APPLEBOX

the alpha syntauri system
a ancient synthisizer concept for the Apple II

General Overview

In the beginning of the 80´s electronics also entered the scene of making music. The very first electronic devices of making soundwaves and strange audiowaves with electronical equipment came into the market and first descriptions of different kinds of wavegenerators got published in various kinds of electronic magazins. Some of them are here present as own contribution pages at the indexpage. I´d just mention here the very first publication of the "Formant" in the magazin "elektor" and the few years later first time published concept of the polyphonic Synthisizer "POLYSYNTH" in the magazin "Elrad" just to name the basic entering to that topic here in Europe.

The first parts of equipment that entered the stage by using at the beginning analog electronic design came from companies like Moog and Roland. Of course there have been some companies existing that made "electronic organs" but their concept was restricted in those days to analog design of sinewave generators with transistors.... - the very new thing in the beginning of the 80´s was that now the technology presented very new sounds to the ear by designing sawwave, rectangularwaves and trianglewaves too and very shortly after also a mix of "enveloping concepts" by modulating a sawwave or sinewave with rectangular or triangular modulation waves. That was the point where the so called "Synthisizers" started the adventure of creating new sounds that have never been heard before....

Various new young musicians started creating very new sounds seeking for a new "band identity" hunting for new audiowaves to make the sound of the band that unique, that it could not be copied by any other band..... Just to name a few of this famous musicians Kieth Emerson from Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Alan Parson fron Alan Parson Project, and other Groups like Pink Floyd and YES - not to forget a lot of musicians from the taste of Jazz like Herbie Hancock and of course Miles Davis. In the mid 80´s for the Apple II the 2 most well known concepts for making music with the Apple II have been the DIY project from "ct" an electronic magazin with the description of the "ct Klangcomputer" (in engl. "ct soundcomputer") and the alpha syntauri. In fact while the "ct Klangcomputer" was a complete design with all related interface cards - the alpha syntauri was in fact a mix from various sources: The organlike keyboard and its interface came from alpha syntauri, while the interfacecards for making the sound originated from the company Mountain Computer and was sold as "Mountain Computer Music System". With both components together and an Apple II or Apple IIe a musician was upfront of a complex synthisizer system which permited to generate nearly every kind of sound from the Apple II series of computers.
The two persons upmost involved to the development of the alpha syntauri system have been Charlie Kellner and Ellen Lapham. In 1984 the company shut off business. An interview with Ellen Lapham introducing the alpha syntauri and explaining the concept is viewable at the computer chronicles - a video that can be viewed from the internet.

While the entire publication of the ct Klangcomputer is here availiable at another series of pages in the chapter of pages we´ll take a very closer look to the entire system with the alpha syntauri and the Mountain Computer Music System with strong focus to the technical side and reverse engineering of this entire system. The reason for this, is the fact that the documantation of the components is quite well for using the system, but if things go wrong and one of the components needs repair or service due to it´s age the documentation turns out to be a desert in the technical side bearing the lack of not containing any kind of technical information like circuitplans or pictures of vital parts of the components and desciption how this part interact with eachother.....

This shall be solved here and the target is to provide the entire missing part of the manuals by reverse engineering the system that far that a technician can check the system for correct function and in case of need carry out a service task or repair such a system and get it back to working condition and finally also to provide a downloadable document containing the circuitplans and vital information about the system far beyond the documentation provided in the ancient days with the manuals of that components.
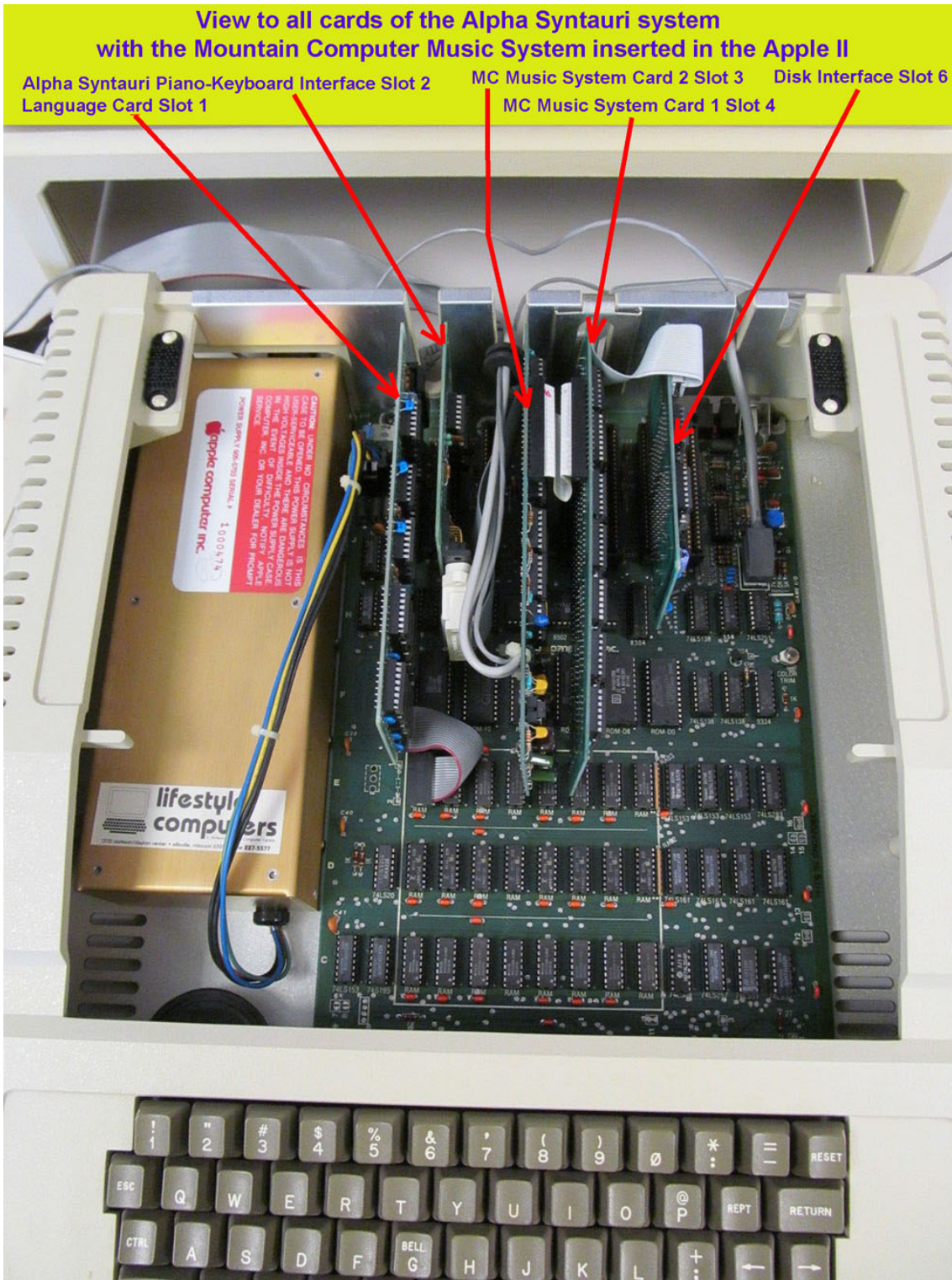
And besides it´s also a target of this pages to present the components in working order and with pictures to teach several details about the system and how it´s working.

So lets start here first with the alpha syntauri keyboard itself and some pictures of it in general and in detail.

Here is the entire System:

Here is the view to the system components inside of the Apple II:

**View to all cards of the Alpha Syntauri system
with the Mountain Computer Music System inserted in the Apple II**

Alpha Syntauri Piano-Keyboard Interface Slot 2   MC Music System Card 2 Slot 3   Disk Interface Slot 6
Language Card Slot 1   MC Music System Card 1 Slot 4

Here is the view to the external Alpha Syntauri components only:

and here is the picture of the Interfacecard of the Alpha Syntauri (which is located inside of the Apple II) from componentside:
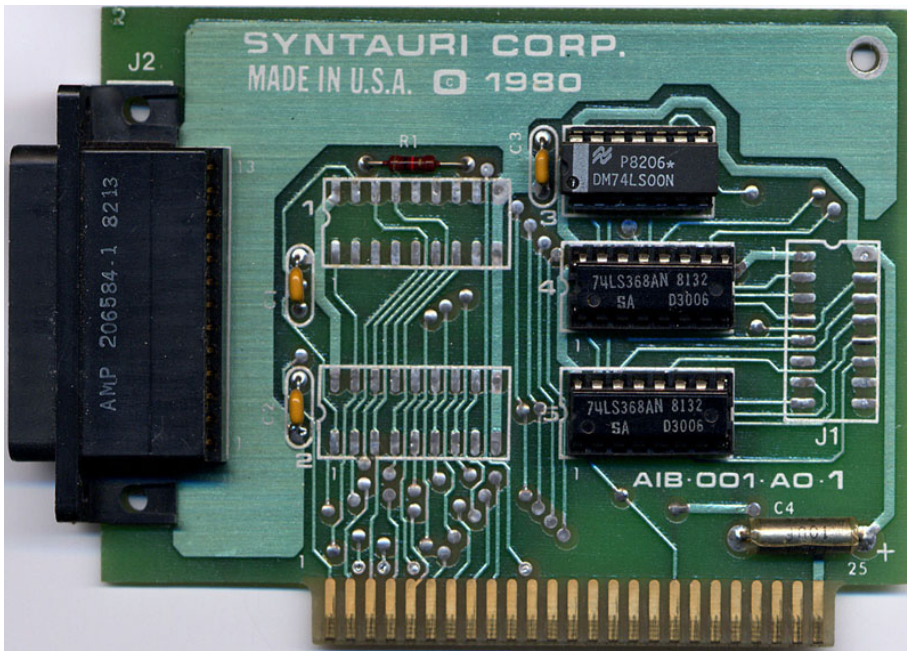
and here is the picture of the Interfacecard of the Alpha Syntauri (which is located inside of the Apple II) from solderingside:
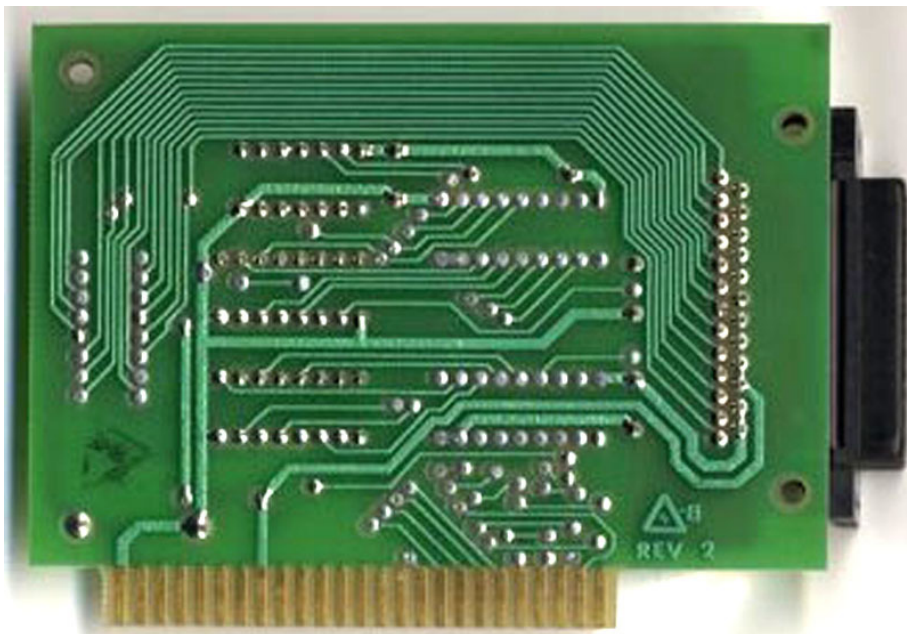
and here is a (unfortunatly bad) picture of a later version of the Interfacecard of the Alpha Syntauri (which is located inside of the Apple II) from componentseide:
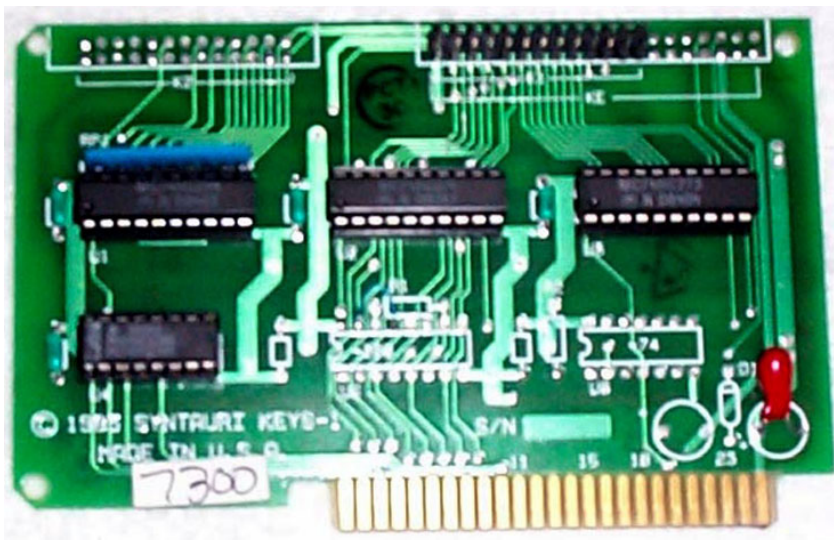
I am still searching for better pictures of this interface and more information on the card.
If a visitor of this page has such additional information please contact me at Applefritter.com.

After viewing the entire set of components lets get ahead to the next page with closer view to the Keyboard and the Footswitches as beeing the "external" Components of the Alpha Syntauri System and examining its details......

next page =>

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details about the keyboard and the footswitches

Lets startup with some pictures of the keyboard itself:

**after removing the top plate you will see this:**

**a closer view to the right upper side will offer this view:**

Apple II Interfacecard Plugconnector

Footswitch Pedal connectors

Before taking a closer view to the other internal parts of the keyboard lets just take a closeup view to the Footswitch pedal connectors, while being extracted:

Please acknowledge the 4 small ceramic capacitors of each 10 nF between the GND pole and the 2 alternating poles. They seem to fullfill a kind of "debouncing" function.
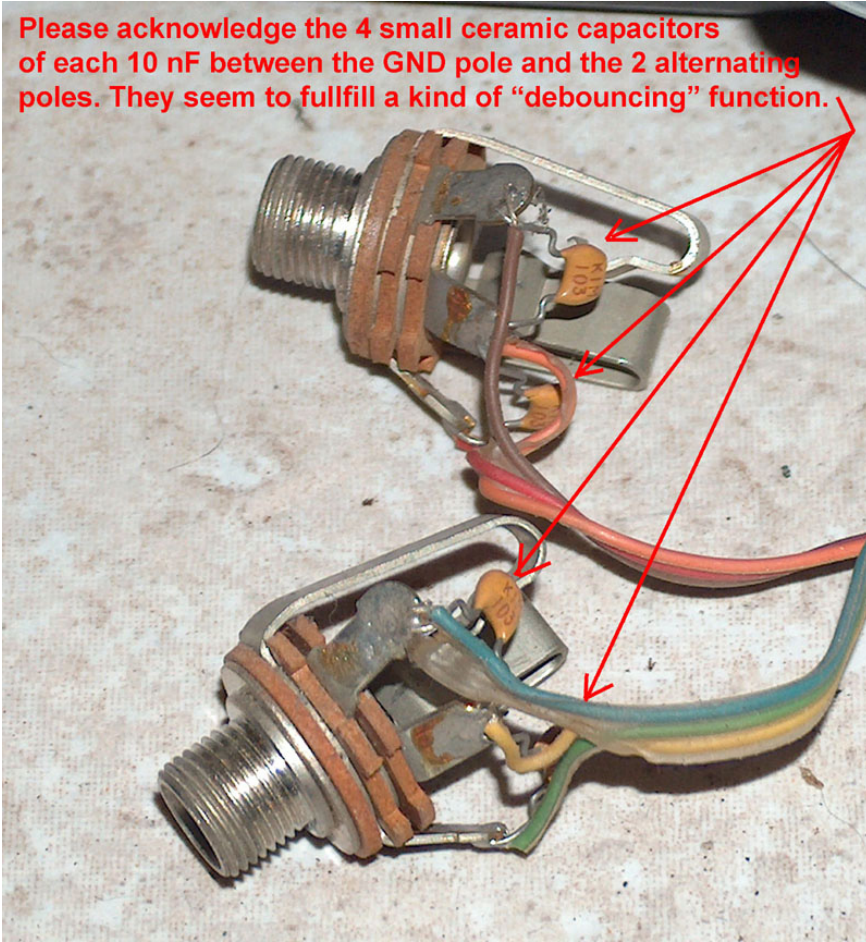
Then after refitting the top plate and <u>turning the keyboard around to the bottomside</u>, lets take a view after the bottom plate has been removed:
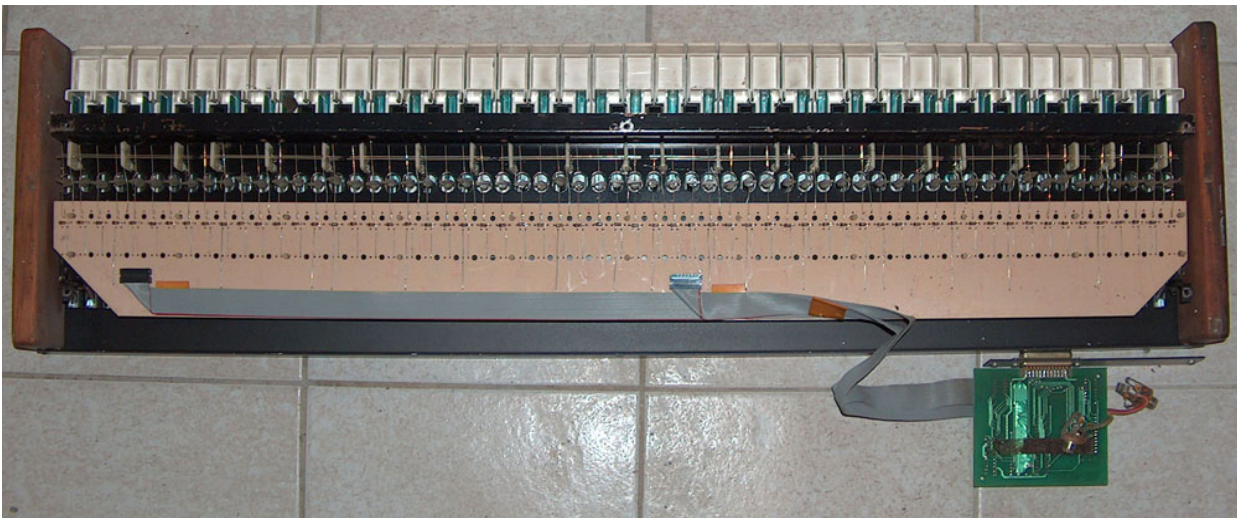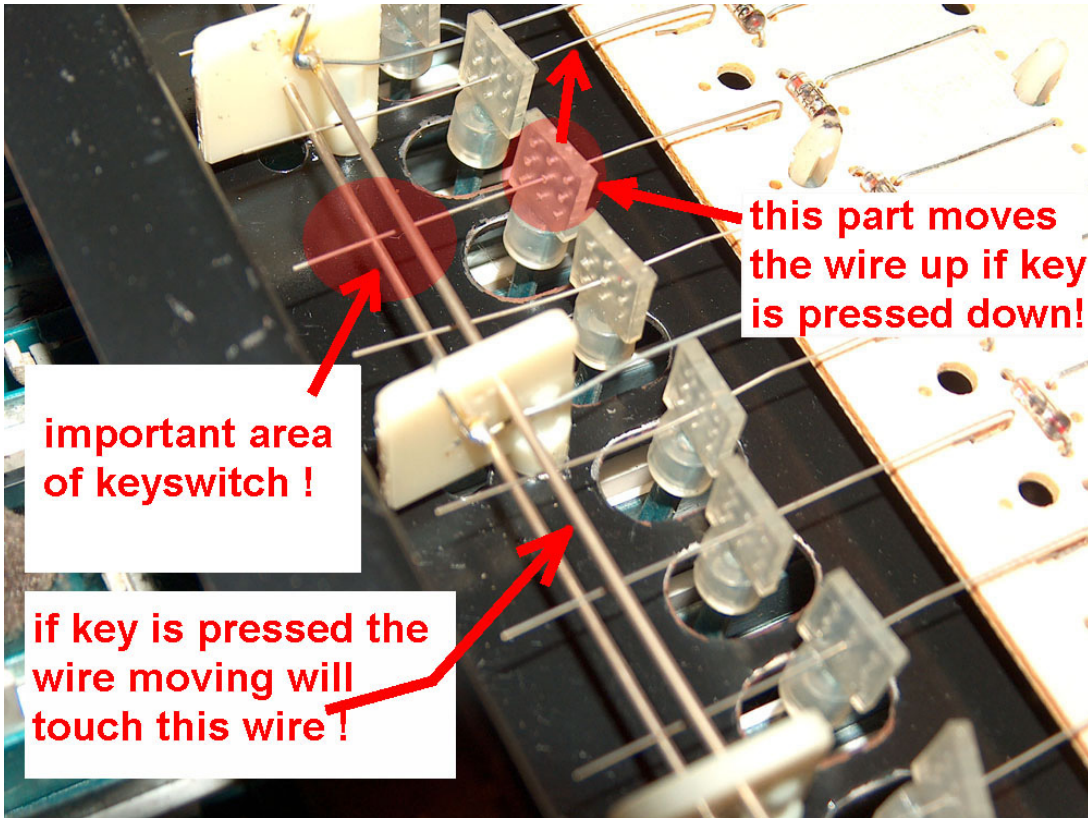

Next a closer view to the "giant PCB" that connects the keyswitches together - and we can drop the demand to examine the entire board - because it´s along it´s entire length eveywhare the same basic principal. there for here only one section in closeup view:
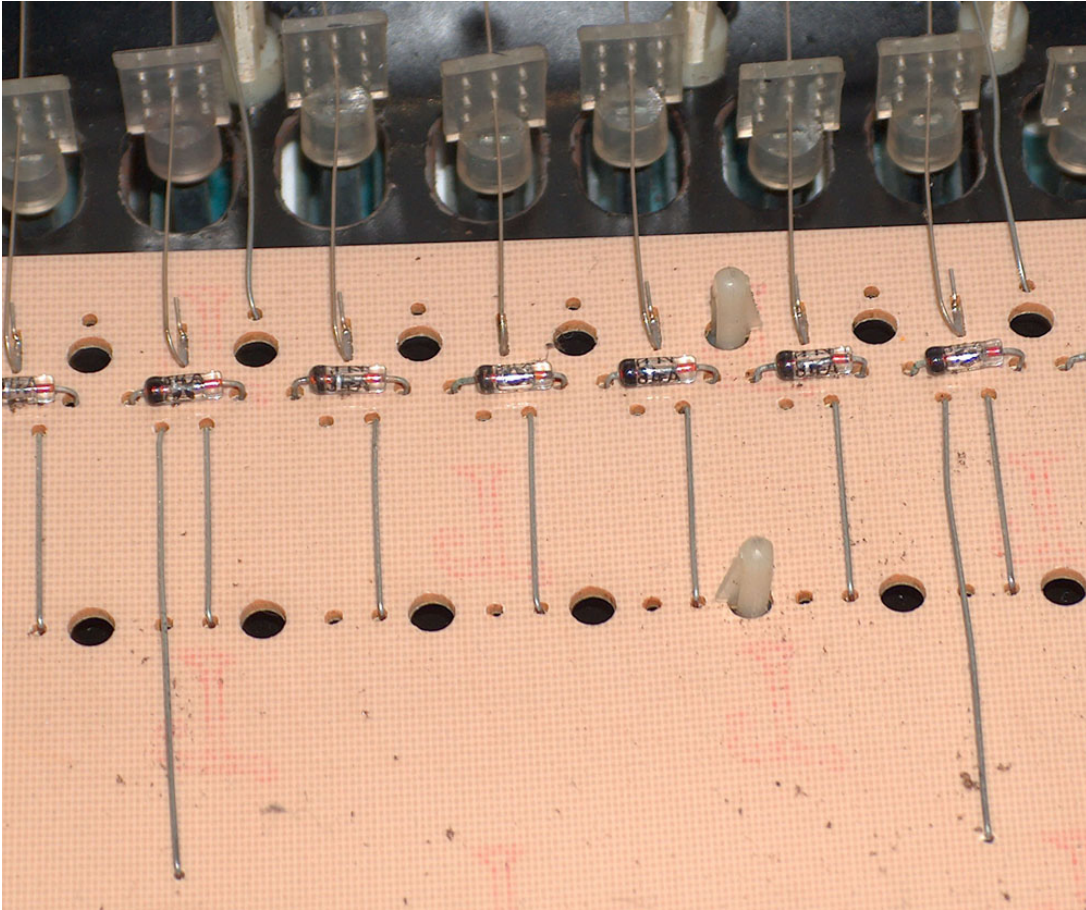
This pisture displays that each keyawitch is related to one rectifier diode.
The next picture displays a closeup to the keyswitch itself with a closeup view from the <u>rear</u>:

important
keyswitch area !
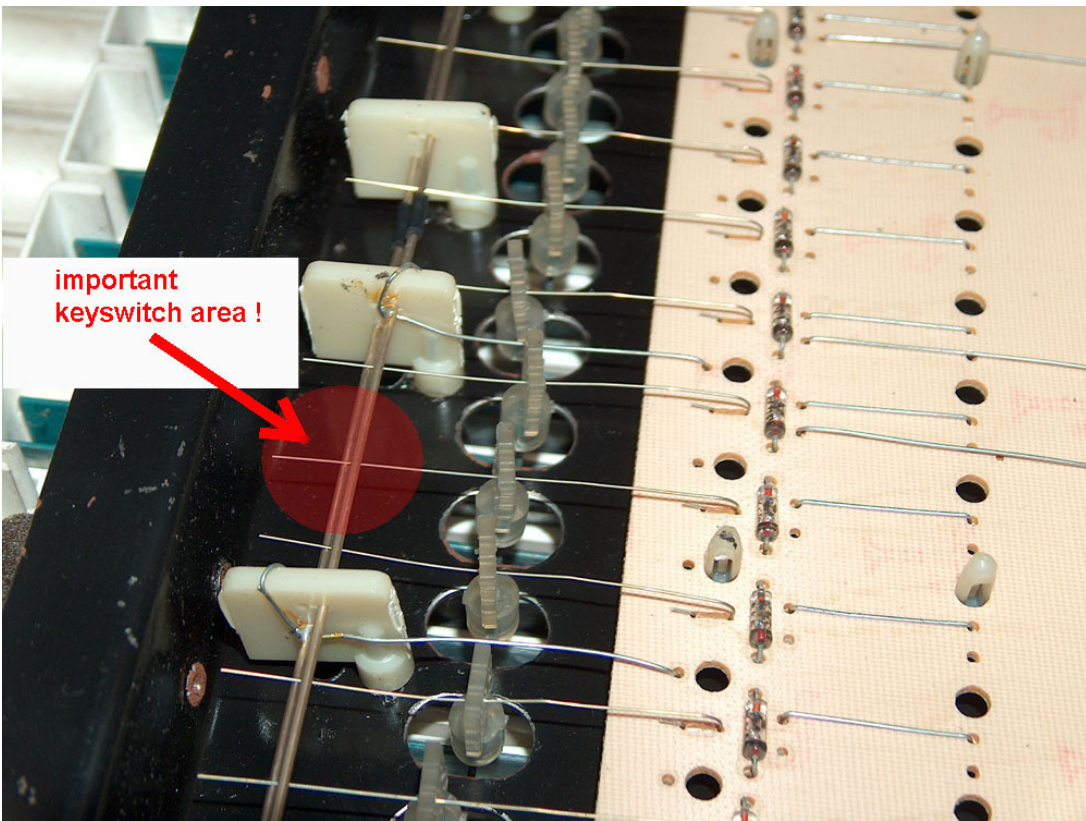
and to get a better view to the important part of the keyswitch now a closeup view in detail from the front:

this part moves the wire up if key is pressed down!

important area of keyswitch !

if key is pressed the wire moving will touch this wire !

This picture shows in detail the manner the keyswitch is operating:
If the key is released the long steelwire from the PCB is right between the long steelwire bars above and below of the wire.
If the kay becomes pressed down the wire moves towards the upper steelbarwire and makes contact with that steelbar wire.
Be aware that this view is reverse view to normal postion. In normal postion the upper steelbar wire is the lower steelbar wire !

The mechanical creation of the keys (better keyswitches) in the alpha syntauri is quite comparable to the description of the DIY procedure of the piano-keyboard of the FORMANT as explained in the magazine elektor. This is explained here in the publication of that device at page 2 of that scanned pages. Allthough the pages are still in German language the drawings are quite clear and selfexplaining.

In this part of the page w´e´ll examine the footswitch and take a view inside of the switch.
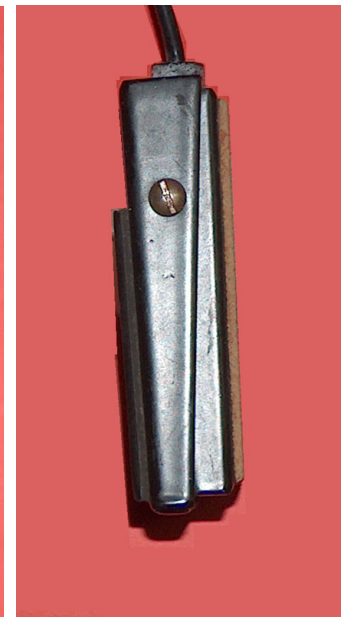**Let´s start first wit the general basic view to the outside view of the footswitch:**
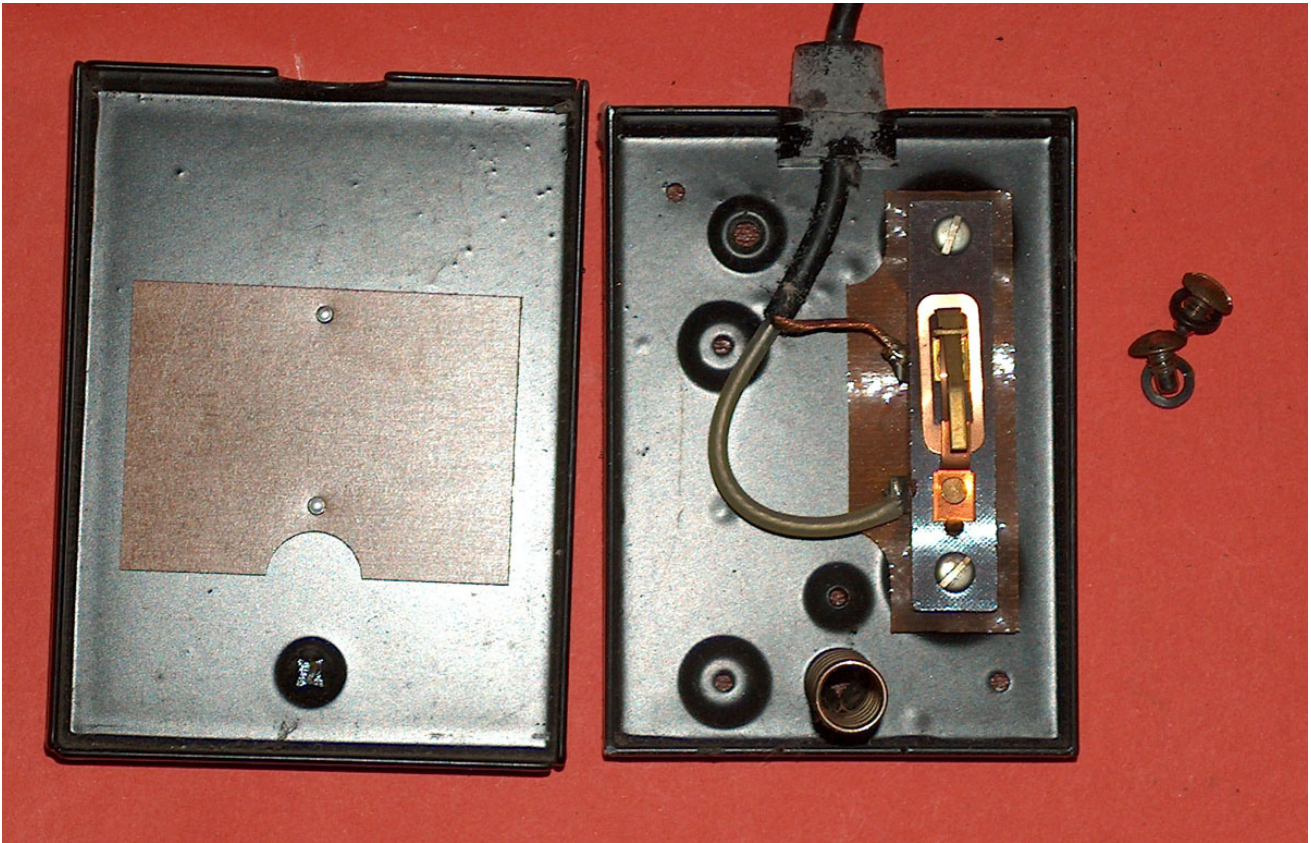
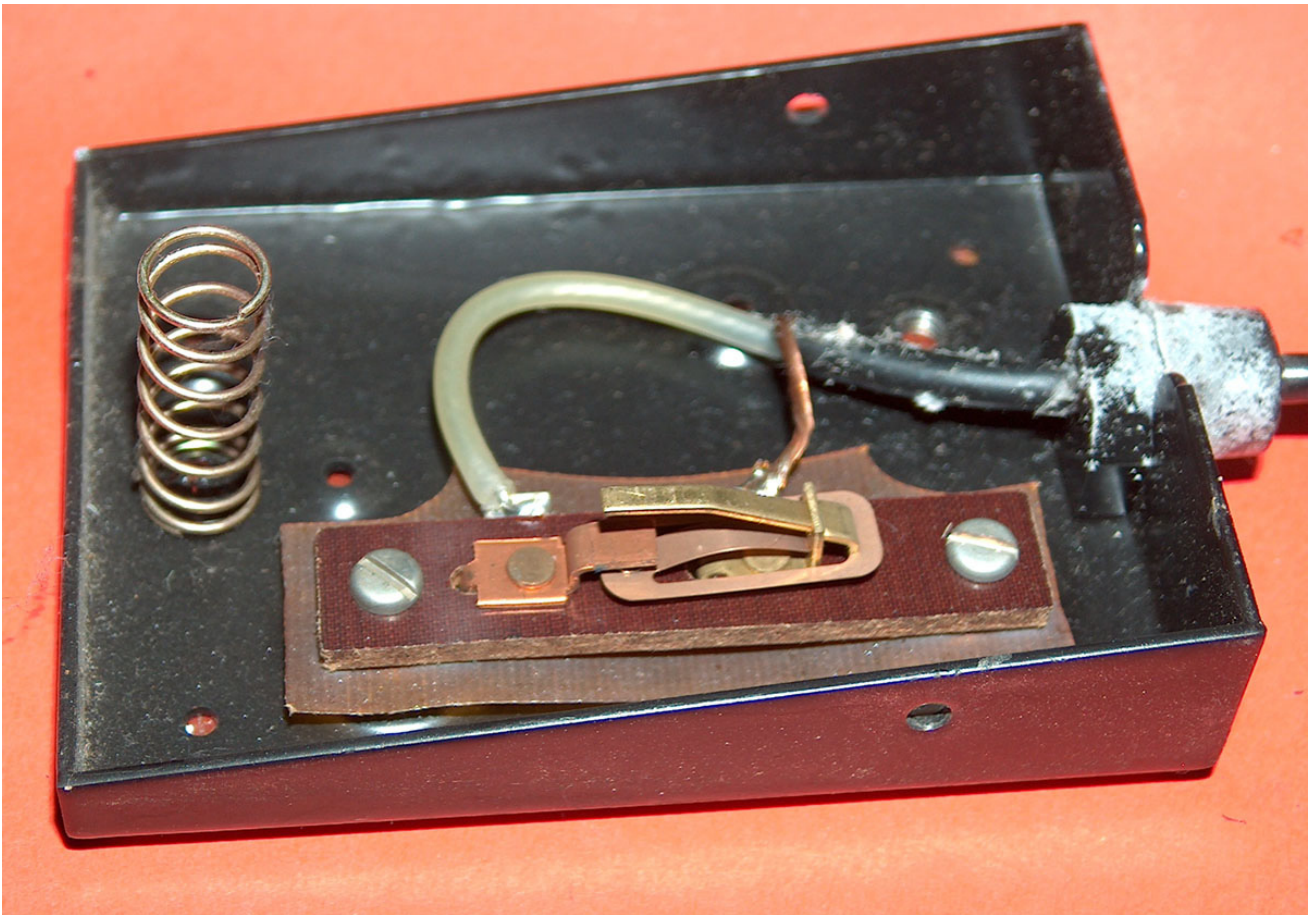**Top of the footswitch:**   **Bottom of the footswitch:**   **Sideview of the footswitch:**

dismounting the footswitch offers to us the following view:

**to get a better view about the switch take a look at this picture:**

The steelspring at the left side keeps the pedal of the footswitch pressed upwards to keep the switch released.
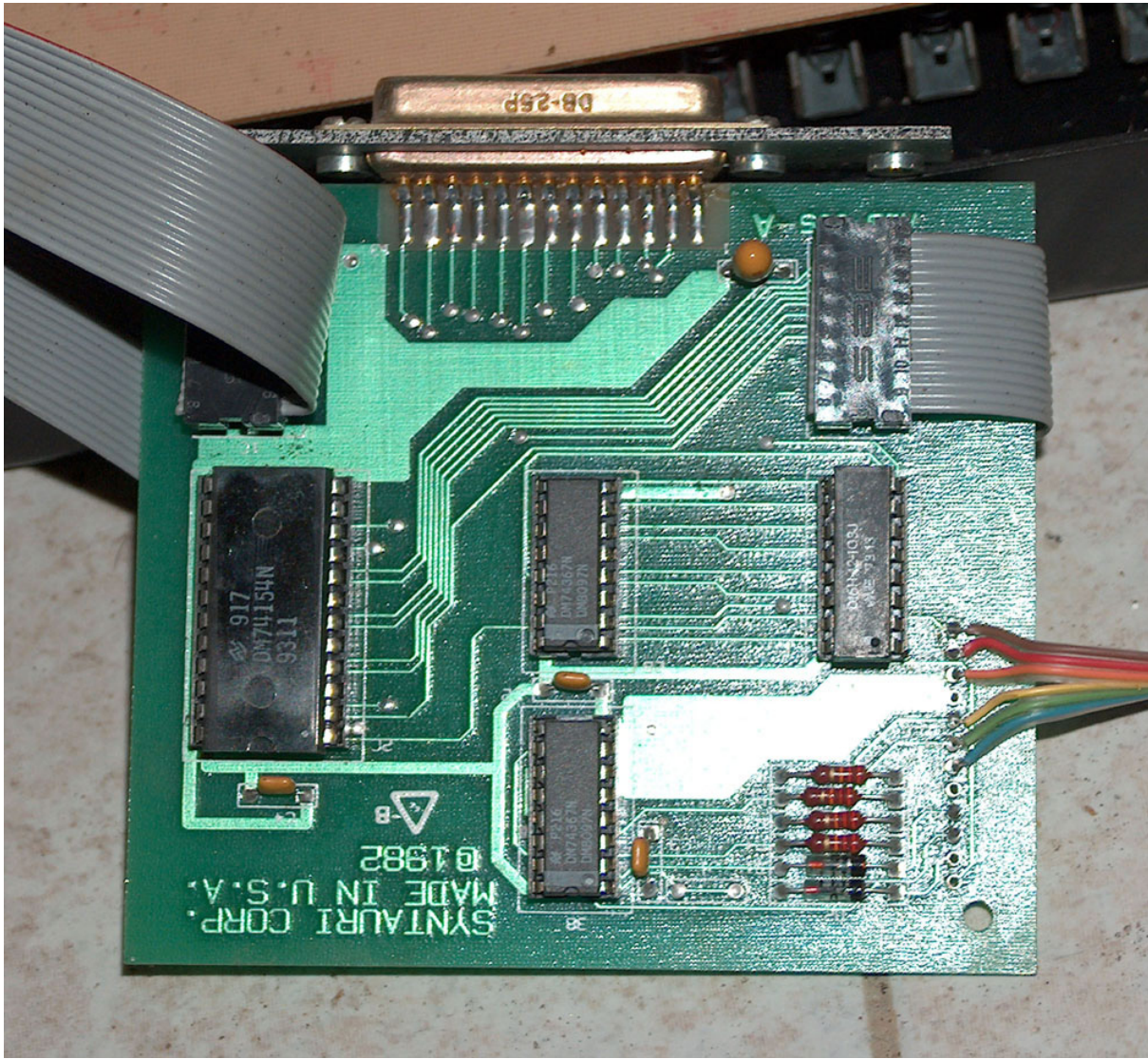**And here is another closeup picture of the switching part:**

Next step we´ll take a closer view to the electronic PCB inside of the keyboard that performs the decoding of the keys pressed and the decoding of the footswitch.
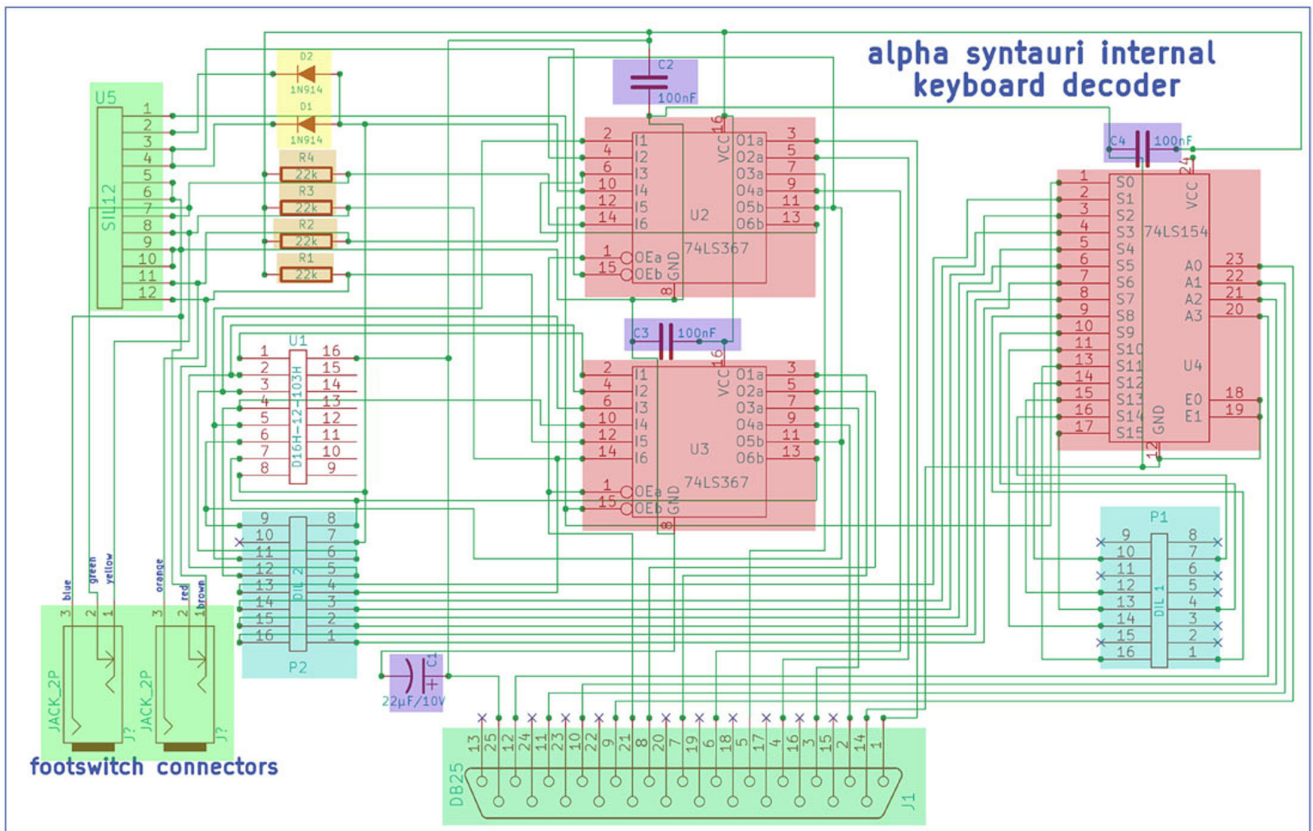'
Here is the view to the soldering side of the decoderPCB:
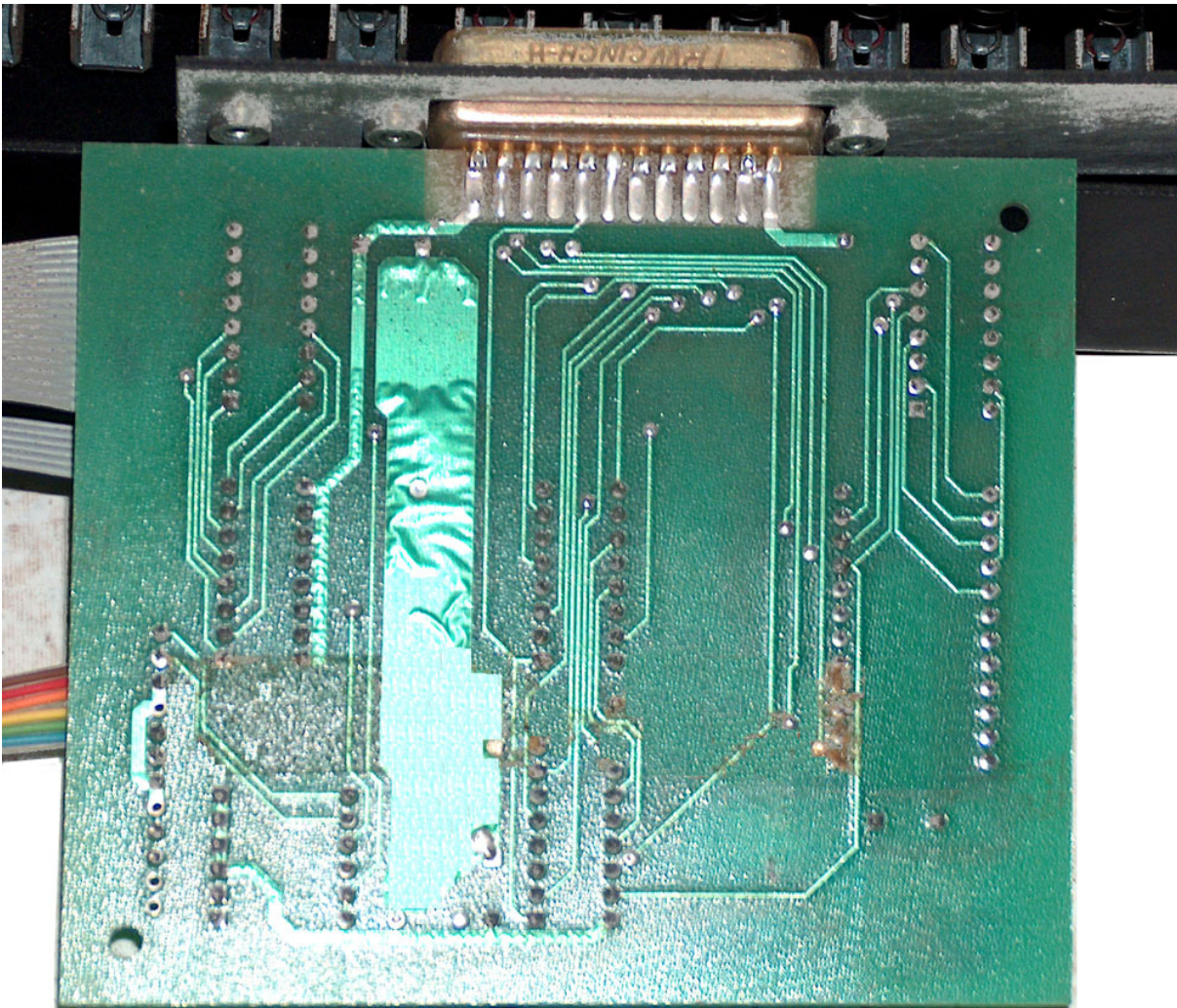
and here is the view to the component side of the decoder PCB:

and now added the circuitplan of this internal keyboard decoder card:

soon more pictures and details as well as the related circuitplans will be added.

<= turn back to previous page	**turn over to next page =>**

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◄ turn back to the indexpage ←

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the Apple II interface card of the alpha syntauri
now completed !

The interface of the alpha syntauri in the Apple II is rather simple due to the fact that it only passes over the information fron the internal decoder interface inside of the keyboard. Up to the moment it seems that one part of the information is a parallel set of the 8 Databits. And it seems that at the other hand some part of the information might be some kind of handshaking and probably some kind of Interrupt-handling. Unfortunatly this part of the information is not complete because the alpha syntauri system i have purchased from ebay did not have this interface card. The only information availiable at the moment yet, is taken from only 2 pictures that i have at the moment. Unfortunatly i cant view the PCB below the chips on the component side and therefor the paths of the traces can only be up to the moment a guess without verification.

Anyhow - lets proceed with the information availiable - at least at the moment - to the point, that might be claimed to be sure by trying to guess the parts that "should be that way" by assuming normal conditions....
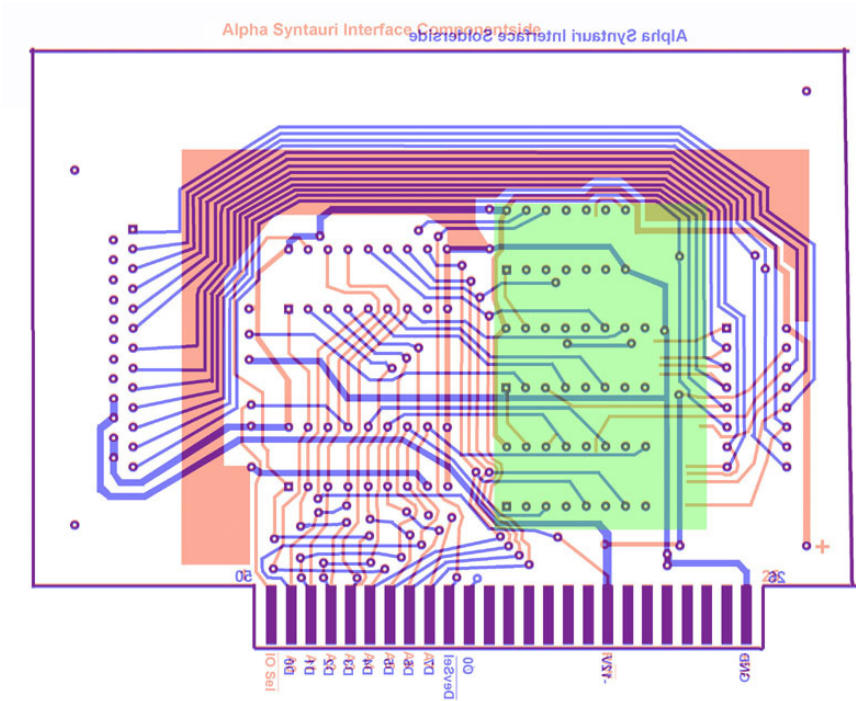
Here is the picture of the top of the interface:
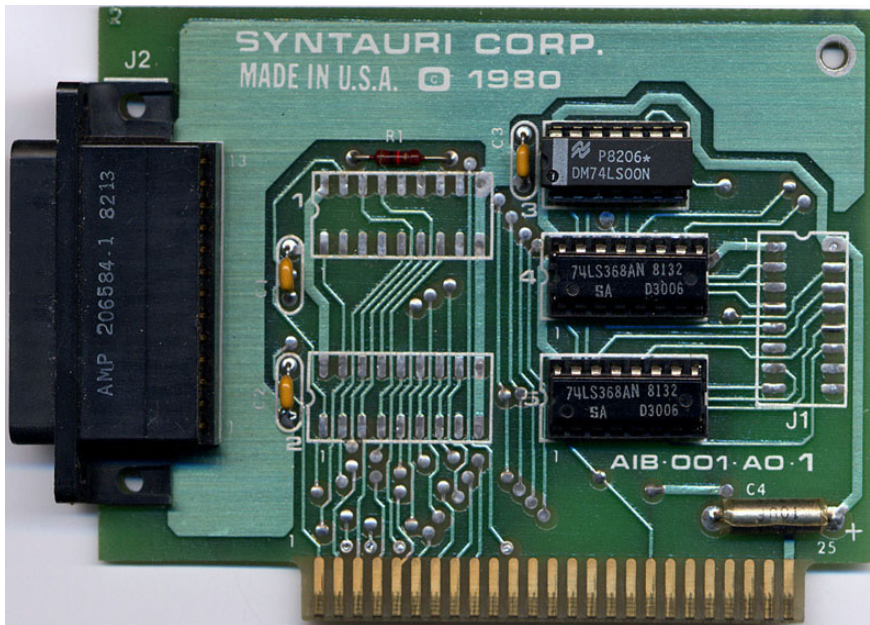
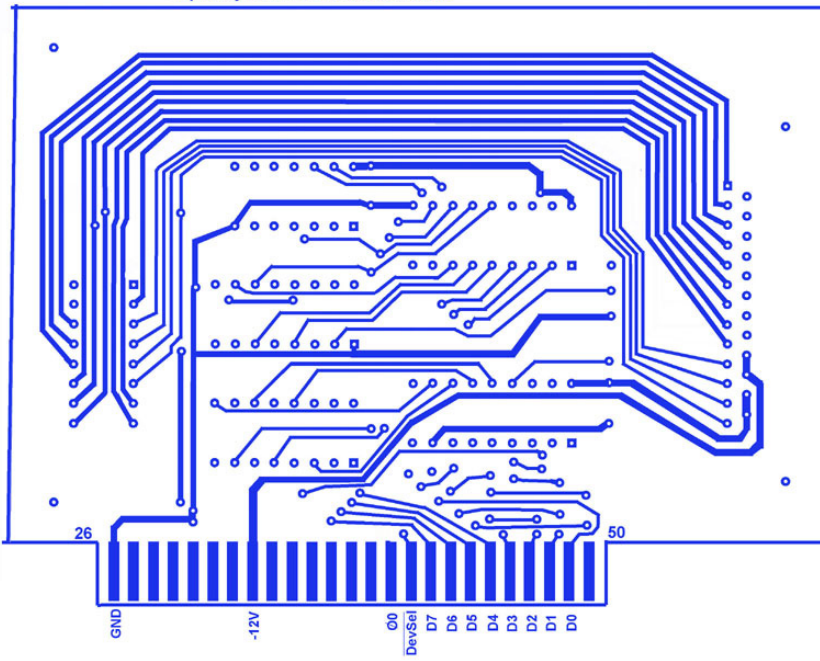and now the picture of the solderingside of that interface card:
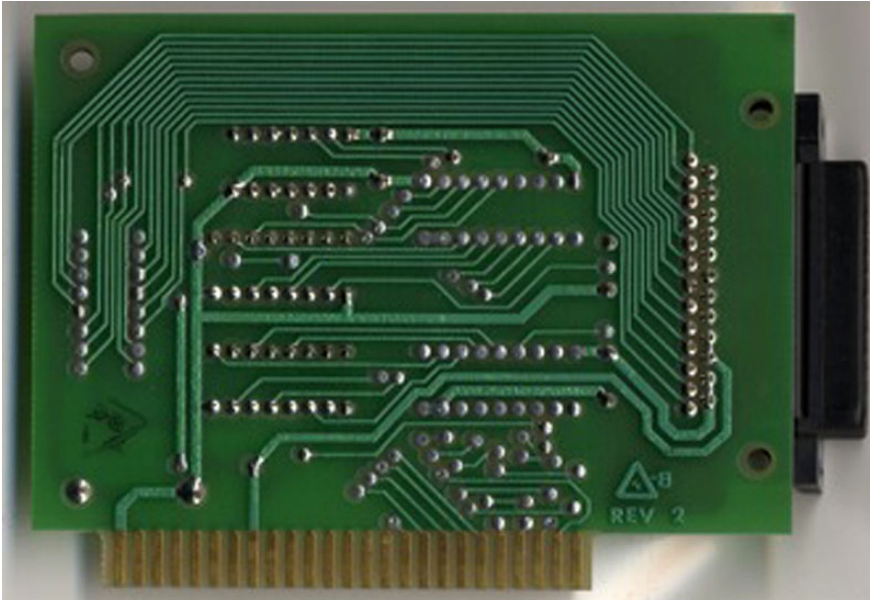
so at the moment the following picture shows the part of the card that can´t be determined at the moment:
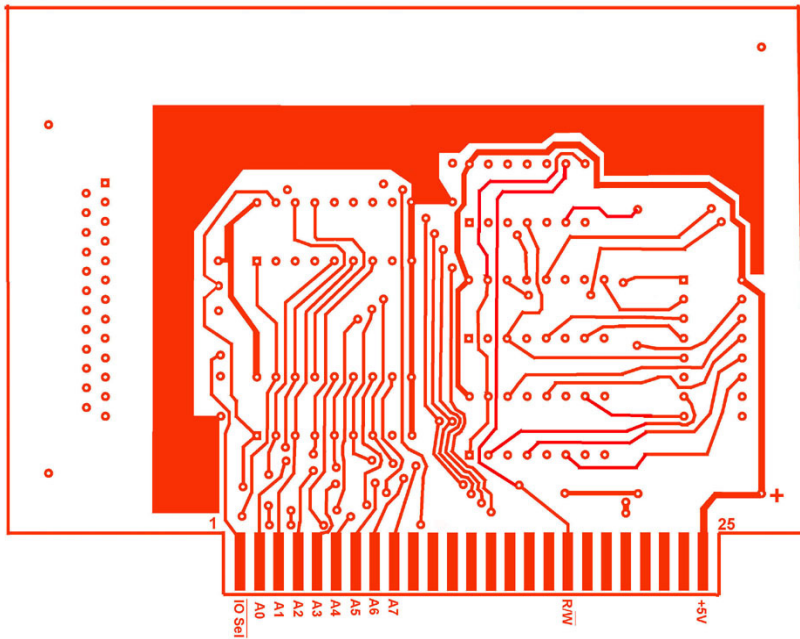

The following picture displays the traces fron the soldering side which are safe identified:
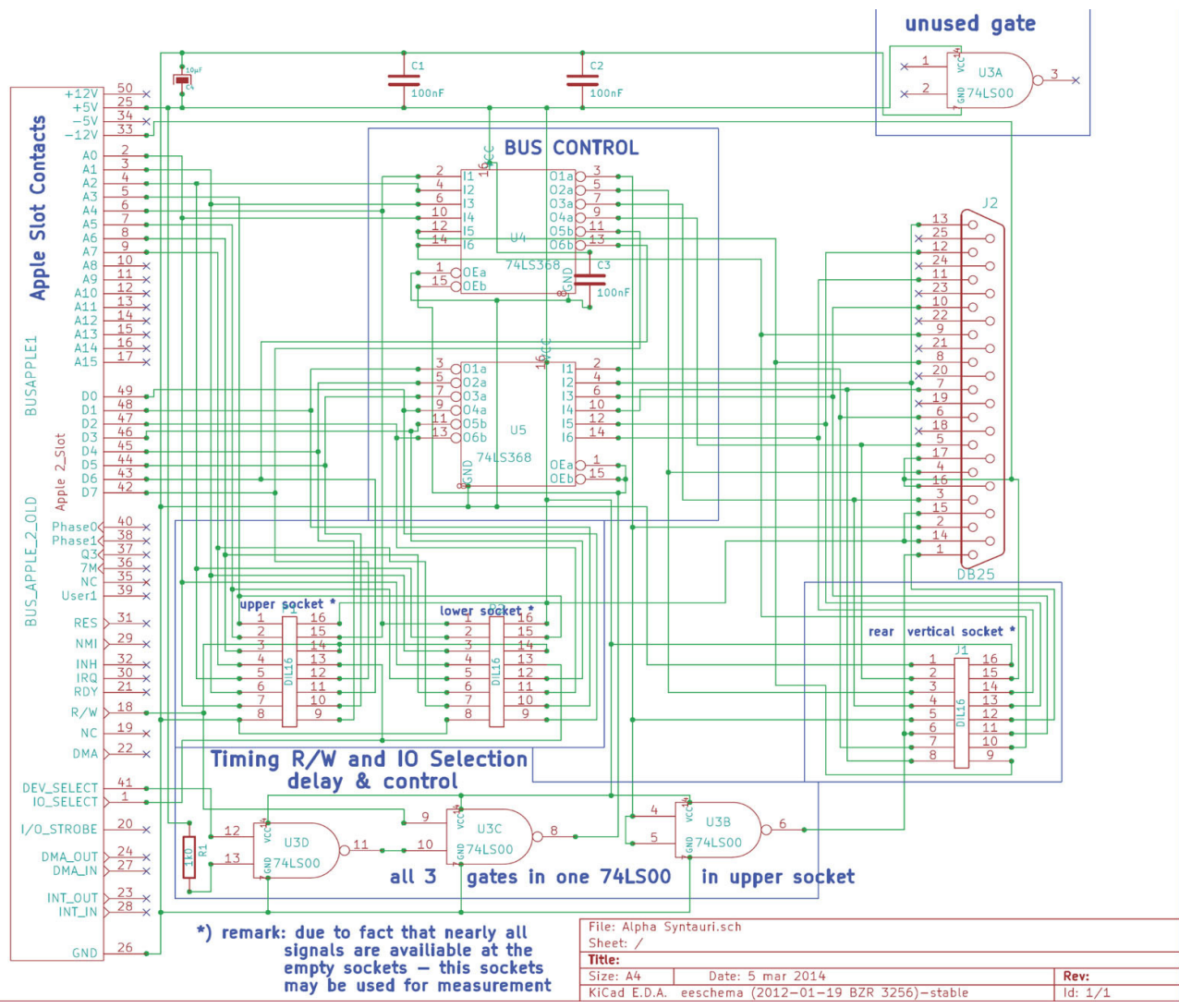
Alpha Syntauri Interface Solderside

and here <u>the part </u>of the component side of the interface card <u>that is also detected for sure</u> as red layer:
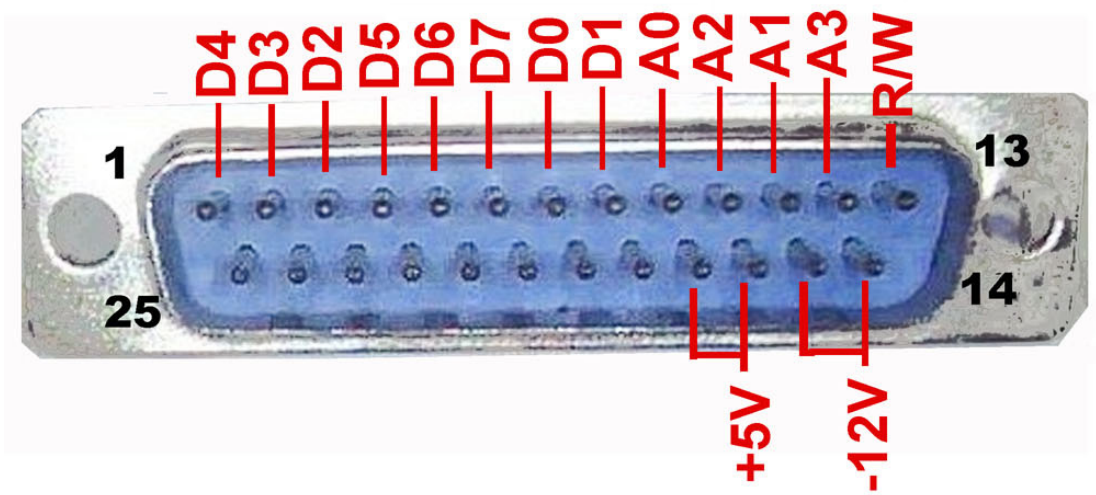
Alpha Syntauri Interface Componentside

and here is a picture of the _current_ circuitplan with the information <u>availiable up to this moment</u>..:
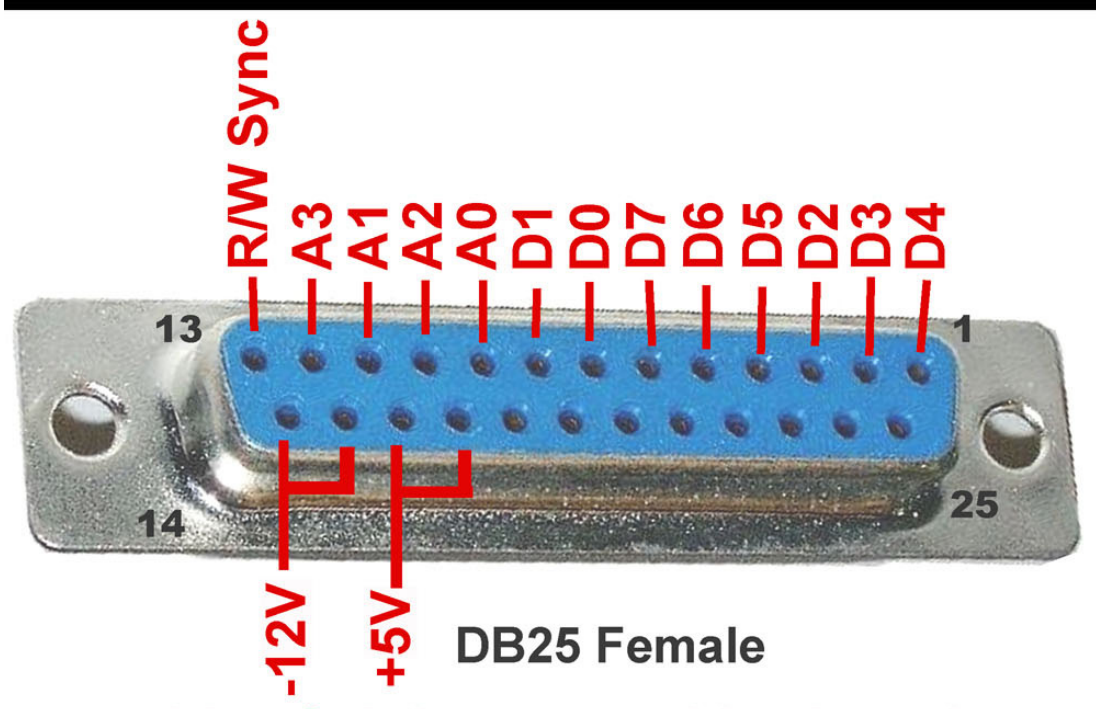
and here is the pinout of the cable from this Apple II interfacecard to the alpha syntauri keyboard:
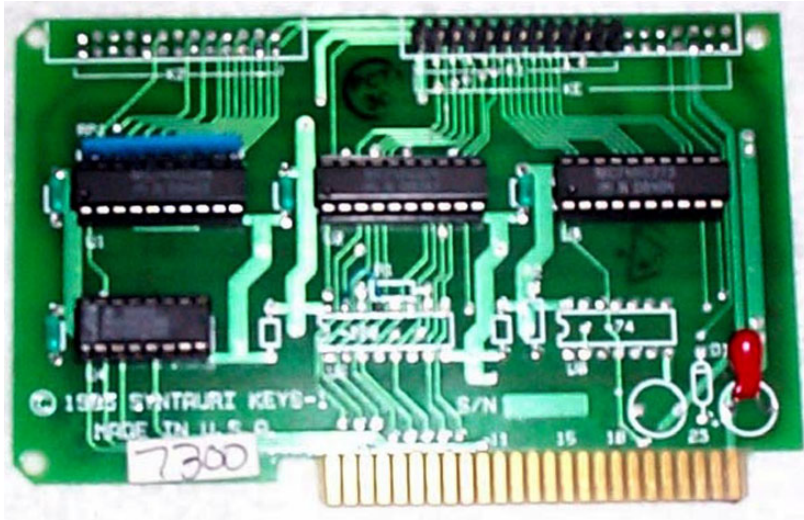
Alpha Syntauri Cable
DB25 Male

D4 D3 D2 D5 D6 D7 D0 D1 A0 A2 A1 A3 R/W Sync

1

13

25

14

+5V -12V

at side of Apple II Interface

R/W Sync

A3 A1 A2 A0 D1 D0 D7 D6 D5 D2 D3 D4

13

1

14

25

-12V +5V

DB25 Female

at side of alpha syntauri keyboard

there is also another kind of interface that was distributed along with the alpha syntauri system, but the picture of that card is unfortunatly that bad, that there is not the slightest chance to reverse engineer it by that picture (even more because also a picture of the rearside / soldering side of that card is missing/ not availiable):

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at this page we will examine the front card of the
### Mountain Computer Music System

The purpose of the Mountain Computer Music System in relation / interaction with the alpha syntauri is the generation of the soundwaves. It´s the system to perform the translation from pressed keys at the keyboard to output of sound to an external Amplifioer and from there to the speakers. And besides of the software of the alpha syntauri, that in fact just stores the keypresses at the keyboard and the setup of sounds at the Mountain Computer Music System.

The Mountain Computer Music System itself consists of two cards: the front card which might be called the system interface that performes interaction between the computer and the software while the alternating card introduces in the later page might be called the "Generation card", that performs the real sound output and that also handles the communication with the lightpen and it´s interaction with the software.

Allthough in this picture both cards are connected with a hard linking connector system - some older systems (like the one i have) are linked together with a flexible system. That flexible system is very vulnerable. Therefor i decided to not only detect the traces below the IC-sockets, but instead to desolder / strip off the entire card and when performing the repopulation to replace the connectior between this cards with goldplated long pin pluging system.
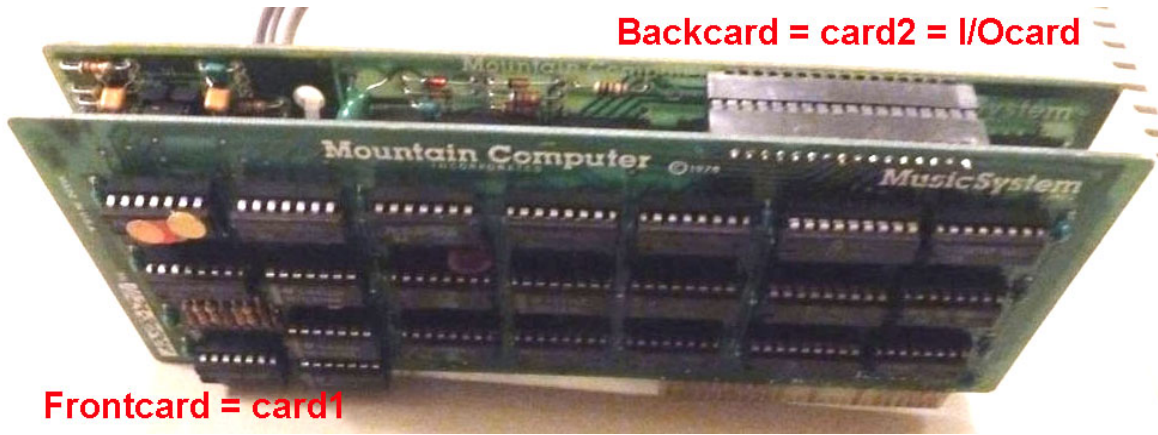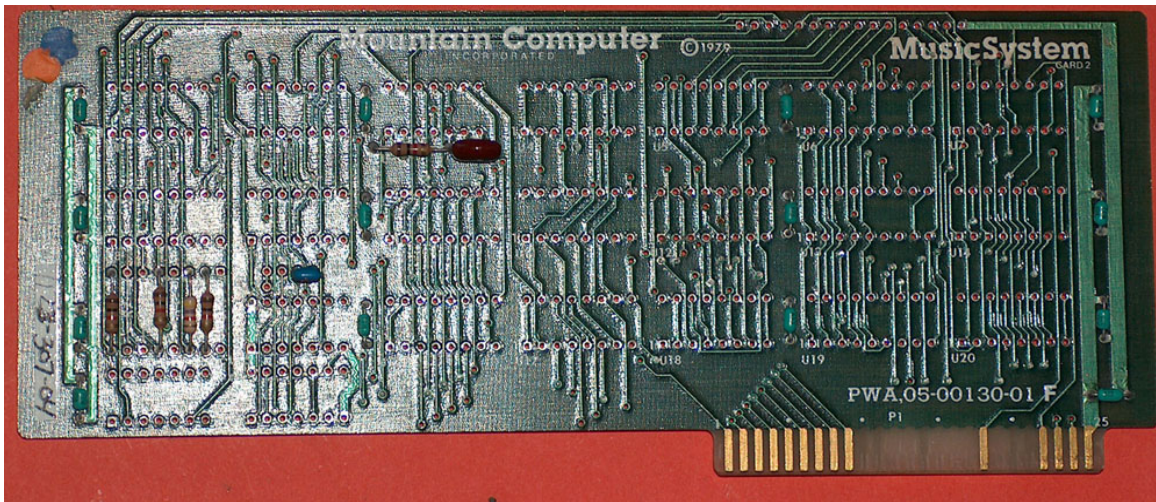

Here is the view to the rear soldering side of the front card (here with a "hard connector linking system):
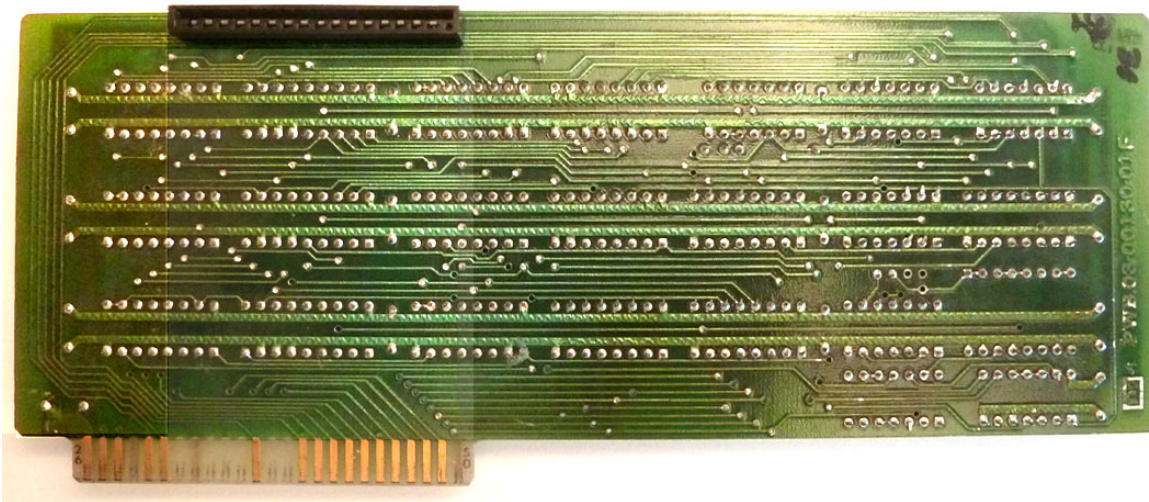

Here is the view to the populated side of this front card:

Here is the view to the (nearly entirely) desoldered card displaying the traces below of the sockets:

After reproducing a drawing and transfer of the traces to that drawings (blue side represents soldering side and red side represents componentsisde) the resulting combination of both layers (solderingside and component side) to this map with both layers:
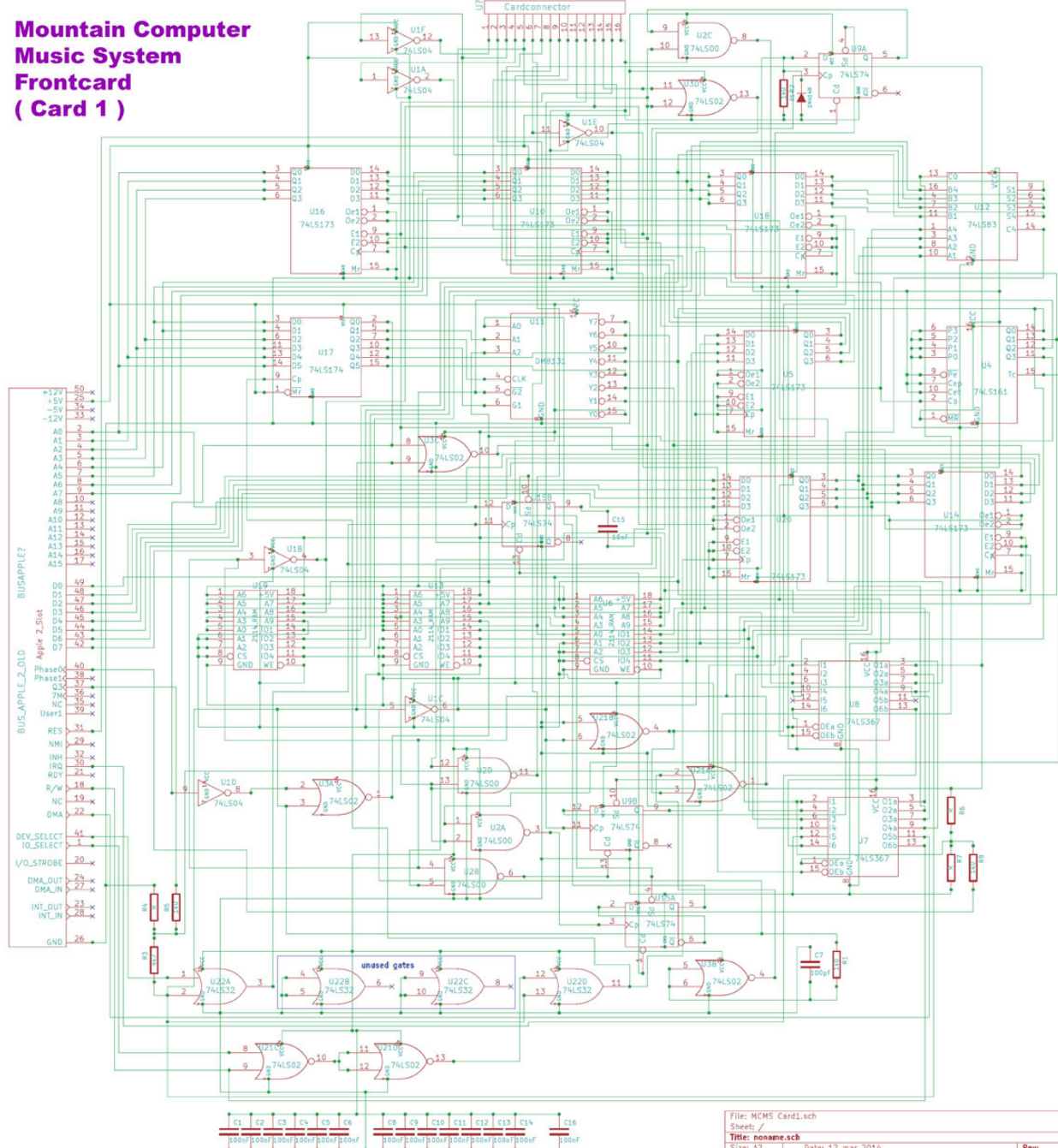

RED = Componentside
Blue = Solderside
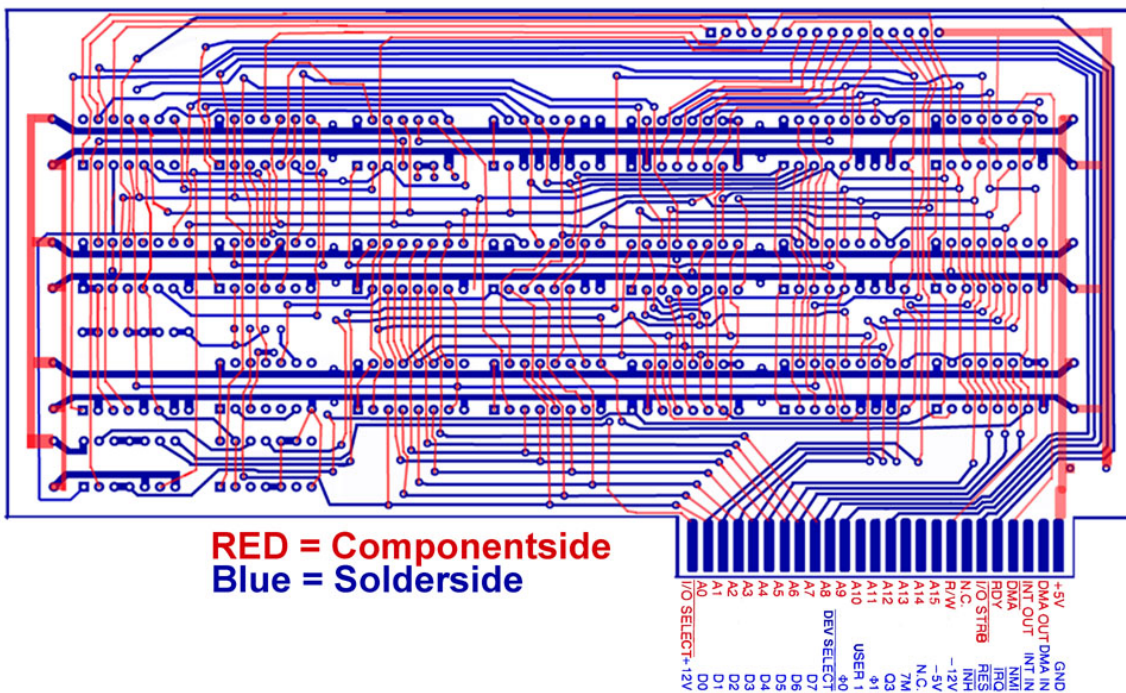
and here in the drawing that displays the used components and the used values (red = circuits, blue = capacitors, light brown = resistors, yellow = diode):
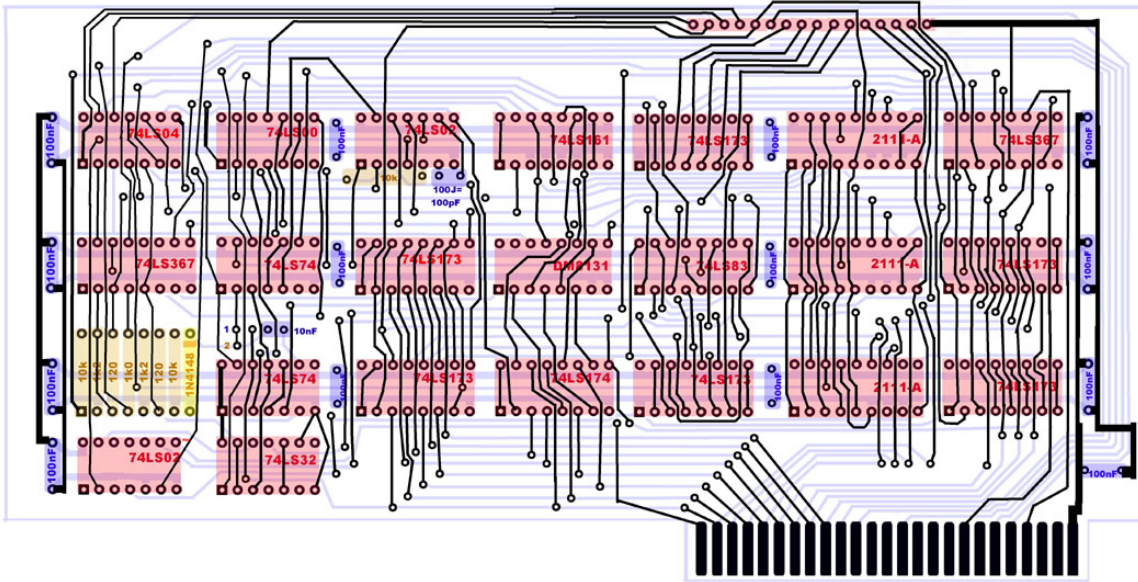
So now after 3 days of work this part of the task is completed and the circuitplan is completed:

**Mountain Computer
Music System
Frontcard
(Card 1)**

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at this page we will examine the back card of the
### Mountain Computer Music System, I/O card
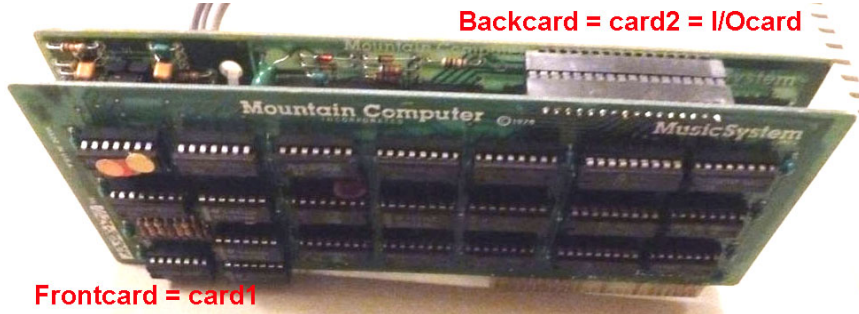
In this part i´ll show the details about the second rear card of the system.The cables to the external devices are connected to this card. The most simple part of the external devices is the lightpen. In fact it´s just a simple phototransistor that detects light and then it switches the power just like any normal switching transistor. The only difference is that instead of a voltage to the baseconnector in this transiostor has a lens at the base and the light causes the transistor to switch through. The Transistor is a MRD370. The pen is visible in the picture below of the card.

The other 2 cables are ending at chich connectors which are common within audio systems. Both cables together act as stereo output - one cable contains signals for right channel and the other contains the signals of the left channel. The output level is equal to standard audiosystems and equals to 0,7 Volt which is normalelly feeded to line inputs at the amplifier.So the part of the electronis on the card in position front (left side) of the holes where the cablebinders are located bear the analog electronic part of the board. The other part of the card contains 2 function blocks: The part that sychronizes the lightpen with the video output - it muist detect exactly the millisecond where the pixels are generated in the picture that display that area which shall be selected by the user. In that very moment the pixels get displayed the transistor passes over a switching pulse to the card and the card must pass over that detected signal to the software for the further handling and switch to the selected menuitem.

The other part of the electronic at the card the pulses setup by the soundconfiguration is prepared before it´s handed over to the audiopart. This primary audiopart determines such things like frequency, pulseduration and other parameters that have been selected by the software and passed over to the other frontcard. The connector on the top of the card passes over that data to this card.

 So in a very unique way you may call the first card (front card) to be the part for handling software and memory storing the parameters and menuoptions and at this second card (rear card) there is a kind IO handling and a kind of synthisizergeneration for waveforms.
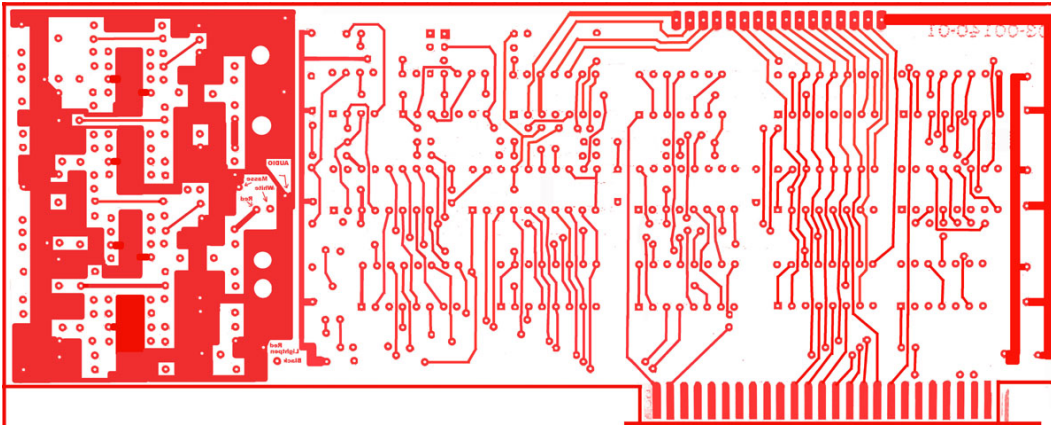
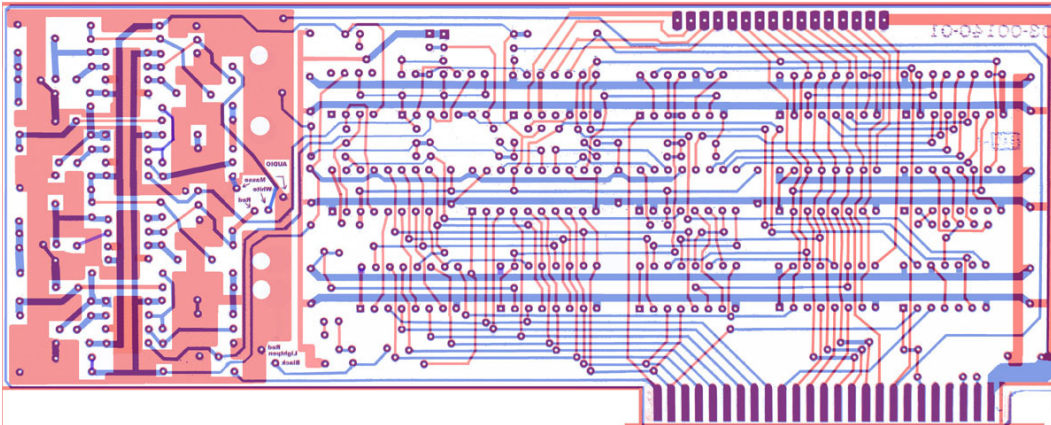here is the view to the populated side of the second (rear) card:
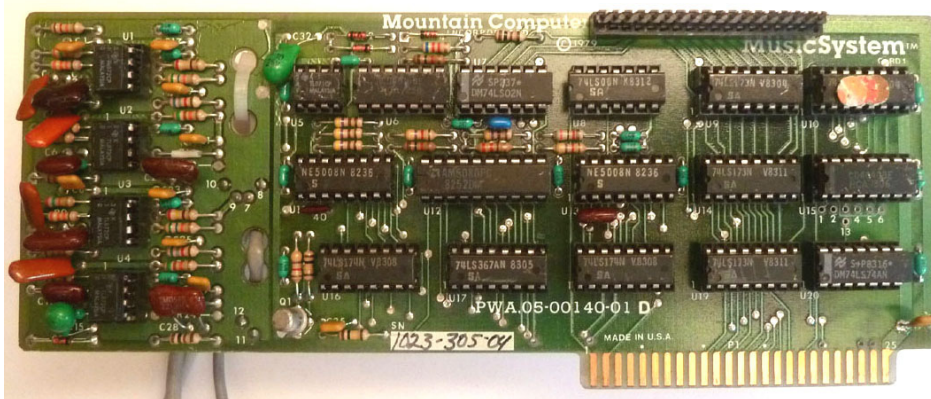
and here is the view to the soldering side of this second (rear) card:
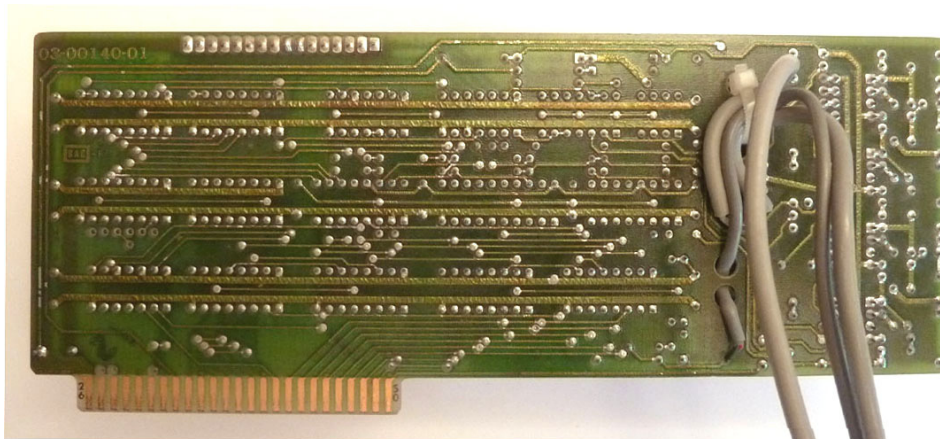
and here is the view to the "external" connection parts of this card : the light pen and the 2 audio-output- connectors.
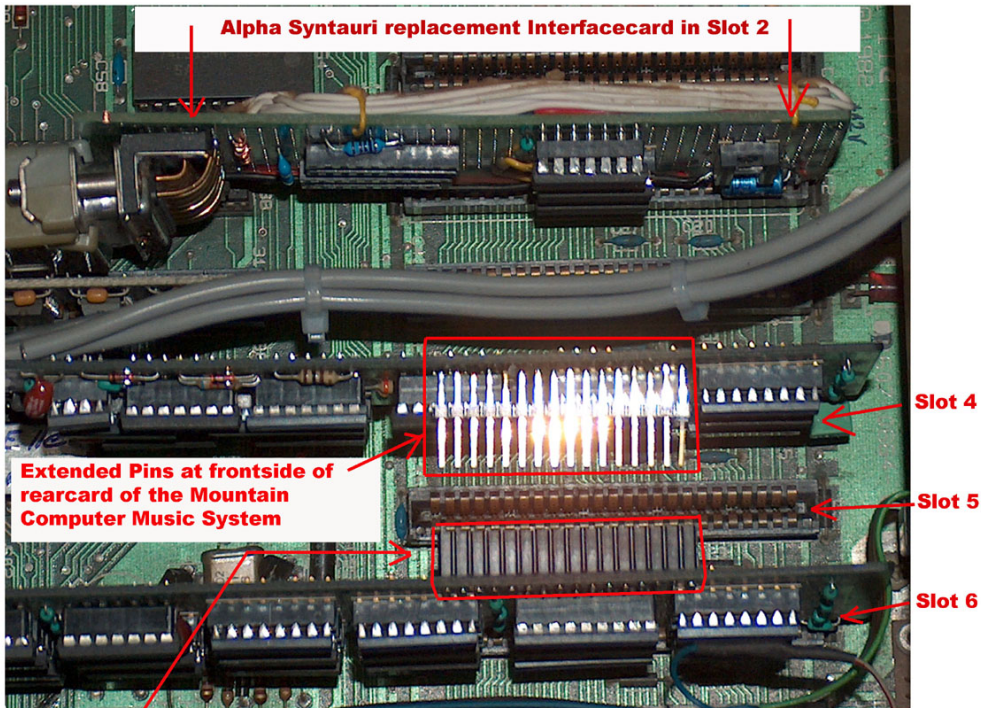
the "external" devices & connections of the Mountain Computer Music System

2 x Chinch =
1 Chinch = Audio Out
1 Chinch = Audio In

so next here a view inside of the lightpen - it only contains a lightsensitive switching transistor :

MRD370

Here is the componentlayout of the card:

And here is a view to the solderside after it has been converted to be blue layer for later analysis of the card:

So now here is the red layer from componentside:

and here is the combination of both layers together:

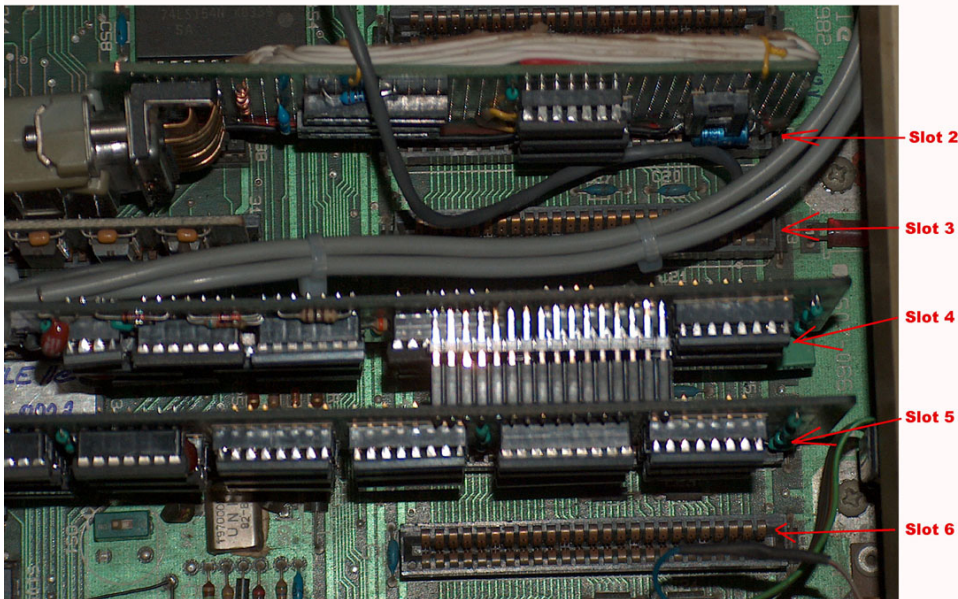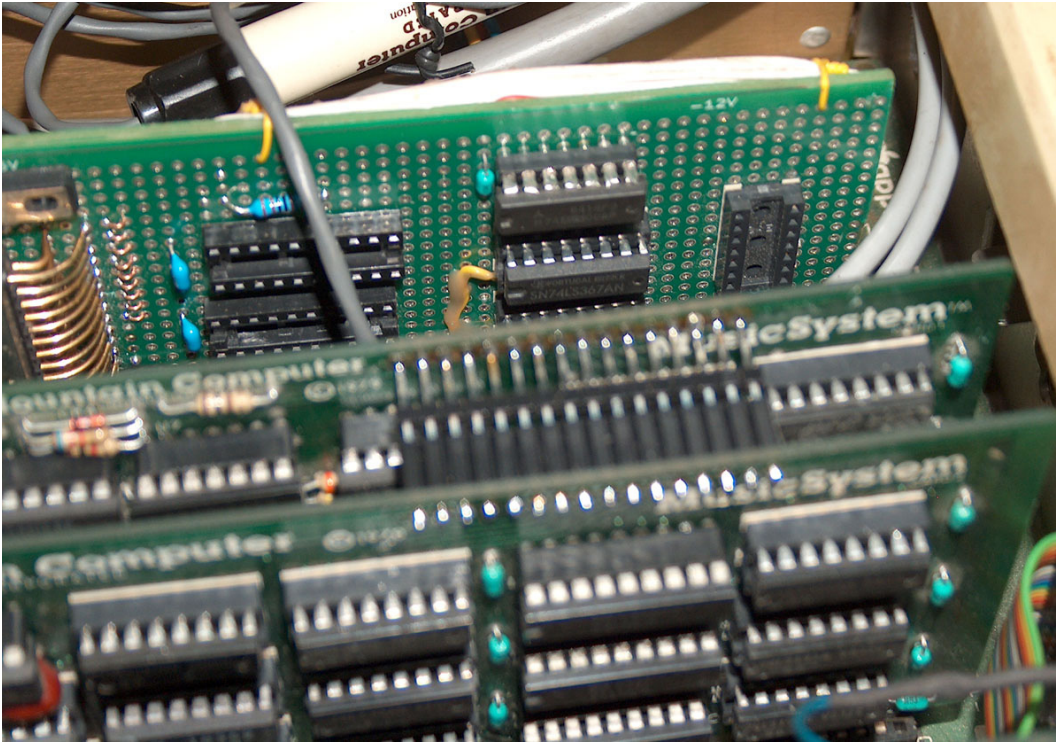**So finally here is now also the circuitplan of the second card of the Mountain Computer Music System :**
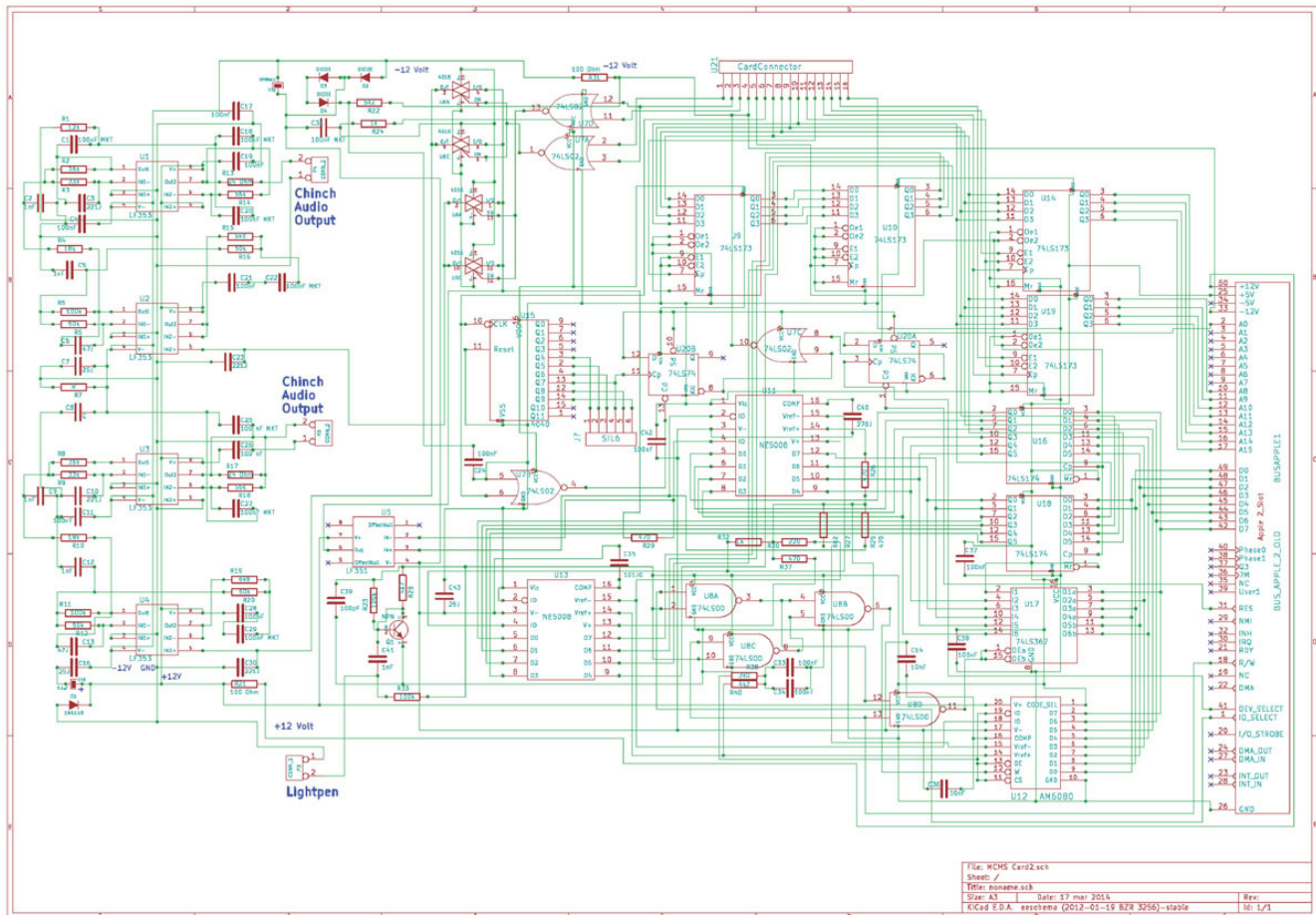
As explained in the previous page the connection between both cards in my system was not reliable.
Therefor i replaced the connection in my system with goldplated extended pinconnectors.
The following pictures show this replacing solution. In the first picture i have placed both cards apart from
each other to mahe the connection visible. In the second and third picture the cards are both plugged together
and set in their default slots.

Alpha Syntauri replacement Interfacecard in Slot 2

Slot 4

Extended Pins at frontside of rearcard of the Mountain Computer Music System

Slot 5

Slot 6

Pinconnector at rearside of frontcard of Mountain Computer Music System remark: distance of one additional slot left in this picture to demonstrate length of extended pins !

In this picture both cards of the Mountain Computer Music System are plugged together to each other and are placed in the regular default slots 4 and 5 ! The result : The card have perfect reliable connection to each other !

Slot 2

Slot 3

Slot 4

Slot 5

Slot 6

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APPLEBOX

the alpha syntauri system
a ancient synthisizer concept for the Apple II

details and circuitplan of the piano-keyboard part
### of the alpha syntauri

During the distribution of the alpha syntauri system there have been 2 different pianokeyboards common to sales:
a version with 48 keyswitches was distributer with the early systems,
while later systems have been distributed with a 61 keyswich pianokeyboard.
Another difference was that the later version was able to recognize velocity, while the early version didn´t do that.

This page displays the later common version with 61 keyswitches.

In the earlier pages the keyboard has been displayed in general. In this part we´ll take a closer view to the details of the piano-keyboard part
of the alpha syntauri before the signals from the keyboard enter the decoder PCB inside of the keyboard case.

The keyboard has 61 keyswitches. To enable the user to assign each single key of the keyboard to it´s correct part in the circuitplan
i have numbered the keys in the picture below. According also to this picture and the circuitplan you may recognize the "grouping"
of each 8 keyswitches in a keyblock. This is also due to the "grouping" inside of the keyboard where 8 keys are collected to one
group by the related "upper connector bar" and "lower connector bar". This will be explained later in other pictures.
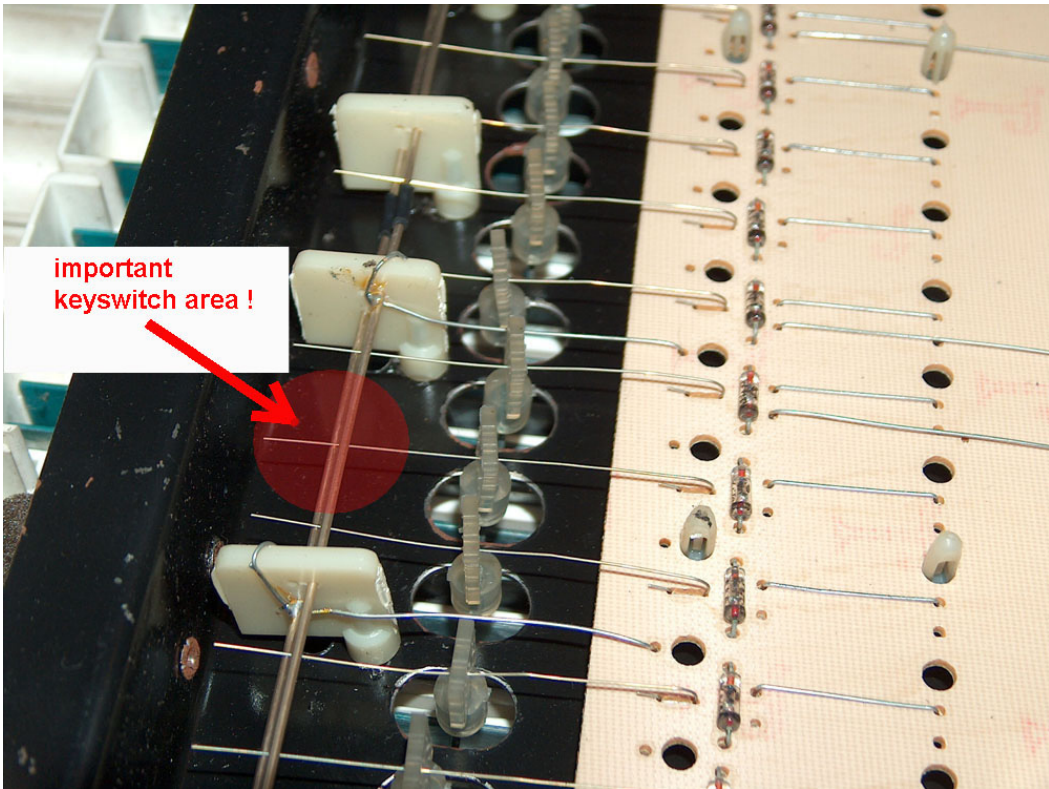
Here is the picture with the numbering of the keyswitches and it´s related "piano keys":

Keys ordered by logical blocks of circuitplan

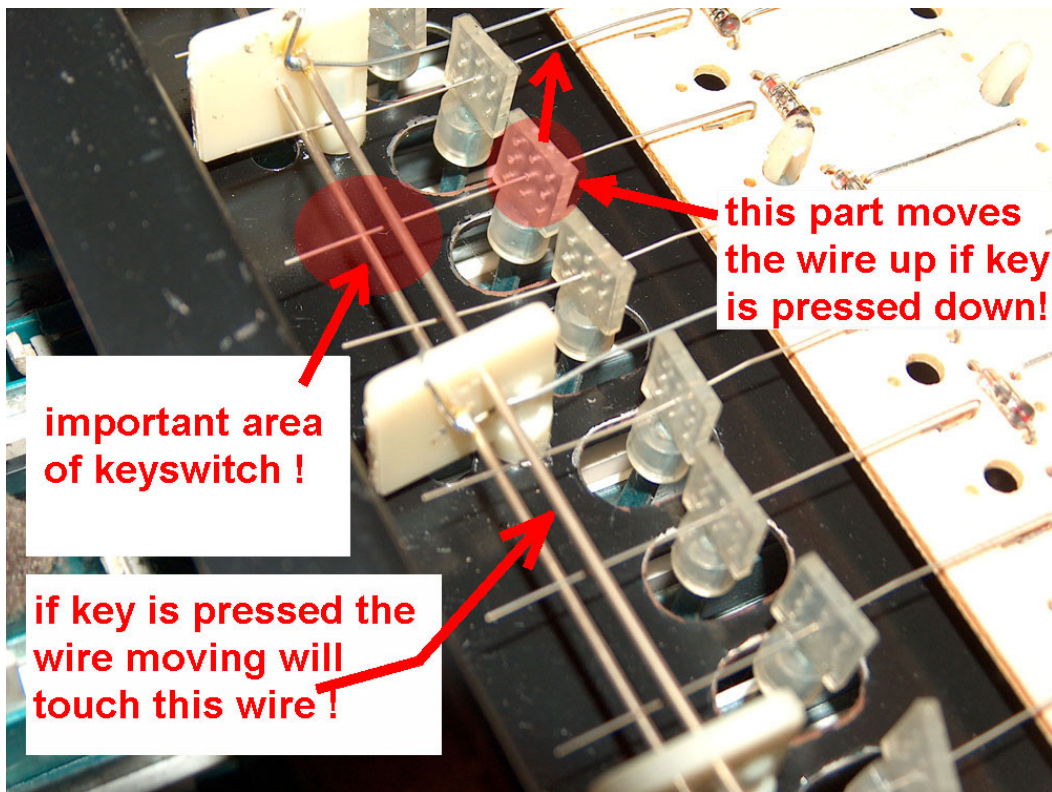25 black keys + 36 white keys = 61 keys total
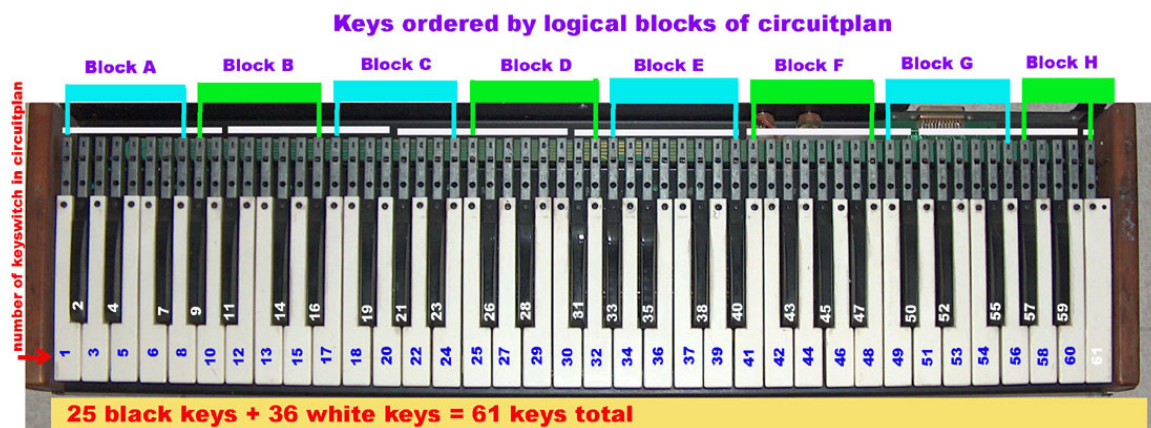
and here is the related circuitplan:
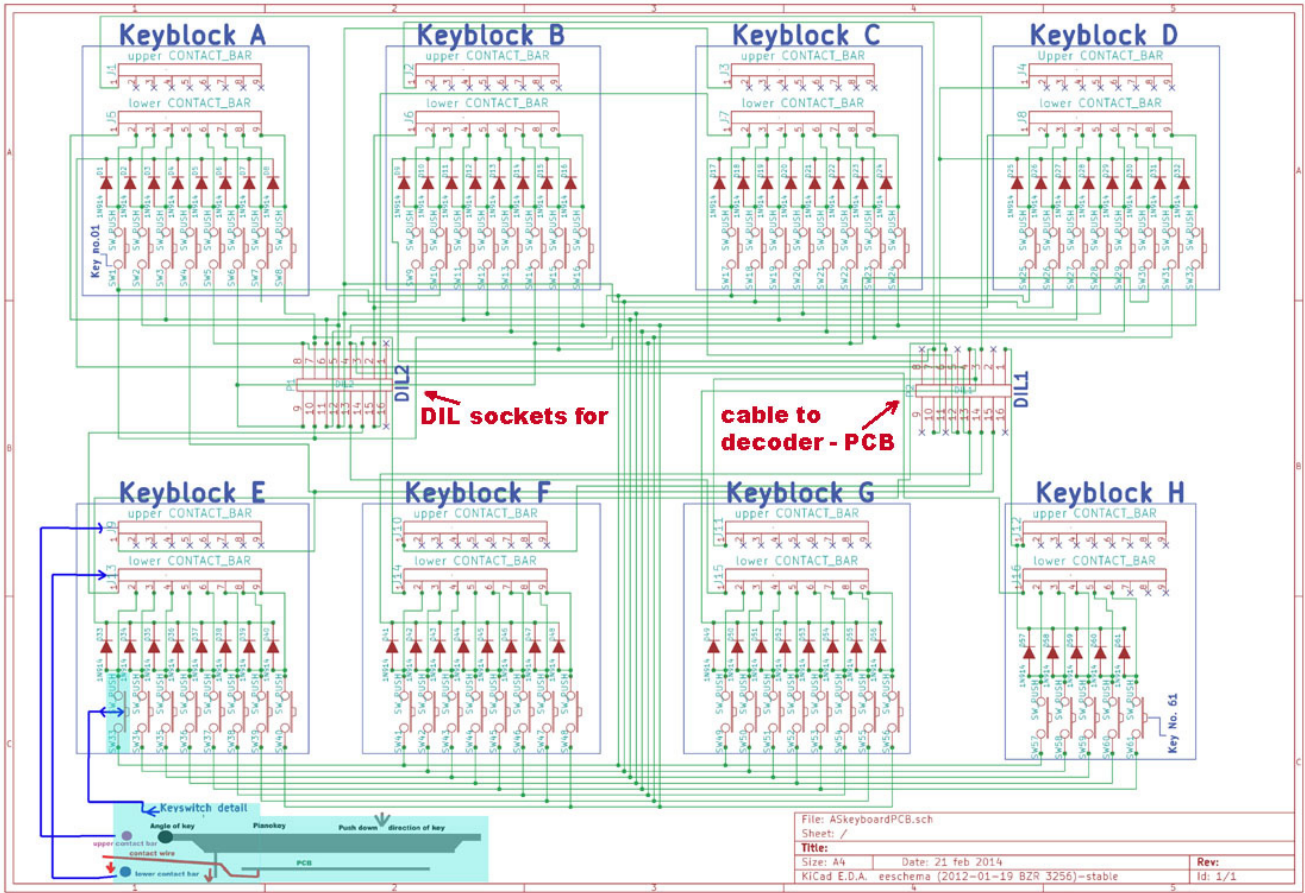
to recognize the details of the keyswitches here some more pictures of that section:

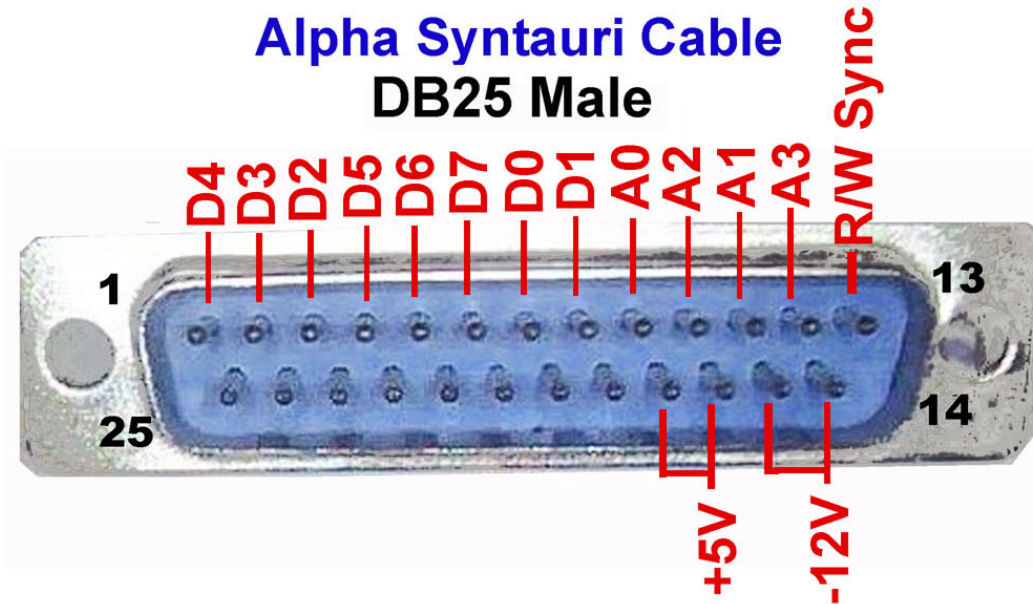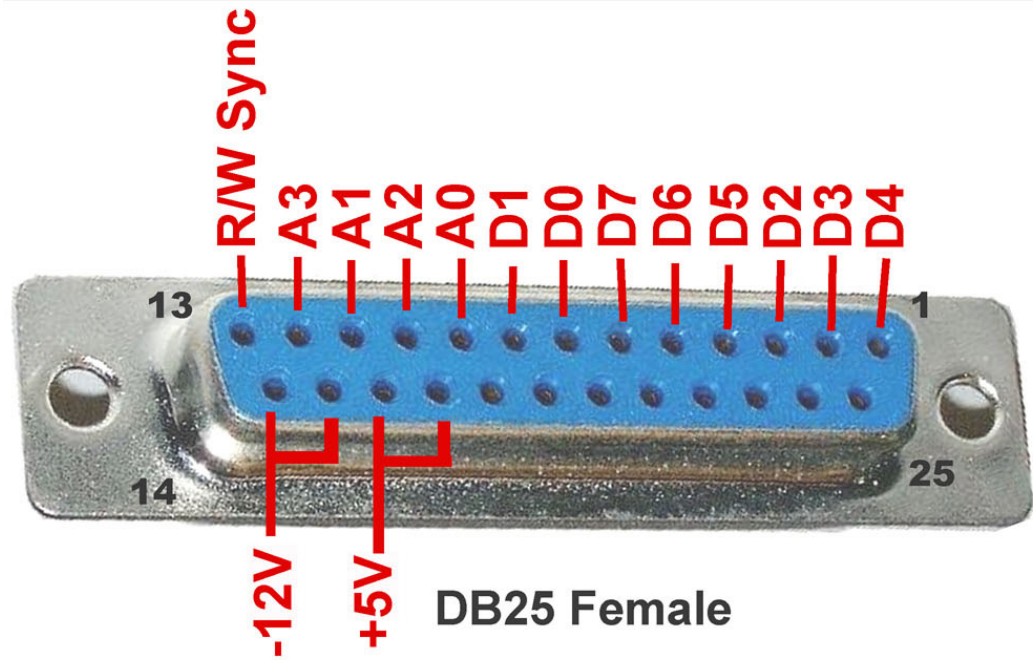and here the second picture from another viewpoint:

this part moves the wire up if key is pressed down!

important area of keyswitch !

if key is pressed the wire moving will touch this wire !

and here is the pinout of the cable between the Apple II interfacecard and the keyboard:

Alpha Syntauri Cable
DB25 Male

D4 D3 D2 D5 D6 D7 D0 D1 A0 A2 A1 A3 R/W Sync

1 13

25 14

+5V -12V

at side of Apple II Interface

R/W Sync A3 A1 A2 A0 D1 D0 D7 D6 D5 D2 D3 D4

13 1

14 25

-12V +5V

DB25 Female

at side of alpha syntauri keyboard

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19.05.2014 10:12

APPLEBOX

the alpha syntauri system
a ancient synthisizer concept for the Apple II
The early beginning with the ALF card

At the beginning the alpha syntauri was distributed with the ALF MC01 card. This was due to the fact that the card was rather cheap and it was rather cheap attempt of experiments to get a system with the pianokeyboard up and running. In later more common distribution the company decided to use the system with the cards from tha Mountain Computer Music System. Allthough that two cards have been in those days much more expensive the crew at syntauri decided to use that system, because it had not only better performance at sound output, but also the ability to use a lightpen as input device.

Here the component layout:
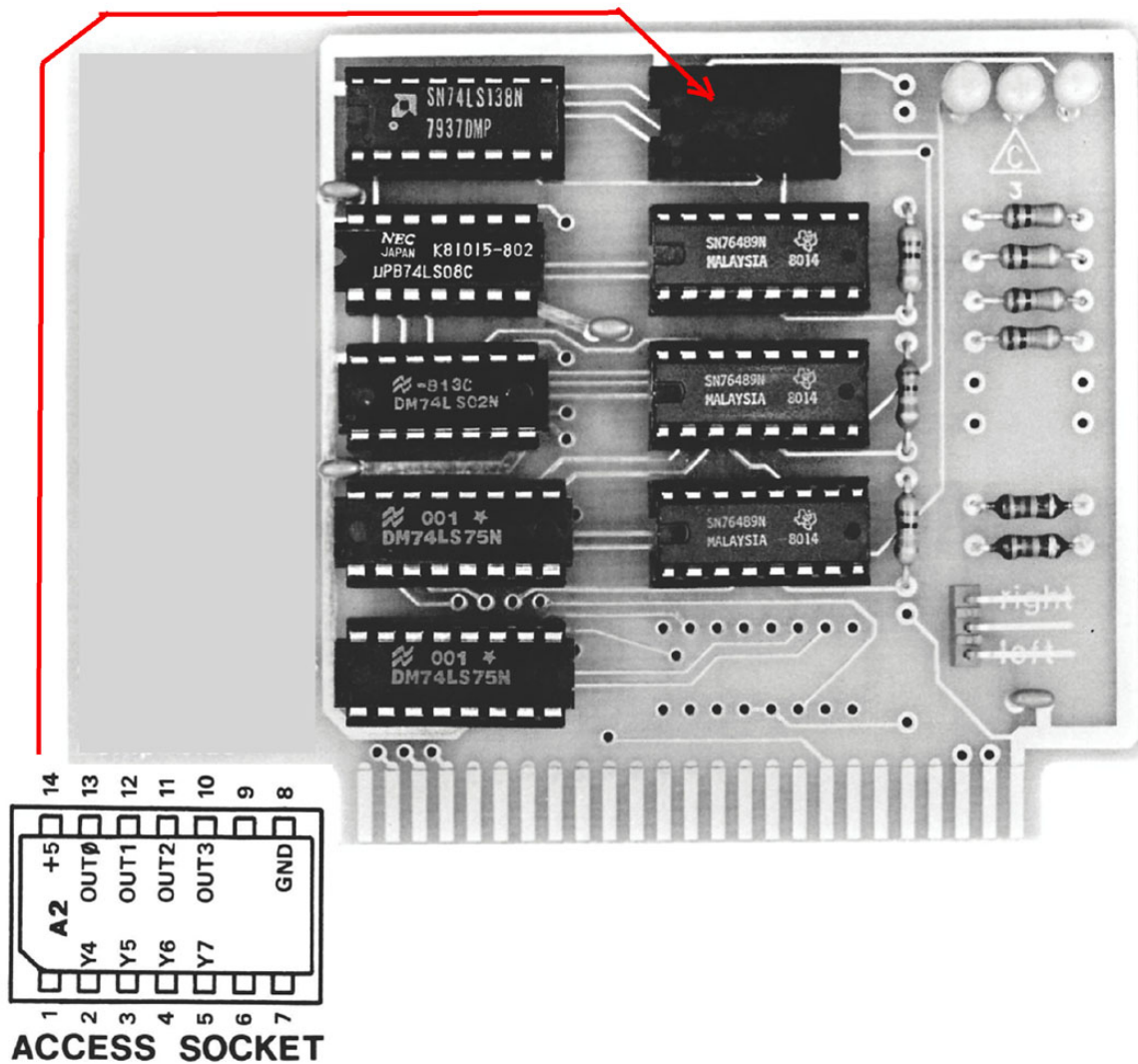
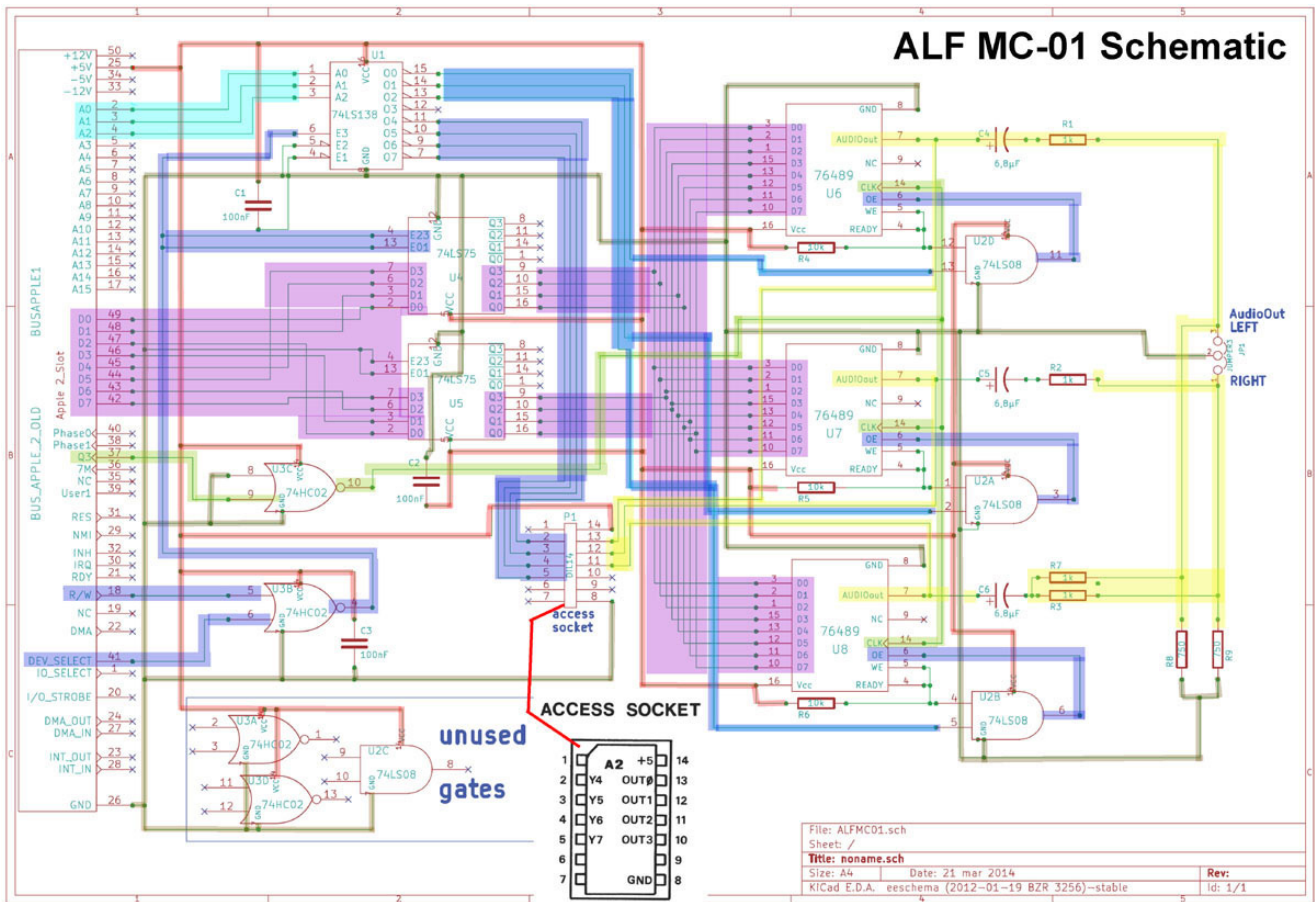Here the picture of the solderside as layer:
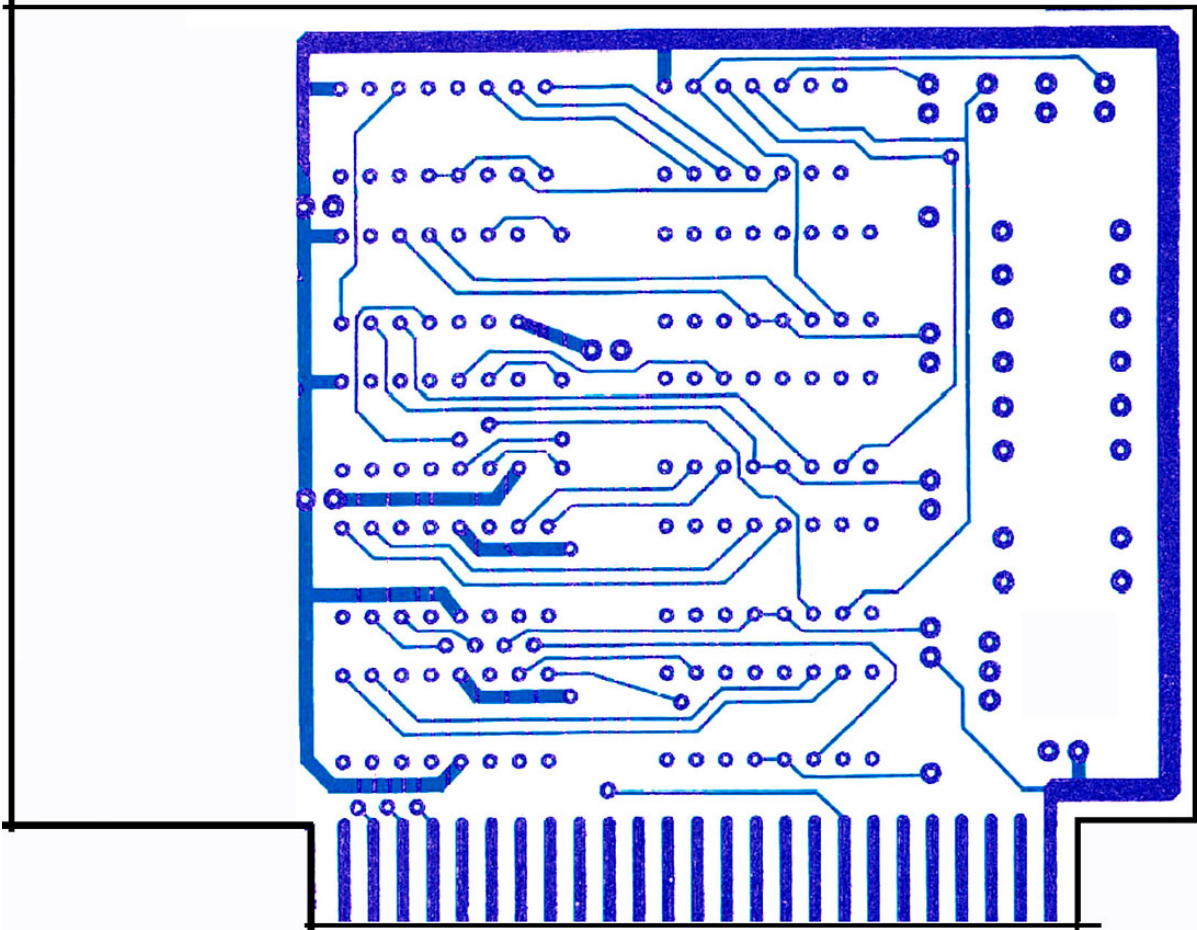
And here the view to the componentside as layer:
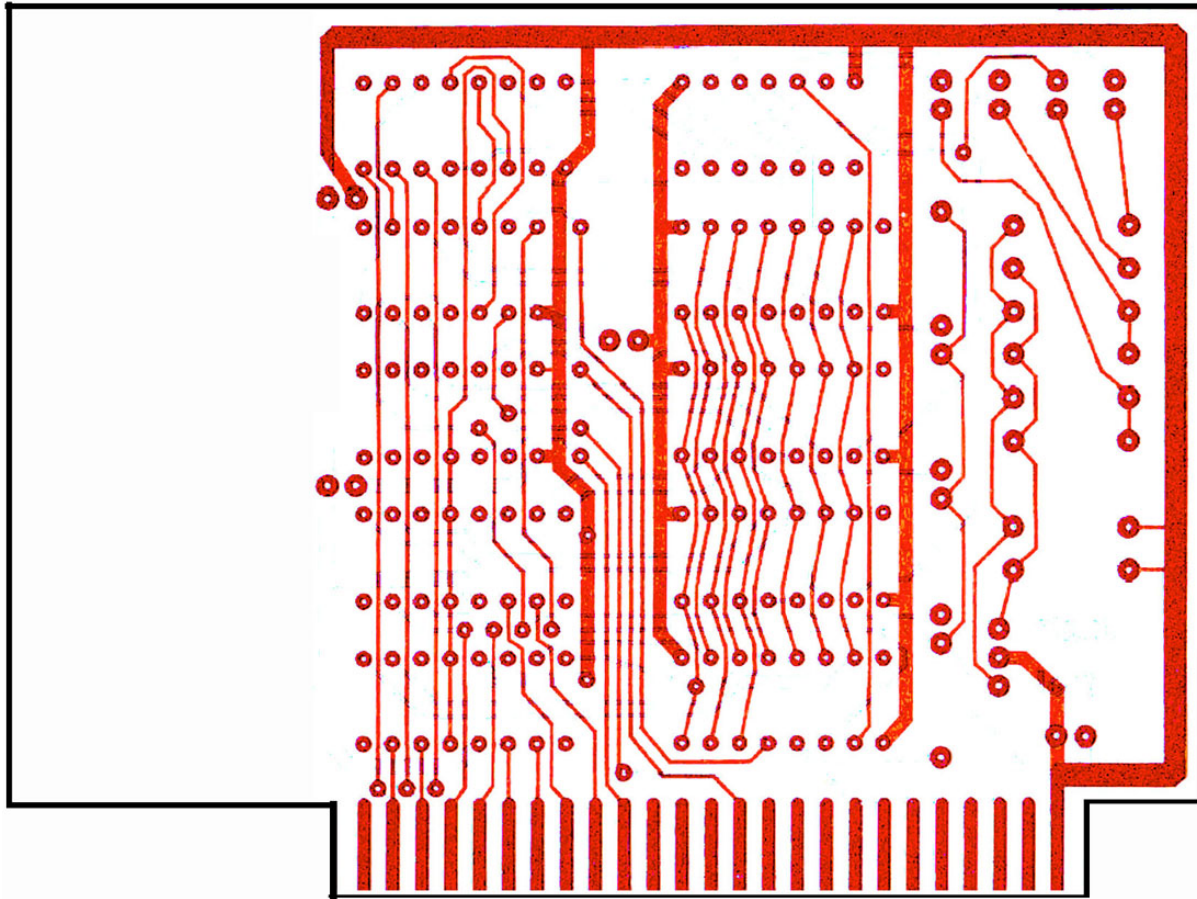
'Here again the combination of both layers:
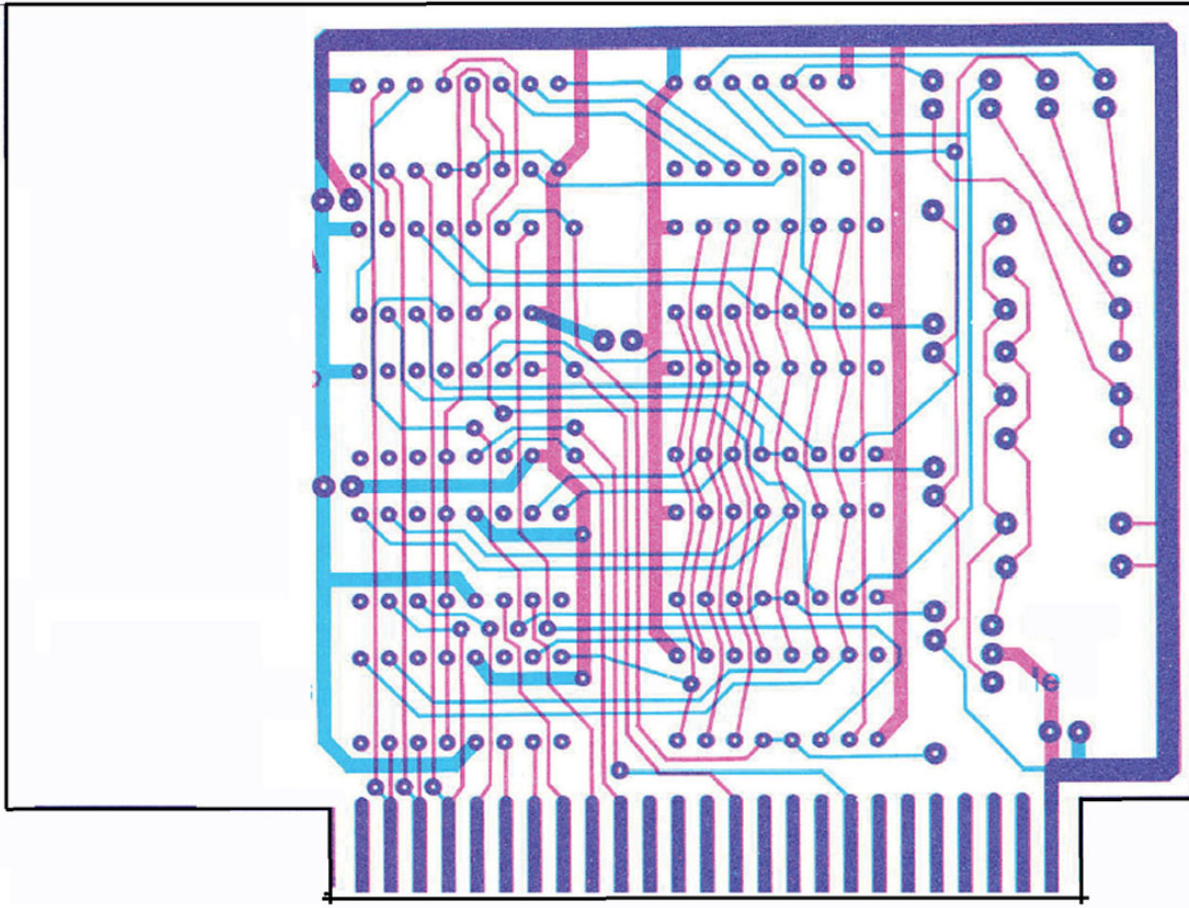
and here is the schematic:

ALF MC-01 Schematic

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**pages.**

APPLEBOX

the alpha syntauri system
a ancient synthisizer concept for the Apple II

making of a replacement for the missing IFcard
### of the alpha syntauri Keyboard

In the **upper part of the page** there is the description of making a "prototype looking card"
while **in the lower part of the page** there is the description and the needed files
for ordering **a professional like looking replacement of the Interfacecard**.

First of all after i have recieved all parts of the alpha syntauri system with the Mountain Computer Music System except of the missing
alpha syntauri Apple II Interfacecard i decided to speed up things by making "on the fly" a "prototype like" interfacecard. the target is to
get very fast a working setup, that permits me to check all components and the availiable software for correct basic functions. While
entering data in the CAD system and getting the files required for ordering a replacement PCB with professional look i have the chance
to get proof if anything is missing and that the circuitplan made for the Interfacecard turns out to be correct and gets verified. Besides
i may recognize if the files i have picked from the archives in the internet for the system are working correct or if i have to continue
hunting for somethiong that still is missing.

At the stage this picture has been made i only have mede the connections for the powersuppplylines. I keep the layout of the
card same as the original.
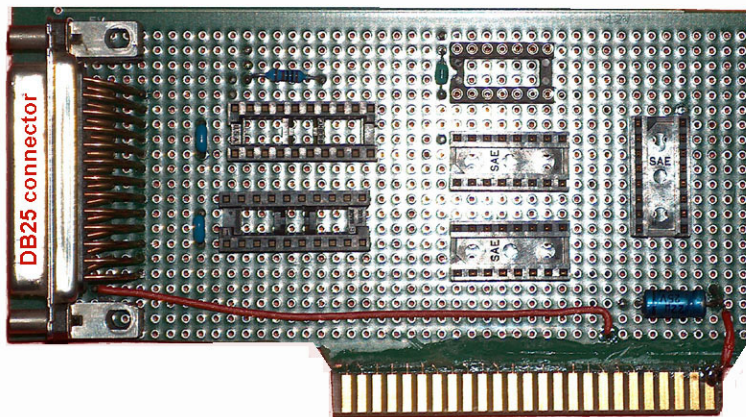
That´s the rear soldering side of the card at this point:
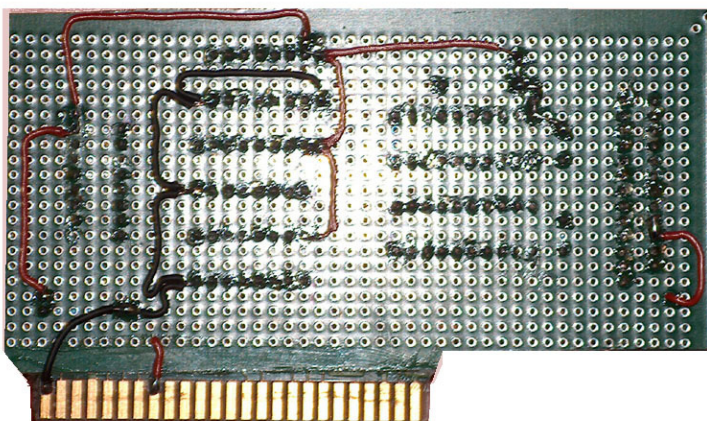
At this stage i have have made the card up to the point that i was able to detect from traces recognized from the picture of the soldering side
and that parts that i was able to detect from the picture of the component side adding only very few parts that i have been able to assume by
logic conclusion and knowledge of the internal functions of the used chips. But there are still important parts (related to the R/W line and the
timing and the handling of the DevSel connecttion to the Apple II. This lines have been fixed after soldering with 2 component glue to protect
the soldered wires from tear off or damage.

Due to still missing information this prototypecard of the Alpha Syntauri Interface can NOT be COMPLETED ! Therefor also the circuitplan can NOT BE VERIFIED ! Pictures URGENTLY REQUIRED ! See postings above !
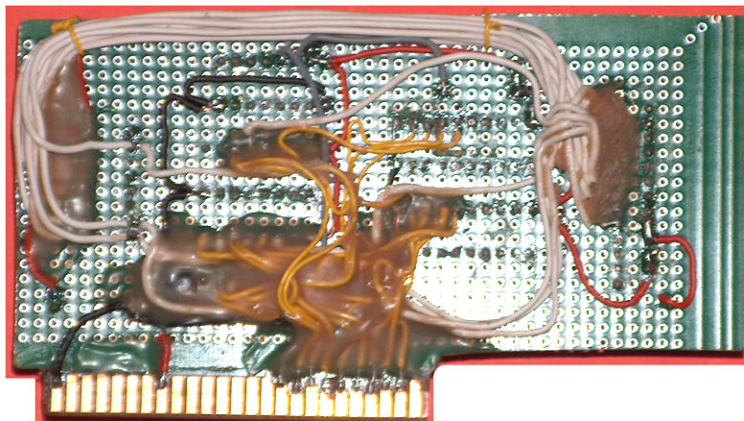

In the mean time i have recieved the upmost missing picture from the USA that displays the unpopulated (in this case even just desoldered) card and therfor i was able to detect the missing connections below of the circuits. So first of all i immediatlly started entering the data in the CAD system and then started with the missing part of the interfacecard.

So here now is the picture of the componentside of that "prototype like" interfacecard. It´s now finished and ready for testing. **There is one big difference to the circuitplan: The Adressinglines from A4 to A7 are only connected to the empty sockets and therfor they are NOT used with the communication between Apple II and the alpha syntauri keyboard. Therefor i have left them away in this version.** At the replacement interfacecard designed with the CAD system they are of course integrated and connected to the empty sockets - it permits to take signals from that sockets for measurement purposes. So at the card in the now following section that traces are connected exactly like at the original interface card - only the layout of the traces changed due to the fact that the CAD-programm carried out a job of rerouting that traces.

Here is the picture of the componentside of the prototypecard:
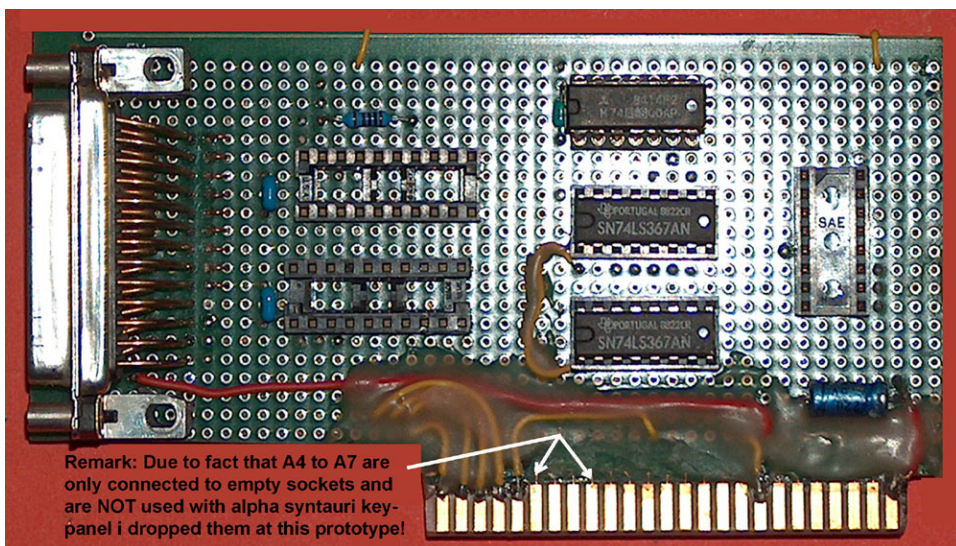
Here is the picture of the solderingside of the prototypecard:
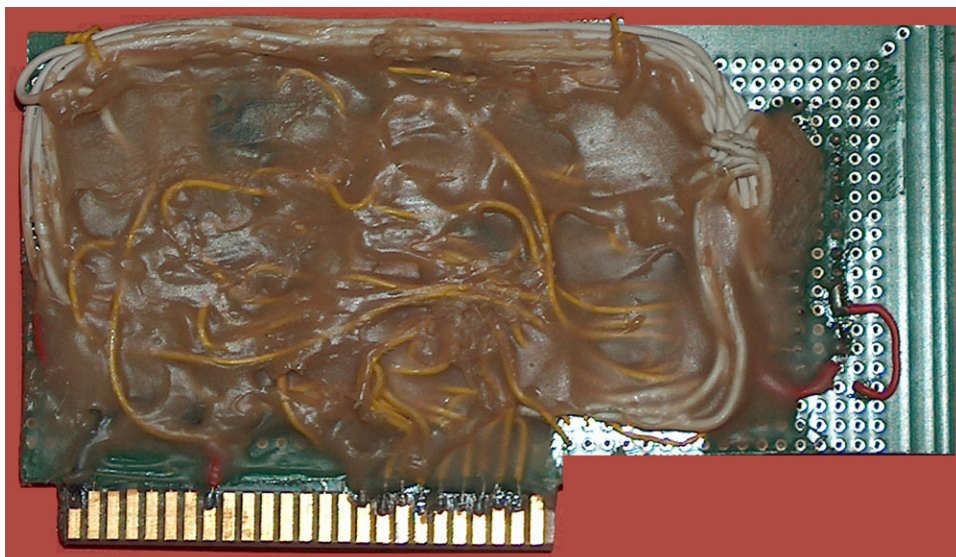
At this point i must state, that for the final documentation i am still searching for pictures of the second version of the interface card that was sold later by alpha syntauri. That version did not have a DB25 connector on the interface card but instead Pinrows on top of the card. See at the bottom of the first page the very last picture. It´s only thing i found about that card. That card was also sold with the ALF card instead of the Mountain Computer Music System. So if anybody has pictures , information, manuals, software of that second version please contact me at Applefritter.com . You may contact me there with my nickname "speedyG".

After finally getting the missing pictures of the Interfacecard which have displayed the traces below the circuits, it was passible to generate the productiondata that enables the user to get a chance of ordering a professional looking replacement interfacecard from any PCB-manufacturer.

This alternate interfacecard is deffent from the original interfacecard by several marks:
I dropped of the empty sockets without use
i flipped the layout due to the fact that at original card the DB25plug connector was heading to the front of the Apple and therefor the thick cable to the alpha syntauri needed to twist around to the rear outlets of the computer - in my design the DB25-connector is set a bit forward bit flipped around - permitting the DB25plg to be connected within the Apple II and the cable running staight back outside of the Apple II without inside twisting.
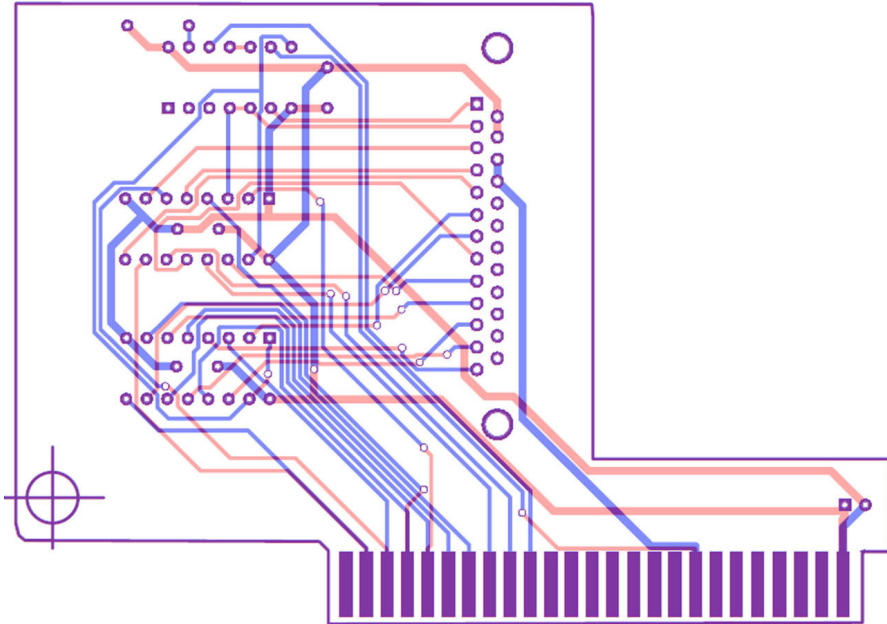
The following pictures display a new rerouted interfacecard.

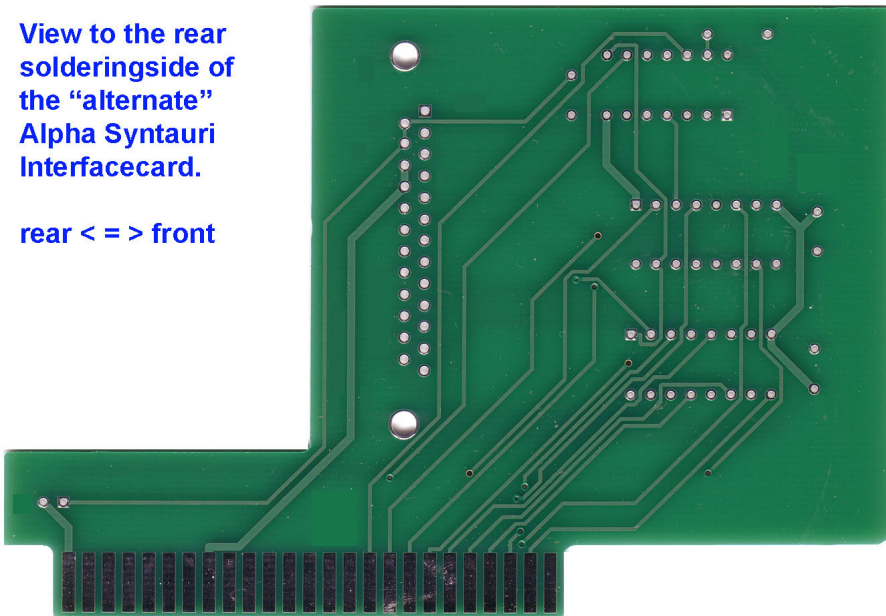here is the circuitplan of this alternate interfacecard:
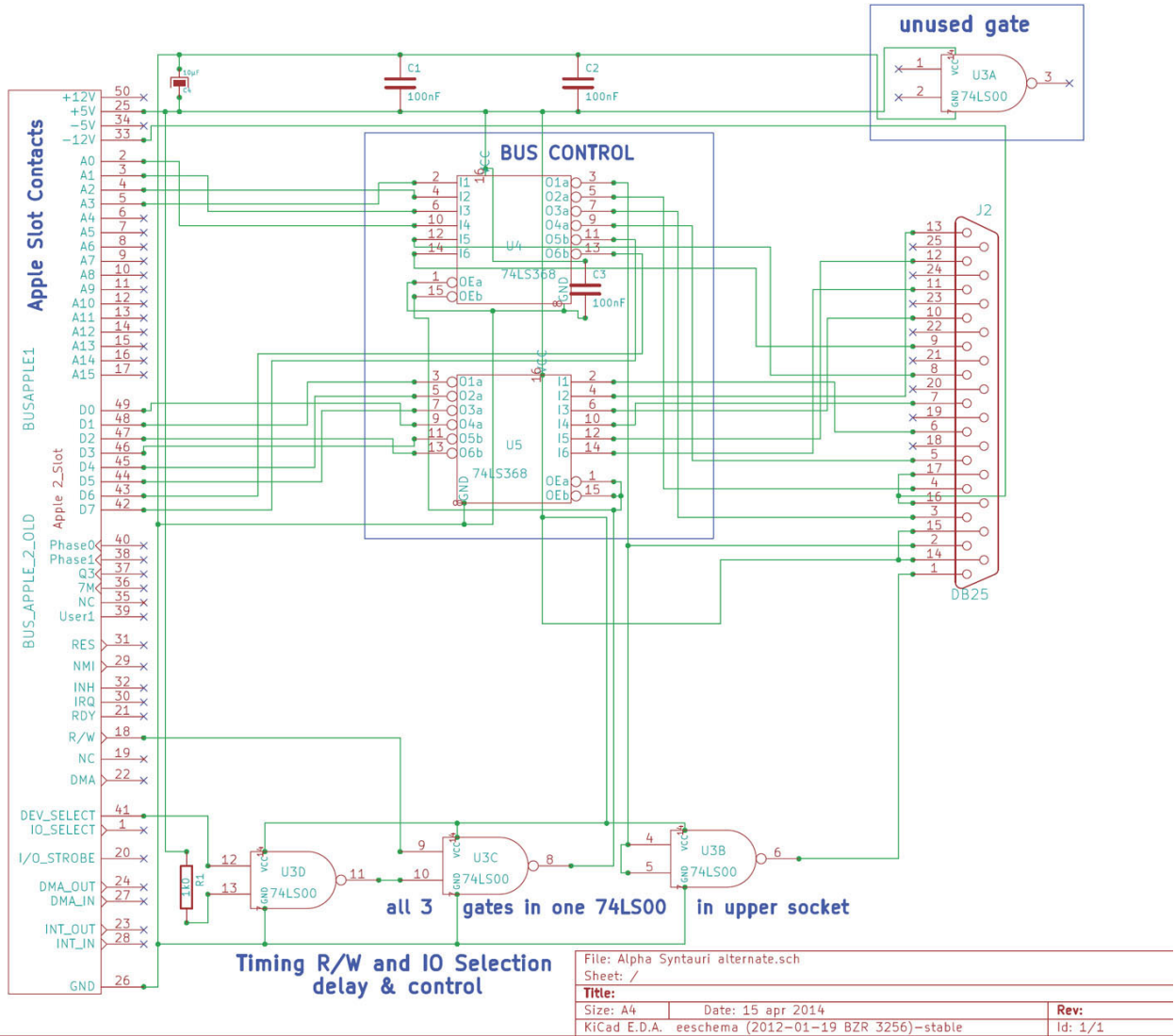
and here now is the view to the combination of both layers:

Here is now the solderingside of the new alternate alpha syntauri interfacecard:

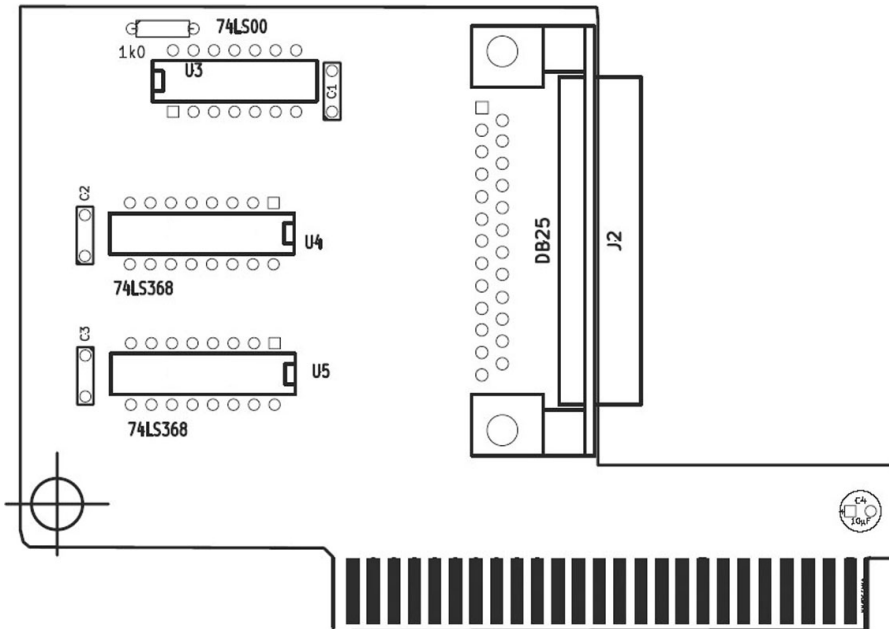**View to the rear solderingside of the "alternate" Alpha Syntauri Interfacecard.**

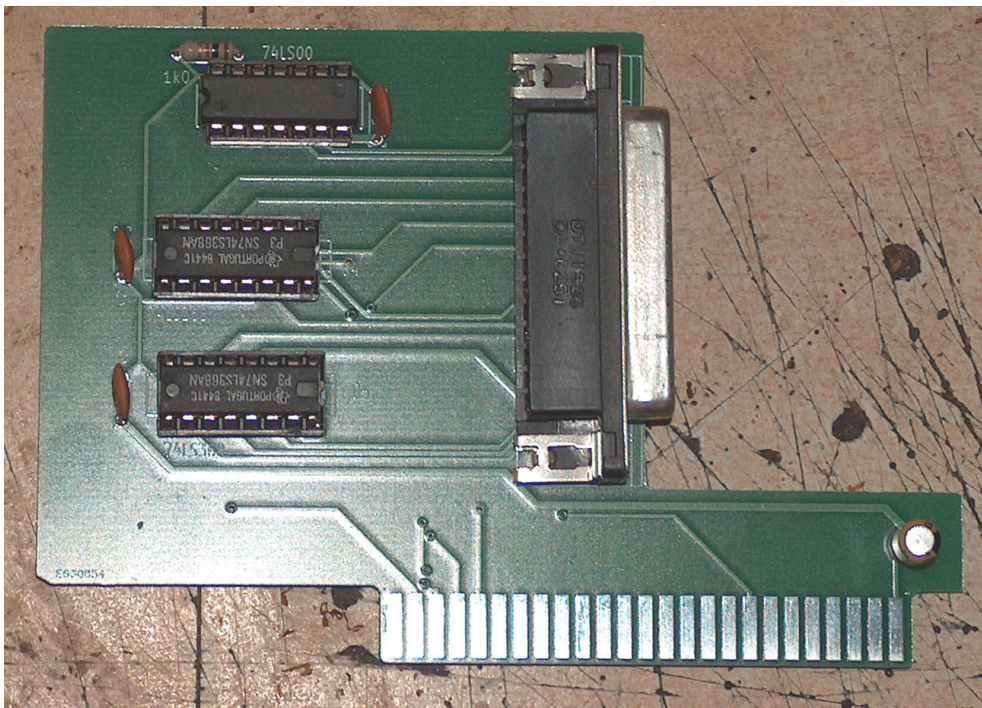**rear < = > front**

and here is now the view to the unpopulated componentside of the alternate alpha syntauri interface card:

DB25 plug with cable to rearside
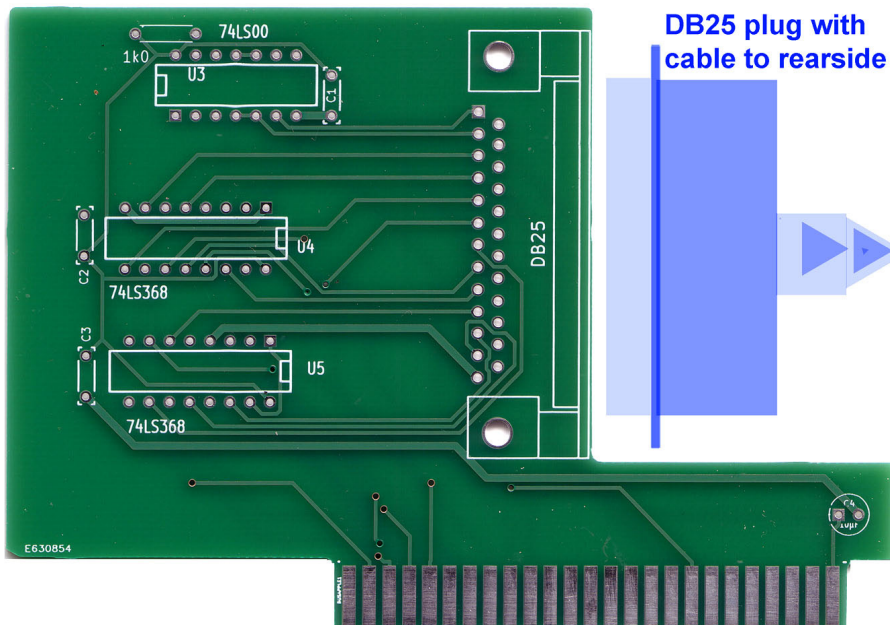
finally the view to the population of the card:

and finally here is the completed and populated interfacecard of the alpha syntauri:

and for those with incomplete system and missing interface is the link to the file that contains the so called "Gerber-files" used for production of the replacement interfacecard and mailed to the PCB manufacturer:

ASalternateGerber.rar

Please recognize :
the measurement unit used in this files is Millimeters / Centimeters
and <u>not</u> inches !
Please inform manufacturer on this important fact !

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APPLEBOX

the alpha syntauri system
a ancient synthisizer concept for the Apple II
Downloadpage of aAlpha Syntauri and
Mountain Computer Music System

Please note: Diskimages are to be used with ADT. That program permits user to keep this images at MAC or PC and transmit
images by serial cable to Apple with Super Serial Card and generate at local Floppydrive on Apple the desired
Disks in 5,25 "format (single sided, double density = 35 Tracks = 140 kB) . The letters ADT contain link to related pages.
Please first read carefully ADT instructions related to your availiable hardware !

Downloadable File:	REMARKS:	Typ:	Filename / Link:
The Alpha Syntauri System:			
General Program for use with alpha syntauri (system setup)		💾	**ALPHAPLUS.dsk**
Examples of different instrumental setup´s		💾	**EXAMPLES.dsk**
several recorded sound for demonstration purpose		💾	**DEMOSNOTES.dsk**
Advanced Soundediting Program		💾	**SUPERPLUS.dsk**
Special Handling of Soundgeneration and Waveform editing		💾	**PTWAVEFORMS.dsk**
Multichannel Soundeditor		💾	**METATRAK.dsk**
Multichannel Configurationfiles		💾	**METAFILES.dsk**
Only for use with later alpha syntaurisystem **with ALF Soundcard** **NOT FOR USE with Mountain Computer Music System !**		💾	**SYNTAURI3.dsk**
Manuals and REFs			
Synth Lab - User Manual		📄	**synthlab_usersmanual.pdf**
Syntauri Metatrak - User Manual		📄	**Syntauri METATRAK - User's Manual.pdf**
Syntauri Metatrak - Quick Ref		📄	**syntauri-metatrak-quickref.pdf**
Syntauri Sounds Trio		📄	**syntauri-sounds-trio.pdf**
Alpha Plus - Manual	**Only for use** with later alpha syntaurisystem **with ALF Soundcard** **NOT FOR USE with Mountain Computer Music System !**	📄	**syntauri-alphaplus.pdf**
Alpha Plus - Quick Ref	**Only for use** with later alpha syntaurisystem **with ALF Soundcard** **NOT FOR USE with Mountain Computer Music System !**	📄	**syntauri_alphaplus_quick_reference_chart.pdf**
Circuit Schematics			
Circuitplan from Alpha Syntauri Interfacecard	**(old version with DB25)** low Res pictures **as .jpg**		**AS_InterfacecardFinalReleaseAllDetectedCircuitplan.jpg**
Circuitplan from Alpha Syntauri Interfacecard	Hires .PDF File	📄	**circuitplan new final.pdf**
Circuitplan from Alpha Syntauri Keyboard	low Res pictures **as .jpg**		**ASkeyboardSwitchPCBcircuitplan.jpg**
Circuitplan from Alpha Syntauri Keyboard	Hires .PDF File	📄	**Circuitplan ASinternPianokeyswitches.pdf**
Circuitplan from Alpha Syntauri internal Decoder	low Res pictures **as .jpg**		**ASinternKeyboardDecoderCircuitplan.jpg**
Circuitplan from Alpha Syntauri internal Decoder	Hires .PDF File	📄	**Circuitplan ASinternDecoder.pdf**
TECH Documents of the alpha syntauri system including datasheets and schematics			**AS_TECH_DOCS.PDF**
		📄	

Mountain Computer Music System:			
Startup Disk with Baseprograms: Player, Editor,Merger		💾	MusicSystemDisk1SideA.dsk
Sample Songs		💾	MusicSystemDisk1SideB.dsk
Instrument Definer, Player		💾	MusicSystem Disk2SideA.dsk
Instrument collection		💾	MusicSystemDisk2Sid B.dsk
Mountain Computer Music System **Operation Manual (81 MB)**		📄	MountainComputerMusicSystem OperatingManual.pdf
Mountain Computer Music System **Frontcard circuit schematics**	low Res picture as . jpg file		CircuitplanFrontcardCard1.jpg
Mountain Computer Music System **Frontcard circuit schematics**	Hires PDF-File	📄	MCMS Card1.pdf
Mountain Computer Music System **Rearcard circuit schematics**	low Res picture as .jpg file		MCMScard2Circuitplan.jpg
Mountain Computer Music System **Frontcard circuit schematics**	Hires PDF-File	📄	MCMS Circuitplan Card 2.pdf
		📄	
AM6080 chip datasheet	📄	🔲	AM6080 datasheet.pdf
NE5008 chip datasheet	📄	🔲	NE5008 datasheet.pdf
LF351/LF353 Datasheet	📄	🔲	LF353 datasheet.pdf

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APPLEBOX

the alpha syntauri system
a review of the alpha syntauri system
and a brief listing of softwareimages used
at the Apple II and IIGS displaying the used
sound/recording sources for search of
diskimages and the related cards

Thankfully to Tom Arnold (from whom i recieved the missing pictures, i was hunting for - from the alpha syntauri interface card) , a contact i recieved from Mark Glinsky (a musician that also owned a alpha syntauri system and who also supported me by hunting missing pictures of the alpha syntauri system) i recieved the scans from an ancient magazin that contains a testing review of the alpha syntauri system:

Keyboards

Alpha Syntauri Pro 5 Music Synthesizer
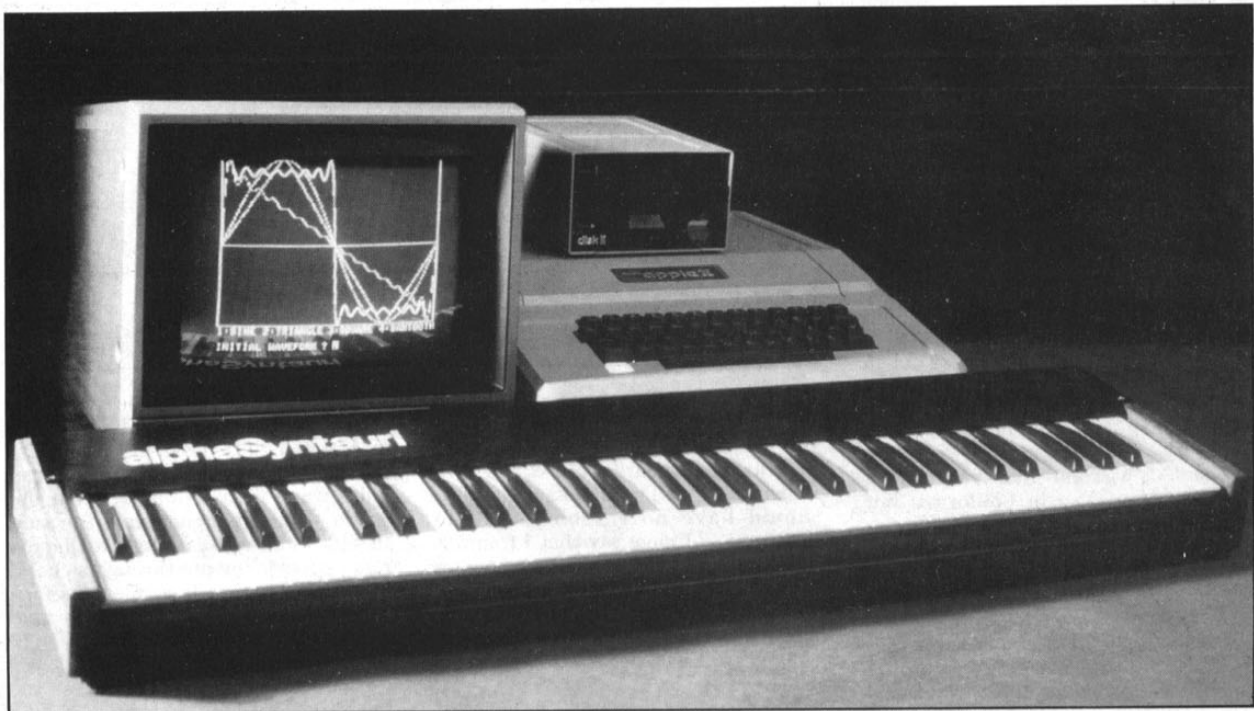
The stated concept of the Syntauri synthesizer is "to provide synthesizers which are fully programmable, modular, expandable, and affordable." The way Syntauri has gone about achieving this stated goal is to base their instruments primarily around software, rather than hardware in designing their modular setups. Modular means expandable, though, and as more and more programs are designed for the Syntauri, the owner *will* have to make some hardware purchases to obtain the full benefits from the instrument. The basic setup is as follows: Syntauri Corp. provides a 5-octave, 61-note velocity sensing keyboard, interface cable, interface card, foot pedals, some basic software (disks), and instructional manuals. What must be obtained separately is a 48K Apple II or Apple II Plus computer, language card, at least one disk drive, a video monitor or color TV, an amplifier, and speaker(s) of some sort.

Standard features on the Syntauri Pro 5, which is the model we obtained for review (these are also standard on the alphaSyntauri Plus 4) include an 8

voice polyphonic synthesizer with two independent oscillators per voice, 32kHz sample rate, and 16 digital oscillators. There are foot pedals included for sustain and portamento, a 200 note sequencer, which can be auto-sequenced during playback, and storage facility for up to 20,000 notes per floppy disk.

Programmable features include two ADSR-type amplitude envelopes for each voice, with one envelope per wave form. There is facility for up to 20 banks of preset storage per disk, and individual waveforms and envelopes may also be saved. Vibrato is user-controllable for both rate and depth, and velocity-sensitivity on the keyboard is also user-definable. Standard effects include tremolo, chorus, pitch bend and pitch sweep.

We gave the complete alphaSyntauri Pro 5 to Ed Walsh, a session musician who has appeared on virtually hundreds of albums and jingles, and who is a recognized expert in the practical and commercial uses of computerized digital synthesizer technology. His report follows:

When you first power up the

alphaSyntauri, it loads in Alpha Plus, which is the same language base you use with a standard Apple computer. The Syntauri then asks you to set some parameters, such as overall volume; a certain group of 10 presets (activated by the numerical keys 1 through 0) — it also turns on the various voice cards and interger card. Once you have let the computer know that all is done correctly, it then loads the information interger basic, etc. This sounds very lengthy, but all these things are accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

Now, on the screen before you, you have your first preset sound. As you play the keyboard, the notes you are playing appear on the screen in small rectangular shapes. Each octave takes up one horizontal line, the lowest octave being on the bottom, the highest on top. With a color monitor (necessary), each note is indicated by a different color. Towards the bottom of the screen are a number of preset parameters which you can modify. These are 10 musical instrument names — only one is active at a time. In the lower right hand corner of the

▶ 75

Keyboards

screen, you can find the name and number of the instrument you are currently making use of, as labelled by the computer.

The parameters are divided into two channels — the Primary and Percussion channels.

Primary
AR = Attack Rate
AV = Attack Volume
DR = Decay Rate
SV = Sustain Rate
RR = Release Rate
RV = Release Volume

Percussion
PR = Percussion Rate
PV = Percussion Volume
FR = Fall Rate
FV = Fall Volume

There are two foot switches included with the system. One allows you to play a note or chord and sustain it until you release the pedal. The other turns on and off the Portamento (glide), for which you set the rate. The alpha Syntauri also has a velocity sensing keyboard.

Besides modifying the Alpha with the parameters we have described, you can also change the volume of the individual harmonics by making use of

a graphic display, which looks similar to the drawbars on a B-3. After you have modified the sound, you can save it as a new file, and assign it to a preset master, should you desire.

The software available is very good. There is a disk called 'Metatrak', which is a 16 track recorder. With this you can overlap sounds, and actually record and perform a composition on 16 tracks. We found this to be the greatest single strength of the Syntauri.

The presets that we especially liked were the organ, vibes, and flutes. The user's ability to modify these presets and create entirely new sounds is virtually unlimited, which is also an important plus.

The Trio Wave offers a B-3 sound, Auto-Pulse, and Wave-Draw. This disk gives you three ways to create sounds:
Wave-Draw: allows you to plot segments of a wave with a graphics tablet. You can actually draw the wave.
Auto-Pulse — You let the computer know what pulse width you desire (10% to 50%) and over how many segments you want it. The end results are fantastic, but very time-consuming.

B-3: Using draw bar graphics over a certain number of harmonics, you build a sound. alphaSyntauri also gives you other waveshapes from which to choose to assist in designing your own sounds.

Syntauri has recently introduced a new software package, which is a music writing disk. This allows you to transcribe notes and rhythms as you play them, literally creating a printed score of what you've played. Of course, a separate printer is required for this, which easily interfaces with the Apple.

In conclusion, we found the alphaSyntauri Pro 5 to be a great way in which to learn about computer music and digital synthesizers. One problem as of this writing, was that the manual tended to be a bit confusing. Another helpful idea would be to place instructions for each section on the individual disks themselves.

Of course, the price is one of the most attractive things about the system. At under $5000.00, it is definitely the most cost-effective computerized digital synth on the market, and the most versatile that you could find for such a low cost.

And while hunting for the information related to the alpha syntauri system and designing a multifuncional sound and speech card
i collected various diskimages from the internet and created a table that displays which kind off software image will request which
kind of hardware. So this table might become valuable to those who have a piece of MIDI- or Soundcard for the Apple II series
(including the software that supports the IIGS internal soundchip) and who are searching for software that will support that hardware:

Used Ports SOFTWARE	Gameport	Cassette IN	Cassette OUT	Speaker OUT	IIGS Soundport	Mocking Board AY3-8910	Speechchips SC01 / SSM263	Soundmeister Card	76489 Chip	Alpha Syntauri	MIDI
AUDEX.DSK Extract sound from Cassette IN		◉		◉							
AppleRockerMasterDisk.dsk Game				◉							
AppleRockerDataDisk.dsk Game				◉							
AppleRockerNC.dsk Game				◉							
BOB BISHOP Lisner.po							◉				
CoolEd.dsk Sound editor notation											◉
DEMO1.DSK Metatrak Demo										◉	
DIGI.DEMO.DSK Shans Digicorder sampling from Gameport	◉			◉							
ElectricDuet.dsk create sound output speaker or tape			◉	◉							
DUET.DSK			◉	◉							
DUET1.DSK			◉	◉							
DUET2.DSK			◉	◉							
FMX.DSK Alpha Syntauri										◉	
INFISOUND.dsk											
MB1.DSK Software for Mocking Board						◉	◉				
MB2.DSK Software for Mocking Board						◉	◉				
Mocking Board Developer Toolkit						◉	◉				
MCS.DSK Music Construction Set				◉	◉						
MEGAMUSIC2.DSK play music with speaker				◉							
MICROMUSIC.DSK											
MICROMUSIC1.DSK											
MICROMUSIC2.dsk											
MICROMUSIC3.DSK											
MICROMUSIC4.DSK											
MICROMUSIC5.DSK											
MUSICOMP.DSK Music Composer Paul Lutus				◉				◉			

Used Ports / SOFTWARE	Gameport	Cassette IN	Cassette OUT	Speaker OUT	IIGS Soundport	Mocking Board AY3-8910	Speechchips SC01 / SSM263	Soundmeister Card	76489 Chip	Alpha Syntauri	MIDI
MegaEcho.dsk soundrecording from cassette in		●	●	●							
MegaEchoMusicFiles.dsk soundrecording from cassette in		●	●	●							
Music Construction Set D1.dsk				●	●						
Music Construction Set.D2.dsk				●	●						
SynthLAB				●	●			●			●
MusicDisk.dsk made w. electronic duet create sound output speaker or tape		●	●	●							
MusicEditor.dsk											●
Apple ORGAN.DSK simple speaker organ				●							
RT.SYNTH.DSK Realtime Synthisizer //e											●
SNDED22.DSK Soundeditor Mahon (AS ?)										●	●
SOUNDWIZARD.dsk sound from cassette		●	●	●							
TIMELORD.DSK											
TIMELORD2B.PO											
TIMELORD2D.PO											
TWOVOICE.DSK											
WINDMILL.DSK belongs to Alpha Syntauri										●	
analyzer.dsk belongs to Alpha Syntauri									●	●	
fmwaves7.dsk belongs to Alpha Syntauri									●	●	
metafile.dsk belongs to Alpha Syntauri										●	
minisong.dsk											
wavemaker.dsk belongs to Alpha Syntauri									●	●	
Master Track Pro MIDI composing, editing and notation											●
Instant Synthisiser Apple or Passport MIDI composing, editing, and notation											
Digital Session compose, edit, notation and Play								●			

in a few weeks this list will be extended with a bunch of other software listed ....

....

◄ turn back to the indexpage ←

BUS CONTROL

J2

DB25

13 25 12 24 11 23 10 22 9 21 8 20 7 19 6 18 5 17 4 16 3 15 2 14 1

rear vertical socket *

J1

DIL16

16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

U4
74LS368

O1a O2a O3a O4a O5b O6b
OEa OEb
GND

3 5 7 9 11 13
2 4 6 8 10 12 14
1 15

C3
100nF
GND
VCC

U5
74LS368

O1a O2a O3a O4a O5b O6b
OEa OEb
GND

2 4 6 10 12 14
11 13 15 16
3 5 7 9 11 13
1 15

lower socket *

DIL16

16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

upper socket *

DIL16

16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

U3B
74LS00

VCC

4 5 6

U3C

VCC

9 10 8

U3D

VCC

12 13 11

Timing R/W and IO Selection
delay & control

alpha syntauri internal
keyboard decoder

footswitch connectors

This page is a full-page KiCad electronic schematic titled "ASkeyboardPCB.sch" showing a keyboard PCB design with Keyblocks A through H, DILs, and a keyswitch detail.

- Keyblock A, Keyblock B, Keyblock C, Keyblock D, Keyblock E, Keyblock F, Keyblock G, Keyblock H
- upper CONTACT_BAR, lower CONTACT_BAR
- SW PUSH switches (SW1–SW61), diodes (D1–D61, 1N914)
- DIL1, DIL2
- Key no.01, Key No. 61
- Keyswitch detail: Angle of key, Pianokey, Push down, direction of key, PCB, contact wire, upper contact bar, lower contact bar

Keyblock D
Keyblock C
Keyblock B
Keyblock A
Keyblock H
Keyblock G
Keyblock F
Keyblock E

DIL1
DIL2

Key no.01
Key No. 61

upper CONTACT_BAR
lower CONTACT_BAR

Keyswitch detail

Angle of key   Pianokey   direction of key
Push down
PCB
upper contact bar
contact wire
lower contact bar
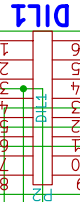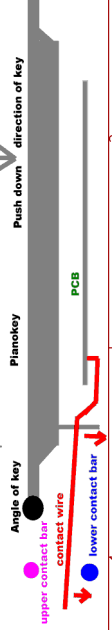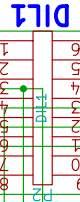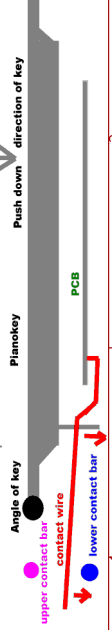
File: ASkeyboardPCB.sch
Sheet: /
Title:
Size: A4   Date: 21 feb 2014
KiCad E.D.A. eeschema (2012-01-19 BZR 3256)-stable
Rev:
Id: 1/1

alpha syntauri internal keyboard decoder

footswitch connectors

File: ASInternDecoder.sch
Sheet: /
Title:
Size: A4   Date: 18 feb 2014
KiCad E.D.A.   eeschema (2012-01-19 BZR 3256)-stable
Rev:
Id: 1/1

Alpha Syntauri alternate schematic (KiCad / eeschema)

Labels visible in the drawing:

- unused gate — U3A 74LS00
- J2 DB25
- BUS CONTROL — U4 74LS368, U5 74LS368
- C1 100nF, C2 100nF, C3 100nF, C4 100nF
- C5 10uF
- R1 1K0
- U3B 74LS00, U3C 74LS00, U3D 74LS00
- "in upper socket"
- "all 3 gates in one 74LS00"
- **Timing R/W and IO Selection delay & control**
- Apple Slot Contacts — BUS_APPLE1 / BUS_APPLE_2_OLD — Apple 2 Slot

Apple Slot Contacts:
+12V 50, +5V 25, −5V 34, −12V 33,
A0 2, A1 3, A2 4, A3 5, A4 6, A5 7, A6 8, A7 9, A8 10, A9 11, A10 12, A11 13, A12 14, A13 15, A14 16, A15 17,
D0 49, D1 48, D2 47, D3 46, D4 45, D5 44, D6 43, D7 42,
Phase0 40, Phase1 38, Q3 37, 7M 36, NC 35, User1 39,
RES 31, NMI 29, INH 32, IRQ 30, RDY 21, R/W 18, NC 19, DMA 22,
DEV_SELECT 41, IO_SELECT 1, I/O_STROBE 20, DMA_OUT 24, DMA_IN 27, INT_OUT 23, INT_IN 28, GND 26

Title block:
File: Alpha Syntauri alternate.sch
Sheet: /
Title:
Size: A4   Date: 15 apr 2014
KiCad E.D.A.   eeschema (2012-01-19 BZR 3256)-stable
Rev:
Id: 1/1

BUS CONTROL

Timing R/W and IO Selection delay & control

J2

DB25

rear vertical socket *

DIL16

U4 74LS368

U5 74LS368

C3 100nF

GND

VCC

O1a O2a O3a O4a O5b O6b
OEa OEb

O1a O2a O3a O4a O5b O6b
OEa OEb

lower socket *

DIL16

upper socket *

DIL16

U3B
74LS00

U3C

U3D

File: MCMS Card2.sch
Sheet: /
Title: noname.sch
Size: A3   Date: 17 mar 2014
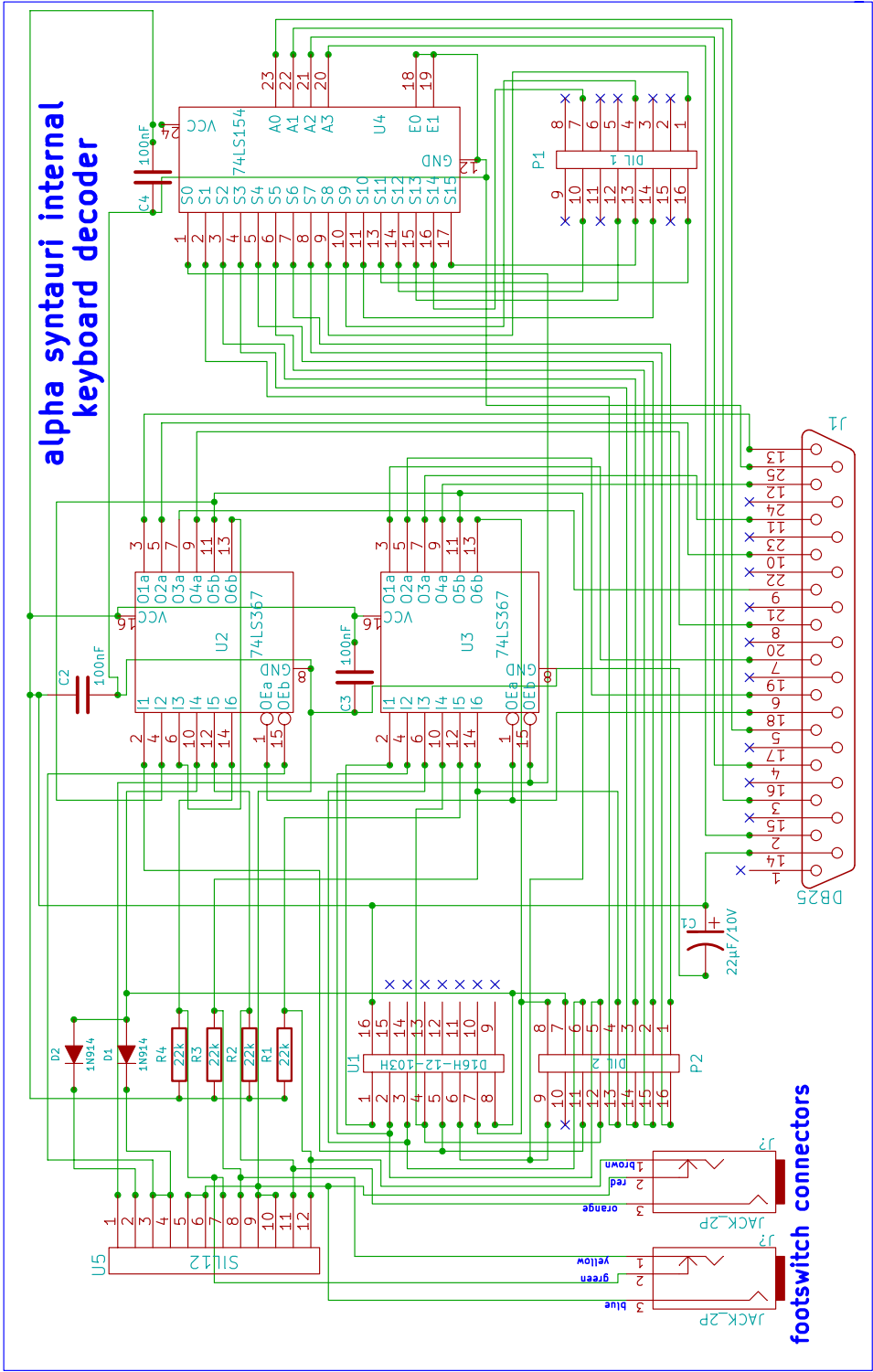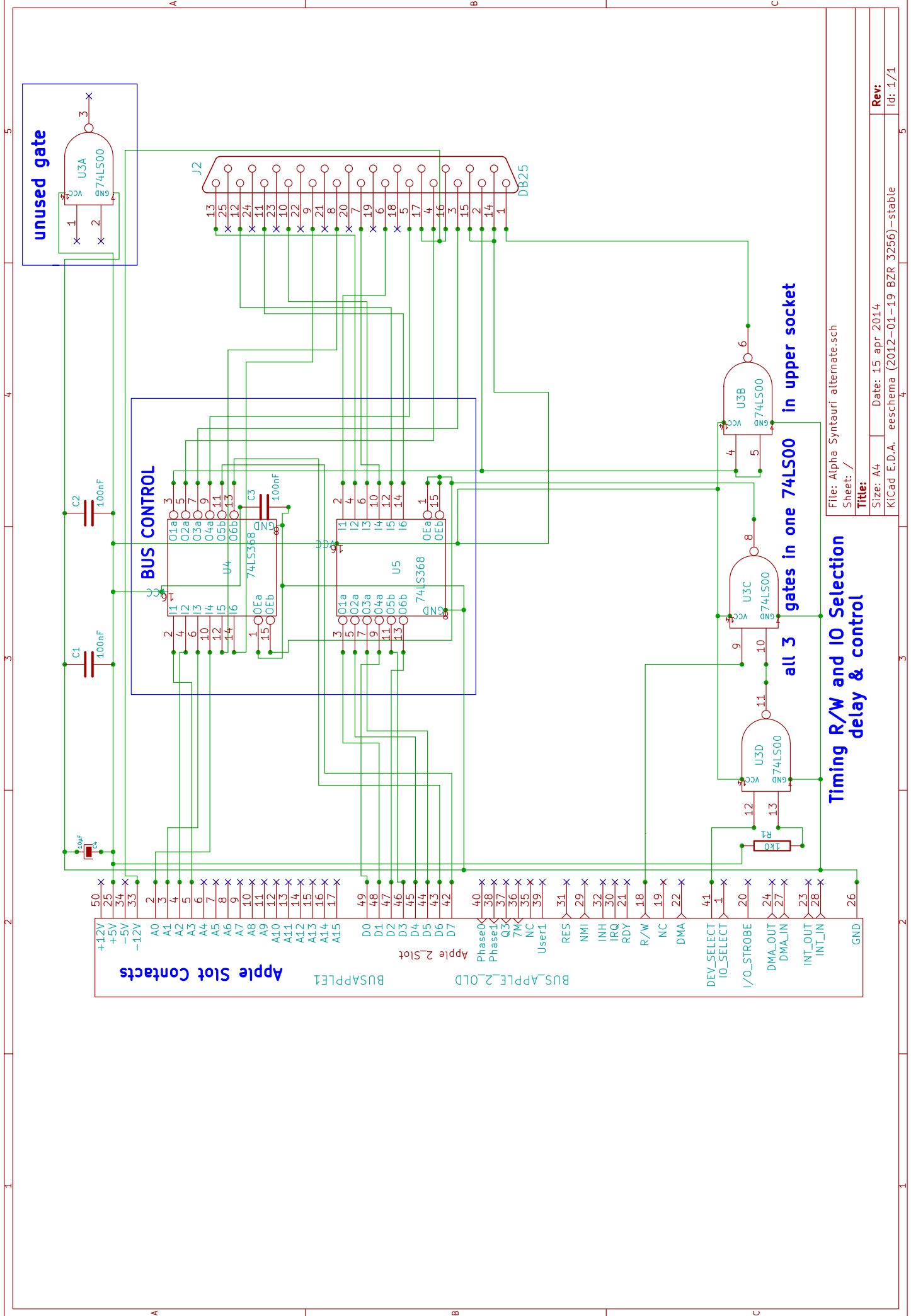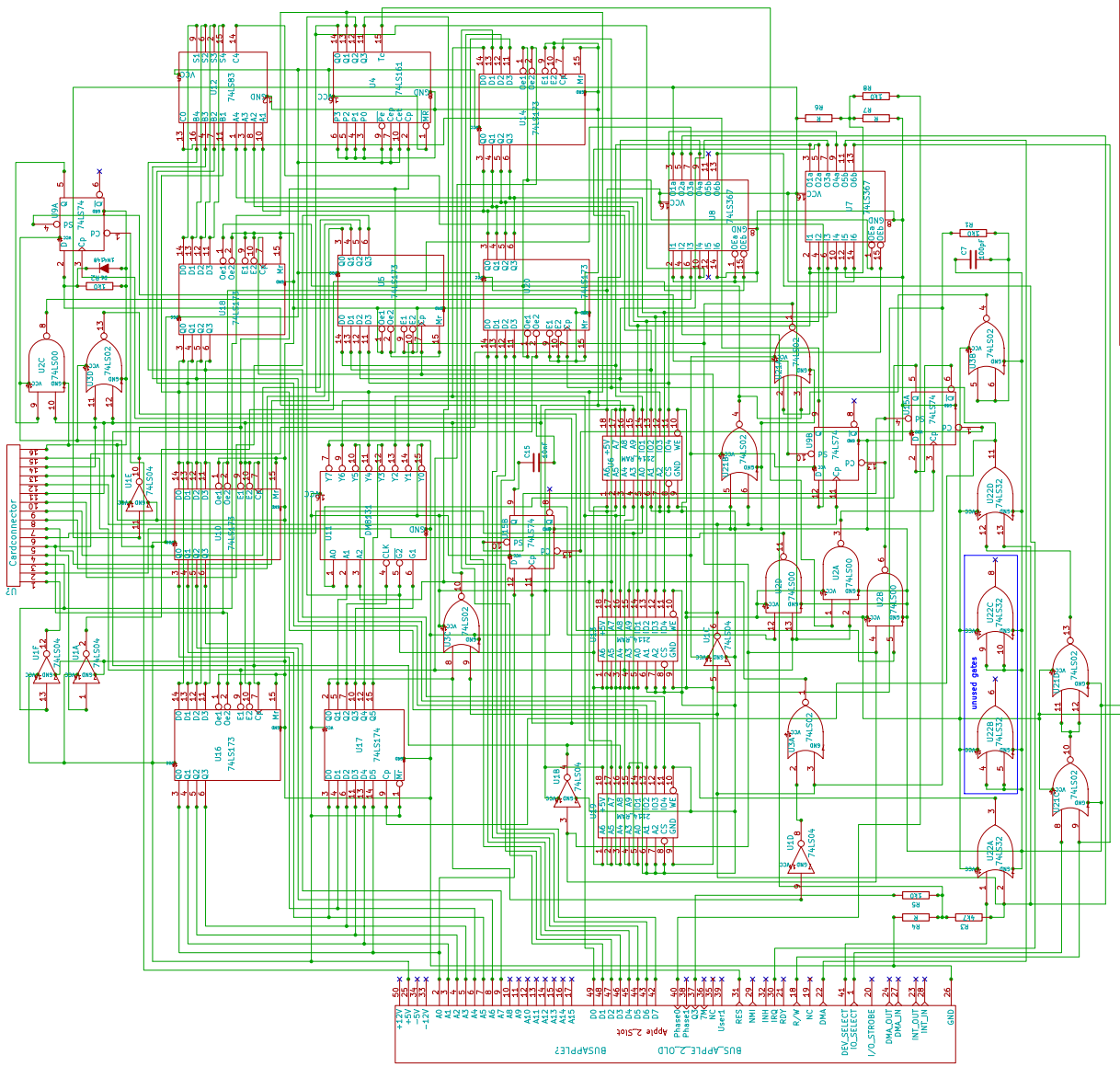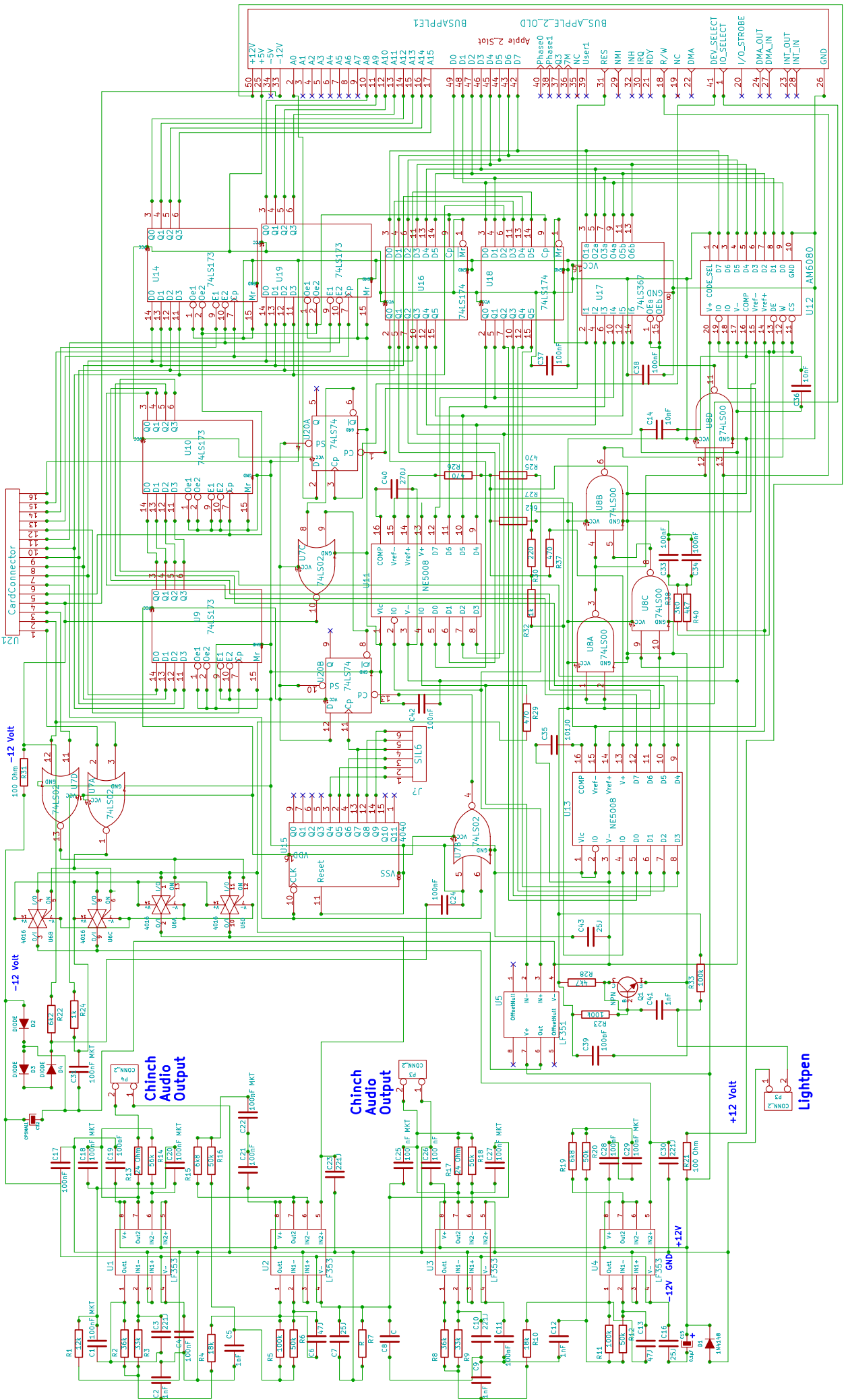KiCad E.D.A. eeschema (2012-01-19 BZR 3256)-stable
Rev:
Id: 1/1