



VALLEY OAK CUSTOMS

Design Manager

Quick Start Guide

Organize SVG, DXF, images, and related design files for CNC, laser, fabrication, and creative workflows.

Version 1.1.0.0 | Release Candidate

Find it. Organize it. Open it. Make it.

What Design Manager is

Design Manager is a local Windows organizer and visual browser for SVG, DXF, SheetCam JOB, images, and related design files used in CNC, laser, fabrication, and similar creative or manufacturing workflows.

The key idea: Your original design files stay in the folders where you keep them. Design Manager builds a visual catalog of your files and stores your notes and organization information separately.

What it does

- Shows a visual library of supported design and reference files.
- Searches filenames, folders, tags, notes, and status.
- Adds favorites, collections, shop notes, and customer-proof tools.
- Opens files in your normal Windows design or CAM program.

What it does NOT do

Design Manager is not
CAD software or CAM software
A CNC machine or laser controller
A 3D-printer slicer
A native STL/3MF model viewer in V1

For laser users: SVG and DXF libraries fit naturally into Design Manager.

For 3D-printer users: Design Manager is not currently a native STL/3MF viewer or slicer. It may still help organize SVG/DXF templates, drawings, engraving artwork, and reference images.

1. Install and open

1. Run the trusted Design Manager setup program.
2. Read and accept the Software License Agreement shown by the installer.
3. If SmartScreen shows Unknown publisher, verify that the installer came from the trusted Valley Oak Customs release package, then choose More info > Run anyway.
4. Open Valley Oak Customs Design Manager from the Start menu.

Trial, licensing, and Viewer Mode

A new installation starts with a 30-day full-feature trial. A perpetual Design Manager 1.x license supports two activated Windows PCs. Activation needs a brief internet connection, but the signed local certificate keeps the activated PC Licensed permanently when it is offline.

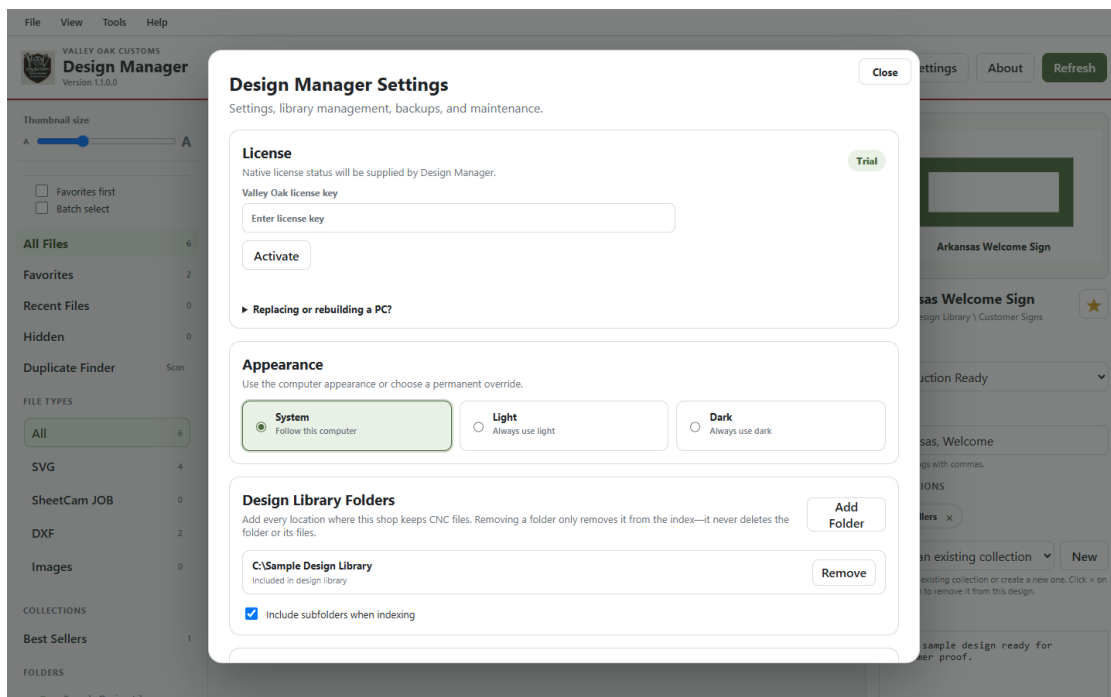
Your information remains yours: If an unlicensed trial expires, Design Manager enters Viewer Mode. It does not delete or hold design files, tags, notes, metadata, settings, backups, or exports hostage. Viewer Mode keeps safe opening, copying, metadata export, backups, diagnostics, and feedback available while editing and other paid actions remain disabled.

Use Settings > License to activate or deactivate this PC. Valley Oak Customs manually delivers the initial license credential and can review a dead-PC reset when the old machine is unavailable.

2. Add your first library

A library is simply one or more Windows folders containing the files you want Design Manager to show in its visual catalog.

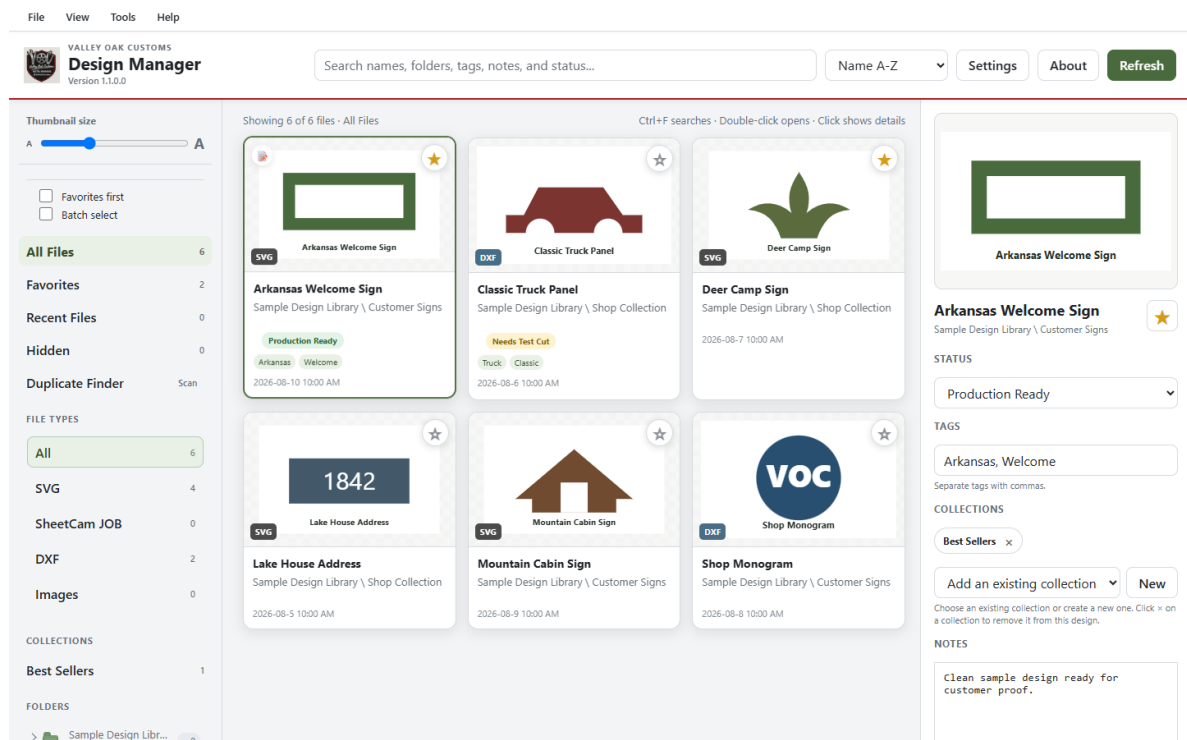
1. Click Settings.
2. Under Design Library Folders, click Add Folder.
3. Choose the main folder containing your designs.
4. Leave Include subfolders checked when your designs are arranged in category folders.
5. Close Settings and give the thumbnails time to appear.



Settings - add one or more folders containing the designs you want Design Manager to include in its catalog.

Good to know: Removing a library folder from Settings removes it only from the Design Manager catalog. The folder and its files remain on disk.

3. Understand the main screen



Main screen - filter the library on the left; select a design in the center; use the Details panel on the right for tags, notes, status, and actions.

Area	Use it for
Menus and top bar	File, View, Tools, Help, Search, Sort, Settings, About, and Refresh.
Left	Favorites, file types, collections, folders, and thumbnail size.
Center	Browse and select design cards.
Right Details panel	Favorite, status, tags, collections, notes, dimensions, file actions, and Preview Studio.

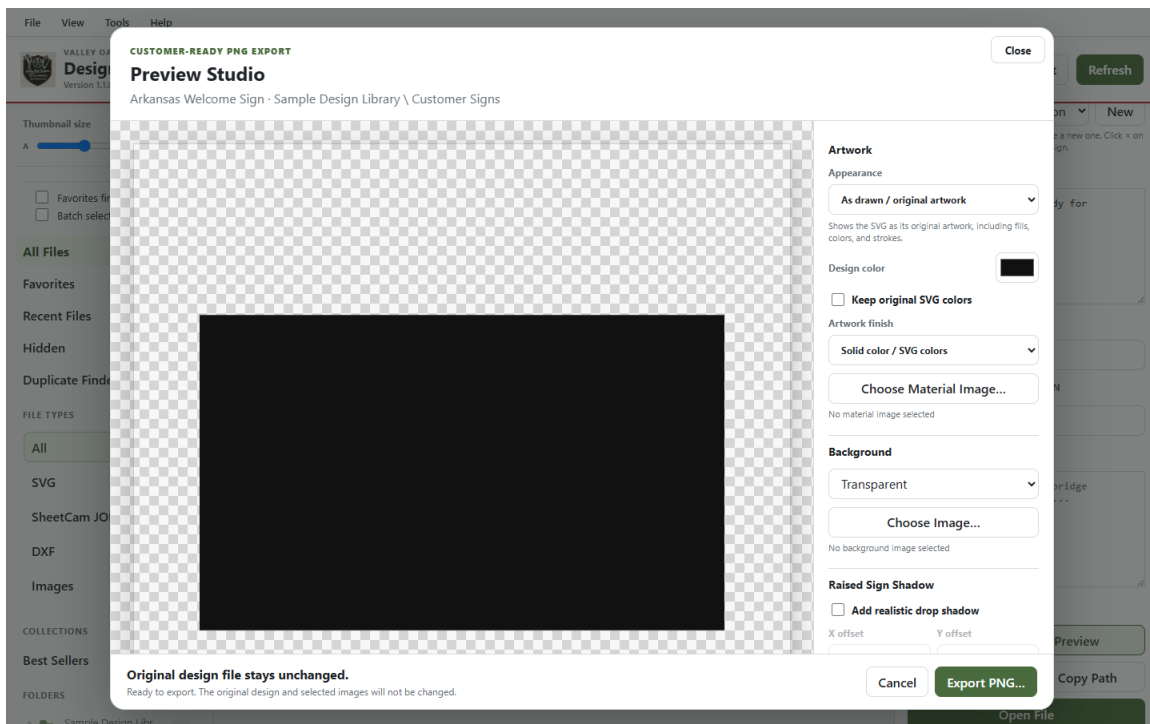
4. Find and organize one design

1. Type part of a filename, folder, tag, note, or status in Search. Ctrl+F jumps to Search.
2. Use the left-side filters to narrow the results. Recent Files tracks files opened in Design Manager.
3. Click a design once to show its Details panel. Double-click to open it.
4. Add a status, a few comma-separated tags, a collection, or notes. Wait for Saved automatically.

5. Create one customer proof

Preview Studio works with SVG and DXF designs and exports a separate PNG proof.

1. Select an SVG or DXF and click Create Customer Preview.
2. Choose the artwork appearance. As drawn / original artwork is the safest starting point.
3. Choose a background, and optionally add a shadow, shop branding, PROOF label, or customer/job text.
4. Choose the output size and padding.
5. Click Export PNG and select where to save the proof.



Preview Studio - create a separate PNG proof without modifying the original SVG or DXF.

DXF tip: If a complex or open DXF does not fill correctly, use As drawn / cut lines or use an SVG made from closed filled shapes.

6. Know which actions affect files

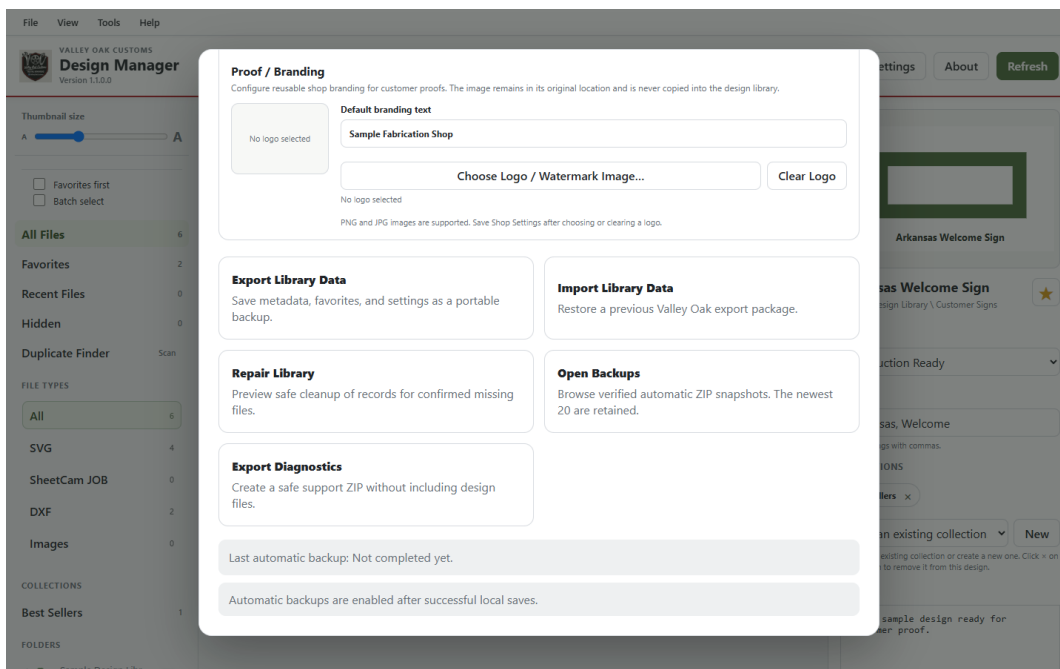
Most organization work changes only Design Manager's saved notes and organization information. Three file actions also change the actual Windows file.

Design Manager organization actions	Real file actions
Favorite, Tags, Notes, Status	Rename - renames the file on disk
Collections and Hide	Archive - moves the file into its library's _Archive folder
Add/remove a library folder from the catalog	Move to Recycle Bin - sends the file to the Windows Recycle Bin

Real file actions: These controls are normal file-management tools, not a reason to worry. Just remember that Rename, Archive, and Move to Recycle Bin affect the real file, the same way File Explorer would.

7. Backups and Repair basics

- Design Manager automatically backs up its settings, saved notes, and organization information.
- The newest 20 routine automatic backups are kept.
- Automatic backups do not contain your actual SVG, DXF, JOB, or image library.
- Keep using your normal backup method for the real design folders.
- A backup warning does not automatically mean the local save failed.



Settings - Export, Import, Repair, automatic backups, and safe diagnostic tools are grouped together.

Repair Library

Repair Library removes saved references to files that are truly gone. It previews changes first and protects offline drives and library folders. If a library folder is unavailable, Design Manager does not remove its saved information. Repair does not repair SVG or DXF artwork.

Help and appearance

Use Help > Quick Start Guide or Help > User Manual to open the installed PDFs in the normal Windows PDF viewer. Help also provides Send Feedback, View License Agreement, and About. Under Settings > Appearance, System follows the operating system appearance; Light and Dark are explicit persistent overrides. Application appearance does not change exported customer-proof pixels.

8. Try these first if something looks wrong

What you see	First thing to try
A new or moved file is missing	Click Refresh.
No results appear	Clear Search and choose All Files and All.
A whole library is missing	Open Settings and confirm its drive or folder is available.
A DXF proof fill looks wrong	Use As drawn / cut lines.
Dashboard send is unavailable	Settings > Dashboard Integration > Browse, then Test Connection.
Backup warning	Check that Documents/OneDrive is available; your local save may still be fine.
Need support information	Settings > Export Diagnostics. It does not include your design files.

You're ready

Simple daily workflow: Find → organize → open in your normal design software → record what you learned → create a proof when needed.

For batch tools, shop estimating fields, Dashboard handoff details, restore behavior, storage locations, and deeper troubleshooting, use the full Valley Oak Customs Design Manager User Manual.

Advanced / good to know

Active Design Manager information is stored under %LocalAppData%\Valley Oak Customs\Design Manager. User-facing backups and exports stay under Documents\Valley Oak Design Manager.