

100 Often Overlooked Details

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WHEN YOU ARE BUILDING a model it is sometimes handy to have a list of forgotten details that you might have missed. A quick review of the list is an easy way to catch oversight and increase Achievement Program points. With the help of the Internet, several train enthusiasts helped me create a list of 100 often-overlooked details. If an item says (period) then it is time-period sensitive and you will need to check the era that you are modeling. Enjoy!

Up on the roof...

1. If you have a building with a flat gravel or tar roof, put some used tires on it, (if you are modeling snow country). The tires prevent ice from freezing solid and pushing the parapet wall out and thus allowing the roof collapse.

2. Model a flat gravel roof with bumps and ridges where air pockets have formed under the roofing material.

3. On the roof add an air-conditioning service man climbing from the parapet onto his ladder.

4. On the roof add an AC company rigging a multi-ton rooftop unit into place.

5. Add rust stains around smoke stacks that exit a roof, or rust running down the wall from metal hardware.

6. Place a TV antenna on every roof prior to cable (period).

7. Water tanks on many buildings in urban type environments are common.

8. Roof details like chimneys, exhaust stacks, sanitary vents, etc.

9. Roof access, hatch, and penthouse doors.

10. On roofs add leftover roof material, tar paper, little piles of gravel, pieces of lumber.

11. Satellite dishes.

Riding along in my automobile...

12. Have a guy underneath a car jacked up with a bumper jack and it has just collapsed on him, maybe use one of the Preiser male cheerleading figures, on his back, with arms and legs outstretched.

13. Use plenty of properly detailed and painted vehicles.

14. On car or truck, add "Bondo" or primer on vehicle.

15. Dents on cars and trucks

16. Fuel oil trucks.

17. Red or yellow fire trucks.

18. On autos, sand a little off the bottom of the tires so

the vehicles don't look like they're tiptoeing through the foliage.

19. Colors on cars were also rarely bright until the early 50's; with white, a greenish white, maroon, dark blue, dark green and black colors predominating.

No place like home...

20. In earlier eras, illuminated signs were not backlit plastic; they were either neon or lighted by floodlights.

21. Window and roof mounted air conditioners.

22. Houses and businesses have numbers and mail-boxes.

23. Street corner signs are everywhere.

24. Garbage pails on the curb.

25. Overflowed dumpsters behind businesses.

26. Puddles of water painted with semi-gloss black paint.

27. Leaves piled up on lawns and around curbs, drains, etc.

28. Every parking lot has a soda/ beer can somebody left behind.

29. Trailers, mobile homes, campers, motor homes, tents, etc.

30. Clothes lines with clothes drying.

31. Fire escape ladders.

32. General junk and debris.

Dancing in the street...

33. Electrical & telephone wires

34. Streetlights.

35. Public trash containers or dumpsters.

36. Traffic lights.

37. Storm drains.

38. Man holes and covers,

39. Parking meters in every downtown area.

40. Painted crosswalks and/or signs.

41. Public phones and phone booths.

42. Newspaper machines.

43. Sand on the roads, or loose gravel.

44. Litter that gets blown against old buildings.

45. Fences of all kinds.

46. Brown glass bottles, beer bottles, soda cans.

47. Oil drips in driveways and parking spaces

48. Half moon scrapes in the pavement or dirt from swing gates that have sagged.

49. Convincing ruts and/or mud puddles in rural dirt or gravel roads.

50. Drivers/passengers in cars and in HO passenger trains.

51. Weeds in sidewalk cracks and along the edge of asphalt or cement roads.

52. Markers and boxes for underground utilities.

53. One of the most commonly overlooked details is the color of the commonly included details, so check the color of the prototype.

54. Stop signs (earlier era) were yellow, not red.

55. Old, olive drab phone booths.

56. Those telephone boxes that are placed in neighborhoods, on sides of buildings, etc with the truck parked nearby.

57. Billboards.

58. A manhole cover that has a street line painted on it, rotated.

All the lonely people...

59. Someone washing the car in the driveway

60. Someone raking leaves.

61. Someone mowing the lawn.

62. People sitting on wood crates.

63. Someone working outside in the garden

64. A bicyclist with his front tire stuck in a grate.... and he's up in the air about eight feet, suspended from above on a wire.

65. People having a garage sale with lots of junk on the driveway.

66. Kids playing in the yard.

67. Paperboys selling newspapers.

68. People sitting at the bus stop.

69. People reading the newspaper.

70. Winos taking a nap or a drink.

Down by the railroad...

71. Oil stains on the ballast and ties on uphill grades and at stations, etc., where locomotives would normally sit.

72. Cinders around the tracks.

73. Rail joiners and tie (fish) plates on track and rails.

74. On rails, modern welded joints.

75. Flange greasers.

76. Cans of rail spikes.

77. Loose or used crossties.

78. Switch stands.

79. Relay stations.

80. Signals and marker boards.

81. Whistle posts.

82. When we add crews to our locomotives all too often they are looking out the cab windows as though they are staring at us! I prefer to have my crewmen looking into the cab at one another or out the front and back windows vs. out the side windows.

I see leaves of green...

83. Foliage everywhere – no “pool table” lawn areas, or golf club type greenery.

84. Model regional plants like Osage Orange in Illinois, Kudzu in North Carolina, Tree of Heaven and Blue Bonnets in Texas.

85. Lawns, fields, wetlands, gardens, flowerpots.

86. Patches of weeds.

87. Stumps of trees.

88. Plowed fields.

89. Puddles of water in low-lying areas with some grass or other foliage growing around it.

This and that...

90. Pigeons, dogs, cats, and other wildlife.

91. Don't forget pigeon “exhaust.”

92. Goat farms.

93. Bicycles in bike racks at schools and theaters.

94. Boxcar ends and doors used to make fences around storage yards, especially near railroad yards.

95. Manure and manure piles at stock pens, stables, barns, etc.

96. Horse, horse drawn rigs, hitching posts, road apples.

97. Quantity of details, either too many people, or not enough people.

98. Smells, like the aroma of a stockyard.

99. Bears in the woods, and around trash cans.

100. A model railroad club moving modules from the clubroom to the vans for a show. 🚚

