Building a Japanese Castle Complex – Part 2

We will be discussing Japan's architecture and history over the next few weeks. This will show you how to start building a Japanese Castle.

1. Open your Japanese Castle. This is approximately where you should be if you are starting with this tutorial – you would have a foundation and base floor, and the first few floors of your tower. When you are satisfied with the number of floors you have, you can even bring in the very top piece from your previous Japanese building to use as a cap to the roof. You may need to scale it up or down a bit to fit in place.
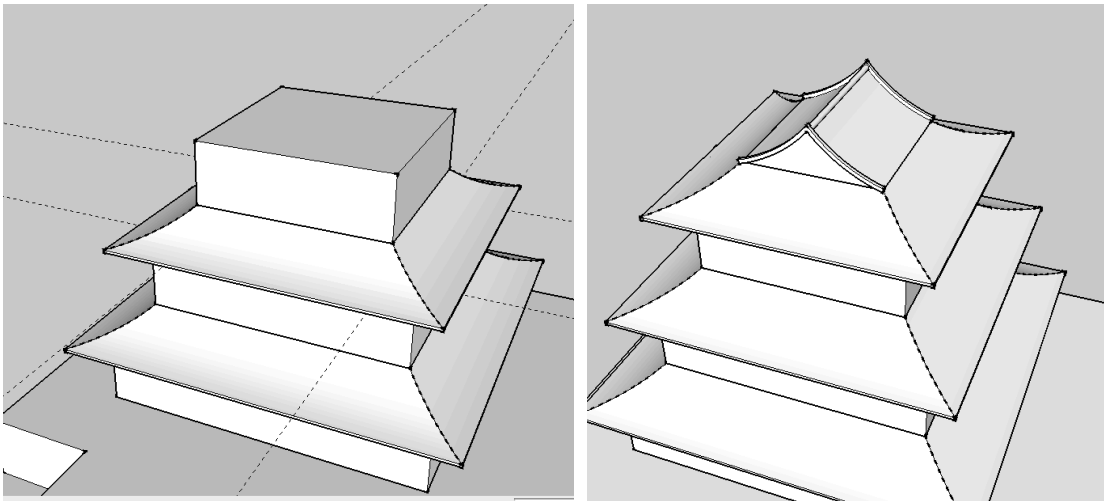

2. After you have the main structure of the tower built, we want to build some additional structures on the first level. My example below fits to the shape of the floorplan I designed, but yours will of course need to conform to your design. Ive repeated the techniques we have been using, this time with a rectangle and not a square, and created a roof object. As usual the bottom box and the roof should be separate GROUPS.
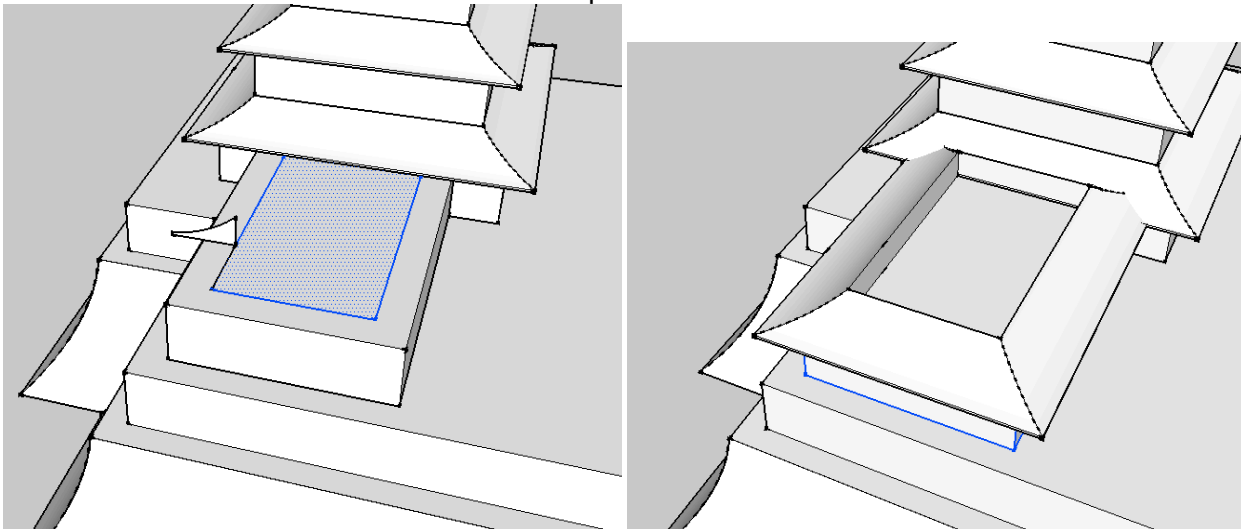
3. As you can see in this image, the roof object I created doesn't exactly fit cleanly with the roof of the first floor of the tower. You can address this a few ways, from scaling horizontally to just moving the new objects you created closer to the tower so they meet up more cleanly. Examine the images below. I took the objects and moved them so they lined up more neatly.
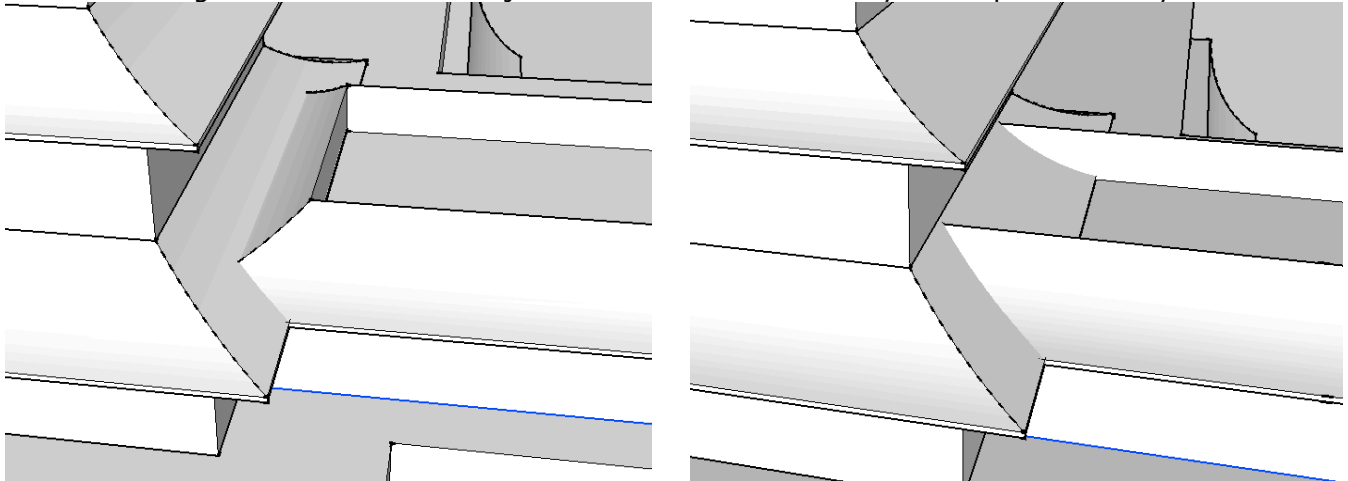

4. The next step I took was to copy the roof cap from above down to this new structure and scale it so it covers the new structure. You will need to adjust these things to the shapes you create.
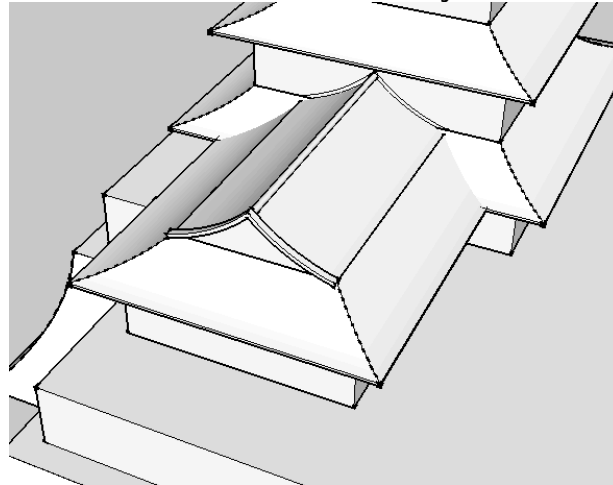
5. Now we want to modify the group of the foundation. Double click into it, and create a profile similar to what we have been doing for the other roof objects as shown in the image below. For this part I suggest creating the profile in place and aligned shown.
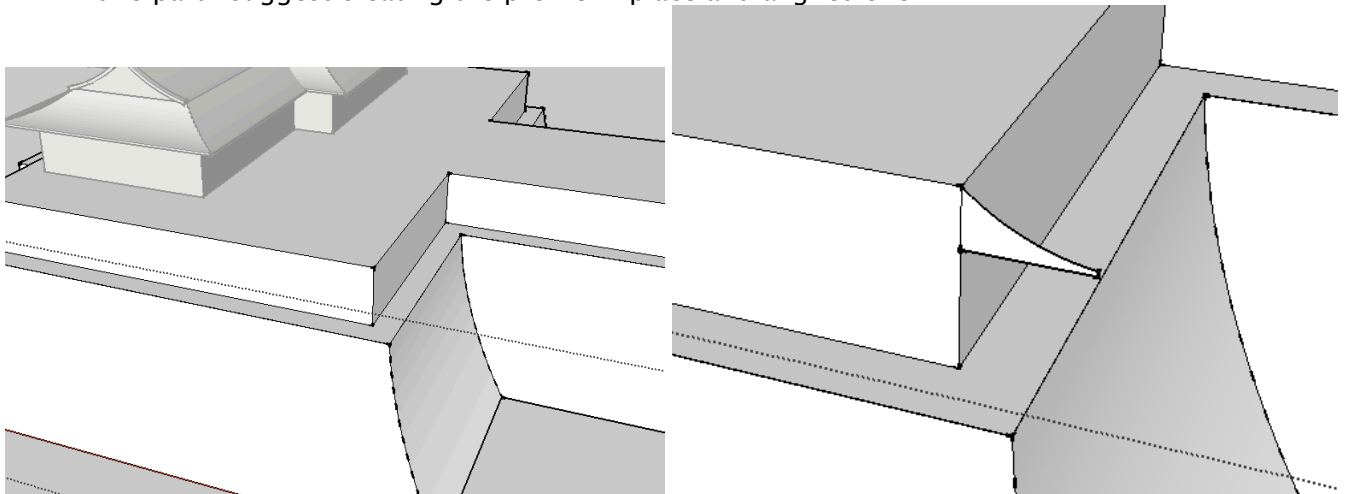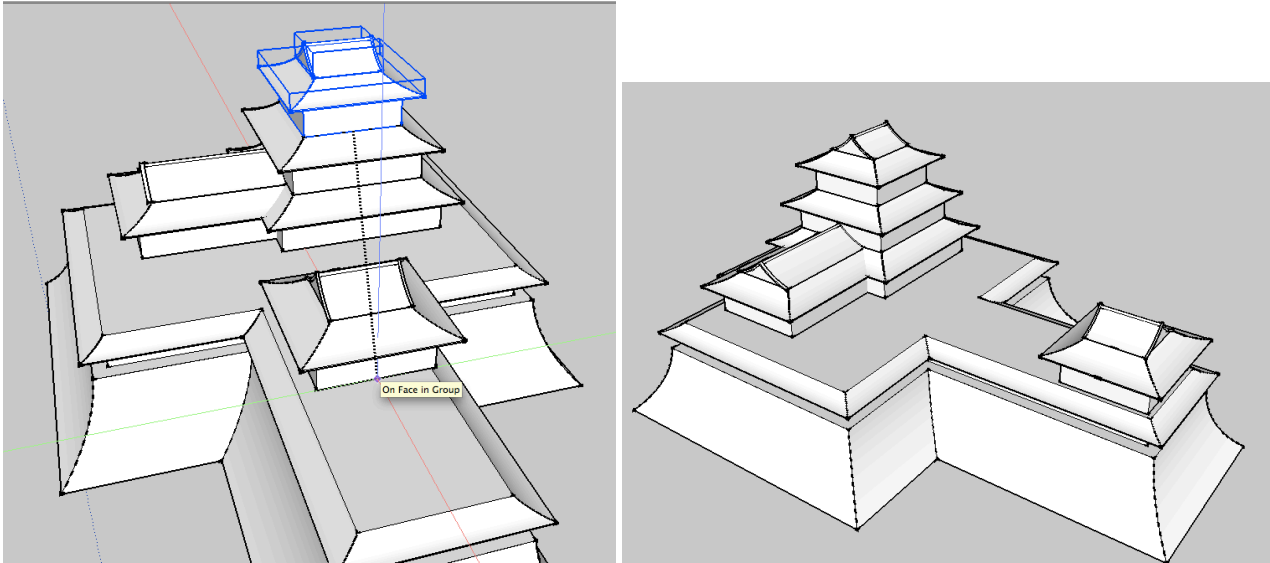
6. Use Follow Me to create the new roof structure for this base level.
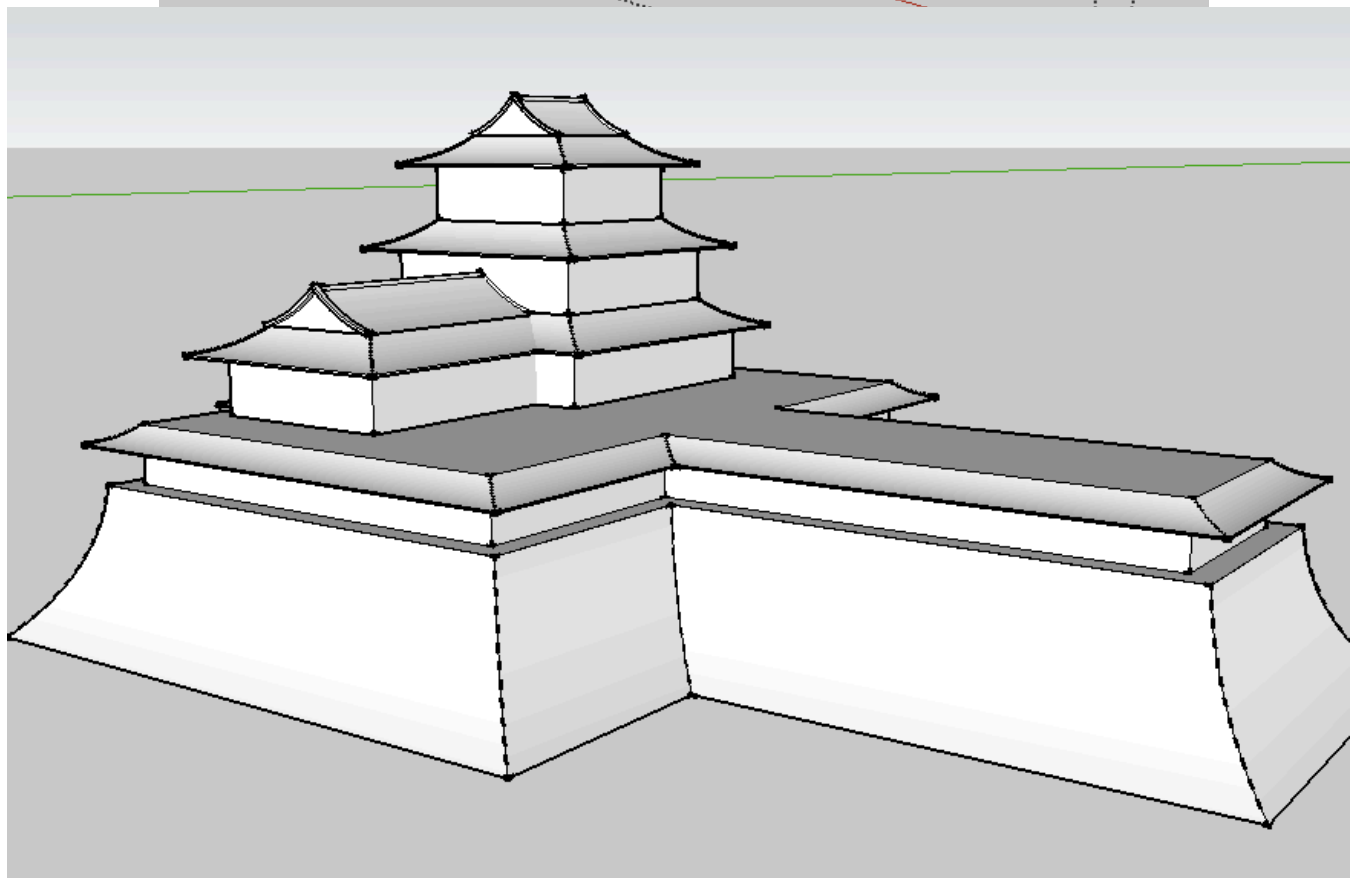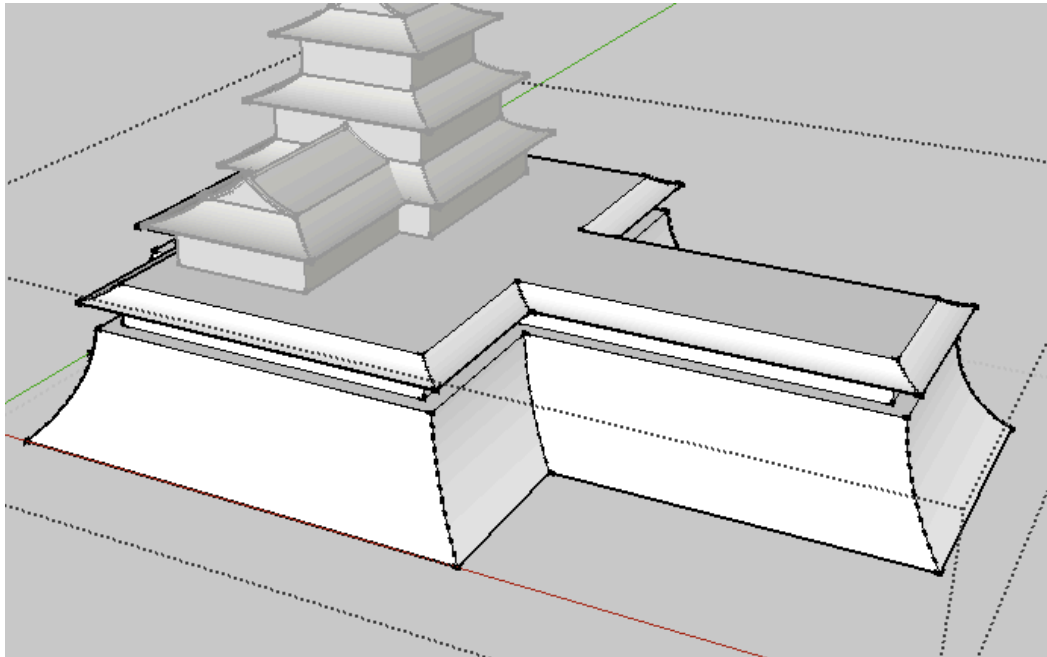
The casle starting to take shape.

7. Now you can start copying around parts of what you have already built and scaling them to create additional structures.


8. To make the roof gables you can take the roof cap and copy it as necessary. You may need to rotate it and adjust its size and position until you like how it looks. Try to align things using midpoint to midpoint, endpoints, etc, so that things are even and clean looking. You can use your judgment here.
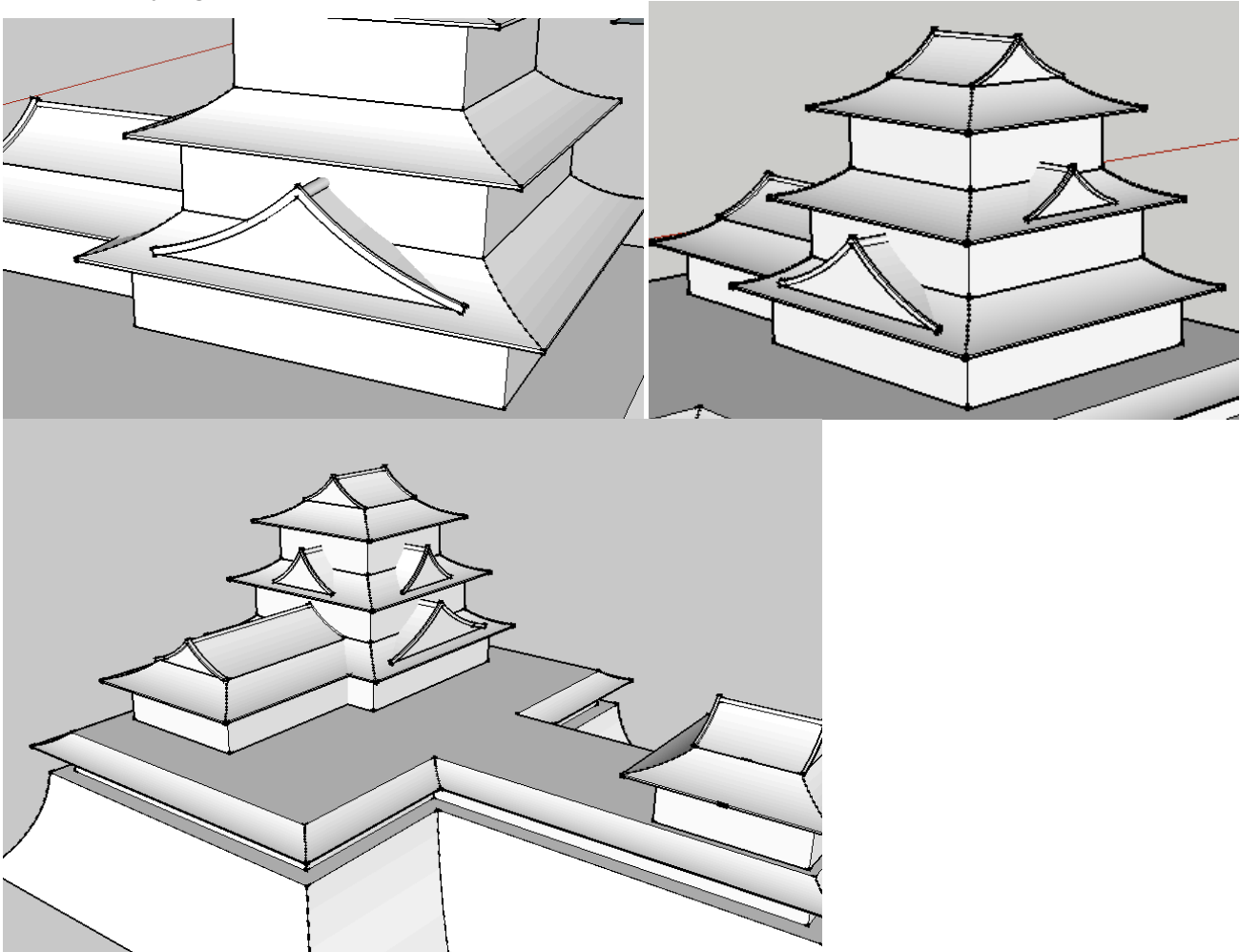
9. After placing these roof details, a great next step would be to create a window component and start placing it around the model. Start by drawing a rectangle that is 6' wide by 4' tall. You may need to enter this as 6',4' or 4',6' depending on which direction you are drawing – SketchUp can behave strangely sometimes! Just draw this rectangle on any wall outside the group. You will turn it into a component and copy it around afterwards.
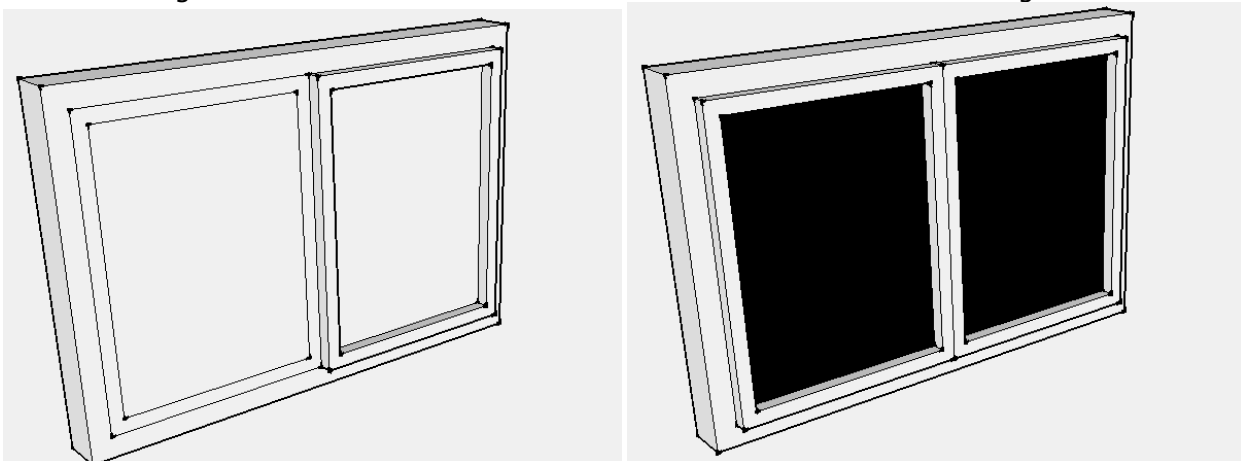
   Pull it out into 3D something like 6" and offset the face inwards 4".
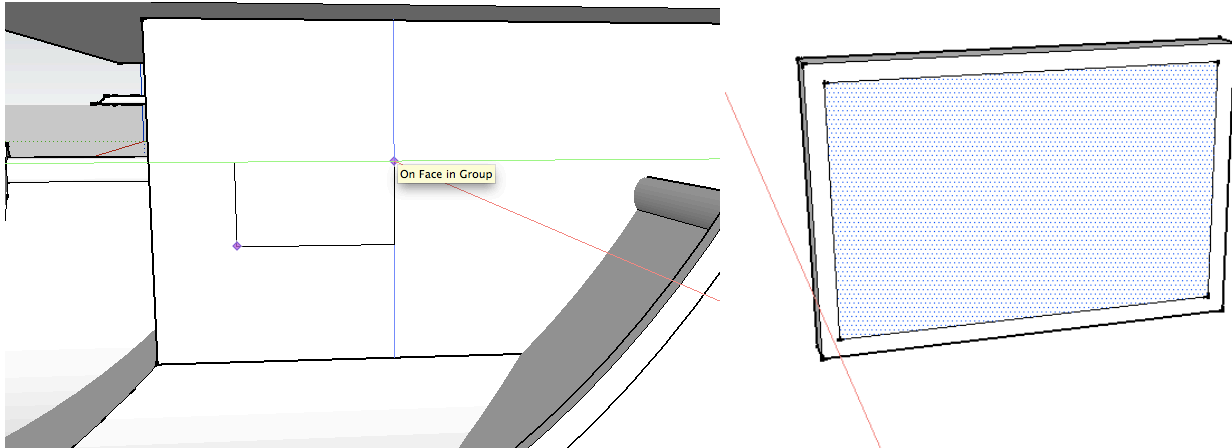
10. Draw a vertical line from midpoint to midpoint. Then offset each of those rectangles inwards 2".
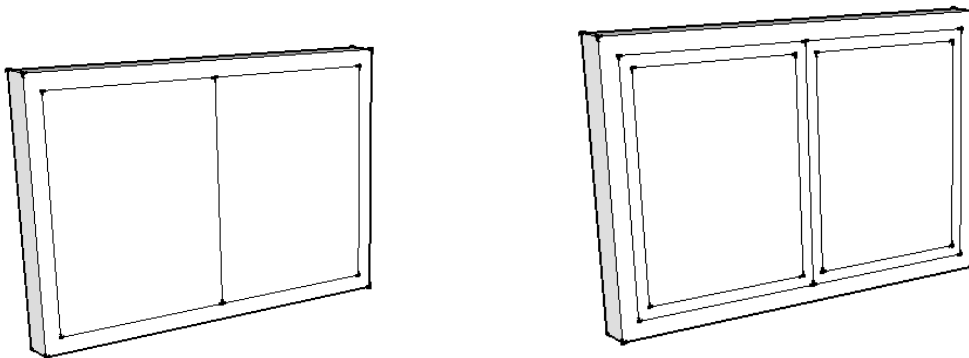
11. Pull these two new ringed shapes out 2" to create window frames. You can paint the inside rectangles black to create the illusion that it is a window with something inside.

12. Turn this into a component called "Window 1". Now you can copy it around your model. Try to be careful that you copy it horizontally. You can estimate its placement but try to make it look even as you copy it around.
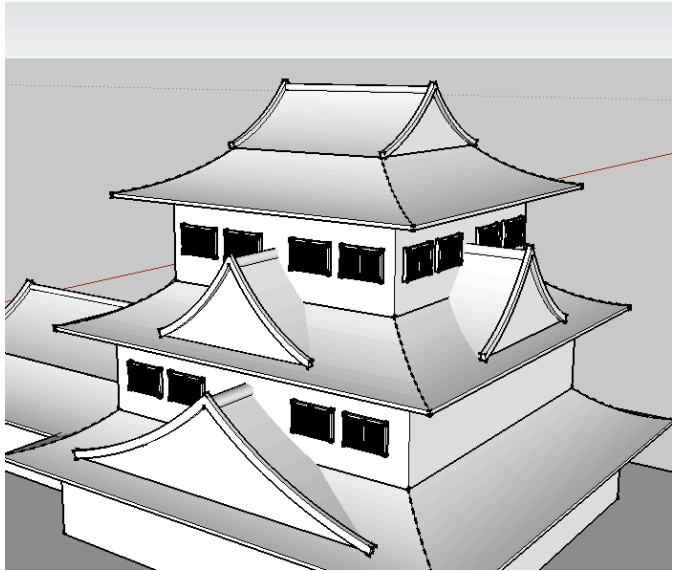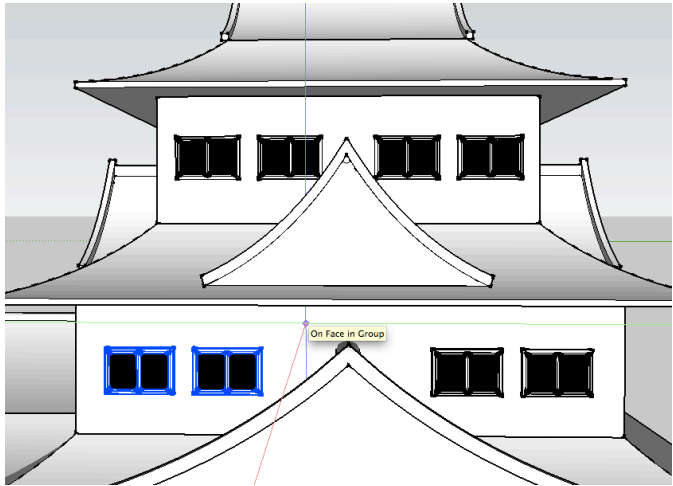
13. We will move on to more details in the next installment.