

STAR TREK II



A Brief History of the Phase II Enterprise

by David Shaw

Introduction

The information on this page is a summary/overview of the history of the redesign of the Enterprise for the Star Trek II TV series (more commonly known today as Star Trek Phase II). While this isn't intended to be all inclusive, I wanted to make sure that most of the basic history of how the design came about and the production of the studio model get covered.

As some of this is based on conversations, the opinions expressed here are my read of what had happened. The actual parties involved might have seen things differently based on additional factors I don't know about or their unique point of view. The goal here is to convey the broad history of the production (before it transitioned into Star Trek: The Motion Picture).

The Beginning

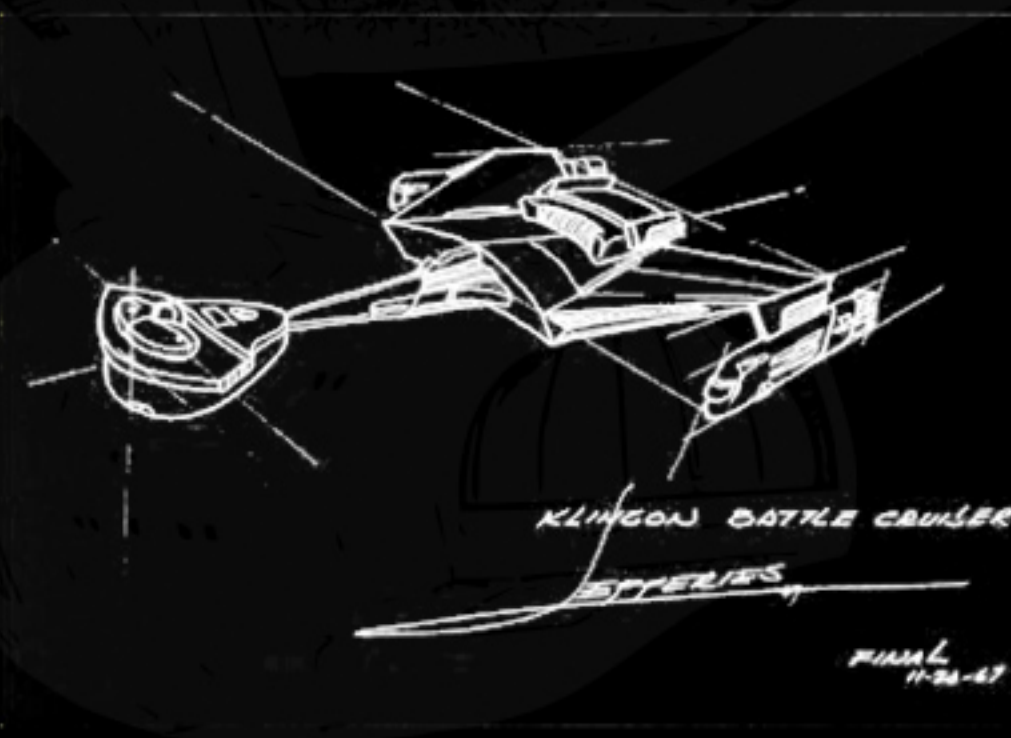
I can't really discuss the Phase II Enterprise design without going back to the original design of the Enterprise from 1964.

After the rush to design and complete the models for the first pilot, Matt Jefferies had a chance to look back at the design and reflect on it a bit. There were a number of elements that he really wanted to change and after the second pilot was accepted he thought he might get the chance to implement them (as part of the budget included modifying the studio models for the series).

Jefferies' main issue was with the engine nacelles, which he wanted to make more interesting looking. This idea was quickly shot down because the producers had

paid for a ton of stock footage shots of the large studio model during the production of the second pilot and the changes Jefferies wanted would have been both expensive and rendered that footage unusable for the series. The alternative idea of adding lighting effects to the nacelles to make them more active was approved, but the blue lighting of the inner channel vents was dropped when it was pointed out that there was the possibility of damaging the nacelle to the point of needing to rebuild it completely (costing more time and money than the effect was worth).

Jefferies continued to play with ideas for an improved nacelle design, and they eventually found their way into the Klingon Battle Cruiser design made for the third season.



A New Series

When Gene Roddenberry got the chance to bring Star Trek back, he wanted to get as many of the people

originally involved with the first series back to work on the new one. This included people like William Theiss for the costumes. Unfortunately Jefferies was working as the art director of Little House on the Prairie at the time, but was willing to consult as a technical advisor.

Joe Jennings was given the position of art director, with John Cartwright, Lee Cole and Mike Minor rounding out his team. With Jefferies input, they started redesigning key aspects of the Enterprise. Cartwright took the lead on the new shuttlecraft, which was more like Jefferies' original aircraft-like concepts for the original series (rather than the boxy design by Thomas Kellogg for AMT). Cole worked on the interiors, including the redesigned bridge (now with two turbo lifts). The Enterprise exterior was initially given to Minor to implement.

Jefferies had been thinking about this for a while, and started in on a series of sketches of changes he had envisioned for the Enterprise. Working from concept sketches and input from Jefferies, Minor put together a series of designs for the new Enterprise.



Many fans of starship design might recognize Minor's Enterprise as being the Endeavor Class.



While the design reflected a lot of Jefferies' ideas, Roddenberry just didn't feel like it was working. He asked Jefferies to take a hands on role in the redesign, and Jefferies agreed to do it.

Because Jefferies was working on location with Little House on the Prairie, he was isolated from the rest of the Star Trek II art department. So while bits and pieces of the design were making there way back to Jennings' team, some aspects of the design were still a bit vague.

Based on Jefferies' early plans, Brick Price Movie Miniatures made a small study model (using elements of the existing AMT model kit) to help with visualizing the new design.

When this was approved, Jefferies went to work on the final plans for the studio model. Jefferies drafted these plans in his hotel room in the evenings while working on Little House on the Prairie during the day.

Using the study model, Minor put together an illustration of how the Enterprise might look in action. Here are two variations on that illustration...



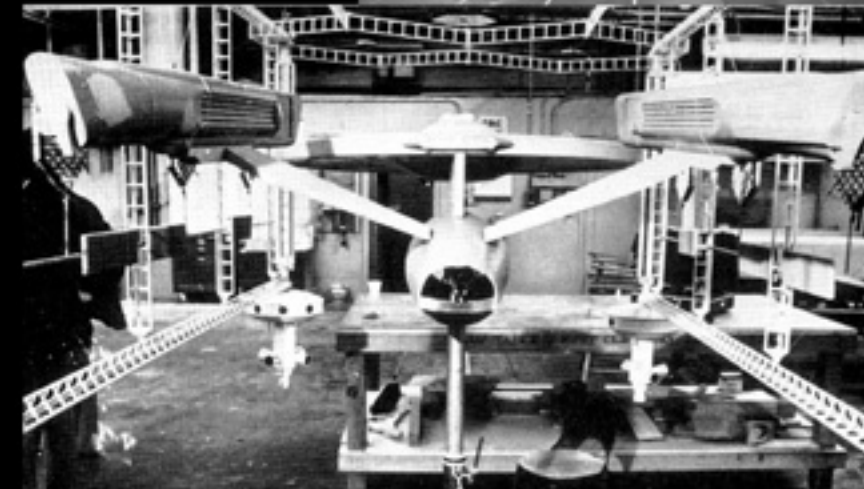
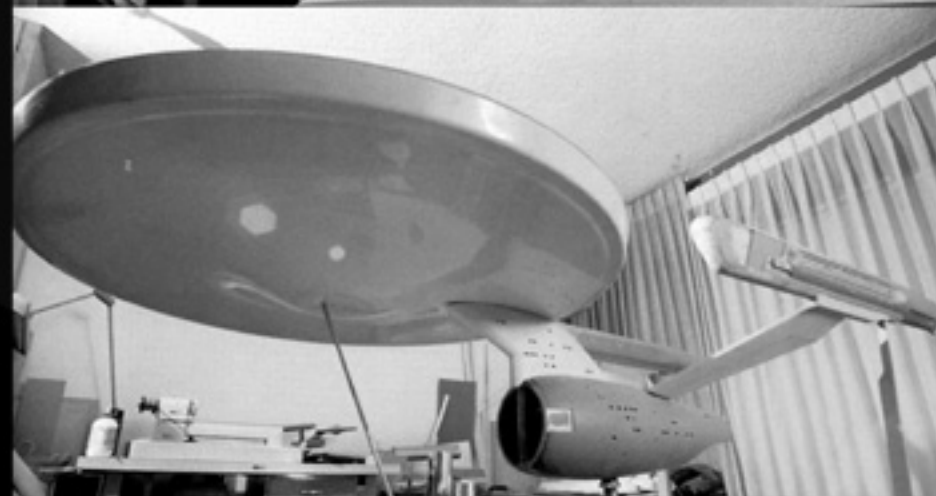
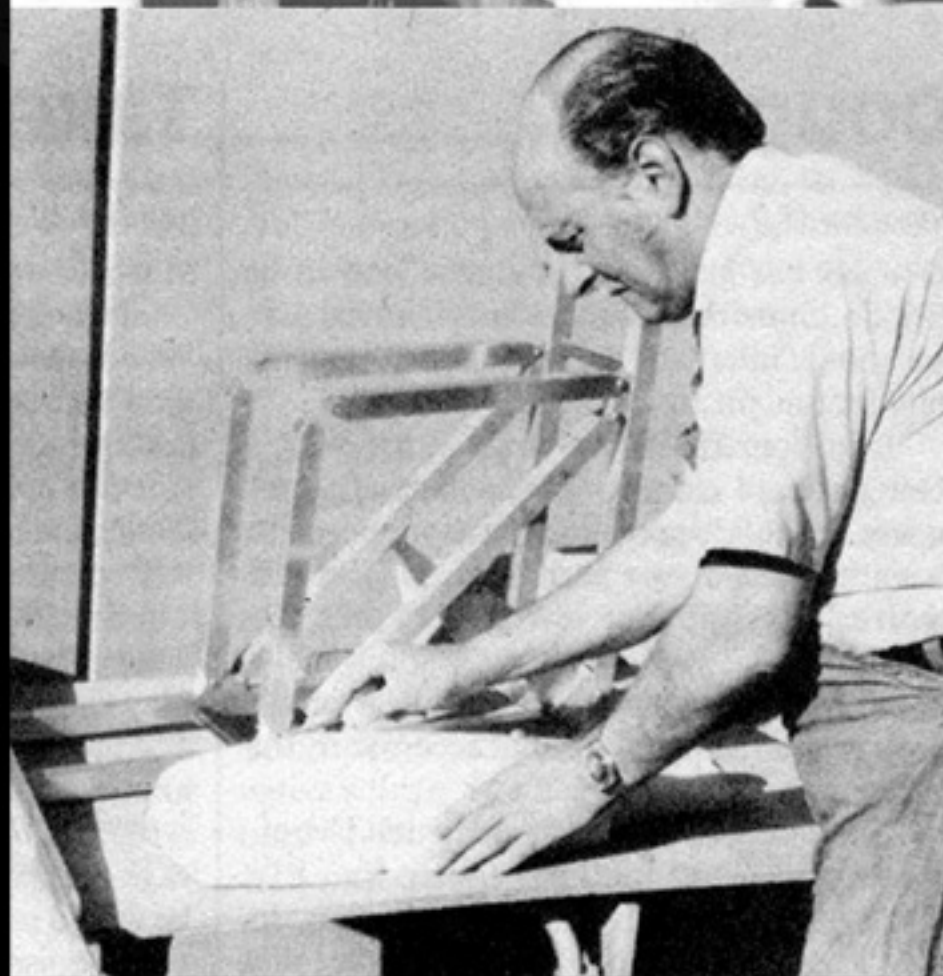
Magicam (a newly formed subsidiary of Paramount) was given the lead in creating the effects elements, but the Enterprise construction was given to Brick Price Movie Miniatures. Magicam worked on the dry dock and spacestation and farmed out the construction of the Klingon model to Greg Jein (who was given the original series Klingon model, on loan from the Smithsonian, to use as a master).

Don Loos and Brick Price worked together to build the Enterprise model based on the plans supplied by Jefferies. Rather than make the plans at some fractional scale to the final model, Jefferies drafted the plans at one-to-one scale to the model. He used the model's symmetry to fold many elements back on themselves to



fit the plans for a 5.5 foot model on a 24" x 36" sheet. Additionally, Jefferies omitted many elements of the design that were to have been pulled directly from the original design (in this case, the original 33 inch Enterprise was to be used as a reference as the 11 foot model was on display in the Smithsonian by this time).

Unfortunately, the denseness of the information on the page made it hard to follow exactly what Jefferies was wanting. This meant that Price/Loos needed to consult with Jefferies quite a bit. And when this started to interfere with Jefferies' work on Little House on the Prairie, Michael Landon stepped in to limit Phase II's access to Jefferies. Between the limited access to



Jefferies and the time constraints, Price/Loos did the best they could. Though a few errors crept in, the model was actually quite true to Jefferies' design.

During all this time both Jennings and Minor were out of the loop on many aspects of the final model's design. Minor was working off of earlier discussions with Jefferies and the study model produced by Price for most of his concept art. Concept art by John Berkey was also largely based on the early study model.



Jennings and Minor had copies of Jefferies' plans, but were left to fill in the blanks on their own. What little time Jefferies had went to Price and Loos.

During the transition to a feature film, Magicam wanted to play a larger part in the effects production. With the help of Richard Taylor, the producers were convinced that the model being built by Price/Loos was too small and ill suited for the large screen. This size argument was clearly false as the large studio model of the Reliant built by ILM for the second feature was actually the same overall scale as the Enterprise model being built by Price/Loos.