

SPL DC-64

Author: Vittorio Pascucci

Email: sideprojectslab@gmail.com

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdhCaevHxyzLeFTYkxkblA>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/user?u=56214619>

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Revision History

Date	Version	Revision
27/11/2023	0.1	First Draft
04/12/2023	0.2	Improved Pictures
09/12/2023	0.3	Completed specification list from actual measurements

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1 Introduction

DC-64 is a small form factor power supply designed to allow powering the Commodore 64 microcomputer with a single external DC power supply, thus replacing the original AC transformer.

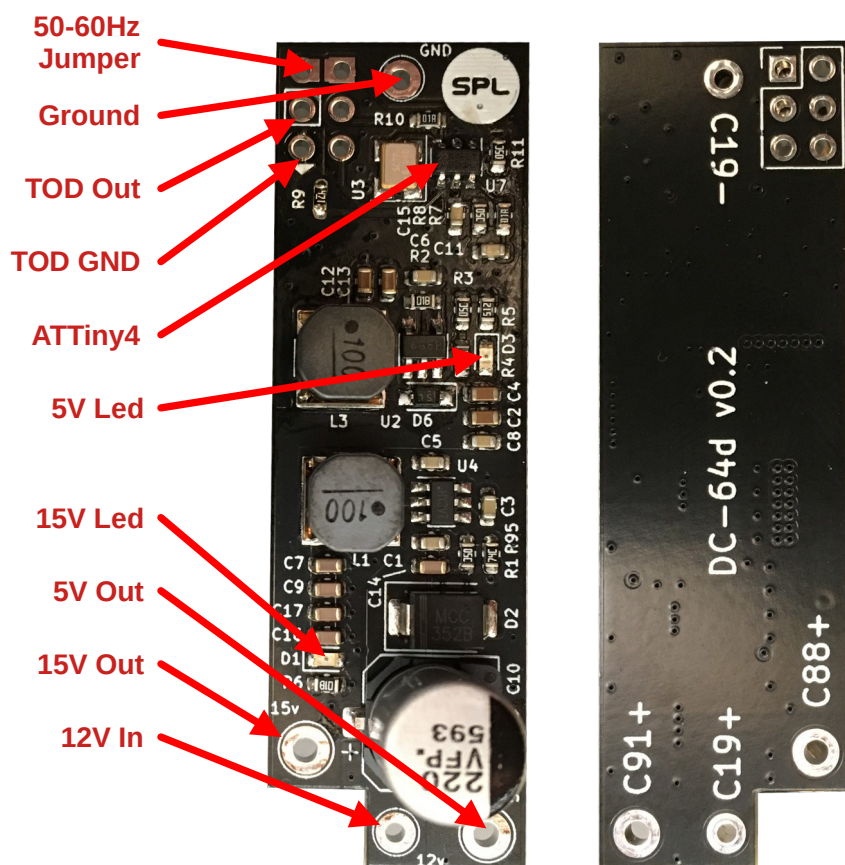


Figure 1: DC-64d Front & Back

Once DC-64 is installed inside the computer, the C64 can be powered externally with a single 12Vdc, 2A power supply. DC-64 generates all necessary additional internal voltages to power the various subsystems of the computer. In addition to this, DC-64 generates a configurable 50-60Hz, 5Vpp square wave that replaces the Time of Day (TOD) clock, originally generated from the AC power supply.

Two variants of DC-64 are available. These variants share identical power supply sections and only differ in the way the TOD clock is generated:

- **DC-64a:** (“a” for “analog”) generates the TOD clock with a “555-like” RC oscillator, must be calibrated by hand.

The advantage of this board is that it is completely analog and does not rely on programmable ICs, thus simplifying the system design for DIY hobbyists that may want to put this board together on their own.

The disadvantage of this approach is relatively low TOD clock stability over time and temperature, as well as relatively high cost due to the expensive nature of potentiometers for calibration.

- **DC-64d:** (“d” for “digital”) generates the TOD clock with an Atmel ATTiny4 microcontroller clocked with a precise, 6MHz crystal oscillator. The ATTiny acts as a configurable clock divider to generate 50-60Hz from the crystal clock.

The disadvantage of this variant is that it relies on a microcontroller that needs a special, relatively expensive programmer to be flashed. While the board can be purchased with the microcontroller already flashed, the design is less friendly to DIY hobbyists that want to put the board together on their own.

The advantage of this version is that the TOD clock is extremely stable over time and temperature and never requires calibration.

2 Compatible Motherboards

The DC-64 is designed to be compatible with all versions of the original C64 motherboard. A full list of the circuit revision that have been verified to be compatible is reported below, gray lines represent versions that should be compatible but have not been verified yet.

C64 “Breadbin”			C64C		
Model	Assembly	Schematic	Model	Assembly	Schematic
Original	326298	326106	B-3	250446	252278
A (CR)	250407	251137-251138	E	250469	252312
B	250425	251469			
B-2	250441	251469			

3 Installation

3.1 C64 “Breadbin”

The following considerations are accurate for all versions of the C64 “Breadbin” motherboard, though the exact position of the parts and pads mentioned is different between revisions:

- DC-64 is installed “in place of” C19, which must therefore be removed from the circuit. DC-64 is designed so that the Power-Ground terminal and the 12V terminal align perfectly with the mounting holes of C19 on the C64 motherboard.
- The Power-Ground terminal of DC-64 is connected to the pad (hole) on the motherboard where the **negative** terminal of C19 would normally be connected.
- The 12V terminal of DC-64 is connected to the pad (hole) on the motherboard where the **positive** terminal of C19 would normally be connected.
- Make sure the DC-64 board does not touch the C64 motherboard. Preferably use male pins to connect the DC-64 to the C64 motherboard so that the male pin's isolation plastic will keep the DC-64 board high enough above the C64 motherboard.
- The 15V output of DC-64 is connected with a flying wire to the **positive** terminal of C88
- The 5V output of DC-64 is connected with a flying wire to the **positive** terminal of C91
- An external 12Vdc power source must be applied on pins 6 and 7 of the power connector, that were originally assigned to the 9Vac power supply. The polarity is not important because the voltage applied to these two pins is fed to the rectifier bridge present on the C64 motherboard (CR4).
- Once the DC-64 is installed, all current drawn by the C64 goes through the main fuse. It is therefore recommended to replace the original 1A fuse with a 2A one.

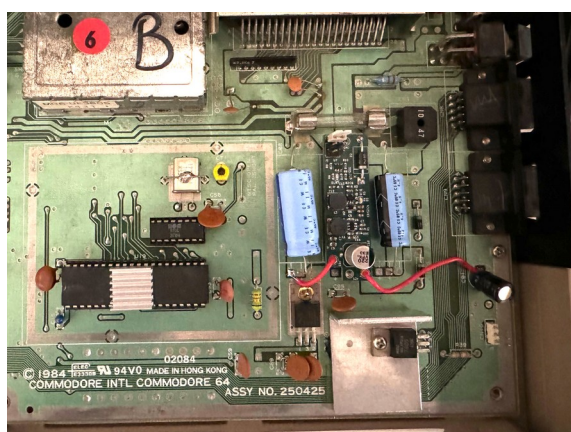


Figure 2: Sch. 251469 Installation

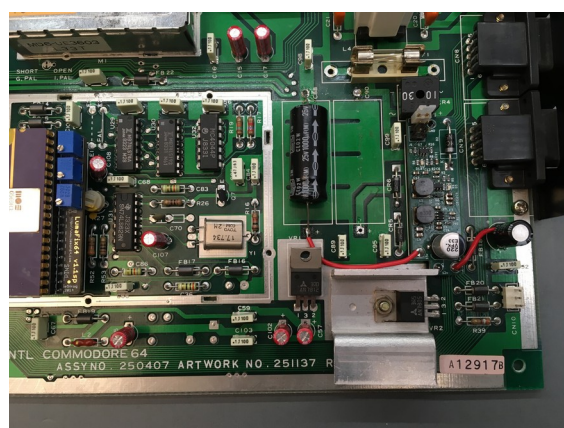


Figure 3: Sch. 251137/8 Installation

3.1.1 Connecting the TOD Clock

- Identify the TOD output pin on the DC-64 as displayed in Figure 1.
- Cut one of the two leads of R5 on the C64 motherboard and nudge the resistor to the side to ensure it is disconnected.
- Connect the TOD clock to the positive terminal of CR1 on the C64 motherboard (see Figure 4).
- It is recommended to use a coaxial cable to perform this connection.
 - The cable's core connects the TOD terminal on the DC-64 board to the positive terminal of CR1.
 - The cable's shield is **grounded ONLY on the DC-64 board**, on the pin marked as Ground next to TOD.

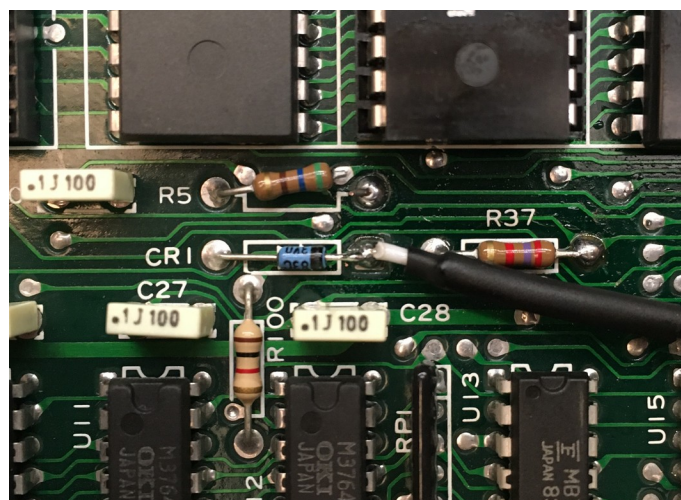


Figure 4: TOD Clock Connection

- The frequency of the TOD clock can be selected with the 50-60Hz jumper depicted in Figure 1. With the jumper left open TOD will have a frequency of 50Hz. Conversely, closing the jumper with a ball of solder will cause the ATTiny4 microcontroller to generate a 60Hz TOD clock.

3.2 C64C

Work in progress...

3.3 Installation Notes

- C19 is glued to the motherboard. In order to remove it:
 - Cut the two leads of C19.
 - Roll the capacitor by pushing it aside until the glue breaks.
 - Remove the remaining ends of the leads from the motherboard by melting the solder and gently pulling them out of their holes with pliers.
 - Remove any solder that may still obstruct the mounting holes of C19, with a solder wick or a desoldering pump.

4 Specifications

	Condition	Min	Recommended	Max	Unit
External DC Voltage (V_I)	-	11	12	13	V
External DC Current (I_I)	-	1.5	>2	-	A
Output Current 5V (I_{o5v})	$T_{room} = 60^{\circ}C$	-	1	2.5	A
Output Current 15V (I_{o15v})	$T_{room} = 60^{\circ}C$	-	150	500	mA
Output Voltage Ripple 5V (1)	$I_{o5v} = 1A$ $T_{room} = 60^{\circ}C$	-	50	100	mVpp
Output Voltage Ripple 15V (1)	$I_{o15v} = 150mA$ $T_{room} = 60^{\circ}C$	-	100	100	mVpp

- (1) T_{room} represents the temperature of the air at a distance of approximately 3cm from the board. Therefore, when the DC-64 is operating inside the Commodore 64, T_{room} represents the temperature of the air inside the computer, which may be 15°C to 20°C higher than actual room temperature.

5 Limitations & Precautions

- The original AC power supply **SHALL NOT BE USED** when the DC-64 is installed in the system.
- Use only a 12Vdc external power supply that can deliver at least 2A. The 12Vdc power must be connected to pins 6 and 7 of the original power connector (regardless of polarity).
- Never run the C64 without a fuse installed when the DC-64 is installed in the system. The DC-64 has no internal fuse and relies on the fuse on the C64 motherboard for safety shutdown. The recommended maximum current for the fuse is 2A.
- The C64's rectifier bridge is now carrying all the current powering the system, this results in the component dissipating more than 2W and therefore **overheating**. While rectifiers can operate at very high temperatures (> 100°C) without failing, it is still recommended to place a small heat sink on top of the rectifier bridge.
- Remember that the Ground terminal of the external 12Vdc power supply **IS NOT THE SYSTEM GROUND** of the C64 and shall never be used as such. The system ground is only found AFTER the rectifier bridge, therefore there may be upwards of 1V difference between the Power supply ground and the system ground.
- User port accessories are not guaranteed to work when the DC-64 is installed in the system, and may be damaged due to the absence of an AC (positive and negative) voltage being supplied to the user port. It is therefore recommended **NEVER TO CONNECT** user port accessories to a system that has been modded with DC-64.
- Custom dual-SID solutions may draw too much current from the 15Vdc output of DC-64 which is limited to 500mA. In case such a multi-SID solution is implemented in the system, it is recommended

to assess its total current consumption and ensuring that it is safely within specs before installing the DC-64.

- Operating the DC-64 outside of its maximum specifications may result in damage of the board, the computer and any accessories connected to the computer. Particular caution shall be taken not to exceed the maximum rated current for the 5V supply of DC-64 which is used to power all digital electronics on board of the C64.