

Scratchbuilding with Monster Modelworks Brick Sheet

Or Constructing a Women's Boarding House Located Suspiciously Close to the Railroad Tracks in Salida, CO



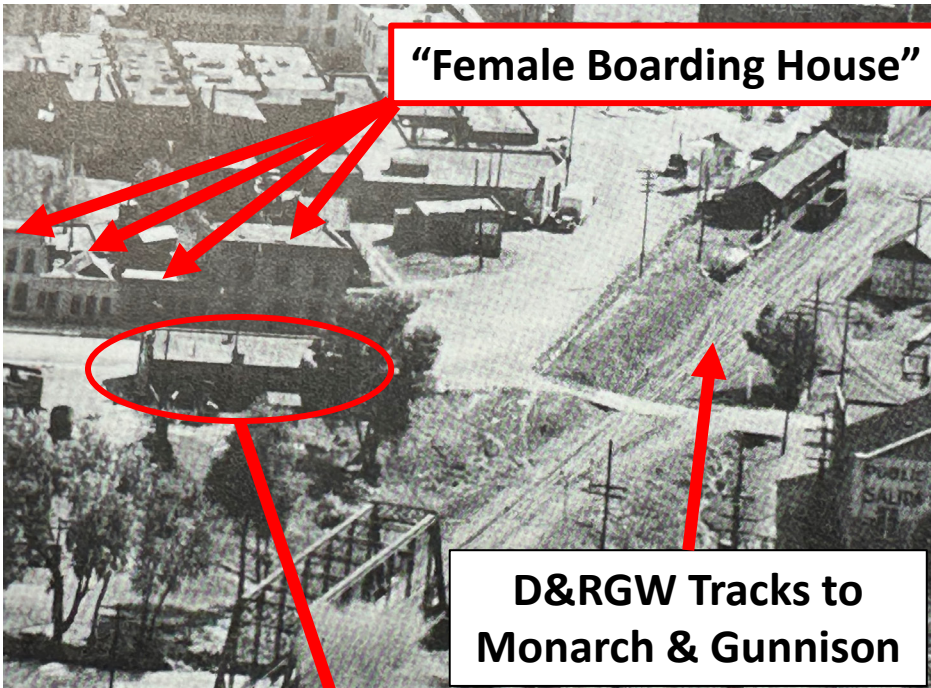
Presented to the Front Range Division, NMRA
Glenn Gibson – 19 February 2024

Why Model this Structure?

- Only space on SLM I layout with room to model town structures of Salida
- SLM I strives for historical accuracy
 - Most buildings on this block identified as “Female Boarding Houses”
 - Salida’s Red Light District from turn of century until 1950

West Salida

West Salida – SLM I Layout



Listed as “Female Boarding House” in public records



From Colorado Cultural Resource Survey - Architectural Inventory Form for 129 W. Sackett Ave., Salida, CO

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original Use(s): Commerce and Trade/Business/Brothel

32. Intermediate Use(s) Domestic/Hotel

33. Current Use(s): Social/Clubhouse

34. Site Type(s): Bordello, Hotel, Fraternal Lodge

35. Historical Background:

The main part of this building was erected between 1898 and 1904 while the eastern portion dates to 1904-09, according to Sanborn fire insurance maps. The 1943 year of construction reported by the Assessor is not correct. The 1904 Sanborn map identifies this building as "female boarding," a Sanborn Map Company euphemism for a place of prostitution. The 1909 and 1914 maps show the same use. Although the 1929 Sanborn labels the building as a dwelling and the 1945 map shows it as the "Victory Hotel," by most accounts the buildings continued to function as a place of prostitution. The block of W. Sackett Avenue (then known as W. Front Street) was the town's Red Light District and contained a number of houses of prostitution. Railroad workers and travelers provided a large client base for the district.

Mildred Bommer was the head of this house in 1905-06. Salida's most famous madam, Laura Evans, lived here for many years. According to an account in One Hundred Years in the Heart of the Rockies, Ms. Evans married young, deserted her family, changed her name, and became a prostitute. She came west to Denver's Market Street and spent three years in Leadville, before settling in Salida in the late 1890s. In 1905 she operated a bordello in the building at 113 W. Sackett Avenue. She opened this parlor house in about 1910 on W. Sackett Avenue. This building is visible on 1926 and late 1930s overview photographs of Salida taken from Tenderfoot Hill. In about 1906, Evans acquired a row of cribs across the street (130 W. Sackett Avenue). She continued to operate her business until 1950, when the local District Attorney finally forced her to close.

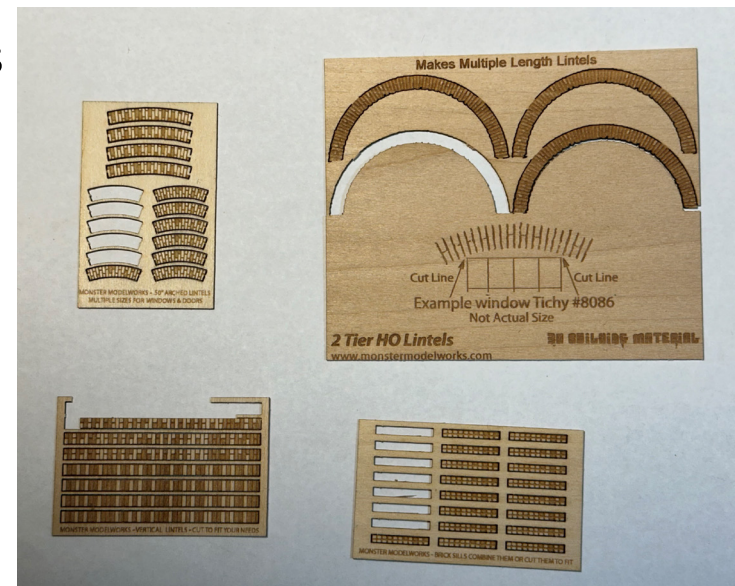
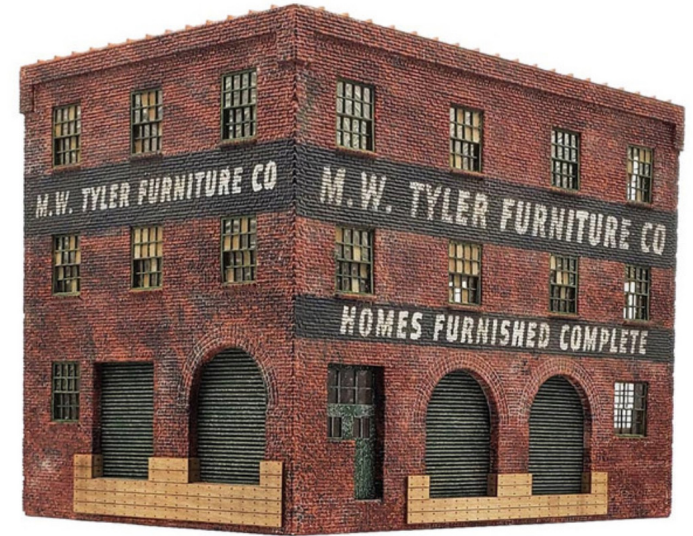
Accounts of Laura Evans's life in Salida are replete with numerous good works. During the influenza epidemic of 1918, she reportedly suspended operations and provided rooms for the sick and sent her girls to aid in nursing the victims. During the Depression, food baskets and coal were provided to needy families. Abused women were given shelter. One Salida politician remarked: "I doubt if anybody will ever know how many people Laura helped. She was an entire Department of Social Services long before there was such a thing."

At the time of the 1920 Census, she reported her age as forty-seven and stated that she was a native of Alabama. She listed her occupation as the keeper of a lodging house. Her "lodgers" included seven women in their twenties and thirties and a sixty-one year old African-American cook.

After her house was closed down in 1950, she rented rooms to railroad workers. Ms. Evans died in this house on 6 April 1953. Her family offered to donate the property to church and civic organizations, and the Mon-Ark Shrine Club eventually acquired the building. The organization still occupies it.

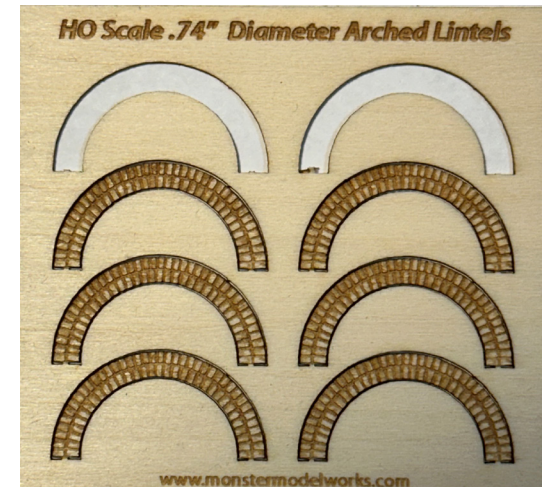
Who/What is Monster Modelworks?

- Division of Larkspur LaserArt
- Produce laser engraved basswood structure kits and scratchbuilding supplies in N, HO, S, & O scale
 - Wide variety of brick, block, & stone sheets
 - Available in 1/8" & 1/32" thickness
 - Brick & stone corners & columns
 - Brick sills & lintels
 - Coping & cornices



Why Use Monster Modelworks Brick Sheet?

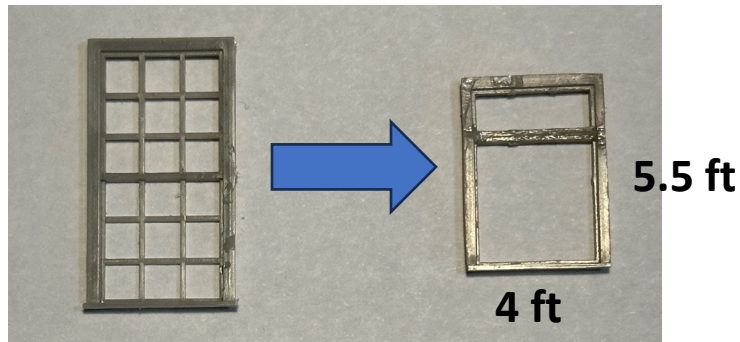
- Didn't find any suitable plastic kits for kitbashing this structure
- They have a correct size arch, the most prominent feature of the building
- Could use their Old Brick sheet to represent brick that was in bad shape, requiring covering with stucco
- Could use 1/8" sheet for basic structure and 1/32" for building up features like cornice
- Previously built a Santa Fe concrete block bunkhouse using their concrete block sheet, so had a little familiarity with their products



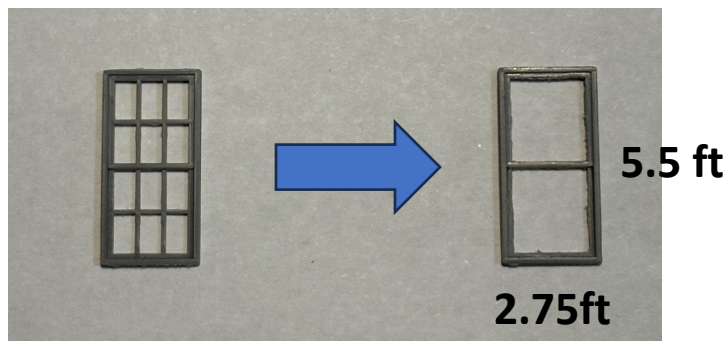
Determining Dimensions

- This building still exists, so Google Street View images were helpful
- Started with the windows
 - No commercially available windows matched, so
 - Modified Tichy Train Group windows

Front Windows



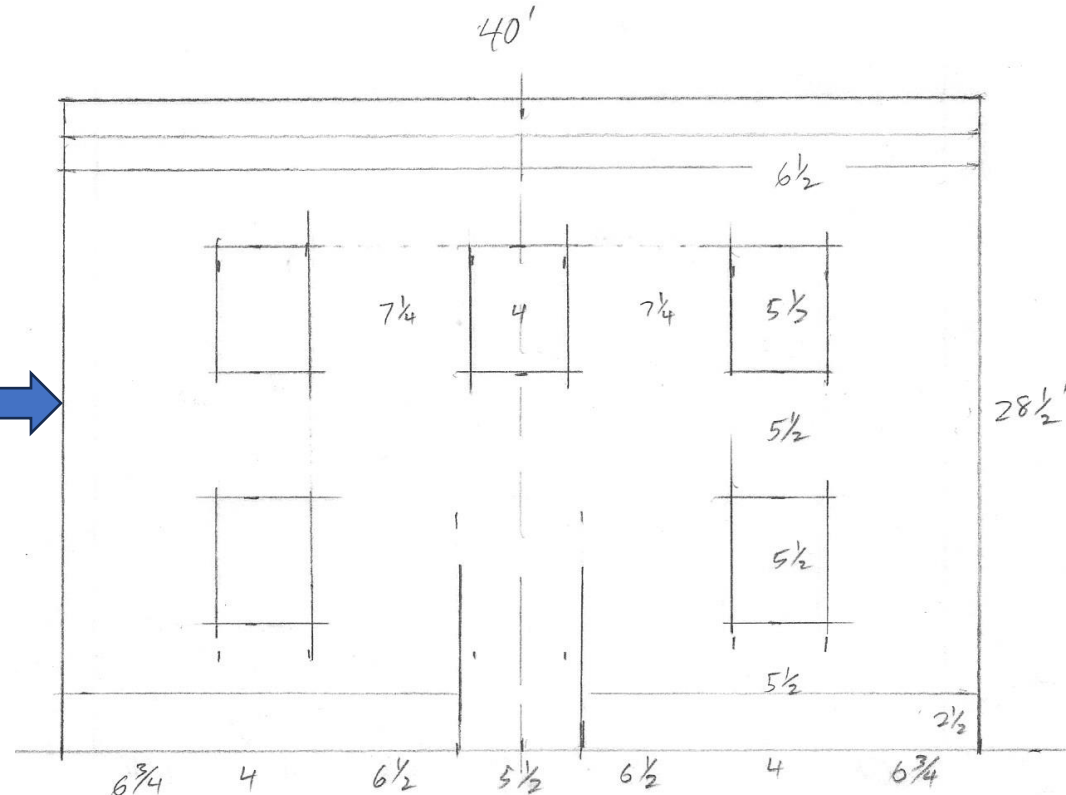
Side Windows



Determining Dimensions (cont'd)

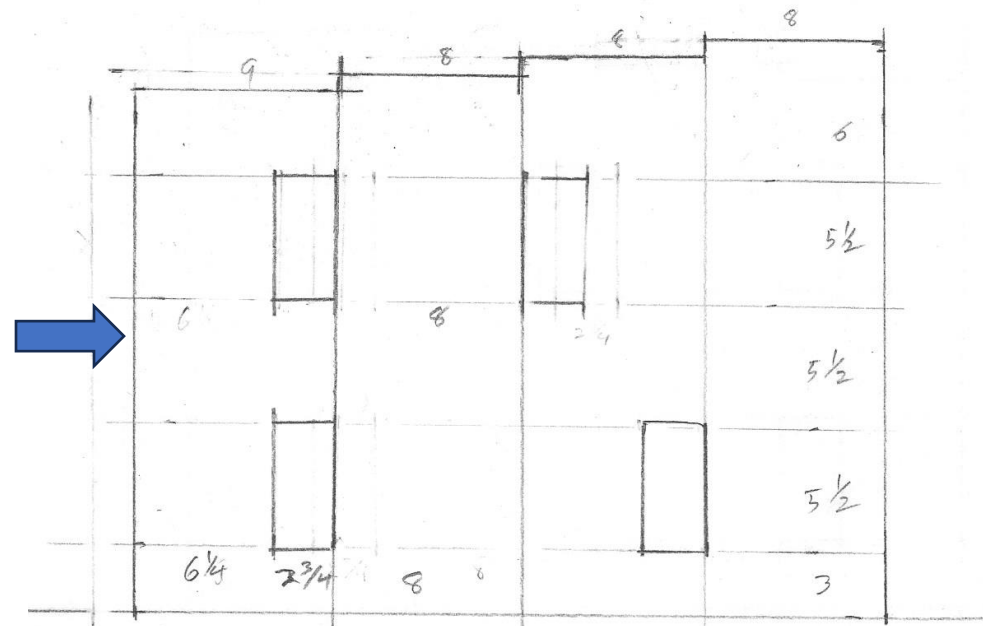
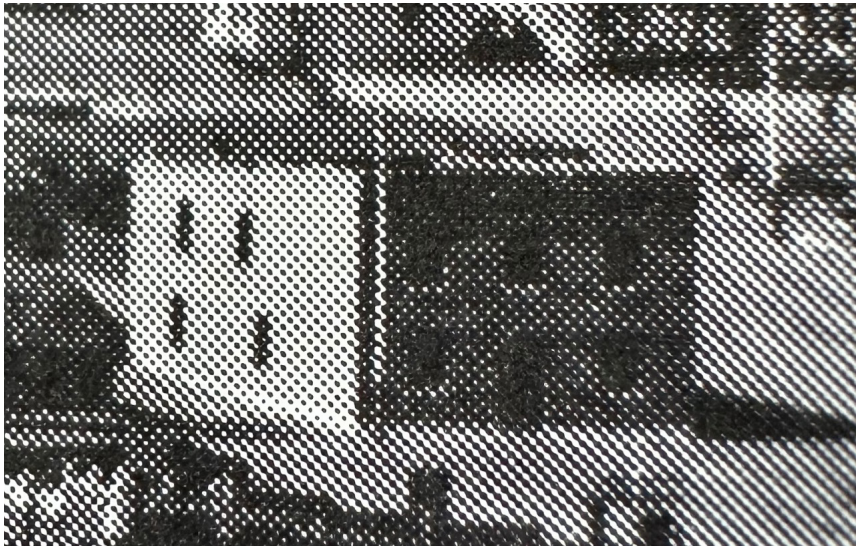
- Front scaled from Google Street View image based on model window dimensions
- Resulted in 40 ft wide by 28.5 ft high structure, which seemed reasonable and proportional

Front



Determining Dimensions (cont'd)

- Left side window placement based on historical photo
 - Side windows covered over at some point
- Depth of structure compressed from ~50 ft to 36 ft to fit space available



Determining Dimensions (cont'd)

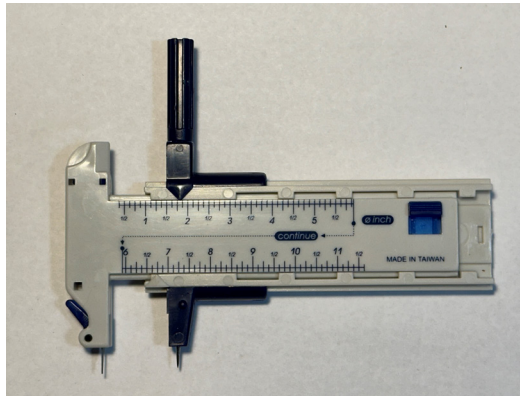
- No historical photos found of right side or back to show window or door locations
- No clues from Google Street View image
- Made right side same as left
- Made educated guesses about the back
 - Probably had a door
 - Maybe had some smaller windows for bathrooms



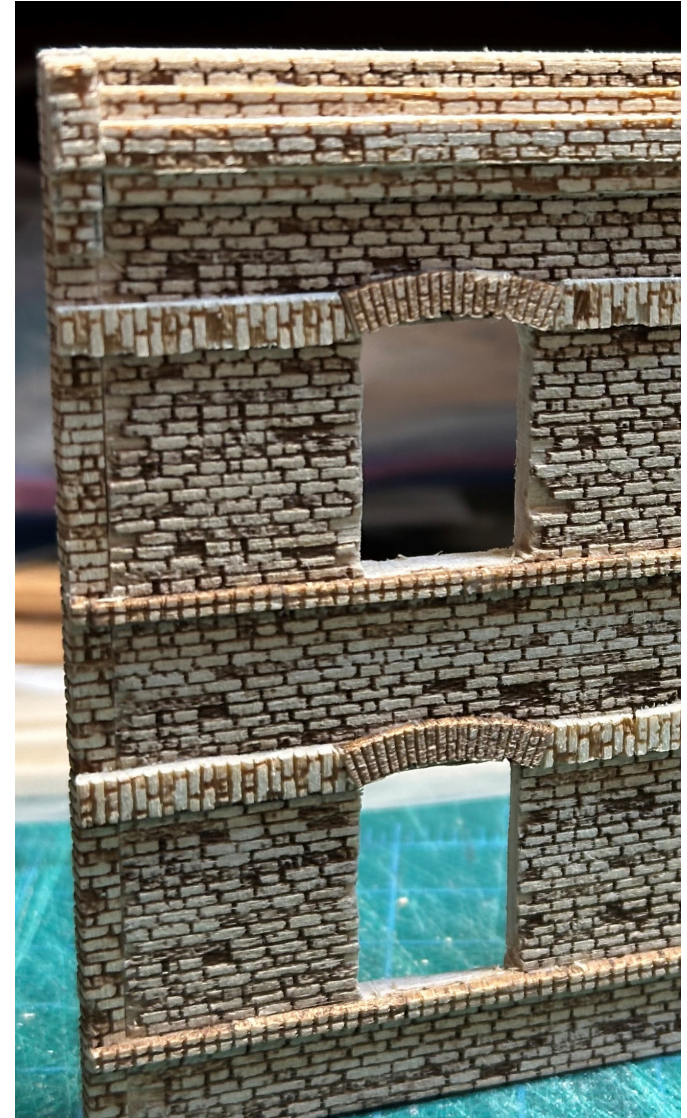
Building the Structure

- Dimensions were transferred to back side of brick sheet
- Window and door openings cut out
- Sanding sticks used to square things up and fine tune openings

- Circle Cutter-
Compass used
to cut out arch

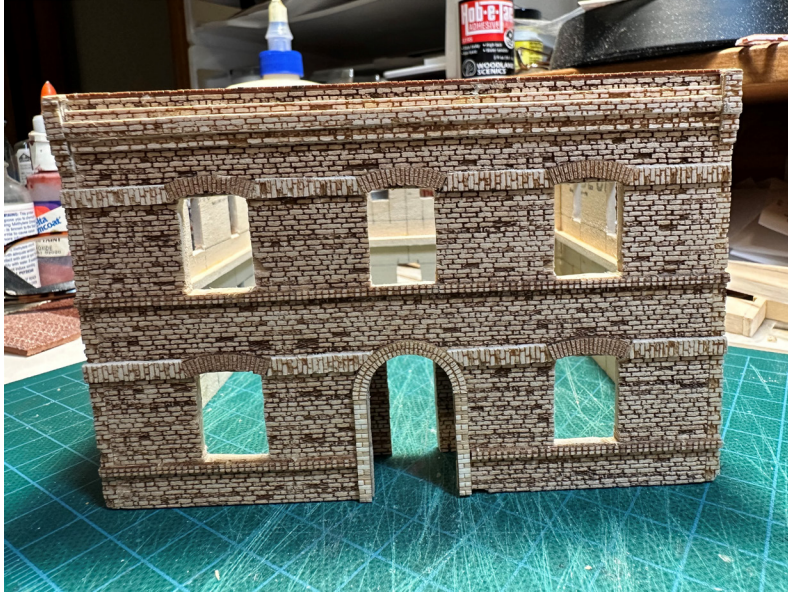


- Window sills, lintels, cornice, and other trim added
- Wood glue used to glue sides together and create the basic box

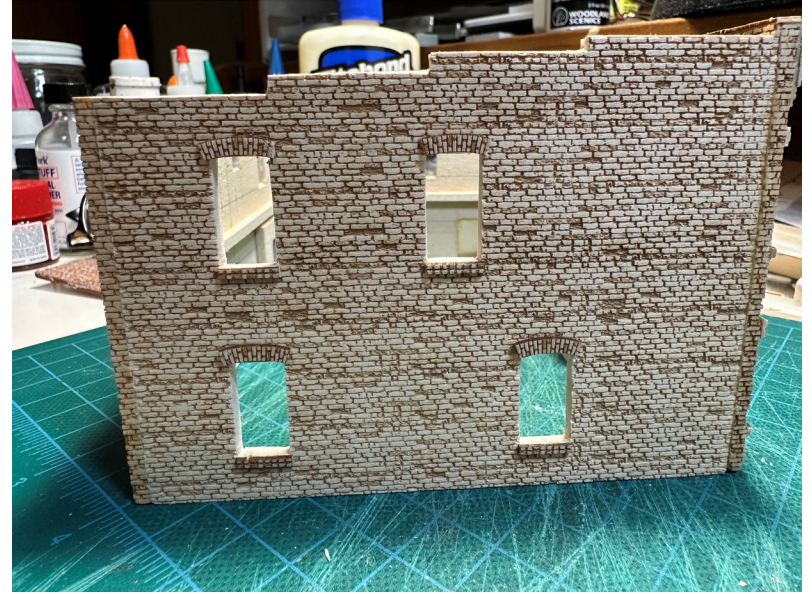


Basic Structure

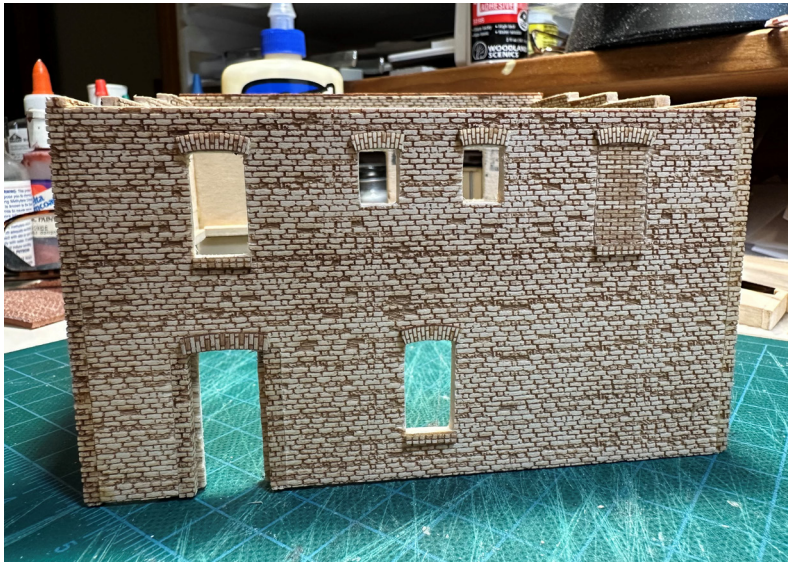
Front



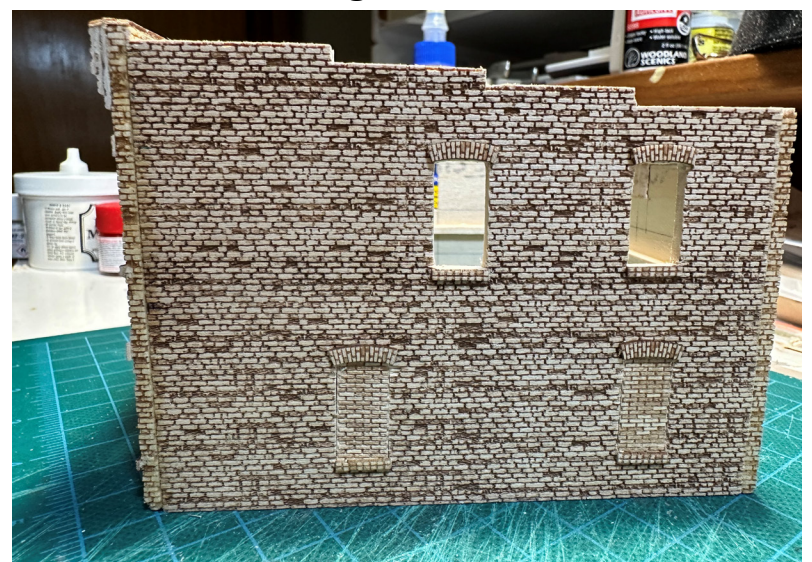
Left Side



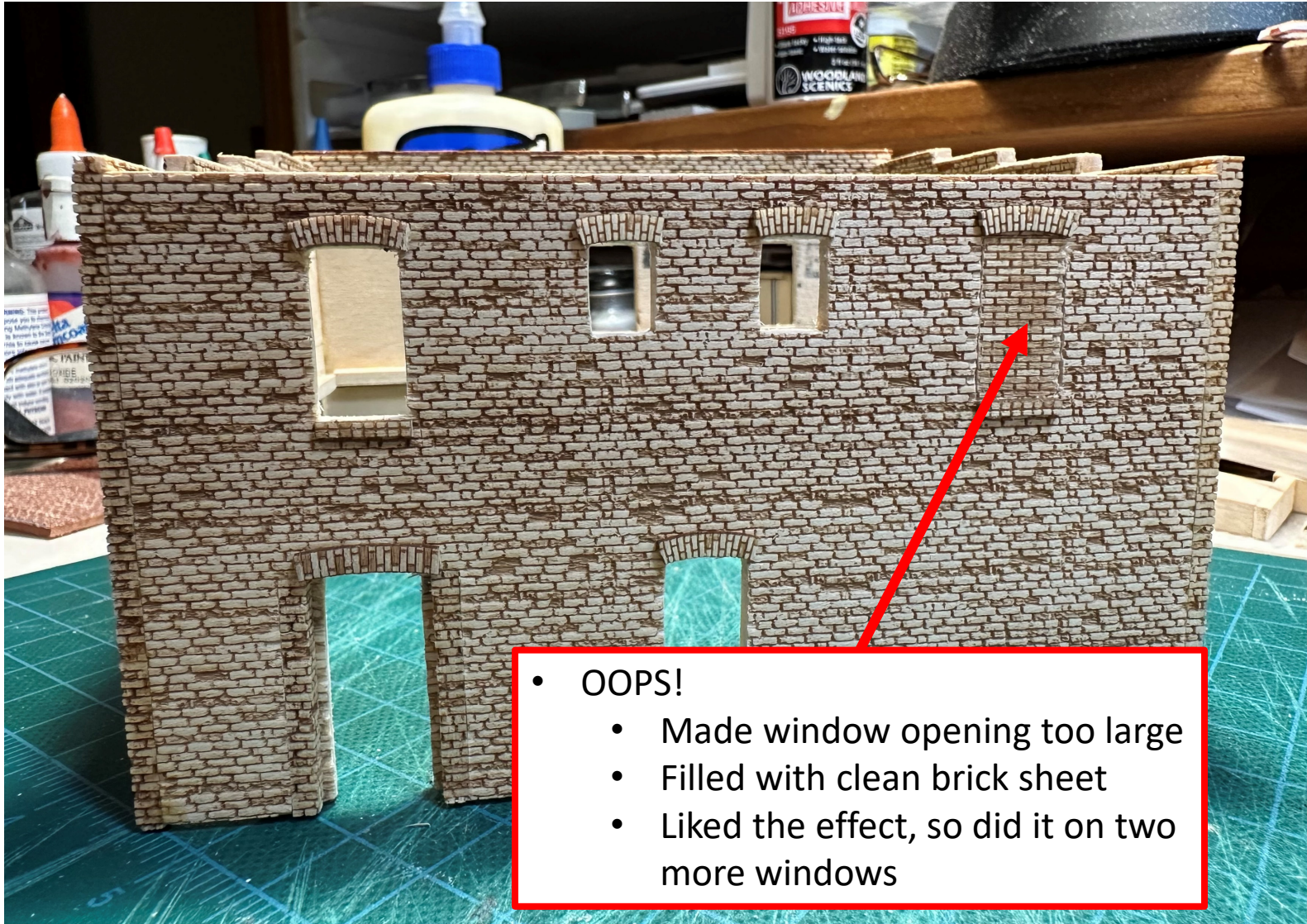
Back



Right Side



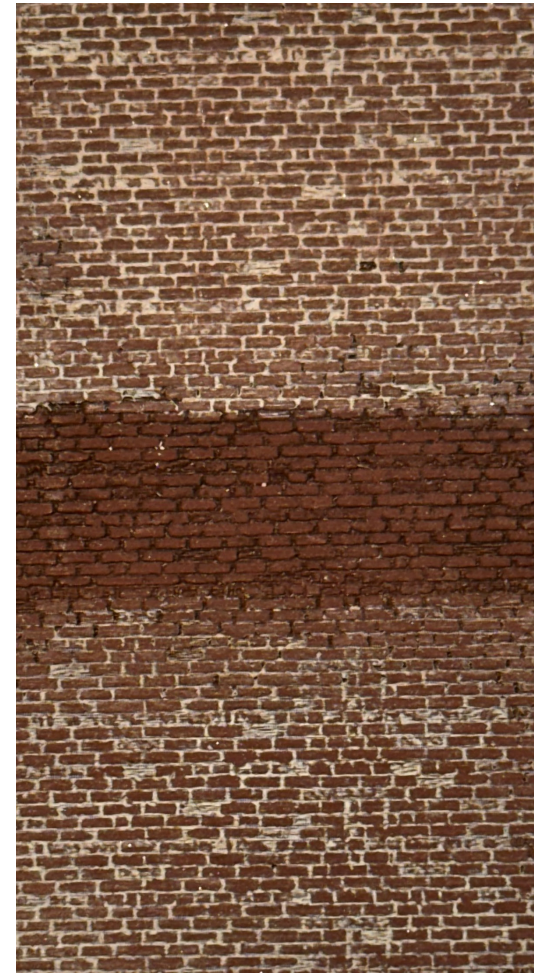
Recovering from a Mistake



- OOPS!
 - Made window opening too large
 - Filled with clean brick sheet
 - Liked the effect, so did it on two more windows

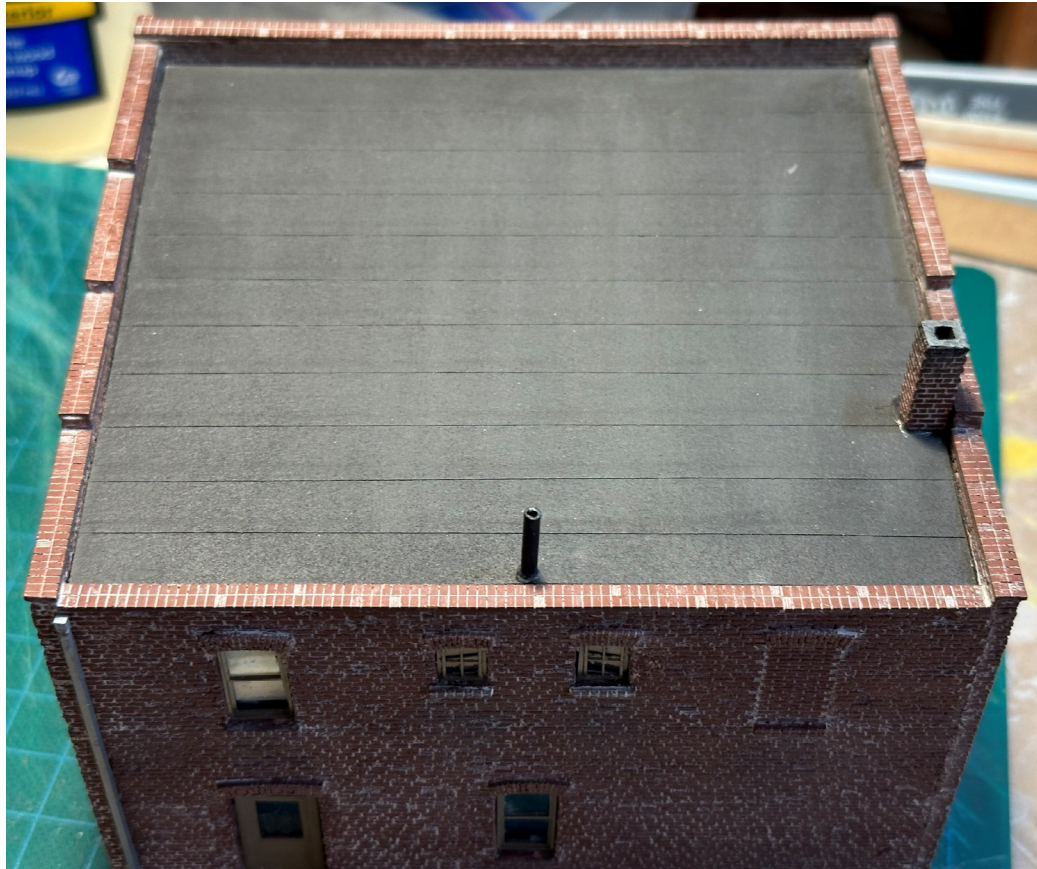
Painting

- Brick walls sprayed with Rustoleum 2X Flat Red Primer
- Brushed on Roberts Brick Mortar Formula
 - Another Mistake
 - Thinned brick mortar with water to increase working time
 - Caused some trim pieces to buckle
- Foundation sprayed with Rustoleum 2X Fossil



Roof

- 1/16" basswood roof covered with first aid tape
- Sprayed with Krylon dark brown camouflage
- Chimney made from column material
- Soil pipe made from brass tube



Final Touches

- Window frames sprayed with Rustoleum 2X Nutmeg
- Windows installed using canopy glue
- Stained glass created in Powerpoint, then printed on transparency
- Curtains from Window Designer software, shades from manila folder

