

# BUILDING INSPIRATION

By Ian Brierley

**T**he great thing about modelling a fictitious location is that we get to create our own little world which allows us to express our creativity without the constraints of a real location. The challenge with all this artistic freedom is to try and ensure that the finished product looks like it could be a real location, and this happy outcome is often more elusive. One element that can contribute to a believable model railway is the time and trouble taken with the buildings, which will often take a large proportion of the man hours devoted to the overall project particularly if they are scratch built.

I find Scratch building my real estate in N gauge immensely rewarding, not least because I know that the buildings I produce will be unique. I have found however that my more successful efforts have been based or at least inspired by a suitable prototype.

I look for interesting examples of typical buildings rather than modelling something too quirky and I find this approach contributes to a more believable overall scene in terms of the model railway that they will populate. Using similar materials for each model

also helps to convey a consistent overall scene

I have chosen three examples from my completed models to show how a really good prototype can be used to inspire the design of a model which is unique, but hopefully also realistic. All of the original prototypes used to inspire the models still exist as you will see from the photographs

**1: Coal merchants office (Howarth station yard - West Yorks) - below left**

It is difficult to find a coal merchants office these days, even on a heritage railway, but the one at Howarth is a great example with loads of character. The design was simplified, which better suited the location I was modelling, whilst still keeping the key features and construction materials, although saddle stones were preferred as a base rather than the brick supports of the original

The model is made from plasticard with fine strip to simulate the panels of the original. Ratio corrugated sheet was employed for the roof. Scribed clear plastic sheet providing the single window. Drain pipes gutters and barge boards were then added and finally the sign on the roof with the Coal Merchants name being printed off from the computer

**2: Station house (Pont-Y-Pant Station house - Conway Valley line) - top of next page**

Most of the station houses on the Conway valley line are still extant, albeit now privately owned. However they have changed little in appearance from their original use. Pont Y Pant station building is typical of those on the line in that it combined the usual facilities with a residence for the station master. It originally had a canopy on the platform side but this has long since been removed. The rugged but attractive design of the building, featuring a complex arrangement of hipped and dormer roofs makes it a very appealing subject for a model.

I decided to build a mirror image version because it better suited the layout of the station and its environs on my current layout project. It would also mean that the structure was both truly unique whilst being prototypical. After visiting the site and taking a few photographs I produced a drawing to what I considered to be the correct dimensions. Further research enabled





me to source photos of the station building when it was still in use complete with canopy on the platform side

Construction is of plain plasticard overlaid with small stone courses - embossed plastic sheet. Spaces were left in the embossed sheet for the lintels and sills of the windows. This was tricky but once completed the resultant space was simply filled with plastic putty which when sanded down blended in really well with the surrounding courses.

All the building sides were completed as far as possible including scribed acetate windows to represent the intricate frames, the building was then put together and the unusual roof shape became more evident. The roof was constructed using ratio tile roofing sheets although these were vigorously sanded down on the blank side to make them thinner and therefore easier to put the sections together accurately.

Coping stones were added using half round strip and chimneys were built up using strips of thick plasticard. Chimney pots are white-metal castings and plastic rod. Finally the brick work is represented using brick paper

### 3: Period garage (Ballards garage - Welshpool)

This garage has received much attention in the modelling press over the years and as a result is probably the most famous period petrol station still around. The garage was drawn and featured in the Railway Modeller some time ago and then appeared as a model on Chris Kleins OO Boduan junction layout, featured once again in a Railway Modeller magazine from 1993.

I changed the design slightly to add a little more interest, by providing a small office/shop at the front and choosing to have the petrol pumps free standing on the forecourt rather than against the wall of the garage

The model is made from plasticard and embossed plastic sheet (small stone courses) with Ratio corrugated sheets for the roof. The various signs are all scaled down images printed off on the computer and the typically large sliding door at the front is clear scribed plastic sheet overlaid with 10 thou plasticard. The petrol pumps are P&D marsh 1950's set on to a suitable plinth with a Shire Scenes fire bucket added for good measure.

I hope the examples shown have provided some inspiration to search out some further examples of buildings that have great modelling appeal for future scratch building projects

