

# CHICA

## Small Town USA

HO scale layout  
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[www.westernmrs.org.uk](http://www.westernmrs.org.uk)

### Layout information and details



### Background

Chica is a fictional Southern Illinois small town set in the 1950s on one of the many prairie branch lines built by the Rock Island lines in better times. The Rock would struggle on to a third and final bankruptcy in 1980 but meanwhile had begun to drift into what has been described as standard gauge with narrow gauge atmosphere. Poorly maintained track, battered locomotives and expedients such as using old box cars to replace decrepit station buildings became common.



Trains crept across the plains still using train orders and 19th century operating practices between small towns that were little more than somewhere to shop for basics, farm requirements and perhaps a drink. The layout has tried to recreate something of the feel of those times as railroad and farms found life increasingly harder.

### Layout History

For those interested in technical detail Chica is an HO scale layout built using Shinohara Code 70 track; many plains branch lines were laid with light rail in the 19th century. Track in the hidden sidings is PECO Code 100 Setrack. The baseboard was built to order by Tim Horn of Fakenham, Norfolk. Locomotive control and sound is through an NCE system with Loksound decoders. Points, signals, fusees, uncouplers are operated from an analogue control panel - switches are cheaper than accessory decoders on a small layout. Buildings are a mixture of modified kits and scratch built structures using Evergreen styrene, Grandt Line windows and details. I hope you enjoy your visit to Chica - do feel free to ask questions about anything you see.

