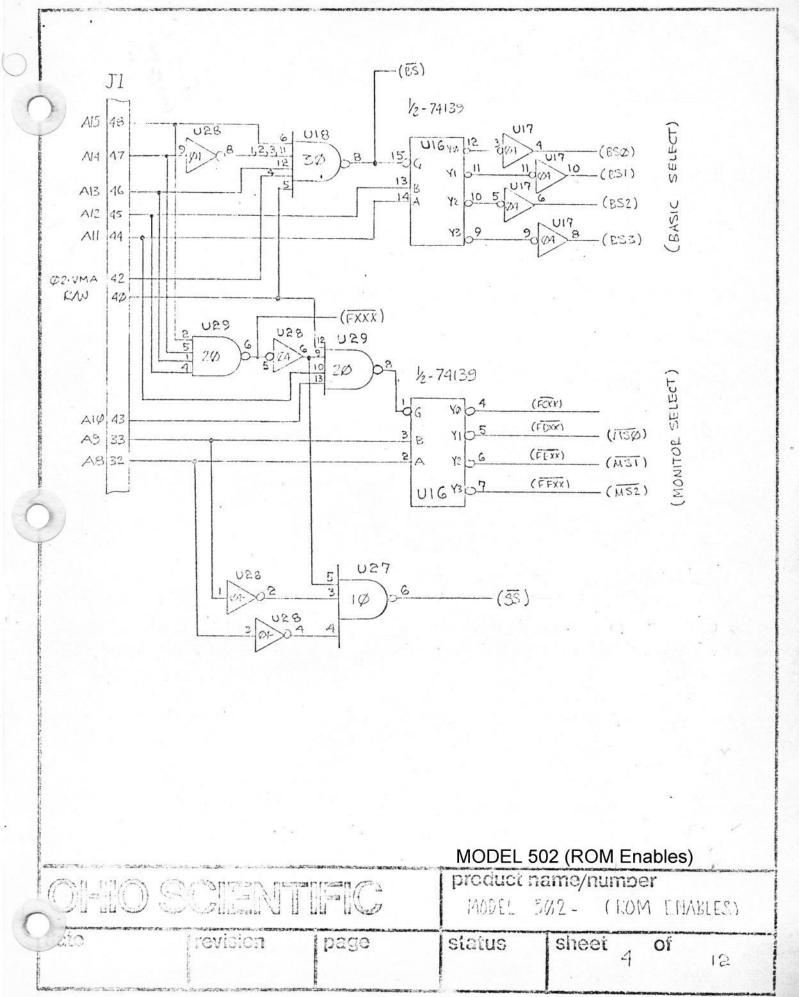
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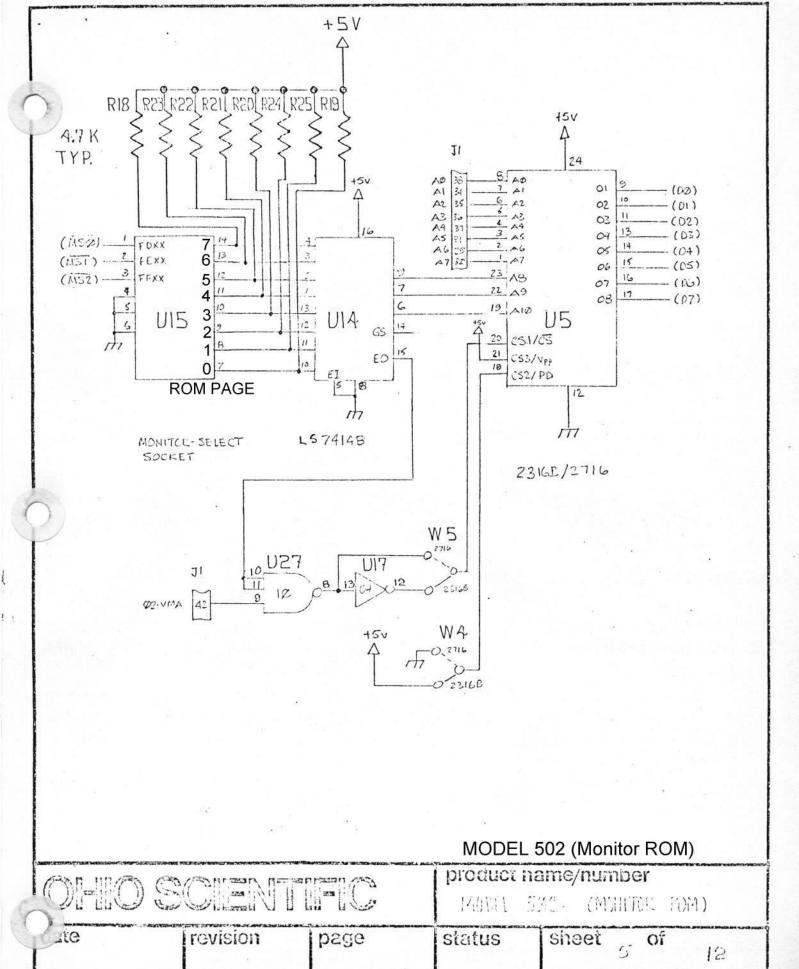
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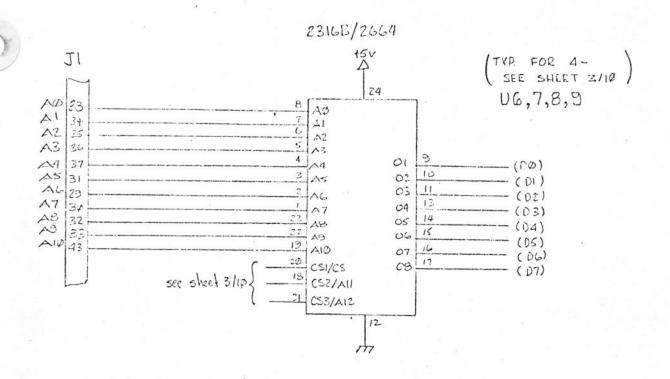


MODEL 502 (RAM & ROM array)

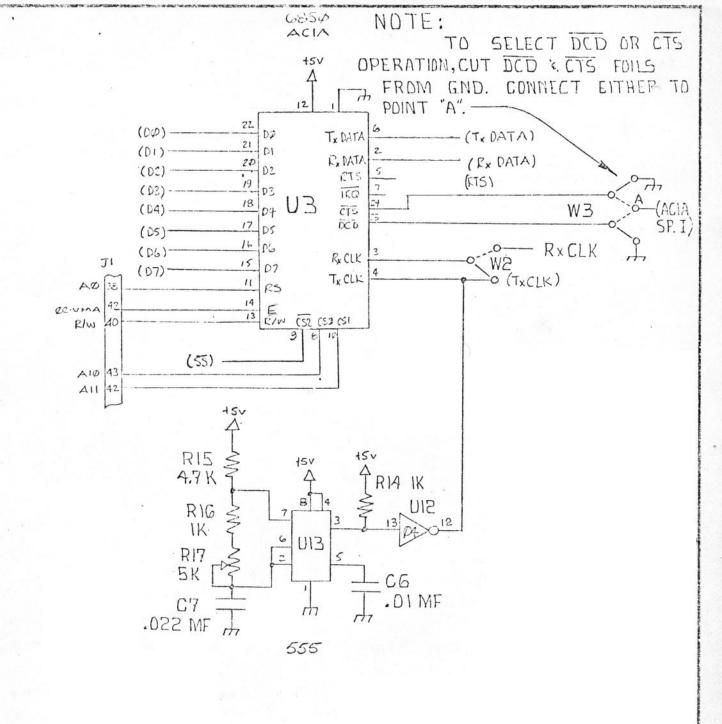
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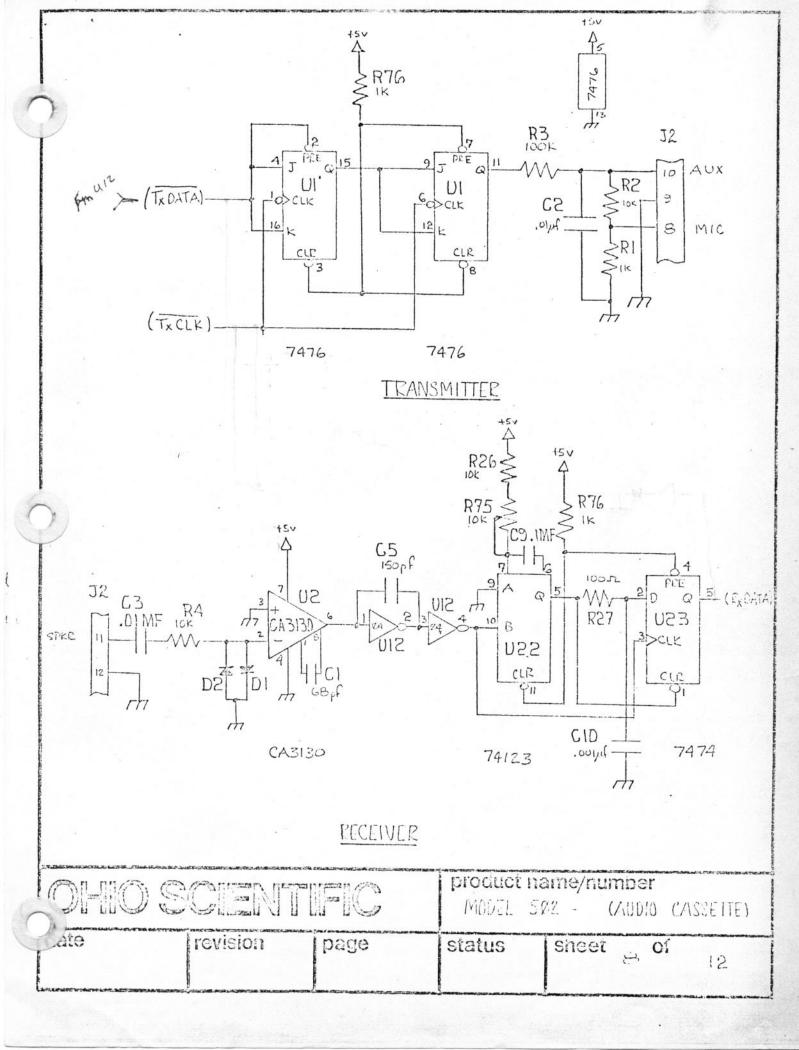


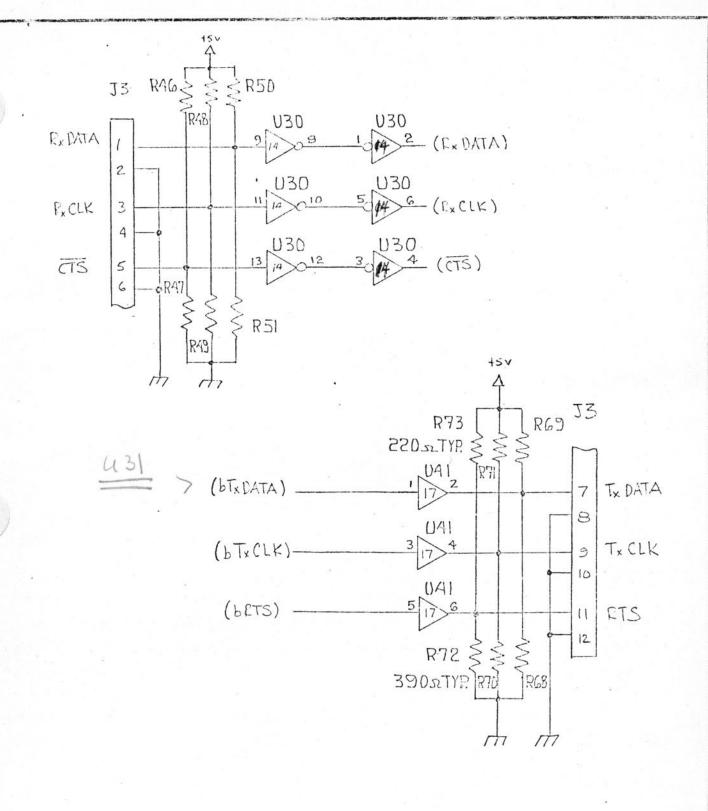


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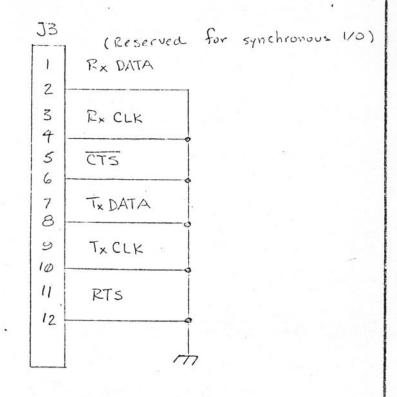


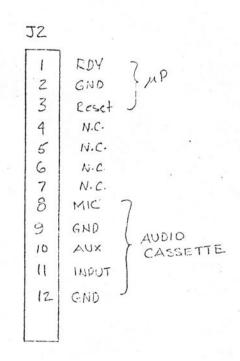
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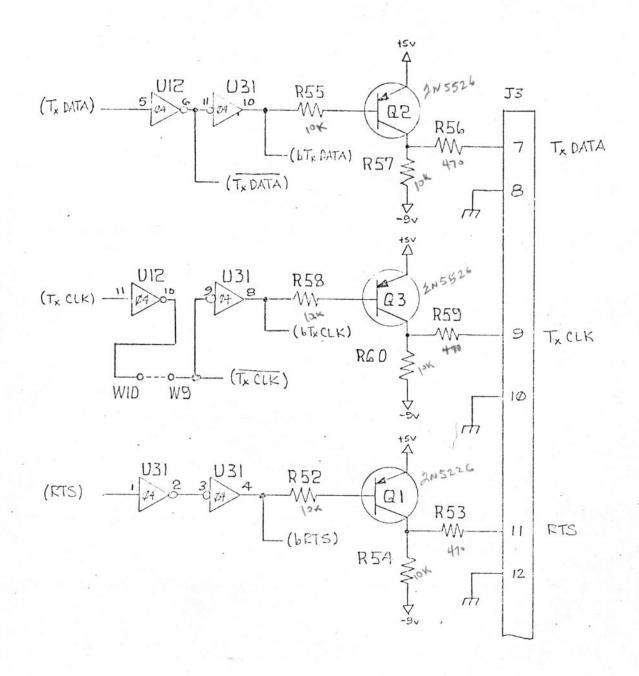


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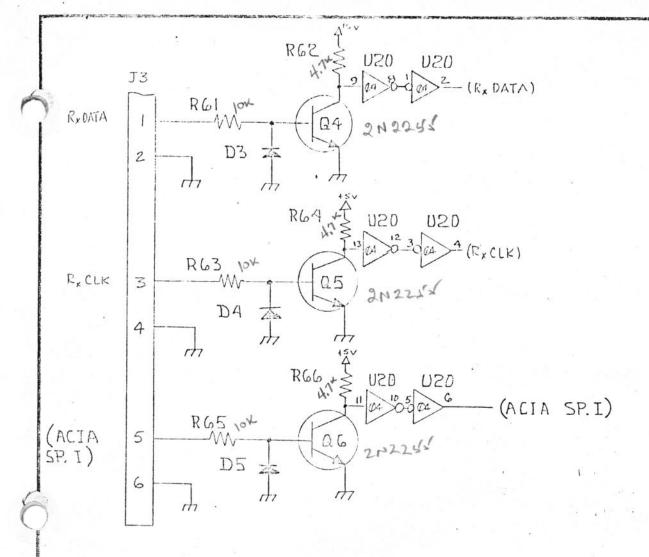
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RS232 DRIVERS

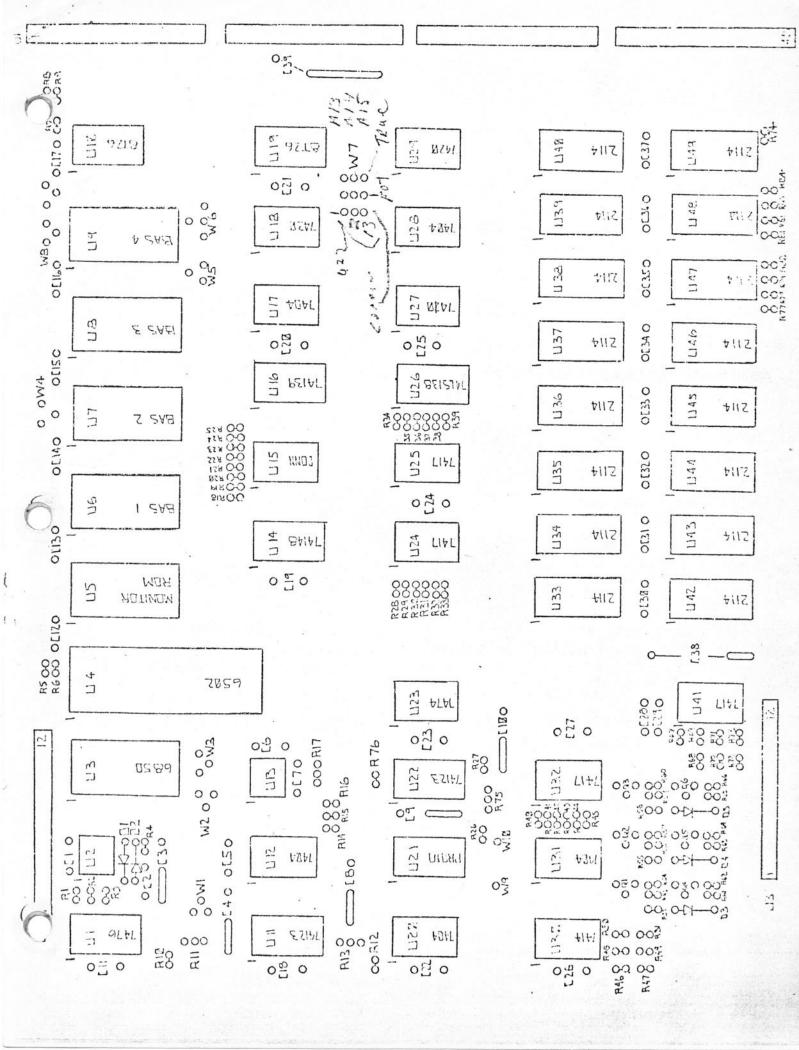
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Streamlining the C2-4P

Here are three modifications you can make to your OSI C2-4P to raise its speed, increase the cassette throughput, and add reverse video to the display.

James L. Cass 19559 Tulsa Street Northridge, CA 91326

I am concerned by the paucity of articles on OSI computers in MICRO and hope that this will reverse the trend. I feel that the Challenger 2-4P running speed and ease of modification more than offset its shortcomings. I will describe three modificiations I have made, mainly, raising the CPU clock rate, raising the cassette data rate, and reversing the video presentation.

Raising the CPU Clock Rate

My computer is happily working with a clock frequency a little under 2 MHz (1.9648 actual, 1.96608 nominal) in place of half that, which is the way it was delivered. The CPU clock is taken from the video timing chain, which uses a crystal oscillator near 12 MHz, a divide by three. and then a series of binary dividers to form 15,360 and 60 Hz sync pulses. It was only necessary to move the CPU clock takeoff one stage higher in the timing chain. To do this, move the jumper wire coming from bus pin #18 off IC #E4 pin #13, and onto pin #14. If you intend to make this change, use a small, low power, preferably grounded soldering iron, as recommended for all IC work. Another word of caution: make a long, thorough shakedown run of several operational programs looking dropped bits from memory. I did this since I have two RAM chips marked "550" (presumably not fast enough to qualify as 450 nsec.), but there was absolutely no hint of dropped bits. Instead, I have very snappy video display operation, slightly fast keyboard repeat, and, best of all, running times cut in half. A machine language LIFE program updates a full screen of 1792 cells 14 times a second!

Doubling the Bit Rate

I successfully doubled the bit rate of my cassette interface from 300 to 600 baud, after speeding up my CPU. I naturally tried 1200 baud; while it seemed to read properly, the load program seemed to choke up on very long (64 to 71 character) lines sometimes and miss the CR and next line. The 555 IC oscillator frequency is doubled from 4800 to 9600 Hz by substitutiong a 0.01 mfd capacitor for the 0.022 and then adjusting the trimpot.

A frequency counter is a big help, if not essential. Since the tone frequencies should remain at 1200 and 2400 Hz, an extra divider is needed. The unused half of the 7474 already in the interface works nicely, or you can install a 74163 in the convenient prototyping vacant space, and get several baud rates for printers and the like. Rate selection can be conveniently brought to a switch mounted to the left of the keyboard. Figure 1 shows the circuit using the 7474.

I have found "reversed" video to be much easier to view for extended periods. Also, the black "reversed" characters have less apparent intensity variation, that is, they look evener. The reversed video connection is indicated in the schematics, but there is no provision made in the printed wiring, so that it is necessary to cut a printed conductor. The junction of R 11 and R 23 is

moved from Pin 8 to Pins 9-10-11 of the IC at D4. I installed a switch near the keyboard with short, direct small wires, but find that I could have left the wiring at "reversed" with no loss.

Conclusions

Doubling the CPU clock rate and hence the speed of the C2-4P is quite easy to do. The main risk is that some 2114 type RAM chips may be too slow. The data rate in the cassette interface can be doubled to 600 baud, but only with some effort and decrease in reliability; 1200 baud does not work. Reversing the video to display black characters on white is relatively simple and the reversed video format is preferred by everyone. Cassette speed selection and normal-reverse video are conveniently brought to switches installed near the keyboard.

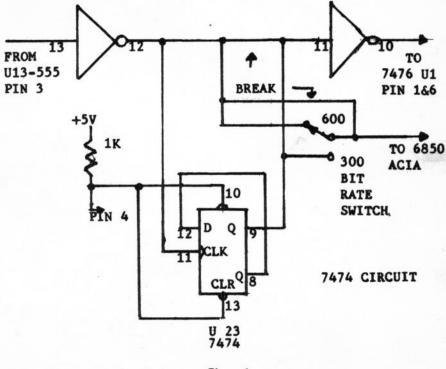


Figure 1

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