



Wilhelm, Joe (1957). Trackworker's Dwelling in Model Trains, Fall, pp 32-33. Charles L Franck photographer.

This card kit has its origins in a 1950s Model Trains magazine article, but instead of providing you with fully textured walls and other components you source the textures to adapt it to your location/era.

In other words, it's more like a conventional scratch building project where you have detailed drawings but need to source the required building materials.

### Construction Details

The design and construction of this model appeared as a three-part series in Narrow Gauge Down Under magazine in 2025. Sample textures and rationale, etc., can be found there.

Most card kits have glue tabs on all components requiring fitting together. This kit requires you to decide where glue tabs are required and include them when cutting out the various components. Use the mockup (upper right) as an initial guide for tabs that strengthen and/or join parts together.

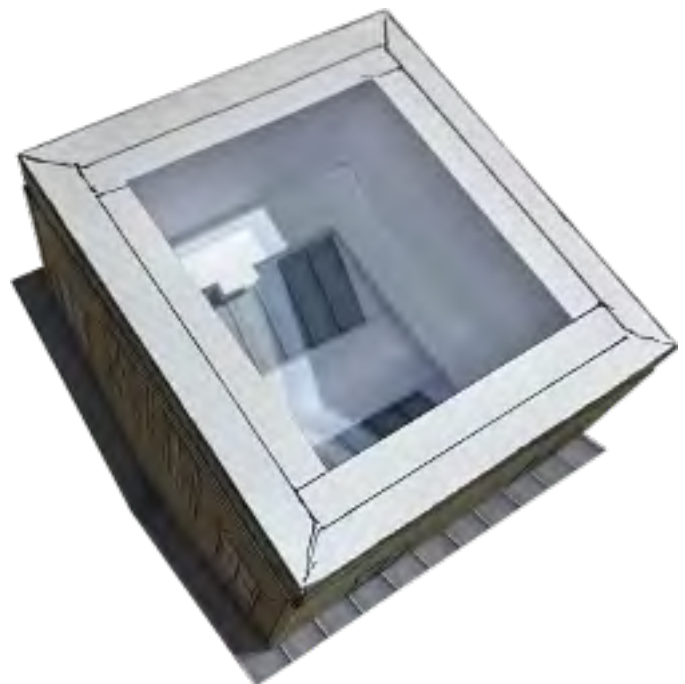
Similarly, you need to determine where multiple layers or extra strengthening components are required. The fold-over tabs on the mockup serve both purposes.

On both the mockup and the model I've used turn-under tabs on the bottom of the walls (foundation layer). Measure the interior dimensions after the four walls have been assembled and cut reinforcing and squaring inserts. Measure roughly 2cm inside this insert and cut out the center (creating a square donut) before assembly so you will still have access to the interior when gluing the roof.

The upside-down image (right) shows the 'square donut' at top-of-wall height and the equivalent at bottom-of-wall... I've actually used four 2cm wide strips glued to the turn-under wall tabs and highlighted them with a felt pen for this photo.



Initial mockup to help determine location of glue tabs, etc.



Semi-finished model with bracing and fold-over/under tabs to keep model square and minimize warping.

Most importantly, you have to source appropriate textures for making the model come alive. These textures are then layered with the kit components using the computer prior to printing.

Most kit components have been supplied as transparent background .png files. When printed at 300dpi they will be correctly sized for O scale (1:48) and can be readily resized when printing for other modelling scales.

Transparency allows you to open them in your image manipulation software and copy/paste a selected texture into a layer underneath. They can then be printed and cut out as normal.

### Texture Sources

I often create my own photorealistic textures but there's a wide range of sources, both free and paid, online. My favourite free source is Textures.com with over 140,000 images. The best source of North American style structures and textures is Clever Models llc (clevermodels.squarespace.com/) with over 130 texture sheets in multiple scales as well as complete kits with bonus texture sheets.

### How much detail?



The semi-finished model (above) has two-layer walls. The base layer is identical to the mockup except for being printed with the stone foundation. It also included all the required glue tabs.

The foundation texture wasn't printed on the top/sheathing layer and once in place the slight setback from the sheathing to the foundation duplicates normal construction practice.

The top layer has cutouts for door and window detailing. Depending on the amount of detail you want in your model it might also be necessary to have corresponding cutouts in the base layer, likely for placing model glass between the two layers.

The photo shows one wall and the back side, with a back story that the duplex was originally board and baton but had the front and two sides replaced with weatherboard sometime after initial construction.

I could have used board by board construction – overlapping weatherboard/board and baton. Instead, only the doors and windows are multilayer, it is a 'proof of concept' model, thus not fully finished to exhibition or front of layout standards.

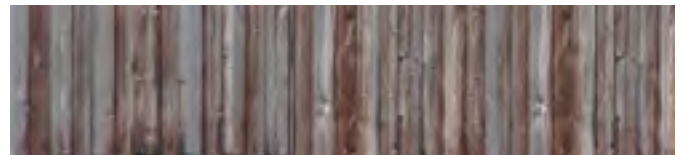
### Localising for your layout

This basic structure could be at home in many parts of the world with appropriate foundation and wall sheathing. In a North American mining camp it might well have a stone or concrete foundation

while in the Queensland tropics it would likely be raised on timber, brick or stone stumps.

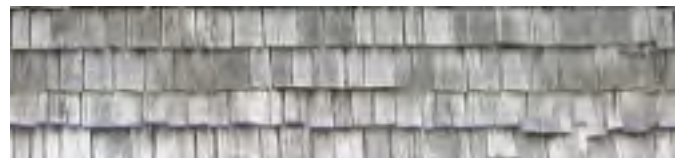
Similarly, almost anywhere in the world the wall sheathing could be rough timber as with the rear wall of this model, perhaps with the tar paper roof of Wilhelm's model -- or weatherboard with either a shingle or metal roof.

In the tropics it could be tin and timber, with or without being raised off the ground on stumps. A brick exterior with a tile or metal roof would be at home in the suburbs of a city or a company town and Colorbond® panels would bring it into today. It's unlikely the building would ever be constructed with a flat roof but a steeper pitch would be appropriate for a mountainous area with heavy snowfall. And the attic vent could be omitted or replaced with a small window according to construction practice in your modelling locale/era.



WoodPlanksDirty0091\_L (photo of a rough barn) from Textures.com was the source for the model's rear wall.

Consider what the model (left) would look like with the following textures:



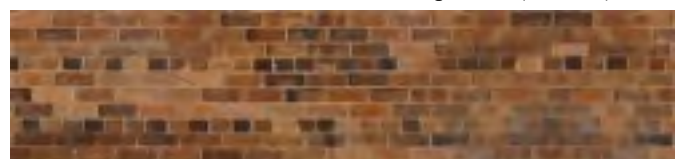
Clever TO-307, O scale Wood Shingles – approximately 10". This texture was used for the front porch roof on the model as built.



A much neater board and batten: Clever 123 O Scale Weathered Board & Batten without Nailheads.



Clever O scale Distressed White Clapboard (Neutral)



O scale brick scaled by the author from a structure in East Street Lane, Rockhampton, July 2015.