

The HO WI&M Expands

When my family and I moved into a new home several years ago, I was fortunate that there was space for an HO-scale layout in one of the basement rooms. Even better, there was more space than I had before, a few inches in one direction and several feet in the other. This allowed me to re-use the sections I had built for my earlier layout, and also gave me some room to expand on what I had already built.

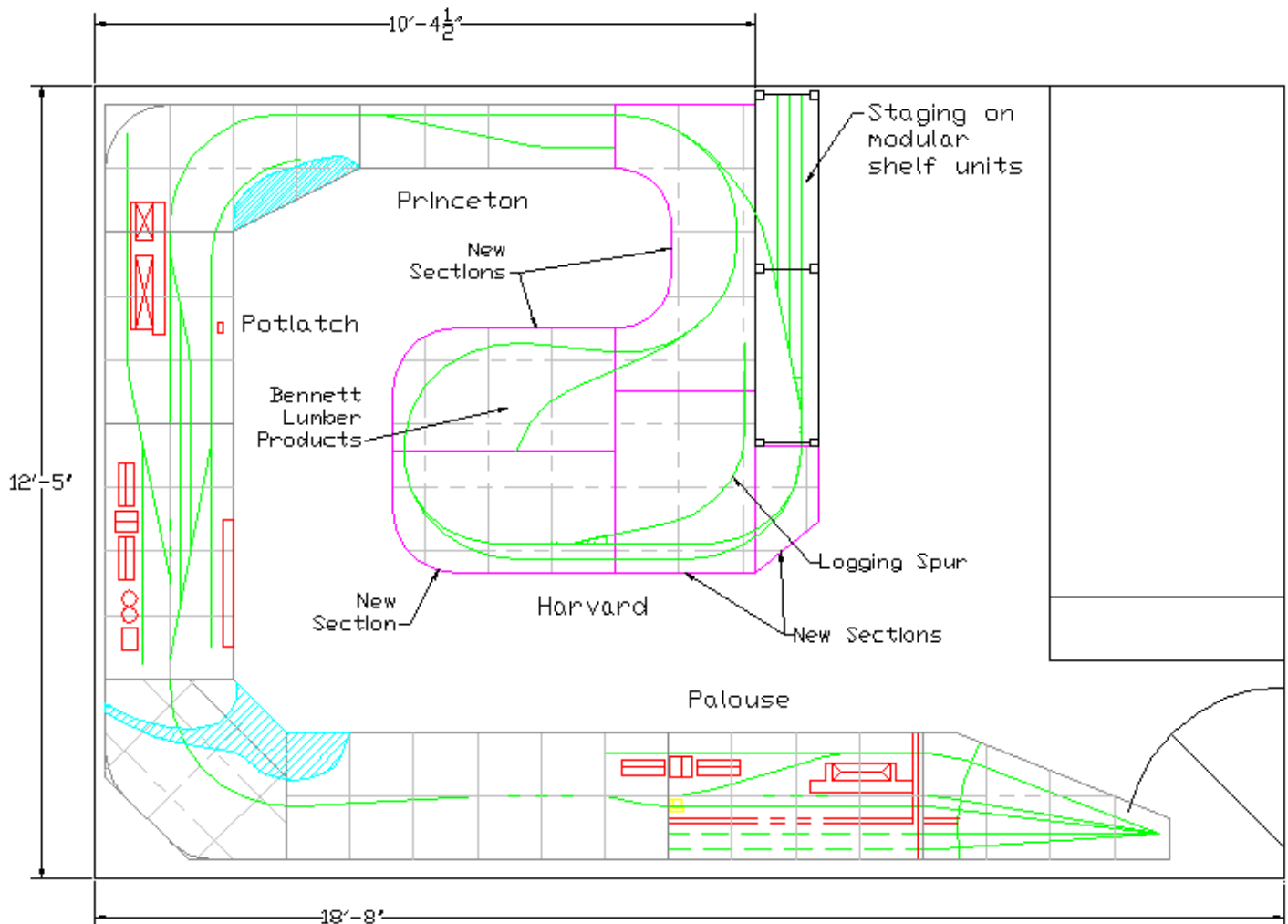
Of course, there were still some constraints. I needed to preserve access to a large storage closet on the east wall where my wife planned to keep her quilting and craft supplies. I also needed to make room for some shelving units to store my "library" of railroad books and magazines. This kept me from using any of the track plans I had previously designed, like the ones that appeared with my WI&M article in *Railroad Model Craftsman* last summer.

It took quite a bit of doodling to come up with the plan I have now (see page 6), and I'm the first to admit that it has some weaknesses. It would have been

nice to include all the important locations on the WI&M, like Deary and Bovill, but there just wasn't room. Instead, I chose to have the visible portions of the layout end at Harvard, and then to have a small staging yard representing points east of there.

I realized that space-wise, I could kill two birds with one stone by placing the staging yard on one of the shelves in my bookcase. On a trip to Seattle, I purchased some modular shelving units from IKEA, which are open on all four sides, and which allow adjustment of the shelf heights. For the rest of the new benchwork, I went with a sectional design similar to the existing layout.

The new track plan features a spur to serve the grain elevator at Princeton, a spur for the Bennett mill, and a siding at Harvard. The "facing point" spur at the Bennett mill will function just like the prototype, but visually it is reversed, with an eastward train moving from left to right instead of right to left as seen from the highway. This was a compromise that I



could not find a way around, but that I'm sure I can live with. Besides, there will be enough other visual compromises on my layout that this one won't make much difference.

One other minor break with reality is the presence of a spur at Harvard heading off into the woods to serve a logging operation. If I understand history correctly, there was probably some sort of logging branch at Harvard, but it was long gone by 1955, which is the earliest era I plan to run my layout in. However, I couldn't pass up the added "play value" of a logging branch, or at least a logging reload, for the railroad to serve.

The staging tracks on the shelves will probably be too short, and I could find no viable way to lengthen them. Besides, the sidings on my layout are pretty

short, too, so I was already planning on running shorter trains than the prototype did. One final design feature is the track that lets trains loop from the staging yard directly back to Princeton. This track will help me more easily re-stage the yard between operating sessions. The switch just east of Princeton will be hidden behind some scenery and will not be too noticeable.

Of course, I wish I had the space to do more with the layout, but with the time and money constraints I have to work within, it's just as well that I don't. As of February, 2009 the benchwork is complete and I'm looking forward to gluing down roadbed and laying track.

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