RANCANUOTEAM HARDWARE SERIES

NEW DANDANATOR CPC ELITE+

TECHNICAL USER MANUAL - ENGLISH EDITION

Compatibility

Amstrad CPC 464 / 664 / 6128

Amstrad CPC 464+ / 6128+ (adapter required)

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Contents

New Dandanator CPC Elite+ - Technical User Manual

Document scope

This English edition documents the New Dandanator CPC Elite+ hardware and the programming workflow described in the source manual. Refer to the original CPC Dandanator documentation for complete project features.

Acknowledgements

First of all, our thanks go to Dandare, Mad3001 and OverCLK, developers of the original CPC Dandanator! Mini project. Their work provided the foundation from which this second version of our existing Dandanator Elite+ was developed.

Original project: www.dandare.es

We also thank hardware developer Cracken Designs for implementing the dual-memory system in the base project, and the AUA developers for the idea of using cartridge-style memory in a Game Boy-style enclosure.

AUA - Club AUA: auamstrad.es

About this guide

This guide is not a complete operating manual for the Dandanator. It describes the features and particularities of the NEW Dandanator CPC Elite+. For more complete information, please visit the original Dandanator project website, where the documentation for the original project can be downloaded.

Product lineage

The New Dandanator CPC Elite+ is a project based on the original concept created by Dandare, Mad3001 and OverCLK. This English edition preserves the original manual's technical scope while presenting the instructions in clear technical English.

2. Device Overview

Figure 1 identifies the main controls and connection points on the New Dandanator CPC Elite+.

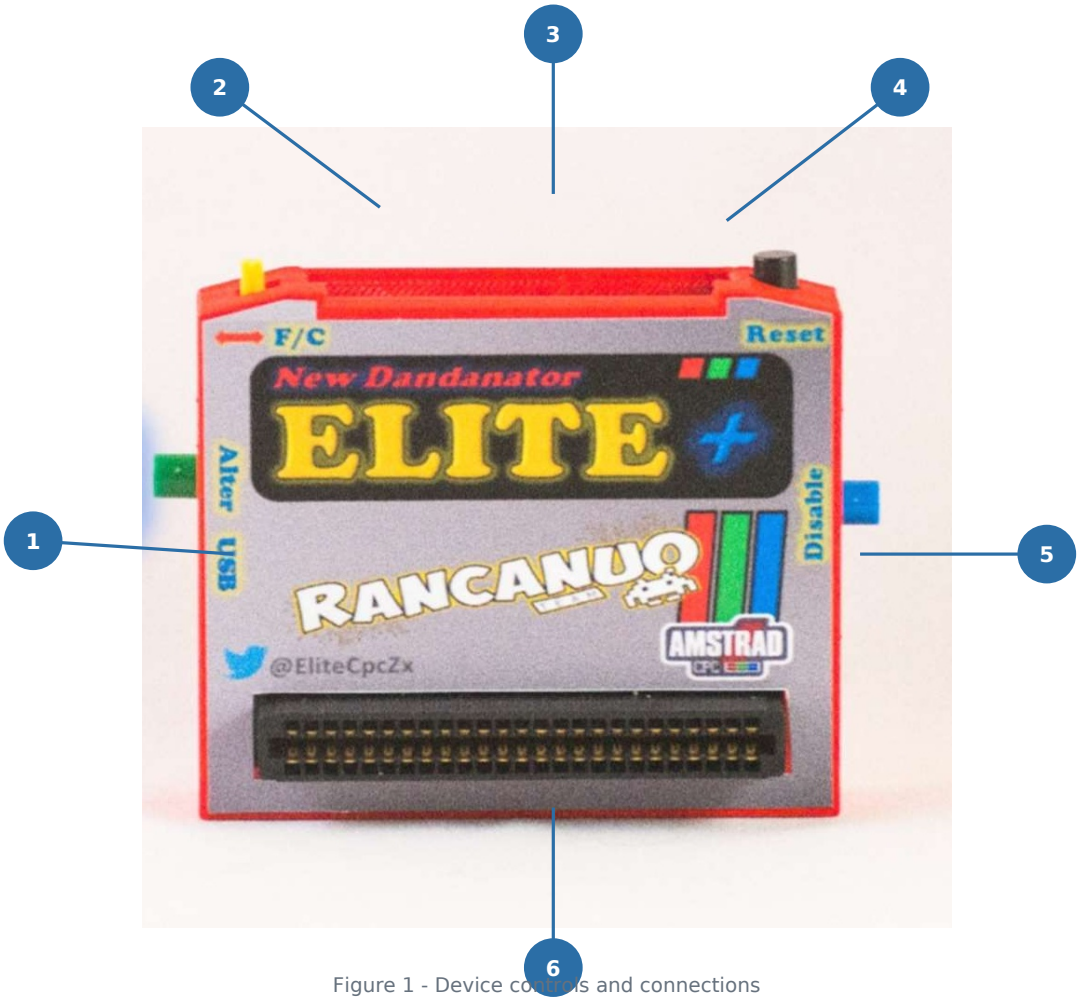


Figure 1 - Device controls and connections

1 **ALTER button**	**2** **Internal Flash / Cartridge selector**
3 **Cartridge slot**	**4** **RESET button**
5 **DISABLE button**	**6** **Amstrad CPC expansion connector**

CPC connector compatibility

Connect the device to the CPC through the expansion connector. The interface is compatible with CPC 464, 664, 6128, 464+ and 6128+. CPC Plus models require an adapter.

1. With the computer switched OFF, firmly connect the device to the CPC. Make sure the computer contacts are clean.
2. Set selector switch (2) to the required position: F for the internal Flash memory, or C when using a cartridge.
3. If you intend to use a cartridge, insert it firmly before powering on the CPC.
4. Switch on the computer.

> **IMPORTANT**
>
> **Always switch the CPC OFF before inserting or removing a cartridge.**

Supported image formats

- **SNA**
- **CDT**
- **DSK**

4. Controls & Functions

The controls below correspond to the numbered callouts shown in the Device Overview. Use them only as described in this manual.

1 ALTER button

The ALTER button loads the alternative ROM. To use it, switch the CPC off, press and hold ALTER, and then power on the computer. The default configuration includes a diagnostic/test ROM.

> **START-UP ACTION**
>
> Hold ALTER before powering on the CPC. Release it once the alternative ROM begins to boot.

2 Internal Flash / Cartridge selector

This switch selects the memory source used by the Dandanator.

F - FLASH

Uses the internal Flash memory. No cartridge is required.

C - CARTRIDGE

Uses the cartridge installed in the cartridge slot.

3 Cartridge slot

Insert a compatible cartridge firmly into this slot before powering on the CPC. The selector must be set to C for cartridge operation.

> **IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE**
>
> Always switch the CPC OFF before inserting or removing a cartridge. Never hot-swap cartridges.

4 RESET button

Press RESET to reset the Dandanator interface. This allows the interface to restart without physically disconnecting it from the CPC.

5 DISABLE button

Holding DISABLE during power-up or reset temporarily disables the Dandanator. The computer will boot directly into the standard CPC BASIC environment.

WHEN TO USE DISABLE

Use this function when you want the CPC to start normally without the Dandanator menu taking control.

6 Amstrad CPC expansion connector

Use this edge connector to attach the device to the CPC expansion port. Make sure the connector is correctly aligned and fully seated before switching on the computer.

Supported CPC models

- CPC 464
- CPC 664
- CPC 6128
- CPC 464+
- CPC 6128+

CPC Plus models require an adapter.

CONNECTION CHECK

Before installation, make sure the CPC expansion contacts are clean and free of oxidation. A poor electrical connection may cause unreliable operation or failure to boot.

Internal Flash Mode

Set the F/C selector to F to run the Dandanator from its built-in Flash memory. A cartridge does not need to be installed in this mode.

FLASH MODE - QUICK START

1. Switch the CPC OFF.
2. Set the selector to F.
3. Firmly connect the Dandanator to the CPC.
4. Power on the computer.

Cartridge Mode

Set the selector to C to run the Dandanator from a cartridge installed in the cartridge slot.

CARTRIDGE MODE - QUICK START

1. Switch the CPC OFF.
2. Insert the cartridge fully.
3. Set the selector to C.
4. Firmly connect the Dandanator to the CPC.
5. Power on the computer.

REMEMBER

Changing between cartridges must always be done with the Amstrad CPC powered off.

6. Installation Checklist

Before first use

Use this checklist whenever the interface is installed, moved to another CPC, or a cartridge is changed.

1. **CPC switched OFF**

   Never connect or disconnect the interface while the CPC is powered.

2. **Expansion contacts checked**

   Make sure the contacts are clean and the connector is correctly aligned.

3. **Operating mode selected**

   Choose F for internal Flash or C for an installed cartridge.

4. **Cartridge seated correctly**

   When using Cartridge Mode, insert the cartridge fully before power-up.

5. **Power on**

   Switch on the CPC only after completing the previous checks.

NEXT CHAPTER

The next section covers programming the internal Flash memory and cartridges from a PC using the USB connection and ROM Generator v2.5 or later.

7. USB Programming

The New Dandanator CPC Elite+ can be programmed from a PC through its Mini-USB interface. The same procedure is used for the internal Flash memory and for a removable cartridge.

BEFORE YOU START

Connect the Dandanator to the CPC first. Select F to program the internal Flash memory or C to program the inserted cartridge. Insert or remove cartridges only while the CPC is switched off.

1. **Connect the Dandanator to the CPC**

   With the CPC switched off, attach the interface firmly to the expansion connector.

2. **Select the target memory**

   Set the selector to F for internal Flash or C for the cartridge currently installed in the slot.

3. **Connect USB and power on**

   Connect a Mini-USB cable between the Dandanator and the PC, then switch on the CPC.

4. **Check USB detection**

   Windows should detect the USB serial interface. If it does not, install the CH340/CH341 serial driver.

USB SERIAL INTERFACE

Controller: CH340/CH341 compatible USB-to-serial interface

Driver source referenced by the original manual: WCH CH341SER package

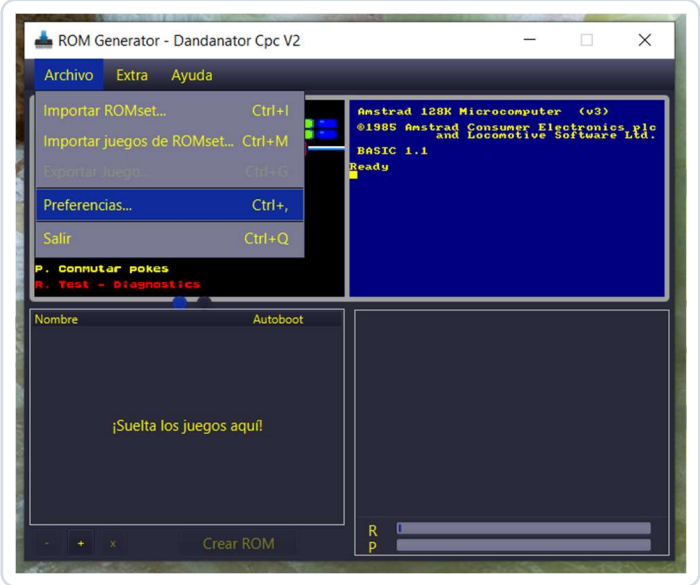
8. ROM Generator Setup

Open ROM Generator for CPC. The original manual specifies version 2.5 or later and points users to the original CPC Dandanator project website for the software.

ROM Generator for CPC

5 Open Preferences

From the File menu, open Preferences.



File > Preferences

6 Open the Loader tab

In the Preferences window, select the Loader tab.

Preferences - Loader tab

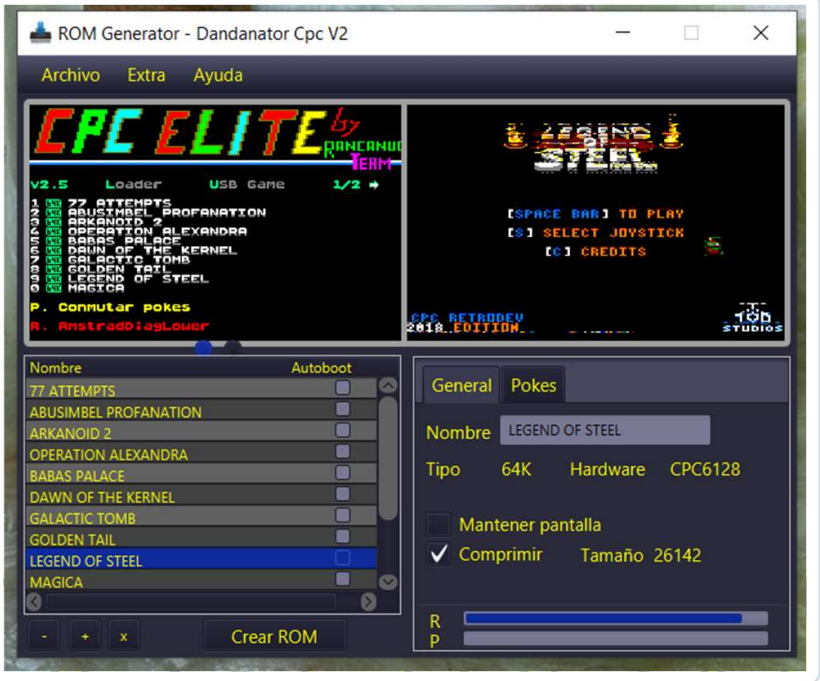
7 Select the serial port

Click the refresh/select icon and choose the COM port assigned to the Dandanator. Close the Preferences window when the correct port is selected.

Serial port refresh/select icon

8 Add games to the compilation

Drag compatible games into the ROM Generator workspace, load games from an existing ROM set, or import a complete ROM set including its saved configuration.



Example ROM set loaded in ROM Generator

> **SUPPORTED SOURCE FORMATS**
>
> The hardware manual lists SNA, CDT and DSK as supported game/image formats for use with the device. Compatibility ultimately depends on the ROM Generator and the individual title.

9 Open the Dandanator loader on the CPC

From the Dandanator menu, press L to enter the loader. On some compilations, the loader is accessed by powering on the Dandanator while holding ALTER.

10 Start the transfer from ROM Generator

With the CPC powered on and the USB cable connected, click the circular transfer button on the right-hand side of ROM Generator.

Dandanator loader - EEPROM Writer

11 Wait for programming to complete

The transfer consists of 32 blocks of 16 KB. Progress is shown on the CPC display. The original manual indicates that a complete transfer typically takes about two minutes.

DO NOT INTERRUPT PROGRAMMING

Do not switch off the CPC, disconnect USB, remove the interface, or change the F/C selector while data is being written. Wait until the programming operation has finished.

10. Additional Software Functions

Useful ROM Generator features

1 Save ROM sets

Save a complete ROM set to the PC and reload it later. Saved sets may also be used with compatible emulators such as RetroVirtualMachine, Arnold or ZesarUX.

2 Send a game directly over serial

Import and select a game in ROM Generator, choose the option to send the game through the serial port, then press U on the CPC. This function is not compatible with every game.

3 Export a game as SNA

Any game in a ROM set can be exported as an SNA file for use with compatible emulators.

4 Recover an erased memory

If either the internal Flash or cartridge still contains a working loader, boot from that memory, enter the loader, then switch the F/C selector to the memory that needs to be rewritten before starting the new transfer.

RECOVERY LIMITATION

The recovery shortcut above requires a working loader in either the internal Flash memory or a cartridge. If neither memory can boot the loader, follow the empty/damaged cartridge recovery procedure from the original CPC Dandanator documentation.

11. Recovery Procedure

Restoring an erased internal Flash or cartridge

The New Dandanator CPC Elite+ provides a simple recovery route when one memory source has been erased accidentally, provided that the other memory source still contains a working Dandanator loader.

RECOVERY REQUIREMENT

At least one memory source must still boot correctly and include the loader: either the internal Flash memory or a cartridge. If neither source can boot the loader, use the recovery procedure documented by the original CPC Dandanator project.

1. **Boot from the working memory**

   Set the F/C selector to the memory that still works: F for internal Flash or C for a working cartridge. Power on the CPC and enter the Dandanator loader.

2. **Prepare the new ROM set**

   On the PC, open ROM Generator, load the compilation you want to restore and confirm that the correct serial port is selected.

3. **Select the memory to recover**

   Before starting the transfer, move the F/C selector to the other position - the memory that needs to be rewritten.

4. **Start programming**

   Begin the transfer from ROM Generator and wait until all 32 blocks have been written.

IMPORTANT

Do not remove or insert a cartridge during this procedure. The selector may be changed as described above, but cartridges themselves must only be inserted or removed while the CPC is powered off.

12. Technical Reference

Hardware and software information

The following reference table summarises the technical information explicitly documented for the New Dandanator CPC Elite+ and its programming workflow.

Compatible computers	Amstrad CPC 464, CPC 664, CPC 6128, CPC 464+ and CPC 6128+. Plus models require an adapter.
Memory selection	Two operating sources selected by the F/C switch: internal Flash memory (F) or removable cartridge (C).
Alternative boot	ALTER button. Hold during power-on to load the alternative ROM; a test ROM is supplied by default.
Bypass / BASIC boot	DISABLE button. Hold during power-on or reset to disable the Dandanator and boot CPC BASIC.
Programming connection	Mini-USB connection to a PC through a CH340/CH341-compatible USB-to-serial interface.
ROM Generator	CPC ROM Generator v2.5 or later, as specified by the original hardware manual.
Documented image formats	SNA, CDT and DSK.
Programming transfer	32 blocks of 16 KB (512 KB total transfer image); approximately two minutes according to the original manual.

13. Troubleshooting

Quick checks before requesting support

If the device does not behave as expected, switch the CPC off before checking the hardware connection or cartridge. The checks below are derived from the setup and programming procedures in this manual.

The Dandanator menu does not appear

Power off the CPC. Check that the interface is firmly and correctly seated in the expansion connector. Make sure the CPC contacts are clean. Confirm the F/C selector is set to the intended memory source.

The CPC boots directly to BASIC

Check that the DISABLE button is not being held during power-on or reset. Then power-cycle the CPC and retry.

The cartridge does not boot

Power off the CPC before touching the cartridge. Reinsert it firmly, set the selector to C, and power on again.

The PC does not detect the USB interface

Check the Mini-USB cable and install the CH340/CH341 serial driver if Windows does not detect the interface.

ROM Generator cannot transfer data

Verify that the correct COM port is selected, the CPC is powered on, USB is connected, and the Dandanator loader is active on the CPC.

Programming was interrupted or a memory was erased

If the other memory source still boots a loader, use the recovery procedure in Section 11. Otherwise refer to the original CPC Dandanator recovery documentation.

14. Operating & Safety Notes

Good practice for reliable operation

POWER OFF BEFORE CARTRIDGE CHANGES

Always switch the Amstrad CPC off before inserting or removing a cartridge. This is the main hardware safety requirement stated in the original manual.

CONNECT WITH THE CPC OFF

Attach the New Dandanator CPC Elite+ to the CPC expansion connector while the computer is switched off. Make sure the connector is correctly aligned and fully seated.

KEEP CONTACTS CLEAN

The original manual specifically recommends clean computer contacts. Dirty or oxidised expansion contacts may cause unreliable operation.

DO NOT INTERRUPT WRITING

During a ROM set transfer, keep the CPC powered and USB connected until programming has completed.

Recommended operating sequence

1. **Power off**
   Switch the CPC off before connecting hardware or changing a cartridge.
2. **Select memory**
   Choose F for internal Flash or C for cartridge operation.
3. **Power on**
   Start the CPC and use the Dandanator normally.
4. **Power off before changes**
   Before removing a cartridge or the interface, shut down the CPC.

15. Support & Project Credits

This manual covers the functions specific to the New Dandanator CPC Elite+. It does not replace the complete documentation for the original CPC Dandanator project.

RancanuoTeam Support

Website: www.rancanuoteam.com

Email: rancanuoteam@gmail.com

Project information and product-specific assistance are available through RancanuoTeam.

Original CPC Dandanator project

For complete details about all Dandanator functions, ROM Generator features and the original empty/damaged cartridge recovery procedure, consult the documentation published by the original project developers at www.dandare.es.

Acknowledged contributors

Dandare, Mad3001 and OverCLK - original CPC Dandanator! Mini project. Cracken Designs - dual-memory hardware implementation. AUA Club - inspiration for the removable cartridge memory concept.

DOCUMENT SCOPE

No warranty duration or commercial warranty terms are stated in the source manual. Warranty and statutory consumer rights should therefore be provided separately by the seller or distributor applicable to the purchase.

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TECHNICAL USER MANUAL - ENGLISH EDITION

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Original project documentation: www.dandare.es