The present invention relates to replica gingerbread houses and methods of assembling the same. The replica gingerbread house includes a lower house section, a roof section, a base, and a light source positioned inside the house. A method of assembly includes preparing the base, the lower house section, and the roof section, attaching them together, and adding decorative elements. The replica gingerbread house uses non-food products such as chipboard so that the house is easy to assemble and long lasting.
Fig. 3

Roof

- Bottom of roof
- Slit for chimney (50)
- Peak of roof
- Slits for dormer (52)
- Bottom of roof

Fascia
Fascia flap
Step 1
Prepare Base

Step 2
Prepare Windows

Step 3
Shutters and Door

Step 4
Assemble House

Step 5
Prepare Roof

Step 6
Prepare Chimney

Step 7
Prepare Dormer

Step 8
Attach House

Step 9
Prepare Landscape

Step 10
Decorate

FIG. 10
REPLICA GINGERBREAD HOUSE AND METHOD OF ASSEMBLING SAME
CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/860,356, filed on Nov. 20, 2006, the entire contents of which are expressly incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to arts and crafts, and more particularly to replica gingerbread houses and methods of assembling the same.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Arts and crafts projects such as gingerbread houses are popular activities and decorations for many different holidays. For example, gingerbread houses may be decorated with winter themes and displayed during winter holidays. However, edible gingerbread houses may be difficult to assemble because they may require the preparation of edible food products, such as gingerbread, icing, and candy. Preparation of a gingerbread house may require cooking and baking as well as assembling the house. Once assembled, the edible gingerbread house may require special care to ensure that it does not melt, crack, soften, or otherwise become damaged or spoiled. Even with special care, edible gingerbread houses may not be very durable and may not last long enough to be stored and displayed again during the next holiday or the next year.

[0004] Therefore, there is still a need for a non-edible gingerbread house and a method of assembling a non-edible gingerbread house that is simple to perform and that creates a durable product that will last longer than prior art edible gingerbread houses.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In one embodiment of the invention, a method of assembling a replica gingerbread house includes obtaining a replica gingerbread house in an unassembled state. The replica gingerbread house includes a lower house section comprising a plurality of walls, with adjacent walls separated by a house score line; a roof section comprising a roof panel and a roof peak score line; a base; and a light support. The method further includes attaching the light support to a top surface of the base, and folding the roof panel along the roof peak score line, attaching the lower house section to the light support, and placing the roof section on the lower house section.

[0006] In one embodiment, a replica gingerbread house includes a lower house section comprising a plurality of walls, with adjacent walls separated by a house score line; a roof section comprising a roof panel and a roof peak score line; a light support configured to support the lower house section; and a base configured to attach to the light support. The lower house section may be constructed out of one piece of chipboard material.

[0007] In one embodiment of the present invention, a replica gingerbread house is provided. The house comprises a lower house section, a roof section, a base, a light support, and, optionally, a light source, and decorating elements. The lower house section comprises four walls forming an interior space and an open bottom. The walls may include window openings. The roof section may include a roof peak, a chimney, a fascia, and a dormer. The light source is attached to the base, and the lower house section is attached to the base such that it covers the light source. The roof section is placed on top of the lower house section to complete the replica gingerbread house. The house may be decorated with any desired decorating elements.

[0008] In another embodiment, a method of assembling a replica gingerbread house is provided. The method includes the steps of preparing the base, preparing the windows in the walls of the lower house section, attaching window shutters and a door, assembling the four walls of the lower house section, assembling the roof section, including shingles, a chimney, and a dormer, attaching the house to the base, arranging a landscape surrounding the house on the base, and adding any desired decorative elements.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The above and other embodiments of the present invention will be appreciated as the same become better understood with reference to the specification, claims and appended drawings wherein:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a corner elevational view of a replica gingerbread house in an embodiment of the present invention in an assembled position;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a front view of the lower house portion of the replica gingerbread house of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a top view of the roof portion of the replica gingerbread house of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a side view of the chimney portion of the replica gingerbread house of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position;

[0014] FIG. 5 is a top view of the dormer portion of the replica gingerbread house of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position;

[0015] FIG. 6 is a top perspective view of a base section of a replica gingerbread house in an embodiment of the present invention;

[0016] FIG. 7 is a bottom perspective view of the base section of FIG. 6;

[0017] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a base section of a replica gingerbread house in an embodiment of the present invention;

[0018] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a foam light support of the replica gingerbread house of FIG. 8;

[0019] FIG. 10 is a flowchart of a method of assembling a replica gingerbread house according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0020] FIG. 11A is a front view of a window with window film according to an embodiment of the invention;
[0021] FIG. 11B is a front view of a window with window film according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0022] FIG. 12A is a front view of a front wall of a replica gingerbread house with decorations according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0023] FIG. 12B is a top view of a chipboard strip according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0024] FIG. 13 is a schematic view of a light source attached to a base according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0025] FIG. 14 is a front view of a roof panel partially covered with shingles, according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0026] FIG. 15A is a front view of a chimney section with decorative trim according to an embodiment of the invention; and

[0027] FIG. 15B is a front view of a fascia with decorative trim according to an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of the presently preferred embodiments of replica gingerbread houses and methods of assembling the same provided in accordance with the present invention and is not intended to represent the only forms in which the present invention may be constructed or utilized. The description sets forth the features and the steps for constructing the replica gingerbread houses of the present invention in connection with the illustrated embodiments. It is to be understood, however, that the same or equivalent functions and structures may be accomplished by different embodiments that are also intended to be encompassed within the spirit and scope of the invention. As denoted elsewhere herein, like element numbers are intended to indicate like elements or features.

[0029] FIG. 1 shows a perspective side view of a replica gingerbread house 10 in an embodiment of the present invention in an assembled position. The replica gingerbread house 10 is constructed out of non-food products that are designed to resemble an edible gingerbread house. The house 10 thus resembles a genuine edible gingerbread house, and it can convey many of the same holiday and winter images as an edible gingerbread house, while avoiding many of the drawbacks. In each embodiment, the house 10 does not require any baking, cooking, or preparation of any food products. It can be stored after the holiday or winter season and re-used at a later date. In addition, the house 10 may include a light source (described below) inside the open interior space of the house to illuminate the house from inside, giving the house an authentic look and feel.

[0030] Referring to FIG. 1, the house 10 includes two main sections, a lower house section 12 and a roof section 14. The roof section 14 sits on top of the lower house section 12, which comprises an open bottom 31 and an interior space 33. The lower house section 12 in this embodiment comprises a front wall 32, two side walls 34 and 38, and a rear wall 36. These walls comprise one or more window openings 30. The window openings 30 shown in FIG. 1 are rectangular in shape, but in other embodiments the window openings could be other shapes and sizes, and may be grouped or arranged in any suitable manner. The number of window openings 30 on each wall may also vary.

[0031] The roof section 14 comprises a roof panel 22, a chimney 24, a dormer 26, and a fascia 28. However, these features are optional and may be absent in other embodiments of the replica gingerbread house. Additionally, the number, size, spacing, and arrangement of these elements may vary according to different embodiments. For example, the fascia 28 may be larger or smaller to account for decorations that the user desires to add to the house, such as icicles hanging from the fascia, or holiday lights, or other suitable decorations. In another embodiment, the house 10 may comprise less than or more than one dormer 26, and/or less than or more than one chimney 24.

[0032] The lower house section 12 and roof section 14 may be constructed of cardboard, chipboard, foamboard, thick paper, or another suitable material known to those skilled in the art. The material should be foldable so that the walls and roof can be folded into a desired shape. The material should also be sturdy enough to support itself and the roof section and additional decorations added by the user. Chipboard is presently preferred as the material of construction because it resembles the color and texture of gingerbread.

[0033] The house 10 shown in FIG. 1 may be decorated in any manner desired by the user, including but not limited to decorations for holidays, winter-themed decorations, birthday-themed decorations, celebrations, or any other suitable decorating theme. These decorations can include paint, paper, stickers, tape, markers, cutouts, shutters, shingles, and replica trees, walkways, plants, fences, sidewalks, icicles, snow, lights, and any other suitable decoration. In fact, the decorations could include food items, if so desired by the user, although food items are not required for the decoration of the house.

[0034] FIG. 2 shows a front view of the lower house section 12 of the replica gingerbread house 10 of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position. The lower house section 12 comprises a front wall 32, a first side wall 34, a rear wall 36, and a second side wall 38. The front wall 32 and rear wall 36 include roof support panels 37 that extend beyond the top edge of the two side walls 34 and 38. A wall flap 40 extends from the side of the rear wall 36. In this embodiment, the four walls, the roof support panels, and the wall flap are all constructed out of one unitary piece of material. In other embodiments, they may be constructed of separate pieces that are then assembled together. The walls and the wall flap 40 are separated by score lines 42.

[0035] The lower house section 12 in FIG. 2 also comprises window openings 30. The window opening 44, the lower left window opening on the front wall 32, may be used for placement of a door. The door placement is optional, however, and the window opening 44 may simply be used as a window. As discussed above, the number, size, shape, and arrangement of the window openings 30 may vary in different embodiments of the replica gingerbread house.

[0036] FIG. 3 shows a top view of the roof portion 14 of the replica gingerbread house 10 of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position. The roof portion 14 includes a roof panel 22 and a fascia 28 extending from one side of the roof panel 22 and separated from the panel 22 by a fascia score line 47.
The fascia 28 includes a fascia flap 46 separated from the fascia 28 by a fascia flap score line 45. The roof panel 22 includes a chimney slit 50, two dormer slits 52, and a roof peak score line 48. The roof peak score line 48 forms the peak of the roof when the roof section 14 is placed on the lower house section 12, as shown in FIG. 1.

[0037] Although only one fascia 28 is shown in FIG. 3, other embodiments of the replica gingerbread house may have more than one fascia. For example, in a preferred embodiment, a second fascia could be included on the opposite side of the roof panel 22 from the fascia 28 in FIG. 3. In this embodiment, when the roof panel 22 is folded along the roof peak score line 48 and assembled, there is one fascia on each of the two sloping sides of the roof. Additionally, FIG. 3 shows one chimney slit 50 and two dormer slits 52, but the number, size, and arrangement of these elements may vary as well in other embodiments. For example, the slits 50 and 52 could both be on the same side of the roof peak score line 48, or they could be on different sides, as shown in FIG. 3. The size and number of the slits 50 and 52 may vary depending on the size and number of chimneys and dormers. The orientation of the slits 50 and 52 may also vary with the placement and orientation of the chimney and dormer on the roof panel 22.

[0038] The placement of the roof peak score line 48 may also vary according to a specific embodiment. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, the line 48 divides the roof panel 22 in half, but in other embodiments, the line 48 may be closer to one edge than another, such that the roof panel 22 is divided into two unequal parts.

[0039] FIG. 4 shows a side view of the chimney 24 of the replica gingerbread house of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position. The chimney 24 includes four chimney score lines 54, a chimney flap 56, and a chimney tab 58. The chimney forms a three-dimensional shape when the user folds the chimney 24 along the score lines 54 (described below). The chimney tab 58 is designed to attach the chimney to the roof panel 22 by inserting the tab 58 into the chimney slit 50, shown in FIG. 3.

[0040] FIG. 5 is a top view of the dormer 26 of the replica gingerbread house 10 of FIG. 1 in an unassembled position. The dormer 26 includes a dormer score line 60 and two dormer tabs 62. The dormer score line 60 forms the peak of the dormer 60 when it is assembled and attached to the house 10, as shown in FIG. 1.

[0041] FIG. 6 is a top perspective view of a base section 16 of a replica gingerbread house in an embodiment of the present invention. The base section 16 shown in FIG. 6 has a rounded, circular shape, but the shape may vary in other embodiments. The base section 16 may have any suitable shape desired by the user for the replica gingerbread house. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 6, the base section 16 comprises a top surface 13 and a bottom surface 15. The top surface 13 comprises an indented outline 19 marking the location where the gingerbread house will be placed. The base section 16 further comprises a hole 20 cut out in the middle of the space outlined by the indented outline 19. On the bottom surface 15, at one side of the hole 20, there is a groove 18 which extends from the hole 20 to an outer edge of the base section 16.

[0042] The hole 20 is configured to receive a light source 70 (see FIG. 13) such as a C7 decorative light bulb. A 5 watt light bulb is preferred, as a higher wattage bulb may overheat and/or cause damage to the house 10. However, the wattage may be higher or lower in other embodiments. For example, if a larger house is assembled, a larger light bulb may be used. The size and color of the light source may also be varied. The light source can be inserted into the hole 20 and secured to the base section 16. When the house is placed on the base section 16 along the intended outline 19, the house will cover the light source. When the light source is activated, the light will emanate from inside the house. A power cord 71 (see FIG. 13) for the light source can extend through the groove 18 to the outer edge of the base 16 so that it can be connected to a wall outlet or other suitable power supply.

[0043] FIG. 7 is a perspective bottom view of the base section 16 of FIG. 6. The hole 20 and groove 18 are visible in the bottom surface 15 of the base section 16. The base section 16 may be constructed from foam, Styrofoam, cardboard, or any other suitable material for supporting the house 10.

[0044] FIG. 8 shows a perspective view of a base section 116 in a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The base section 116 is made of cardboard, has a round shape, and is about 10 inches in diameter. In this embodiment, the base 116 does not have a hole 20 or groove 18 for receiving the light source and power cord. A light support 117, shown in FIG. 9, receives the light source and power cord and is mounted on the base 116. In one embodiment, the light support 117 is a foam rectangle. The base 116 comprises a pencil indentation 21 formed along the outline of the foam rectangle 117 according to the desired placement of the house 10.

[0045] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of the light support 117 that is mounted on the base 116 to form the completed replica gingerbread house. The light support 117 is made of Styrofoam or any other suitable material, is about 4 inches by about 5.5 inches in size, and has side edges 64. The light support 117 includes a hole 20 cut in the middle of the foam light support. The hole 20 is preferably located directly in the center of the foam, as it will determine the position of the light inside the house 10. A groove 18 extends from the hole 20 to the outer edge of the light support 117, similar to the groove 18 described in reference to FIGS. 6 and 7. A power cord connected to the light can extend through this groove 18 to the rear edge of the foam light support 117 and to a wall outlet or other power supply, as described above.

[0046] FIG. 10 shows a method of assembling a replica gingerbread house according to an embodiment of the present invention. Before beginning this method, the user should obtain a replica gingerbread house assembly kit comprising a replica gingerbread house 10, a base 16, a light source, and decorating elements. Before beginning assembly, the user can read through all of the instructions for the steps outlined in FIG. 10 before beginning Step 1, or, alternatively, read through each step before beginning that step. Additionally, the user may cover the user’s work space with a cutting mat or board or other suitable protection before beginning Step 1, and/or before beginning any step that involves the use of a razor knife or other cutting instrument.

[0047] As shown in FIG. 10, Step 1 comprises preparing the base. In a preferred embodiment, the user prepares the
base 116 shown in FIG. 8 and the foam light support 117 shown in FIG. 9. This step includes the use of the base 116, the foam light support 117, a pen or pencil, and a razor knife or other suitable cutting instrument. The user first places the tan side of the base 116 facing upwards and determines where on the base 116 the house 10 should sit. This choice is one of user preference, and may be made based on aesthetic or practical considerations. The user then places the foam light support 117 in the desired position for the house 10 and uses a pencil to lightly mark around the outline of the foam light support 117 on the base 116. When the user removes the support 117, the pencil outline 21 of the support will be visible on the base 116.

[0048] Next, the user cuts a hole 20 in the middle of the light support 117. In a preferred embodiment, this hole 20 is circular in shape, is about 1.5 inches in diameter, and is cut directly in the center of the rectangular support 117. The hole 20 creates a space for placement of a light source 70 (see FIG. 13), such as a C7 decorative light bulb, which can illuminate the house 10 from the inside when assembly of the house 10 is complete. If the hole 20 is cut too close to any of the sides of the light support 117, then the light source may be too close to a side wall of the house 10 when the house 10 is placed on the base 116 and could cause damage to the house.

[0049] The user then turns the foam light support over and marks a groove 18 with a pen or pencil extending from the hole 20 and continuing to a rear edge of the foam light support 117. The user should position the groove 18 such that it extends toward the rear wall 36 of the house 10 when the house is placed on the rectangle 117. Preferably, the groove 18 is about 0.25 inches deep, or any other depth suitable for receiving a power cord 71 (see FIG. 13). The groove 18 allows a power cord to pass from the light source placed in the hole 20 to a wall outlet or other suitable power supply. The groove 18 should not extend all the way from the bottom surface of the foam light support 117 to the top surface. That is, the groove 18 should not be visible in the top surface of the light support. The groove 18 may form a straight line from the hole 20 to the edge, or it may be curved or follow any other suitable path or contain any other suitable spaces for receiving a power cord.

[0050] Next, the user should test the light to make sure that it is functional. The user can simply plug the light into a wall outlet or other power source and ensure that it functions when turned on. If the light is functional, the user then attaches the light to the light support 117 by pressing the clips in the light into the hole 20. The power cord for the light should extend out the bottom of the hole 20. The user then carefully turns the light support 117 over and places the cord in the groove 18. Optionally, the user may then apply glue or another suitable adhesive to the base 116 in the area marked by the pencil outline 21 for placement of the house 10.

[0051] In another embodiment of Step 1, the step includes the use of the base 16, a base template, a pen or pencil, and a razor knife. Optionally, this step may also include the use of acrylic paint and a foam brush for painting the base 16. In completing this step, the user first runs the side of the pen or pencil around the edge of the top surface 13 of the base 16 to soften the edge. Next, the user determines where the house 10 will sit on the base 16. This choice is one of user preference, and may be made based on aesthetic or practical considerations. When the user has decided where the house 10 will sit, the user places the base template on the base 16 at the desired location and marks an outline 19 around the template, pressing hard enough into the top surface 13 of the base 16 to leave a small indentation that is visible after the base template is removed. This visible indentation of the outline 19 shows where the house 10 will sit.

[0052] Next, the user cuts a hole 20 in the middle of the area enclosed by the outline 19. In a preferred embodiment, this hole 20 is circular in shape, is about 1.5 inches in diameter, and is cut directly in the center of the area defined by outline 19. The hole 20 creates a space for placement of a light source, such as a C7 decorative light bulb, which can illuminate the house 10 from the inside when assembly of the house 10 is complete. If the hole 20 is cut too close to any of the sides of outline 19, then the light source may be too close to a side wall of the house 10 when the house 10 is placed on the base 16 and can cause damage to the house.

[0053] Next, the user turns the base over so that the bottom surface 15 is facing upwards. The hole 20 will be visible on the bottom surface 15. The user should mark a groove 18 with a pen or pencil extending from the hole 20 and continuing to the edge of the base 16. The user should position the groove 18 such that it extends toward the rear wall 36 of the house 10 when the house is placed on the base 16. Preferably, the groove 18 is about 0.25 inches deep, or any other depth suitable for receiving a power cord. The groove 18 allows a power cord to pass from the light source placed in the hole 20 to a wall outlet or other suitable power supply. The groove 18 should not extend all the way from the bottom surface 15 to the top surface 13. That is, the groove 18 should not be visible in the top surface 13. The groove 18 may form a straight line from the hole 20 to the edge of the base 16, or it may be curved or follow any other suitable path or contain any other suitable spaces for receiving a power cord.

[0054] Optionally, the user can turn the base 16 back over so that the top surface 13 is facing upwards, and then paint the edges and top surface 13 of the base 16 with any suitable paint, in any desired color. When painting the base 16, the user may choose to skip over the area enclosed by the outline 19, as this area will be covered by the house 10 when the assembly is complete. The user should allow the paint to dry before attaching the house 10 to the base 16 (Step 8). If desired, the user may apply multiple coats of paint to the base 16, and can paint the bottom surface 15 as well as the edges and top surface 13.

[0055] As shown in FIG. 10, Step 2 comprises preparing the windows. This step includes the use of the house 10, window film 72, decorating elements, scissors, adhesives, and a razor knife. In this and other steps where adhesives are used, tacky glue and glue sticks are preferred adhesives, as they create a desirable tight bond. However, other adhesives may also be used, including adhesive runners, tape, glue, or other adhesives suitable for crafts projects. Photo and scrapbook adhesives are not recommended.

[0056] During Step 2, the user folds the lower house section 12 along the four score lines 42. This folding creates a three-dimensional shape that will form the shape of the house 10. When folding the lower house section 12, or any other elements in later steps, the user should fold hard enough to create a crease in the material that is being folded.
[0057] After the user has folded the fold lines 42, the user should open the lower house section 12 into a generally flat position and place it face down on the user’s work space. That is, the inside surface of the lower house section 12 is facing the user. Next, the user should take the window film 72, provided in the gingerbread house assembly kit, and carefully cut out the windows along the thin lines 73 printed on the film. The thick lines 74 printed on the window film are the window panes which will show through the window openings 30 when the house 10 is assembled. The thin lines 73 show where the user should cut the window film. Once the user has cut out the windows from the window film, the user should then apply adhesive around one window opening 30 and place one window film cutout onto the adhesive centering the thick line window panes in the window opening 30. The thick lines at the top and bottom of each window film cutout should be visible through the window opening 30. The user repeats this process with each window opening 30, excluding window opening 44 if the user intends to include a door on the house 10.

[0058] Next, the user should decorate the windows according to the desired decorating scheme. For example, for a Halloween-styled house 10, the user may attach ghost cutouts to the windows at random so the ghosts appear to be looking out of the windows. When the light is placed inside the interior space 33 of the house 10, it will illuminate the ghosts from inside. Alternatively, or in addition, the user may place ghost cutouts between the window film and the edge of the window opening 30 so that the ghosts appear to be passing through the house to the outside.

[0059] An optional element of Step 2 is the creation of a broken window look. This step may be employed, for example, if the user is creating a Halloween-styled house. If the user desires, the user may carefully cut small zig-zag lines 75 into the window film with a sharp razor knife. Only a small amount of pressure is needed to create these lines, and too much pressure may wrinkle the window film. The user may position these zig-zag lines at any desired location and in any desired number of windows to obtain the look of broken windows.

[0060] Step 3 comprises assembling the window shutters 78 and door 77. This step includes the use of chipboard strips 76, decorating elements, a door 77, adhesive, a pencil, and scissors or other cutting instrument. Optionally, this step may also include the use of tape, a razor knife, and an ink pad. To prepare the shutters 78, the user first uses the pencil to mark incremental lines 79 spaced about 0.5 inches apart along the length of chipboard strips 76 (see FIG. 12B). The strips are preferably about 2 inches by about 8 inches in size. After the user has marked the incremental lines, the user then cuts along those lines to form about 30 shutters that are about 2 inches by about 0.5 inches in size. Optionally, the user may use colored cardstock to cover the chipboard before cutting the 2 inch by 0.5 inch pieces. The user may also use an ink pad to apply ink along the edges of the shutters. The chipboard strips 76 may be other sizes, as, for example, shown in FIG. 12B where the chipboard strip 76 is marked by incremental lines 79 to form 12 shutters.

[0061] Next, the user places the lower house section 12 face-up on the user’s work space. The user then applies adhesive to the sides of the window openings 30 and places the shutters on the adhesive to secure them to the lower house section 12. The shutters 78 should be placed along both sides of each window opening 30, as shown in FIG. 12A. If desired, the user may place the shutters slightly askew to give the house a distressed look, such as for a Halloween-styled house. Alternatively, or in addition, the user may arrange one or more of the shutters to be partially open. To do so, the user places a shutter face down inside the window opening 30, and then applies adhesive along the edge where the shutter meets the window opening 30. Tape is the preferred adhesive in this step. The user can then carefully open the shutter. The user may also arrange one or more shutters to be closed, by attaching the shutter inside the window opening 30, covering the window film. If the user arranges a shutter to be closed, the second shutter attached to the same window opening is preferably left open so that light from the light source inside the house can emanate out.

[0062] The user can then attach the door 77 to the window opening 44 at the bottom left corner of the front wall 32, as shown in FIG. 12A. This window opening was left open during Step 2, and was not covered with window film. To attach the door 77, the user should turn the lower house section 12 over, face down, and secure the door to the inside of the lower house section 12. Tape is the preferred adhesive for this step. Optionally, the user may round out the corners of the door and/or use an ink pad to apply ink along the edges of the door. The user may also attach colored cardstock to the door.

[0063] During this step, the user may attach any desired decorating elements to the door, the shutters, and/or any other suitable part of the lower house section 12.

[0064] As shown in FIG. 10, Step 4 comprises assembling the house 10. This step includes the use of the lower house section 12 with shutters, door, and window film attached, and decorating elements, scissors, adhesive, paper clips, and a straight edge or ruler. First, the user should fold the score line 42 on the lower house section 12 that is nearest the wall flap 40 (if the user had not already done so during Step 2). The user should place the lower house section 12 face up on the work space and apply adhesive to the flap 40. The user should apply a suitable amount of adhesive to ensure a tight bond. The user then lifts the lower house section 12 and folds it along the score lines 42 (which were previously creased during Step 2) to form the shape of the house 10. The user then attaches the flap 40 to the inside of the second side wall 38 and secures the two together with paper clips to allow the adhesive to dry.

[0065] After the adhesive has dried, the user can then proceed by attaching decorating elements to the corners of the house 10 formed along the score lines 42. For example, if the user is assembling a Halloween-styled house 10, the user may attach black scalloped trim 80 to the corners of the house along the score lines 42, between the four walls, as shown in FIG. 12A. To do so, the user cuts four pieces of the scalloped trim 80 to a suitable length, folds each piece in half to create it, and, using a straight edge or ruler, marks a line down the center of the trim, pressing hard enough to indent the trim. The user then opens the trim again and applies adhesive to the inside, along the entire length of the trim, and attaches the trim to the house 10 on each corner between two walls. The user should press against the trim from the inside of the house 10 to ensure that the trim is tightly adhered to the house 10.
[0066] Step 5 comprises the preparation of the roof section 14. This step includes the use of the roof section 14, optional shingles, decorating elements, scissors, a razor knife, adhesive, and paper clips. The user first folds the roof peak score line 48, folding hard enough to form a crease. This creased line 48 forms the peak of the roof section 14. The user also folds the score lines 47 and 45 on the fascia 28. The user then applies adhesive to the fascia flap 46 and secures the flap 46 to the bottom side of the roof panel 22, attaching paper clips to hold the two pieces together while the adhesive dries.

[0067] If desired, the user can also prepare decorating elements for the roof section 14. For example, for a house that has two fascia 28, the user can cut pieces of decorative trim 80' into lengths suitable to cover the fascia. The user can apply adhesive to the trim 80' and attach it to the front of the roof section 22 from the peak line 48 to the bottom edge. The user should align the trim with the edge of the roof so that there is enough trim to cover the fascia 28 when the trim is folded down, as shown in FIG. 15B. When attaching the trim, the user may press the trim in place along the roof section 22 and fold the trim 80' over to cover the fascia 28. The user may repeat this process for all of the edges of the roof including the peak of the roof 48 (if not adding optional shingles) and all fascia, if desired.

[0068] To attach the optional shingles 82, the user applies enough adhesive to each shingle to ensure a tight bond. The first row 83 of shingles is at the bottom of the roof panel 22, farthest from the roof peak score line 48, as shown in FIG. 14. This row of shingles should overhang the roof panel 22 enough to cover the visible thickness of the roof panel 22 at its edges. The next row 84 of shingles should overlap the first and should preferably be offset slightly from the first so that the shingles are staggered with respect to the previous row. The user repeats the process of attaching overlapping shingles until the shingles reach the peak of the roof. The user then repeats the entire shingle process for the other side of the roof panel 22, on the other side of the peak. Then, the user can fold several shingles in half and attach them to the top of the peak line 48. Once the adhesive has set, the user can then carefully trim excess shingles hanging over the sides. The user should not trim the bottom edges of the roof panel 22.

[0069] Finally, with a razor knife or other suitable cutting tool, the user cuts slits through the shingles along the chimney slit 50 and the dormer slits 52 in the roof panel 22, shown in FIG. 3. After this step, the slits 50 and 52 extend through both the roof panel 22 and the shingles to enable attachment of the chimney and dormer. It should be noted that the roof panel 22 is pre-cut with the chimney and dormer slits, but if the user covers the roof panel with the optional shingles, then the user should cut through these shingles in order to attach the chimney and dormer to the roof panel through the slits.

[0070] Step 6 comprises preparation of the chimney. This step includes the use of the chimney 24, decorating elements, scissors, adhesive, and paper clips. First, the user folds the chimney score lines 54 on the chimney 24, folding hard enough to form a crease. Then the user places the chimney face up and applies adhesive to the chimney flap 56. The user can then fold the chimney 24 into a three dimensional shape and secure the chimney tab 56 to the inside surface of the chimney, attaching paper clips to hold the chimney together while the adhesive sets.

[0071] Next the user can prepare decorative elements for the chimney, if desired, such as decorative trim 80' for the chimney top, as shown in FIG. 15A. For example, the user can cut a piece of decorative trim to a suitable length that is long enough to fit around the top of the chimney. Alternatively, the user can attach other decorative elements to the chimney top. For example, the user can attach a chimney cap with bats flying out of the chimney for a Halloween themed house. Finally, the user can attach the chimney 24 to the roof section 14 by inserting the chimney tab 58 into the chimney slit 50.

[0072] Referring again to FIG. 10, Step 7 comprises preparation of the dormer 26. This step includes the use of the dormer 26, optional shingles, decorating elements, adhesive, scissors, and a razor knife. The user first folds the dormer 26 along the dormer score line 60. Next, if desired, the user can prepare decorating elements, such as decorative trim. Preferably, the user can cut the trim into a suitable length that is long enough to cover the front of the dormer. The user then applies adhesive to the trim and attaches it to one side of the dormer, folding the trim down to form a fascia. This process is repeated for the other side of the dormer.

[0073] Next, the user can attach optional shingles to the dormer 24, following the same procedure set out in Step 5 for attachment of the shingles to the roof panel 22. The user should attach the shingles along one side of the dormer 26 first, starting at the bottom edge and working toward the score line 60, and then repeat with the other side. When the adhesive has set, the user can trim off any excess shingles and/or decorative trim that is extending over the side edges of the dormer. If desired, the user may also attach shingles along the peak line 60. Finally, the user attaches the dormer 60 to the roof section 14 by inserting the dormer tabs 62 into the dormer slits 52.

[0074] A preferred embodiment of Step 8 comprises the attachment of the house and foam light support 117 to the base 116. First, the user applies glue or another suitable adhesive to the base 116 in the area marked by the pencil outline 21 for placement of the house 10, if the user had not already done so in Step 1. Next, the user attaches the foam light support 117, with the light attached, to the base 116, and sets it aside to dry. The next step requires use of the completed lower house section 12, base 116 with light support 117 and light attached, and tacky glue or other suitable adhesive. The user then applies the glue or other suitable adhesive to the edges 64 of the light support 117, places the lower house section 12 over the glue and presses it in place. The user should let the adhesive dry completely before moving on to Step 9.

[0075] In another embodiment, Step 8 comprises the attachment of the house 10 to the base 16. This step includes the use of the completed lower house section 12, base 16, light, base cover, and adhesive. The adhesive in this step is preferably tacky glue. First, the user should test the light to make sure that it is functional. The user can simply plug the light into a wall outlet or other power source and ensure that it functions when turned on. Next, the user attaches the light to the base 16 by pressing the light into the hole 20 cut into the base 16. The light cord should be on the bottom side of the base 16, extending away from the bottom surface 15. Once the light is in place, the user then places the cord into the groove 18.
[0076] Next, the user applies adhesive to the entire base cover (supplied with the gingerbread house kit) and attaches it to the bottom surface 15 of the base 16, thus covering the bottom of the light and the light cord. The light cord extends through the groove 18 and out the back edge of the base 16.

[0077] The user then turns the base back over so that the top surface 13 is facing up, and applies adhesive along the outline 19. The user then places the lower house section 12 over that outline 19 and presses it into place. The user should let this adhesive dry completely before moving on to the next step.

[0078] In a preferred embodiment, Step 9 comprises preparation of the landscape on the base 116 surrounding the house 10. This step includes the use of replica stone, crinkled paper, decorative base strips, tacky glue or other suitable adhesive, and, optionally, straight pins. First, the user marks with a pencil where the walkway should be on the base 116. The walkway preferably begins at the door of the house 10 and extends to the edge of the base 116. The user then applies adhesive to the bottom side of a piece of replica stone and places it randomly over the area marked with the pencil. The user repeats this process with the pieces of replica stone until the user has created a suitable walkway. Alternatively, the user applies glue over the entire area marked with the pencil and smooths the glue with a foam brush. The replica stone pieces are then placed over the glue to create a stone walkway.

[0079] Next, the user applies glue over the remainder of the top surface of the base 116, spreads the glue with a dampened foam brush, and attaches crinkled paper to the glue by pressing it lightly in place. Smaller pieces of crinkled paper are preferred, as they can lay flat and more easily cover the base 116.

[0080] Next, the user applies adhesive to the decorative base strips and attaches them around the edges of the base 116, covering the edge of the base. The user may secure the base strips with straight pins until the glue dries.

[0081] In another embodiment, Step 9 comprises preparation of the landscape that surrounds the house 10 on the top surface 13 of the base 16. The landscape may be any type of landscape desired by the user according to the theme or decorating style of the house 10. For example, Step 9 may comprise the assembly of a walkway, lawn, and fence on the base 16 in much the same way as described above for base 116.

[0082] As shown in FIG. 10, the final step is Step 10, comprising optional decorations. In a preferred embodiment, where the user is creating a Halloween-themed house, Step 10 includes the use of a replica tree, tombstone, tacky glue or other suitable adhesive, and, optionally, a black pen or fine tip marker. The user first assembles the tree pieces to create a replica tree. Optionally, the user may then write a Halloween phrase on the tombstone with a black pen or fine tip marker. Next, the user determines the desired placement of the replica tree, and then applies a small amount of glue to the base 116 at the desired location for the tree. The user then attaches the tree to the base, and secures pins until the glue dries.

[0083] In another embodiment, Step 10 includes the use of toothpicks to secure the replica tree, and tombstone to the base 16. First, the user uses the tree pieces and attach a toothpick to the bottom of the tree so that about 0.5 inch of the toothpick extends beyond the bottom of the tree. The user then attaches a toothpick to the back of the tombstone. Finally, the user applies a small amount of glue to the toothpicks and attaches the tree and tombstone to the base 16 by pressing the toothpicks into the top surface 13 of the base 16.

[0084] After decorating the house 10, the user can place the roof section 14 on top of the lower house section 12. The roof section 14 is preferably not attached to the lower house section 12, in order to enable the user to remove the roof section 14 later to replace or repair the light inside.

[0085] When the house 10 is not in use or is not out on display, the user may store it in a box, preferably about 1 foot in each dimension.

[0086] In other embodiments, the steps outlined in FIG. 10 may vary, and some steps may be reversed in order or be absent. For example, the roof section 14 may be assembled before the lower house section 12. The dormer and chimney may be assembled in any order. The door may be attached before or after the windows or shutters. The base 16 may be prepared before or after the lower house section 12 and roof section 14. These examples are meant to be illustrative, and not limiting.

[0087] In a preferred embodiment, the score lines formed in the various house sections, such as the score lines 42, the fascia score line 47, the fascia flap score line 45, and others, are formed by a clean fold. A clean fold is a cut that is made half way through the thickness of the material. Thus, for example, the fold lines 42 include a precise cut half way through the thickness of the chipboard (or other material used for the house). When the user obtains a gingerbread kit as described above and assembles the house, the chipboard will fold cleanly and easily along the fold lines. The clean fold creates a sharp, straight fold line, which gives a desirable, professional look to the assembled house.

[0088] It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations may be made in the replica gingerbread house of the present invention without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention. Thus, it is intended that the present invention cover the modifications and variations of this invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:
1. A method of assembling a replica gingerbread house, comprising:
   - obtaining a replica gingerbread house in an unassembled state, the replica gingerbread house comprising:
     - a lower house section comprising a plurality of walls, with adjacent walls separated by a house score line;
     - a roof section comprising a roof panel and a roof peak score line;
     - a base; and
     - a support;
   - attaching the support to a top surface of the base;
   - folding the lower house section along the house score lines;
folding the roof panel along the roof peak score line;
attaching the lower house section to the support; and
placing the roof section on the lower house section.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the lower house section
and the roof section comprise chipboard.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the lower house section
further comprises a wall flap separated from the plurality of
walls by a wall flap score line, the method further comprising
folding the wall flap along the wall flap score line and
attaching the wall flap to a back surface of one of the
plurality of walls.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising cutting a
hole in the support for placement of a light source.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising placing a
light source in the hole in the support.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising forming a
groove in a bottom surface of the support prior to attaching
the support to the top surface of the base, the groove being
dimensioned to receive a power cord for the light source.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the roof section further
comprises a fascia and a fascia flap, the fascia being sepa-
rated from the roof panel by a fascia score line, and wherein
the method further comprises folding the fascia along the
fascia score line and attaching the fascia flap to a bottom
surface of the roof panel.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the replica gingerbread
house further comprises a chimney section having a chimney
tab, and wherein the roof panel further comprises a slit,
and wherein the method further comprises inserting the
chimney tab into the slit.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the replica gingerbread
house further comprises a dormer section having a dormer
tab, and wherein the roof panel further comprises a slit, and
wherein the method further comprises inserting the dormer
tab into the slit.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of walls
of the lower house section comprise one or more window
openings.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the gingerbread
house further comprises window film, and wherein
the method further includes cutting the window film and attac-
ings it to an inside surface of the plurality of walls to cover
the window openings.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the support comprises
foam.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the base comprises
cardboard.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the house score lines
and the roof peak score line comprise clean folds.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the lower house
section comprises one unitary piece of material.

16. A replica gingerbread house, comprising:

a lower house section comprising a plurality of walls, with
adjacent walls separated by a house score line;

a roof section comprising a roof panel and a roof peak
score line;

a support configured to support a light source; and

a base configured to attach to the support.

17. The replica gingerbread house of claim 16, wherein
the lower house section and the roof section comprise
chipboard.

18. The replica gingerbread house of claim 16, wherein
the lower house section further comprises a wall flap sepa-
rated from the plurality of walls by a wall flap score line; and
wherein the roof section further comprises a fascia and a
fascia flap, the fascia being separated from the roof panel by
a fascia score line.

19. The replica gingerbread house of claim 18, further
comprising a chimney section having a chimney tab and a
dormer section having a dormer tab.

20. The replica gingerbread house of claim 16, wherein
the support comprises foam and the base comprises card-
board.

21. The replica gingerbread house of claim 16, further
comprising a light source dimensioned to fit inside the lower
house section.

22. The replica gingerbread house of claim 16, wherein
the lower house section comprises one unitary piece of
material.