

<https://design.tutsplus.com/tutorials/how-to-create-a-new-york-buildings-themed-icon-set--cms-28364>

How to Create a New York Stamp Icon Set in Adobe Illustrator



What You'll Be Creating

In today's tutorial, we're going to pull out our architect hats and learn how to "build" our very own miniaturized set of New York's most iconic buildings, using nothing more than the basic shapes and tools that we work with on a daily basis.

So, assuming you've already refilled your coffee mug, let's get to it!

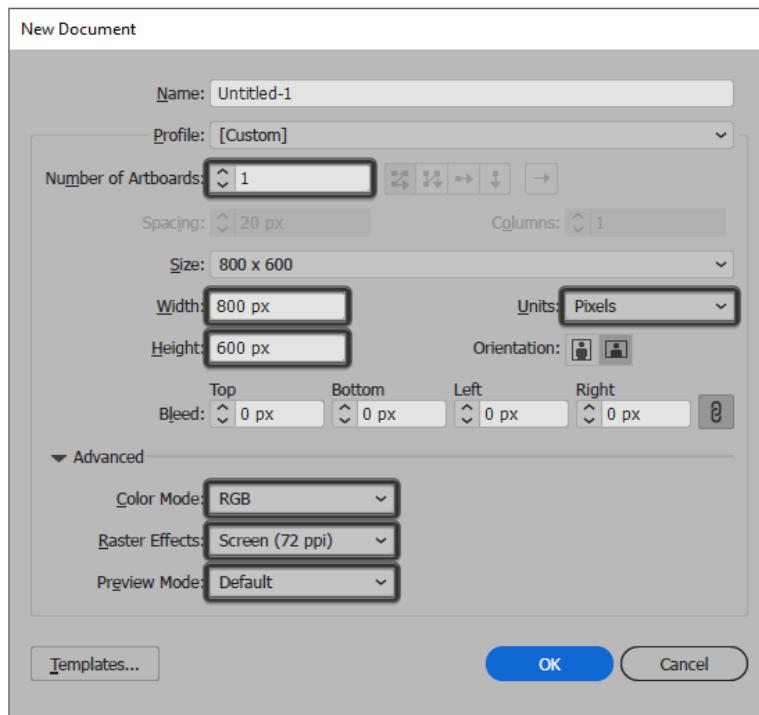
1. How to Set Up a New Document

Since I'm hoping that you already have Illustrator up and running in the background, bring it up and let's set up a **New Document** (**File > New** or **Control-N**) using the following settings:

- **Number of Artboards:** 1
- **Width:** 800 px
- **Height:** 600 px
- **Units:** Pixels

And from the **Advanced** tab:

- **Color Mode:** RGB
- **Raster Effects:** Screen (72ppi)
- **Preview Mode:** Default



Quick tip: some of you might have noticed that the **Align New Objects to Pixel Grid** option is missing, which is because I'm running the new CC 2017 version of the software, where great changes have been made to the way Illustrator handles the way shapes snap to the underlying Pixel Grid.

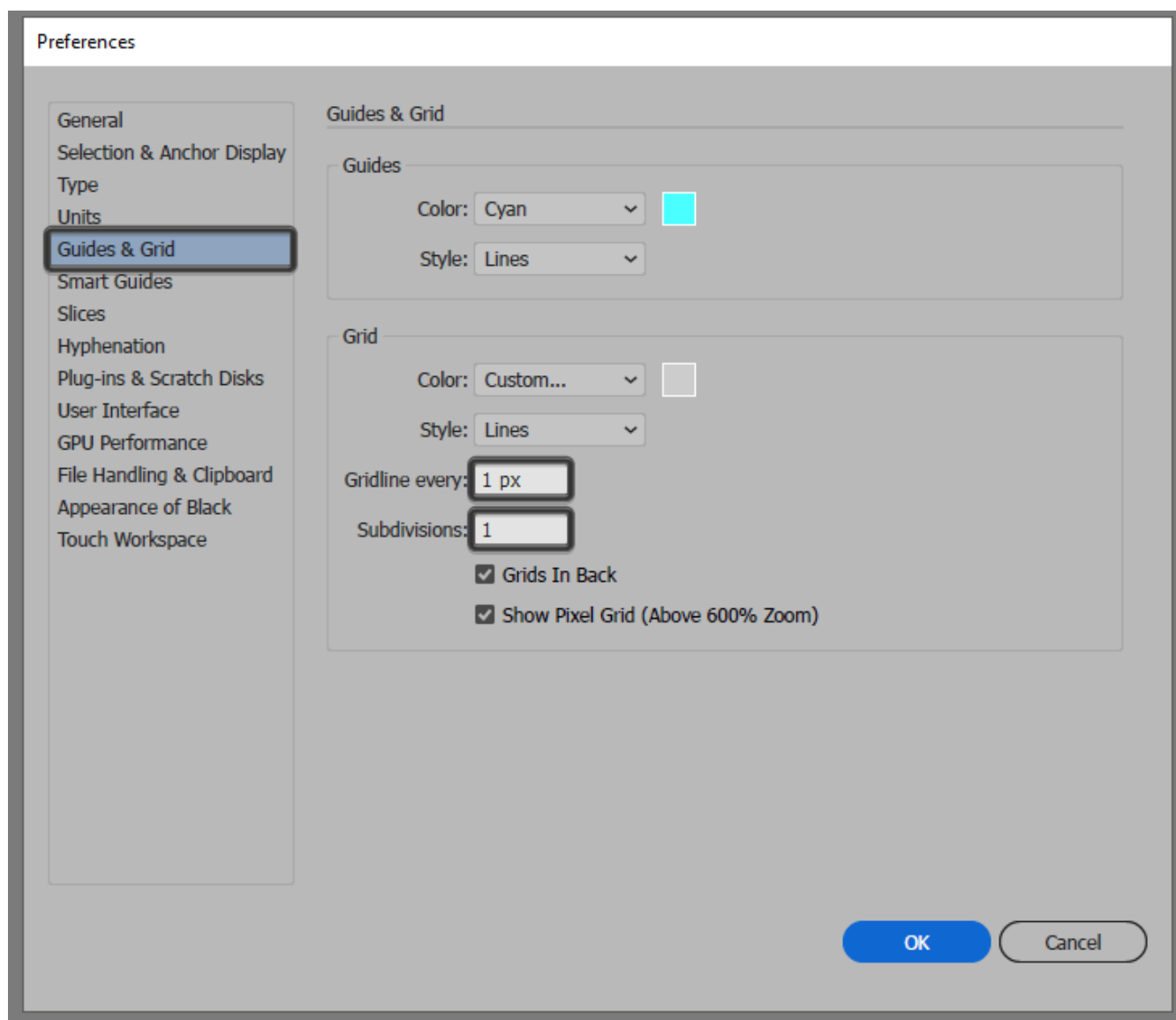
2. How to Set Up a Custom Grid

Since we're going to be creating the icons using a pixel-perfect workflow, we'll want to set up a nice little grid so that we can have full control over our shapes, that is if we're running the older version of the software.

Step 1

Go to the **Edit > Preferences > Guides & Grid** submenu, and adjust the following settings:

- **Gridline every:** 1 px
- **Subdivisions:** 1



Quick tip: you can learn more about grids by reading this in-depth piece on [how Illustrator's Grid System works](#).

Step 2

Once we've set up our custom grid, all we need to do in order to make sure our shapes look crisp is enable the **Snap to Grid** option found under the **View** menu, which will transform into **Snap to Pixel** each time you enter **Pixel Preview** mode.

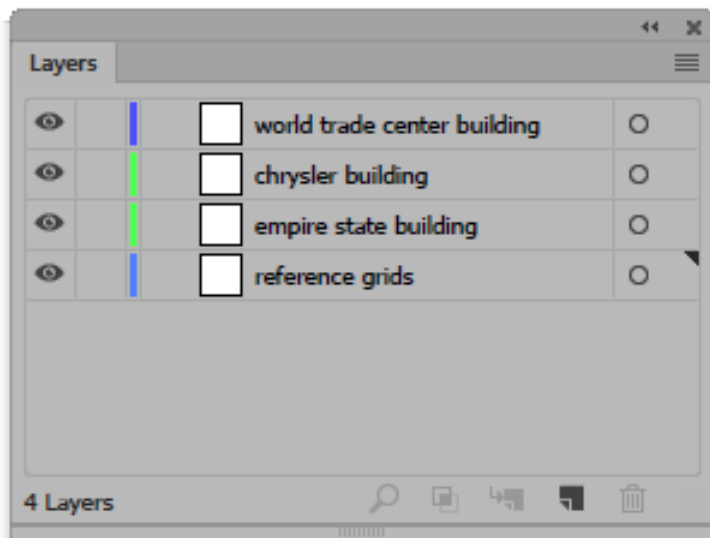
Now, if you're new to the whole "pixel-perfect workflow", I strongly recommend you go through my [how to create pixel-perfect artwork](#) tutorial, which will help you widen your technical skills in no time.

3. How to Set Up the Layers

With the New Document created, it would be a good idea to structure our project using a couple of layers, since this way we can maintain a steady workflow by focusing on one icon at a time.

That being said, bring up the **Layers** panel, and create a total of four layers, which we will rename as follows:

- **layer 1:** reference grids
- **layer 2:** empire state building
- **layer 3:** chrysler building
- **layer 4:** world trade center building



4. How to Create the Reference Grids

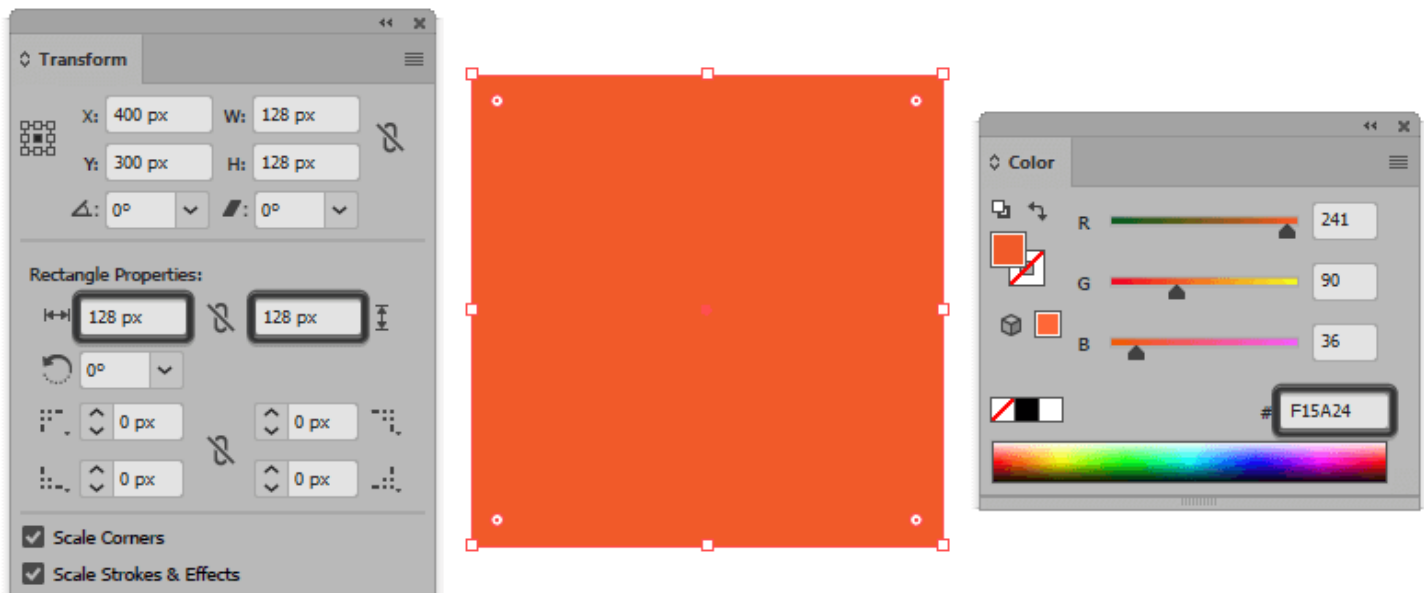
The **Reference Grids** (or **Base Grids**) are a set of precisely delimited reference surfaces, which allow us to build our icons by focusing on size and consistency.

Usually, the size of the grids determines the size of the actual icons, and they should always be the first decision you make when you start a new project, since you'll always want to start from the smallest possible size and build on that.

Now, in our case, we're going to be creating the icon pack using just one size, more exactly **128 x 128 px**, which is a fairly large one.

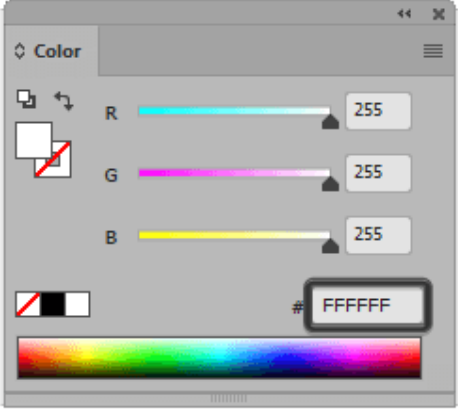
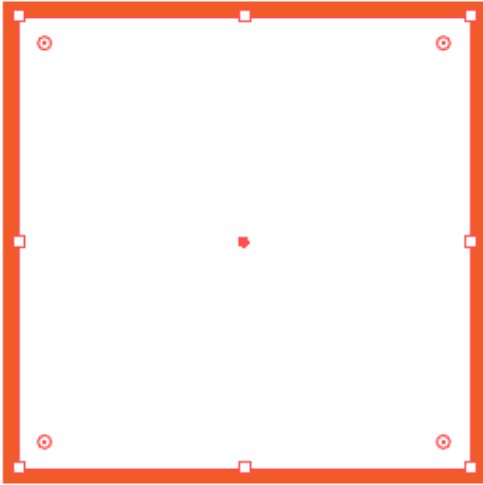
Step 1

Start by locking all but the reference grid layer, and then grab the **Rectangle Tool (M)** and create a **128 x 128 px** orange (#F15A24) square, which will help define the overall size of our icons.



Step 2

Add a smaller **120 x 120 px** one (`#FFFFFF`) which will act as our active drawing area, thus giving us an all-around **4 px** padding.



Step 3

Group the two squares composing the reference grid using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut, and then create three copies at a distance of **40 px** from one another, making sure to align them to the center of the **Artboard**.

Once you're done, lock the current layer and move on to the next one where we'll start working on our first icon.

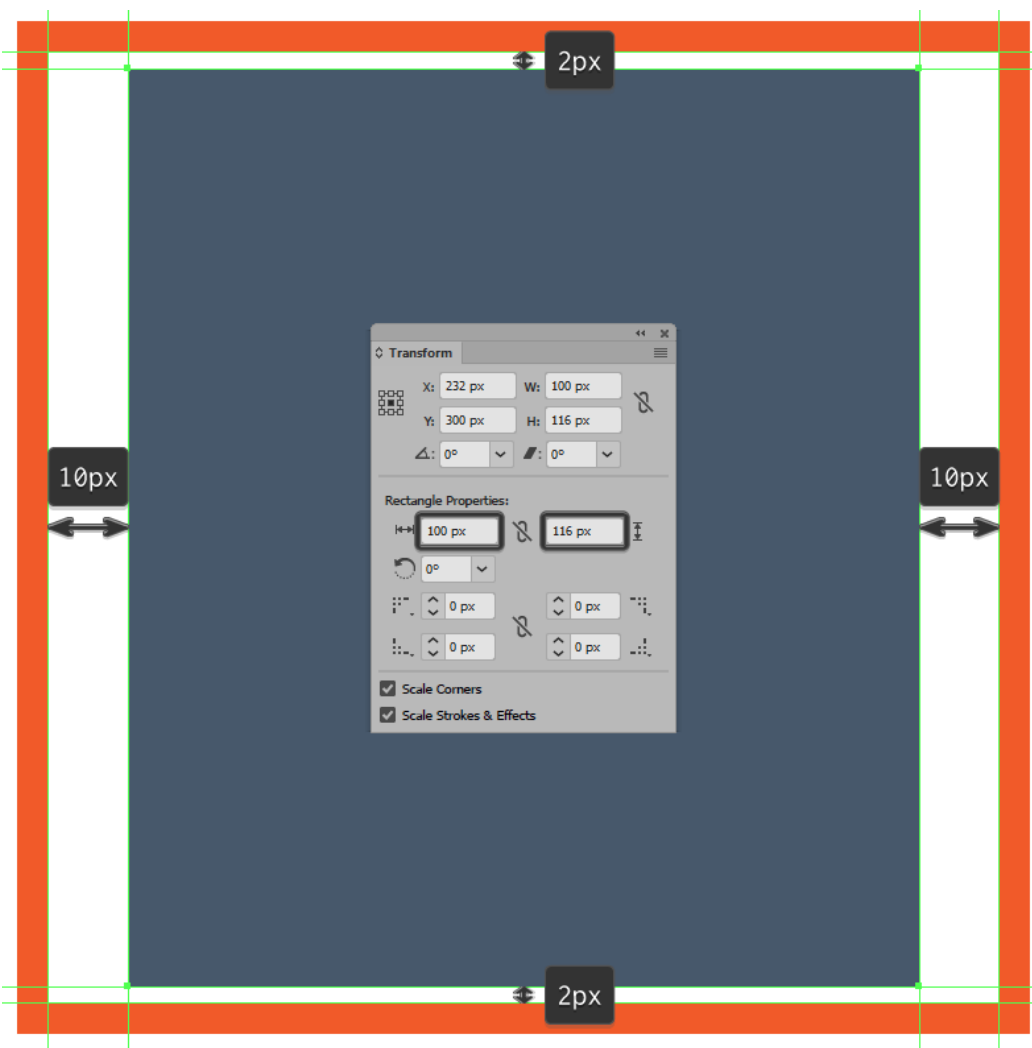


5. How to Create the Stamp Frame

Let's kick off the project by creating the stamp-like frame which will be the repeating element for each of our icons. That being said, make sure you're on the right layer (that would be the first one) and then zoom in on the first reference grid.

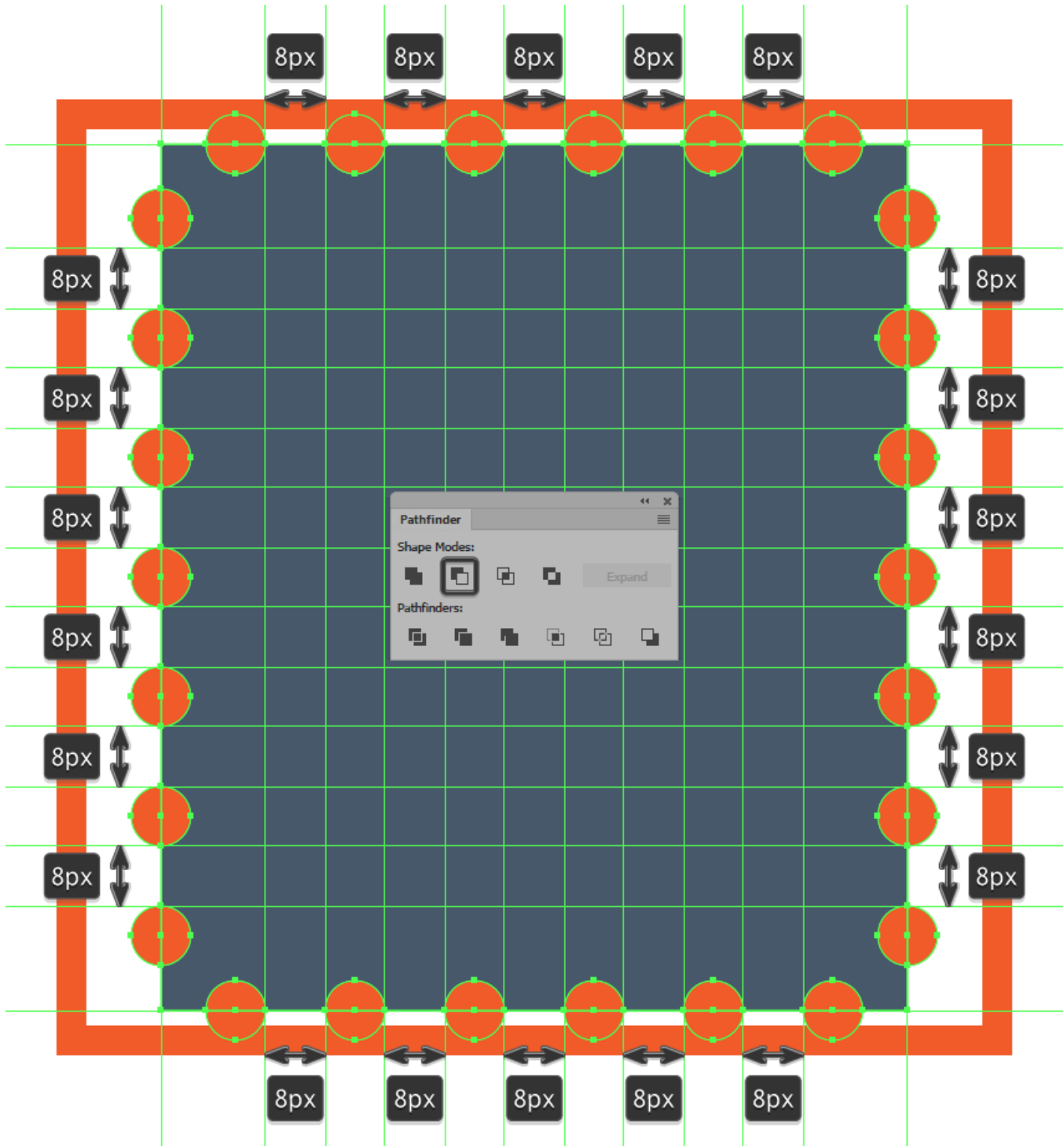
Step 1

Create the frame's outer section using a **100 x 116 px** rectangle, which we will color using `#45576B` and then center align to the underlying active drawing area.





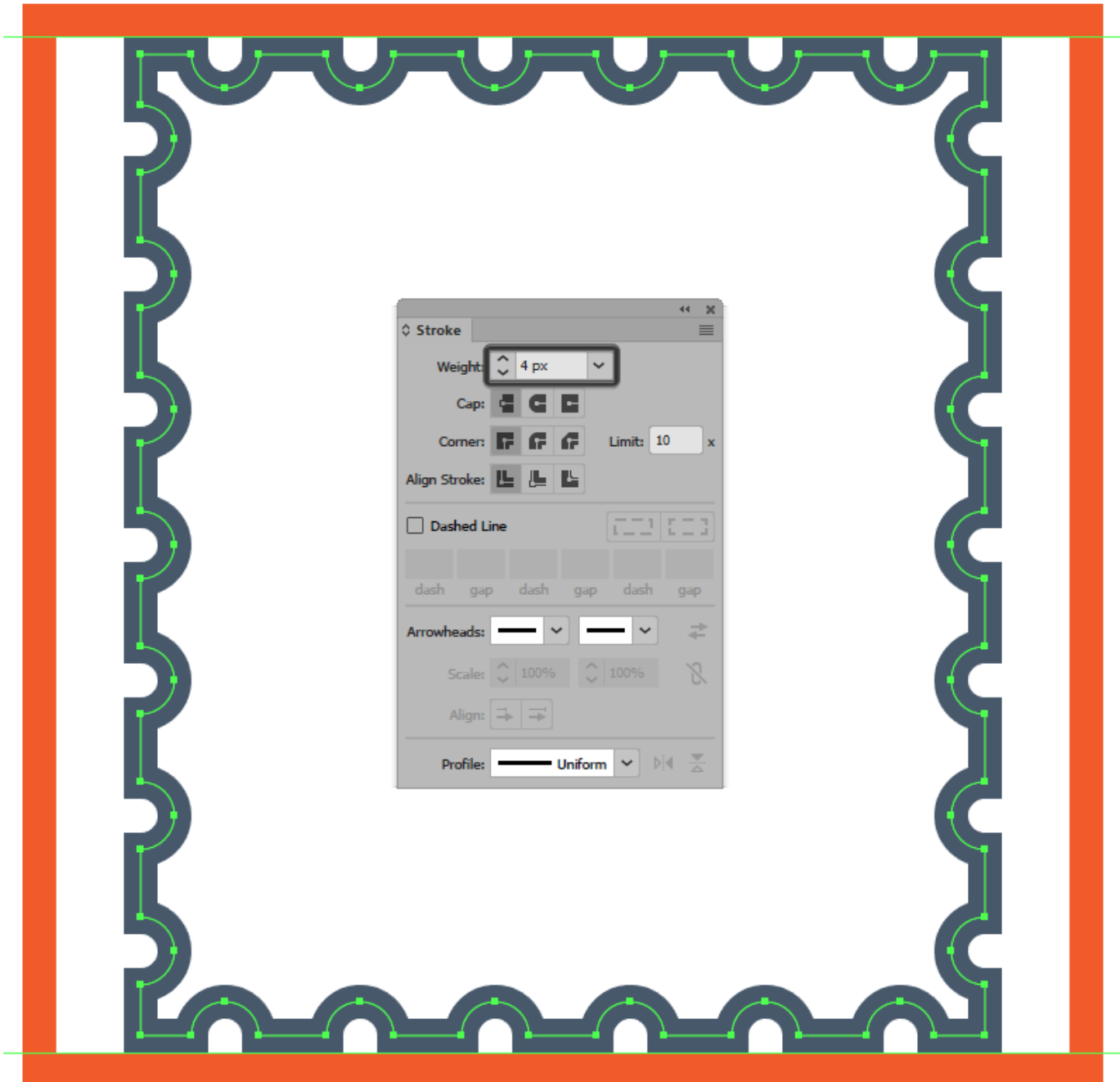
Adjust the shape that we've just created by positioning a couple of 8 x 8 px circles (highlighted with red) exactly 8 px from one another both horizontally and vertically, which we will then cut out from the larger rectangle using Pathfinder's Minus Front Shape Mode.





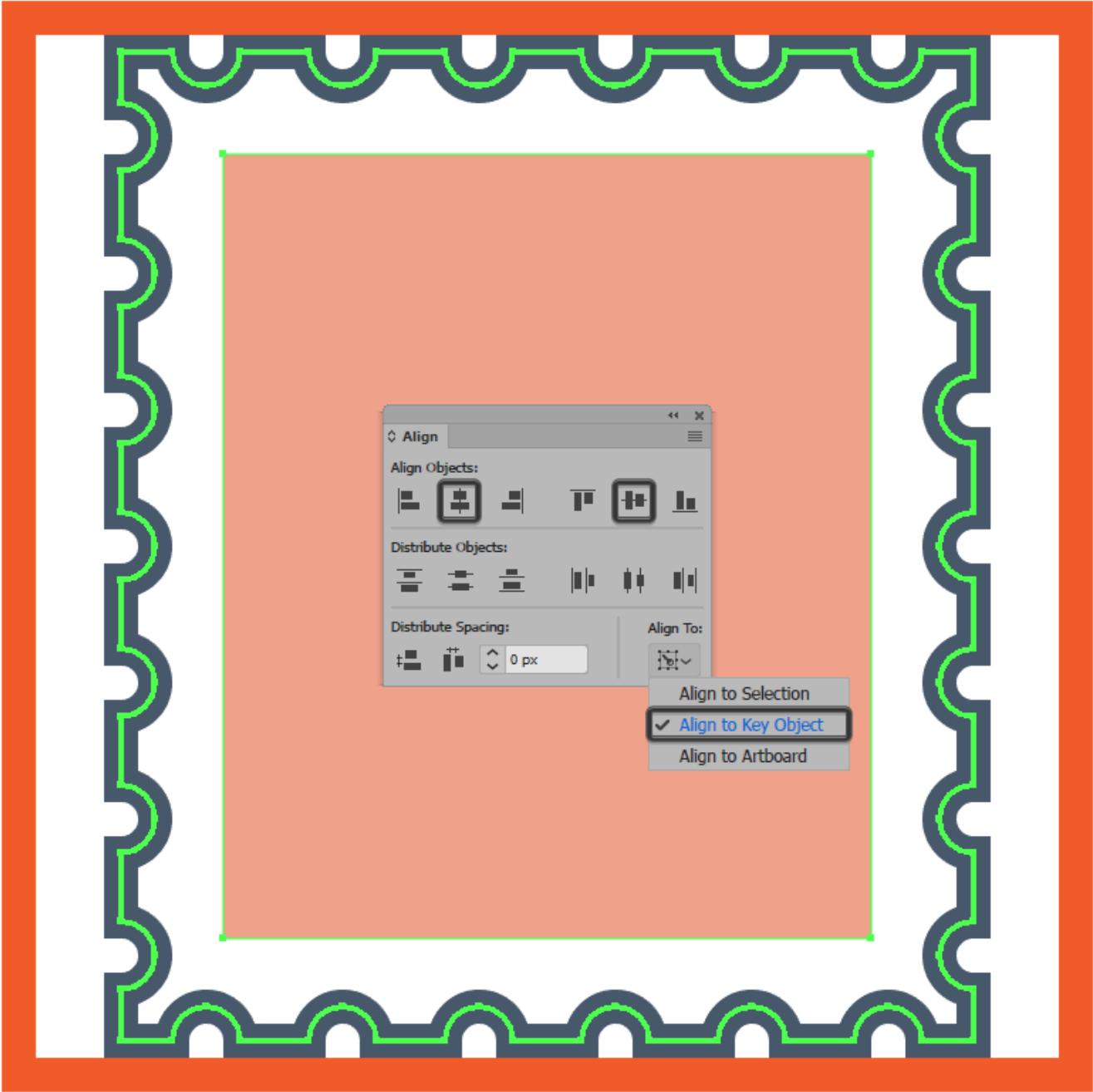
Step 3

Continue adjusting the resulting shape by flipping its **Fill** with its **Stroke** (**Shift-X**), and then setting its **Weight** to **4 px** from within the **Stroke** panel.



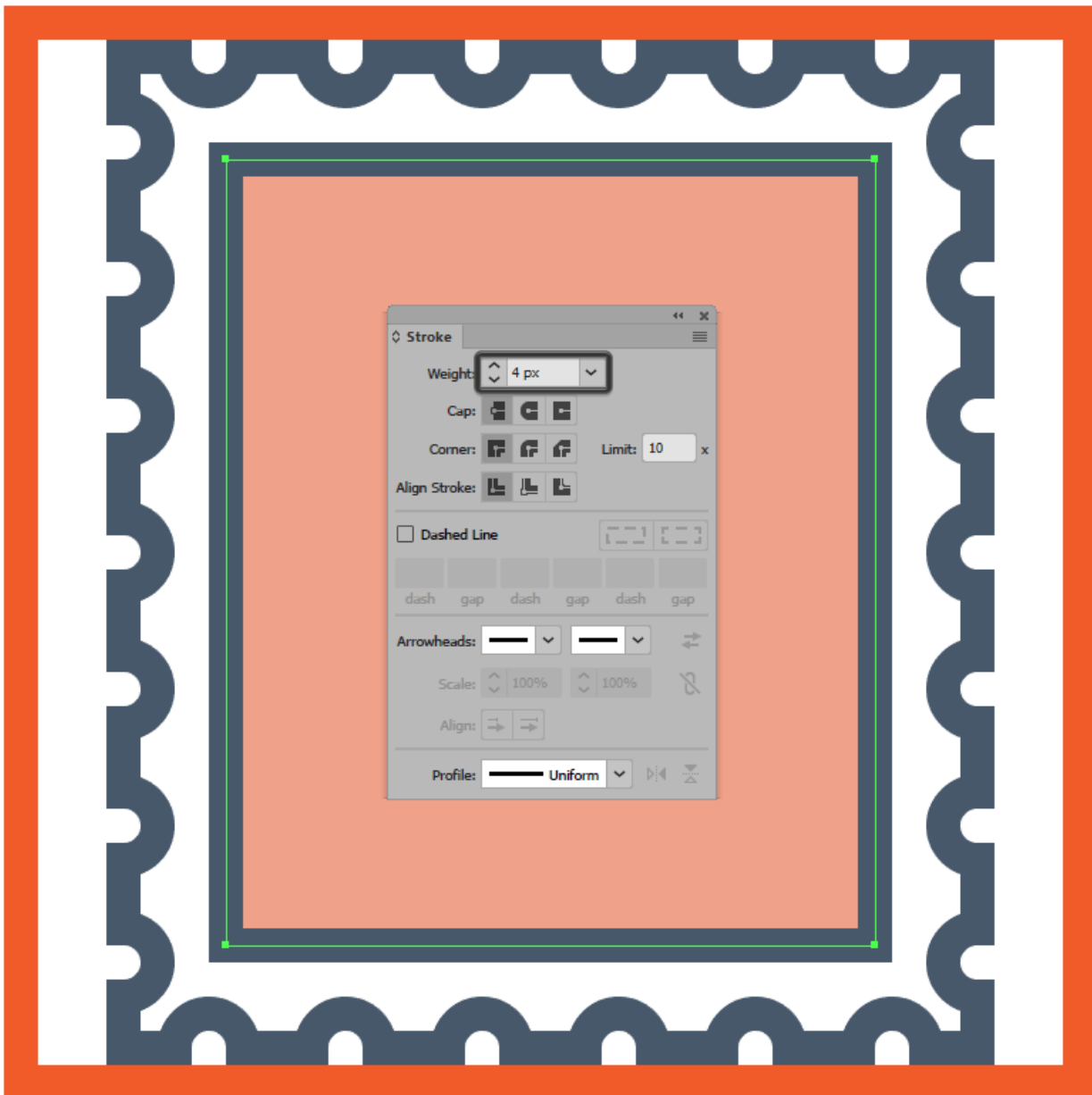
Step 4

Create the frame's colored fill section using a 76 x 92 px rectangle (#EFA28B), which we will center align to the larger outline.



Step 5

Finish off the frame by adding an outline to the colored fill section using the **Stroke** method. Create a copy of it (**Control-C**) which we will paste in front (**Control-F**) and then adjust by changing its color to #45576B and then flipping its **Fill** with its **Stroke** (**Shift-X**). Set the path's **Weight** to **4 px**, and then select and group all three shapes together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.



Step 6

Once we've finished working on the frame, we can create two copies of it (**Control-C > Control-F**) and position them onto the remaining reference grids, making sure to paste each one of them onto their respective layer (that would be the third and the fourth). Then before you lock the layers back, change the color of the second frame's fill section to `#8CC1ED` and the third one's to `#8CEAC8`.



6. How to Create the Empire State Building

With the frames in place, we can now begin working on the actual buildings, so make sure you're back on the right layer (that would be the second one) and zoom in on the first reference grid so that you can have a better view of the shapes.

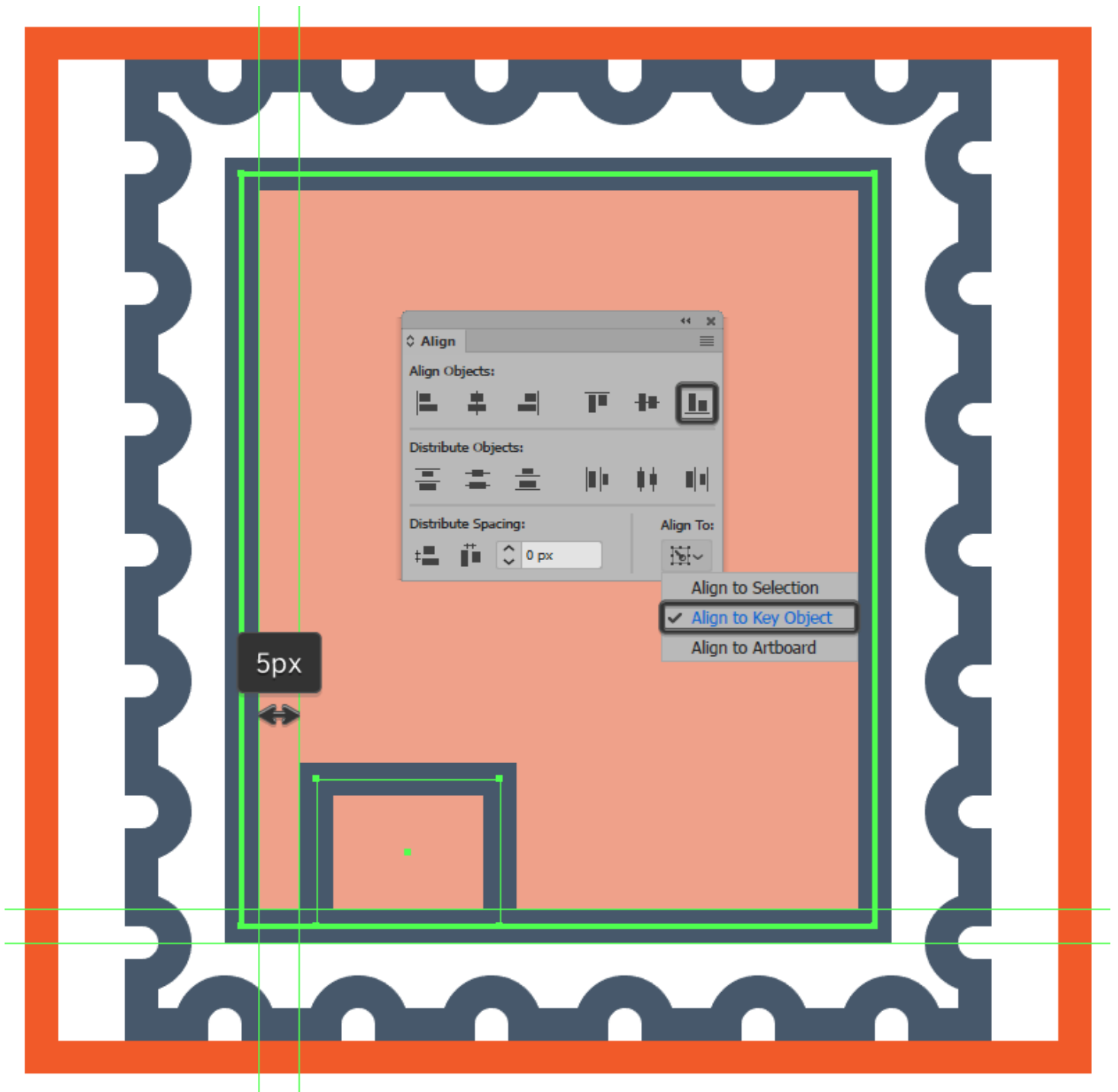
Step 1

Start working on the Empire State Building's base by creating a **22 x 18 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (`#45576B`) which we will bottom align to the fill section's outline, positioning it at a distance of **5 px** from its left edge.



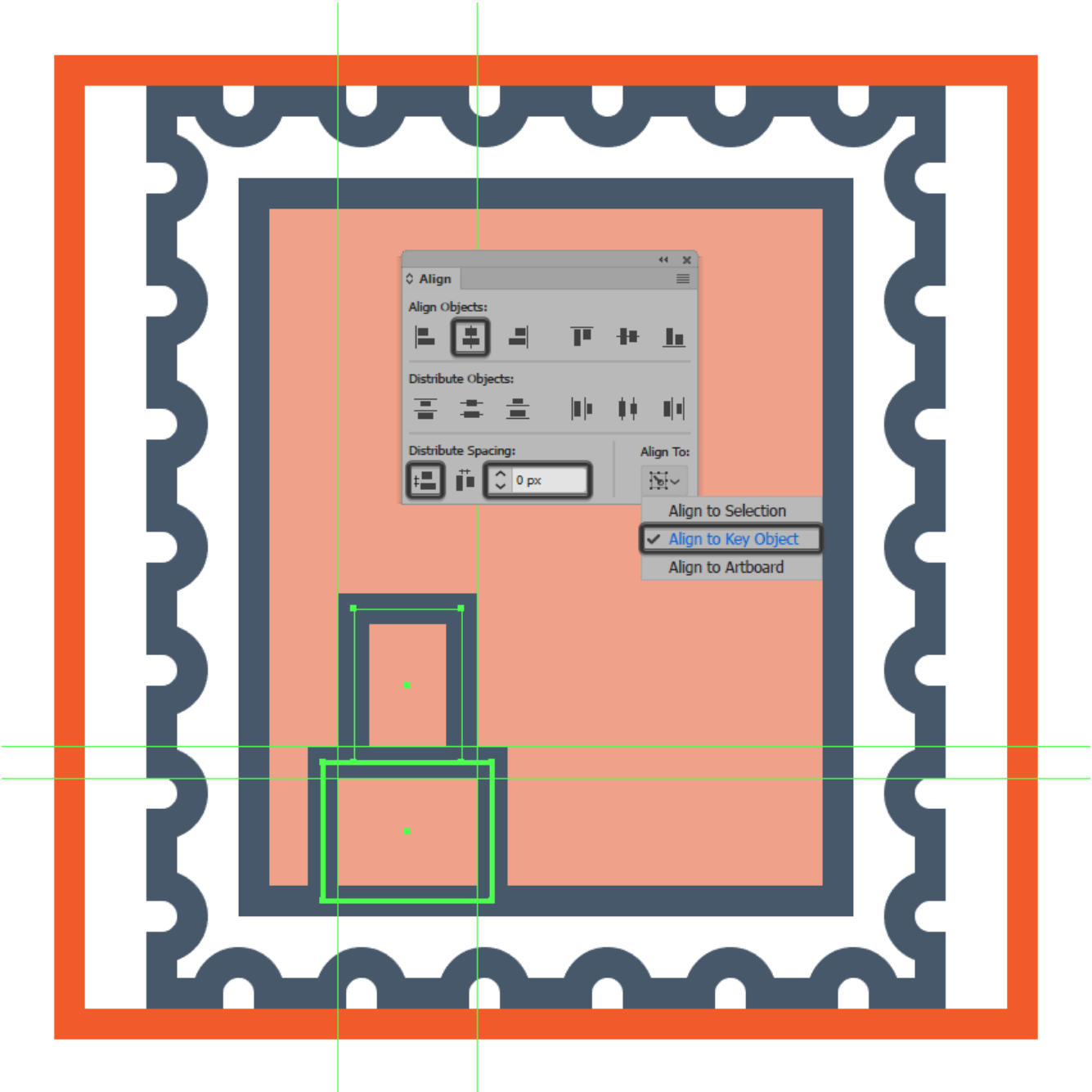
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Step 2

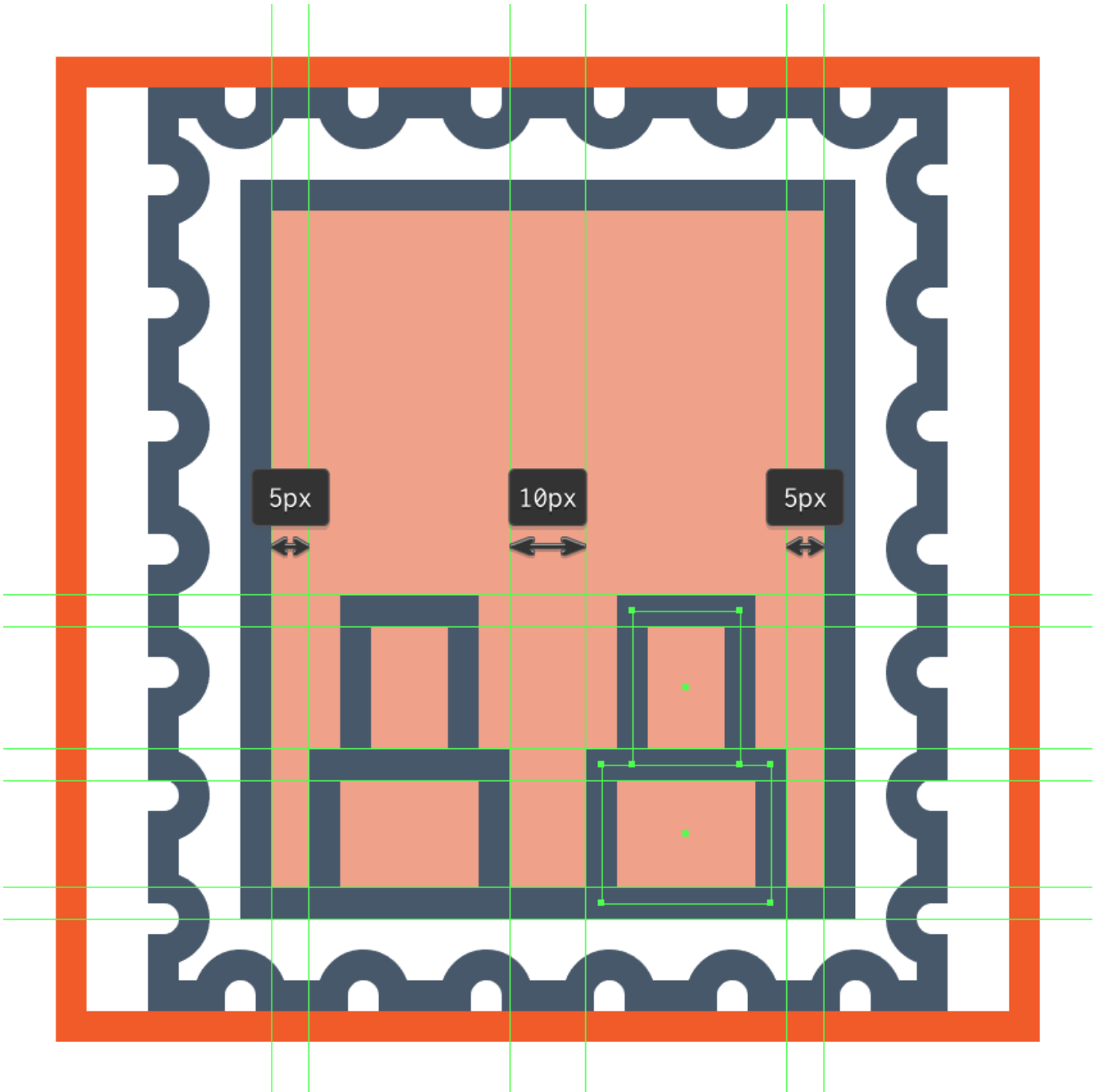
Create another slightly taller **14 20 px** rectangle with the same **4 px** thick **Stroke (#45576B)**, which we will position on top of the one from the previous step.





Step 3

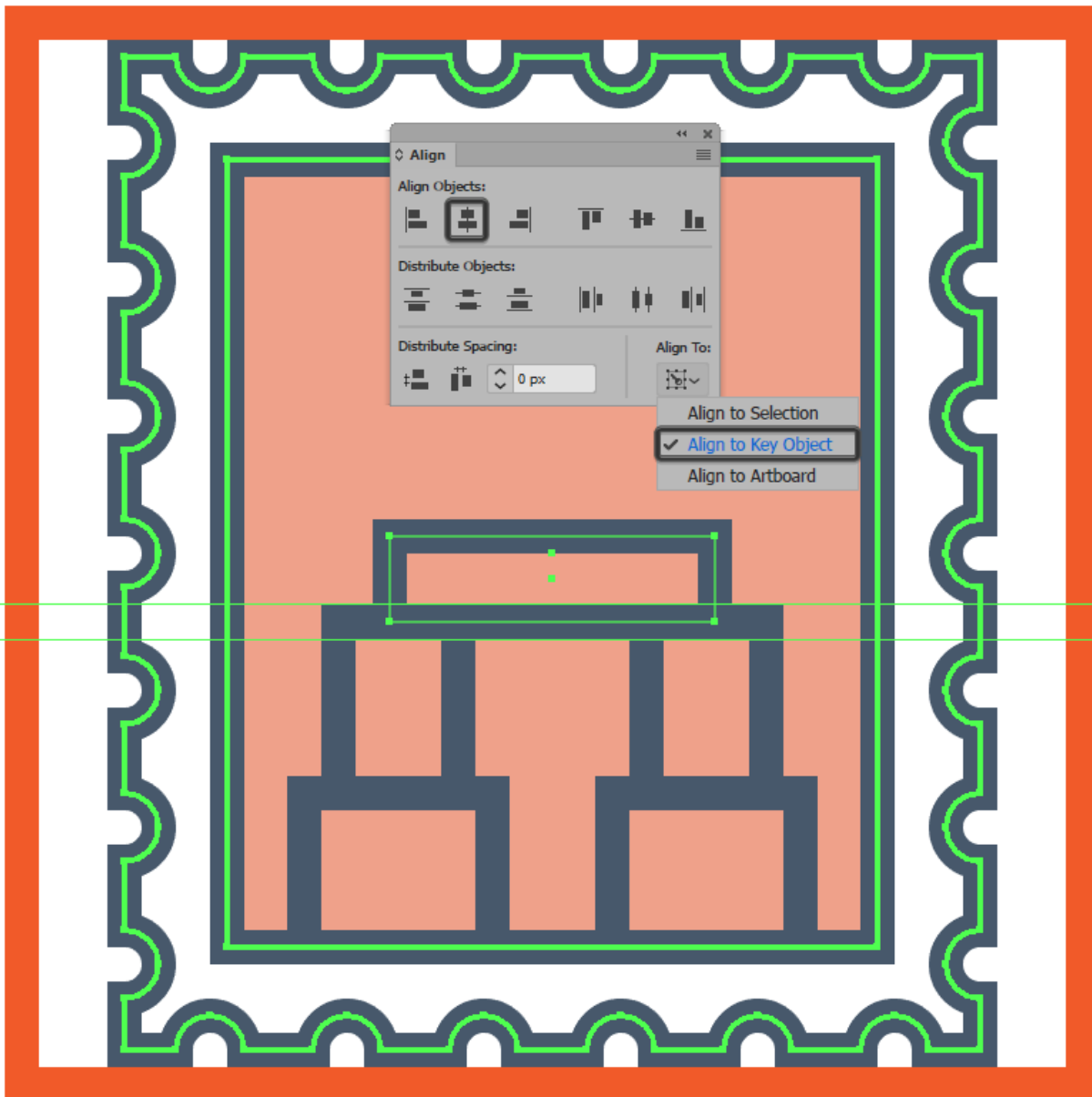
Create the right section of the building's base by placing a copy (**Control-C > Control-F**) of the two shapes that we have onto the opposite side of the frame, keeping the same **5 px** gap between them and the larger outline.





Step 4

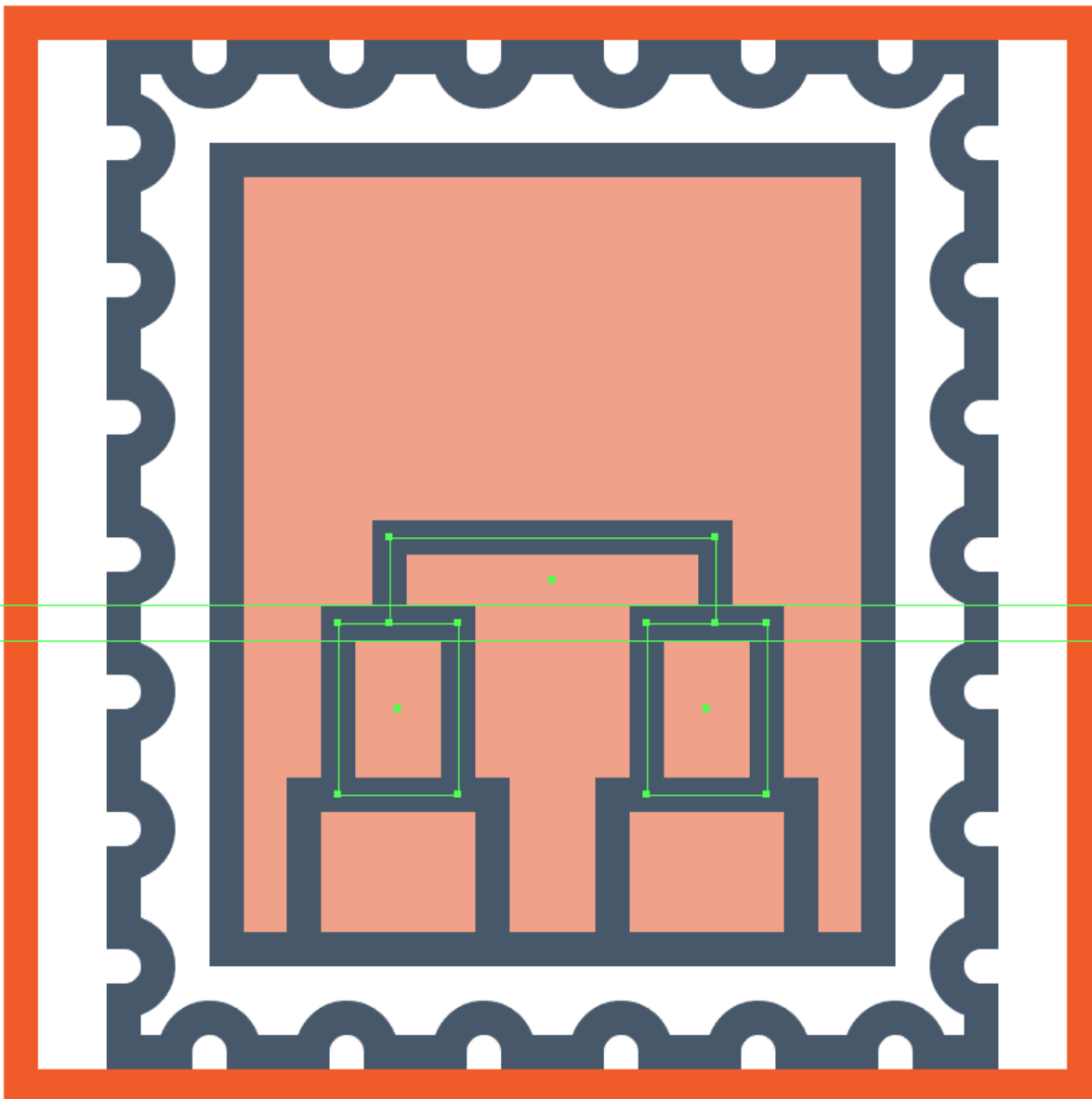
Start working on the building's center section, by creating a **38 x 10 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will center align to the frame, positioning it on top of the base shapes.





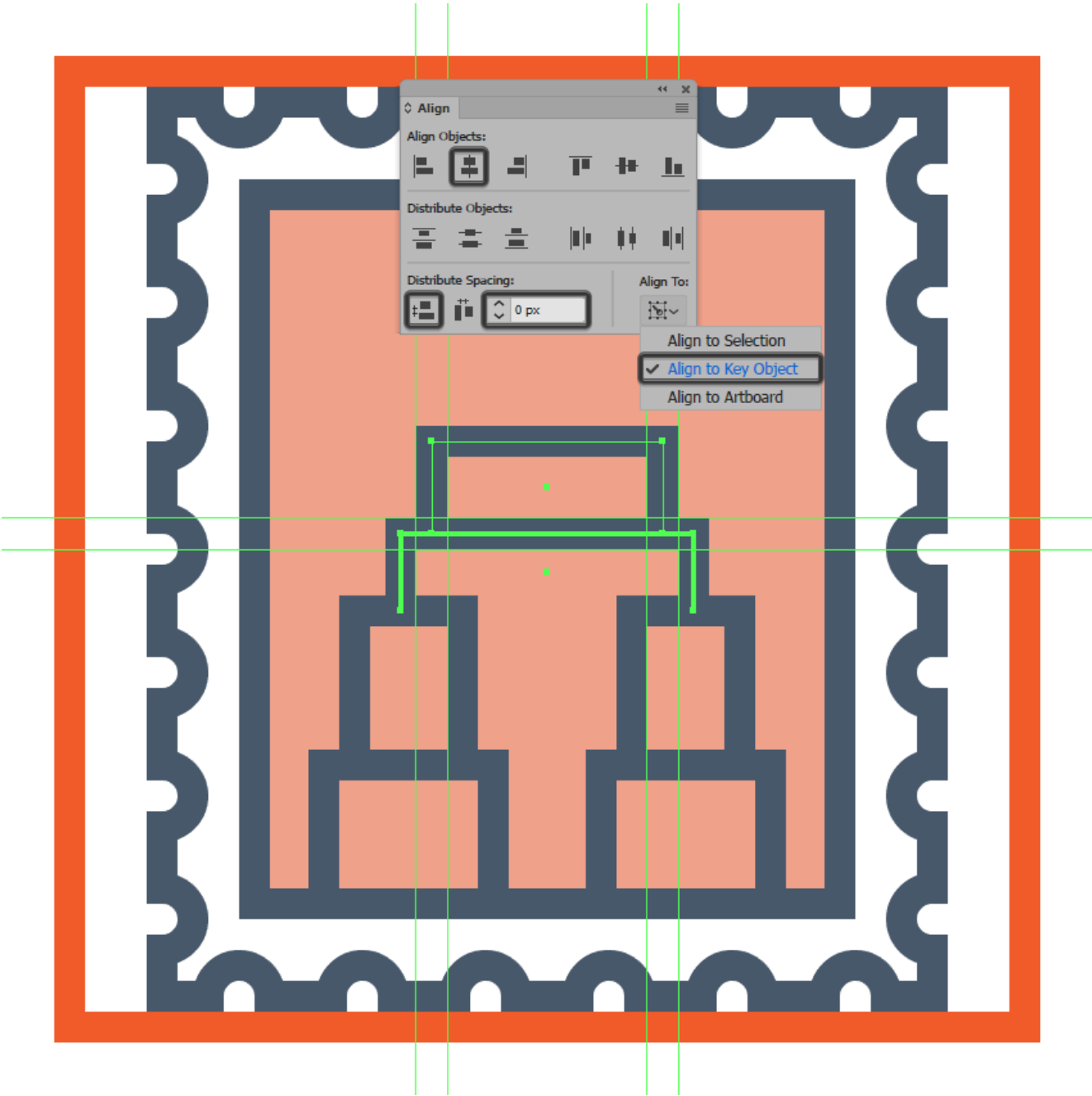
Step 5

Adjust the shape that we've just created by opening up its path, by adding a new anchor point to the center of its bottom edge using the **Add Anchor Point Tool (+)** and then removing it by pressing **Delete**.



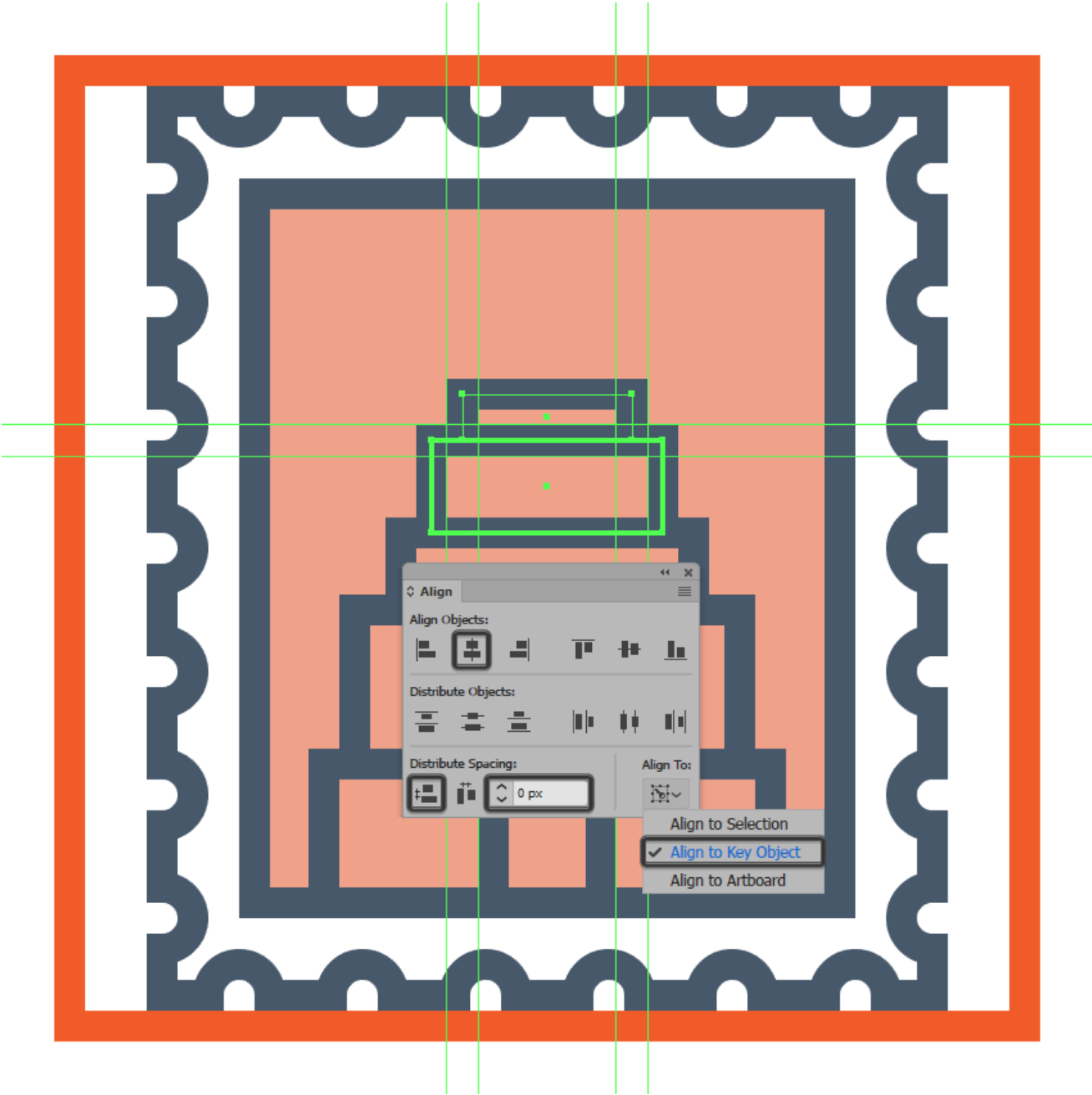
Step 6

Continue working your way up by creating a **30 x 12 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which we will center align to the previous shape, positioning it on top.



Step 7

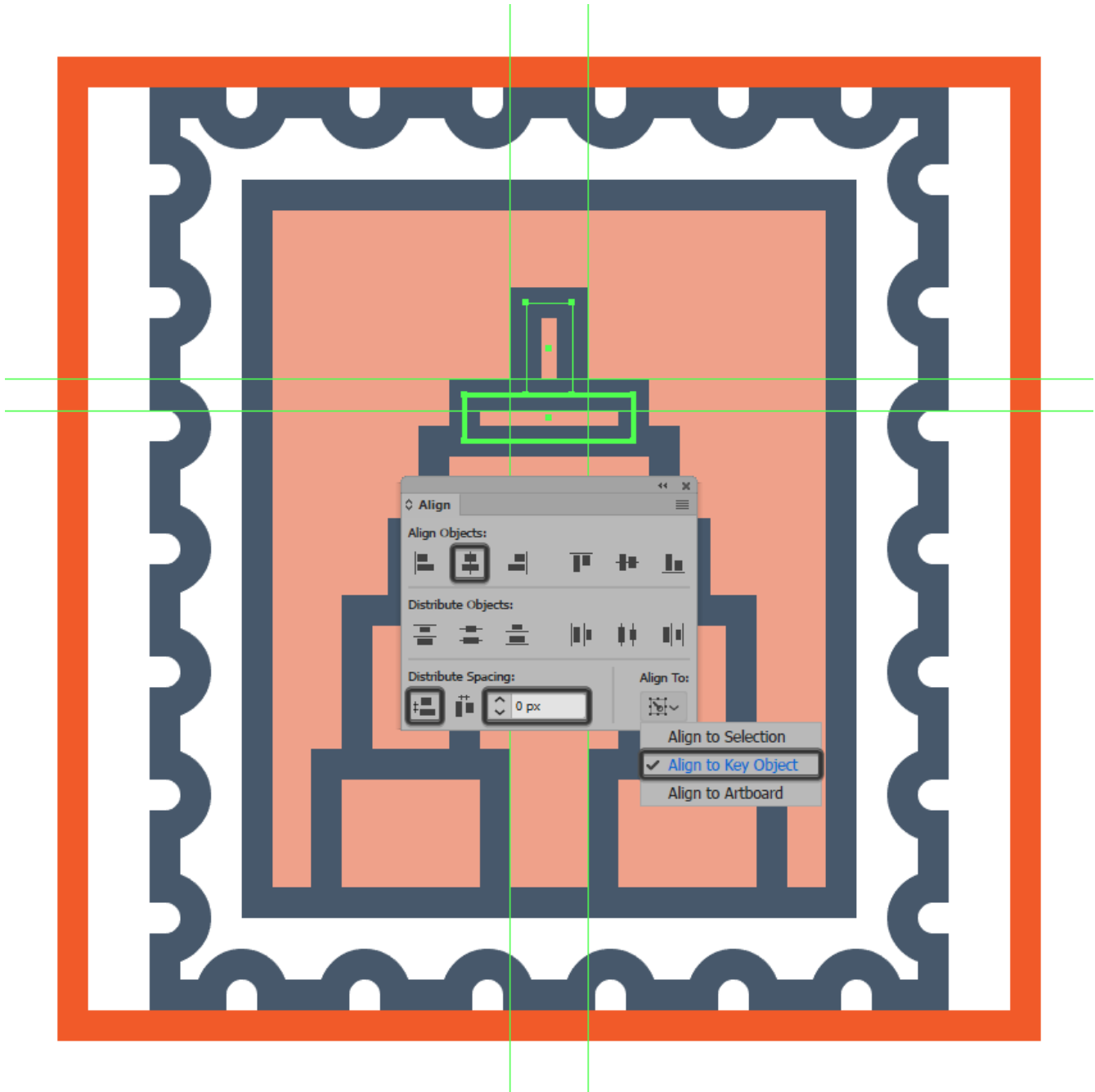
Start working on the building's upper section by creating a **22 x 6 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which, as you've probably already guessed, we'll position on top of the previous shape.





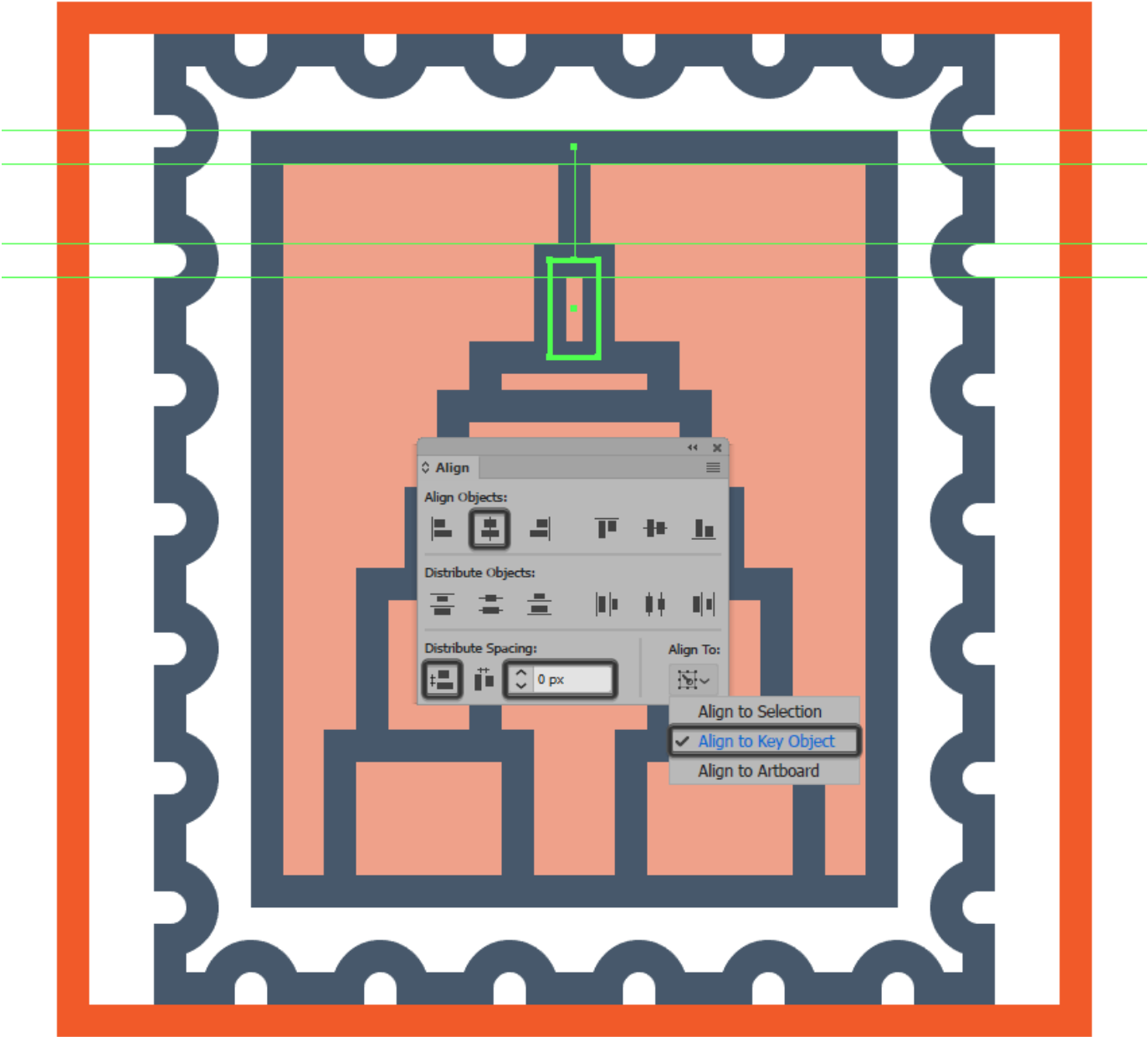
Step 8

Add another **6 x 12 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) on top of the shape that we've just created, making sure to center align the two afterwards.



Step 9

Finish off the building's structure, by adding the antenna using a **14 px tall 4 px thick Stroke** (#45576B), which we will of course position on top of all the other shapes.



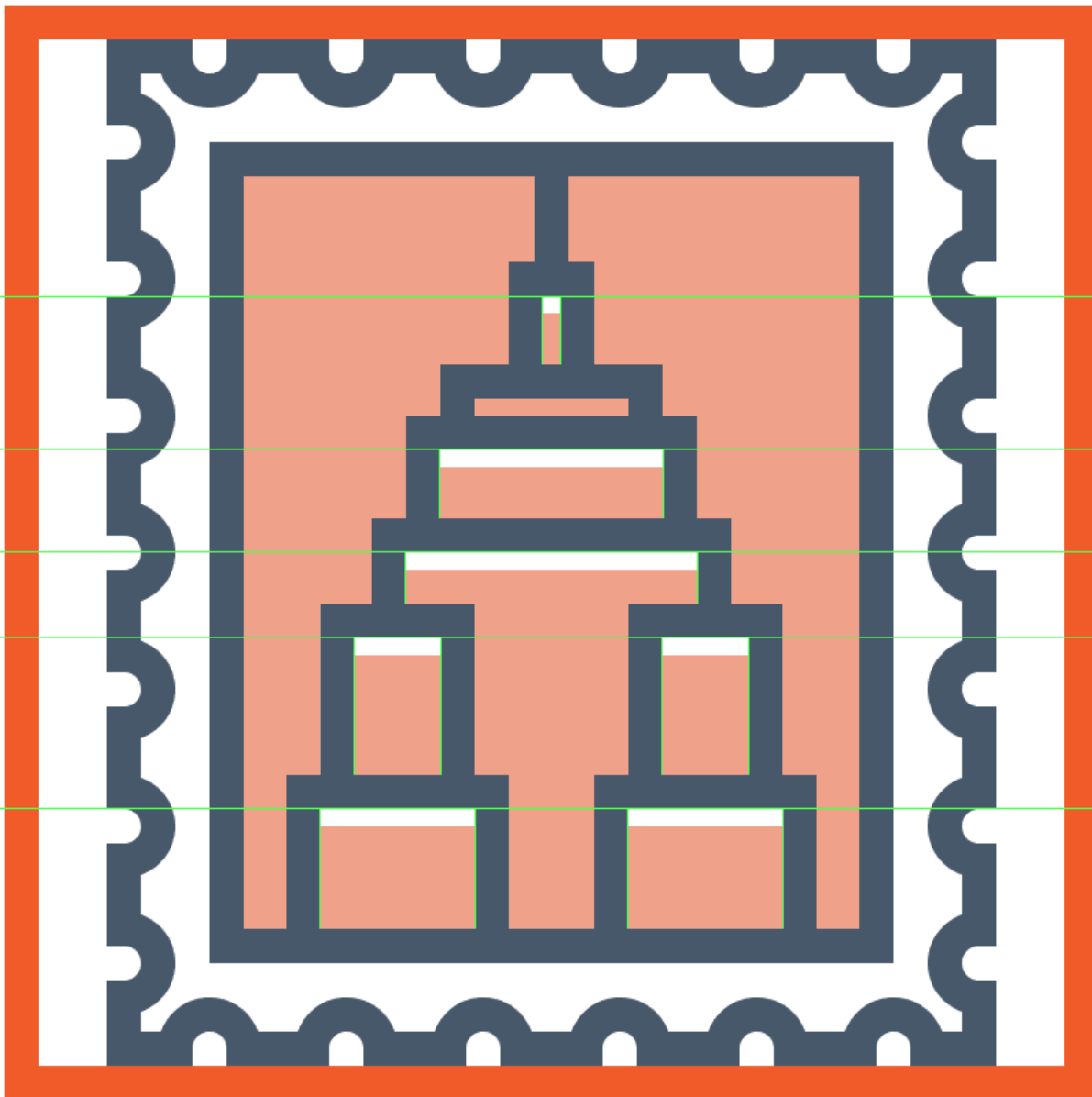


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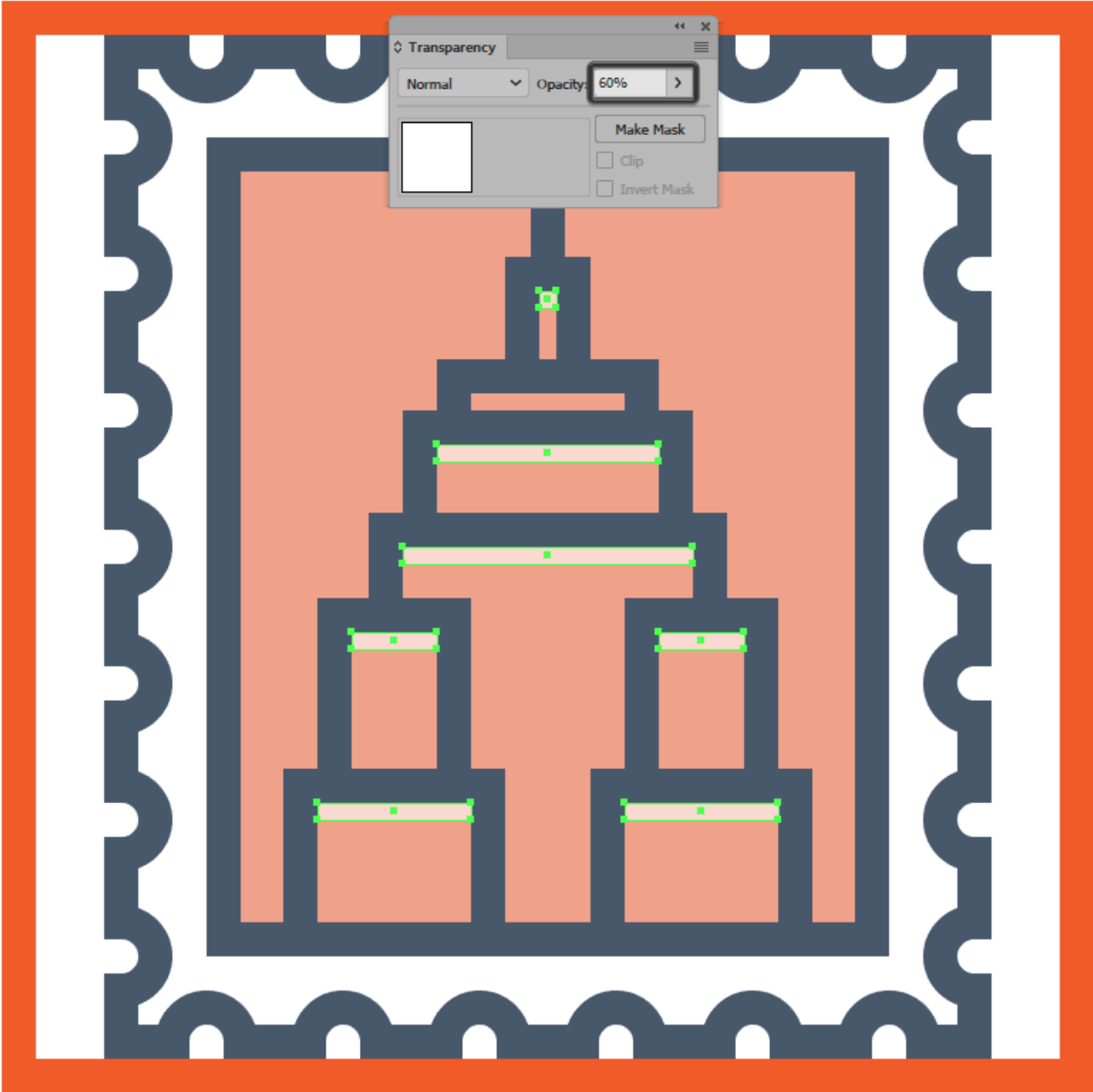
Step 10

Next, we're going to take a small detour and add in the little highlights before starting work on the windows themselves. So, using the **Rectangle Tool (M)**, create a bunch of **2 px** tall white (#FFFFFF) rectangles, which will cover the upper visible section of most of the building's composing sections.



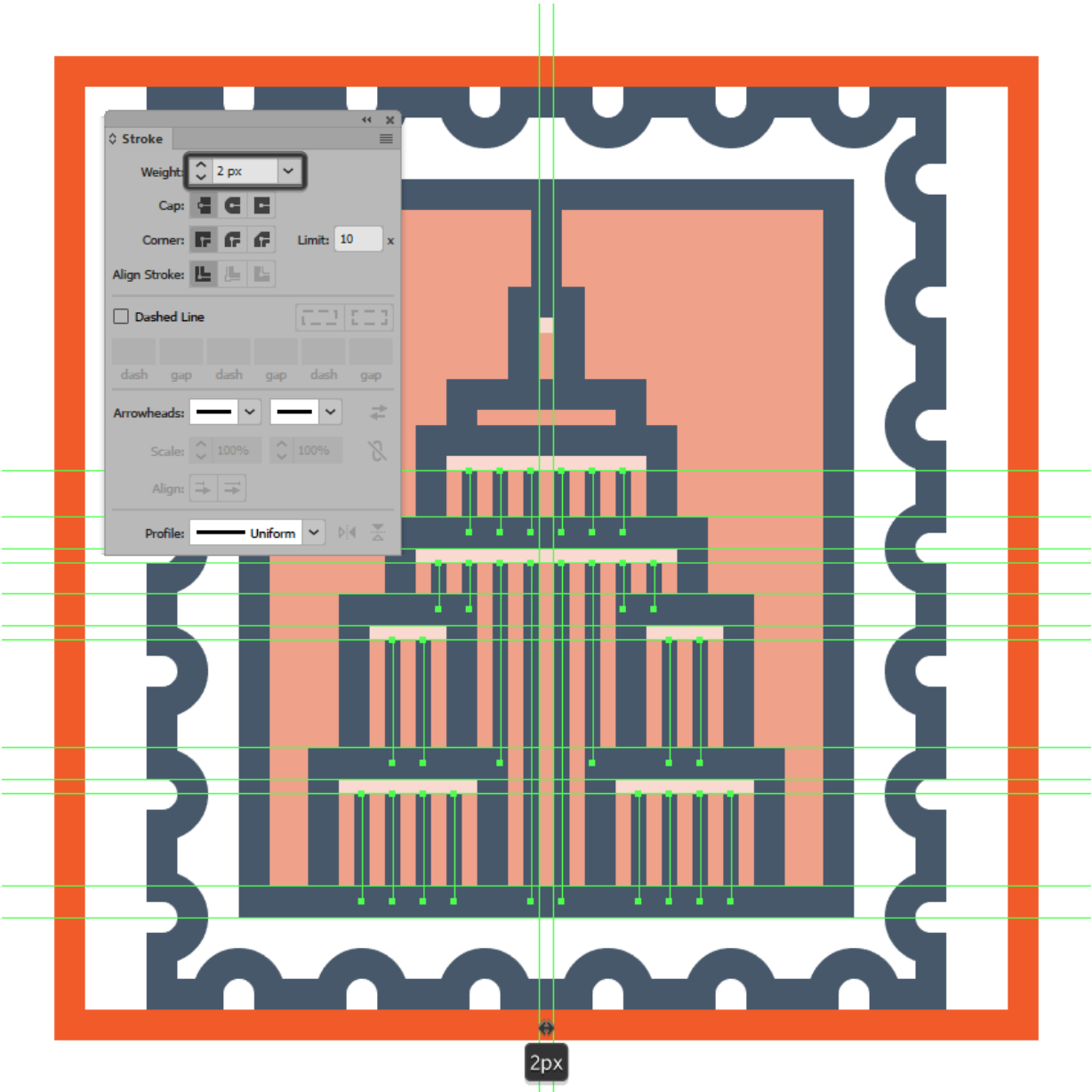
Step 11

Adjust the shapes that we've just created so that they turn up looking like actual highlights, by selecting them all and then lowering their **Opacity** to just **60%**.



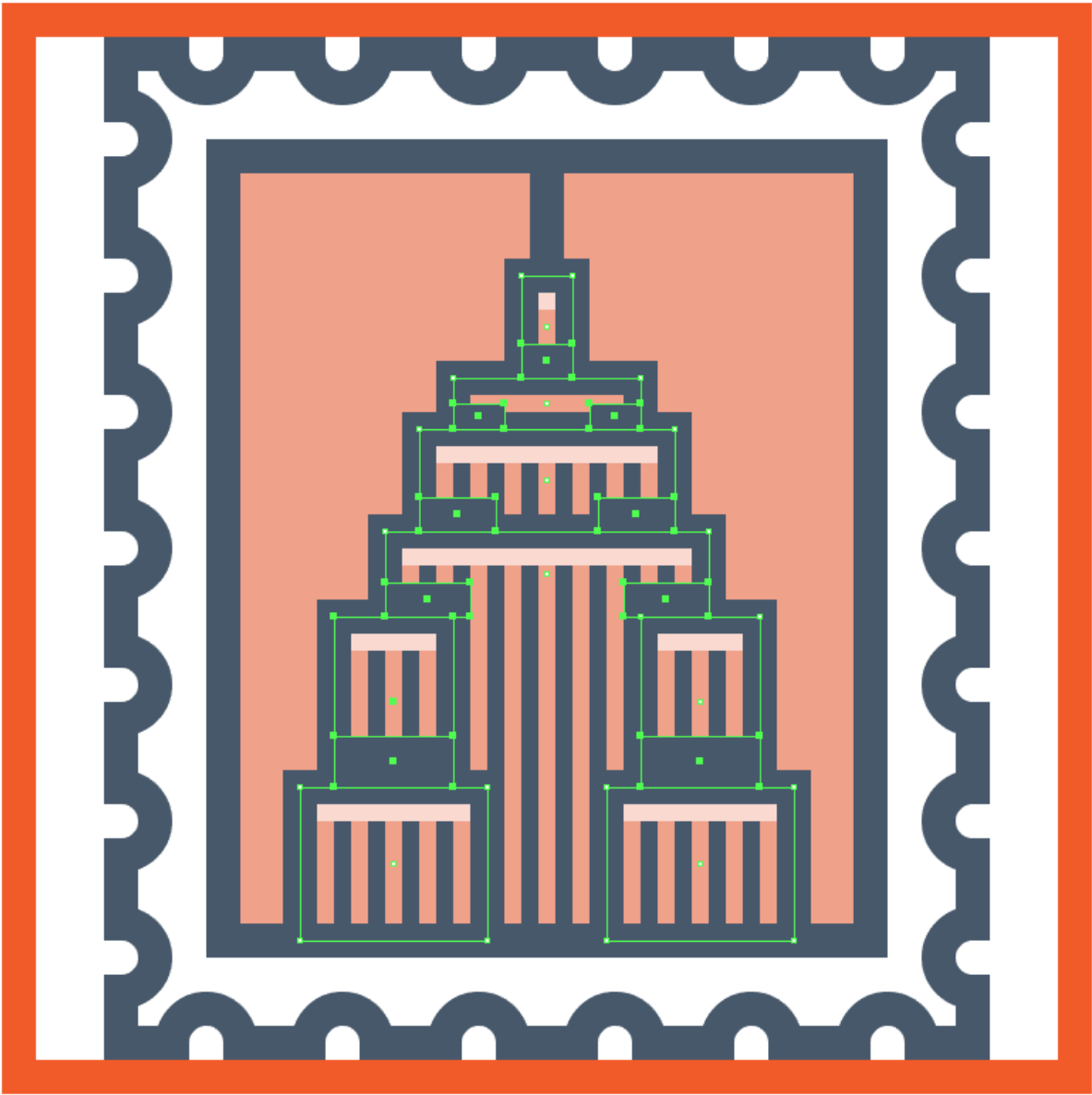
Step 12

With the highlights in place, it's time to start working on the windows, which we will create by drawing them using a couple of **2 px** thick vertical **Stroke** lines (#45576B) positioned **4 px** from one another (if you're using the **Align** panel's **Distribute** options). Take your time, and add the lines to each section of the building, selecting and grouping (**Control-G**) both them and the larger composing shapes together as you go along.



Step 13

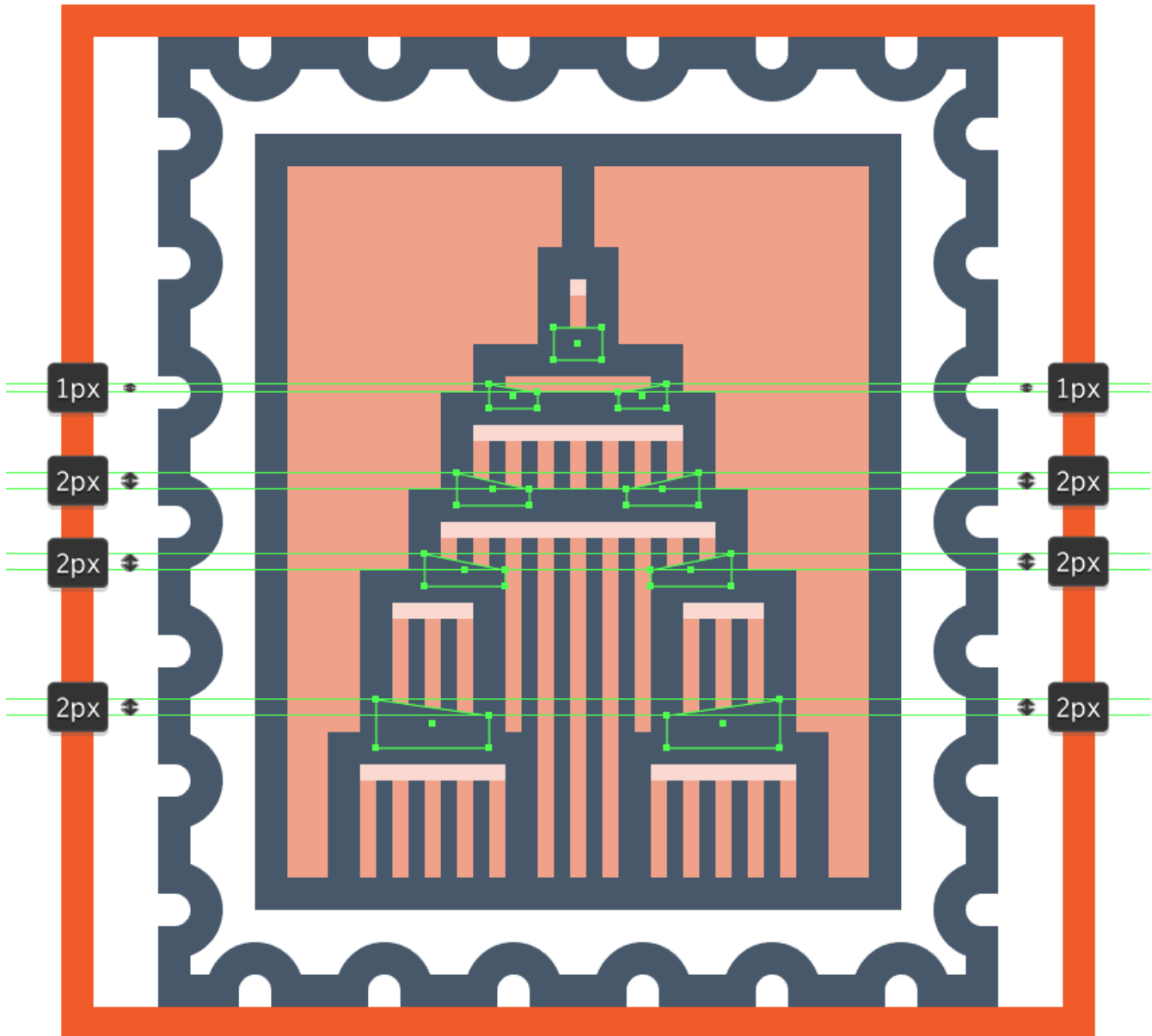
Add the hard shadows by creating a couple of rectangles (#45576B) which we will position so that they overlap the path of each building's outline.





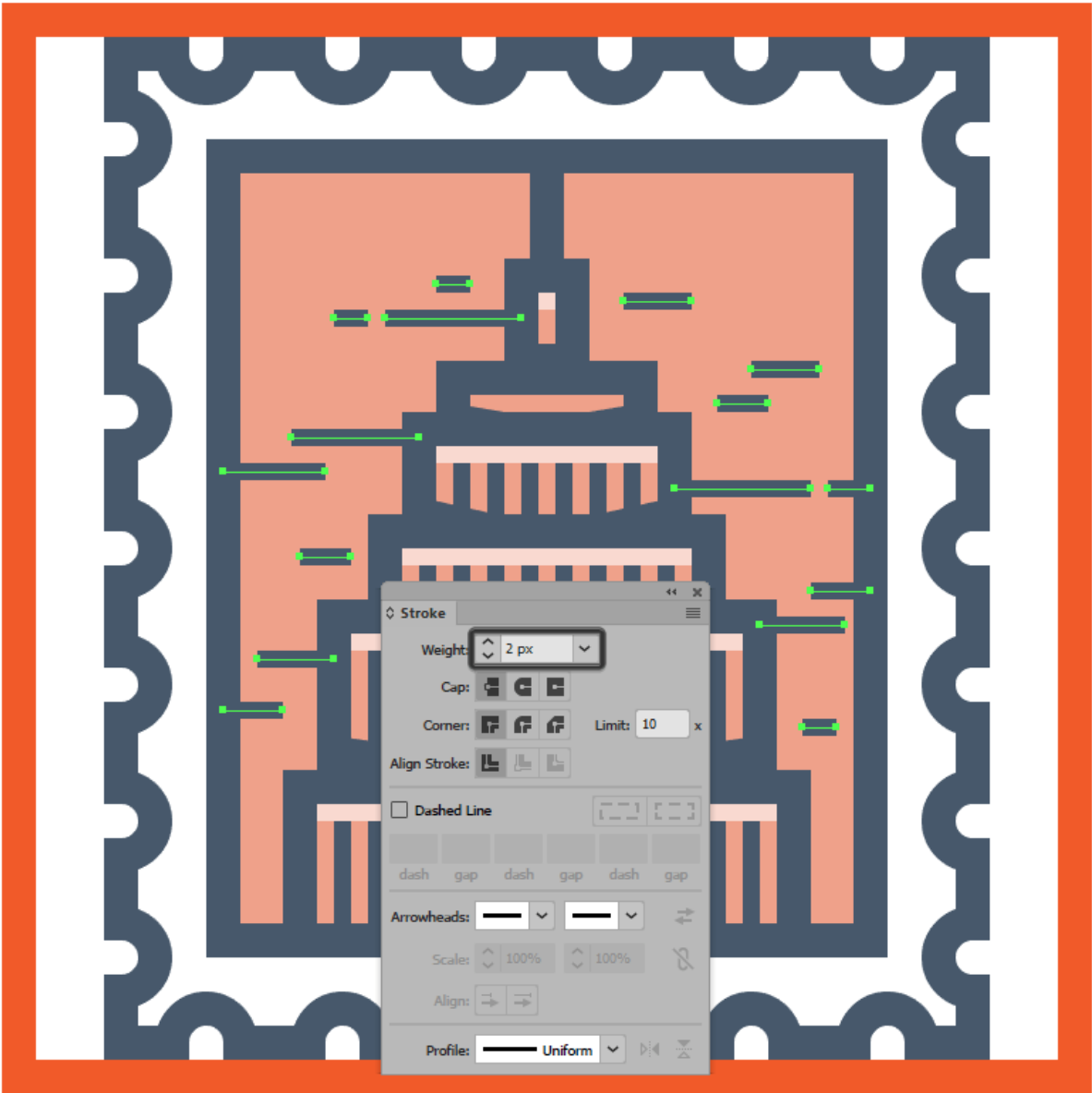
Step 14

Adjust the shadows (all except the top center one) by individually selecting their top inner anchor points and then pushing them to the bottom by a distance of **1 px** for the top ones and **2 px** for the rest. You can use the **Move Tool** (right click > Transform > Move > Vertical > + / -2 px depending on which side you start with).



Step 15

Finish off the icon by drawing in the sky using a couple of **2 px** thick **Strokelines** (#45576B). Take your time, and once you're done, group all the lines together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut, doing the same for all of the icon's composing sections afterwards.

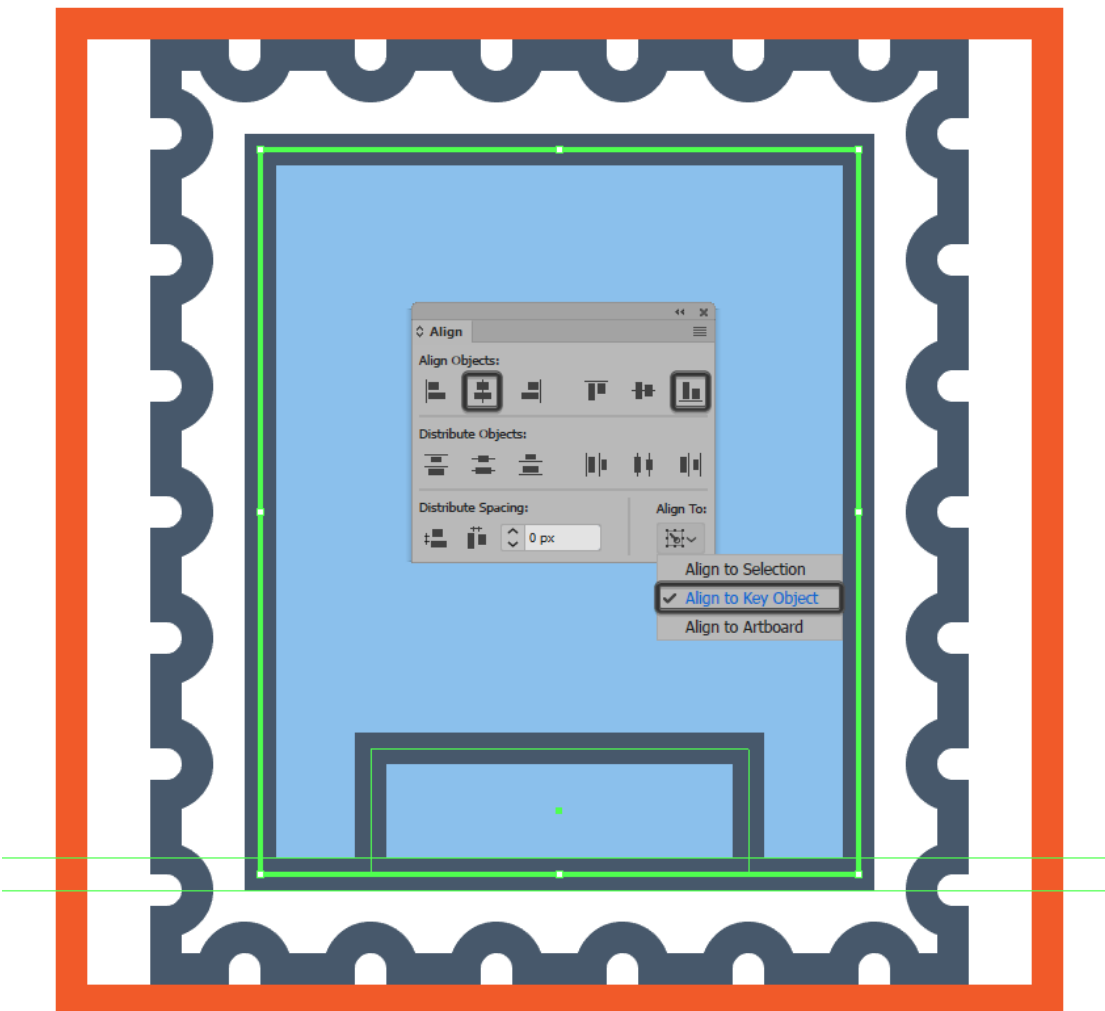


7. How to Create the Chrysler Building

Assuming you've already finished working on the first icon, move on up to the next layer (that would be the third one), locking the previous one, and then zoom in on the second reference grid so that we can get started.

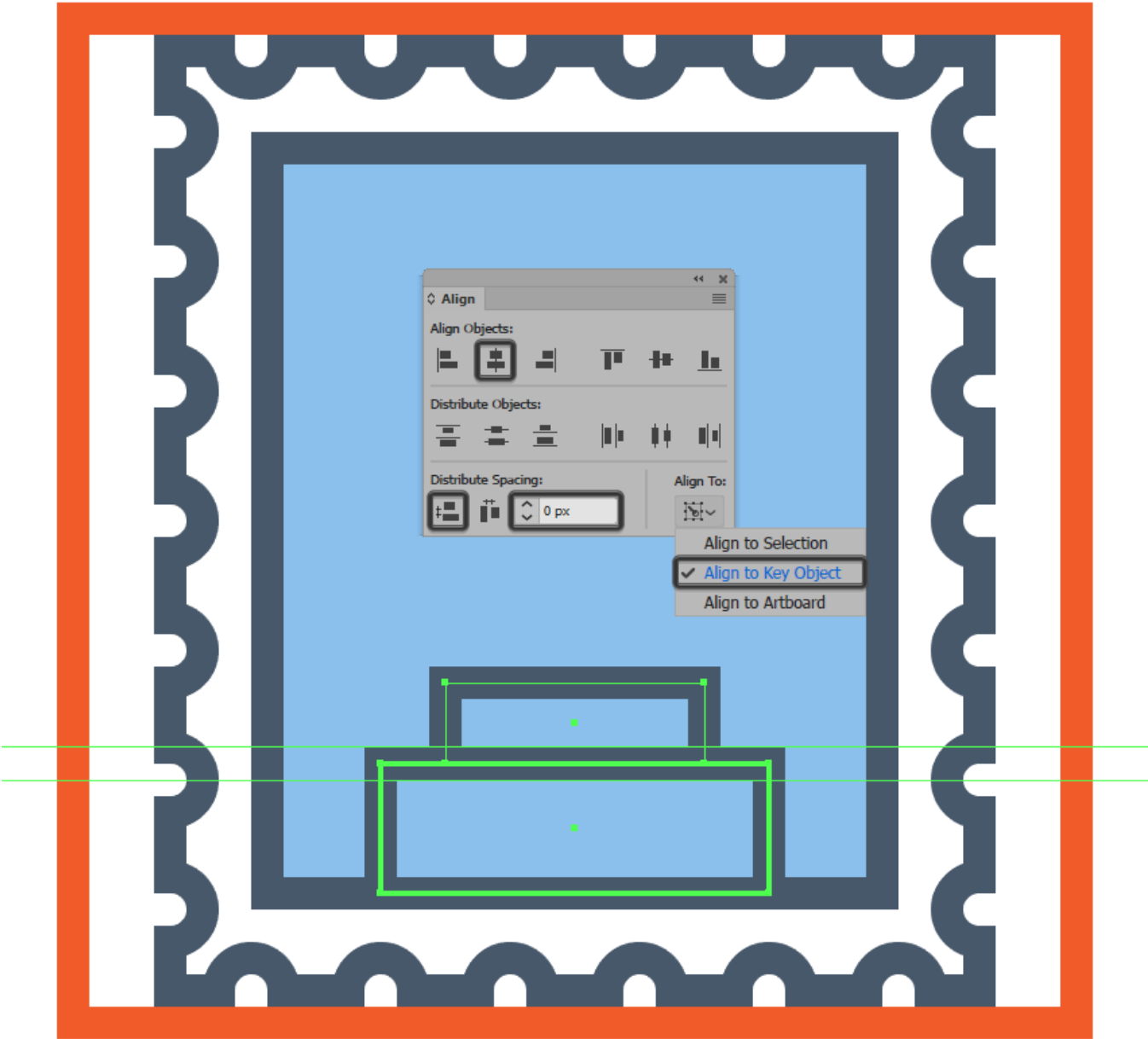
Step 1

Start working on the building's bottom section by creating a **48 x 16 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will center align to the bottom of the colored fill section's outline.



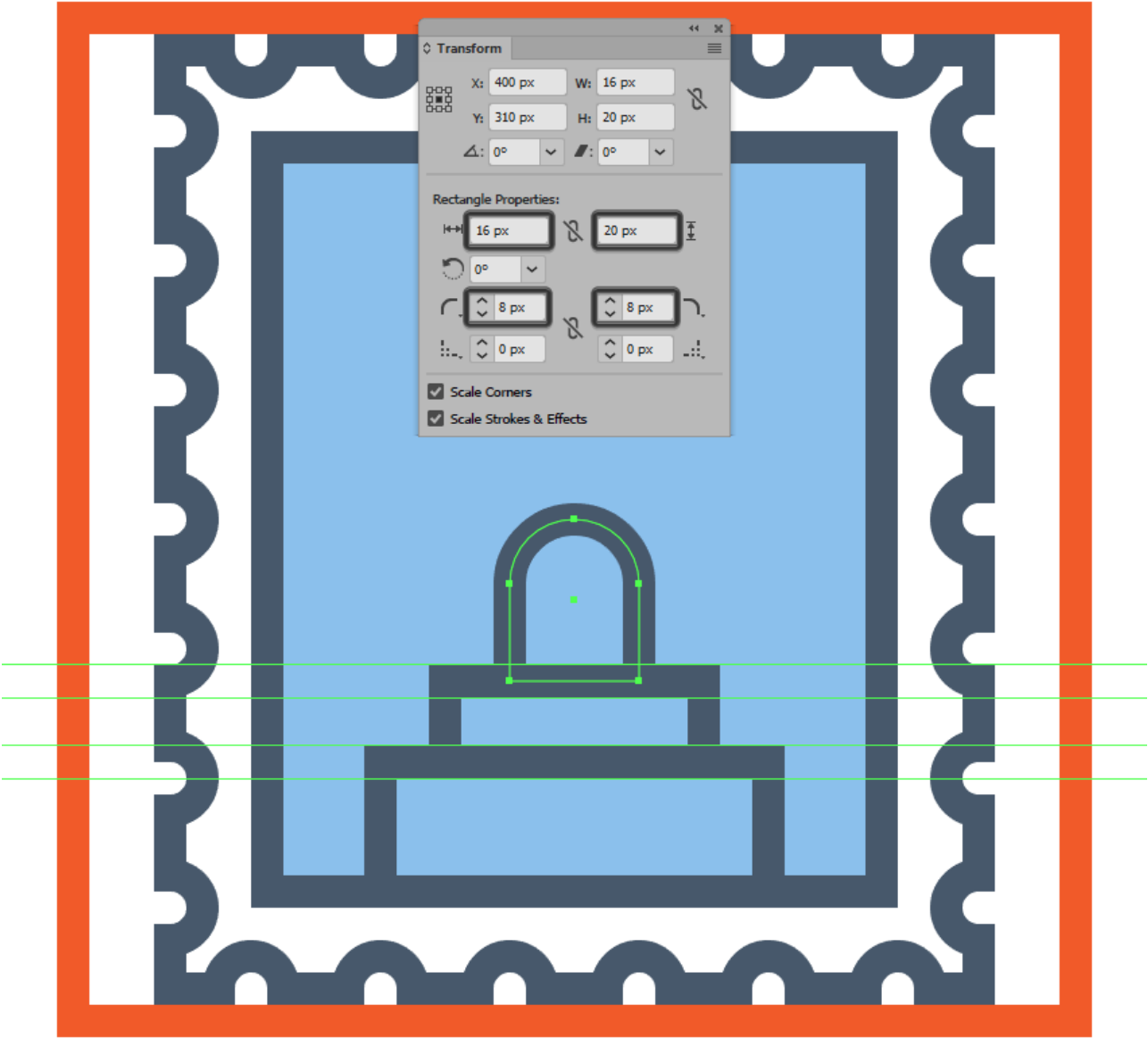
Step 2

Create a smaller **32 x 10 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will position on top of the previous shape, making sure to center align the two.



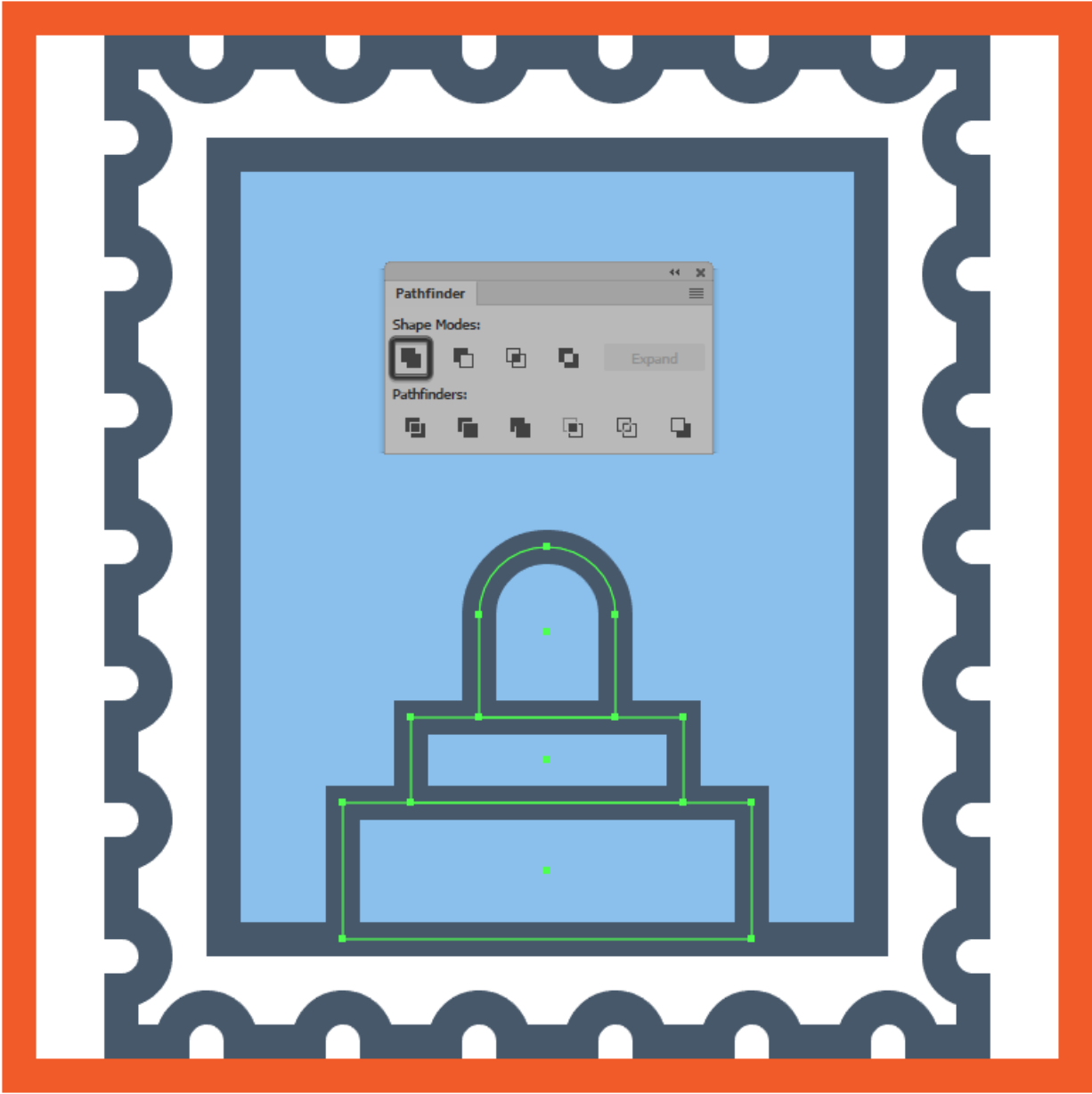
Step 3

Finish off this section by adding a **16 x 20 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (**#45576B**), which we will adjust by setting the **Radius** of its top corners to **8 px** from within the **Transform** panel's **Rectangle Properties**.



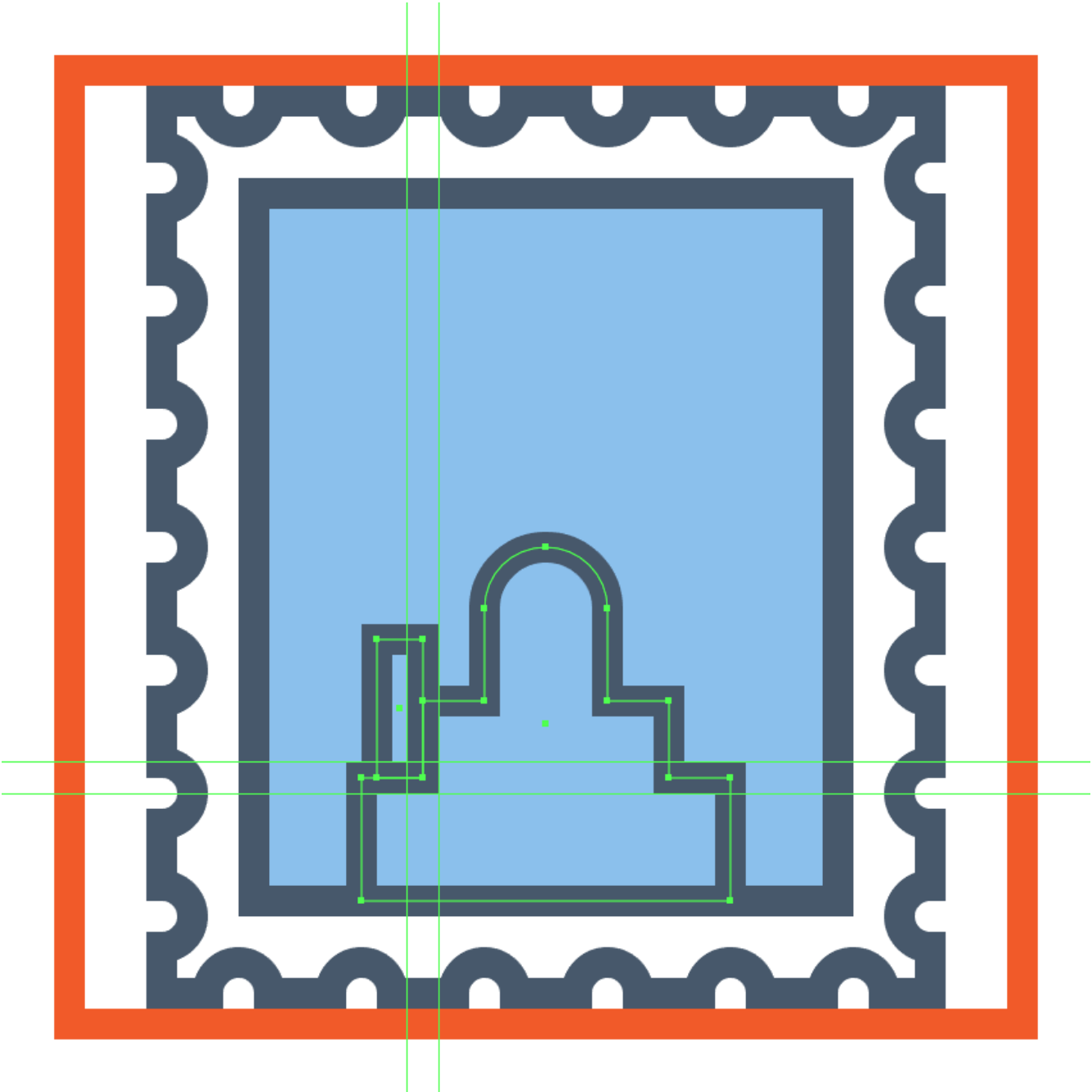
Step 4

Select all three shapes, and turn them into a single larger path by uniting them using **Pathfinder's Unite Shape Mode**.



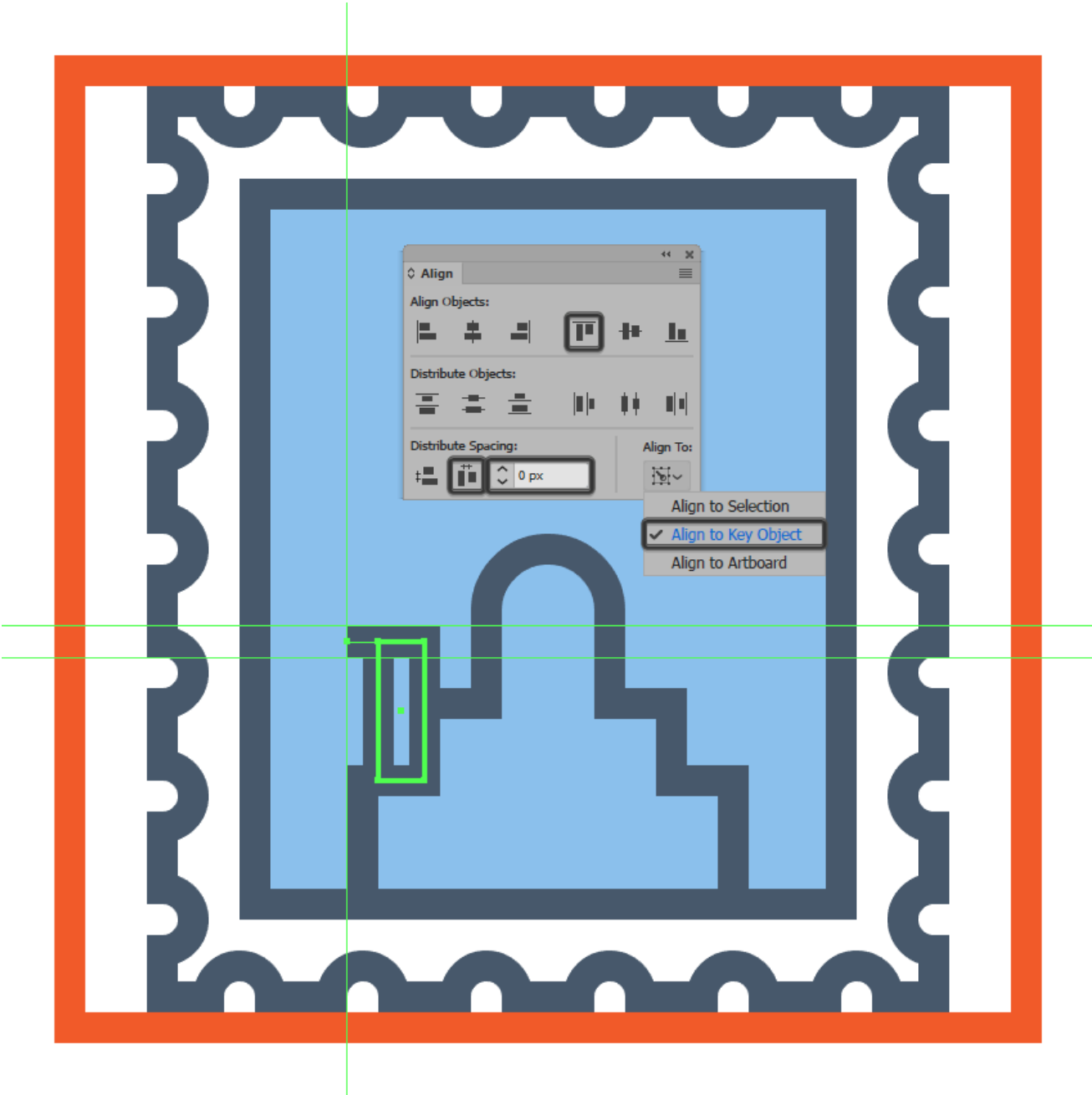
Step 5

Start working on the building's left side section by creating a **6 x 18 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which we will position onto the first step of the larger shape.



Step 6

Add a little ledge to the shape that we've just created, using a **4 px** wide **4 px** thick **Stroke** line (#45576B) which we will position onto its top-left corner. Once you're done, select and group the two together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.



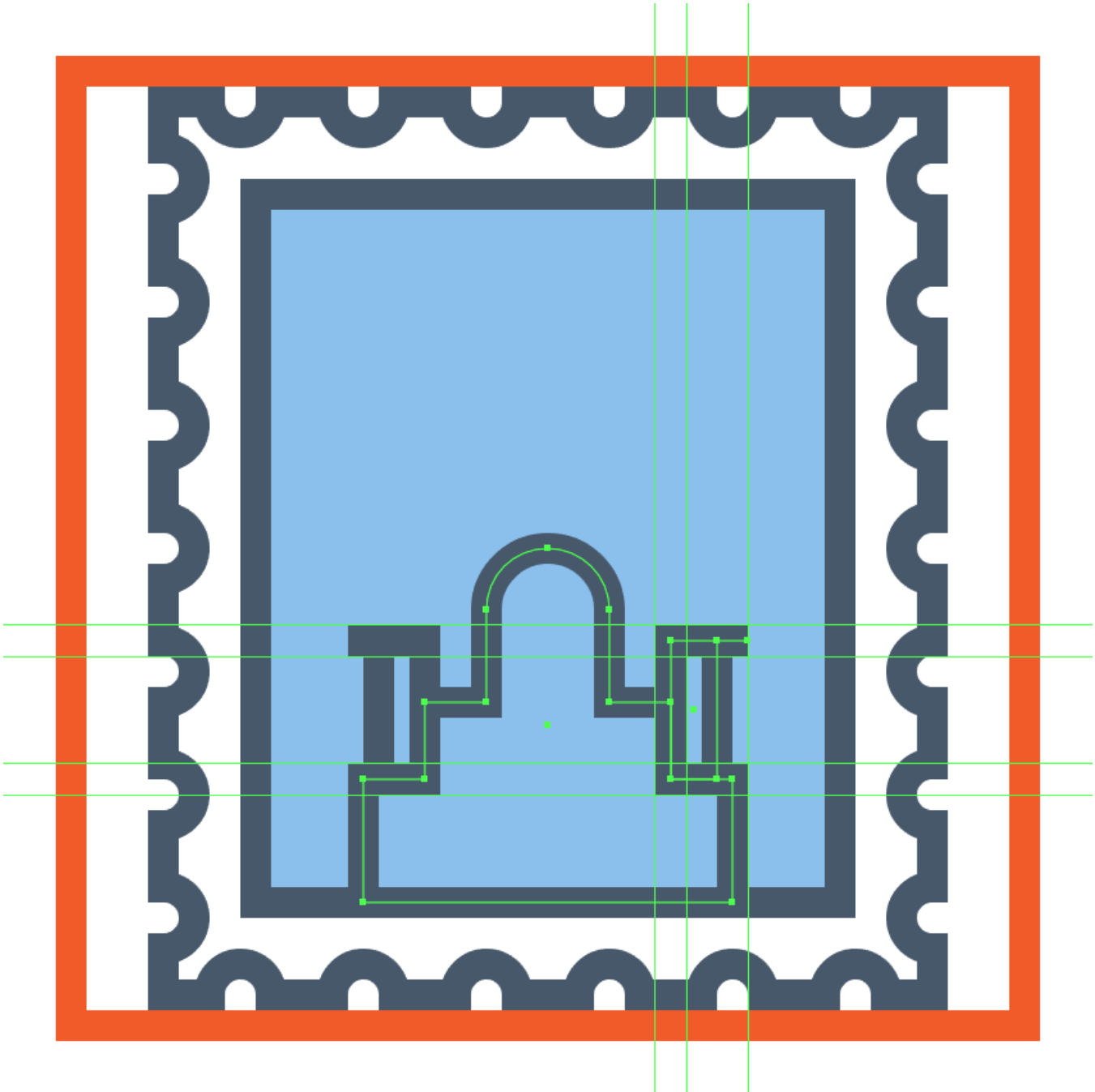


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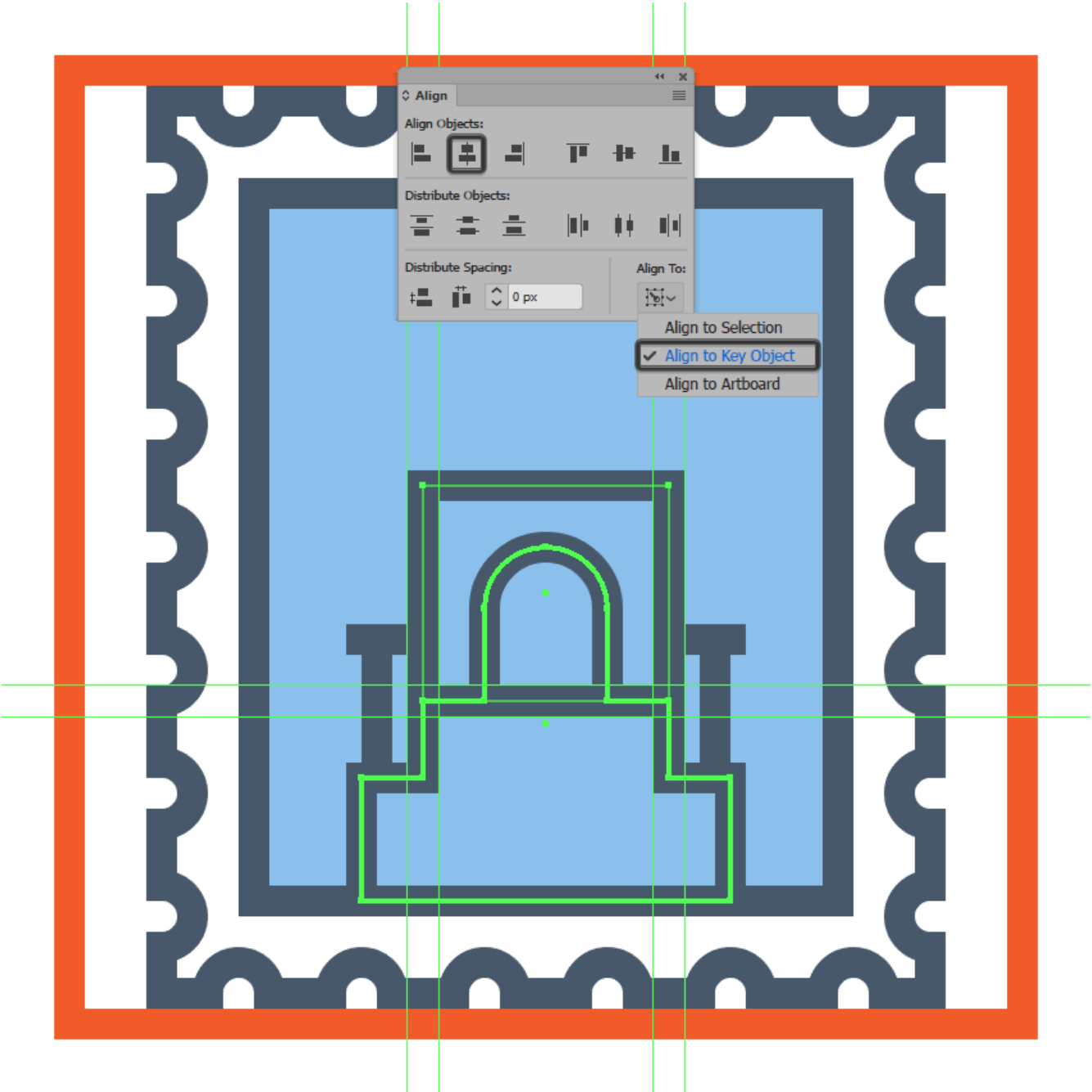
Step 7

Create the building's right-lower section using a copy (**Control-C > Control-F**) of the one that we've just finished working on, which we will vertically reflect (**right click > Transform > Reflect > Vertical**) and then position onto the opposite side of the building.



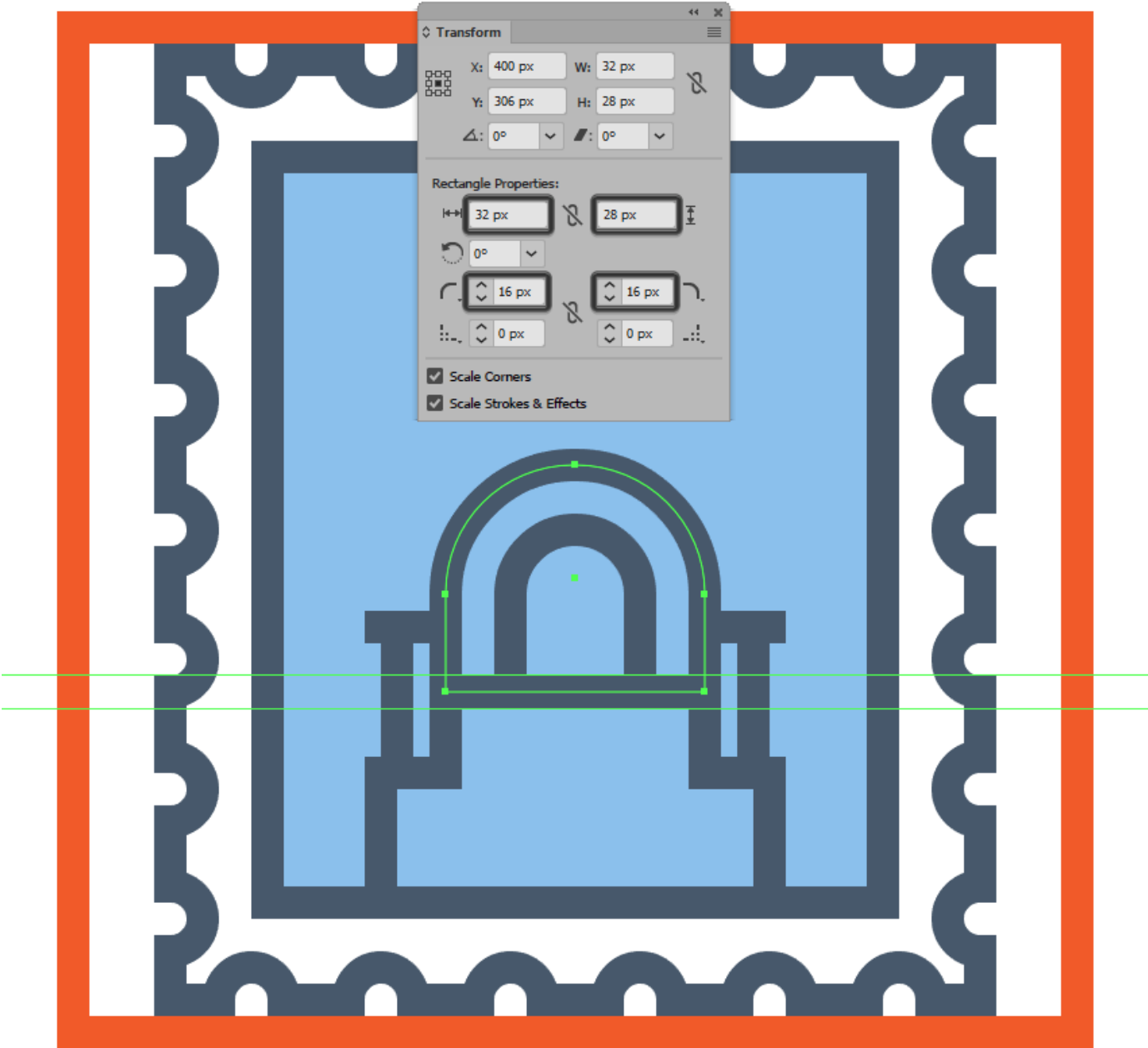
Step 8

Create the building's center section using a **32 x 28 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will position on top of its base.



Step 9

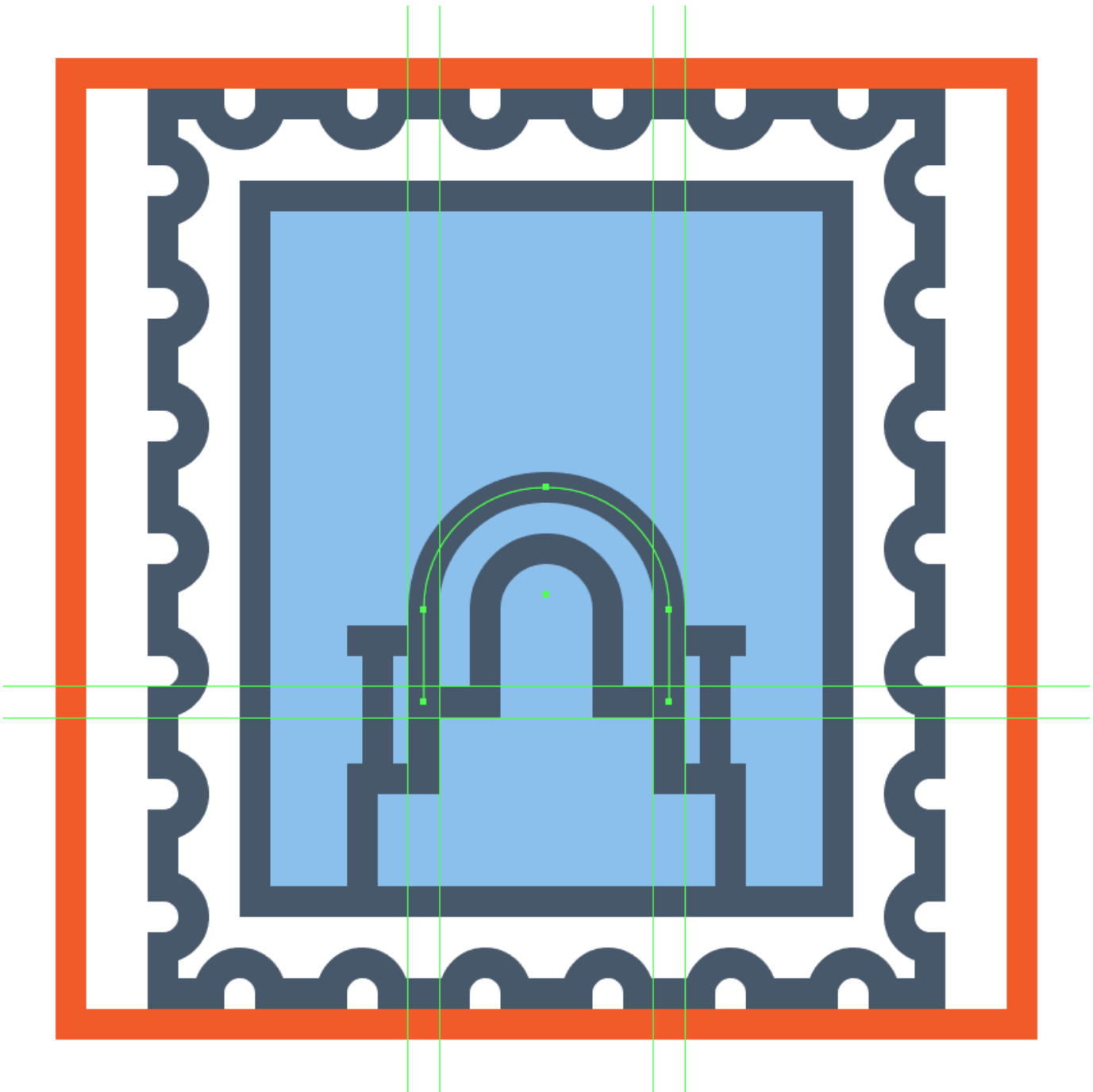
Adjust the shape that we've just created by setting the **Radius** of its top corners to **16 px** from within the **Transform** panel's **Rectangle Properties**.





Step 10

Continue adjusting the resulting shape by adding a new anchor point to the center of its bottom edge using the **Add Anchor Point Tool (+)**, and then removing (**Delete**) in order to open up its path.





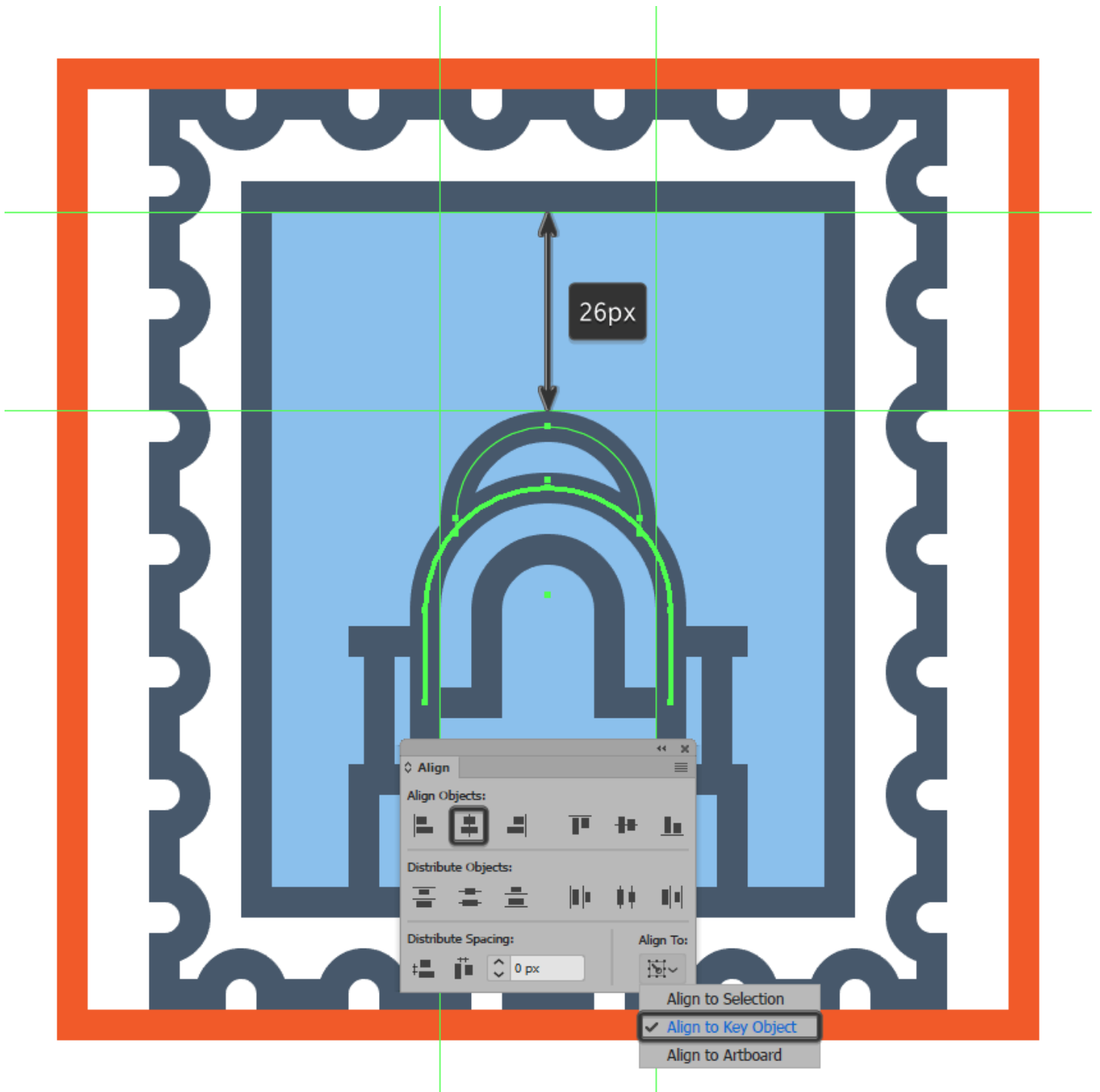
Step 11

Continue working your way up by creating a **24 x 14 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will adjust by setting the **Radius** of its top corners to **12 px** and then opening up its bottom path. Once you're done, position the resulting shape on top of the previously created one.



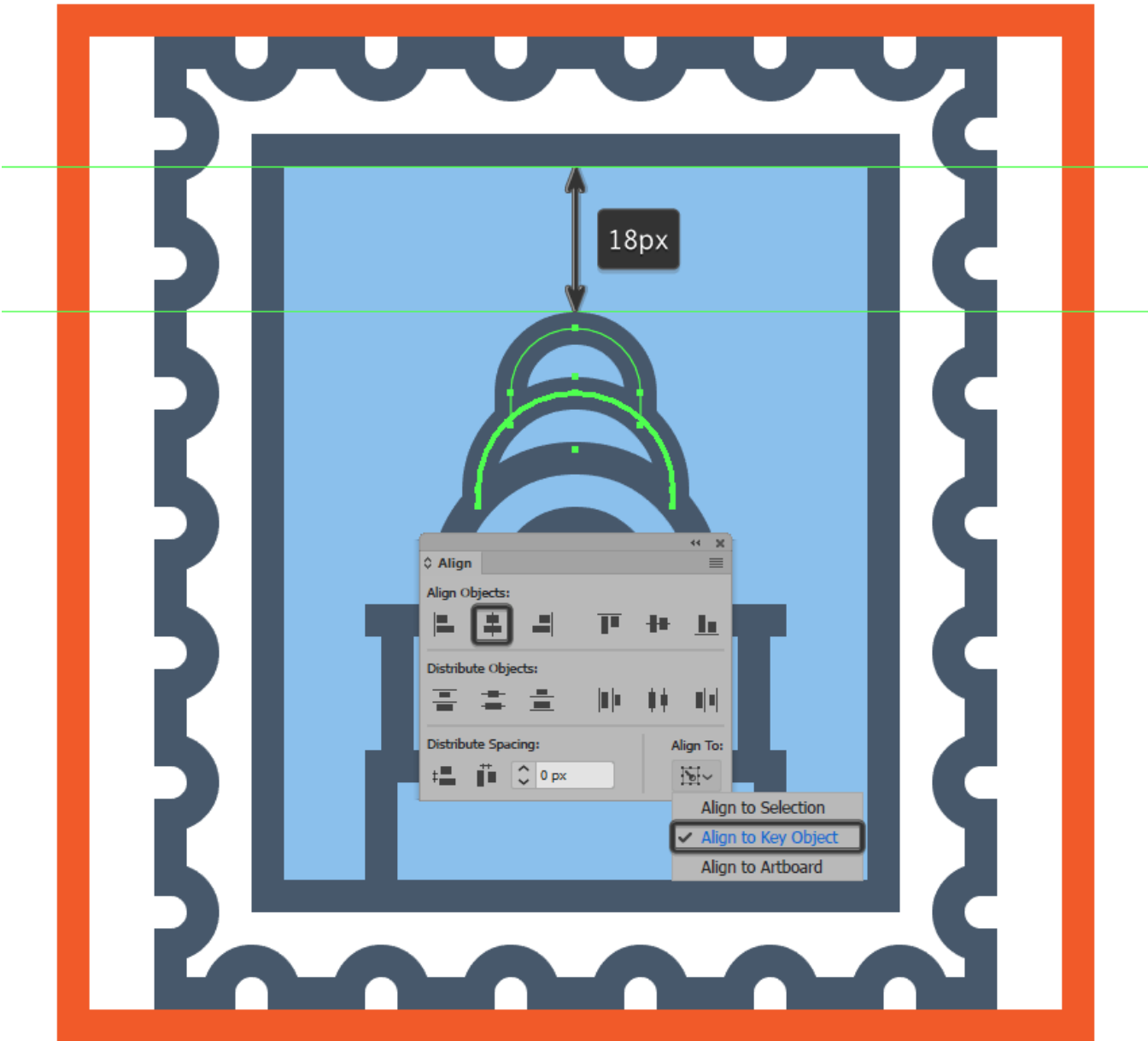
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Step 12

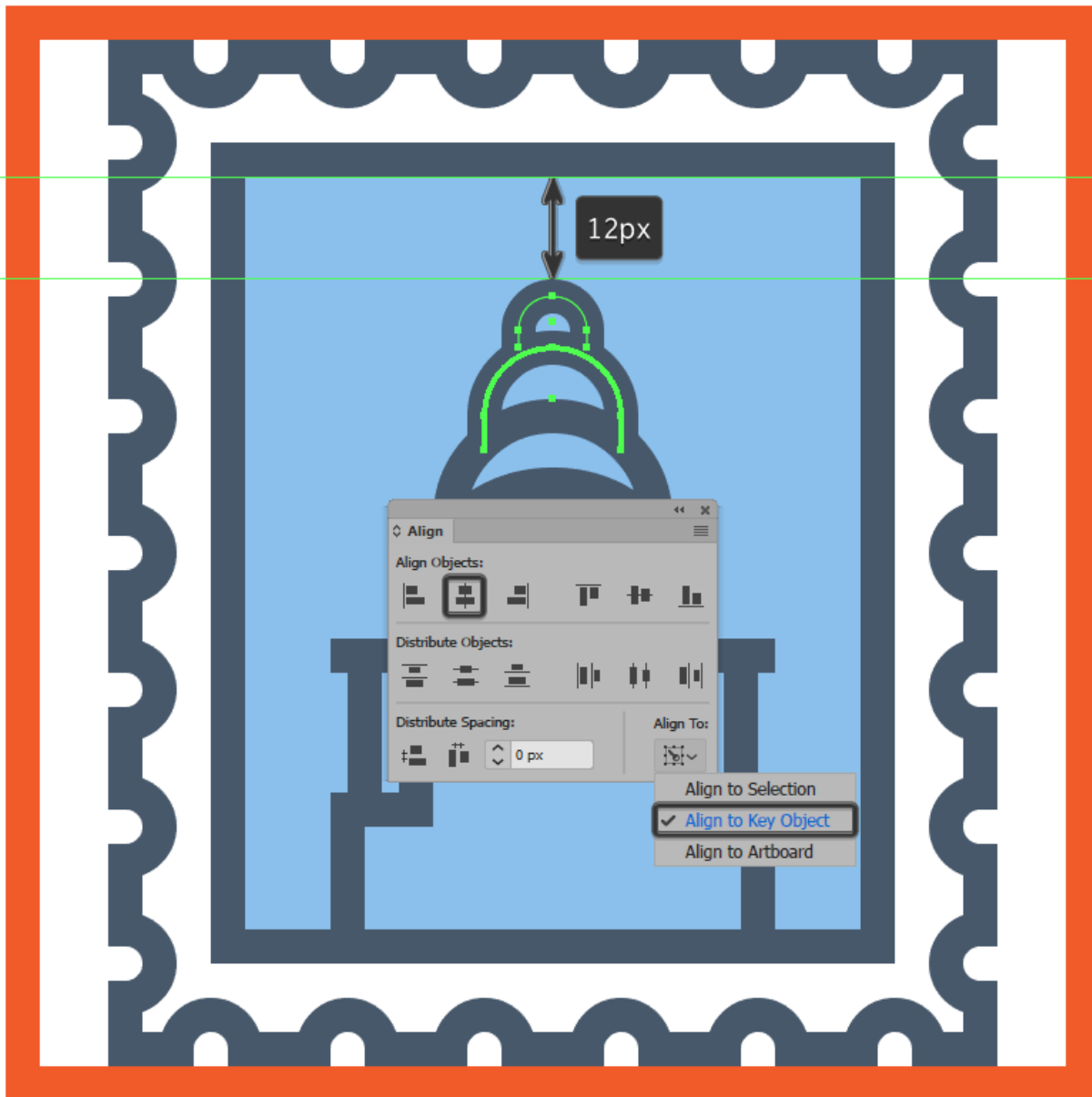
Add another **16 x 12 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which we will adjust by setting the **Radius** of its top corners to **8 px**, opening up its bottom path as we did with the previous shape. Then, once you're done, position the resulting shape on top of the building's center section.





Step 13

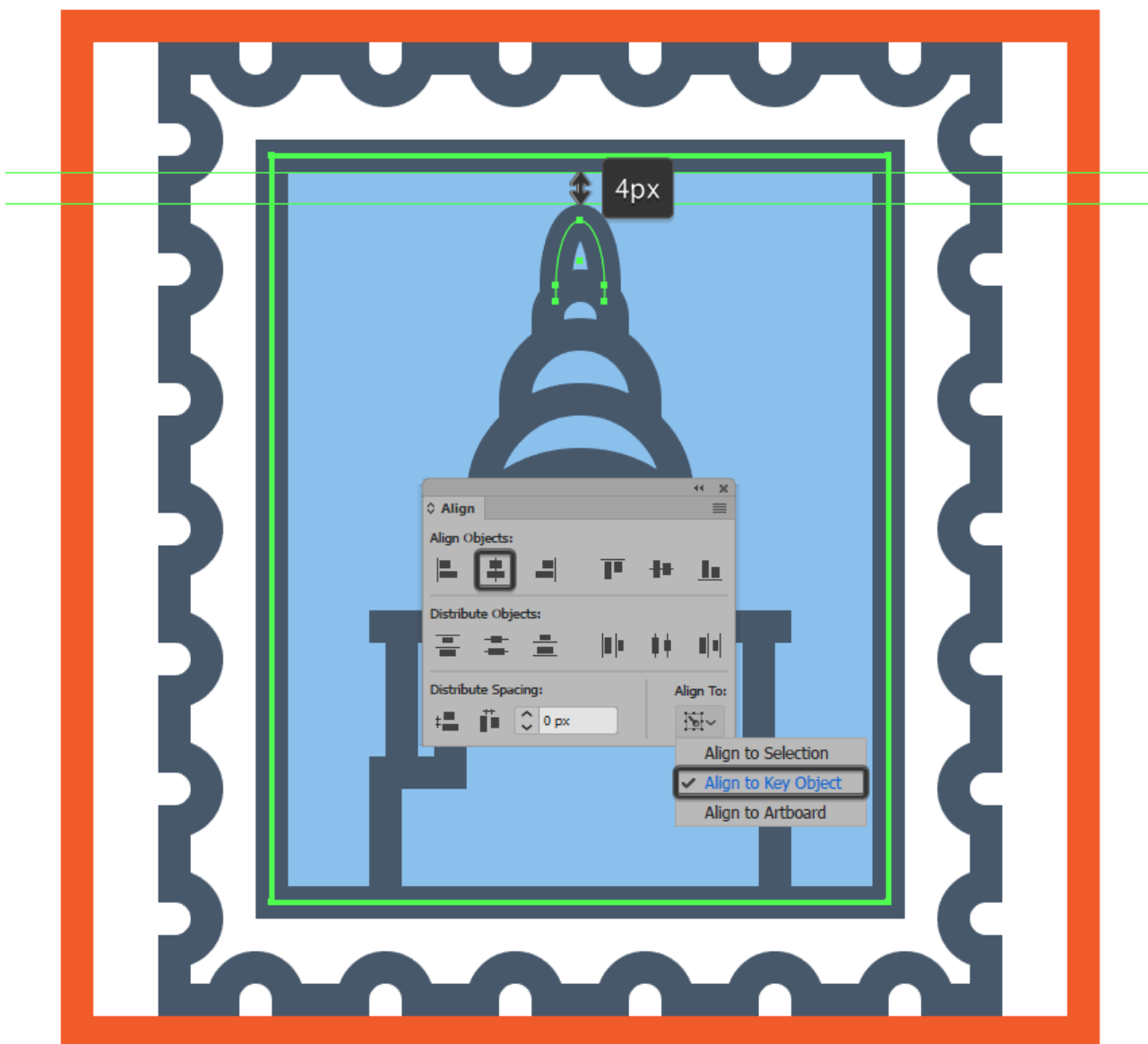
Start working on the building's upper section by creating a smaller **8 x 6 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which we will adjust by setting the **Radius** of its top corners to **4 px**, positioning the resulting shape on top of the previous shape, making sure to open up its bottom path.





Step 14

Create the final piece of the building's upper section using a **6 x 16 px** ellipse with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will adjust by cutting it in half by selecting and then removing its bottom anchor point. Center align the resulting shape at a distance of **4 px** from the active drawing area's top edge, making sure to extend its bottom section onto the previous shape, using the **Pen Tool (P)**.



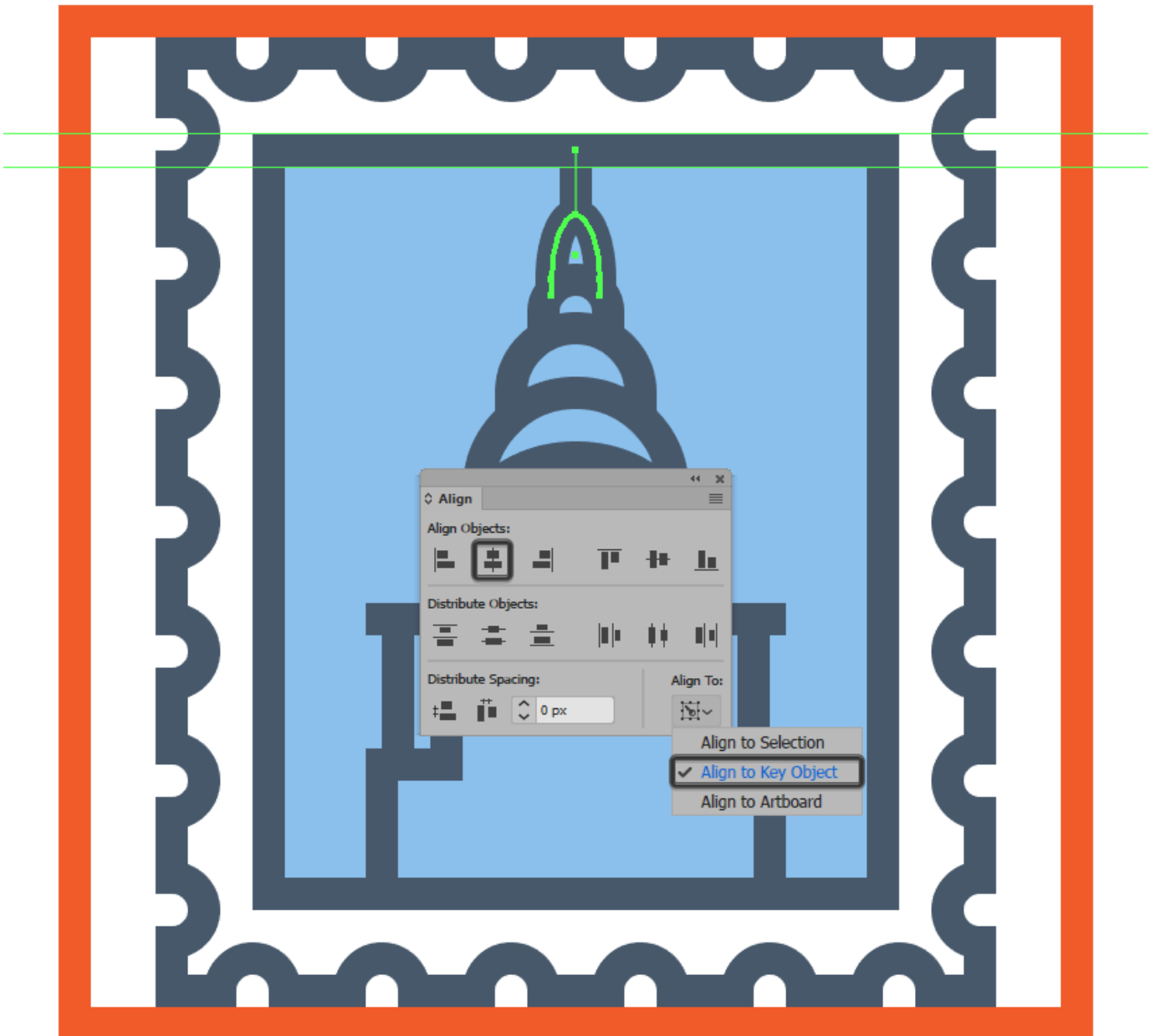


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Step 15

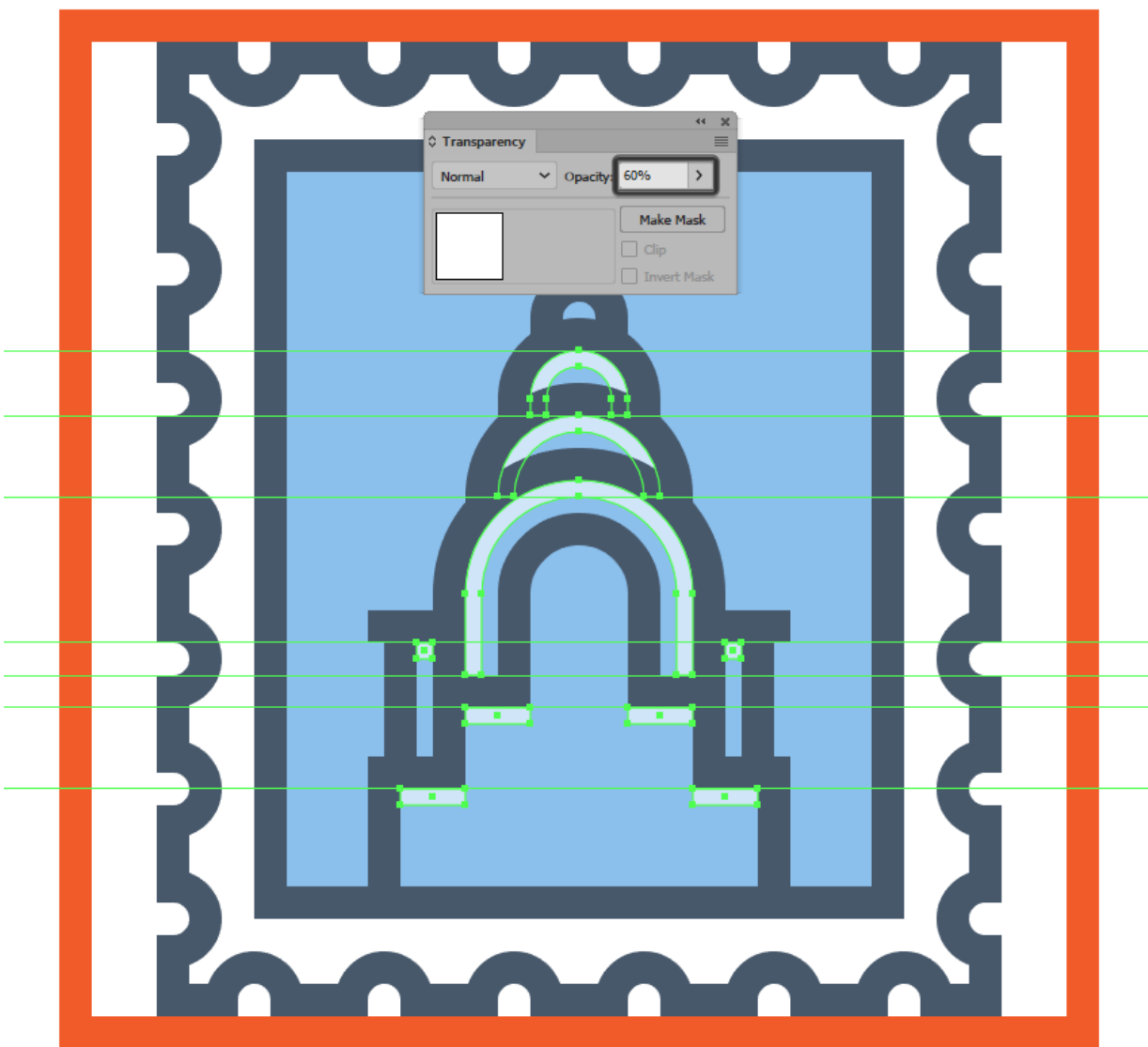
Add the antenna using an **8 px** tall **4 px** thick **Stroke** line (#45576B), which we will center align to the previously created shape.





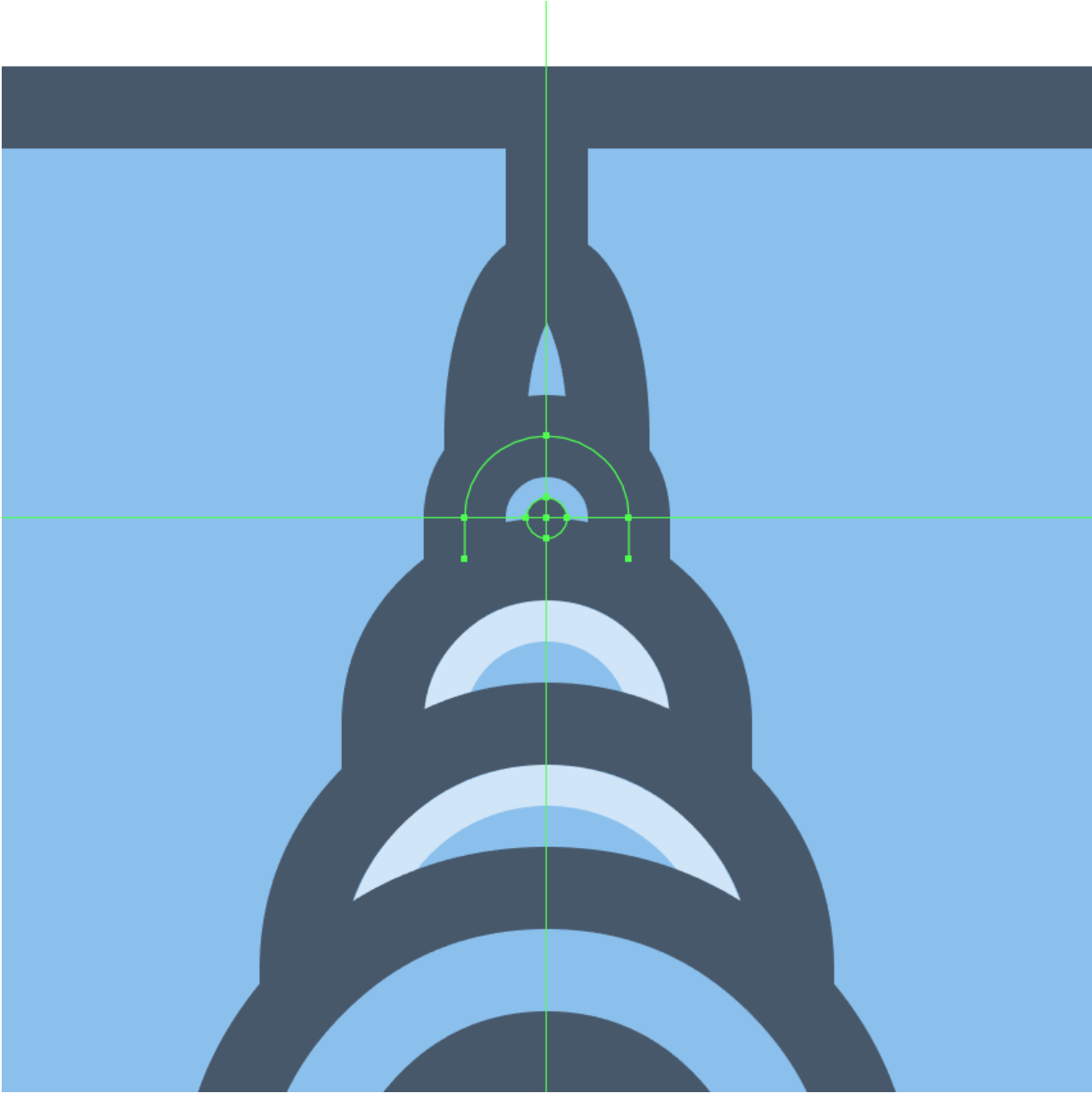
Step 16

As we did with the previous building, start adding the little highlights using white (#FFFFFF) as your main fill color, lowering their **Opacity** to **60%** once you're done. Create the straight highlights using regular rectangles, while using cutouts for the arched ones, making sure to send them to the back of the building afterwards (**right click > Arrange > Send Backward**).



Step 17

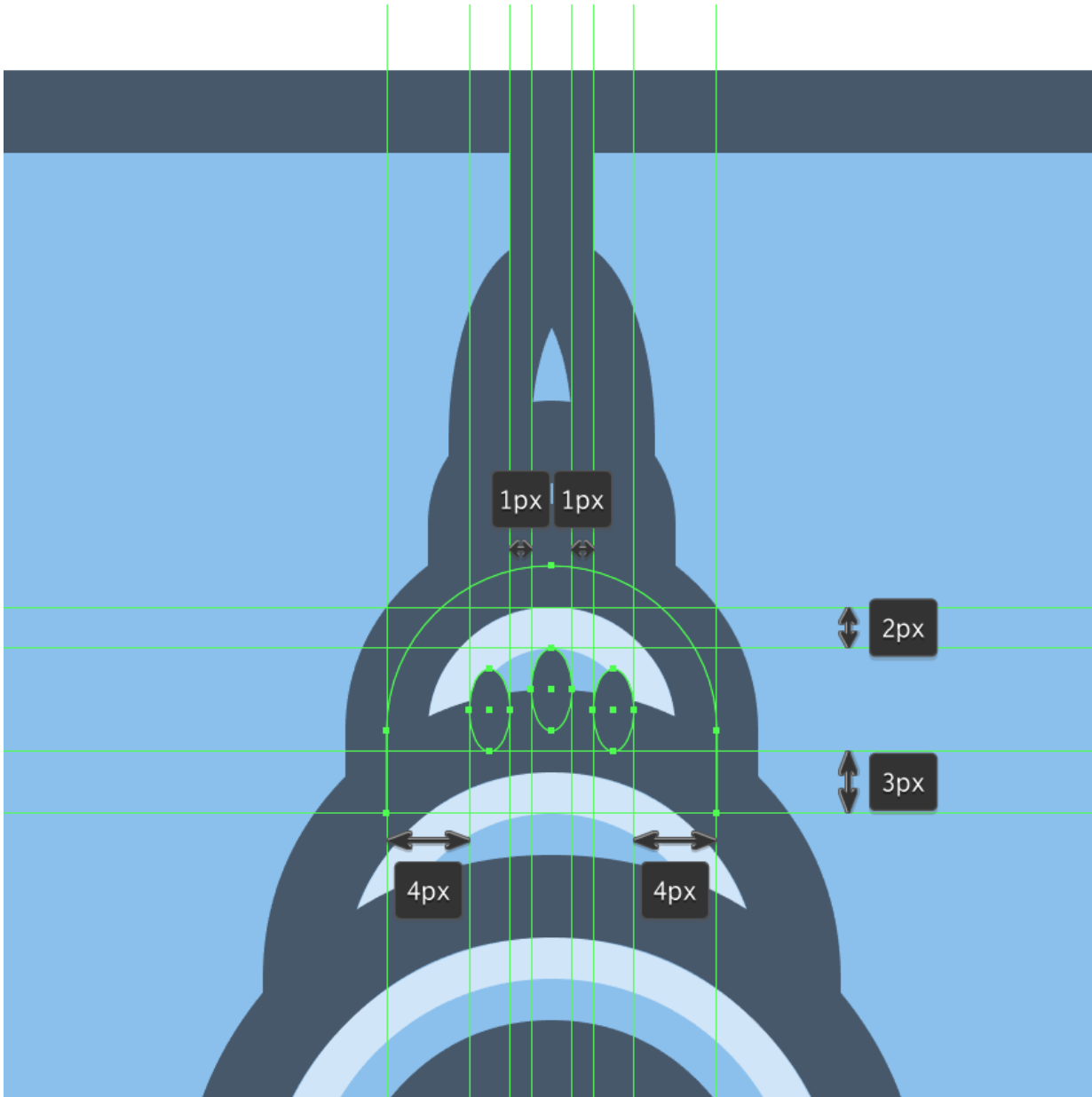
Start adding details to the upper section of the building by creating a **2 x 2 px** circle, which we will color using `#45576B` and then position in the center of its second shape.





Step 18

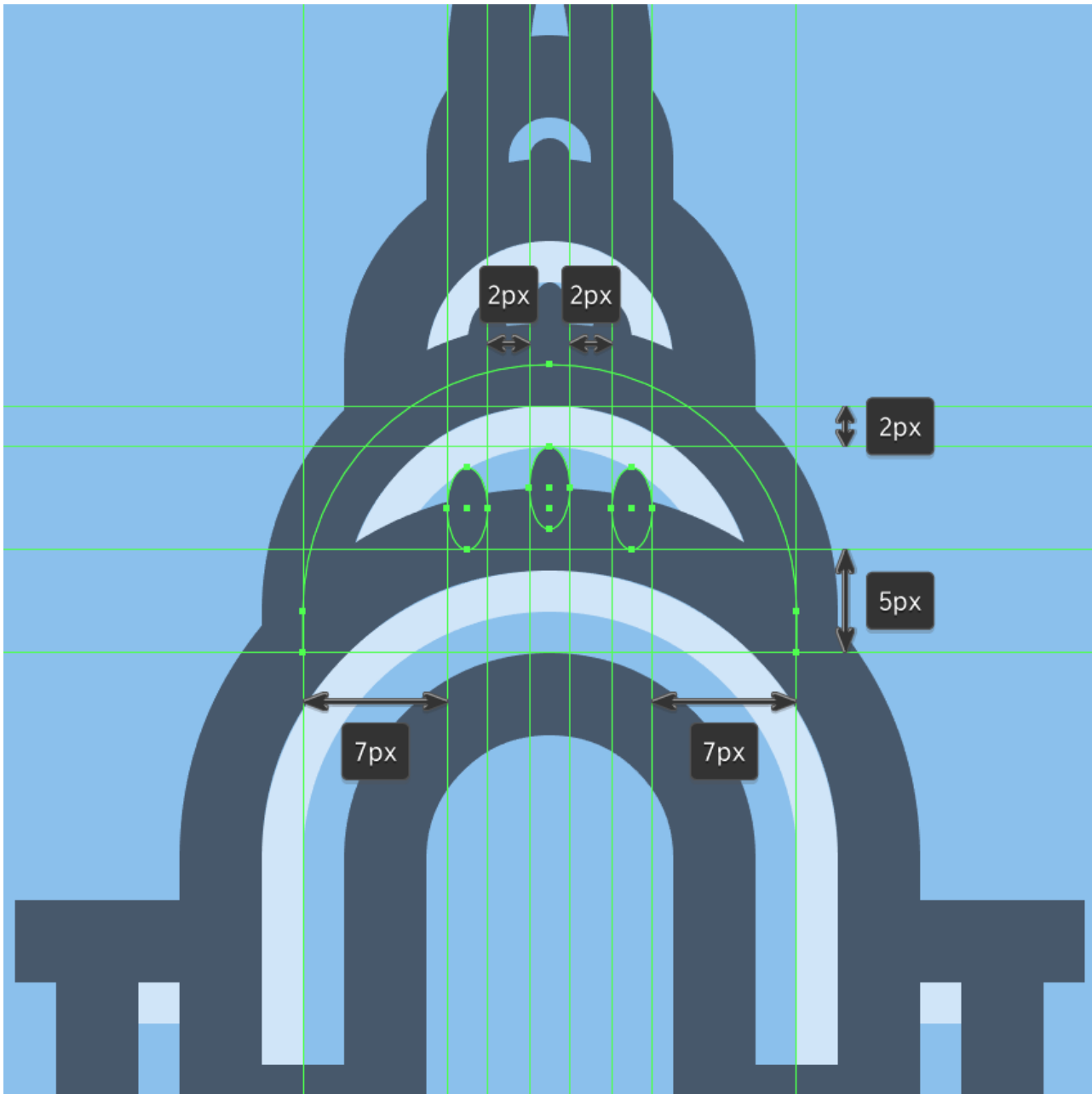
Create three **2 x 4 px** ellipses (#45576B) which we will position **1 px** from one another, moving the center one to the top by **1 px**. Group (**Control-G**) the shapes and then position them in the center of the top section's third shape.





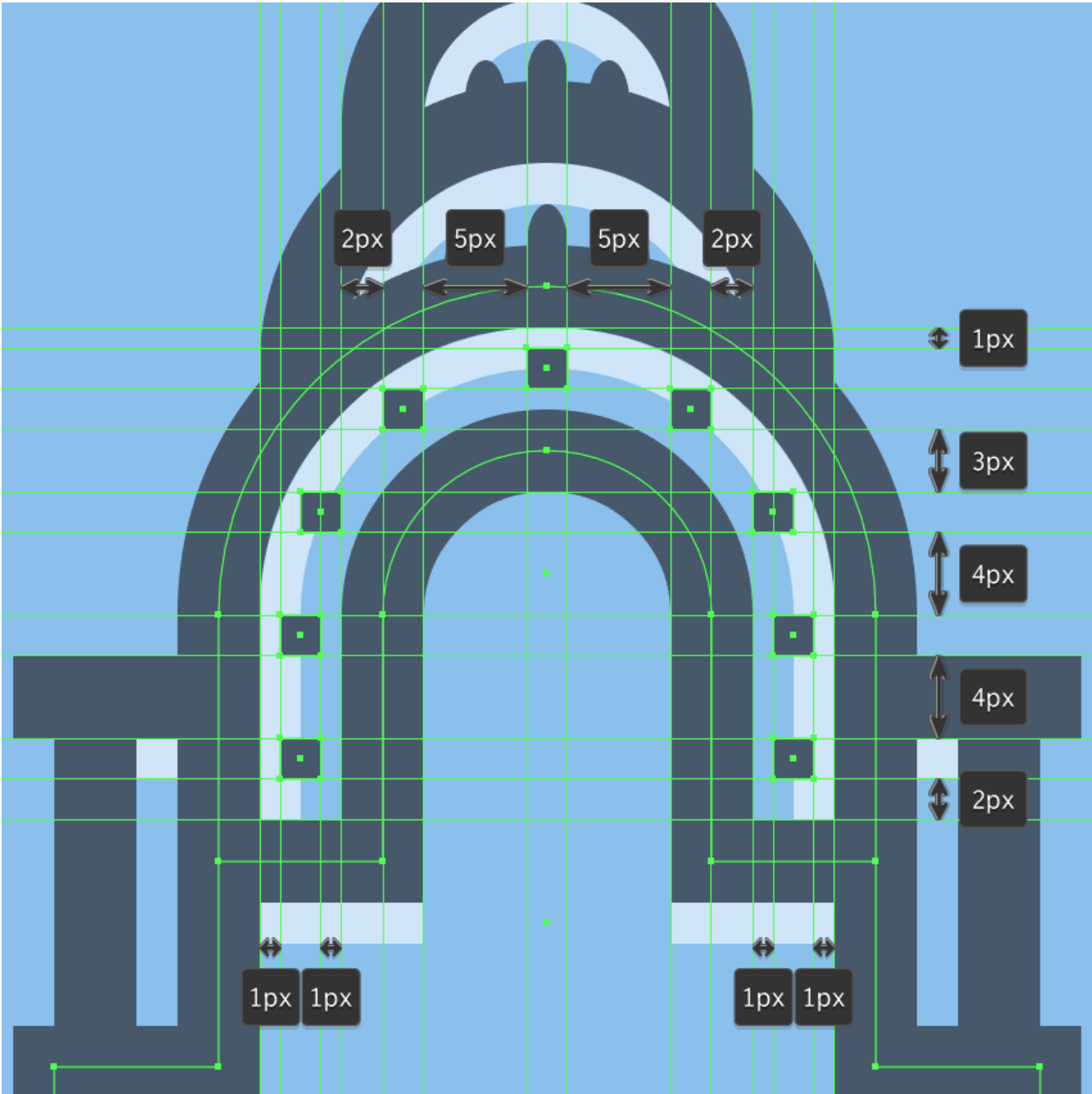
Step 19

Create a second set of **2 x 4 px** ellipses (#45576B), which we will distance at **2 px** from one another, grouping (**Control-G**) and then positioning them towards the center of the top section's fourth shape.



Step 20

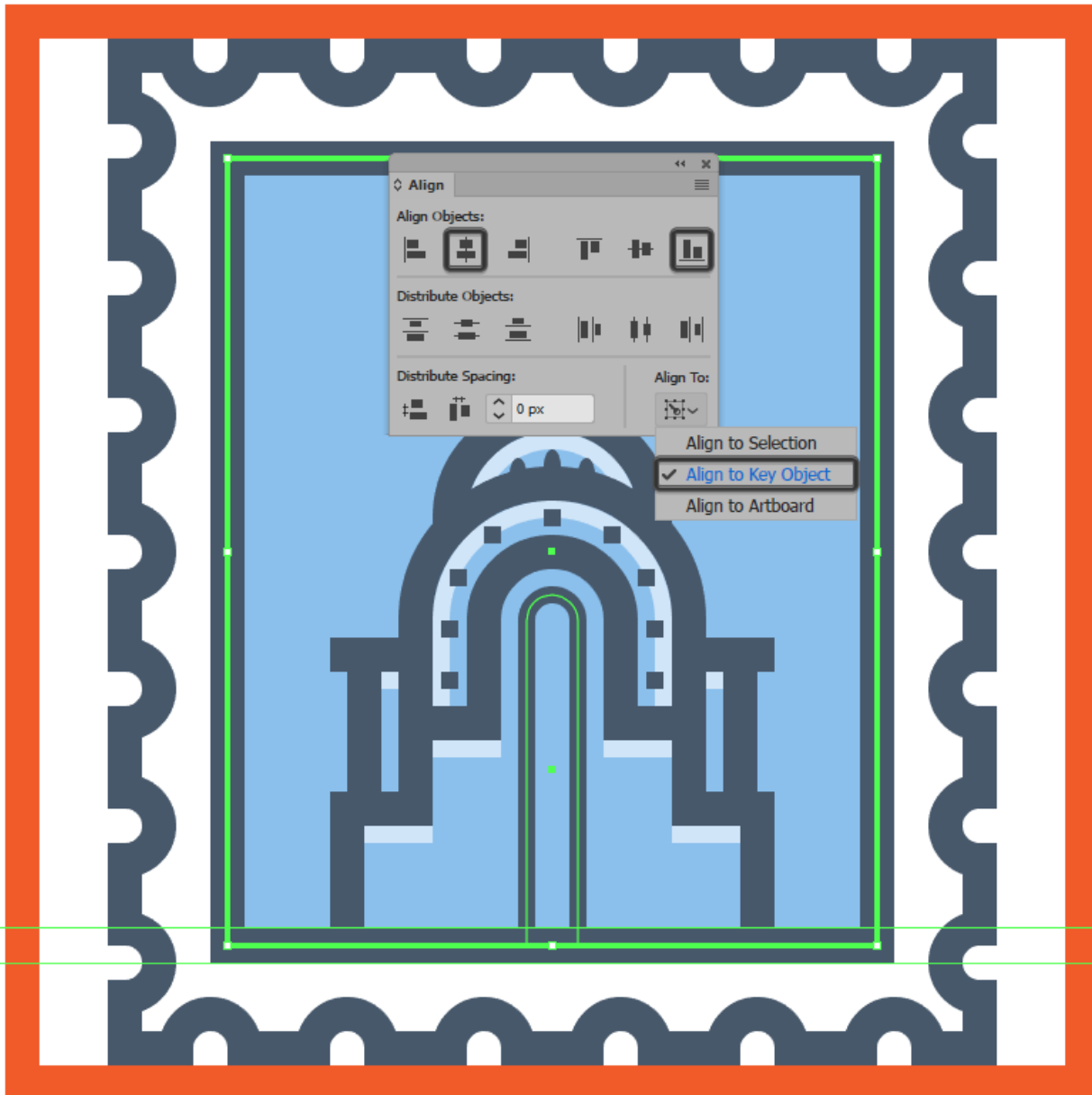
Using nine **2 x 2 px** squares (#45576B), add the little windows to the arched section of the building, grouping them together afterwards using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.





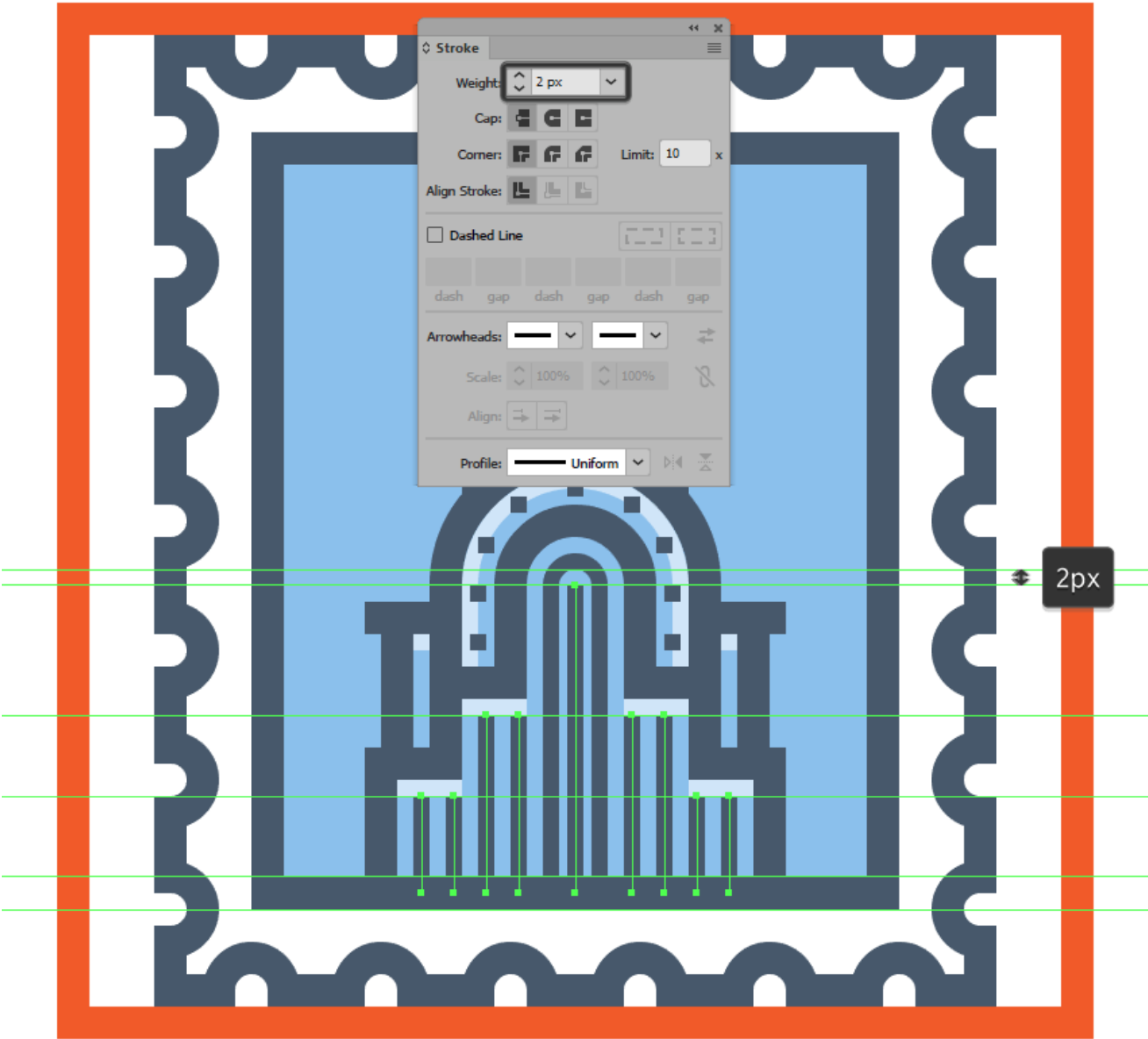
Step 21

Create a **6 x 41 px** rectangle with a **2 px** thick **Stroke** line (`#45576B`), which we will adjust by setting the **Radius** of its top corners to **3 px**, center aligning the resulting shape to the bottom of the colored fill section's outline.



Step 22

As we did with the first building, take your time and draw in the windows using a couple of **2 px** thick **Stroke** lines (#45576B) positioned **2 px** from one another, selecting and then grouping (**Control-G**) them together once you're done.



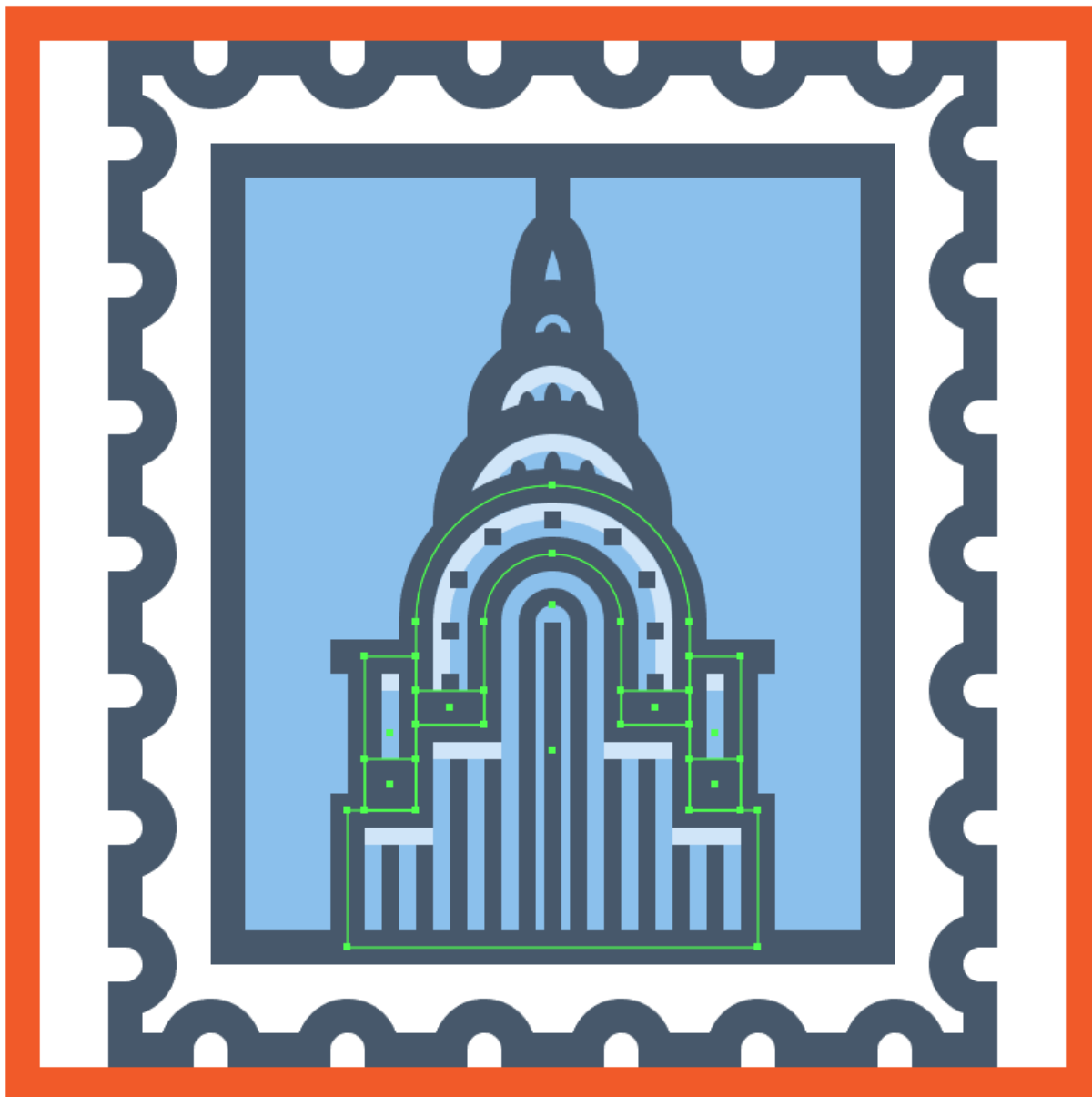


COMPUTER ART

Olympian High School

Step 23

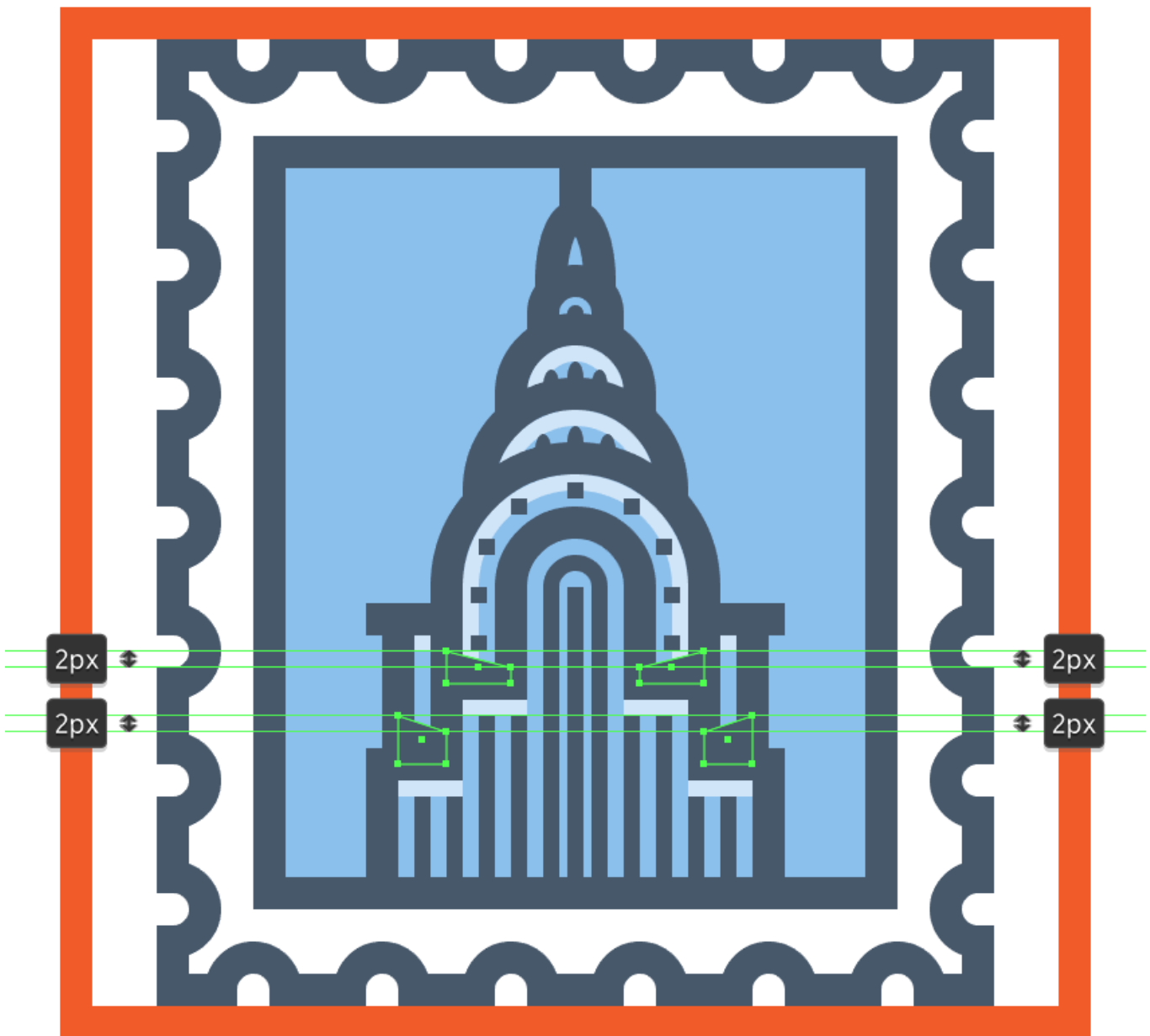
Add the shadows using a couple of rectangles which we will position so that they follow the path of the building's composing sections.





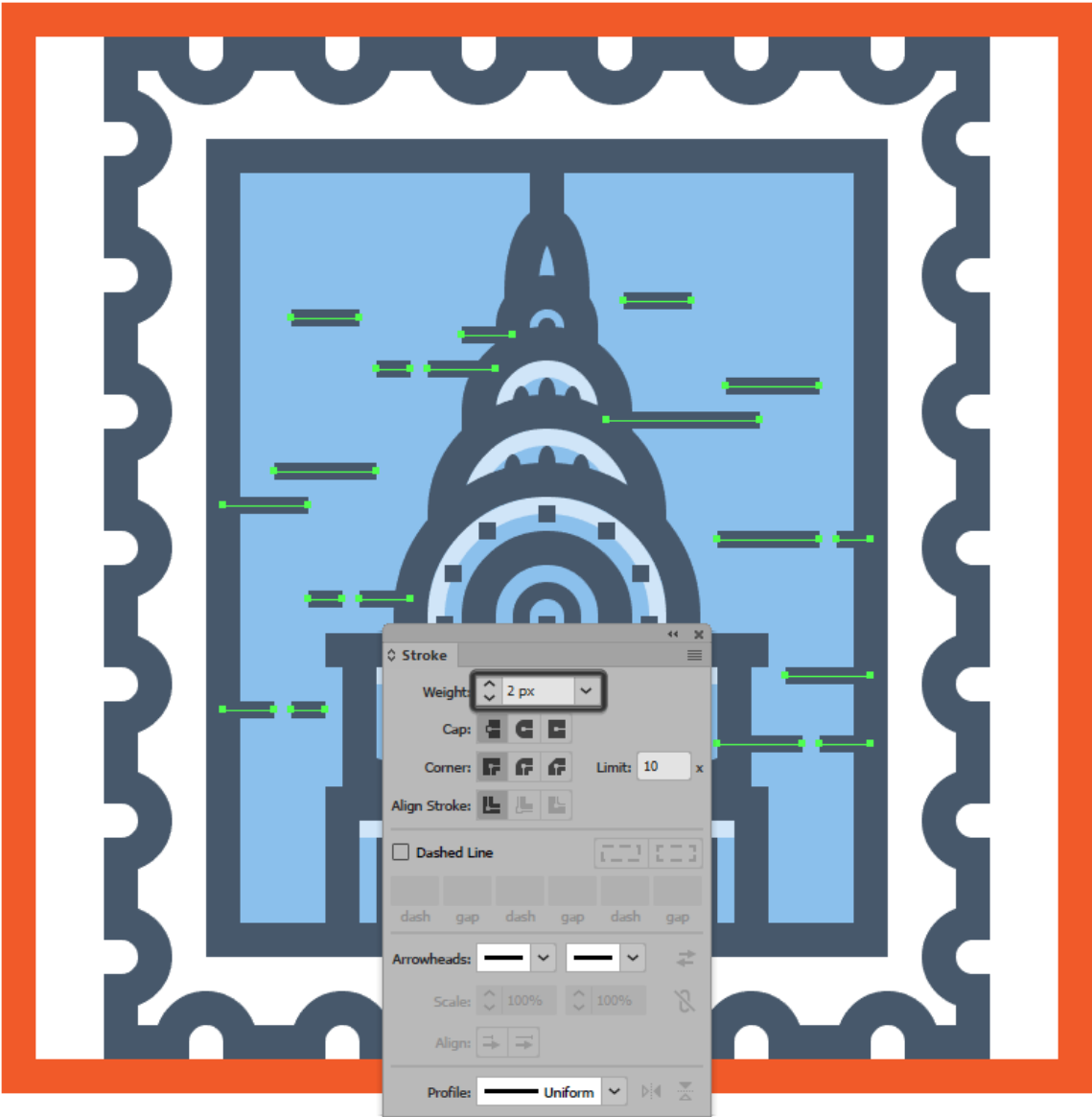
Step 24

Adjust the shadows, by individually selecting their top inner anchor points, and then pushing them to the bottom by a distance of **2 px** using the **Move Tool** (right click > Transform > Move > Vertical > **2 px**).



Step 25

Finish off the icon by drawing in the sky using a couple of **2 px** thick **Strokelines** (#45576B). Take your time, and once you're done, group all the lines together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut, doing the same for all of the icon's composing sections afterwards.

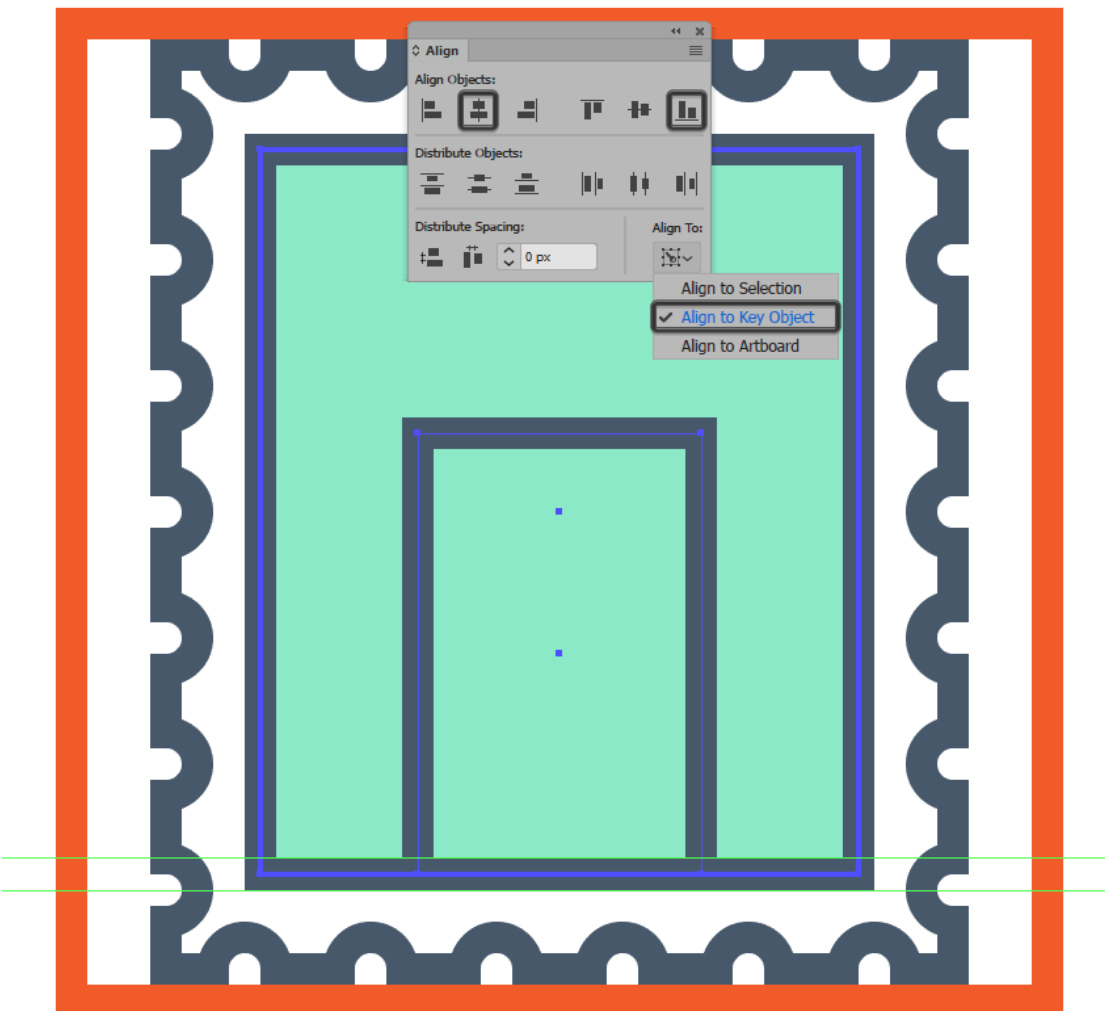


8. How to Create the World Trade Center Building

We are now down to our third and last icon, so assuming you've already moved on up to the next layer (that would be the fourth one), zoom in onto its reference grid, and let's finish this.

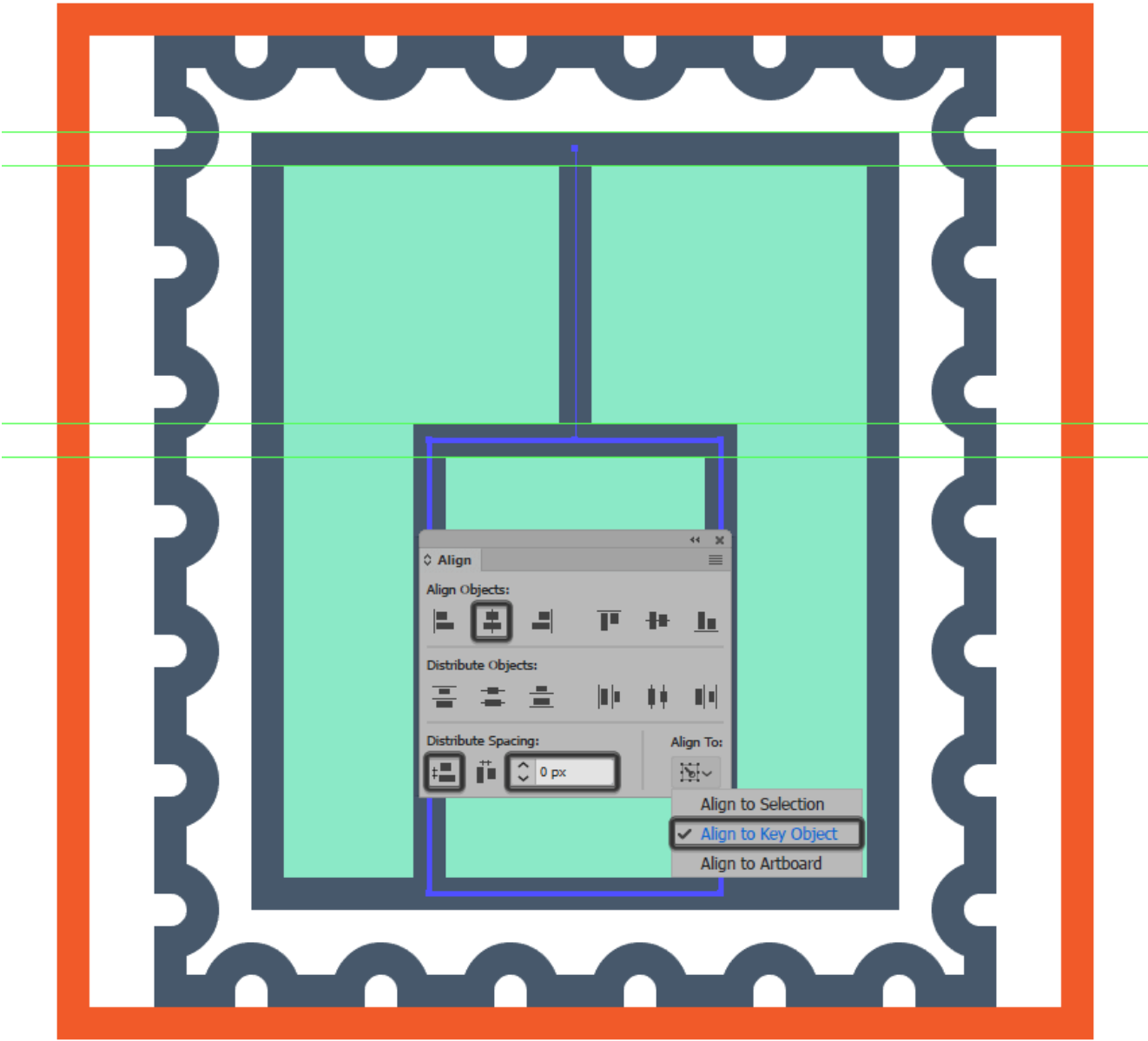
Step 1

Create the building's main shape using a **36 x 56 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B) which we will center align to the bottom edge of the colored fill section's outline.



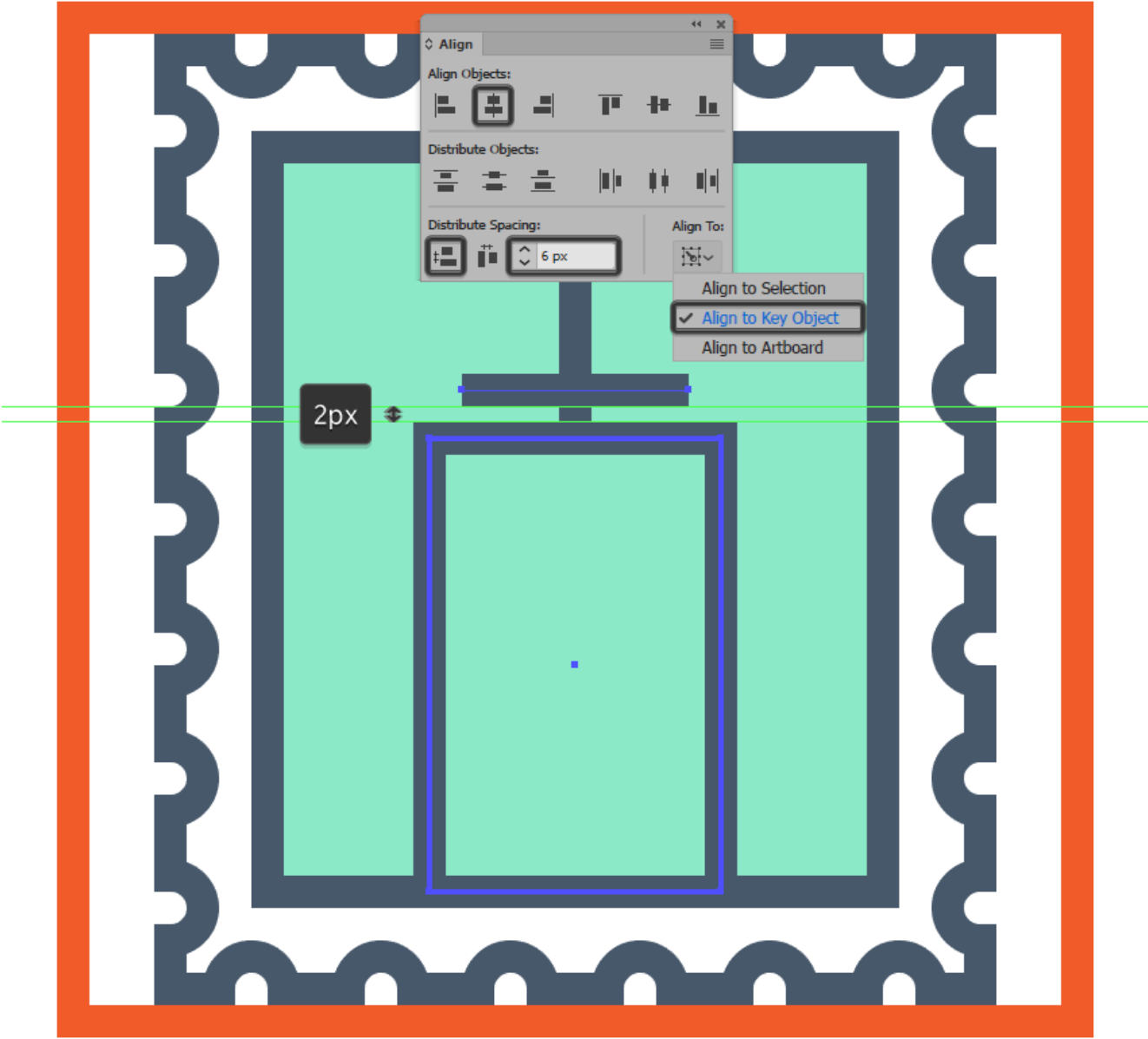
Step 2

Start working on the building's upper section by creating the antenna using a **36 px tall 4 px thick Stroke** (#45576B), which we will position on top of the larger shape.



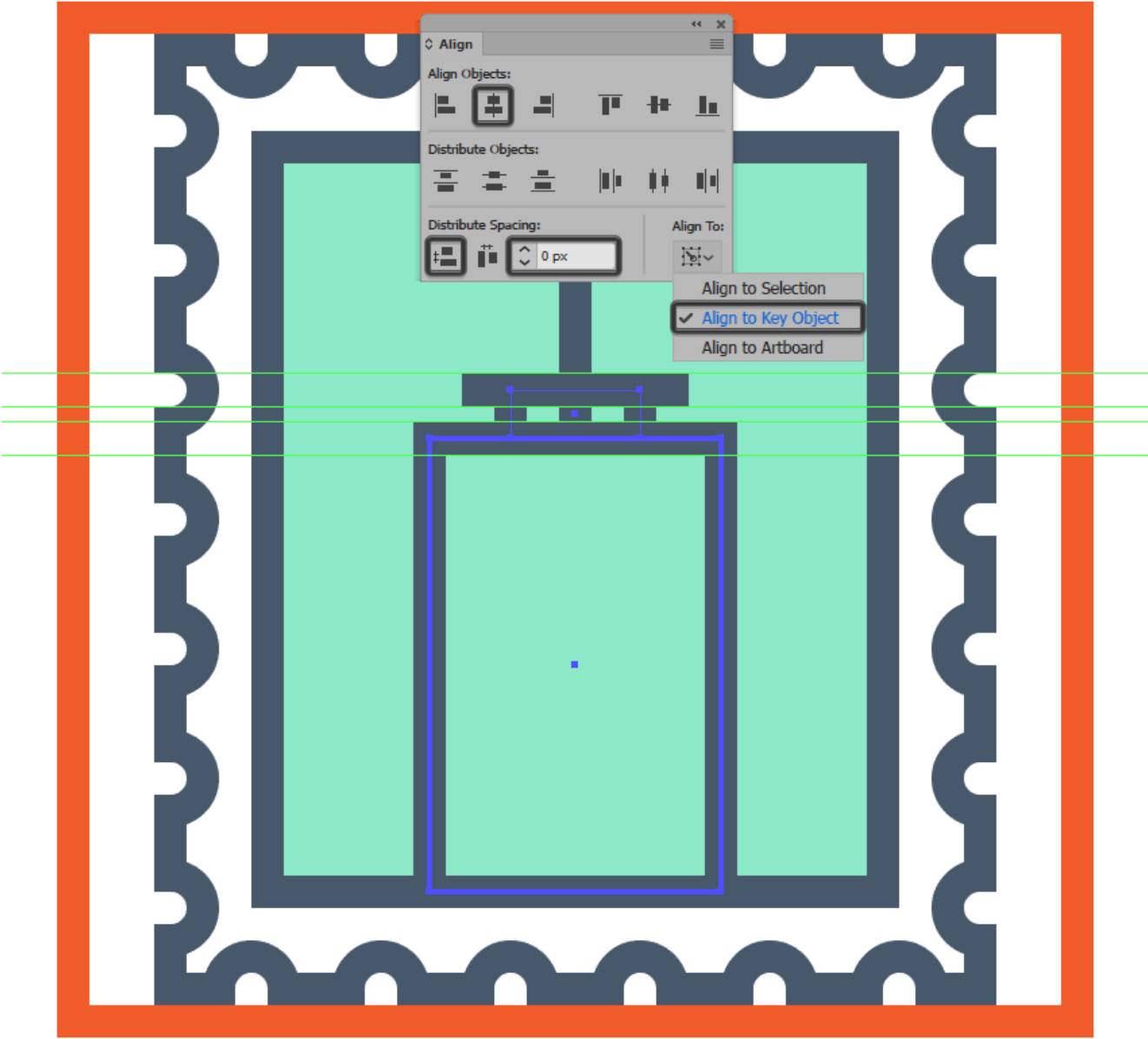
Step 3

Create the bottom section of the roof platform using a **28 px wide 4 px thick Stroke** (#45576B), which we will center align to the building's main shape, positioning it at a distance of **6 px** from it.



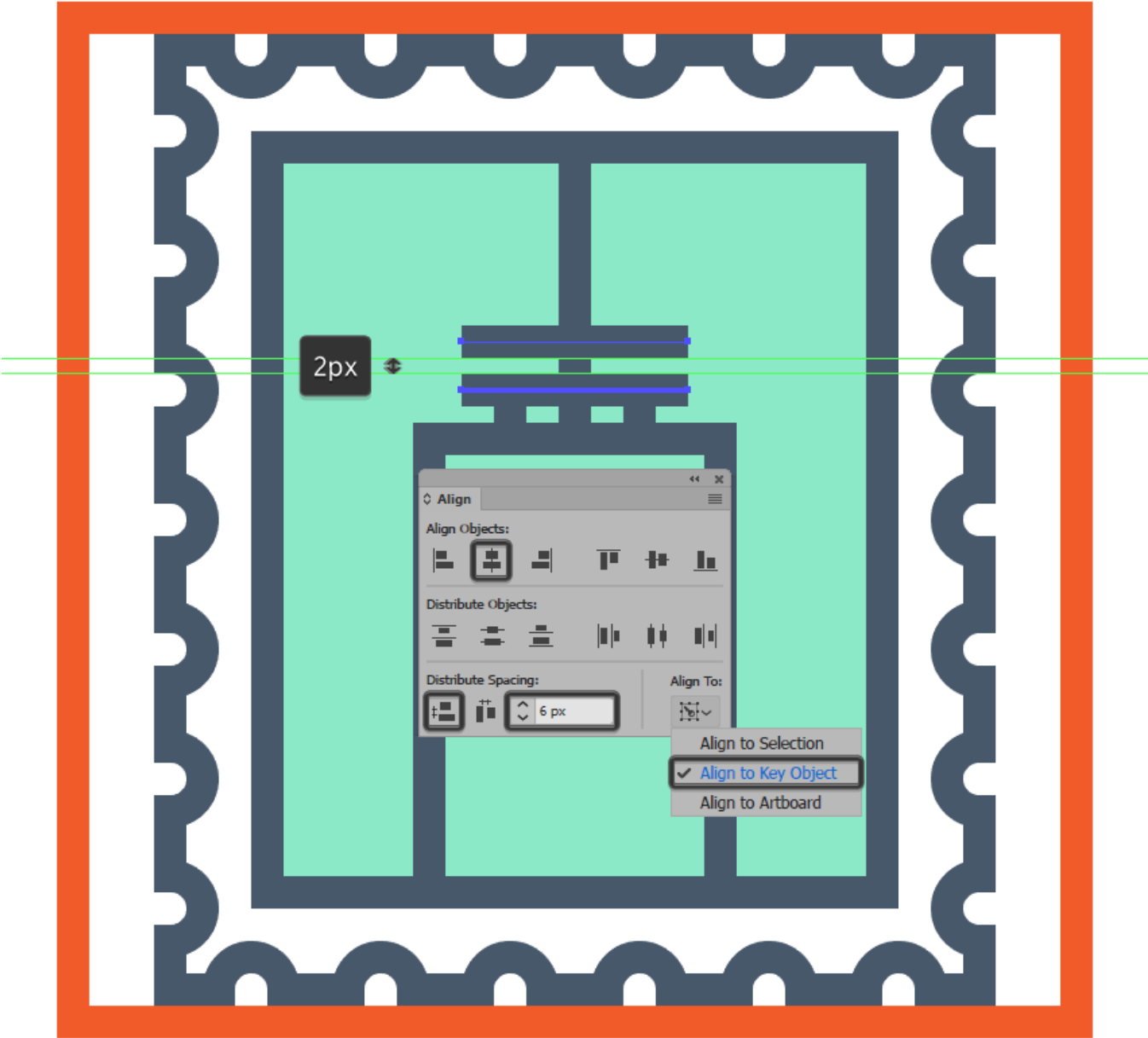
Step 4

Add the platform's support legs using a 16 x 6 px rectangle with a 4 px thick Stroke (#45576B), which we will center align to the larger rectangle's top edge.



Step 5

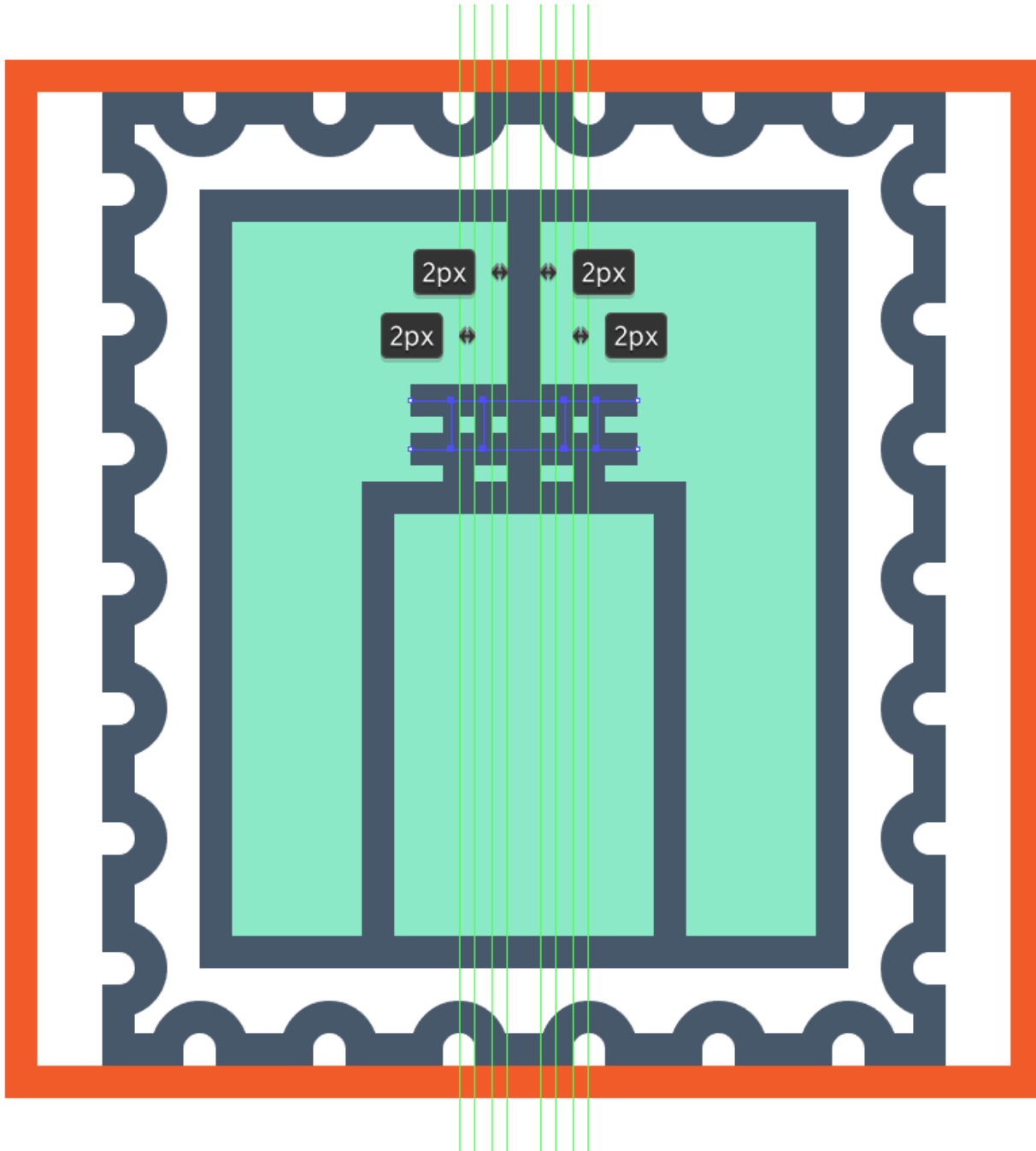
Create the upper section of the platform using another **28 px** wide **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which we will center align to the bottom section, positioning it at a distance of **6 px** from it.





Step 6

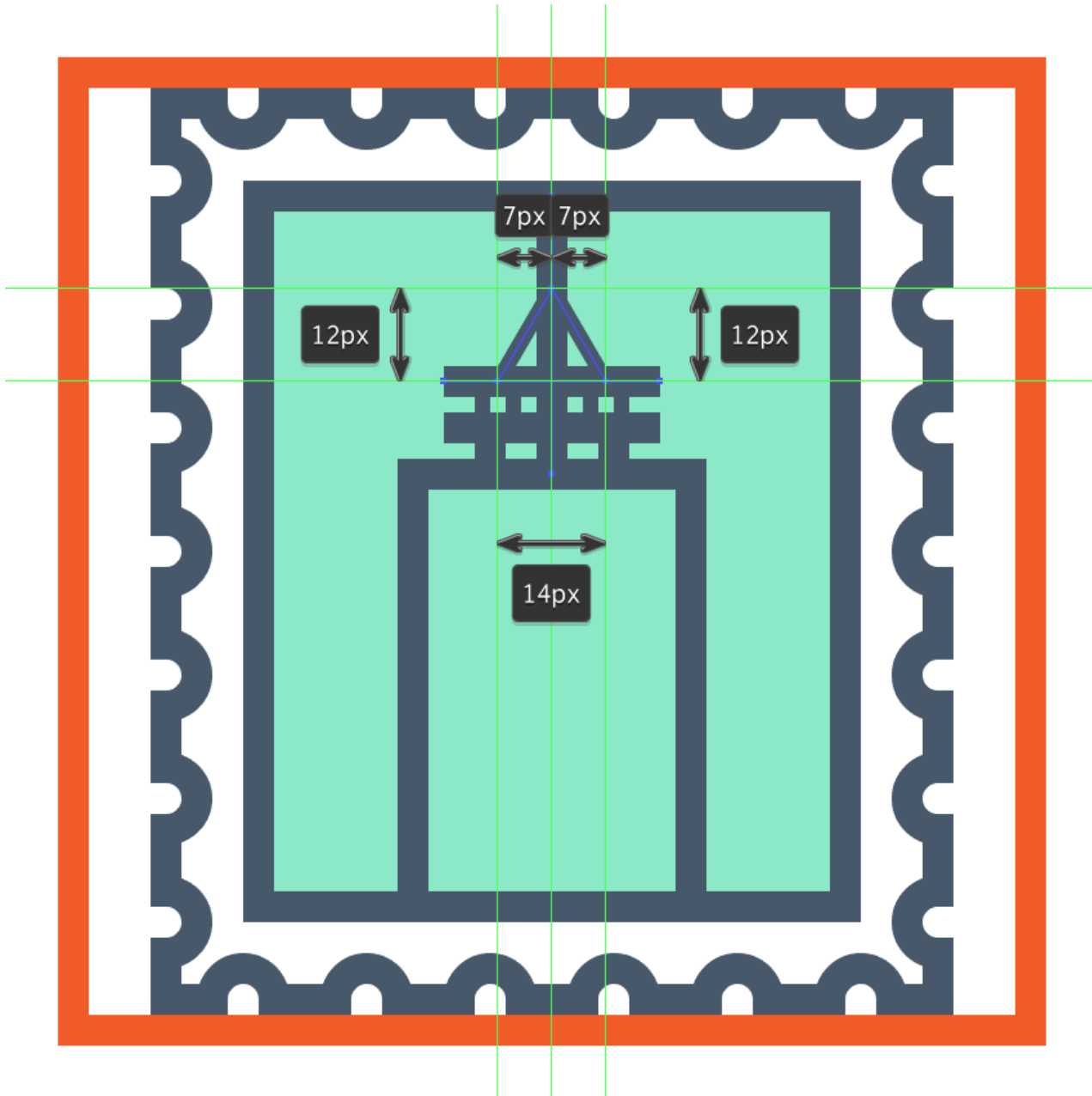
Connect the platform's two sections using two sets of 6 px tall 4 px thick **Stroke** lines (#45576B), which we will position 4 px from one another using the **Align** panel's **Distribute** options, placing one on each side of the antenna.





Step 7

Quickly grab the **Pen Tool (P)**, and then draw in the diagonal support rods using a **2 px** thick **Stroke** line (#45576B), starting from the top section of the platform and going up onto the center section of the antenna.





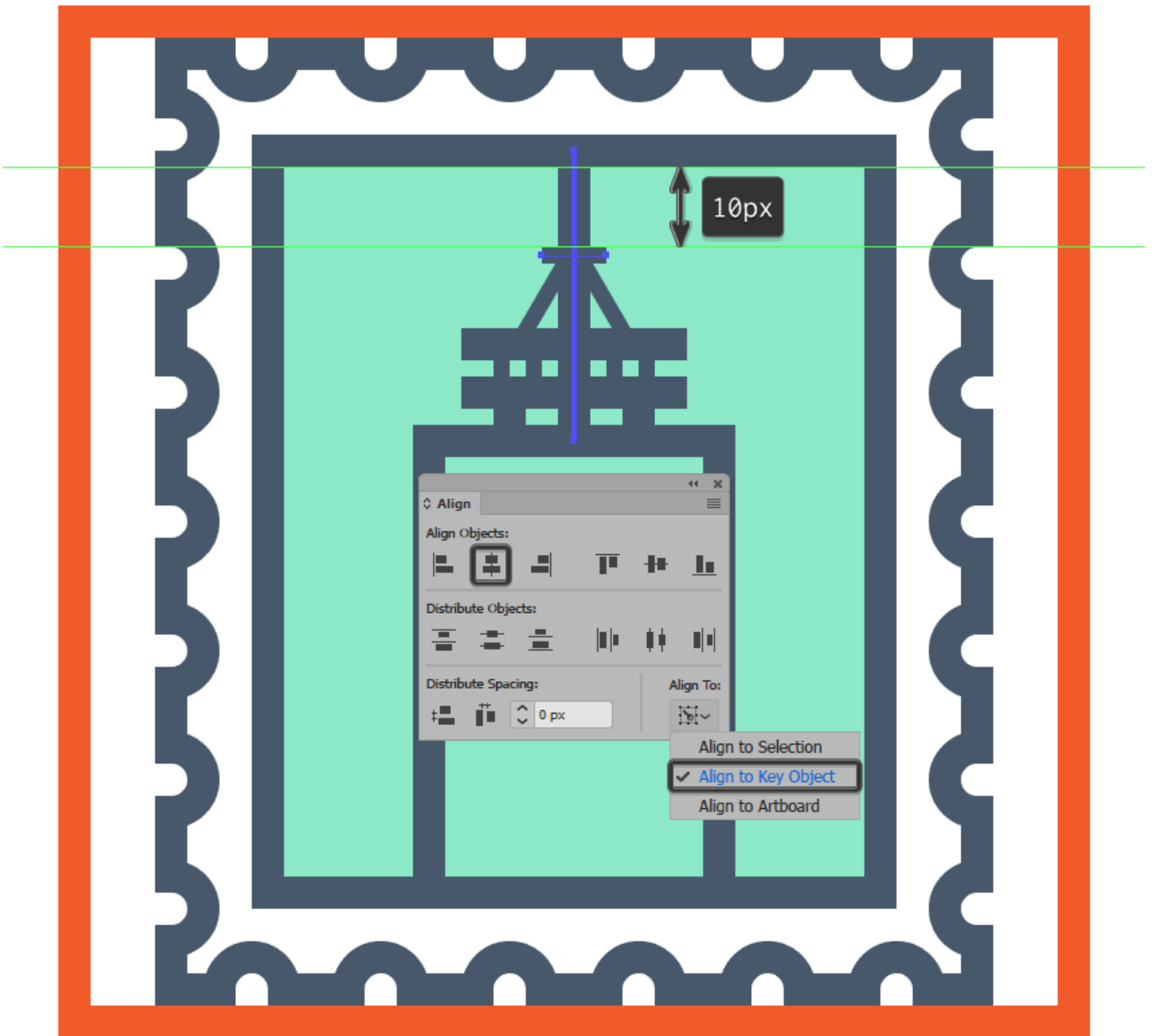
Step 8

Finish off the upper section of the building by adding an **8 px** wide **4 px** thick **Stroke** line (`#45576B`) which we will center align to the antenna. Then, once you're done, select and group all of the current section's shapes together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.



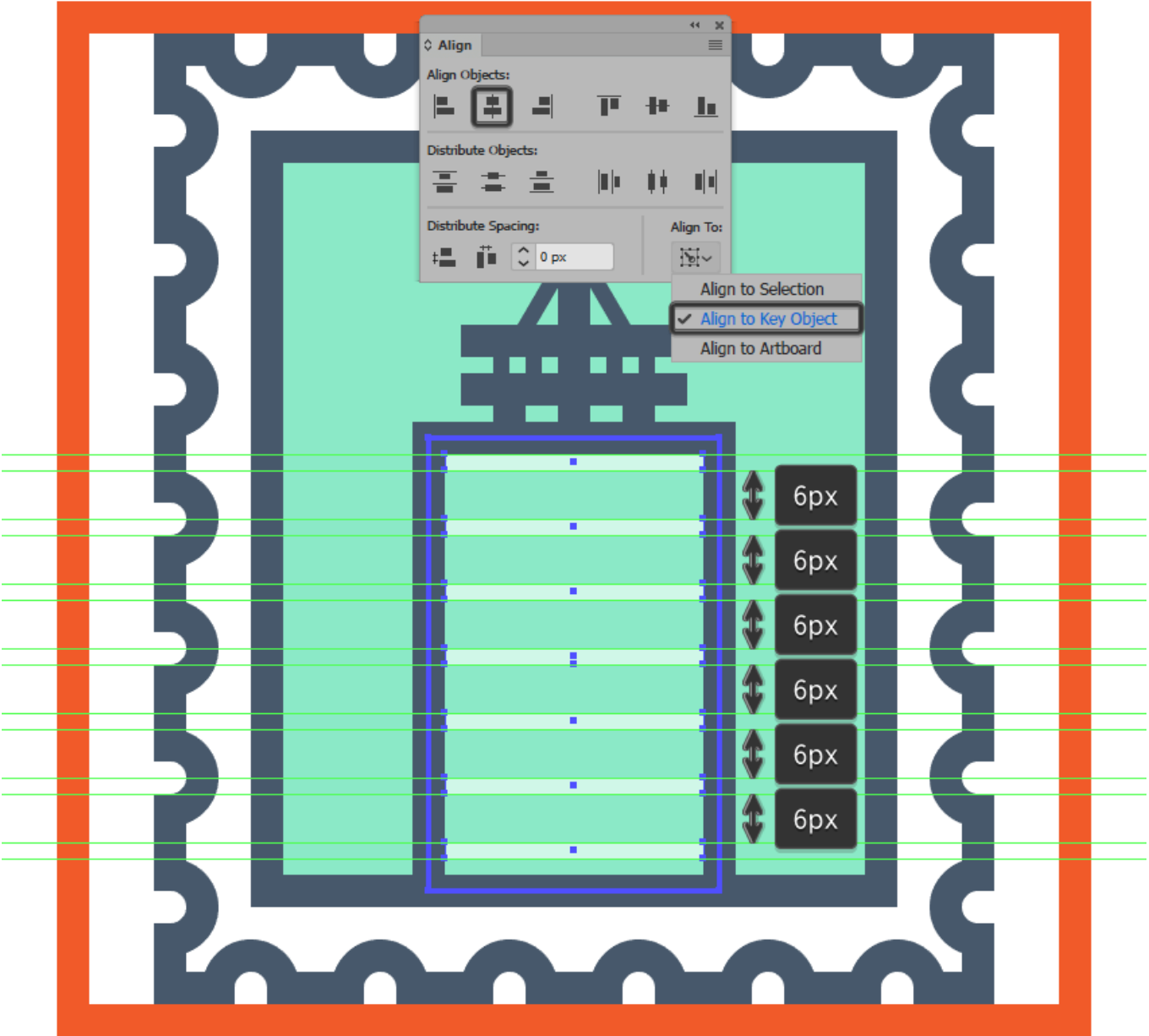
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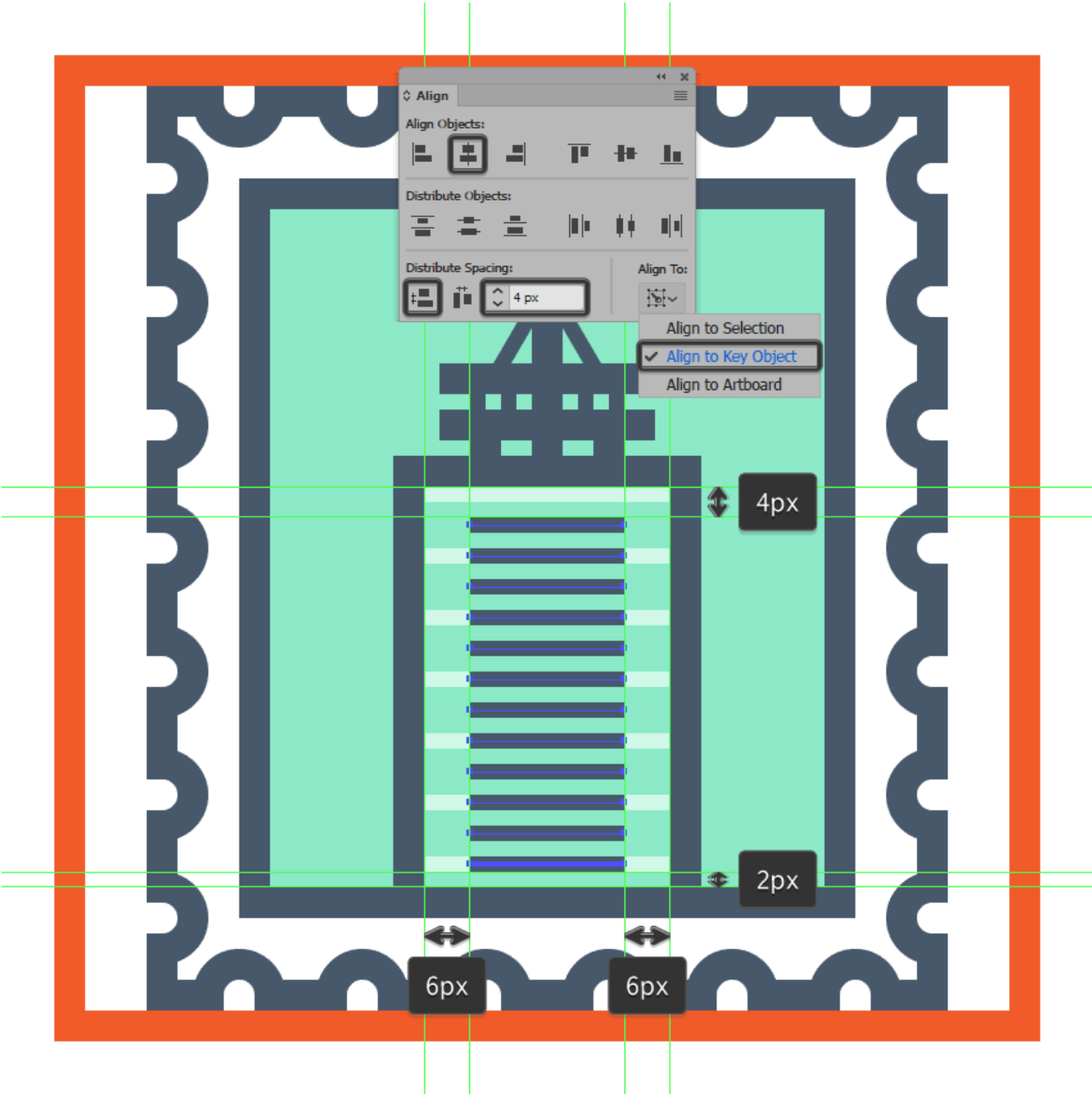
Step 9

Add the main highlights using seven **32 x 2 px** rectangles (**color:** white; **Opacity:** 60%) which we will vertically stack **6 px** from one another, grouping (**Control-G**) and then center aligning them to the building's main body.



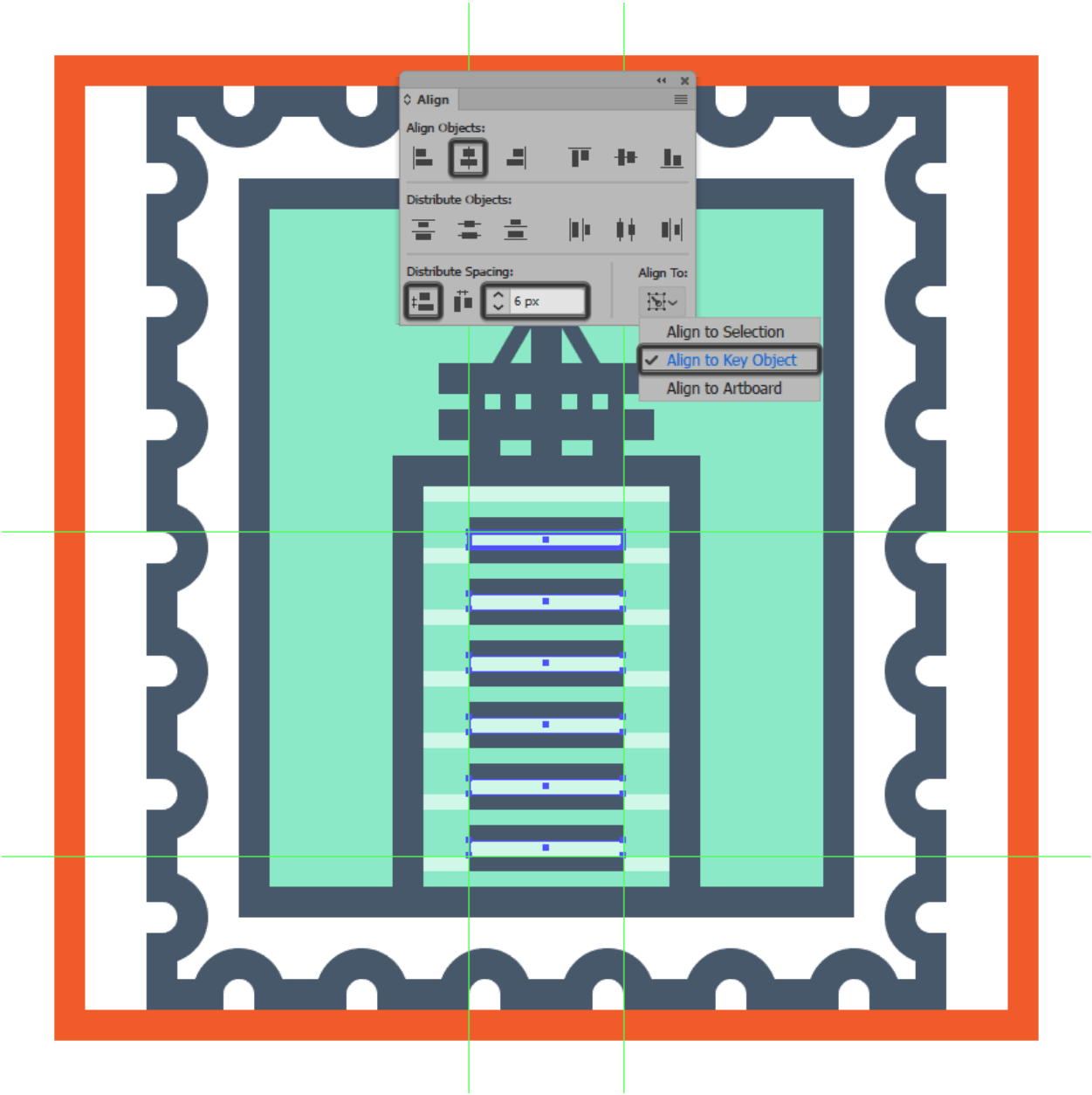
Step 10

Start working on the front section of the building by creating the windows using twelve **20 px** wide **2 px** thick **Stroke** lines (#45576B) vertically stacked **4 px** from one another. Once you have the lines, group (**Control-G**) and then center align them to the tower's main body, at a distance of **4 px** from its top edge.



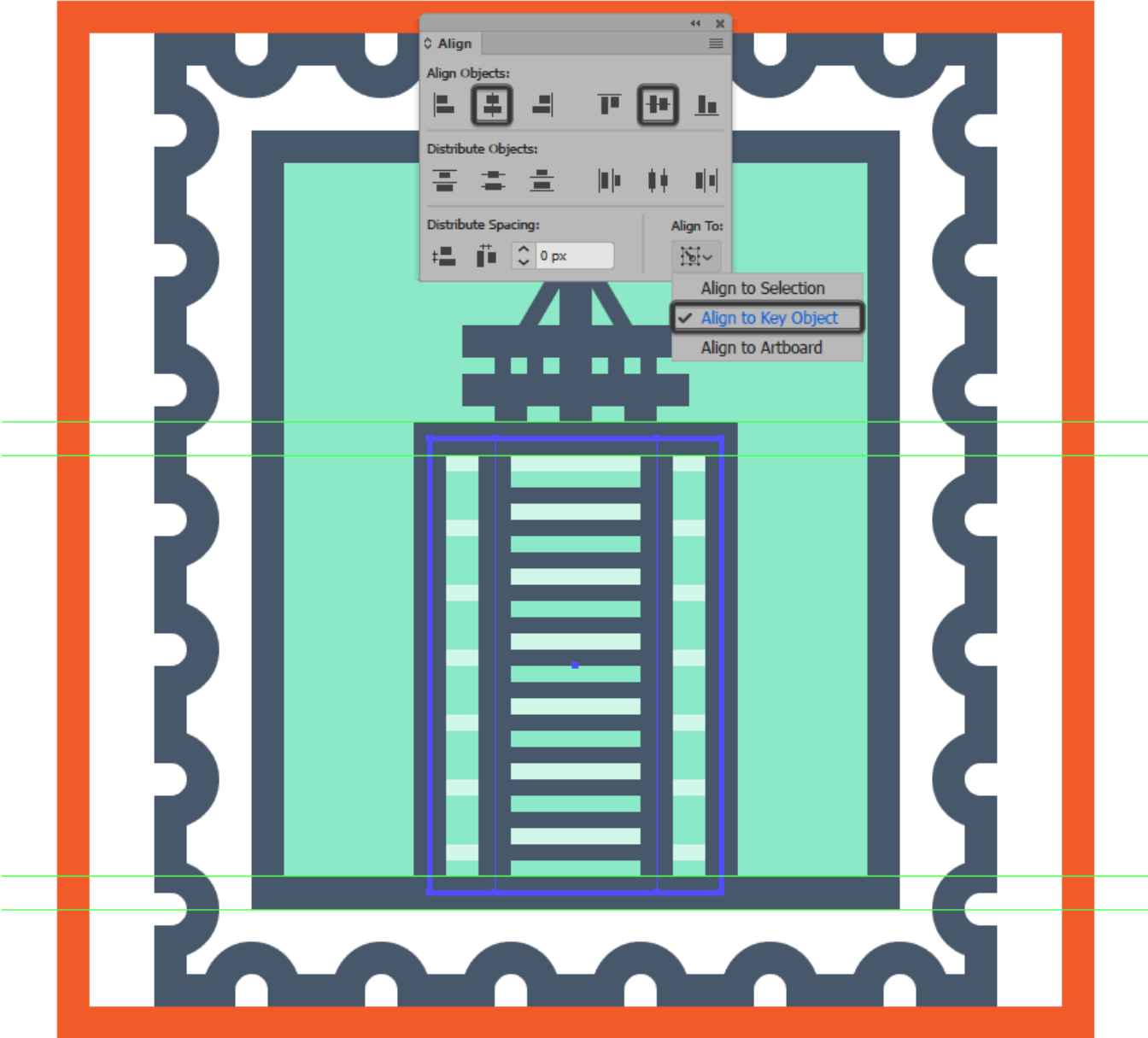
Step 11

Add the front section highlights using six **20 x 2 px** rectangles (**color:** white; **Opacity:** 60%) vertically stacked **6 px** from one another, which we will group (**Control-G**) and then center align to the windows, positioning them underneath the first **Stroke** line. Then, once you're done, select and group both the windows and highlights together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.



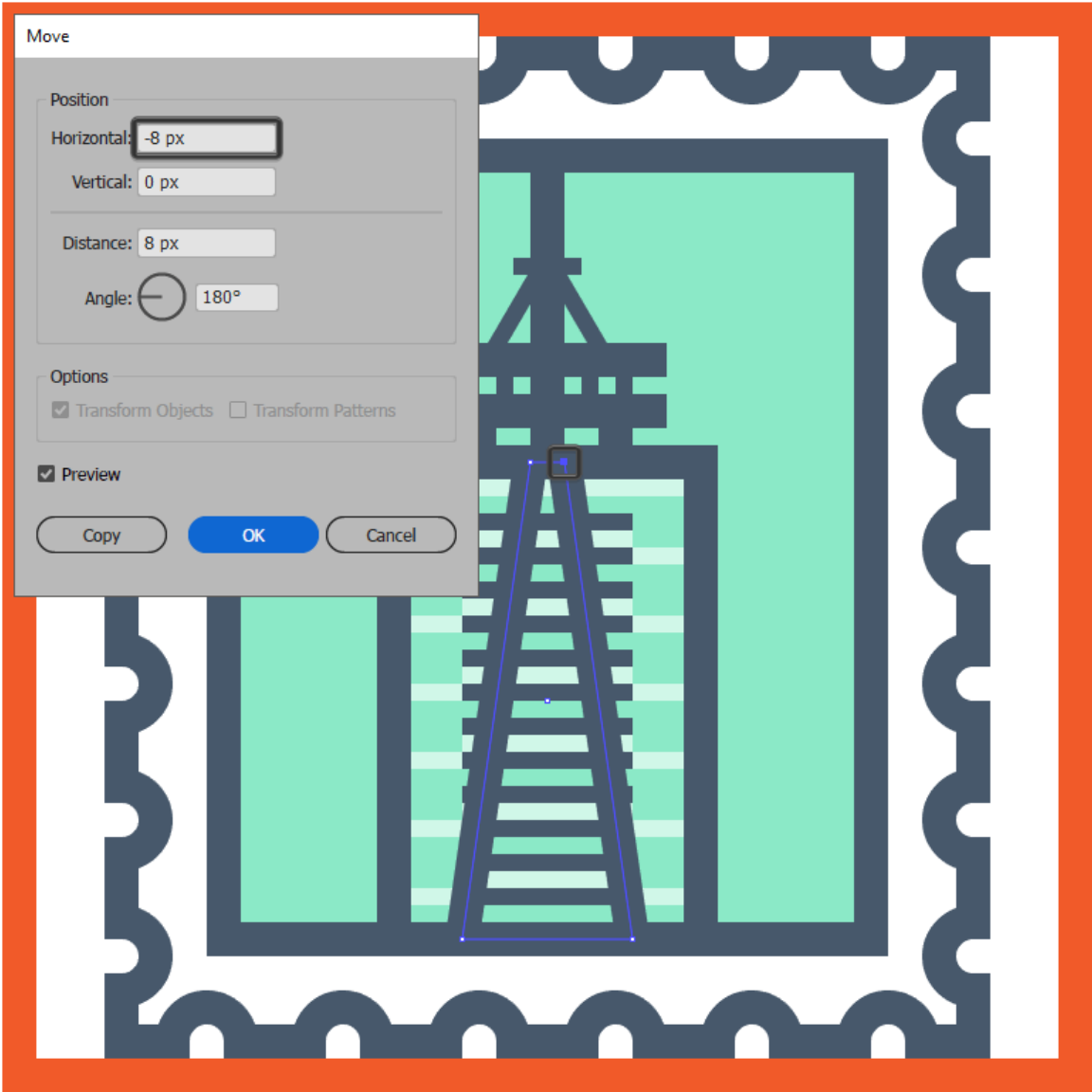
Step 12

Create the front section's main outline using a **20 x 56 px** rectangle with a **4 px** thick **Stroke** (#45576B), which we will center align to the building's main body.



Step 13

Adjust the rectangle by individually selecting its top anchor points and pushing them to the inside by a distance of **8 px** using the **Move** tool (right click > Transform > Move > Horizontal > + / - **8 px** depending on which side you start with).





Step 14

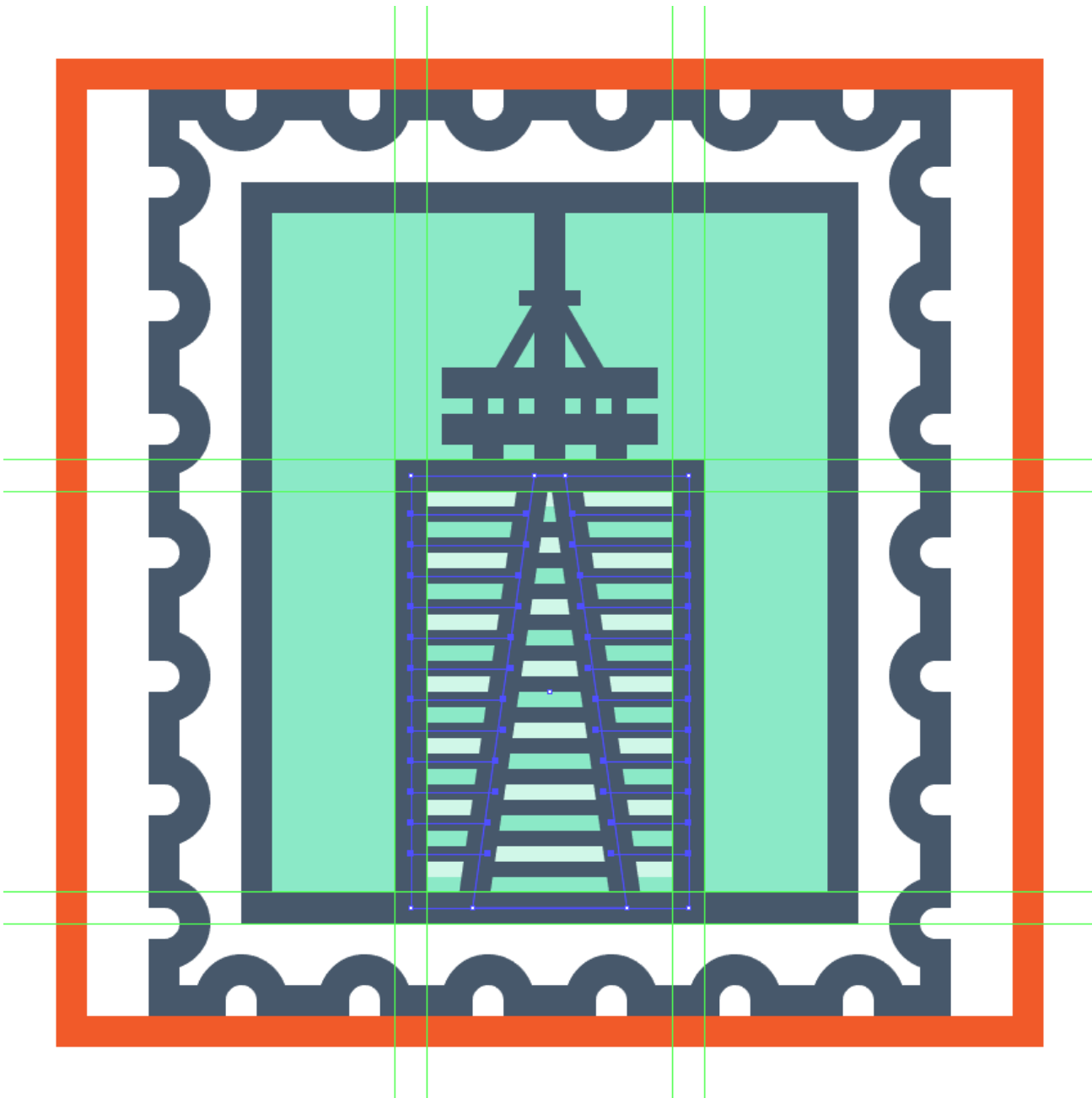
Create a copy (**Control-C > Control-F**) of the resulting shape, and then use it to mask the front section's windows and highlights (**right click > Make Clipping Mask**), making sure to send them to the back afterwards (**right click > Arrange > Send Backward**).





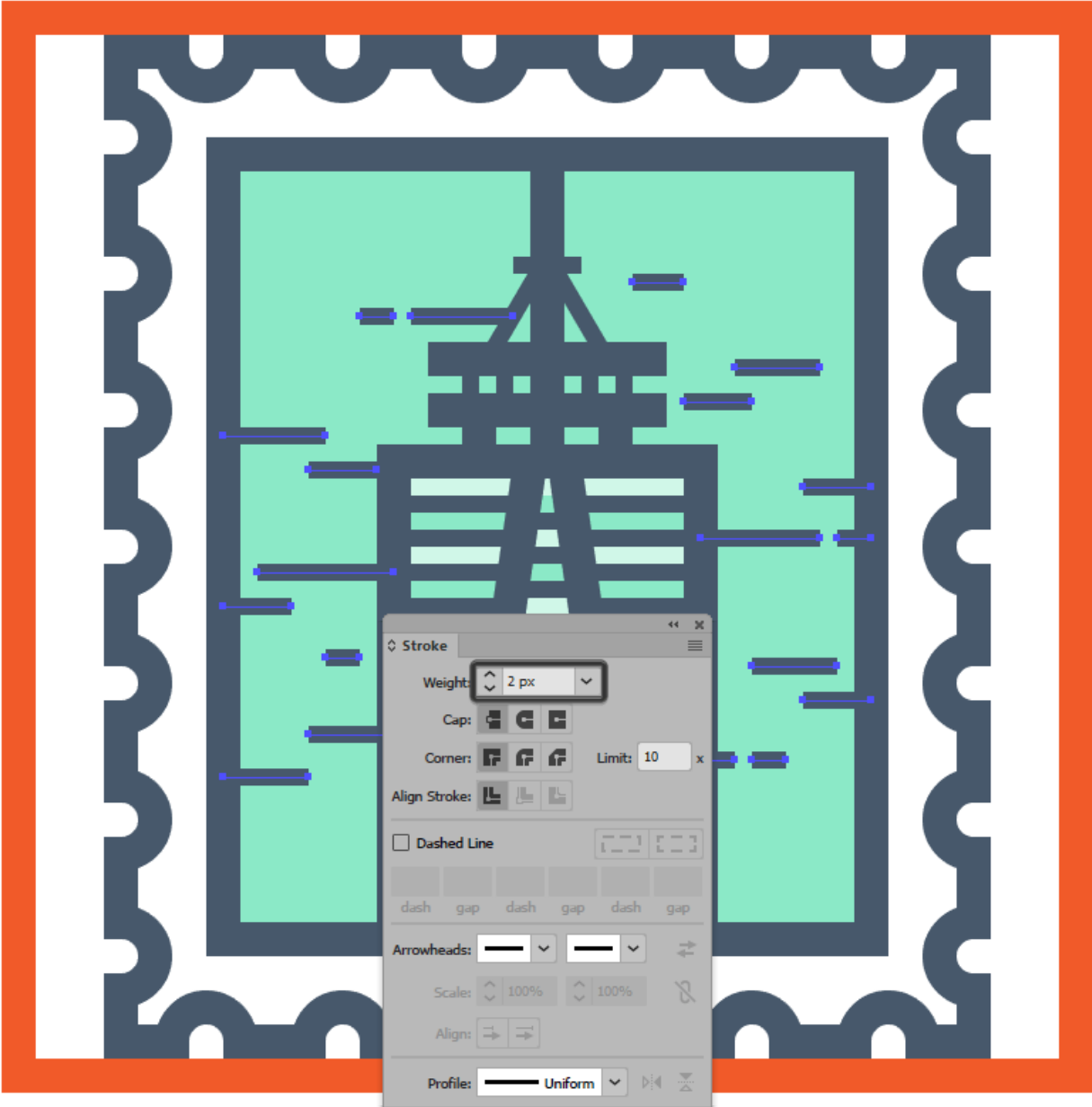
Step 15

Add the background windows using a couple of **2 px** thick **Stroke** lines (#45576B), vertically stacked **4 px** from one another. Start from the outer edge of the larger outline and go all the way to the front section's one. Then, once you're done, select and group all of the building's shapes together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.



Step 16

Finish off the icon by drawing in the sky using a couple of **2 px** thick **Strokelines** (#45576B). Once you're done, group (**Control-G**) all the lines together, doing the same for all of the icon's composing sections.



Hats Down!

Great work! Our little icon pack is completely finished!

I hope you've managed to follow each and every step, and as always learned something new and useful during the process.

