



Fire Brigade

Modularity and romance together

By lluisgib

Pictures by lluisgib and LEGO® System A/S

Set: Fire Brigade
 Set Number: 10197
 Number of parts: 2231
 Includes: Building, Fire Truck, 3 firefighters, 1 civilian, bell, water tank, furniture.
 Recommended Price: € 149.95, \$ 149.99

Every time I start to build a new modular building, I prepare to enjoy the many details included in it. The Fire Brigade is no exception.

The Fire Brigade is the fourth modular building in the series, after the Corner Cafe, Market Street (both discontinued) and the Green Grocer.

The first time I heard the name I was a little surprised about the launch of a new fire station. Throughout the history of LEGO® CITY there have been many and varied fire stations. I knew that a modular building didn't have to look the same, but I expected more "red". When I saw the pictures I was surprised about the building style. It reminds me the typical fire

stations of the USA. Complemented with a truck with an "old fashioned" look, the building is a good addition to the existing ones, and shows some very interesting construction techniques.

Construction

Like other modular buildings, we start by assembling the minifigures and in this case the truck. As is also becoming customary, the minifigures have the "classic" face. There are three fire-fighters and a civilian woman with a handbag.

The truck is in the same style as the building. It has rounded shapes and lots of accessories like hoses, ladder (made from parts) and some tools. Although the truck is 6 studs wide, the designers have managed to seat two minifigs with a stud between the two seats. As the only flaw, the front bumper is a bit fragile. It is made with two bars and two binoculars, and is connected to the truck only through the top bar. The grip of the bars with the binoculars is not very strong, so with any slight blow, it dismantles.



We begin building the front and back pavements. At the front there is a "3" built with tiles, which is the symbol that indicates an emergency exit of vehicles. There are two manholes, one tree (finally!) and a lamppost. At the rear some plates are used to simulate irregular green grass.

When I start building, I start noticing the details that turn building a modular building a special experience. On the ground floor, apart from the area where the truck parks, there are some trash cans (one brown square and a cube), a chest to place the

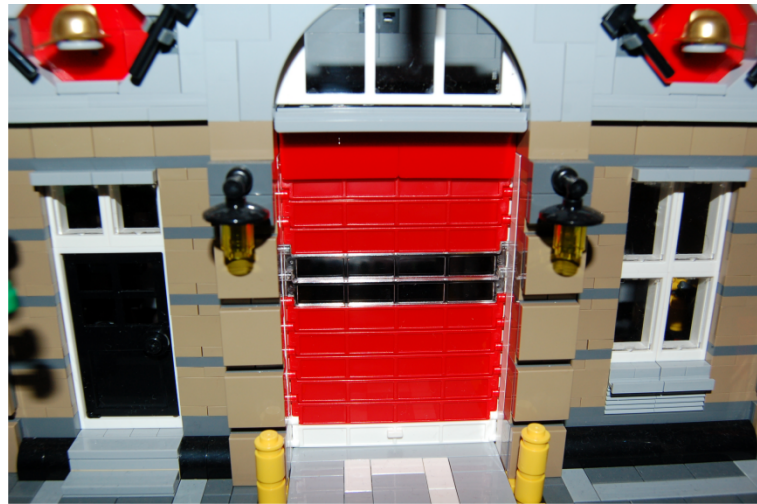
oxygen bottles, a bank, a rack for the fire fighters' helmets and fixing points for fire extinguishers and other tools. It is very curious and fun to watch how dark grey frogs have been used to make the rack of helmets. As in the rest of modular buildings, there are of course also the stairs leading to the next floor.

The front facade is decorated with light brown tiles (2x2 tiles). The mailbox, although it is not functional, is very striking in contrast with the colour of the building. On one side we set the access door to the building, on the other side, a window, and in the access door of the truck, the garage door with a small transparent section. In the back there is another access door, two large windows and a large gate (made with the gates used in Castle sets), which is the rear access to the garage.

Upon completion of the ground floor I start to see some of the construction techniques that I like so much to see during the assembly of these models. To make the window that is above the garage access, designers have used a vertical window, which is rotated 90 ° with Bricks 1 x 1 with Studs on Two Opposite Sides and Bricks 1 x 1 with Headlight. A very clean and fast way to make that turn. The method of securing the top of the garage door is also curious. Instead of connecting it directly to the main structure with a plate, the designer have opted for using two plates 1 x 4 with Arm along with two Plate 1 x 1 with Clip Vertical. Although it is a bit more fragile than the typical solution, its placement is cleaner and allows the top to be independent of the main structure. In the centre of the building, there is an American flag. In my opinion it is a bit ugly that the flag is made of plates, since the thickness is disproportionate. Perhaps it would have been better to use a white flag part and stickers to customize it (you know I usually criticize stickers, except when justified).

The finishing touch of the ground floor, which deserves a small paragraph, is done with two gold





fire-fighter helmets that complete the facade. These two helmets, on either side of the driveway and on a red background are spectacular. It shows the quality of the design, although some of its force is lost due to the fact that the union between these pieces is quite weak and any slight touch makes it move or become detached.

We build the upper floor starting with its base, and thereafter we build some items of furniture which are one of the highlights of the set. For example, there is a refrigerator, a ping-pong table, a complete kitchen, in which the sink even has a drain, a wardrobe and a sofa. All this furniture makes this plant look very complete. Since it could not be missed at any fire station, there is also the hole on the floor along with a yellow bar to slide down to the fire truck during an emergency. There are also some "gadgets" interesting like the sausages.

The way the walls are made is very original, while simple. The tiles in dark red and gray with different depth provide a completely "real look" to the facade. You can also see a large window in the centre, accompanied by two windows, one on each side. These windows have a small finishing at the top made of a car radiator placed upside down.

The roof deserves a chapter of its own. It isn't just a simple roof because it incorporates a parapet, a

golden bell and a water tank. The tower is beautiful, with white arches that surround the space for the bell, and a black tile roof. The colour combination is very attractive. The water tank, though simple, is very well designed. Apart from the parts of the shell and the securing structure, the designers have also added a pipe that allows the extraction of water from the reservoir. To access the roof, they have again used 1x1 headlight bricks to place a door horizontally.

The parapet is well built, with shapes that mimic the typical decoration in plaster or stone. In the middle there is a date, referring to the construction date of the building: 1932. Do you remember anything about this date? 1932 was the year of the founding of the LEGO® Company by Ole Kirk Kristiansen. A good reference, incorporating this date. Besides this fact, this 1932 building is very curious because it is based on a structure of 1x1 plates with clip light that which are connected to clip join 1x2 plates with handle by means of Bar 1.5L, and form a whole together with plates and 1x1 tiles, to form the date 1932. Very original and very well done.

The Set

When you see the finished building, with all the floors together, it gains a lot of points. The combination of colours between the different plants



is very good. Modular buildings tend to use more realistic colours than the basic sets which can increase their imitation of reality. If I look at the building from the bottom up, I see each plant as a "whole" which does not need any supplement. On the ground floor, the decoration of the facade. On the first floor, all the furniture. The parapet is very elaborate in many shapes and on the roof we can find the bell and the water tank.

A small detail that I will not let go unnoticed, is that we have reached parity: two male and two female minifigs. We are not accustomed to see women as fire-fighters and police officers, just as civilian women. I think it's a small step forward for girls to feel more identified with this toy, which is traditionally "for boys".

Conclusions

Unlike other previously released modular buildings, this is the first one that has only one elevated floor. Both the ground floor and first floor are higher and together they equal the height of the Cafe Corner and Green Grocer. Even though it is a building with a "classic look", it matches with the rest, which are already a bit classical. The designers have made a lot of effort with the details. No area lacks an important detail or just a small touch of decoration. The tree, though simple, is a new addition that I hope

will be repeated in the next building, if possible more elaborate. The finishing of the façades on both floors is very realistic and pretty. Details like the golden helmets, the date or the parapet are of high quality.

The truck is simpler but it does the trick, and the rounded design is consistent with the date of the building. When the designers decided to mount the stairs with tiles and Minifig Tool Light Saber Hilt they made it very appealing and more beautiful than the typical stairs part. Nothing to add regarding the minifigs.

In the design some interesting techniques have been implemented that will inspire more than one AFOL for future MOCs (like me for example), so I recommend the set, not only because of how pretty it is, or as a part of the collection of modular buildings, but as a "school" of building techniques.

What will be the next surprise in the line of modular buildings? The level is now very high

Acknowledgments

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