

Modeling 101 Basic Buildings and Structures

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October 16, 2020

Buildings and Structures

Buildings and structures are an integral part of your model railroad. They are the beginnings of realistic scenery. Once you have placed your buildings you can surround them with various paved areas for streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and ground covers.

The biggest benefit of having buildings is that they give your railroad purpose

Types of Buildings / Structures

Rural Buildings

Farms, houses, barns, animal coupes, out buildings

City / Town Buildings

Houses, stores, churches, restaurants, gas stations, schools, etc., all buildings that are people oriented, need for living happy lives.

Industrial Buildings

So many different type of industries, large medium, and small.

Factories for manufacturing, chemical, oil / gas related, coal, forestry, tool & die shops, food manufacturing and distribution, this list goes on and on.

Railroad Buildings

Passenger Stations – large & small

Maintenance – lineside, yard offices, sand houses, water towers, engine facilities, roundhouses

So – What Buildings Do You Need?

Get out a notepad and start making notes.

Ask yourself the questions: What does your railroad do?

Does it haul freight?

What Kind?

Coal, Oil, Manufacturers Parts, Finished Products, Agricultural Products.....

Does is carry passengers? Do you need a large Train Station, or just one or two small stations for the limited passenger traffic?

Use your list and research the types of buildings that support the things your railroad does

Google, books, magazines, friends, club members.

Layout Track plan

Review your track plan. Envision the different types of buildings and their uses can be incorporated into the track plan. Also make notes on the foot print (space available for the buildings). Make notes on a copy of your track plan for reference when you are building the layout.

Where Do You Find The Buildings?

Local Hobby Shops:

Nankin Hobby, Plymouth Train Shop, Great Lakes Hobby, P&D Hobby, Menards

Online Resources

Micro-Mark (NMRA discount 15%) and other NMRA Partnership Program Members, Walthers, eBay, Facebook groups

Train Shows, Flea Markets, *Club Friends!!*

Which One Should I buy?

Kit (you build) or Ready-To-Run (already built)

Kits – Plastic or Wood

Some of these kits can be very simple, others very difficult. If you have already build such things as plastic or wood model airplanes or the AMT model cars, you shouldn't have much of a problem building most of the plastic building kits. Build wood kits requires a bit more skill and practice, that is why they are usually referred to as Craftsman Kits.

There are many plastic kit manufacturers such as: Walthers Cornerstone, DPM, Atlas, City Classics, Smalltown USA, so many more

Wood Kits - Bar Mills, Blair Line, GCLaser, JL Innovative Design, many more

Ready Built –

If you don't want to build the buildings yourself, look into already build models. There are many suppliers of ready to install buildings that warrant looking at. At first the price may seem a bit high at first, but remember to build the kits you need to supply the glue, paints, sometimes detail parts like lights, etc. Some of the manufacturers of ready build buildings are: Walthers, Model Power, Woodland Scenics, Menards, and more

Kits Plastic examples shown

Kits Wood examples shown

Ready Built examples shown

I Can't Find a Building to Fit My Space I Have!

Answer is to modify an existing building!

This is called KITBASHING.

The magic word here is KIT bashing. Find a kit that has the style of building you want, then modify the walls and roof to change the physical dimensions. Cut the walls to make them small, or glue two tighter to make them bigger. You are only limited to your imagination.

Wood or plastic kits can be modified.

You only need a few basic tools like a Xacto knife, a razor saw, some sandpaper, and small file or two.

Kit Bashing – example photos.

I started with an old Revell Engine House plastic kit. I needed a small two story factory that was only a couple of inches deep to use as a background building. To make the two stories was simple, just glue the walls on top of each other. I used a razor saw to cut pieces of wall to the desired width. Add some detail parts, windows and you have a convincing factory!

Finish up and Detail Your Buildings

After your building is built you will want to “dress” it up with some accessories, people, vehicles, lights. Many building kits include some details, others don’t. Most of the manufacturers have this stuff available.

You will want to make your buildings more realistic by adding interior details, and external details. Such things as crates, barrels, pipes, lumber, etc.

Of course, don’t forget the vehicles and the people!

We’ll touch on more of this when we discuss scenery for your model railroad in a future Modeling 101 Clinic.

Resources

Nankin Hobby – 4 Stores – Westland, Farmington, Ypsilanti, Southgate (248) 919-0040

or email Russ – russatnankin@yahoo.com

Plymouth Train Shop – Livonia – (734) 454-7337

Great Lakes Hobby – Sterling Heights – (586) 254-1600

P&D Hobby – Fraser – (586) 296-6116

Micro Mark – www.micromark.com NMRA 15% discount code – NMRA

Walthers – www.walthers.com

Menards – menards.com