



PSLTC Standards - Overview

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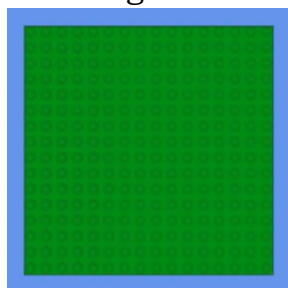
Overview

PSLTC layouts are built from the individual contributions of the members participating in any given show. Some members bring buildings, some vehicles, some roads, some landscape, some track. Typically, the design aesthetic aspires to the exterior look of Lego's Café Corner standard with four walls (as opposed to the dollhouse style common in Lego City and Friends), lots of detail, and significant selective compression. Note that standard PSLTC roadplates include sidewalks, so buildings need not have sidewalks in front (but often have four studs of alleyway in back). Trains are usually six studs wide (although seven- and eight-wide are welcome if they fit) and cars six wide (but allowing four to eight wide). Ground color is standard green by default.

Given the mixed, collaborative nature of layouts everything remotely fungible—such as baseplates, stock or modified sets, track, PSLTC standard hills—must be clearly labeled (usually on the bottom). Items not convenient to label (such as minifigures or flowers) should be attached to a structure owned by their owner or, for common areas like sidewalks attached to roadplates and baseplates, assigned by zone (e.g., this person will provide all the minifigs for the sidewalks of the city, that person will provide all the foliage around the curved tracks at this end of the layout).

Modules

For this article's purposes, "module" refers not to a full-blown NTrak-style complete free-standing section of layout with standardized dimensions, but to any creation on the layout that is designed to be one unified component, such as a building, section of landscape, road, bridge, scene, or even "loose" structures arranged on particular baseplates. The desire to completely cover the benchwork with modules (possibly supplemented with baseplates), the size of standard baseplates, and the geometry of 9V Lego track dictate that modules should in length and width be multiples of 16 studs (nominally 5 inches).



Benchwork

PSLTC uses tables that are module-friendly. The standard size table is (nominally) 30x60 inches (actually 96x192 studs). Other custom table surfaces are 30x30, 15x60, 30x45, 30x90, and 60x45 inches. Off-the-shelf tables, frequently provided by show venues, tend to be 30x96, 30x72, or 24x96 inches. In practice, we treat such tables as dimensioned in multiples of 5 inches by either leaving space on the table (96 inches becomes 95 inches usable) or gapping tables (two 24-inch tables together becomes 50 inches).

Tables are usually arranged one- or two-deep for a total depth of 30, 45, 60, or at most 75 inches—assuming the layout provides access from both sides. A reach of more than 30 inches causes problems with detailing, resetting details that fall over, accessing battery boxes, or fixing derailed trains.

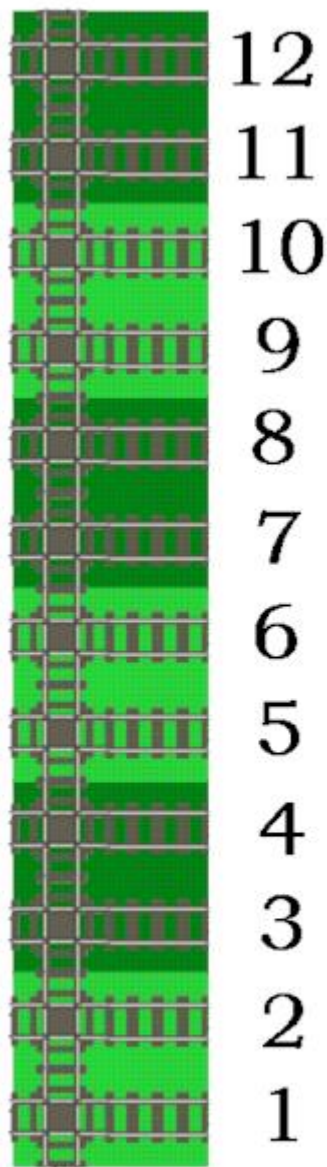
Standard table height (which is also the standard ground level for the layout) is the nominal 30-inch height of off-the-shelf tables, which in practice tends to be 29 or 29.5 inches. Variations in table height are usually multiples of 6 inches (16 bricks), but club tables are designed to accommodate other variations; for example, if a table is covered in MILS modules and four plates lower than an adjacent table covered in baseplates, ground levels will match. Variations in table height must be carefully planned in the benchwork and should be planned before constructing modules requiring non-standard heights. Venue-provided tables can be unpredictably challenging to adjust in height (and tend to be large), so height variation should typically be done with club tables; in any case, the module should completely cover the table of different height.

Backdrops

PSLTC sometimes uses two-stud deep brick-built backdrops on the inside edge of the layout. Modules that may be on the back of the benchwork can help by leaving the back two studs clear for backdrops.

Track

PSLTC mainline track is 9V Lego track. As explained on the Brickpile Track Layout Geometry page (<https://www.brickpile.com/articles/track-layout-geometry/>) this means that mainline track should, at the edges of modules, be placed at the positions defined by (centered) 8 studs from the front and every 16 studs thereafter. On a typical 60-inch deep table setup these are often referred to as track positions 1 through 12.

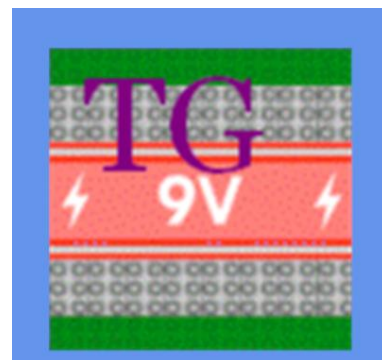


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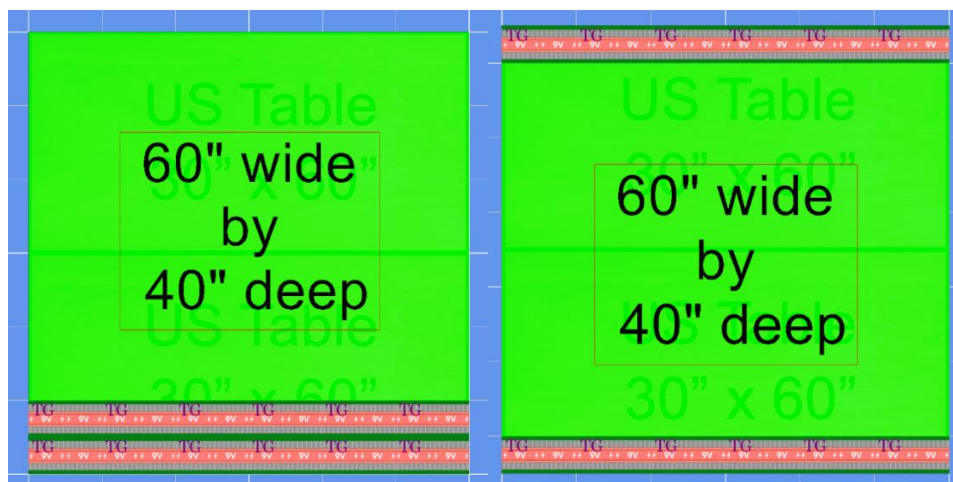
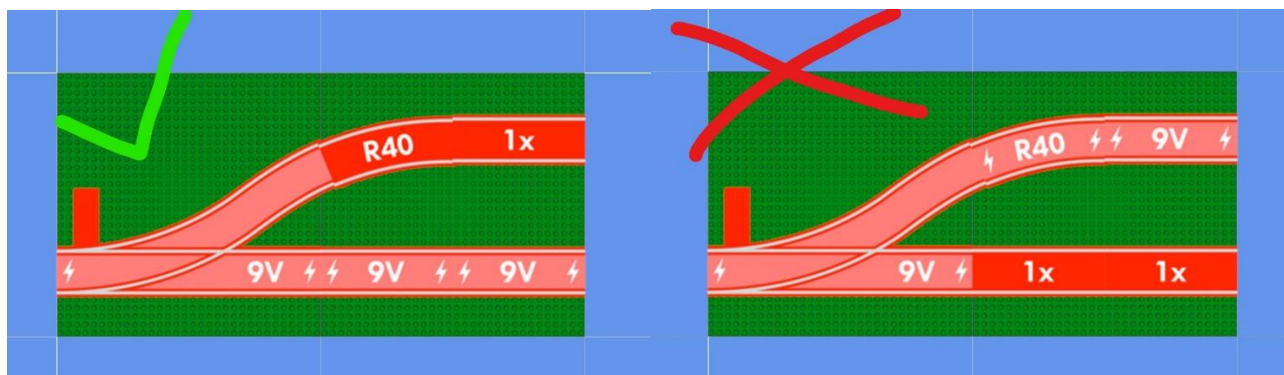
On a typical 60-inch deep PSLTC layout, mainlines usually run doubled in front (track positions 1 & 2) or in front and back (track positions 1 & 12). A module that includes mainline track should anticipate one of these cases. A module that does not include mainline track can safely be up to 40 inches deep, keeping in mind that the track running in front of and/or behind the module will likely be on green baseplates. This restricts landscaping; to play well with others, modules can have terrain that goes up or down, but should return to ground level on the sides and where they will be adjacent to track. PSLTC hill modules are a standardized departure from that restriction.

Note that the L-Gauge Modular System in particular specifies mainline track at positions 3 and 4, so an individual LGMS module would rarely fit into a PSLTC layout without transition modules to move the mainlines.

PSLTC ballasted track is permanently attached to (usually green) baseplates in standard track positions (and raised one plate). In a module, track that may be mainline track should be 9V in an appropriate position at the edges. Track that will not be mainline track but will interface



with it (such as a siding or a connection to a local loop) can be post-2005 plastic track in an appropriate position at the edges. Mainline track should avoid geometries that may lead to derailment when trains are moving at high speeds, such as S-curves or running through the diverging side of a switch.



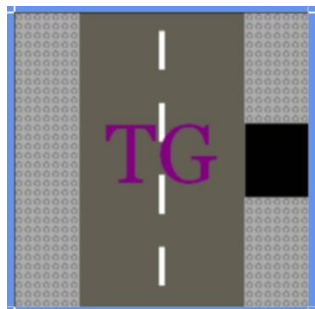
Trains



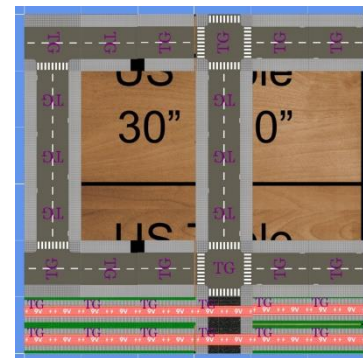
To run on a PSLTC layout, trains should have L-gauge wheelsets, be no more than 8.5 studs wide, and be no more than 13 bricks tall. Trains should expect track pieces to be built up with a plate on the ties (possibly a plate plus a tile) and should be able to navigate crossings, R40 curves, and R40 switches. Larger radius curves may sometimes appear on PSLTC layouts but are not the norm. It is expected that mainlines, but not necessarily sidings or secondary loops, will be 9V track and powered. Power Functions-controlled trains should have the receiver accessible so that the channel can be changed easily in the event of conflicts.

Roads

Standard PSLTC roads have been built by four members in sufficient quantity to support any size city that the club has made. These roads are based on 10-inch square roadplates, with DkGray road and Gray 7-stud studded sidewalks or DkStone road and MdStone 7-



stud studded sidewalks. This makes the road surface 18 studs wide, and each lane about 8 studs wide. Alleys, when available, are 8-stud black-tiled. Road typically appear adjacent to railroad tracks, which on a 60-inch deep layout results in rectangular city blocks 20x30-inch or 30x30-inch. Sidewalks are two plates tall,

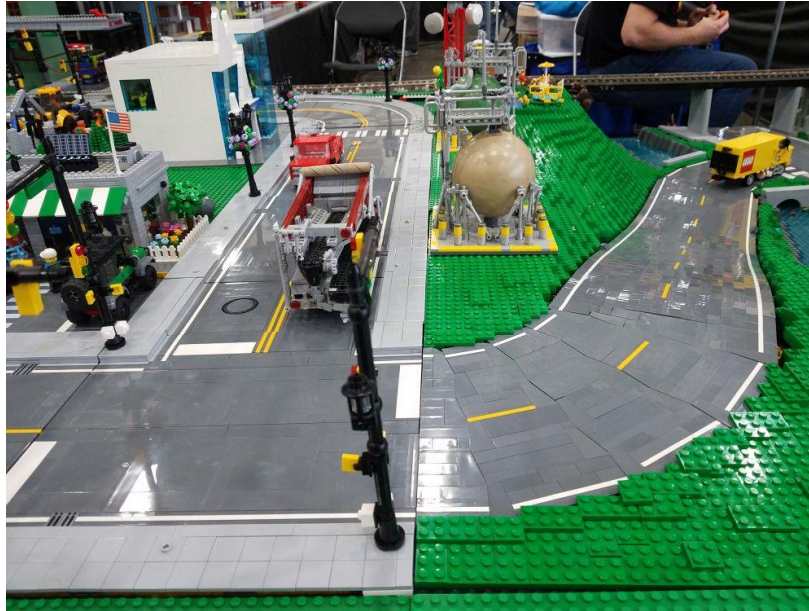


so buildings with the doors at baseplate level need to be on risers. (This is an excellent use for excess curved track.) The roadplates to make these standard roads have gone out of production, so future road development will likely be brick-built.



Roads that are not rectilinear, 18 studs wide, two-lane, center-striped in white, and flat require brick-built roads. Brick-built roads tend to be DkStone bricks and plates sideways to a height of 5 or 5.5 plates (that is, 2x bricks on their sides), with center striping in

BtLtOrange and side striping in white. When brick-built roads include sidewalks those are MdStone, mostly stud-free, and 2 plates higher than the road surface.



Buildings

Buildings on PSLTC layouts, if constructed as stand-alone structures and not part of larger modules, should expect to be mixed with similar buildings within blocks defined by roads. This means stand-alone buildings should be multiples of 16 studs wide and 32 or 48 studs deep. Since the roads incorporate sidewalks, buildings need not include sidewalks; building do, though, benefit from including four studs of black tile in back to make alleyways. Moreover, “street litter” (streetlights, traffic lights and signage, fire hydrants, etc.) is generally attached to the sidewalks on the roads during layout setup, and so redundant if included as part of buildings. The thresholds of building doors on the perimeter should expect a sidewalk 2.5 plates tall (roadplate plus two gray plates). Buildings should be cautious of what may be on either side; a protruding awning or window sill may cause a collision with the neighboring building, but if there is no neighbor or a short one, a completely blank or unfinished wall may look odd.

Buildings should normally have four walls (unless designed to be on an edge of the layout—the layout is a slice of a larger world). Interior detail is not expected unless its absence is visible and distracting to the public. Selective compression is common, such as two-story 16-stud wide urban buildings.

Buildings that are meant to be close to tracks, especially mainline tracks, should be mindful of train clearances.