



Tape Connector

The tape interface is a DIN-type socket, and has connections for controlling the tape-recorder motor

Power Connector

Power is supplied here from a small transformer

Custom Chip

The M5 uses a piece of sophisticated custom logic to achieve its advanced functions at a reasonable price

ROM

The only built-in programs in the machine are a set of low-level control programs, which are called up by the user program. These take care of the details of handling the screen, keyboard and cassette

CPU

The processor in the Sord M5 is the well-known Z80A. This one is clocked at 3.58MHz

RAM

The user memory is contained in these two large chips, and is separate from other areas of RAM

CTC

Much of the cleanness of operation of the M5 is derived from the use of this advanced Clock Timer Controller, which times and triggers various operations in the machine



The Joypads

The joypads are the Sord equivalent of joysticks. They work by sending a signal for each of four diagonal directions. Since these signals actually interrupt the CPU, no matter what task it is executing, the response time is very fast indeed

be standard-sized or enhanced. The machine can display upper and lower case letters, punctuation and numbers. It has line and block drawing symbols, as well as a very large range of accented lower case letters for use with foreign languages — and since any character can be redefined, the possibilities are very wide indeed.

Other machines use the same graphics chips — in particular the TI99/4A (see page 189) — and it is the use of such dedicated chips that makes the Sord M5 so effective despite its lack of RAM. Since the screen memory is totally separate from the program memory, the only contents of the main RAM will be the actual program, plus, of course, the data needed by the variables.

Something that is currently being hotly argued over in the home computer industry is the