

STRONG MUSEUM VICTORIAN MANSION

Manufactured by
Real Good Toys

EXTERIOR FINISHING DIRECTIONS

The Strong Museum Victorian Mansion Dollhouse Kit is one of the best kits available in today's market. With this finishing kit, you will be able to customize the exterior of your kit in the same manner that the prototype was prepared for national exhibition. The necessary ingredients are included; it is now up to you and we want to help with these directions. Our words are not absolute law. In fact, we applaud creativity. Occasionally, you may have to "wing it." A word-by-word description is many times inhibiting and certainly boring. Two things to keep in mind:

- A. Be accurate. Use an X-Acto knife to mark your measurements.
- B. The difference between a good job and a poor job is a few minutes of patience.
- C. Experiment first with new techniques.

This kit includes those materials listed below. The kit does not include those tools or incidental materials that are common to most do-it-yourself workshops.

- 14 bundles brick material
- 2 packages shingles
- 1 roll copper
- 2 tubes Liquid Nails adhesive
- 1 adhesive tube plunger gun
- 1 quart spackle
- 2 tubes Quick Grab glue
- brick application directions
- 2 bottles brick paint
- 2 pieces sponge
- 4 3/16" x 3/8" strips for foundation board
- 12 1/8" x 3/4" strips for foundation stones
- 10 1/8" x 1/2" strips for foundation stones
- 10 1/16" x 1" strips for porch floor

LET'S START

Step I - VERY IMPORTANT

Read through this set of directions and the directions for the assembly of your House Kit. When using this finishing kit, the sequence of assembling the basic house will be slightly altered. Try to develop a "feel" for what is going to happen to your house.

Assemble the case of the house, BUT DO NOT INSTALL the doors or windows OR put on the roof panels. The exterior brick work will be easier if it is done before the roof panels are installed. Also, assemble the base of the porch, the front steps and the chimneys.

What if the roof panels are already on? Well, very honestly, your job is going to be more difficult.

Consider the following:

- A. Remove the roof panels as carefully as possible.
- B. If the roof panels can't be removed, it will be necessary to bend our directions slightly.

The door and window trim will not be installed until the house is almost finished.

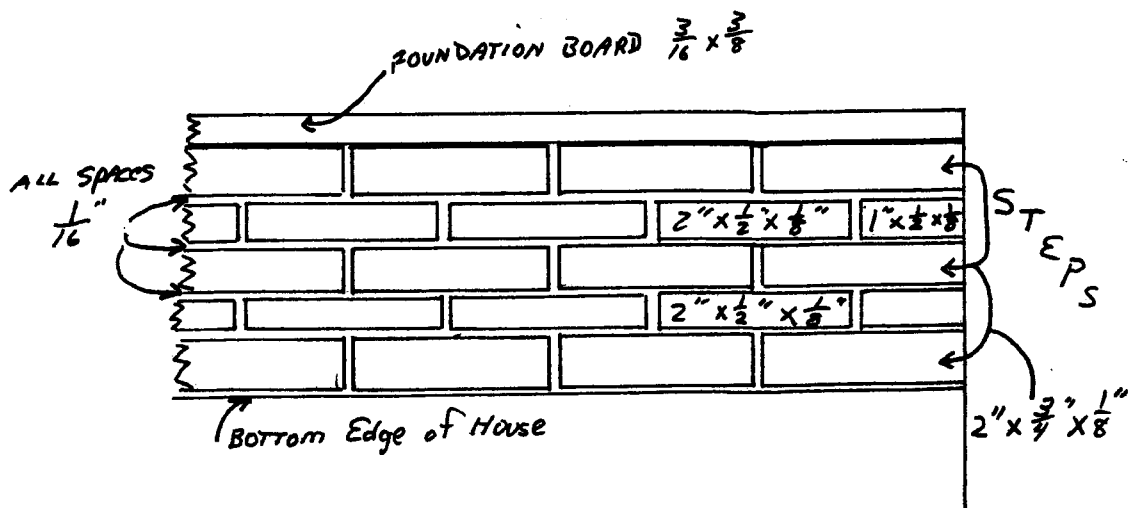
Install the hinged panel on the left side of the house.

Set the assembled house on an even surface and put the porch base and the steps in their proper locations.

The porch floor is even with the level of the first floor. Use the porch as a marking gauge and draw a pencil line completely around the house. This line will locate the top of the foundation board. Glue the foundation board pieces ($\frac{3}{16}$ " x $\frac{3}{8}$ ") (use QuickGrab) starting at the left at the front steps and continuing clockwise around the house and across the back. Do not apply the foundation boards on the sides where the porch is located. The purpose of the foundation board is to separate the foundation and brick.

Cut all of the $\frac{1}{8}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " and eight (8) of the $\frac{1}{8}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces into 2" lengths. These will be our foundation "stones." Again start at the left of the steps and work clockwise. Do not put "stones" on the sides where the porch is located or on the edges of the hinged panel. The first row under the foundation board will consist of the $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide pieces; the second row $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces; the third row $\frac{3}{4}$ " pieces; the fourth row $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces; and the bottom row will be $\frac{3}{4}$ " pieces. Start alternate rows with 1" long pieces. See Diagram #1. Glue with Quick Grab. Leave $\frac{1}{6}$ " space between "stones." Turn the corners and try to maintain same staggered pattern. Complete laying the foundation "stones."

Diagram 1



Now remove the hinged panel (if it seems dumb, trust me!) and the hinges. Face the left and right edges with the two remaining pieces of 1/8" x 1/2". The top and bottom edges should be flush and the interior edges should also be flush. The outside edges will extend 1/8" above the surface--the brick and foundation stones will set inside of these facing strips. They also serve to even out the panel with the sides of the bay. When the brick is applied, it will add 1/8" to the sides of the bay. The facing strips on the panel will keep the panel edges flush with the sides of the bay. The panel cannot be hinged now until all of the brick is on.

The application of the brick is next. The instructions are included in this kit. A few general guidelines first.

- A. Start from the bottom and work up. The foundation board serves as the base for the left side of the house; the pencil line serves as the base for the porch side of the house.
- B. Always try to work to a horizontal surface; for example, if you are working on the front, lay the house flat on its back. If you are working on an end panel, stand the house on end.
- C. The reason for the above: we find it easiest to lay the bricks in blocks of about 2" high and "dry fit" first. Let's take the panel to the left of the steps. First we would cut and "dry fit" a 2" band of brick across the whole panel. If everything is satisfactory, draw a pencil line across the top of the band. Carefully remove the "dry fitted" strips, cover the surface of the panel below that pencil line with the adhesive and then replace the brick strips exactly as you fitted them before. Firmly press the strips into the adhesive, being careful that the strips do not slide out of position.
- D. It is important to keep the brick pretty level all around the house. Probably the easiest way is to work a 2" to 3" band starting at the back left corner and continuing counter-clockwise to the back right corner, and then repeat this procedure.
- E. Brick right to the edge of the openings of the doors and windows. Be careful to pick up your staggered pattern on the other side of the opening.
- F. A word about the adhesive tubes and gun. The tube is placed in the gun first, then cut the tip of the tube at a 45° angle. We don't want the hole any larger than a pencil lead so only cut off the very tip. Next, poke a thin wire (coat hanger works good) in the nozzle to pierce the inner seal. Turn the plunger handle so the notches are down and slowly squeeze the handle.

This will move the plunger into the cartridge and break the bottom seal. By squeezing the handle, the adhesive will now be pushed out of the nozzle. The pressure can be released by turning the notches up.

We run a fairly tight zig-zag pattern of adhesive and then set the strips in place. If the adhesive squeezes out around or between the brick, you are using too much.

The brick work can now be completed, including the mortar work and coloring.

The foundation can be finished in the same manner as the brick except for the coloring. We suggest using a grey color for the base coat and then highlighting it with either black or dark blue to achieve a stone color and texture.

At this point you have achieved a significant milestone. The house is beginning to take on its own character and is coming alive. The next part is equally important as the brick work, but will represent only a few pieces. The pieces of trim for the top and bottom of the windows and the exterior door trim will now be prepared to provide the illusion of stone. Gather these pieces: all of the top and bottom exterior window trim pieces, the exterior trim pieces for the doors, and don't forget the pieces from the dormer window and the gable window. (The vertical trim and inside casing of the window and doors will be painted later on.) We only want those pieces that represent stone at this point.

Arrange all of the pieces face up on a piece of cardboard and paint them with a medium grey paint. Some of the pieces have a pressed design. Color the design black.

Next, spray a few pieces at a time with one coat of spray glue, and before the glue dries, sprinkle the surface with a very fine sand. Now do a few more pieces and continue to finish all of the pieces. Don't pick them up yet. Spray the pieces one more time very lightly and set them aside to dry, for two or three days. Experiment with scrap pieces first.

The effect that we are creating works like this: the grey paint provides a base color, the spray glue has a slight sheen and holds the sand. It also gives a textured surface. After they have dried, rub the surfaces with your finger to remove the loose sand.

You need a break! Now is a good time to paint the trim. You will need the pieces that frame the window openings, the small vertical window side pieces, the window mullions, the door framing pieces, and the porch trim. It is also a good idea to assemble the dormer at this time. We painted it the same color as the trim. Also, paint the gable trim, the steps, and porch lattice.

Tips on painting:

- A. We use semi-gloss latex house paint.
- B. The first coat can be spray painted with a flat primer.
- C. We use two coats after the primer.
- D. Sand lightly between coats.

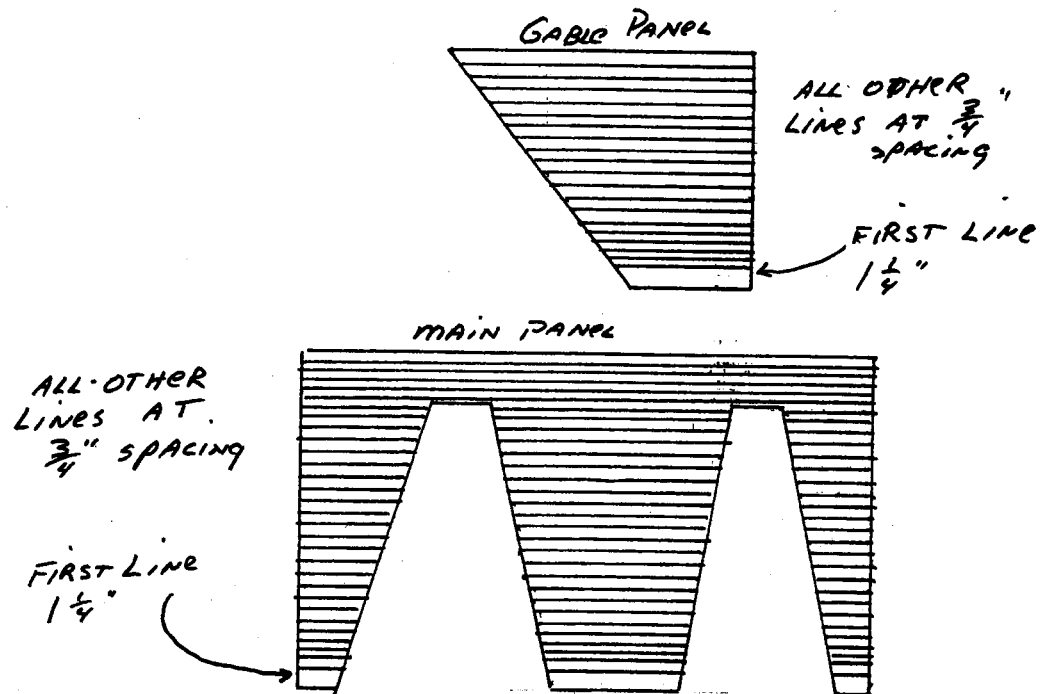
You can now assemble the rest of the porch. Check it frequently against the house to insure a good fit.

Ready for the roof pieces? The first step is to identify all of the roof pieces and lay them face up on a table. Hold the bay roof separate for a little while.

There are eight pieces plus the porch roof which is already in place.

Preparing the roof pieces with guidelines at this point will be a great help. We need a long straight-edge, a ruler and pencil. Start with a line $1\frac{1}{4}$ " up from the bottom edge of the roof piece; then draw a line at $\frac{3}{4}$ " intervals up the rest of the roof piece. The lines must be parallel to the bottom of the roof piece. Prepare all of the roof pieces in this manner. Please refer to Diagram #2. Paint the underside of the roof panels that will overhang the edges of the house.

DIAGRAM 2



Don't forget to prepare the porch and dormer roofs the same way.

Glue and nail the roof panels in place. Trial fit two or three times. Be sure the panels fit properly. The guidelines on the gable pieces should line up pretty well with the lines on the main roof.

Glue the gable trim in place.

Copper flashing. Cut five strips lengthwise from the roll $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. Fold the strips lengthwise to about a 90° angle. Glue them with Quick Grab over the seams where the gable roofs meet the main roof. It will be necessary to piece the runs. The copper runs from the very top of the seam all the way down to the bottom edge.

Next, cut a 1/2" wide strip lengthwise from the roll and glue it as a facing around the dormer opening.

Cut a 1" wide strip and cover the angle seam on the porch roof.

Finish the inside of the dormer; wallpaper, paint, whatever you decide. It will be virtually impossible to get inside the dormer once it is in place. Once the interior of the dormer is finished, glue it in place. Make sure it is straight before the glue sets.

Ready for the Shingles.

First, cut enough shingles in half lengthwise to run along the bottom edges of all of the roof pieces. The half pieces with the shaped ends will be used upside down for the bottom layer. Run a bead of the adhesive about 1/4" up from the bottom edge of the roof. Place the half shingles on the bead and press into place; the bottom edge of the shingle will be even with the bottom edge of the roof.

Place the bottom shingles on all of the roof pieces.

Next, you will place a row of full shingles directly on top of the half shingle row. The purpose of the half shingle is to prevent the plywood from showing through along the edge.

Run a bead of adhesive slightly below the 1 1/4" guideline and place the full shingles in the bead. The top edge of the shingles will be even with the 1 1/4" guideline and will overlap the first row of half shingles.

Keep the shingle rows flush with the edges of the gable trim.

At this point it is necessary to cut some templates from either scrap wood or heavy paper. As you now can see, the shingles must be angle cut to fit into the valleys. If you cut the templates to fit the angles, the templates can then be used to cut the shingles to the appropriate angle.

End the shingle rows about 1/4" from the valley seams that were covered with copper. That way, the copper flashing will show through.

The section of the main roof between the two gables will require rows that both start and end with angled pieces.

At this point you have a row of half shingles along the bottom edge, a row of full shingles with their top edges even with the 1 1/4" guideline directly over the half shingles, and your angled templates are cut.

Assemble the chimneys and brick them using the same methods as you did for the house. Glue half inch strips of copper to the bottom edges of the chimneys and attach the chimneys to the roof in their respective locations.

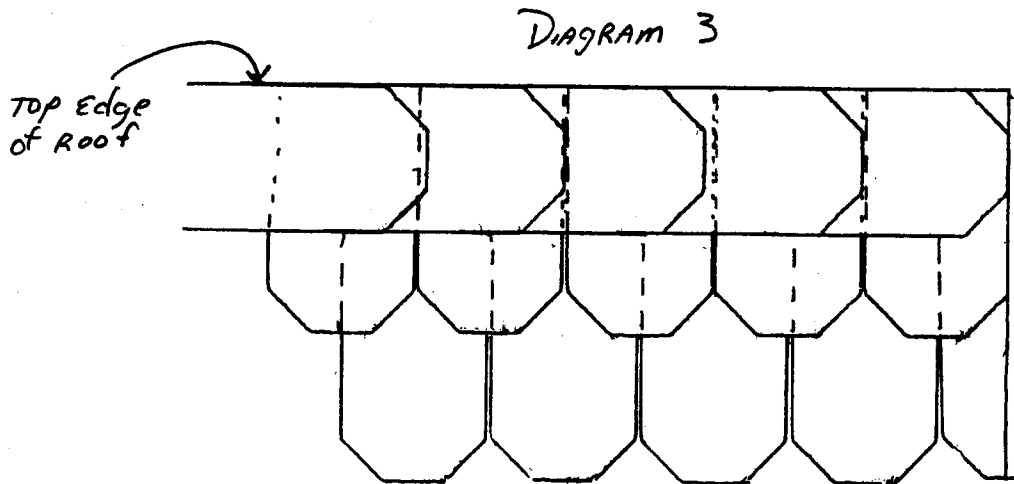
Back to the shingles. Start the next row of shingles with a split shingle (3/8" wide). This will start a staggered pattern. Run a bead of adhesive slightly under the first 3/4" guideline and place the shingles in the bead with the tops of the shingle even with the guideline.

The third row will start with a full shingle, the fourth row starts with a split (3/8") shingle, and this pattern alternates all the way up.

Butt the shingles tightly to the chimneys and maintain the pattern as you work around them.

Keep the shingles about 1/4" away from the edge of the dormer. This space allows the copper to show through.

To cap the roof, we recommend a method called the Boston Lap. After you reach the tops of the roofs, a row of shingles is placed on each side of the peak, parallel to the ridge of the roof. The overlap is the same as the rest of the shingles. See Diagram #3.



The roof of the bay is covered with copper. Again it is important to dry fit the copper to the roof and once you are satisfied with the fit, use the Quick Grab to glue the copper down. After the copper is set, glue the roof in place.

We stained the doors with a walnut stain and then varnished.

Up to now we have been real dictators, but now you have a choice!

The door and window trim pieces that were customized to look like stone can either be applied to the brick surface or they can be set into the brick. The latter is the most authentic and, of course, the most difficult.

After determining which pieces go in which place, very carefully place the trim piece in the exact position that it will be when permanent. Trace the outline on the brick with a sharp pencil. With a razor knife, cut out the brick materials inside of the pencil line. Yes, it is a tough job! If you are satisfied with the fit, go ahead and glue the piece in place.

The 1" x 1/16" pieces included in this kit are the floor boards for the porch. They should be glued down with Quick Grab and then stained and varnished.

At this point the exterior should be pretty much finished except for the installation of the painted door and window framing pieces. We like to wallpaper before the doors and windows are put in because we can paper right over the openings. After the paper dries, the openings are cut out with a razor knife. But before we paper, the ceilings should be painted and the floors finished.

When you get to the point of installing the windows and doors, follow the instructions included with the house kit.

As you complete this house, we wish we could stand by to pat you on the back. It hasn't been easy, but the final result is worth all of the pain.

IF you encounter a snag, please write to Don Saddlemire through REAL GOOD TOYS and he will be in contact as promptly as possible.

THANKS AND CONGRATULATIONS!