



VALLEY OAK CUSTOMS

Design Manager

User Manual

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.

How to use this manual

Read Getting Started once, then use the remaining chapters as a reference. Exact button and menu names match Design Manager V1.1.0.0.

Scope: This manual documents Valley Oak Customs Design Manager V1.1.0.0 for Windows. Later versions may move or rename controls.

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GETTING STARTED

1. Product overview and safety model

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 workflows. It builds a visual catalog from files that remain in your normal Windows folders.

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 can still organize related SVG/DXF templates, drawings, engraving artwork, reference images, and other supported project files.

Supported library files

Group	Extensions	Normal use
Vector designs	SVG, DXF	Preview, organize, open, and create separate PNG customer proofs.
SheetCam jobs	JOB	Catalog and open SheetCam JOB files.
Images	PNG, JPG, JPEG, BMP, GIF, WEBP	Catalog reference artwork, mockups, and finished-product photos.

Three kinds of information

What it is	Plain-English description
YOUR DESIGN FILES	The SVG, DXF, JOB, and image files you own and keep in normal Windows folders.
DESIGN MANAGER INFORMATION	Favorites, tags, notes, status, collections, settings, shop information, and other organization details the program remembers.
BACKUPS AND EXPORTS	Recovery copies of Design Manager's saved information. They do not contain the source design library.

Real files stay real: Favorite, Tags, Notes, Status, Collections, Hide, and library-folder changes organize the catalog. Rename, Archive, and Move to Recycle Bin affect the actual Windows file, just as similar File Explorer actions would.

2. Installation and first launch

Install

1. Close any older Design Manager window.
2. Run the trusted setup program.
3. Review and accept the Software License Agreement.
4. Complete setup and start Design Manager.

SmartScreen and installer trust

The installer is not digitally signed, so Windows may show Unknown publisher. Continue only when the installer came from the trusted Valley Oak Customs tester package. Help > View License Agreement reopens the agreement.

Upgrade behavior

An in-place upgrade preserves supported older Design Manager information and locations. V1.1.0 upgrades V1.0.0 as the same installed Windows product. Only one Design Manager window writes information at a time, and the program saves pending notes and shop changes when it closes.

Trial and perpetual license

- A new installation receives a 30-day full-feature trial.
- A perpetual Design Manager 1.x license supports two activated Windows PCs.
- Activation needs a brief internet connection. After activation, the signed machine certificate verifies locally and the purchased version continues working permanently offline.
- Use Settings > License to activate or normally deactivate a PC before moving its slot.
- If the old PC is dead or unavailable, submit a recovery request for Valley Oak Customs to review and reset manually.
- Initial license credentials and replacement-PC support are delivered manually for this release; public checkout is not enabled.

Viewer Mode and data ownership

When an unlicensed trial expires, Design Manager enters Viewer Mode rather than locking the user out. Viewer Mode permits safe source-file opening and copying, metadata export, backup access, diagnostics, and feedback. Editing metadata and shop information, batch mutations, file mutations, paid Preview Studio actions, and Dashboard sending require an active trial or license.

Never held hostage: Trial expiration and licensing changes do not delete, encrypt, move, or withhold design files, tags, notes, status, collections, shop settings, metadata, backups, or exports.

Add your first library folder

1. Open Settings.
2. Click Add Folder under Design Library Folders.
3. Select the main folder that contains the designs you want to catalog.
4. Leave Include subfolders enabled when designs are organized in category folders.

5. Close Settings and allow the catalog and thumbnails to load.

3. Main screen and daily workflow

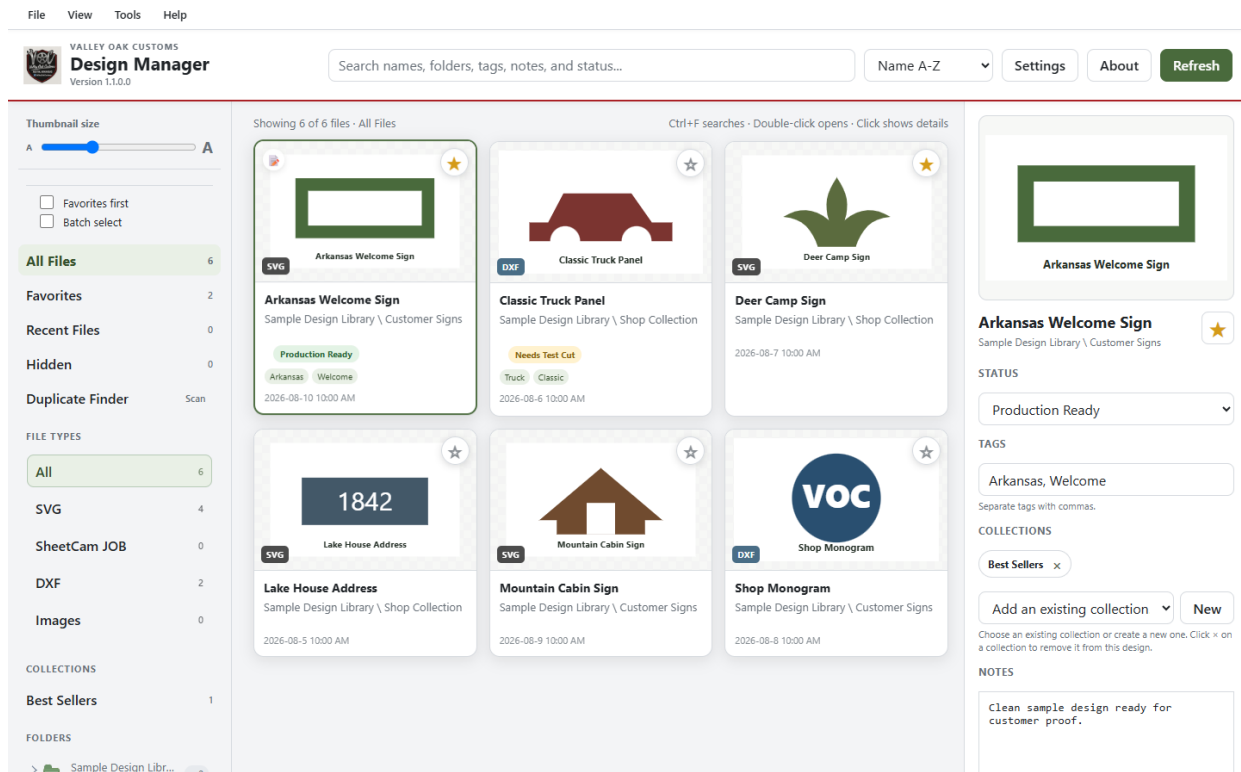


Figure 1. Main screen - filters are on the left, design cards are in the center, and saved notes and actions are in the Details panel on the right.

Area	Purpose
Menus and top bar	File, View, Tools, Help, Search, Sort, Settings, About, and Refresh.
Left navigation	Thumbnail size, Favorites first, Batch select, views, file types, collections, and folders.
Center gallery	Thumbnail cards and the current result count.
Right Details panel	Preview, Favorite, Status, Tags, Collections, Notes, dimensions, file actions, and Preview Studio.

Desktop menus

File contains library and data actions. View changes the current library view. Tools opens Preview Studio, Duplicate Finder, backups, Repair, and Settings. Help includes Quick Start Guide, User Manual, Send Feedback, View License Agreement, and About. Menu and toolbar actions share the same command system.

Search and filters

- Search matches filenames, folders, tags, notes, and status.
- Ctrl+F focuses Search; clear the box to restore the current view.

- Sort by name or date.
- If nothing appears, clear Search and return to All Files and All.

Opening a file

Double-click a card, click Open File, or right-click and choose Open File. Windows uses the normal program associated with that file type. Open Folder shows the containing folder; Copy Path copies the full Windows location.

Refresh

Click Refresh after adding, deleting, renaming, or moving files outside Design Manager. Large libraries may continue preparing thumbnails while the gallery remains usable.

ORGANIZING AND USING DESIGNS

4. Favorites, Tags, Collections, Status, and library organization

Favorites

Click the star in Details or use the right-click menu. Favorites first keeps starred designs at the top of broader results.

Tags

Enter comma-separated labels that help across folder boundaries, such as Truck, Wildlife, Arkansas, Customer, Engraving, Tested, or Christmas.

Collections

Collections group files without moving them. Choose an existing collection or click New. Removing a collection chip changes only that membership.

Status

Status	Suggested meaning
Not set	Not reviewed yet.
Production Ready	Known-good design ready for the normal production workflow.
Needs Test Cut	Needs a physical test or machine check before routine production.
Needs Cleanup	Artwork, contours, bridges, or other design details need attention.
Customer Order	Currently tied to an active customer request.
Retired	Kept for history but not recommended for current production.

Hidden, folders, Recent Files, and duplicates

Hide removes clutter from normal views without moving the file. Hidden shows those designs again. Folder filters follow the library's Windows folders. Recent Files tracks files opened in Design Manager. Duplicate Finder identifies candidates for review; compare paths and workflow use before recycling either copy.

5. File actions and batch tools

Design Manager organization actions	Real file actions
Favorite, Tags, Notes, Status	Rename - renames the source file and updates Design Manager references.
Collections and Hide	Archive - moves the source file into the appropriate _Archive folder.
Add/remove a library folder from the catalog	Move to Recycle Bin - uses the Windows Recycle Bin.

Real file actions: Rename, Archive, and Move to Recycle Bin affect the actual Windows file, just as similar actions in File Explorer would.

Batch select

1. Check Batch select in the left pane.
2. Click each card you want to select.
3. Confirm the selected count in the batch toolbar.
4. Choose Add Tags, Set Status, Add to Collection, Hide, Archive, or Recycle.
5. Use Clear when finished.

Before a batch file action: Confirm the selected count and current filter. Batch Archive and Recycle apply to every selected source file.

6. Design details and shop information

Field	How to use it
Notes	Record source, customer fit, revisions, or general observations.
Finished dimensions	Record a readable finished size such as 32 x 32 in.
Material recommendation	Record the material normally used for this design.
Cut / testing notes	Record machine settings, test results, cleanup needs, material behavior, or anything learned while producing the design.

Plasma examples may include pierce, feed, bridge, or dropout notes. Laser users may record power, speed, focus, material, or engraving observations.

Saved notes and organization information update automatically. Wait for Saved automatically before closing immediately after a large edit.

Shop Intelligence fields

Where enabled, per-design fields record material/thickness, finished size, cut time, finish, sell price, customer, times sold, stock count, and last-sold date. Material allocation uses finished area, sheet area/price, and the shop waste percentage.

Pricing note: Design Manager V1.1.0.0 does not provide a complete job-profit estimate. Displayed gross-margin information is primarily a material-cost reference and does not include all labor, consumables, finishing, overhead, discounts, taxes, or other job costs.

7. Preview Studio

Original stays unchanged: Preview Studio creates a separate PNG and does not modify the original SVG or DXF.

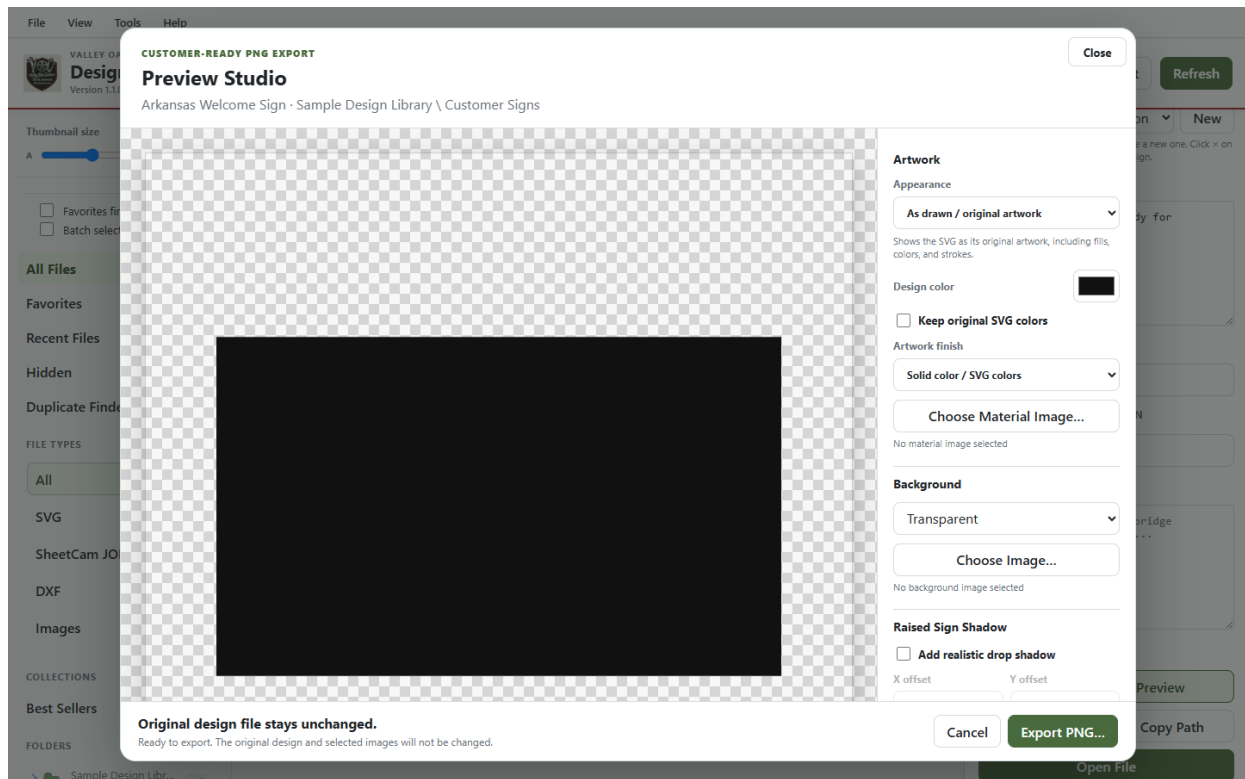


Figure 2. Preview Studio - Artwork and Background controls shape the proof; lower controls provide Shadow, Proof / Branding, Output size, and Export PNG.

Create a proof

1. Select an SVG or DXF.
2. Click Create Customer Preview and wait for the artwork to appear.
3. Choose Artwork appearance and color or texture.
4. Choose a Background and optional Raised Sign Shadow.
5. Add optional Proof / Branding details.
6. Choose Output size and padding, then click Export PNG.

Artwork

Control	Meaning
As drawn / original artwork	Safest representation; SVG can retain original colors.
Filled cutout (best effort)	Attempts a solid cutout appearance.
Negative plate / cut openings	Shows openings against a plate-style silhouette.
Material texture image	Uses a selected PNG/JPG texture inside the artwork.

DXF limitation: Complex, open, or crossing DXF contours may not fill as expected. Use As drawn / cut lines or a closed-shape SVG for the most reliable proof.

Background, shadow, branding, and output

- Background: transparent, standard color, custom color, or customer/shop photo; Fit preserves the whole photo and Fill may crop it.
- Raised Sign Shadow: adjustable X/Y offset, blur, opacity, and color.
- Proof / Branding: Logo, Text, Logo + Text, optional PROOF label, customer/job text, position, size, and opacity.
- Output: Square 1080 x 1080, Facebook landscape 1200 x 630, Portrait 1080 x 1350, artwork proportions, or custom 256-4000 pixels per side.
- Customer/job text clears for every fresh Preview Studio session; general appearance settings are remembered.

SETUP AND INTEGRATION

8. Settings and shop setup

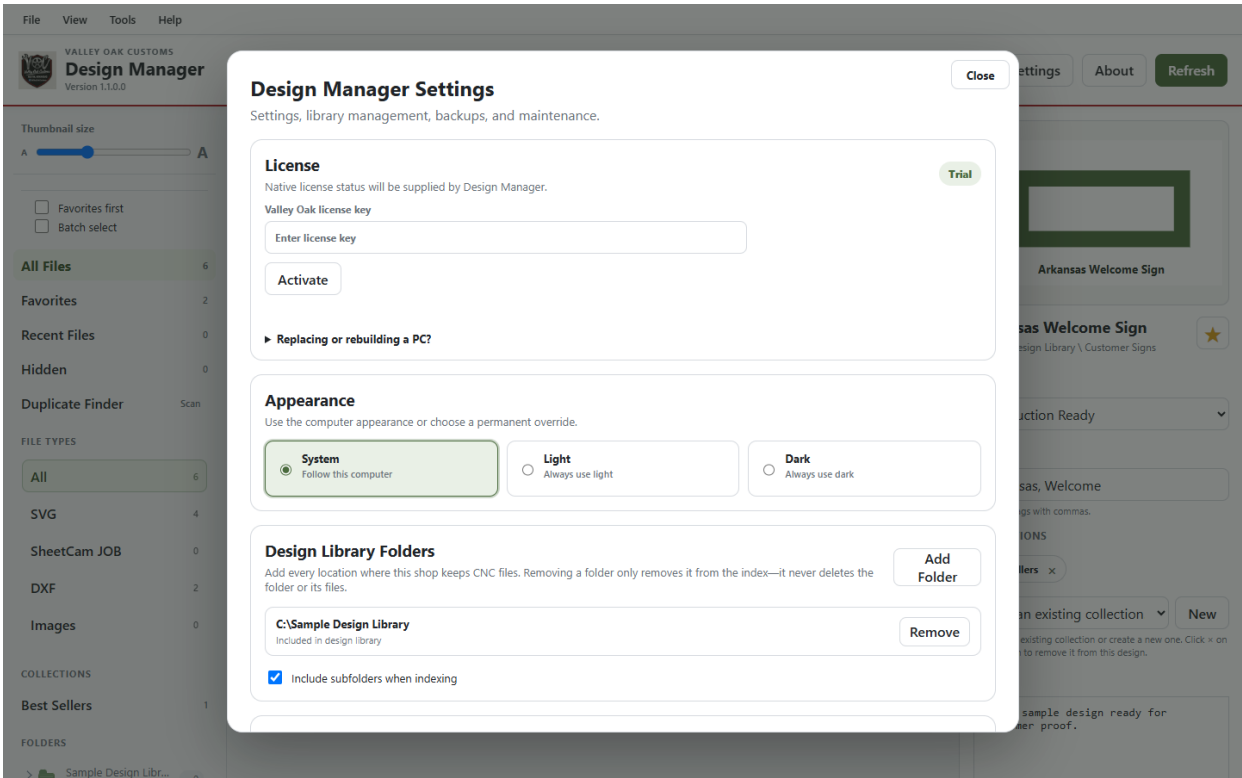
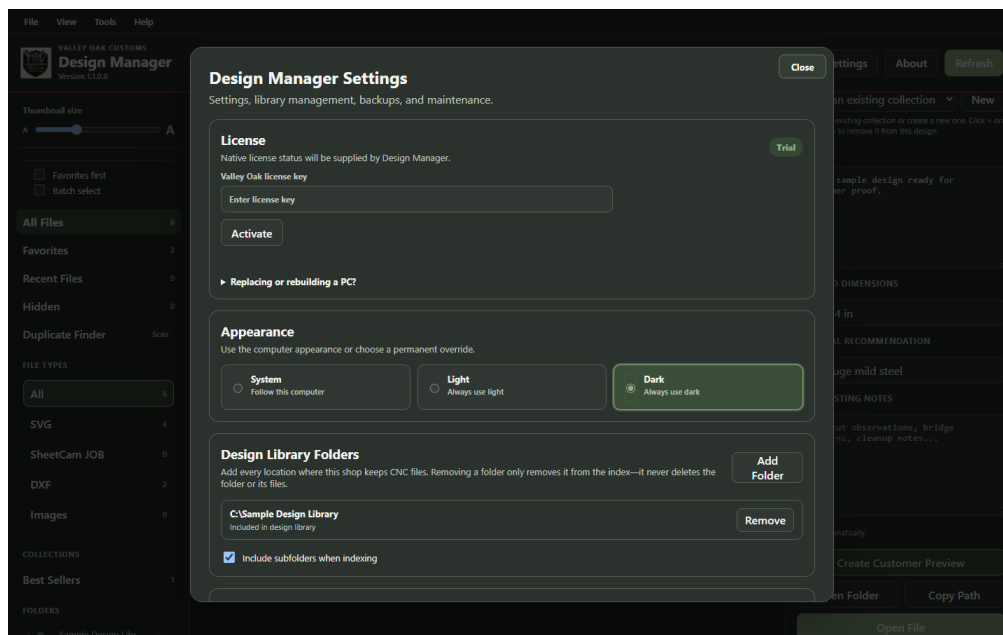


Figure 3. Settings - add library folders, confirm an unavailable drive, connect the optional Dashboard, and enter shop defaults.

Appearance

System is the default and follows the operating system light or dark appearance. Light and Dark are explicit overrides that remain selected until changed. Appearance changes Design Manager application chrome only; it does not alter Preview Studio customer-proof or exported PNG pixels.



Dark appearance example - use System to follow Windows automatically, or select Light or Dark as an override.

Design Library Folders

Add each Windows folder containing supported designs. Include subfolders normally stays on. If a folder or removable drive is unavailable, Design Manager marks it unavailable rather than assuming its designs were deleted. Remove takes the folder out of the catalog only.

Shop Settings

Group	Contents
Company	Name and location.
Estimating groundwork	Labor rate, markup, material waste, minimum charge.
Machine	Machine name and plasma cutter or other equipment description.
Materials and sheet prices	Material, gauge/thickness label, sheet dimensions, and price.
Paint / finish options	Selectable finishing choices.
Proof / Branding	Default text and PNG/JPG logo reference.

Logo location: Design Manager remembers the selected logo's Windows path. It does not copy the image into the design library, so keep the logo in a stable, backed-up folder.

9. Optional Dashboard integration

Optional: You do not need Valley Oak Customs Dashboard to use Design Manager. Skip this chapter if Dashboard is not installed.

Connect

1. Open Settings.
2. Under Valley Oak Customs Dashboard Integration, click Browse if Dashboard is not found automatically.
3. Select ValleyOakDashboard.exe.
4. Click Test Connection and confirm Connected.

Send a design

1. Right-click the design.
2. Choose Send Design to Valley Oak Customs Dashboard.
3. Design Manager places a local handoff in the queue and launches or contacts Dashboard.
4. Wait for Dashboard confirmed receipt. If confirmation does not arrive, the handoff remains queued for troubleshooting.

The handoff can include the design name and path, identity, dimensions, tags, notes, material recommendation, preview path, and modification time. Dashboard decides how the design is linked to a job and must not silently substitute a different job.

PROTECTING AND MAINTAINING YOUR LIBRARY

10. Backups, Export, Restore, and Repair

Design Manager automatically protects its saved settings, notes, and organization information. The newest 20 routine backups are retained. These backups do not include the source SVG, DXF, JOB, or image library, so the real design folders still need a normal file backup.

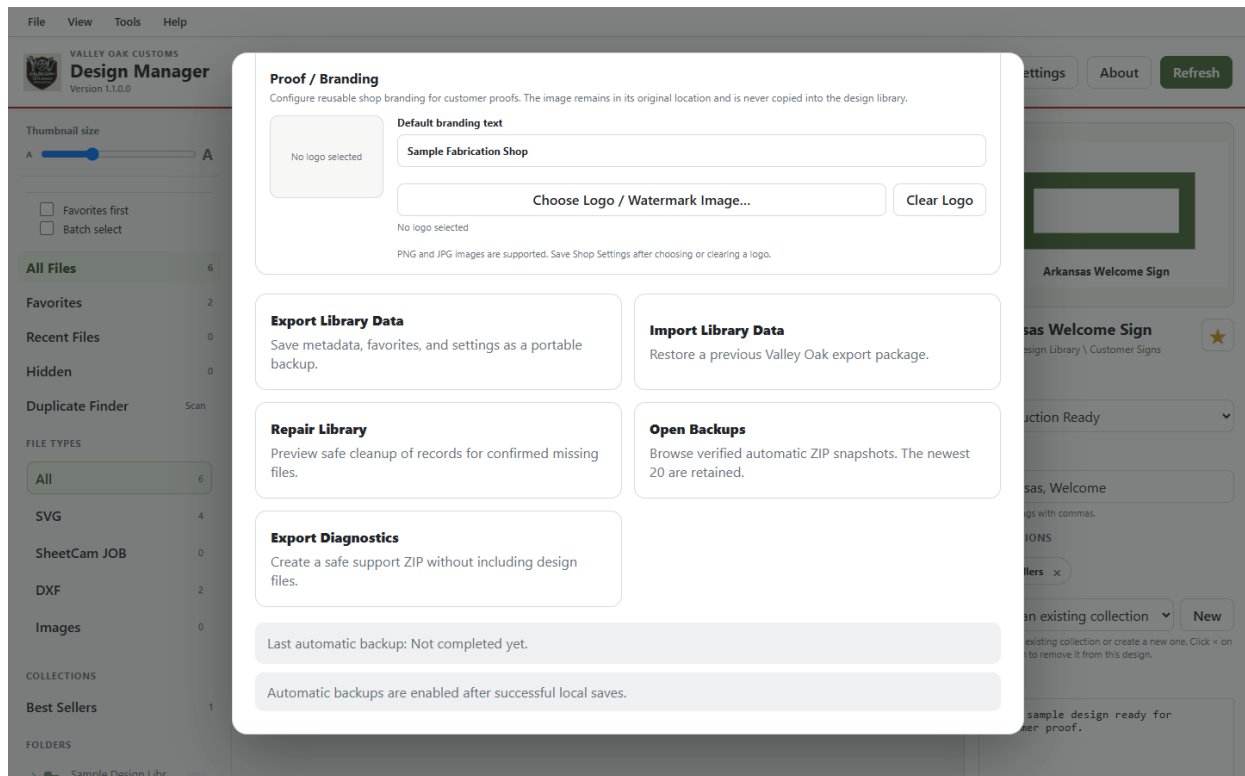


Figure 4. Maintenance controls - Export and Import Design Manager information, preview Repair, open automatic backups, or create a safe diagnostics package.

A problem with the Documents backup location does not automatically mean the local save failed. Correct the destination when available and use Export Library Data when an additional manual copy is appropriate.

Automatic backups - advanced note

Rapid edits are combined and routine backups are limited to about one every ten minutes. Design Manager verifies a backup before considering it complete. Current packages include a manifest of filenames, sizes, and SHA-256 values for technical verification.

Export Library Data

Export creates a portable .vodm.zip containing Design Manager settings and saved organization information. It does not contain source designs. Create one before moving to another PC or performing major Windows maintenance.

Restore with Import Library Data

Before applying a restore, Design Manager checks the backup and protects your current information. If the restore cannot finish safely, the previous information is put back. Current and supported older packages are accepted; information missing from an older package remains unchanged where appropriate.

1. Open Settings > Import Library Data.
2. Choose a supported .vodm.zip or ZIP package.
3. Review the package inspection and preview.
4. Continue only when the source and listed contents are correct.
5. Allow Design Manager to complete the restore and report the result.

Repair Library

Repair Library cleans Design Manager's saved references to files that are truly gone. It does not repair SVG/DXF artwork and it does not delete source designs.

1. Connect every library drive or network share.
2. Click Repair Library.
3. Review the preview and any protected-record message.
4. Cancel if an expected library folder is unavailable or uncertain.
5. Confirm only when the preview matches the intended cleanup.

Offline, unavailable, access-denied, or uncertain folders are protected. If drive availability changes after preview, Repair stops and requires a fresh review.

Export Diagnostics

Export Diagnostics creates a support ZIP containing version, Windows information, configured library folders, file counts, and the application log. It does not include design files. Review the package before sharing it.

11. Where Design Manager stores information and migration

The everyday explanation comes first: source designs stay in your library folders; active Design Manager information stays local to Windows; user-facing backups and exports stay under Documents.

Purpose	Technical Windows location
Active settings, saved organization information, cache, and logs	%LocalAppData%\Valley Oak Customs\Design Manager
Dashboard handoff Inbox and Archive	%LocalAppData%\Valley Oak Customs\Integration
Automatic backups and manual exports	Documents\Valley Oak Design Manager
Source designs	The Windows library folders selected by the user

Migration from older builds

The V0.9.5.19 migration copied missing saved information into LocalAppData without replacing newer information. It left older Documents locations as safety copies and safely handled repeated runs. Do not delete old folders merely because they appear unused; first verify current information, backups, and normal operation.

12. Troubleshooting and support

Problem	Likely cause	First action
No files appear	Search/filter or unavailable library folder	Clear Search, choose All Files/All, then check Settings and drive availability.
New or moved file missing	Catalog has not refreshed	Click Refresh.
External/removable library disappeared	Drive letter or connection unavailable	Reconnect the drive; do not assume the files were deleted.
Thumbnail unavailable	Unsupported/damaged artwork or preview issue	Open the source in its normal program and save a clean supported copy if appropriate.
DXF proof fill incomplete	Open or complex contours	Use As drawn / cut lines.
Branding logo missing	Logo moved, deleted, or unsupported	Choose a stable PNG/JPG again and save Shop Settings.
Dashboard action missing	Optional Dashboard is not connected	Browse to ValleyOakDashboard.exe and Test Connection, or ignore if Dashboard is not used.
Backup warning	Documents backup location unavailable	Restore access; the local save may still be fine.
Second launch does not open	Single-instance protection	Use the already-open window.
Close reports save failure	Pending information could not be saved	Retry; if it continues, Cancel Closing and export diagnostics. Exit Without Saving loses pending edits.
Repair protects records	A library folder is unavailable or uncertain	Cancel, reconnect the folder, Refresh, and preview Repair again.
Laser/3D format question	Only documented formats are supported	Use SVG/DXF/JOB/images. Native STL/3MF viewing and slicing are not provided.

Support report checklist

- Version shown under About.
- Exact steps you performed.
- What you expected.
- What actually happened, including exact message text.
- Whether Refresh or restart changes the result.
- Screenshot when useful.
- Settings > Export Diagnostics ZIP, after reviewing it before sharing.

Appendix A. Status and field reference

Field	Stored as	Notes
Favorite	Organization flag	Fast personal priority marker.
Status	Organization text	Use the supplied status list consistently.
Tags	Organization list	Comma-separated, cross-folder labels.
Collections	Organization list	Virtual groups; no source-file move.
Notes	Saved text	General searchable notes.
Finished dimensions	Saved text	Dashboard can read width/height when written like 32 x 32.
Material recommendation	Saved text	Plain-language suggested material.
Cut/testing notes	Saved text	Machine settings, tests, and production learning.
Shop fields	Shop information	Per-design sales, material, and finish values where enabled.

Appendix B. Backup checklist

- Your actual design-library folders have their own normal file backup. Design Manager backups protect Design Manager information, not source artwork.
- Settings > Open Backups shows recent automatic ZIP backups.
- A manual Export Library Data package exists before a PC move or major maintenance.
- The export is stored away from the PC being replaced when disaster recovery matters.
- The proof logo is in a stable, backed-up folder.
- Offline or removable library drives are connected before Repair.

Appendix C. Glossary

Term	Plain-language meaning
SVG	Scalable Vector Graphics; a vector design format widely used by CNC, laser, graphics, and web tools.
DXF	Drawing Exchange Format; a common CAD interchange format used by design and manufacturing software.
SheetCam JOB	A saved SheetCam job/project file. Design Manager catalogs and opens it but does not replace SheetCam.
CAD	Computer-aided design software used to draw or edit designs.
CAM	Computer-aided manufacturing software used to prepare designs for a machine.
CNC	Computer numerical control; equipment that follows computer-generated motion instructions.
Library	One or more Windows folders added to Design Manager.
Catalog / Index	The searchable visual listing Design Manager builds from library folders.
Metadata	Technical term for saved notes and organization information stored separately from artwork.
Customer proof	A separate PNG exported from Preview Studio; not the source design.
Backup	A recovery copy of Design Manager information.
Restore	Putting information from a backup back into Design Manager.
Repair	Removing saved references to files confirmed gone; not artwork repair.
Dashboard handoff	An optional local message that sends selected design information to Valley Oak Customs Dashboard.