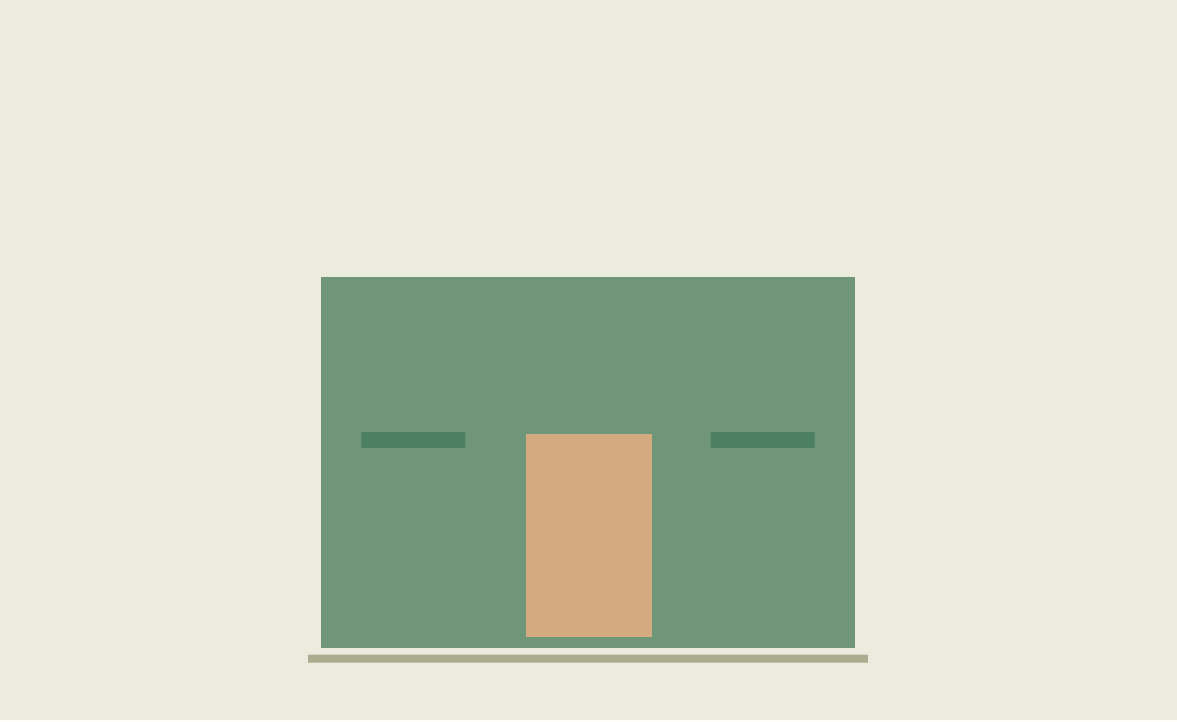
STEADLEAF PRESS

MAKE / ORIGINAL FREE DIGITAL GUIDE / F102

BUILD A MINIATURE CLAY HOUSE ORNAMENT



3 PANELS / 2 SOFT JOINS / SUPPORTED FLAT DRYING

Original paper panel patterns, assembly chart and logs

Not a tested hollow house, candle lantern or hanging toy.

Edition: Original Steadleaf Press FREE adult digital craft guide. Independent technical/editorial practical review verdict PASS. No real clay cutting, scoring, bonding, drying, dimensional, printing, safety or strength tests have been carried out. All illustrated pieces and measurements are digital teaching examples: the publisher has NOT actually rolled, scored, joined, dried, weighed, load-tested, printed to actual scale, displayed, or assessed any clay specimen, adhesion, food contact or child/pet safety.

A little house that lies safely flat

Make one miniature house-front silhouette from THREE soft, separately shaped air-dry-clay panels. The main panel is a thick rectangle, a broad triangular gable roof overlaps its upper edge, and a small rounded rectangular door sits on its lower face. It looks like a little house from the FRONT but remains flat-backed on a maker-approved board while working, drying and displaying. It is not a six-sided hollow house, freestanding architectural model, lantern, wall hanging, toy, candle house or safe support for anything.

The objective is to practice planning panel shapes, checking a real overlap and joining two soft contact faces without making a tall structure that could slump while drying. The house has THREE actual clay pieces and TWO joining operations: roof-to-body, then door-to-body. Two windows are optional shallow marks made with a clean, blunt tool directly on the existing body panel; they are NOT separate little window pieces. The total number of clay panels is always 3, not five or six.

The original three-panel design

Draw this plan with a real ruler on dry paper. You may enlarge it when the actual manufacturer’s clay requires thicker walls or larger pieces. The PDF illustrations are schematics, not full-scale cut-out moulds.

Part | Illustrative wet-clay footprint | Planned thickness | Function

Body panel | 7 cm wide x 5 cm tall, softly rounded rectangle | About 8-10 mm, ONLY if maker permits | Flat house wall and backing

Roof panel | Isosceles triangle, 8.5 cm base x 3 cm apex height, soft corners | About 8-10 mm, maker-dependent | Overlaps TOP of body by about 7 mm

Door panel | 1.8 cm wide x 2.5 cm tall, softly rounded rectangle | About 8-10 mm, maker-dependent | Attaches to body FRONT near bottom

Actual final house | Approx. 8.5 cm wide by 7.3 cm tall before shrinkage, if assembled as planned | Layers add thickness | Small flat-backed ornament only

The bottom 7 mm strip of the roof triangle lies over the top 7 mm strip of the body rectangle, rather than relying on a fragile edge-to-edge butt joint. The triangle is 8.5 cm wide at its base, which gives a nominal 0.75 cm roof overhang on either side of the 7 cm body. Roof height above the overall body top is approximately 3 cm minus 0.7 cm overlap = 2.3 cm, and total planned wet height about 5 + 3 0.7 = 7.3 cm, before shrinkage or shaping. These are drafting relationships, not a prediction of physical dried measurements.

The door belongs roughly in the LOWER CENTRE of the body, with its bottom approximately 0.3 cm above the bottom edge. Its back is scored and attached to the corresponding body FRONT contact zone. Optional window outlines can be lightly impressed beside and above the door only if there is ample unmarked clay. Do not punch holes for windows or doors, cut out a hollow door opening, add a stiff hanging loop, or plan a place for a flame or an electrical light.

Thickness is material-specific. Crayola warns that its own air-dry clay can crack if thinner than 1/4 inch (about 6 mm). Sculpd recommends a thicker minimum for its own material. Never pretend the 8-10 mm illustrative targets are suitable for every product. If your maker requires thicker components than this miniature design comfortably allows, enlarge the entire paper plan or choose a different permitted project; do not roll thin sheets in defiance of the clay's label. Avoid abrupt thickness changes and long unsupported extensions.

Materials, soft-panel handling and safe contact

Use one identifiable, still-soft AIR-DRY clay product and read its safety, thickness, water-addition, scoring, timing and full-dry instructions first. All three panels must use the same clay brand and batch, and all joining contact should be manufacturer-permitted. You need a stable protected craft-only workboard that can also serve as a compatible drying support, a physical ruler, dry paper with three patterns, pencil, soft clean smoothing mat, a blunt rounded plastic scoring tool, a broad blunt plastic shaping edge or craft-safe scraper approved by the maker, and a dedicated barely damp brush ONLY if the product permits wet joining. Keep the remaining clay portions covered, including the second and third panels, to avoid a dry skin before assembly.

The method here is scoring + maker-permitted minimal moisture, not an invented glue. Crayola and Sculpd both describe lightly roughening both contact surfaces and using water according to their respective product instructions. Slip made from clay and water is not automatically appropriate for every air-dry formula; this project does not use a generic slurry. If your actual product requires a different joining method, use the maker's explicit directions or stop. Do not assume a dry-hard panel will form a strong permanent bond to a newly wet panel.

Work entirely over a low stable table. No knives, razors, exposed wire, power tools, needles, drills, sharp window cutters, sandpaper, glue guns, heaters, ovens, kilns, steam or flames. If your clay product is unsuitable for blunt shaping, choose a safer compatible tool rather than cutting quickly with a blade. Follow warnings about skin contact and dry dust, use manufacturer-recommended protective equipment where needed, damp-wipe residues instead of dry-sanding, and wash hands. Clay crumbs and tiny decorative parts must be kept away from pets and children. Never present this as a child-safe play house or working lamp shade.

Pattern A - three separate thick panels, checked on paper

On a dry, real-ruler paper plan draw a 7 x 5 cm body rectangle, an 8.5 cm wide x 3 cm tall isosceles roof triangle, and a 1.8 x 2.5 cm door with soft corners. Keep paper edges dry; do not press wet clay into absorbent paper. Mark the 7 mm roof overlap zone on both the upper body FRONT and lower roof BACK, and mark a small door back/contact rectangle near the bottom centre of the body. The roof and door must be thick enough to

follow their maker’s requirements; draft numbers may need enlargement together.

Place only the dry paper patterns beside the wet clay. Form each soft panel on the maker-compatible board with fingertip pads or a clean rounded plastic forming edge. Smooth each panel so thickness does not taper into sharp fins. Compare actual widths and heights with the real physical ruler, not a PDF pixel width. If the roof’s pointed gable tip becomes too thin, soften/round that corner or restart with a smaller and maker-compatible triangle; the tiny apex is not meant to be a sharp fragile spur.

Pattern B - overlap the roof while everything is still soft

Keep the body lying flat with its FRONT facing up. Score several shallow, short, blunt crosshatched marks only in the narrow contact strip at the upper body FRONT. Score the matching strip on the LOWER BACK of the roof triangle, taking care not to gouge through the panel. If this clay maker permits slight contact dampness, use a barely damp brush on the meeting areas, never a puddle. Move the roof panel to rest over the top of the body by approximately 7 mm, with the centre of the triangle aligned to the body’s centreline. Press gently while supporting both panels from below on the workboard; smooth a little EXISTING soft clay from the seam edge without squeezing the wall into a thin fold. Keep the broad lower roof overhang resting on the flat board, not balanced in midair or hung off a stand.

Check whether the two panels remain seated without an obvious open gap in ordinary stationary handling on the board. This is a simple observation and NOT a pull, peel or shear-strength test. If the roof slides, the overlap is distorted, or clay cracks, stop, reduce excess water if applicable, and re-form while the maker says the clay is still workable. Do not hide a wide gap by adding unapproved thick slurry.

Pattern C - attach the door and finish shallow outlines

On the actual body FRONT, gently mark the intended 1.8 x 2.5 cm door location in the lower centre, leaving a little material all around its edges and about 0.3 cm below it. Score that small contact zone and the separate door’s BACK with the same blunt shallow method. Use only manufacturer-permitted tiny dampness; seat the door flat against the body without pushing it all the way through. Blend only a tiny existing soft edge if the product allows it. Do not cut an open doorway in the body: this is a raised decorative door appliqu. If the tiny door is too fragile at the clay’s required minimum thickness, enlarge it with the rest of the house or make a shallow door impression in the body instead, recording that a two-panel variant was made rather than pretending three pieces were assembled.

Windows are optional shallow outlines drawn on the house body panel with a blunt tool, one on each upper side of the door only if there is room. Do not pierce through the backing, carve hard sharp channels, glue glass, paint while wet, or make small detachable knobs. A doorknob may be a gently stamped dot, not an additional bead.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Choose a miniature flat-backed ornament, not a hollow house

Plan a house-front architectural relief that remains supported on its workboard. It will have three soft air-dry-clay panels (body, roof and door), two scored joins, optional shallow window lines, and no functional openings, wall mount, hanging loop or candle recess. Review the clay product's exact thickness, permissible moisture and full-drying instructions before shaping.

2. Prepare a craft-only table and the maker's instructions

Protect a stable low surface using a clay-compatible board, arrange dry paper, a physical ruler, pencil and rounded blunt forming/scoring tools, and keep food, pets, children, open flames, sharp cutters and heaters away. Lay out a damp-safe cleanup cloth appropriate to the clay and reserve no kitchen utensils for the task.

3. Draw the three different panel outlines

On dry paper measure the example BODY at 7 x 5 cm, ROOF triangle at 8.5 cm base x 3 cm height, and DOOR at 1.8 x 2.5 cm. Mark a 7 mm roof-overlap strip and an area for the low centred door. These are illustrative WET dimensions; if the brand's clay needs thicker/larger pieces, enlarge every part proportionally before taking clay out.

4. Make an assembly mock-up using only dry paper

Cut or fold the paper plan with craft-safe scissors, keeping cutting separate from clay handling. Lay the triangle over the rectangle's top by 7 mm and the door in the lower centre; check that the roof has roughly 0.75 cm of side overhang and that the door does not crowd the roof. Revise paper dimensions if necessary. The paper mock-up is a fit check only, not a rigid mould to leave inside or around shrinking clay.

5. Divide workable soft clay into three suitable portions

Use one manufacturer-labelled soft clay batch and make roughly appropriate amounts for the body, roof and door. Keep all waiting material covered to avoid crusting. Don't use bone-dry pieces, and don't assume a generic clay-and-water slip is approved for these joins.

6. Shape a thick rectangular body on the workboard

Form the approximately 7 x 5 cm body panel from soft clay on its maker-compatible protected board, or an enlarged version. Keep the thickness reasonably consistent with manufacturer guidance, not blindly 8-10 mm if your product requires thicker clay. Round all corners gently and avoid cutting a door or window hole. Leave the body fully supported on the board.

7. Shape a thick triangular roof with rounded ends

Form the roughly 8.5 cm-wide, 3 cm-high roof triangle from a second still-soft portion while the body is protected from drying. The roof is a flat triangle panel, not a roof sloping up in three-dimensional space. Round

its apex and end points so they do not become thin sharp fins. Compare against the dry paper roof shape, but never press a paper template into wet clay.

8. Prepare both roof-to-body mating strips

On the BODY TOP-FRONT strip roughly 7 mm deep and the ROOF LOWER-BACK strip that will overlap it, make a few shallow crosshatch scores with a blunt rounded tool. Confirm you scored BOTH actual touching faces, not the roof's visible front. If the maker permits, add minimal damp contact according to the label; otherwise stop and use that maker's approved joining procedure, not an unverified generic slurry.

9. Join the roof over the supported body

Align the roof centreline with the body, lower the roof onto the body by about 7 mm, and gently seat it so the lower triangle lies on the body FRONT at the marked strip. Keep the entire silhouette supported flat on the board, including the overhanging roof base. Smooth a little existing soft clay at the seam, without forcing the roof into a thin hinge. Do not lift the partly assembled house to test the join.

10. Form a small, soft-edged decorative door

Use the third soft portion for a separate thick rectangular door approximately 1.8 x 2.5 cm, adjusted as necessary for the clay's safe thickness. Its corners should be rounded, not pointed. Check that the intended lower-centre contact area remains visibly clear. If a separate door of maker-approved thickness would distort the project, mark the door instead and record a two-panel variant.

11. Attach the door using a second approved soft joint

Score the body FRONT inside the door footprint and the DOOR BACK with the blunt tool. Add only manufacturer-approved contact moisture if permitted, centre the door near the lower part of the body, and press lightly while the board supports all material. Smooth the seam edge without hollowing, piercing or dragging the body. No adhesive, metal pin, hard wire or detachable bead is added.

12. Optionally mark two shallow window outlines

Only if there is enough safe-thickness body area, make one soft rounded window outline on each side of the door using a blunt stamp or tool. Windows are shallow texture marks, not holes or extra panels. Do not cut square holes that weaken the back, leave sharp grooves or attach tiny bits that can fall off. Record if windows were intentionally omitted.

13. Dry the house flat for the maker's full time

Leave the completed flat-backed ornament on a maker-compatible level support in ordinary sheltered, reasonably ventilated room conditions, avoiding a heater, sunlight, forced fan, oven or microwave. Don't clamp

against a rigid armature or peel up the soft house: clay shrinks as it dries. Follow the actual maker’s guidance if its drying support or turning rules differ. Do not turn or lift while the soft roof or door may peel away. If the maker’s complete-dry status is unknown, mark PENDING.

14. Inspect, record and store the miniature safely

Once maker-complete drying is reached, inspect the two seams and visible faces for crack lines, roof curl, door slip, changed dimensions and surface dust without bending, peeling or lifting by the roof. Complete both pattern/checklist records and photograph flat only if helpful. Keep dry on a stable indoor display board or tray beyond children and pets. Never use as a toy, hanging decor, lamp, candle house, food dish, planter or load-bearing hardware.

Fix, care and preserve

The roof slips or bows while the clay is wet

Check whether either panel has been overly wetted, become too thin, or lost even support on the board. Gently re-seat only while both remain soft and the maker allows reworking; do not add a thick adhesive slurry or clamp a stiff frame around the shrinking clay. Make the silhouette smaller or maker-compatible thicker if needed.

A crack develops in the overlap seam

An uneven thickness change, deep scoring, poor contact or hurried drying may contribute. Record when the crack appeared and whether it is a visible surface split or opening. Follow the brand’s instructions for any still-soft repair; this guide provides no tested after-drying structural repair.

The roof triangle’s apex feels fragile

Round the triangular point or enlarge the entire pattern rather than making a thin sharp spike. Maker minimum clay thickness applies to every panel including roof corners. If the available material is too coarse or thick for a tiny roof, don’t force the miniature size.

The door panel is too heavy or too small

A separate raised door adds thickness. If it cannot fit while maintaining safe material proportions and a broad join, use a gentle impressed door outline instead and record the two-panel variant. No detached bead/door handle is necessary.

The front and back do not dry evenly

Use the manufacturer’s supported room-temperature drying practice and follow its safe turning or airflow recommendations. Avoid flipping a fragile roof/door joint prematurely. No rigid cardboard or glass form should remain trapped inside the clay during shrinkage.

You want to hang the ornament or put a light inside it

This is a flat house faade, not a hollow house or lantern. It has no engineered hanging point and no cavity. Do not drill it, glue a hanger, add a real candle, insert an LED, put it beside a heater or use it in a nursery. Those would require separately developed product designs and safety evaluation.

Clay dust, wet contact and cleaning

Never sand a dry clay panel in this lesson. Gently damp-wipe deposits following its label, collect solid scraps, and wash hands. Many air-dry clays remain moisture-sensitive and are not waterproof even when surface-coated. Do not leave the ornament outdoors, in a wet planter, on a pot saucer or where it can be mistaken for a food item.

Pattern 1 - Three original panel outlines and overlap geometry

On a DRY paper guide, draw: BODY rounded rectangle 7 x 5 cm; ROOF broad low isosceles triangle with 8.5 cm base and 3 cm perpendicular height; DOOR rounded rectangle 1.8 x 2.5 cm. Mark roof OVERLAP as 0.7 cm (7 mm) onto body FRONT at its top. Nominal roof side overhang is (8.5 7) / 2 = 0.75 cm each. Nominal total wet height is 5 + 3 0.7 = 7.3 cm, before shrinkage. Mark the door about 0.3 cm up from lower body edge. All values are planning examples, never a PDF-supplied full-size cut-out, finished dimensional tolerance or universal clay thickness. Enlarge the plan to honour the actual product’s minimum thickness, especially for the triangular tip and added door thickness.

Pattern 2 - Two scored, maker-approved soft contact joins

First, score the BODY TOP FRONT strip and ROOF LOWER BACK strip; only when the manufacturer permits, dampen minimally, align centreline, overlap 0.7 cm, seat gently while supported. Second, score BODY FRONT inside the lower-centre door footprint and DOOR BACK; use only maker-approved contact moisture, seat gently and blend a tiny soft edge. Optional windows are shallow MARKS, not third and fourth joints. The assembled house dries fully FLAT, not upright, hung or tightly bound to a rigid form. Diagram labels should read roof/body joint and door/body joint, not tested mechanical connections.

Record 1 - Cut-plan and assembly log

Item | Illustrative plan | Actual / note

Air-dry clay brand and thickness guidance | Manufacturer instructions | _____

BODY panel wet outline | 7 x 5 cm | _____ x _____ cm

ROOF panel wet outline | 8.5 cm base x 3 cm height | _____ x _____ cm

DOOR panel wet outline | 1.8 x 2.5 cm | _____ x _____ cm

Maker-safe panel thickness | Label overrides 8-10 mm example | Estimate _____ mm

Roof overlap on body FRONT | About 0.7 cm | Estimate _____ cm

Side roof overhang | About 0.75 cm per side | _____ cm

Roof/body mating faces both scored? | Yes, shallow | Yes [ ] No [ ]

Door/body mating faces both scored? | Yes, shallow | Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A [ ]

Separate raised door or outline variant? | Three-panel / two-panel | 3 [ ] 2 [ ]

Two window outlines made? | Optional shallow | Yes [ ] No [ ]

Manufacturer permitted contact method and source: _____

Any wet seam gap, roof curl or distortion: _____

Record 2 - Completely dry ornament and safety checklist

[ ] Exact clay material manufacturer thickness, moisture and drying guidance read.

[ ] Dry paper fit-check completed; no absorbent mould left in clay.

[ ] House body and roof sufficiently thick for actual product; corners rounded.

[ ] All soft panels remain on a level stable work/drying board.

[ ] Roof BACK and body FRONT scored at the same meeting strip.

[ ] Only manufacturer-permitted tiny contact moisture used, if any.

[ ] Separate door BACK and body FRONT scored, or variant recorded.

[ ] No sharp window/door holes, drilled hangers, hooks or detachable beads.

[ ] Entire assembly kept flat and supported during maker-complete drying.

[ ] No oven, heater, strong fan, direct sun or rigid drying armature used.

[ ] Roof/body seam: visibly intact [ ] hairline [ ] open [ ] PENDING [ ].

[ ] Door/body seam: visibly intact [ ] hairline [ ] open [ ] N/A [ ].

[ ] No pull/peel/drop/weight/water/food/heat or candle safety tests claimed.

[ ] Dry dust damp-wiped, solid scraps stored away from children and pets.

Maker full-drying start/date or PENDING: _____

Any roof corner or door edge curl/shrink: _____

Dry indoor display position: _____

What to adjust in the next paper mock-up or clay attempt: _____

Originality, technical references and limits

This original Steadleaf Press miniature flat-backed house-front study has three specific planned panels, two supported score-and-moisten-if-permitted contact joins, a simple paper-overlap geometry card, and an original two-part drying/seam review. It is not the STAEDTLER or any third-party six-sided house design and uses no third-party diagrams, images, tutorial prose or published cut-out templates. General material facts were checked against manufacturers' current original advice:

- Crayola, Why has my Air-Dry Clay piece cracked?: https://www.crayola.com/products/brands/scribble-scrubbie/faqs/why-has-my-air-dry-clay-piece-cracked-faq

- Crayola, Clay Sculpting Station - Idea Guide (scoring and maker-approved water joining): https://www.crayola.com/docs/default-source/instruction-sheets/04-2912-0-400-clay-sculpting-station-idea-guide-1.pdf

- Sculpd, Tips for Slab-Building Method: https://help.sculpd.com/en-US/tips-for-slab-building-method-1777932

- Sculpd, How durable are the finished pieces?: https://help.sculpd.com/en-US/how-durable-are-the-finished-pieces-1777937

- STAEDTLER, Crafting with FIMOair air-drying modelling clay made easy (product-specific drying and shrinkage guidance): https://www.staedtler.com/ca/en/discover/crafting-with-fimoair-air-drying-modelling-clay-made-easy/

- Sculpd, Will my piece be waterproof?: https://help.sculpd.com/en-US/will-my-piece-be-waterproof-1777926

Claims boundary: No actual forming, measured physical panel dimensions, clay scoring, seam strength, complete drying, crack rate, shrinkage, abrasion, waterproofing, flame/electrical, child/pet, food safety, printed scale, or real use testing was performed. This is a digital adult educational low-relief house ornament, not an engineered three-dimensional building, tested home furnishing or functional illuminated lantern.

Three original flat panels and wet fit plan

Draw on DRY paper with a real ruler. NOT a 1:1 cut-out.

BODY: 7 x 5cm; ROOF: 8.5cm base x 3cm height.

DOOR: 1.8 x 2.5cm. Rounded safe edges.



Roof overlaps body TOP by 0.7cm (7mm).

Nominal side overhang (8.5-7)/2 = 0.75cm each.

Planned total wet height: 5+3-0.7 = 7.3cm.

Example wet sizes only. Enlarge if clay maker demands thickness.

Score BOTH actual mating faces; keep all panels flat

JOIN 1 - ROOF to BODY

Score BODY upper FRONT and ROOF lower BACK.

Minimal wet contact ONLY when maker approves.

Overlap 7mm, keep wide roof supported flat.

JOIN 2 - DOOR to BODY

Score BODY lower FRONT and DOOR BACK.

Seat soft door without piercing body.

Windows are shallow outlines, NOT extra pieces.

Two-panel variant if separate door is too small.

No binder, scaffold, stand or rigid mould during drying.

Actual joint strength, hanging and load NOT tested.

Panel sizing and joining observations

Clay maker/brand and minimum thickness: _____

BODY wet width x height: _____ x _____ cm

ROOF wet base and height: _____ x _____ cm

DOOR wet width and height: _____ x _____ cm

Panel thickness estimate/maker requirements: _____

Roof overlap measured/estimated: _____ mm (plan 7mm)

Roof side overhang estimated: _____ cm each

Join 1 - body FRONT and roof BACK scored? yes [ ] no [ ]

Join 2 - body FRONT and door BACK scored? yes [ ] no [ ]

Used manufacturer-permitted contact moisture? _____

Three-panel ornament [ ] or two-panel door-mark variant [ ]

Any soft-clay gaps, curled corners or sliding: _____

All sizes are wet planning observations, not dry tolerances.

Complete drying, seams and indoor display

- [ ] Exact maker thickness, joining and full dry rules read
- [ ] Three outlined panels drafted first on DRY paper
- [ ] Board remains level and manufacturer-compatible
- [ ] Body, roof and door thick enough for maker formula
- [ ] Roof scored on BACK; body scored on FRONT
- [ ] Roof 7mm overlap supported; no lift-by-roof test
- [ ] Door scored on BACK; body scored on FRONT
- [ ] Windows shallow marks only; no extra detachable beads
- [ ] No sharp cut-through windows or doorway
- [ ] No heat, oven, strong fan or rigid drying armature
- [ ] Full maker drying confirmed, or PENDING logged
- [ ] Roof seam intact [ ] line [ ] open [ ] PENDING [ ]
- [ ] Door seam intact [ ] line [ ] open [ ] N/A [ ]
- [ ] Dry flat indoors, no hanging, candle, water or load

No actual manufacturing, lifting force or durability tests performed.