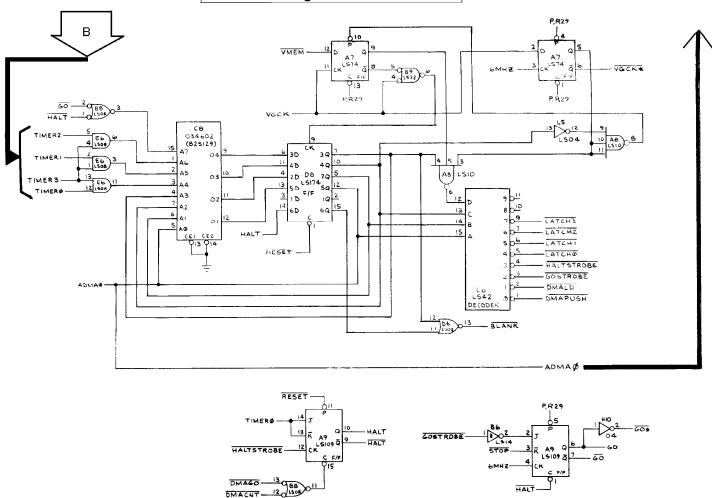
Asteroids - Digital Vector Generator



STATE MACHINE

The state machine is the "master controller" of the vector generator circuitry. It receives instructions from the game MPU, via the vector generator RAM. It carries out these instructions by accessing the appropriate sections of the vector generator ROM memory, using the vector generator program counter to do so. The state machine reads the vector generator ROM data (via Timer 0-3) and decodes this information to determine how it should use this data: 1) to draw a vector; 2) to move the monitor beam to a new position on the monitor display; 3) to "jump" to a new vector memory address; 4) to return to a previous vector memory address; or 5) to tell the game MPU that it has completed its current instructions, and is waiting for its next command.

The state machine consists of input gates B8 and E6, ROM C8, latch D8, clock circuitry A7, and decoder E8. Four bit input TIMER0 thru TIMER3 is the operation code input to the state machine. The A4 thru A6 address input to ROM C8 tells the ROM which instructions to perform. Address inputs A0 thru A3 from latch D8 tells the ROM which state was last performed. The address A7 input $\overline{\text{GO}}$ tells the ROM that the position counters are presently drawing a vector. The $\overline{\text{HALT}}$ input to A7 tells the ROM that the vector generator has completed its operations.

During initial power-up of the game, the HALT signal is preset low. The microcomputer reads the high HALT signal through its switch input port (buffer M10) on data line DB0. This tells the microcomputer that the vector generator is halted and waiting for an instruction. To ensure that the beam is off when the state machine is halted, the high HALT, clock-

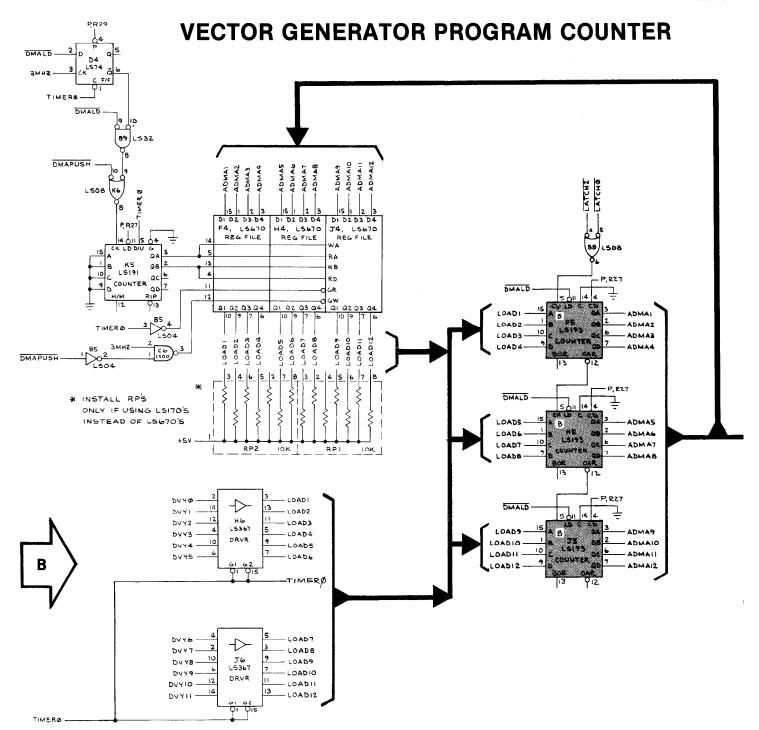
ed through latch D8, results in a low BLANK to the Z axis output.

The microcomputer outputs an address that results in a DMAGO signal that causes HALT to go high, and clears the vector generator data latches. This makes TIMERO thru TIMER3 signals all low. The state machine now begins executing instructions, starting at vector memory location 0.

When the state machine receives the operation code for a HALT instruction, it outputs a low HALTSTROBE, setting the HALT flip-flop A9, and suspending state machine operation.

The GO signals load and enable the vector timer and the X and Y position counters and tell the ROM that the vector generator is now actively drawing a vector. The HALT input to GO flip-flop A9 sets the outputs to ensure that the vector timer and position counters are not active when the state machine is halted. When a low GOSTROBE is clocked through A9, the vector timer and X and Y position counters begin to operate from the GO, GO and GO* signals. When STOP is clocked through A9, the vector timer has reached its maximum count, and GO goes high. This means the vector has been drawn.

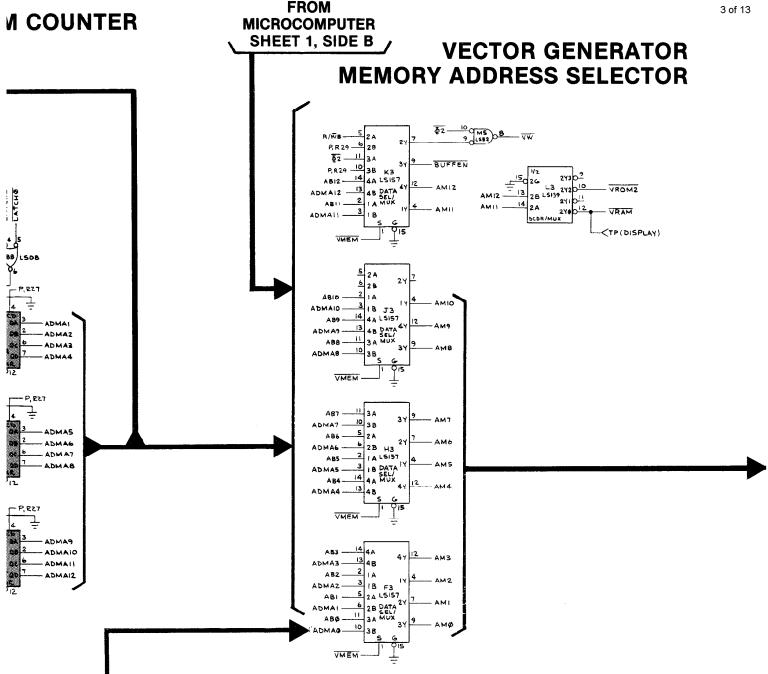
The VGCK input to the clock circuitry is a buffered 1.5 MHz clock signal from the microcomputer. This is the same frequency used to clock the MPU of the microcomputer. The signal clocks latch D8 unless the microcomputer is addressing the vector RAM or ROM memories (when VMEM goes low). Then the clock input to latch D8 goes high and stays high until VMEM goes high.



Counters F5, H5 and J5 contain the address of the next data byte (instruction) to be fetched from the Vector Generator memory. Because these counters point to the next instruction in memory to be retrieved and performed, they are called the program counter. This program counter is incremented one count (to the next sequential address) each time the information at its current address is loaded into data latch 0 or data latch 2.

The program counter may also be preset to "jump" to a new address. This new address can be loaded into the program counter from the vector generator memory via data latches F7 and H7 and buffers H6 and J6.

The program counter may also be preset to "return" to a previous address which it had stored in its "stack". The stack consists of register files F4, H4, & J4, and down/up counter K5. The stack is a 4-word 12-bit memory, used to save the contents of the program counter for future reference. It is loaded when DMAPUSH is low. Immediately after information is written into the stack, counter K5 increments one count. Immediately before loading the program counter from the stack, counter K5 decrements one count.

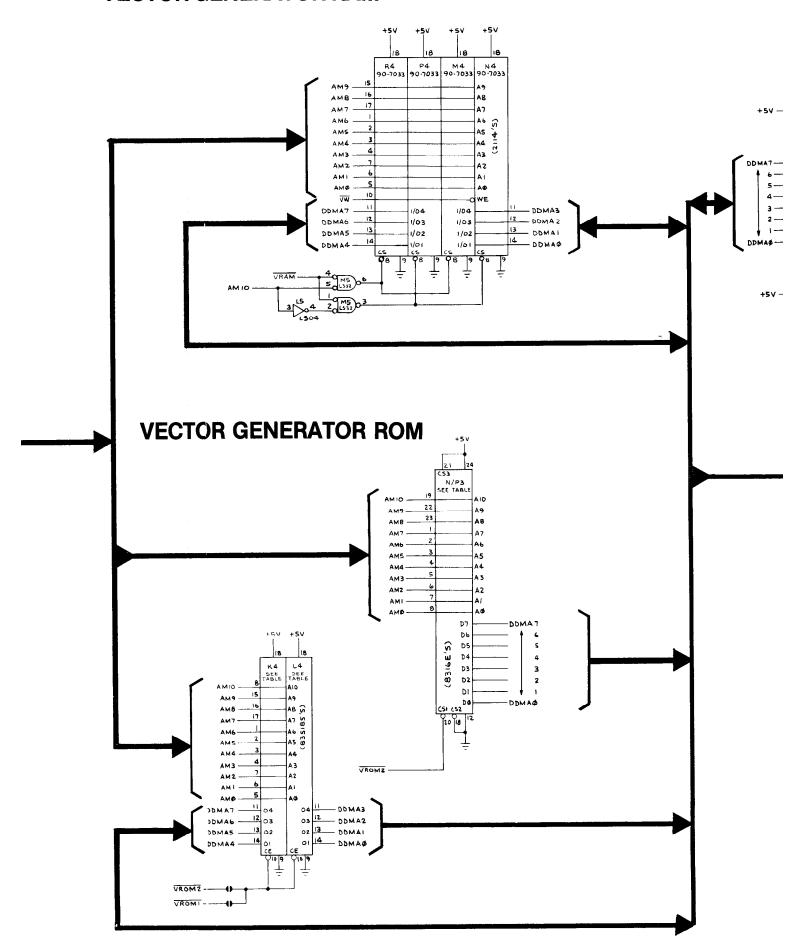


The address selector consists of multiplexers F3, H3, J3 and K3. When VMEM is low, the MPU of the microcomputer gains access to the address inputs of the vector generator $\underline{\text{memory. In}}$ this state, $\underline{\text{BUFFEN}}$ is from $\underline{\Phi 2}$ and $\underline{\text{VW}}$ (vector generator write) is low when $\overline{\Phi 2}$ and $\overline{R/WB}$ are both low. When \overline{VMEM} is high, the address input to the vector generator memory is from the vector generator program counter and state machine. In this state, BUFFEN and VW are both held high by the pullup resistors connected to the 2B and 3B inputs of multiplexer K3.

Address decoder L3 decodes address bits A11 and A12, and selects the RAM or one of three ROMs of the vector generator memory.

This address-selecting arrangement allows the game MPU to access the vector generator memory, i.e., write data into the vector generator RAM to instruct the vector generator what it should do next. The address selector can then allow the vector generator program counter and state machine to access this same area of RAM also, and read what instructions were sent to it by the game MPU.

VECTOR GENERATOR RAM

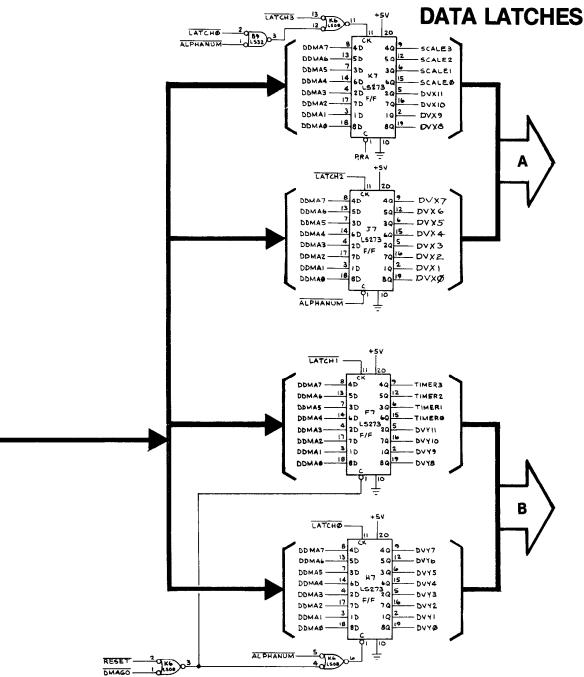


VECTOR GENERATOR TO/FROM **MPU DATA BUS DATA BUFFER** SHEET 1, SIDE B, 11(12) [87 86 12 (13) (7)8 7 В7 - 686 86 13(14) 185 (6)7 R2 B5 14(15) D84 (5)6 L5245 B5 I5 (I6) D84 A4 P2 B4 I5 (I6) D83 A1 (AMB3048) B1 A2 XCVR B2 A3 XCVR B3 (4)5 - DDMA3 (1)2 - DOMA 2 (2)3 - DOMAI 83 16(17) DB6 (3)4- DOMAP (9) (10) R/WB BUFFEN * USE PIN NUMBERS IN PAREN-THESES IF BOARD CONTAINS AM8304B INSTEAD OF 74L5245 VECTOR MEMORY LOC PROM # ROM # LOC AT K/L3 035129 K4 ++ N/P3 035127 035130 L4 к4 ± ± R3 The vector generator memory consists of 2K of RAM and 4K of ROM. It may be directly accessed by the MPU of the microcomputer through the direct memory access process (DMA). Data is written in from the microcomputer thru data buffer R2 when BUFFEN and R/WB are low. The $2k \times 8$ vector generator program memory chip N/P3 may be substituted with two equivalent 1K x 8 chips in location K4 and L4.

В

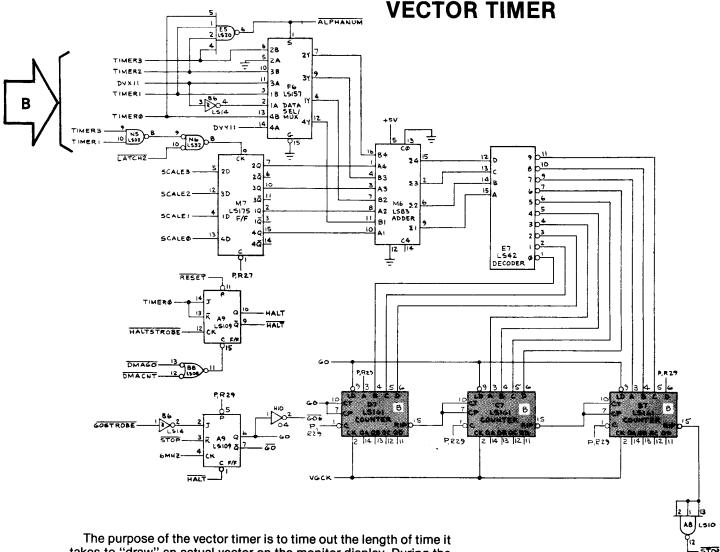
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VECTOR GENERATOR MEMORY



The data latches consist of latch 0 (H7), latch 1 (F7), latch 2 (J7), and latch 3 (K7). Inputs DDMA0 thru DDMA7 are the data outputs from the vector generator memory.

Latches 0 thru 2 are directly clocked by the rising edge of the LATCH0, LATCH1, and LATCH2 outputs from the vector generator's state machine. Latch 3 is clocked by LATCH3 or by LATCH0, if ALPHANUM is low. Latch 0 is cleared when RESET, DMAGO, or ALPHANUM goes low. Latch 1 is cleared by ALPHANUM.



The purpose of the vector timer is to time out the length of time it takes to "draw" an actual vector on the monitor display. During the interval when the X and Y position counters are actually drawing the vector, STOP is high. This prevents the vector generator state machine from advancing to its next state until the vector currently being drawn is completed. As soon as the vector has been drawn, STOP goes low, allowing the state machine to advance to the next state in its intended sequence.

The vector timer consists of multiplexer F6, decoder E7, LATCH M7, ADDER M6, and counters B7, C7, and D7. M7 contains a scale factor which is added in M6 to the four timer signals. If TIMER0 thru TIMER3 inputs are any state but all high, decoder E7 directly decodes the sum and loads the decoded low into one of the counters. When GO goes low, the counters count from the loaded count until the counters all reach their maximum count. This count is a maximum length of 1024. At this time STOP goes low and clears the GO flip-flop of the state machine.

If the TIMER signals are all high, ALPHANUM goes low and data signals DVX11 and DVY11 are decoded by decoder E7. This is added to the scale factor and loaded into the counters.

X AND Y POSITION COUNTERS

The X and Y position counters are two identical circuits. Therefore, the following description discusses only the X position counters.

The X position counters contain rate multipliers (J8 and K8), down/up counters (C9, D9 and E9), multiplexers (D10, E10, and F10), and associated gates (B8 and H10). The output of the down/up counters is a 12-bit binary number that represents the horizontal location of the beam on the monitor screen (or X axis), with 0 being the far left side of the screen and 1023 being the far right side of the screen. Increasing or decreasing this binary number output will cause the beam to move to the right or left, respectively. The vector generator state machine decodes instructions from its memory, and then is capable of using that data to alter the binary count of these counters in one of two ways.

The state machine can preset these counters to an entirely different number from their previous contents. This will cause the beam to "jump" to a new location on the monitor screen instantaneously, i.e., for drawing a new vector from a different starting position than where the previous vector ended. While the beam is

"jumping" to this new position, the beam itself is turned off to prevent unwanted lines from appearing on the screen. To preset this new position into the counters, the state generator causes LDSTROBE to go low. At this time, a new 12-bit number (DVX0-11) is loaded into the counters from the vector generator memory data latches.

The state machine can also instruct these counters to count up or down any specific number of counts. This will cause the beam to move to the left or to the right a specific distance relative to where it was. During this beam movement, the beam is turned on with the desired intensity. This is the procedure used to draw a vector on the monitor screen. The direction (to the left or right) and length (0 to 1023) of the vector to be drawn relative to the beam's current position is determined by DVX0-11 (from the vector generator memory data latches). This data contains information that determines how many clock pulses the counters will receive and whether the counters will count up or down.

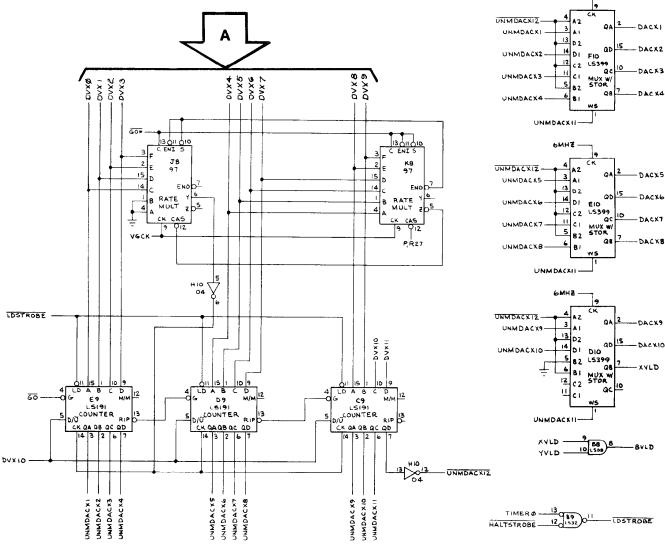
DVX0-9 memory data is loaded into rate multipliers J8 and K8. The function of these devices is to space the desired number of counter clock pulses at equal intervals over the time period that it will take to draw the desired vector. This insures that vectors of different lengths will still be displayed with the same relative beam intensity. DVX10 and 11 are loaded directly into the counters. DVX10 determines whether the counters count up or down. DVX11 is used to control the select input of multiplexers D10, E10, and F10.

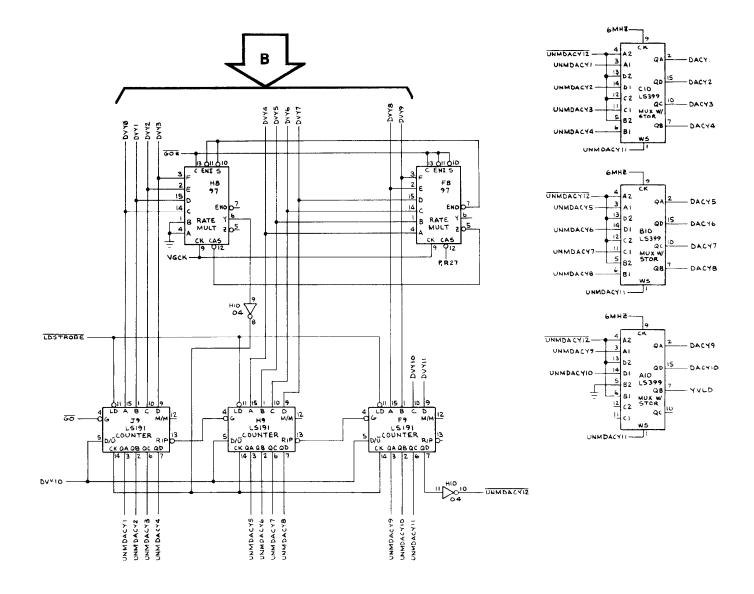
The UNMDACX1 thru UNMDACX10 (X axis unmultiplexed digital-to-analog converter signals) are transferred and stored at the output of the multiplexers on each rising edge of the 6 MHz clock (from the microcomputer clock circuitry). The DACX1 thru DACX10 signals are sent to the digital-to-analog converters (DACs) in the X video output.

The DACX1 and DACX10 outputs represent the physical placement of the beam on the monitor. The far left of the monitor screen is 0, the center is 512, and the far right is 1023. Therefore, if the DACX1 thru DACX10 signal was greater than 1023, the monitor beam would go off the right side of the screen and start again on the left side of the screen, a "wraparound" condition. To prevent a wraparound, the multiplexers' select input from UNMDACX11 goes high when the count is greater than 1023 or less than 0. This selects UNMDACX12 to be output from the multiplexers to the DACs, forcing all zeros or all ones, and thus keeping the beam on the appropriate side on the screen, instead of allowing it to wraparound.

The XVLD and YVLD (X and Y valid) outputs from the X and Y positon counter multiplexers are gated together to enable the Z axis output, BVLD (beam valid).

X AND Y POSITION COUNTERS





The video output circuit consists of three individual circuits; X axis, Y axis, and Z axis video output circuits. The X axis and Y axis video output circuits consist of a digital-to-analog (DAC) converter, current-to-voltage converter, sample and hold, sample and hold control, and amplifier. The Z axis video output circuit consists of a shift register and a summer.

X and Y Outputs

The DACs (B11 and D11) each receive binary numbers from the vector generator's position counters outputs. These numbers represent the location of the beam on the monitor. For the X axis, the number is 0 to 1,023, where 0 is at the far left of the monitor screen, 512 at the center, and 1,023 is at the far right. For the Y axis, the number is from 128 to 996 where 128 is at the bottom of the monitor screen, 512 is the center, and 996 is the top.

The DACs convert these binary number inputs to current output. The DAC's current output is applied to the pin 6 inputs of current-to-voltage converters A12 and C12. The pin 5 inputs ensure that the null points (resting point on the monitor screen) of the pin 7 outputs are 512 for the X axis and 512 for the Y axis.

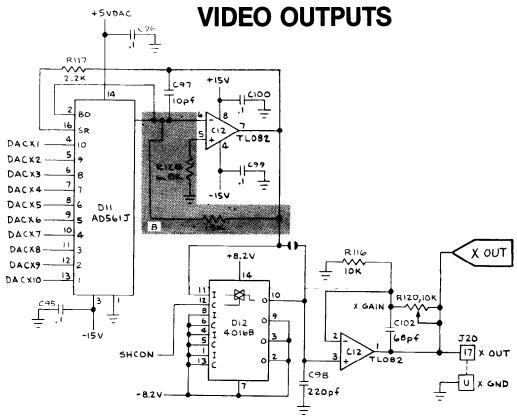
From the current-to-voltage converters, the signal is fed to the sample and hold circuits. Analog switches B12 and D12 pass the voltages to sample and hold capacitors C77 and C84. This is controlled by SHCON (sample and hold control). SHCON is derived by gating 3 MHz from the microcomputer clock circuitry and \overline{VGCK}^* from the vector generator's state generator. The result of these inputs insures that the pin 7 outputs of voltage-to-current converters A12 and C12 have sufficiently stabilized before being applied to the sample and hold capacitors. The output swing of SHCON is -8 to +8 VDC. When SHCON is high, the voltage charges or discharges the sample and hold capacitor to the voltage value. The voltages are then applied to the second stages of A12 and C12 for an impedance matched output to the X and Y inputs of the monitor. Since the monitor doesn't have field adjustable X and Y gains, the gains are adjustable by variable resistors R87 and R93.

Z Output

The Z axis video output receives six inputs. BVLD (beam valid), from the output of the vector generator's position counters, tells the Z axis to draw the line. BLANK (vector line blank), from the vector generator's state machine, tells the Z axis to stop drawing a line. SCALE0 thru SCALE3 (grey level shading scale), from the output of the vector generator's data latch, tells the Z axis the grey level shading of the line that is being drawn on the monitor.

When BVLD and BLANK are both high, a high is clocked through shift register K9 that turns transistor Q3 off. This allows the scale inputs to be passed through transistor Q2. When BLANK goes low, a low is clocked through K9, transistor Q3 turns on, and the signal is grounded at the base of transistor Q2.

The scale inputs at the base of transistor Q1 determine Q1's emitter voltage, during the line draw period. The SCALE0 thru SCALE3 resistors R36 thru R39, resistor R35, and resistor R40 result in a range of about \pm 1.0 VDC when all are low and \pm 4.0 VDC when all are high. The emitter of Q1 follows at about \pm 1.7 to 4.7 VDC, while the emitter of transistor Q2 follows at about \pm 1.0 to 4.0 VDC. This output is applied to the Z input of the monitor. Since there are brightness and contrast controls in the monitor, there are no adjustments in this circuit.



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