

Description

The invention relates to an electrical connector assembly for mounting on a printed circuit board.

It is often desirable that electrical connector assemblies for mounting on printed circuit boards be of low profile, that is, upstand only a small distance above the surface of the printed circuit board, to permit a plurality of printed circuit boards to be closely spaced together in compact electronic equipment.

A known electrical connector assembly for mounting on a printed circuit board, comprises a post header including a row of post contacts fixed in a first insulating housing with one end of each post contact extending out of the housing for receipt in a hole in the printed circuit board, and a female connector including a corresponding row of female contacts fixed in a second insulating housing and for mating with the other ends of the post contacts when the female connector and the post header are mated.

In this known assembly the post contacts are rigid and are gripped by cantilever or beam spring portions of resilient female contacts.

However, it is very difficult in practice to manufacture economically female contacts with a height of below 10mm. If the female contacts are simple fork contacts, a reduction in their heights achieved by a reduction in the length of the fork arms would result in an increase in stiffness of the arms which would cause an undesirably high insertion force on mating with a post contact.

A further disadvantage of the known connector assembly is that a wall of the post header housing through which the post contacts extend must be relatively thick to provide sufficient support for the post contacts to resist deflection thereof during mating. This thickness contributes to the overall height of the assembly as the female contacts can engage only those portions of the post contacts extending above the wall surface.

It is known from our US patent US-A-3 960 434 to provide a two part connector, each part comprising an insulating housing supporting a plurality of post contacts projecting from one side thereof, the post contacts on the other side thereof being formed with resilient contact portions. One of the housings has post contacts formed with a pair of hooked portions arranged on opposite sides and externally of ribs forming side portions of the housing. The other housing has posts formed with a pair of resilient contact arms spaced apart in fork-like manner to define receptacles for receiving pairs of hooked portions of respective posts of the other housing between them.

It is known from US-A-3 960 434 to provide an electrical connector assembly for mounting on a printed circuit board, comprising a post header including a row of post contacts each being stamped from sheet metal, the post contacts being fixed in a first insulating housing having apertures receiving the post contacts with one end of each post contact projecting from a wall of

the housing and with the other end extending out of the housing for receipt in a hole in a printed circuit board, and a female connector including a corresponding row of female contacts fixed in a second insulating housing for mating with the one ends of the post contacts when the female connector and the post header are mated, the female contacts being forked to receive resilient hooked portions of the post contacts in a resilient interference fit, which hooked portions extend about portions of said first housing and have free ends spaced therefrom.

It is an object to provide such an assembly which may be of low overall height, which may be economically manufactured and in which female contacts of simple fork form and with relatively short arms may be used.

According to the invention an electrical connector assembly for mounting on a printed circuit board, comprising a post header including a row of post contacts each being stamped from sheet metal, the post contacts being fixed in a first insulating housing having apertures receiving the post contacts with one end of each post contact projecting from a wall of the housing and with the other end extending out of the housing for receipt in a hole in a printed circuit board, and a female connector including a corresponding row of female contacts fixed in a second insulating housing for mating with the one ends of the post contacts when the female connector and the post header are mated, the female contacts being forked to receive resilient hooked portions of the post contacts in a resilient interference fit, which hooked portions extend about portions of said first housing and have free ends spaced therefrom; is characterised in that each post contact is a formed metal strip, said one end of the post contact upstanding from said wall of the first housing in the mating direction and being turned back to define a resilient hooked portion which extends about a supporting rib also upstanding from said wall of the first housing in the mating direction and received as a free fit within the hooked portion, the rib being formed adjacent to the aperture which receives the post contact.

The assembly of this invention has the advantage that the resilient end of each post contact provides only a relatively small resistance to insertion in the associated forked female contact which may, therefore, have relatively short stiff arms. As the supporting rib extends in the mating direction, it supports the post contact during insertion and assists in preventing deformation of the post contact caused, for example, by misalignment of the mating parts. The thickness of the wall of the first housing through which the post contacts extend can therefore be reduced. Furthermore, each female contact can engage the associated post contact below the upper level of the rib enabling location of the female contact close to the surface of the printed circuit board.

The resilient post contacts are stamped and formed from sheet metal and thus will require less material in manufacture than the prior rigid

post contacts, and may also more easily be provided with integral teeth adapted to anchor the posts in the housing.

An electrical connector assembly according to this invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a known connector assembly;

Figure 2 is a side view of a connector assembly according to this invention with portions shown in different planes of cross-section;

Figure 3 is a transverse cross-sectional view of the assembly of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a transverse cross-sectional view of the assembly of Figure 2 taken in an opposite direction to Figure 3 showing the post header and female connector during mating; and

Figure 5 is a side view of the connector assembly housings aligned for mating.

The known connector assembly shown in Figure 1, comprises a post header 1 including a row of rigid posts 2 fixed to extend through a thick base wall 3 of a housing 4 and anchored at one of their ends in a printed circuit board 5. A mating female connector includes a corresponding row of resilient female contacts (not shown) fixed in a second insulating housing 6 for connection to the other ends of the post contacts 2.

As shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4, the electrical connector assembly according to this invention comprises a female connector 9 matable with a post header 10.

The female connector comprises an insulating housing 11 (Figure 5) moulded in one-piece of plastics material with contact receiving cavities 12 communicating with rear and mating faces. A contact stop 13 is integrally formed with cavity end walls to extend across the cavities adjacent the mating face. A pair of spaced, parallel contact guiding ramps 14 extend along respective end walls to guide a female contact 22 inserted into the cavity through the rear face towards the stop 13. A recess 15 providing a contact retaining shoulder 16 is formed adjacent each side wall on opposite sides of each stop 13. Guiding posts 17 are integrally formed on opposite ends of the female housing, and the side walls extend below the cavities to define flexible latching skirts 19 formed with latching depressions 21.

Each female contact 22 is stamped and formed from sheet metal with a wire crimping portion 26 at a rear end and a fork 23 at a mating end. Locking lances 24 are provided at the root ends of the fork arms enabling the female contact to be retained in the housing with their arms protruding from the mating face by insertion, fork first, through the rear face until the fork crotch engages the stop 13 and the lances 24 snap behind shoulders 16. Flanges are bent up from inner edge portions of the fork arms to provide contact surfaces of larger area than the stock thickness.

The post header 10 comprises an insulating housing 31 moulded in one-piece of plastics material with sockets 32 formed at opposite ends

for receiving the guiding posts 17 and latching protuberances 33 (Figures 3 and 4) for receipt in depressions 21 to latch the housings together. A coding projection 34 is formed on one side wall for receipt in a slot (not shown) formed in a skirt 19 of the female housing.

A series of post receiving cavities 36 is formed in the housing 31 and a contact supporting rib 37 upstands centrally from each cavity floor adjacent a post receiving aperture 38. On the side of the rib adjacent the aperture 38 the end walls of each cavity are stepped inwardly as they extend from the mating face to provide spaced contact-supporting shoulders 39 on each end of the cavity.

Each post contact 41 is a resilient stamped and formed metal strip comprising a body part 42 from opposite ends of which extend a turned-back portion providing a resilient hook 43 and a leg 44, respectively. As seen from Figure 4, the free end of the hook 43 normally diverges from the body opposite edge portions of which are rebated to define retention tangs 46 and supporting shoulders 47.

The contacts 41 are each inserted into a respective cavity through the mating face of the housing 31 with the leg 44 received as a force fit in the aperture 38, the tangs 46 engaging the stepped end walls and the shoulders 47 engaging shoulders 39. The rib 37 is received as a free fit in the hooked portion 43.

On mating the female connector 9 with the post header 10 on a printed board, the hooked portion 43 of each contact post 41 is received as an interference fit in the fork of the associated female contact 22. The maximum resilient deflection occurs in the free end of the hooked portion 43, this providing a low resistance to insertion and a reliable electrical connection.

It should be noted that, although the fork arms of each female contact 22 engage the hooked portion 43 of the associated post contact 41 on both sides of the supporting rib 37, the rib 37 does not contribute to the force establishing electrical connection, since the sum of the thickness of the rib 37 plus twice the stock thickness of the hooked portion 43 is less than the minimum separation of the fork arms of the female contact 22. However, the rib 37 assists in supporting the hooked portion 43 during mating.

It should also be noted (from Figure 4) that the maximum deflection of the latching skirts 19 occurs prior to deflection of the hooked portions 43 of the post contacts 41, the progressive engagement of the latching protuberances 37 and depressions 21 subsequently urging the connectors 9 and 10 together and thus assisting in reducing the net insertion force.

An additional advantage associated with the use of a substantially flat fork contact with a suitably orientated conventional wire crimping portion for each female contact is that close spacing of the female contacts is possible as the height of the crimping portion is less than the width thereof.

Claims

1. An electrical connector assembly for mounting on a printed circuit board, comprising a post header (10) including a row of post contacts (41) each being stamped from sheet metal, the post contacts (41) being fixed in a first insulating housing (31) having apertures (38) receiving the post contacts (41) with one end of each post contact (41) projecting from a wall of the housing (31) and with the other end (44) extending out of the housing (31) for receipt in a hole in a printed circuit board, and a female connector (9) including a corresponding row of female contacts (22) fixed in a second insulating housing (11) for mating with the one ends of the post contacts (41) when the female connector (9) and the post header (10) are mated, the female contacts (22) being forked to receive resilient hooked portions (43) of the post contacts (41) in a resilient interference fit, which hooked portions (43) extend about portions (37) of said first housing (31) and have free ends spaced therefrom; characterised in each each post contact (41) is a formed metal strip, said one end of the post contact (41) upstanding from said wall of the first housing (31) in the mating direction and turned back to define a resilient hooked portion (43) which extends about a supporting rib (37) also upstanding from said wall of the first housing (31) in the mating direction and received as a free fit within the hooked portion (43), the rib (37) being formed adjacent to the aperture (38) which receives the post contact (41).

2. An assembly as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that each post contact (41) has a leg (44) received as a force fit in an aperture (38) in the wall of the first housing (31), adjacent the associated supporting rib (37).

3. An assembly as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, characterised in that each female contact (22) is secured in an associated cavity (12) in the second housing (11) by means of a stop (13) on the housing (11) engaged in the crotch of the female contact (22) and lances (24) on the female contact (22) engaging shoulders (16) in the cavity (12) in the second housing (11).

4. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim, characterised in that the second housing (11) is formed with a skirt (19) which surrounds the first housing (31) when the connectors (9, 10) are mated, the skirt (19) being formed on its inner surface with depressions (21) which receive protuberances (33) on the first housing (31) to secure the housings (31, 11) together in the mated condition.

5. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim, characterised in that the second housing (11) is formed with guiding posts (17) which are received in sockets (32) formed on the first housing (31) when the housings (31, 11) are mated.

Patentansprüche

1. Elektrische Verbinderanordnung für die Mon-

tage auf einer gedruckten Schaltungsplatte, mit einem Stiftsockel (10) mit einer Reihe Stiftkontakte (41), deren jeder aus Metallblech gestanzt ist, wobei die Stiftkontakte (41) in einem ersten Isoliergehäuse (31) befestigt sind, das Öffnungen (38) aufweist, in denen die Stiftkontakte (41) derart aufgenommen sind, daß das eine Ende jedes Stiftkontakts (41) von einer Wand des Gehäuses (31) hervorsteht und sich das andere Ende (44) zur Aufnahme in einem Lock in einer gedruckten Schaltungsplatte aus dem Gehäuse (31) herauserstreckt, und

mit einem aufnehmenden Verbinder (9) mit einer entsprechenden, in einem zweiten Isoliergehäuse (11) befestigten Reihe aufnehmender Kontakte (22) zur Verbindung mit den einen Enden der Stiftkontakte (41), wenn der aufnehmende Verbinder (9) und der Stiftsockel (10) miteinander verbunden sind, wobei die aufnehmenden Kontakte (22) zur Aufnahme federnd nachgiebiger, hakenförmiger Bereiche (43) der Stiftkontakte (41) in elastischem Festsitz gabelförmig ausgebildet sind und wobei sich die hakenförmigen Bereiche (43) um Bereiche (37) des ersten Gehäuses (31) herumerstrecken und von diesen beabstandete freie Enden aufweisen, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß es sich bei jedem Stiftkontakt (41) um einen geformten Metallstreifen handelt, daß das genannte eine Ende des Stiftkontakts (41) in Verbindungsrichtung von der genannten Wand der ersten Gehäuses (31) aufrecht wegsteht und zur Bildung eines federnd nachgiebigen, hakenförmigen Bereichs (43) zurückgebogen ist, der sich um eine Trägerrippe (37) herumerstreckt, die ebenfalls in Verbindungsrichtung von der genannten Wand des ersten Gehäuses (31) aufrecht wegsteht und die in freiem Sitz innerhalb des hakenförmigen Bereichs (43) aufgenommen ist, und daß die Rippe (37) angrenzend an die den Stiftkontakt (41) aufnehmende Öffnung (38) ausgebildet ist.

2. Anordnung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jeder Stiftkontakt (41) einen Schenkel (44) aufweist, der im Preßsitz in einer Öffnung (38) in der Wand des ersten Gehäuses (31) angrenzend an die zugehörige Trägerrippe (37) aufgenommen ist.

3. Anordnung nach Anspruch 1 oder Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jeder aufnehmende Kontakt (22) in einem zugeordneten Hohlraum (12) in dem zweiten Gehäuses (11) mittels eines an dem Gehäuse (11) vorgesehenen Anschlags (13) befestigt ist, der in die Basis des aufnehmenden Kontakts (22) eingreift, und daß an dem aufnehmenden Kontakt (22) vorgesehene Zungen (24) an Schultern (16) in dem Hohlraum (12) in dem zweiten Gehäuse (11) angreifen.

4. Anordnung nach einem der vorausgehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das zweite Gehäuse (11) mit einer Einfassung (19) ausgebildet ist, die das erste Gehäuse (31) umgibt, wenn die Verbinder (9, 10) miteinander verbunden sind, und daß die Einfassung (19) an ihrer Innenfläche mit Vertiefungen (21) ausgebildet ist, die Vorsprünge (33) an dem ersten



Gehäuse (31) aufnehmen, um die Gehäuse (31, 11) im miteinander verbundenen Zustand aneinander zu befestigen.

5. Anordnung nach einen der vorausgehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das zweite Gehäuse (11) mit Führungsstiften (17) ausgebildet ist, die in an dem ersten Gehäuse (31) ausgebildeten Aufnahmeteilen (32) aufgenommen sind, wenn die Gehäuse (31, 11) miteinander verbunden sind.

Revendications

1. Ensemble à connecteur électrique à monter sur une plaquette à circuit imprimé, comprenant une tête à broches (10) comportant une rangée de broches de contact (41), chacune en tôle emboutie, les broches de contact (41) étant fixées dans un premier boîtier isolant (31) présentant des ouvertures (38) recevant les broches de contact (41) de manière qu'une première extrémité de chaque broche de contact (41) dépasse d'une paroi du boîtier (31) et que l'autre extrémité (44) sorte du boîtier (31) pour être reçue dans un trou d'une plaquette à circuit imprimé, et un connecteur femelle (9) comportant une rangée correspondant de contacts femelles (22) fixée dans un second boîtier isolant (11) pour s'accoupler avec les premières extrémité des broches de contact (41) lorsque le connecteur femelle (9) et la tête à broches (10) sont accouplés, les contacts femelles (22) étant en forme de fourches afin de recevoir des parties élastiques (43) en forme de crochets des broches de contact (41), avec un ajustement serré élastique, lesquelles parties (43) en forme de crochets s'étendent autour de parties (37) dudit premier boîtier 31 et présentent des extrémités libres qui en sont espacées, caractérisé en ce que chaque broche de contact (41) est une bande métallique formée, lesdites premières extrémités de la broche de contact (41) s'élevant de

ladite paroi du premier boîtier 31 dans la direction d'accouplement et étant recourbées en arrière pour former une partie élastique (43) en forme de crochet qui s'étend autour d'une nervure (37) de support s'élevant également de ladite paroi du boîtier (31) dans la direction d'accouplement et est reçue avec un accouplement libre, dans la partie (43) en forme de crochet, la nervure (37) étant formée à proximité immédiate de l'ouverture (38) qui reçoit la broche de contact (41).

2. Ensemble selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que chaque broche de contact (41) comporte une broche (44) reçue avec un ajustement à force dans une ouverture (38) de la paroi du premier boîtier (31), à proximité immédiate de la nervure de support associée (37).

3. Ensemble selon la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce que chaque contact femelle (22) est fixé dans une cavité associée (12) du second boîtier (11) au moyen d'une butée (13) située sur le boîtier (11) et engagée dans le fond du contact femelle (22), et de languettes (24) situées sur le contact femelle (22) et portant contre les épaulements (16) situés dans la cavité (12) du second boîtier (11).

4. Ensemble selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, caractérisé en ce que le second boîtier (11) comporte une jupe (19) qui entoure le premier boîtier (31) lorsque les connecteurs (9, 10) sont accouplés, la jupe (19) présentant, à sa surface intérieure, des évidements (21) qui reçoivent des bossages (33) du premier boîtier (31) pour fixer les boîtiers (31, 11) l'un à l'autre dans l'état accouplé.

5. Ensemble selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, caractérise en ce que le second boîtier (11) comporte des broches (17) de guidage qui sont reçues dans des alvéoles (32) formés dans le premier boîtier (31) lorsque les boîtiers (31, 11) sont accouplés.

