

# BUILDING BREEZEHOME - PART ONE



Callum France takes inspiration from the *Elder Scrolls* world and makes a stunning terrain piece. Though fantasy themed the design and techniques in this two-part guide can be easily transferred to all kinds of historical terrain building too!

*The Elder Scrolls: Call to Arms* is an exciting tabletop skirmish wargame from Modiphius, set in the fantasy world of The Elder Scrolls video game series. With the release of the *Skyrim Civil War* expansion, I wanted to build a playing area to depict the opening conflict of the civil war - the Battle of Whiterun - and there seemed no better place to start than building the Dovahkiin's starter home.

Many fantasy settings have a base of operations that the player can call home - a building to store their loot, rest after adventures, and share a bottle of mead with world-weary companions - in the *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, this starter-home is Breezehome, and in this guide I'll show you how to build such an auspicious home. Part one takes in the lower-level walls, texturing techniques, various wood and stone designs, and works up to the upper panels. Part two will finish the build and detail some painting techniques.

## HIT THE WEB AND GET BUILDING

When beginning a project like this, a good scale diagram helps speed up the process immensely - it saves time on bad cuts of materials and such; if you fail to plan, you plan to fail!

Scale diagrams for Breezehome can be found on the *Wargames Illustrated* website - search for Breezehome. I created these taking references from *Skyrim* itself, so the size is as accurate as possible when using 32mm scale figures.

### SHOPPING LIST (FOR BOTH PARTS)

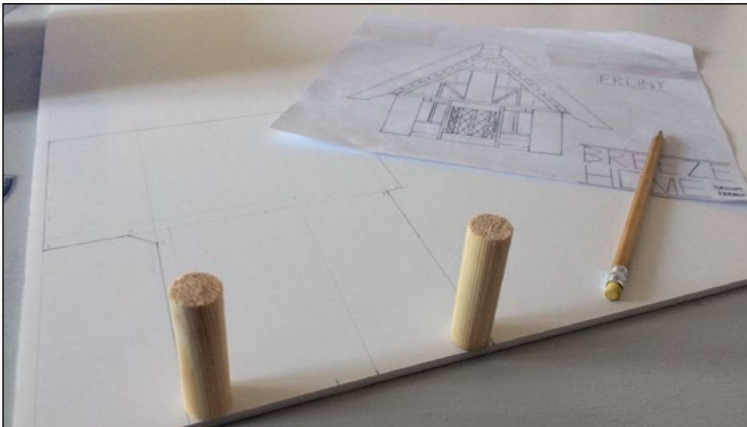
#### TOOLS

- Hand saw (if using any pinewood like we did)
- Exacto knife (also goes by Stanley blade, retractable blade)
- Sandpaper (I recommend buying some 80 grit, 120 grit, and 240 grit)
- Gorilla wood glue (I like Gorilla, but any strong-bonding wood glue will do)
- PVA glue
- 30cm ruler (a metal one is best)
- Protractor
- Pencil
- Wire brush (can also be found as a weed brush)
- Spare rolling pin (don't use your kitchen one as you'll never want this near food again!)
- An old large paintbrush (used to paint on PVA, so make sure it can be ruined)
- Spare Tupperware (to store your air-drying clay)
- Optional - clay sculpting tool

#### MATERIALS

- 1mm-thick balsa sheets (the amount depends on the size. I bought 20 sheets at 10cmx10cm)
- 2 meters of 6mm-thick wood strips (I used pinewood, but balsa strips would be easier to use)
- 2 meters of 1.3cm (1/2 inch)-thick balsa strips (must be balsa for some specific applications as pine is too tough)
- An A1 sheet of 5mm-thick foamboard
- 1 meter of 18mm-diameter dowel
- 1 meter of 18mm half-dowel
- 1 meter of 18mm quarter-dowel
- 75 x 7mm-wide coffee stirrers (smaller sizes work, you'll just need to use more of them)
- Matchsticks (without the flammable match end)
- Cardstock (I used an old cereal box)
- 1kg of DAS air-drying clay (any air-drying clay should work)
- Small rocks
- A sturdy tube (plastic or card - as long as you can warp clay around it)
- Spray varnish (matt, satin, gloss - any will work)
- Cocktail sticks
- Barbeque skewers
- Mesh fencing (I used Jarvis 'OO' wrap from my local hobby store, but anything with a fine pattern will do)
- Optional - Greenstuff (or Milliput, any two-part sculpting material)

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BUILD



1. Draw the floor space of the building on 5mm-thick foamboard and cut it out, holding the blade as straight as possible in order to keep the edge from being angled. If placing other elements helps you visualise the scale then you can do that while drawing.



2. Reference the plans online to draw the first level walls. It will be useful to label them as this guide will refer to them by letter.

## DETAILING WALL A - A DOOR AND PLANKING



3. The front door, with its central location, is an area to build everything else out from. A 4cm x 6cm piece of 1mm balsa makes the door base, then two 4cm x 1cm strips get glued (double stacked for extra thickness) to the top and bottom. Gorilla wood glue ensures a firm bond, and it is important to weigh glued pieces down to prevent warping.



4. Cut five matchsticks to 4cm in length. Texture their edges by making small nicks with your exacto blade (essential when it comes to painting as it truly sells these pieces as real bits of wood) and glue them onto the door front. The middle three should have a greater width between them than the outer two. Finish the door with coffee stirrers trimmed to 6cm in height (with distressed edges as before) glued to each edge of the door, sealing it in. Glue the door in the middle of Wall A.



5. To create the plank panelling on the walls, cut coffee stirrers to 2cm and 4cm in length and distress them, even cutting large chunks to change the shape of the plank. Use fine sandpaper (around 240 grit) to smooth the ends, rounding them so they look more natural. You should also smooth the front of each panel at the ends to create an angled finish. Place three 2cm stirrers horizontally at the wall base, then place the 4cm planks vertically. Allow a slight gap between each plank, so that the edges will catch the paint when drybrushing.



6. Finish Wall A by adding matchsticks as shown in the picture, trimmed to fit the width and height. These add visual interest and cover the spot where the planks change from horizontal to vertical. Remember to distress the edges before gluing them down! Don't worry about the pillars in the picture, we'll cover those next.

## THE FRONT WOODEN SUPPORTS



7. Take your 18mm dowel and measure out two pieces, each just above 6cm in height, marking with your pencil. I used a hand saw to cut, carefully scoring along each pencil line first and gradually rotating the rod so the cut is even across the dowel - this stops snapping and jagged edges. When cut, sand both pieces' ends so they stand level. I also rounded the edges using progressively finer sandpaper, just like I did with the planks. The final touch is to take a metal wire brush and aggressively score the dowel, running lengthways to simulate the trunk texture. The deeper and more numerous the grooves, the better this will look when painted.

## WALLS B AND H - SUPPORTS AND DETAIL



8. I recommend buying dowel that has been pre-halved for these walls; doing it yourself is difficult and potentially dangerous. Cut two 6cm lengths in the half-dowel just as before; sanding, rounding, and texturing with the wire brush. Glue one down onto each wall. The dowel wants to be slightly off-centre - for Wall B there should be roughly a 3cm gap on the right and a 4cm one on the left. This is reversed for Wall H. While that's drying, make more wood planks using coffee stirrers (as detailed earlier) to detail the walls.



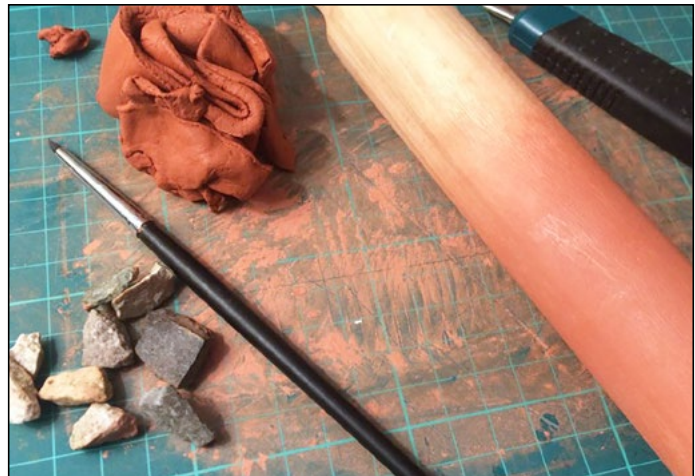
9. Wall B (left) and H (right) are opposites, so pay attention to the pictures and apply the different planks and matchsticks. The angled piece has corners cut at around a 45-degree angle so it sits flush. This finished off the first floor wooden walls. Though the photos here show the walls fixed in place, **DON'T GLUE THEM TOGETHER YET!**



### MAKING A ROLLER FOR STONE TEXTURED WALLS

a) Decide what tube you will make into your texture roller. I used the core from a fabric roll but anything structurally strong is fine. Make sure it is large enough to cover your entire wall height.

Gather some air-drying clay (I used DAS, but any brand will do), a rolling pin, a smooth and wipe-clean surface (I used a spare cutting mat), some sculpting tools (though these aren't essential), and lots of little stones. I grabbed a handful from outside, washed them in soapy water, and left them to dry.



b) Roll the clay into a long rectangle on the surface, to around half a centimetre thick, then trim it to fit your roller. Take your rocks and press them into the clay to make an indent, then remove. Vary the rocks to add variety in the texture. I found it best to work in vertical lines, as if building a cobblestone wall. This will take some time, but the better the job you do here, the better your textures will look.

c) Once you've done the entire surface, carefully slide your knife under the clay to lift it off. Coat the roller in glue (I simply used the Gorilla wood glue again) and gently stick the clay to the roll. Where the two ends meet, you may have to smooth with a clay sculpting tool (or your finger) and redo some of the rock indents. Leave to dry, standing upright, overnight. When it is completely dry, coat the entire roller in a few layers of spray varnish. Try not to leave the clay drying in a particularly warm area - especially not in direct sunlight. This causes the clay to crack excessively.

## APPLYING TEXTURE TO THE WALLS



10. Firmly press your roller into the clay, starting from one edge and moving in one continuous motion across. Keep the pressure even and if you make a mistake, simply re-smooth the clay and start again! Once you have your desired texture, slide the blade underneath to separate the clay from the surface, measure it against your wall, then cut the clay to size.



11. For the sections of cobblestone wall with exposed wood (Walls E, F and G), prep the area with wooden strip lengths as before, then fit the clay texture between, gluing it in place with Gorilla wood glue. Use a sculpting tool to smooth the clay up the edge if there are any rough patches. After around 30 minutes, or when the clay begins to harden slightly, you may wish to use a sculpting tool to further deepen the recesses between the rocks. Once you're happy, leave to dry for around 24 hours. When the clay is dry, you can cut and file any proud edges.



12. For Walls E and G, there are two windows embedded into the stone. Before rolling out any clay, cut two rectangles 1.5cm x 4cm from balsa sheets, trim matchsticks to form the frame of the window, and glue. Apply clay texture to the wall, press the window frame in, remove, then cut out the indent. The window can now be glued into the cavity.

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER

13. All the walls are now prepared, it's time to build. Test fit each in their proper place, leaving a slight gap between the wall and the edge of the foamboard. If the walls do not sit upright, sand the bottoms down with 240 grit sandpaper until they stand unaided. If any walls aren't wide enough, you can add coffee stirrers to each end to bulk them up and sand them down to the required thickness. When building Breezehome, I sanded the cobblestone wall edges at a 45-degree angle so that they fitted together smoothly.

Once happy with the dry fitting, you can begin gluing. Liberally apply Gorilla wood glue, working one wall at a time. As you can see, I supported the inside using cocktail sticks. You may notice that the cobblestone foamboard has warped slightly. This occurs because air-drying clay shrinks as it dries. Do not fear! These bends are unnoticeable in the finished product.





14. For the corner trunks, I used quarter-piece dowel secured with glue, filling any gaps with clay. They connect Walls B, C, D, and the end of Wall G.

When the construction has dried, cut another piece of foamboard slightly smaller than the floorplan piece. To help with the size, you can hold the building upside down and trace the outline to see the necessary overhang. Do not glue it down yet, this will form the base of the second floor.

## THE FIRST SECOND FLOOR PANEL



15. Cut out three identical second floor panels using the templates online. If your lower walls ended up larger than the guide provided, you'll need to ensure that the bottom line on each of these upper panels is the same width as the wall below. Glue 1mm balsa sheets over the panel. For the first panel, to go above wall A, cut a half-dowel 6cm in length and texture it before gluing it down to the panel.

16. Texture the panel using the same coffee stirrer, balsa, and matchstick techniques as before, applying them as seen here. Cover the panel with the coffee stirrers and trim their edges to fit the roof angle. Add 1.5cm wide, double depth balsa to follow the panel edge, cutting their ends to the correct angle, and continue to build these details up in further layers. At the tip where they join, you can see that I decided to add another doubled-up piece of balsa to bulk up the arch. Finish with matchstick decoration.



17. As you can see here, all the detailing is layered neatly on the edge without any proud pieces. If you do have any wood sticking out, simply sand it back down.

## THE OTHER SECOND FLOOR PANELS



18. The other two second floor panels are identical. Glue down your 1mm balsa sheet, decide how many exposed planks you want, then apply them. In my build, I used around five for each panel. These will be more raised than the original balsa sheet, so glue another piece of balsa on top of the previous one to make sure the entire panel is level before preparing the trim as with the first panel.

Use your texture roller and create the cobblestone wall texture as before. Press the panel into the cobblestone texture and trim with your exacto along the indents, then glue it to the panel, leaving the planks exposed. Finally, while the clay is still wet, press down your matchsticks into the clay, fixing them with glue and leave it all to dry.

## PUTTING THE TOP TOGETHER



19. Back to the top piece of foamboard - you may have noticed in some pictures I covered the edges in of it in wood. I recommend you do this now. The process is very simple. Cut several 5mm-wide strips from your 1mm balsa sheets and glue them along the foam edges to protect the piece and provide a better texture. Liberally apply your glue and hold the pieces in place for several minutes to allow time to bond. Don't worry about overhang, it can be sanded with 240 grit sandpaper once dry.



20. Time to stick the top piece down! Dry fit multiple times and file anything that causes a bad fit until all of the pieces are flush. Liberally apply wood glue to the top piece. I recommend gluing it upside down, placing the bottom piece onto the it so the weight helps make the bond. Place extra weights on the bottom piece to ensure the entire structure remains flat as it dries, then leave it overnight.



21. The last step this month is to glue each of the second-floor panels down: do the same as you did for the first-floor walls here. Ensure they stand up straight - if they don't, simply sand the bottoms with 240 grit sandpaper until they do and prop them up at a 90-degree angle. Make sure that the back two panels line up or you'll have an enormous headache when you get to part two of the build!

**In part two I will show you how to finish the roof structure, add tiles and other details, then paint it to make a home fit for a Dovahkiin.**