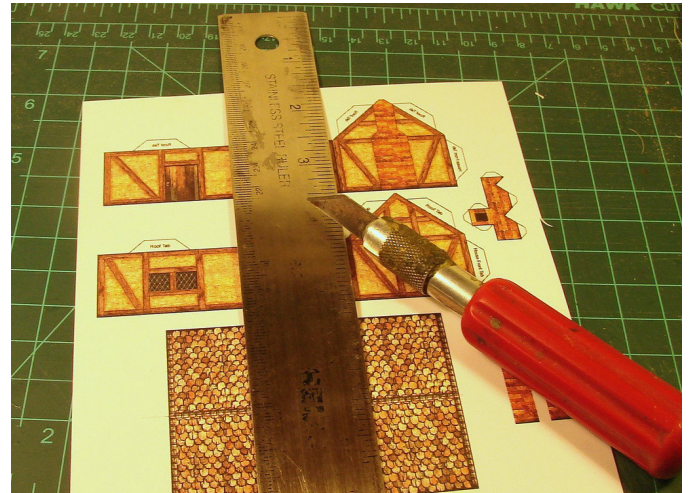CARDSTOCK BUILDING TUTORIAL

This tutorial demonstrates some of the techniques I use to enhance the look of the cardstock building models used in my games.
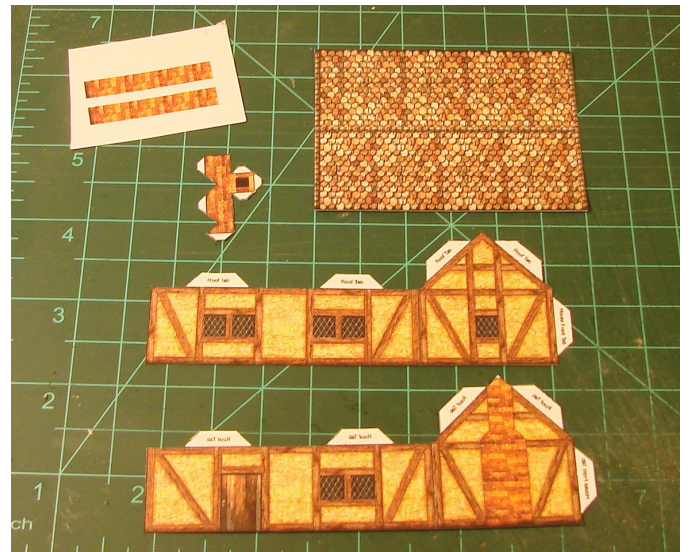
The model I chose for this tutorial is one of those distributed by WizKids for use with their Mage Knight games, but it's generic enough to fit in well on a historical battlefield in Europe, anytime after the middle ages. The original website has been taken down since WizKids was bought out by NECA, but the web archive has a copy of it here:

http://web.archive.org/web/20071102205307/www.wizkidsgames.com/mageknight/article.asp?frame=gameresources&cid=37135

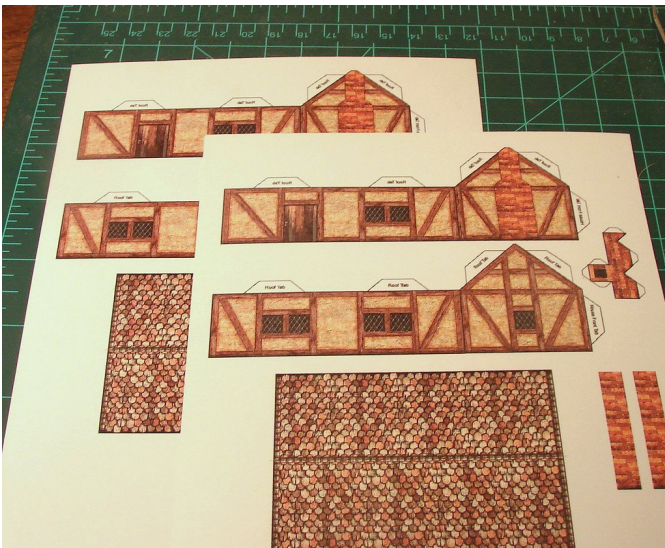First, print two copies of the building.
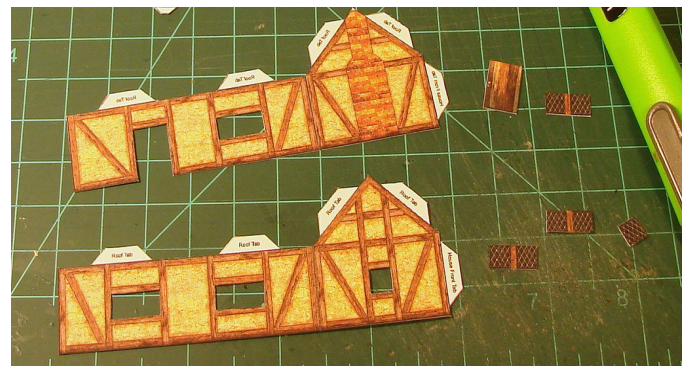

Score the folds, and the base of each of the tabs.

Cut out the parts. The two strips of brick pattern at the top left were copied and pasted from the chimney portion of the image. Their purpose will explained later.
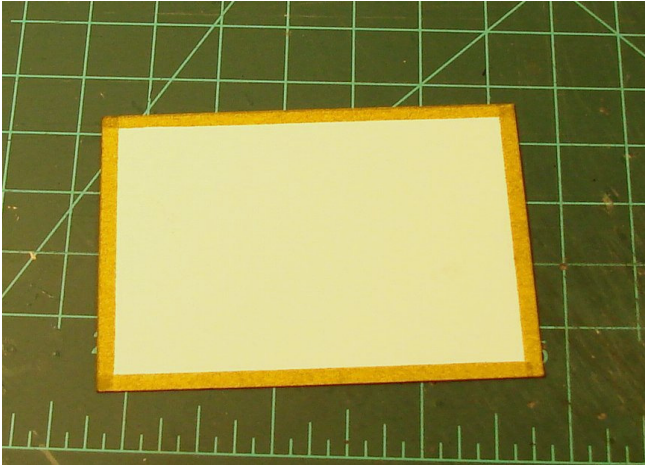

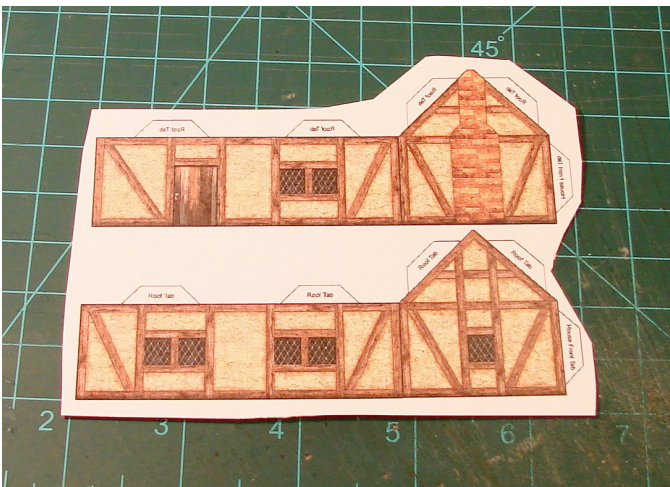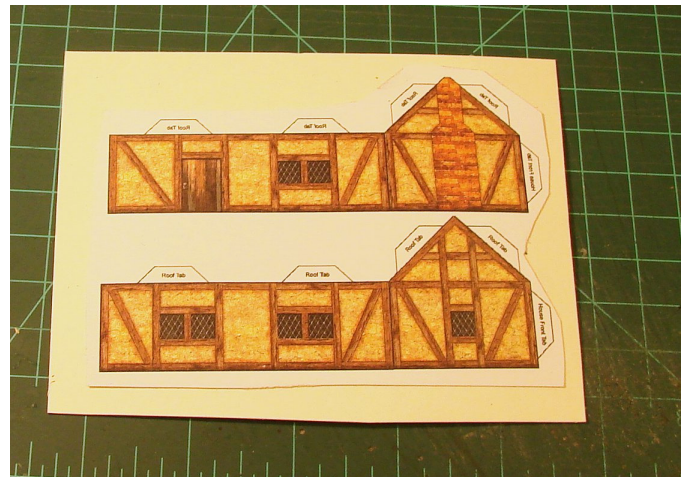Cut the windows and doors from the parts.

Tint the cut edges of the parts (and the edges of the back of the roof piece, as shown here) with a brown marker. Calligraphy markers work really well for this, because the chisel tip allows you to get into tight corners.
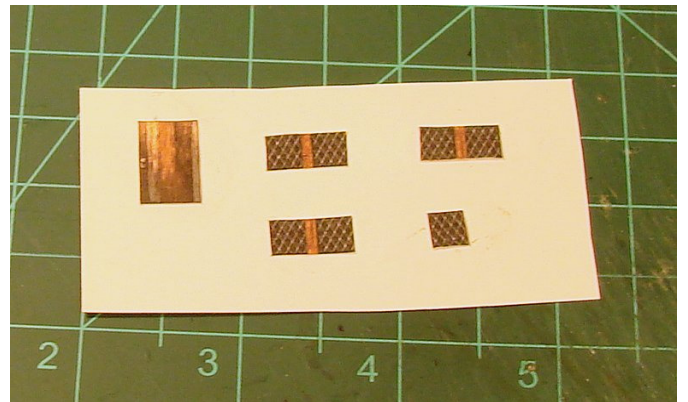

Roughly cut out the wall parts from the second copy of the building.
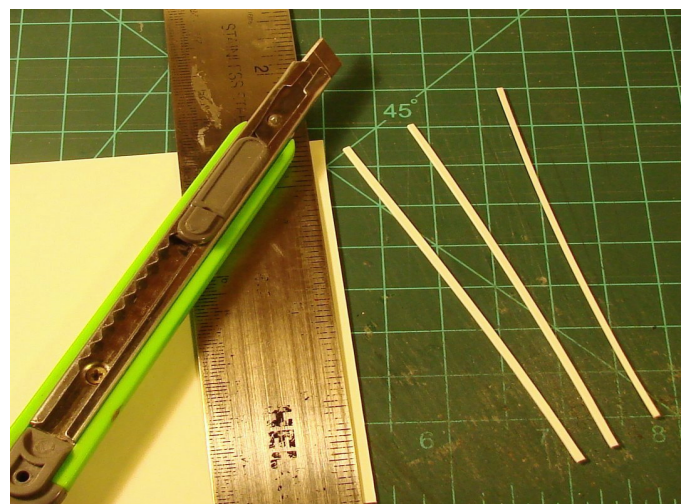

Glue these parts to another piece of cardstock. I've used a piece of tag board in this demo to exaggerate the effect, for the sake of clarity. Set this aside to dry.

While that's drying, take the doors and windows cut from the first sheet and glue them to a scrap of cardstock, leaving a little space in between them.
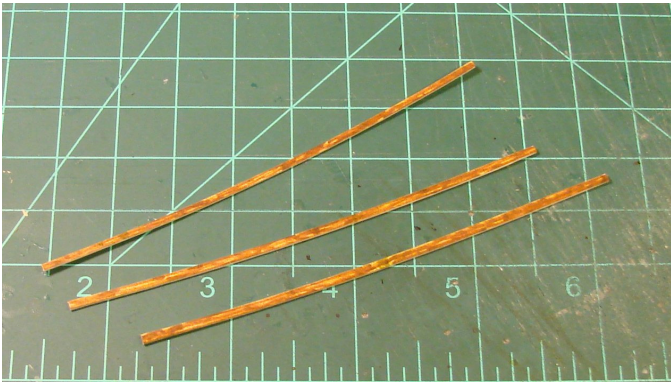

From a piece of tag board or heavy cardboard (tag or bristol board works well because it doesn't delaminate when you cut small parts from it), cut some thin strips, say 1/16". They should all be the same width.
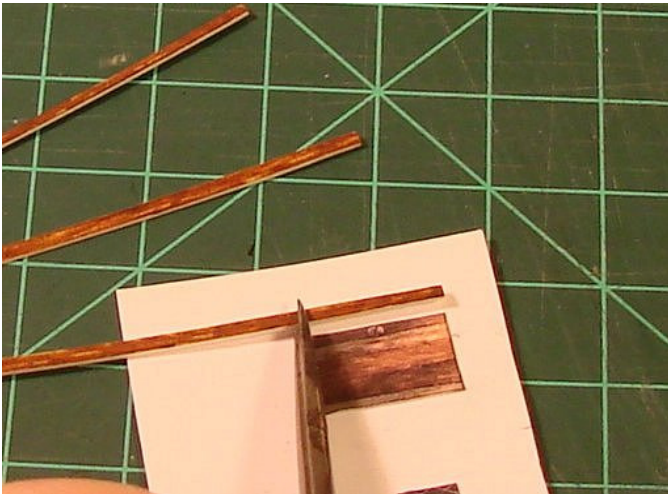
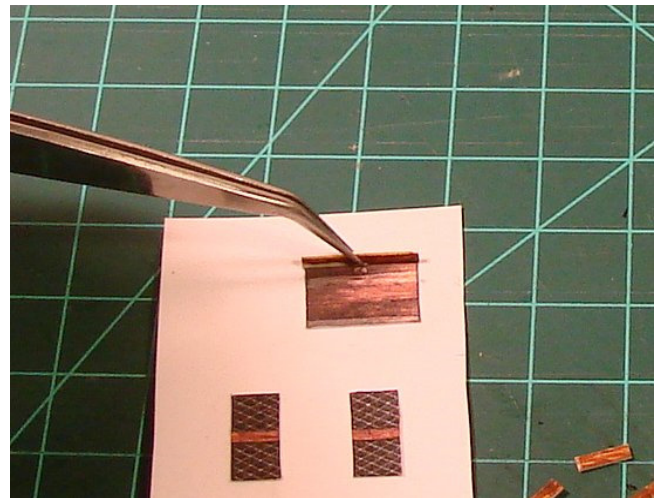Tint the strips by running your brown marker the length of each one.

Cut pieces the length of each side of the windows and doors. They should be at least as long as the side of the window; definitely not shorter.

In this case, two of the three strips that I made were enough to make all the necessary pieces. It's better to have too much than too little.
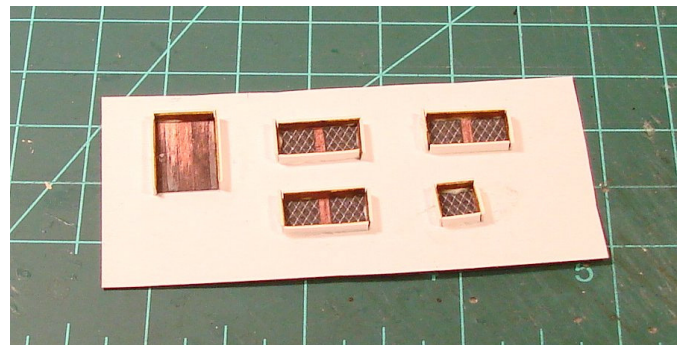

Pick up each of the cut strips, dip the edge into a little white glue, and set it alongside the window or door for which it was cut, standing on edge, with the tinted side in (facing the piece.) Note: don't put one on the bottom edge of the door.

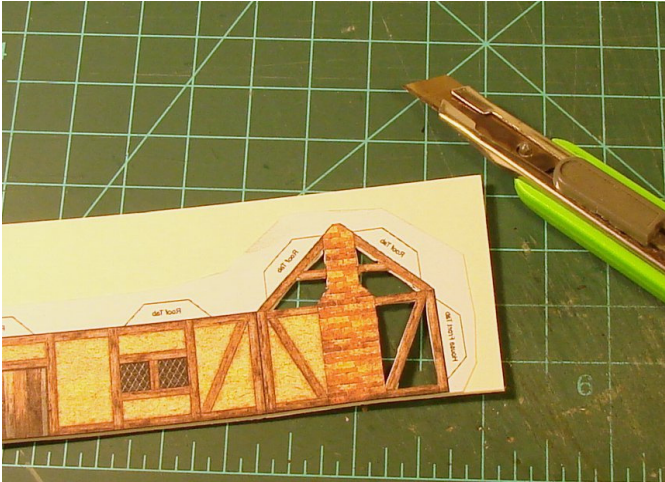If the pieces are a little long (they should be, and that's OK), overlap them as shown in this diagram.

When all the strips are in place, each of the windows and doors should be boxed in, as shown here. Set it aside to dry thoroughly.
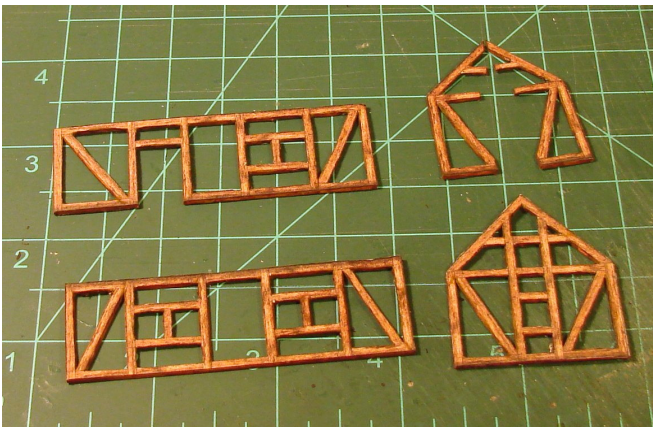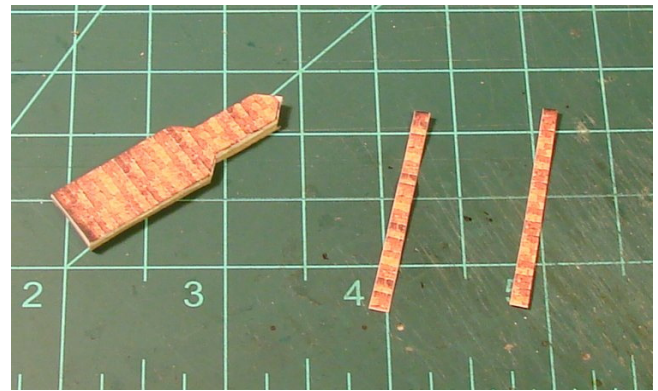
Now go back to the second set of wall pieces, which were glued to another piece of cardstock or tag board. (Tag produces more depth, but is more work to cut cleanly.) Cut away everything but the half-timbering. Then tint all the cut edges brown (this is where the chisel tip on that calligraphy marker makes things easy).
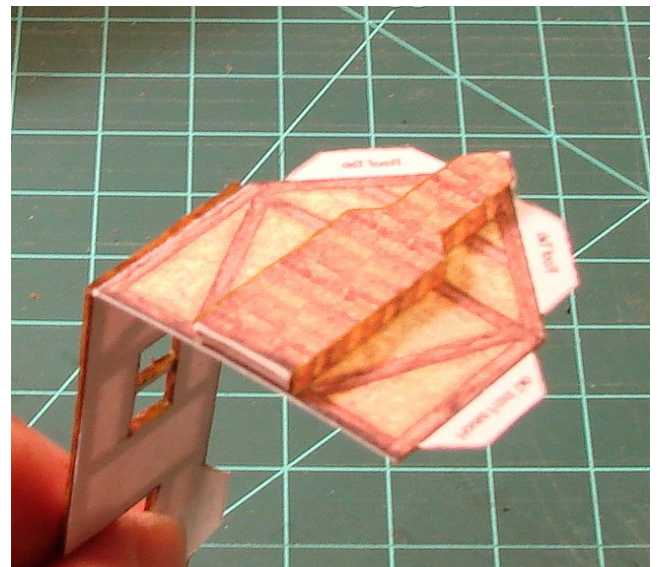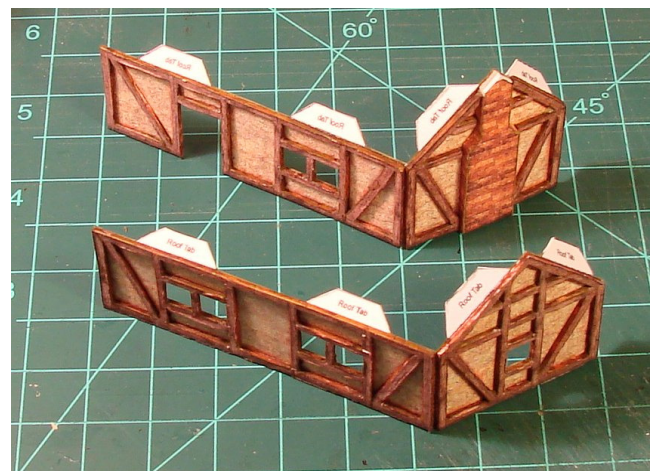

Here's what they'll look like when they're done.

Next, take the chimney piece that was cut from the second set of wall pieces, and glue it to a thick piece of cardboard (I used illustration board for this demo). Then, from the extra pieces of brick, cut strips the same width as the thickness of the chimney piece. Glue these to the edges of the chimney.

Glue the finished chimney piece over the printed chimney on the first set of wall parts. Then glue the half-timbering over the printed equivalent on those same pieces.
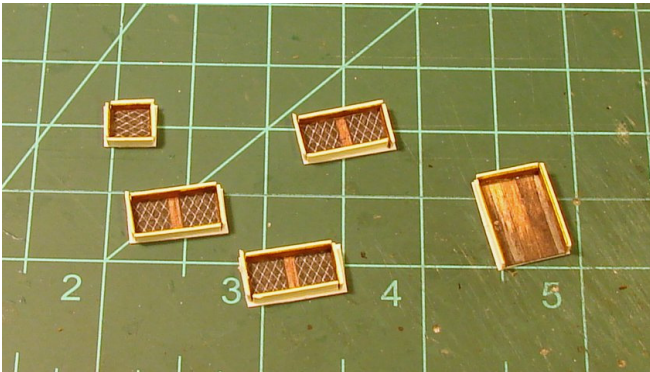

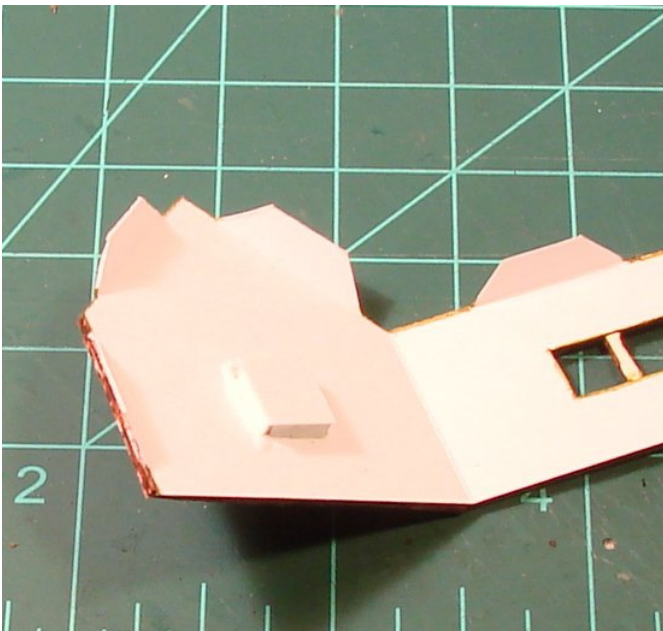When you're done, you should have two wall parts that look like this.

Cut out the boxed door and windows. No need to be very neat about this - you can leave a little cardstock around the edges - it's going to be inside the building anyway.
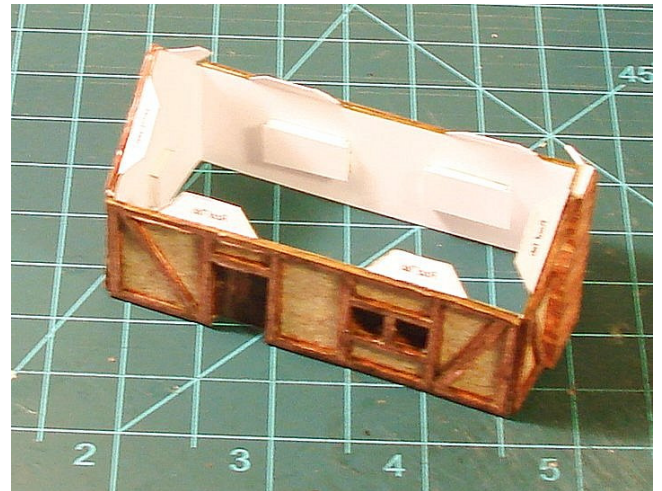

Glue each door and window to the back of the wall piece, directly over its original position. Check the outside to make sure it is positioned properly, and none of the box edges are showing.

The window in the previous picture should look like this, from the outside.

When all the windows and doors are in place, glue the end tabs on the wall parts together. (Sorry about the focus on this one - I think the Irish Coffees were starting to get to me).

Add the roof, making sure it is centered on the walls.

Finally, fold up the chimney cap, and glue it to the top of the chimney.

Voila, a cardstock building that will rival even the best resin-cast buildings for looks.

The same techniques can be used to make buildings in any scale, simply by printing out the parts the appropriate size. Just scale the printout so that the doors are about as tall as the miniatures you're going to use, and they'll look fine. The upper one in this photo is 25mm, and the lower one is 10mm.

The same methods can be used on buildings which have no half-timbering; the windows and doors can still be recessed, and the raised detail might be shutters, brick facades, stone foundations, etc.

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