

## **Trolley Tip - Window Details for Structures Along Your Trolley Routes - by Manny Reider**

Streetcars, by definition, traverse city streets and streets are lined with buildings. Interurbans, while mostly traveling across rural countryside connect towns and cities and to access their terminals travel down city streets lined with buildings. Yet many traction layouts seem to be devoid of structure lined streets and on layouts that do have buildings, they are often blank windowed structures with no indication of any activity going on inside. This mini clinic will endeavor to show you quick and easy ways to treat your window openings to give life and function to your buildings and also to touch on some exterior treatments such as signs to enhance your total street scene. There are currently on the market many fine structures in all the major scales or one can always scratch build. Once the basic exterior is complete, it is time to clarify the building's function by treating the interior details that show through the window.

### **Residential Windows (See Figure 1)**

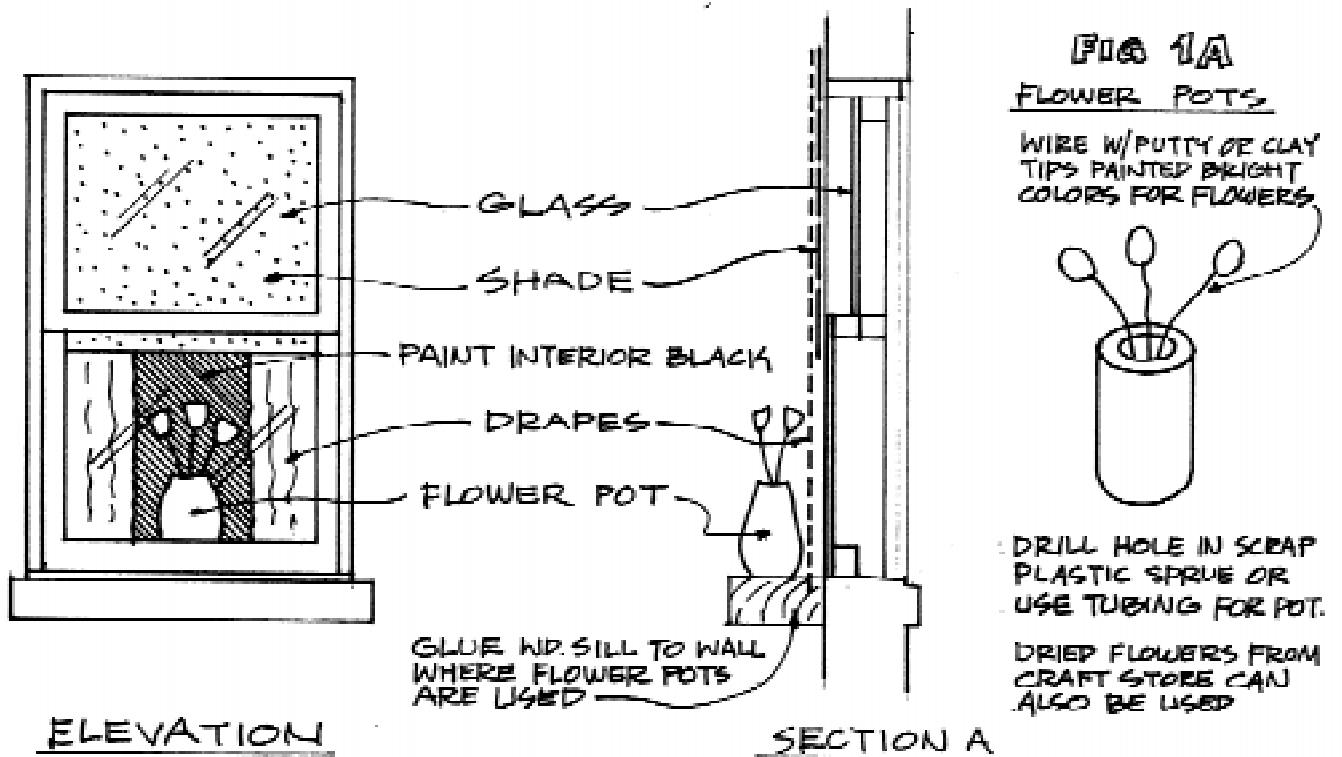
Needless to say in all windows, the first thing to add is the glass. Use a reasonably thick material that does not ripple. Clear styrene or celluloid about .030" thick works well. If you detail your interior rooms, you do not need this clinic. We are going to create the image that there are finished rooms with a minimum of work. First add window shades. These are mostly white, tan or green though in recent times any color goes. School type construction paper is excellent for this. For a change of pace, you could use Venetian blinds. There are decals for these or in some scales, the bar codes on products can be used or you could make your own. Glass can be secured with white glue that, until it is half-dry, can be scraped off if it gets on the glass. Shades can also be secured with white glue. We still have too much interior showing, so to really hide our lack of interior add drapes. Paper towels, napkins, crepe paper or scraps of wall covering material are fine for this. At this point there is only a small amount of area left to see inside. Painting the inside black will fade this out and give your windows a lived in look. An occasional sill ornament like a flower pot can also help to obscure the lack of an interior.

### **Commercial Windows (See Figure 2)**

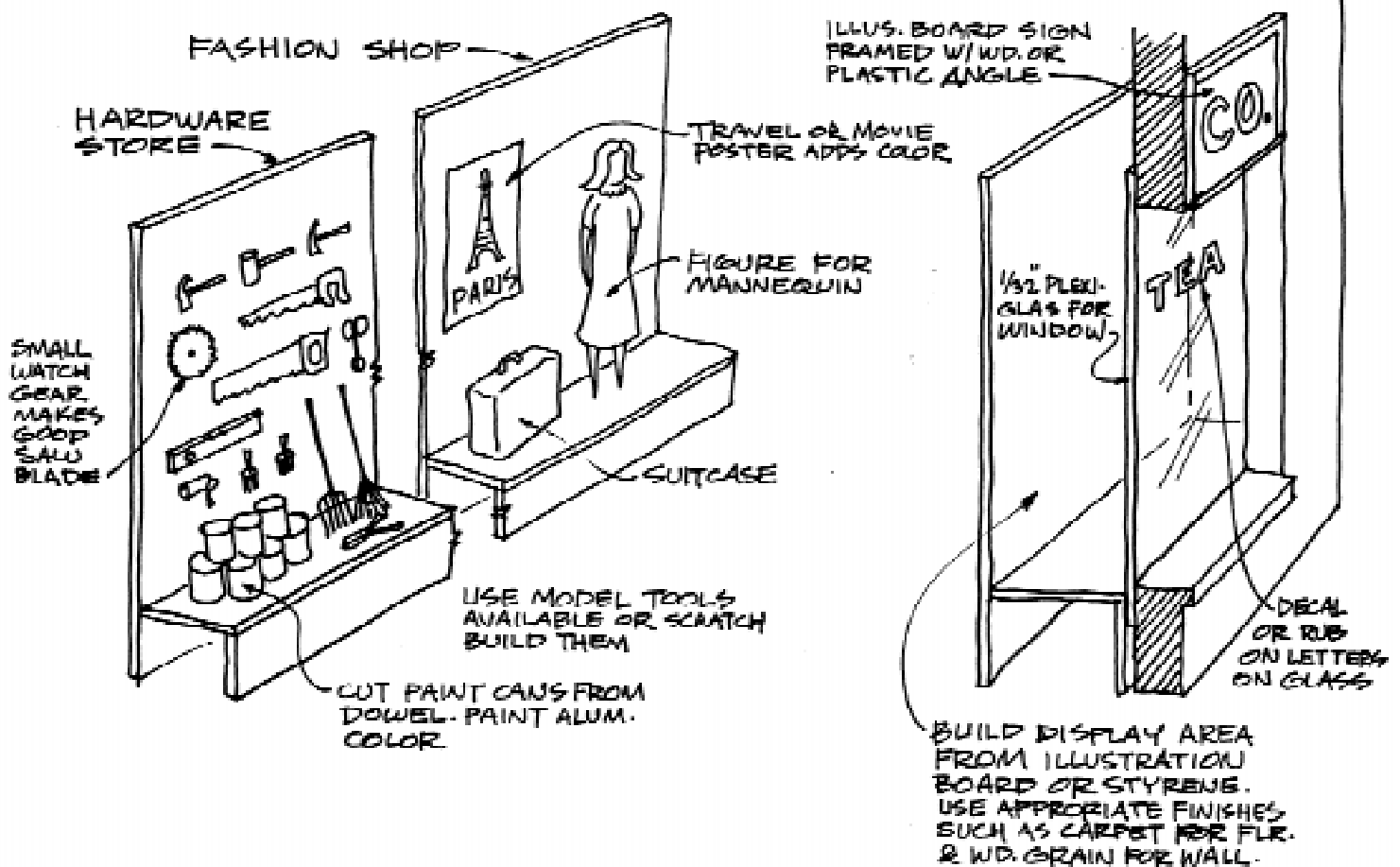
Storefront windows present a greater challenge, as they look terrible empty, yet greatly help to identify a store if treated properly. Regular figures can be used for store mannequins in clothing stores. A set up of head's can decorate a hat store window. Most scales have tool models available. These are great for a hardware store window which might also have a coil of green wire for a hose and maybe a sink or water closet also. Other items such as lawn mowers can be scratch built. For an auto showroom, use available car models or, if there is not enough depth, saw them in half or use cutouts from catalogs or auto magazines. There are classic car magazines that have ample photos of cars from earlier eras. For a sporting goods shop, a round toothpick makes a good ball bat and team logos, pennants and posters can be cut from sports magazines. Soldier figures often make good mannequins of ball players with a little revamping of headgear from army helmet to football helmet. Use a file and Squadron putty to make these changes. The possibilities are endless. Art magazines provide pictures for an art gallery; travel and hospitality magazines provide scenes useful for restaurant backgrounds. For show window glass, especially in larger scales use the thinnest Plexiglas available 1/32" or .030". This gives a rigid window to which you can add decals or rub on lettering to reproduce sign letters right on the glass, a common sight in the trolley era.

Study the street scene in the neighborhoods that trolleys used to or currently pass through and you will get lots of storefront ideas. Then use some of these tips to convert them to models that will make a perfect setting for your cars to run through. The photographs on the last page show some samples of the building that have been detailed using these techniques.

# FIG 1 RESIDENTIAL WINDOWS



# FIG 2 COMMERCIAL WINDOWS





East Penn Traction Club, November 2001