

# *Atsuko Kudo*

Couture Latex Design

## Trench Coat Overview

The classic trench coat dates back to at least as early as WW1 (arguably even before that with outerwear designers such as Burberry in the 19th century) but the name alludes to its use by the British military in the trenches. Later popularised in film noir movies by stars such as Humphrey Bogart the trench also quickly became fashionable in womenswear. Photographed with such allure by Helmut Newton and many others, the trench coat has become firmly established in the lexicon of fashion garments. Now almost all fashion houses have their own take(s) on this classic staple.

As Atsuko Kudo designs and produces garments solely from latex material our version of the trench coat is defined very much by the material we use but also by Atsuko's penchant for beautiful, precise tailoring.

Though the trench coat style is quite traditional, latex is quite new compared to many other materials. We find that the mixture of old and new is interesting. Perhaps you may find other fabrics from which to construct your trench which may have an equally interesting tension.

However, for this project we aim to offer some advice on how to make quite advanced items from latex but most importantly to encourage creativity in cut and shaping by asking viewers to create their own interpretation for the main silhouette and structure of their finished garment.

Therefore we have presented a partial pattern for this garment and we encourage you to fill in the rest. Using the building blocks provided we are asking viewers to create their own shapes according to their perspective of how a trench coat could look. In addition we are offering advice on how to make the pattern elements provided in latex and tips if you prefer to use another fabric.

The concept of the project is also based around levels of translucence. We have used semi transparent latex to produce the example shown in Nick Knight's amazing, almost X-ray images. For the trench this creates a very sensual feeling as parts of the body are revealed to differing degrees by the translucence offered by the fabric and construction of the garment.

## Material

Looking at the images of our coat you will immediately notice the lighter (more see through) and darker sections. We have provided the patterns of the 'dark' sections, which are made from thicker or layered latex. The thicker material of course appears darker when using a semi transparent fabric.

It is worth noting that latex is available in many semi transparent colours which have varying levels of transparency and which are also affected by the gauge of the fabric selected. The more opaque sections of our own coat are achieved through the layering of the fabric.

Of course there are completely opaque colours available too, so if you want to make a trench which is not at all see through you can still do that. Please take your colour selection into account when thinking about the direction you'd like to take with your piece. For example if you'd like a classic tailored piece or perhaps a more conceptual approach.

Latex sheeting has limitations of colour and thickness so if you want the fabric to be thicker, you will have to glue the layers together yourself. There are really no rules so you don't have to thicken the material but we would usually recommend making the fabric thicker for strength and weight on the pieces we have provided.

You may also want to try to make a trench in another, non latex material. If you do prefer this approach similar principles apply. If you are going to sew the pattern pieces together then you will need to adjust the pattern pieces accordingly - especially in respect of seam allowances. Additionally you may wish to back the fabric and add facings for the more structured parts just as we have done with the latex or create structure in other ways depending on the fabric you use.

We have been working with latex for over two decades but we are still learning about this material every day. Like with any material - if something doesn't work, make it work. You have to find the way.

Latex has quite a strong association with punk and the DIY spirit so that may be a great inspiration as it always is for us.

## Technique

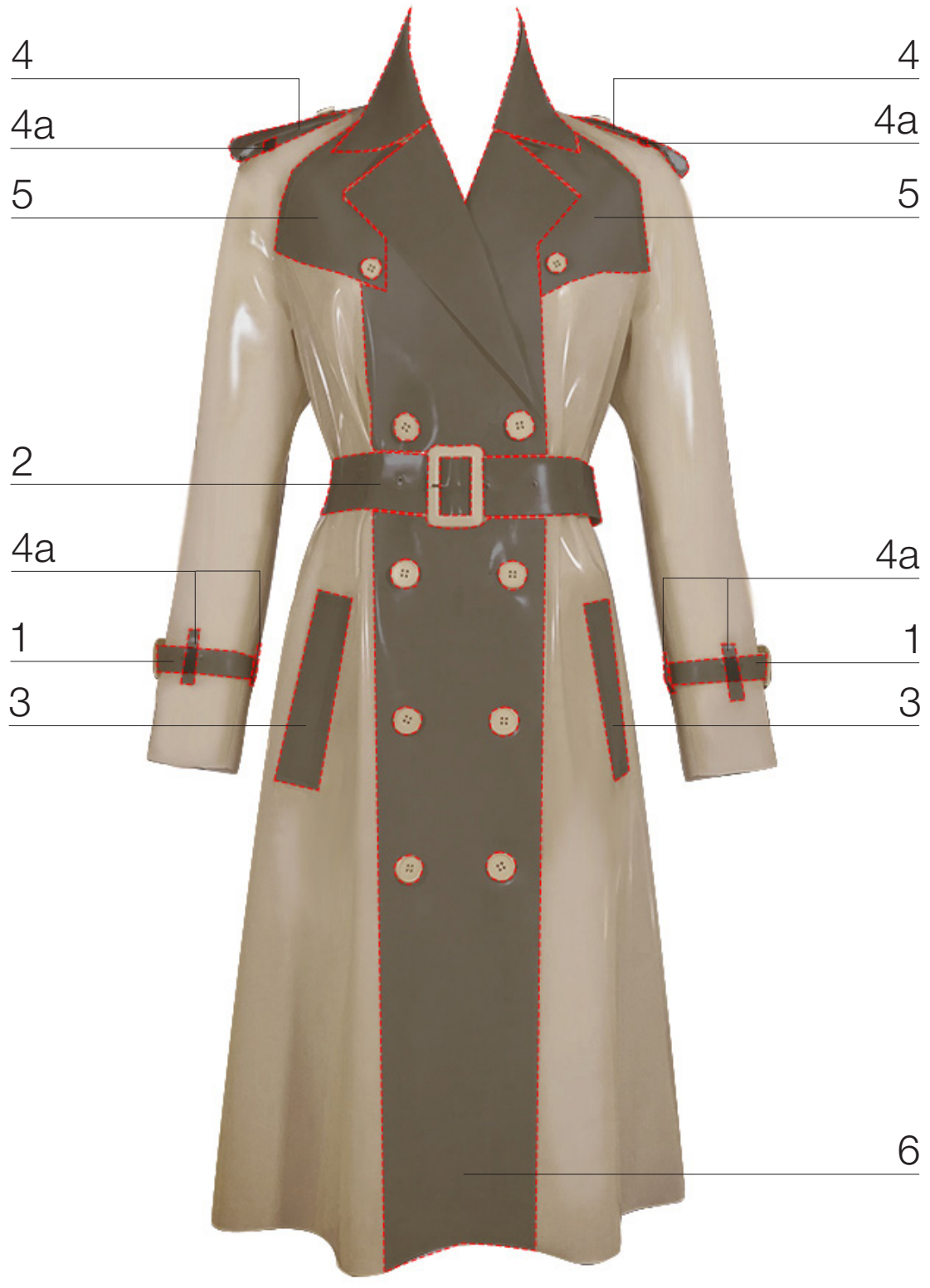
Before you start you will need the following:-

Your chosen latex fabric, latex glue and/or white glue such as Copydex, latex cleaner, sharp scissors, rotary cutter, cutting ruler, pressure roller, a cutting mat, gel pens (silver is our favourite), reinforcement fabric of your choice, buttons and buckles of your choice, J cloths, nitrile gloves and eventually latex polish.

Basic latex making technique tutorials are available by searching in your favourite search engine so we will not repeat them here but here are some general tips.

- 1) You need a large work surface. Please make sure your table is clean. Try to be tidy all the time as even a little dust may affect the fabric.
- 2) All of our latex patterns are designed for glueing. You will over lap one seam to the other seam. Please decide which seam will go on top or underneath yourself.
- 3) To layer the latex to create thicker pieces you will need to apply the glue (usually) to the matt side of each piece and then smoothly lay it down onto the other piece without creating lumps or bubbles. You can use the pressure roller to seal them properly. This takes practice and time to perfect so it's best to just try it to a few times on some scrap pieces until you feel you are confident you are getting a good surface.
- 4) Buttons and button holes: you can sew buttons to the latex. We recommend to use a reinforcement fabric. Please always test if your choice of fabric can work with latex before use. Any reinforcement fabric will always have to be prepared with white glue in order to stick to latex, so will need to be an absorbent material like cotton. You can make button holes - to do so cut a straight slit line for your button holes and make sure to have rounded ends to stop any tears.
- 5) Belts: we have not used eyelets for this look but if you want to use eyelets for your belt we recommend to use reinforcement material between the latex fabric. You may want to coat the eyelets to avoid staining as some metal stains lighter coloured latex.
- 6) Though the patterns are all latex patterns the construction of the pieces is of course not the same as standard fabrics. But that shouldn't stop you from using them as a starting point for your own creations.
- 7) Remember to not rush. Keep calm!!!

**Instructions for download: Print with Adobe Acrobat reader at 100% / Actual size / Do not resize**



4

4

4a

4a

5

5

2

4a

4a

1

1

3

3

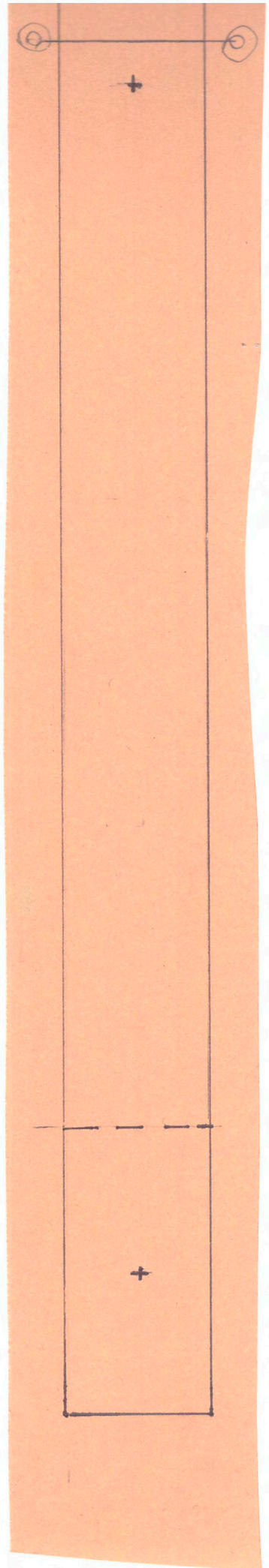
6





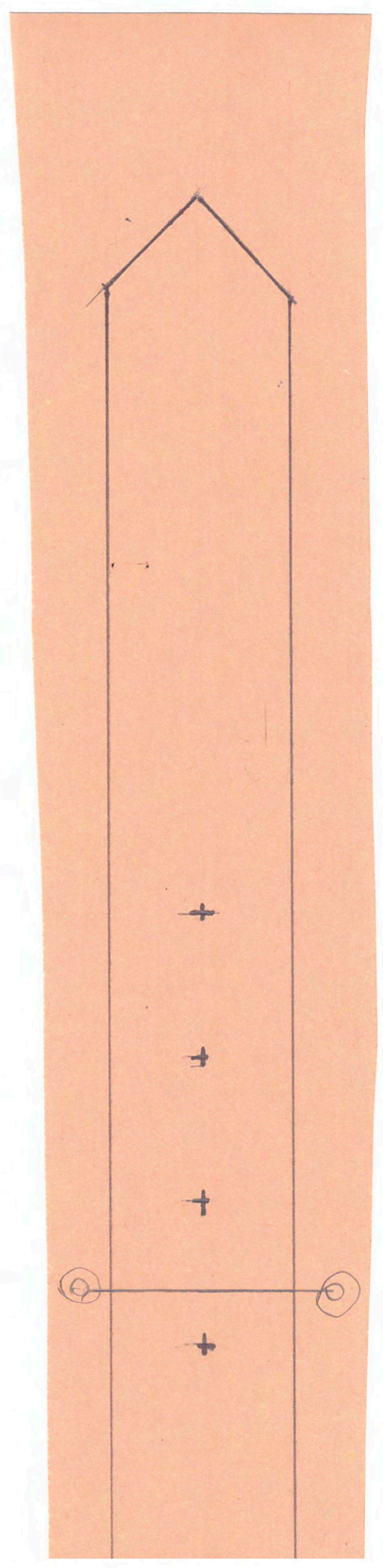
Wrist Belt 1

Cut pair



Wrist Belt 2

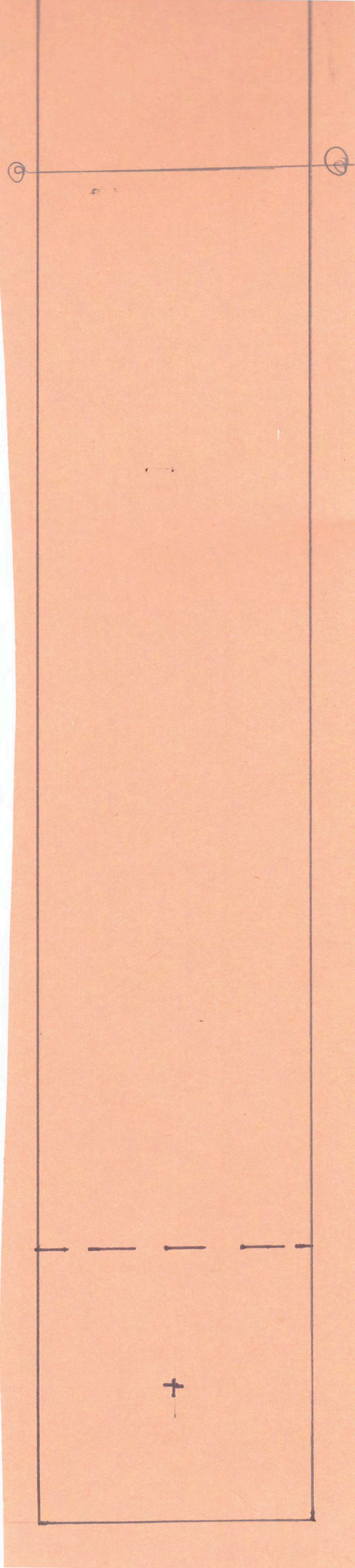
Cut pair





Waist Belt 1

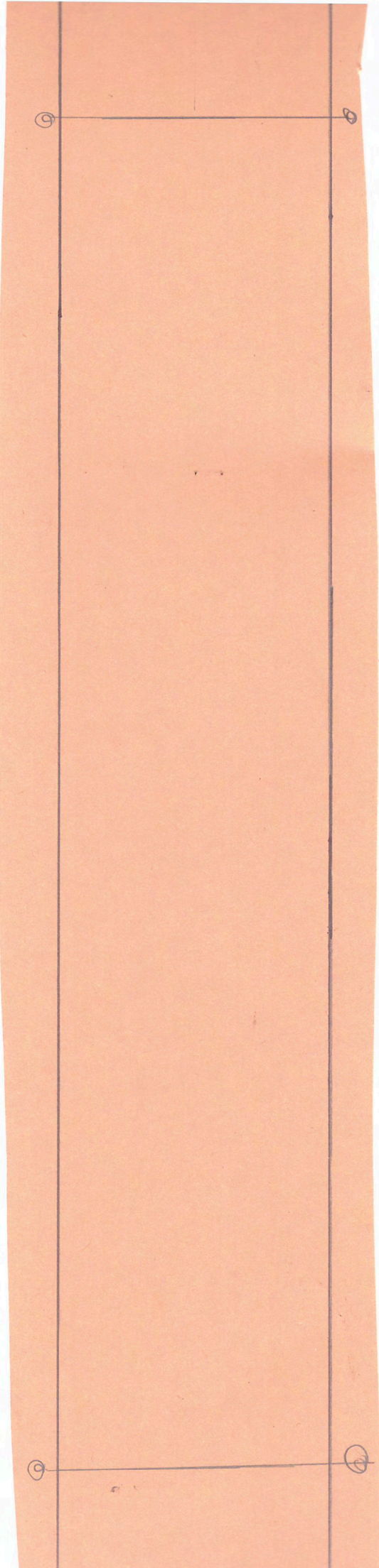
Cut x 1





Waist Belt 2

Cut x 1



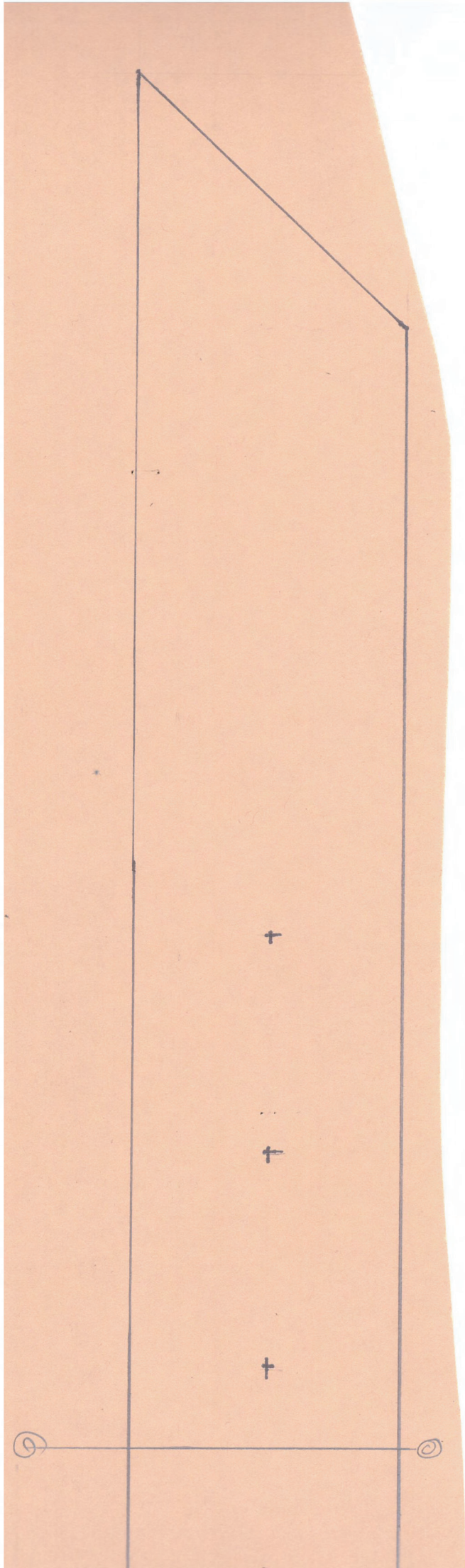




Waist Belt 3

Cut x 1

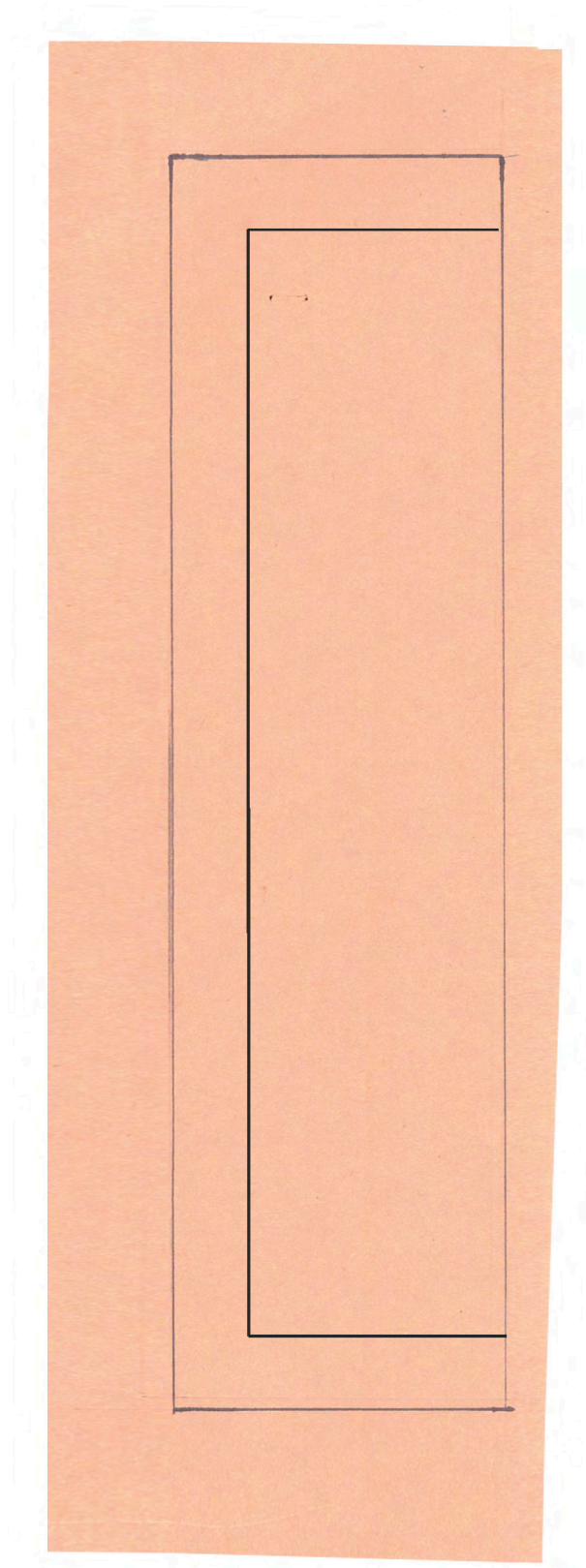
Waist Belt 4  
Cut x 1



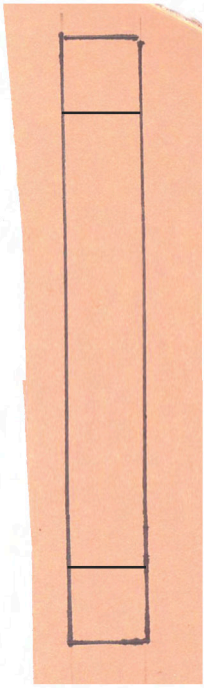


Pocket

Cut pair

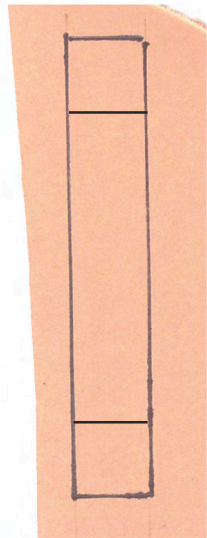


2a



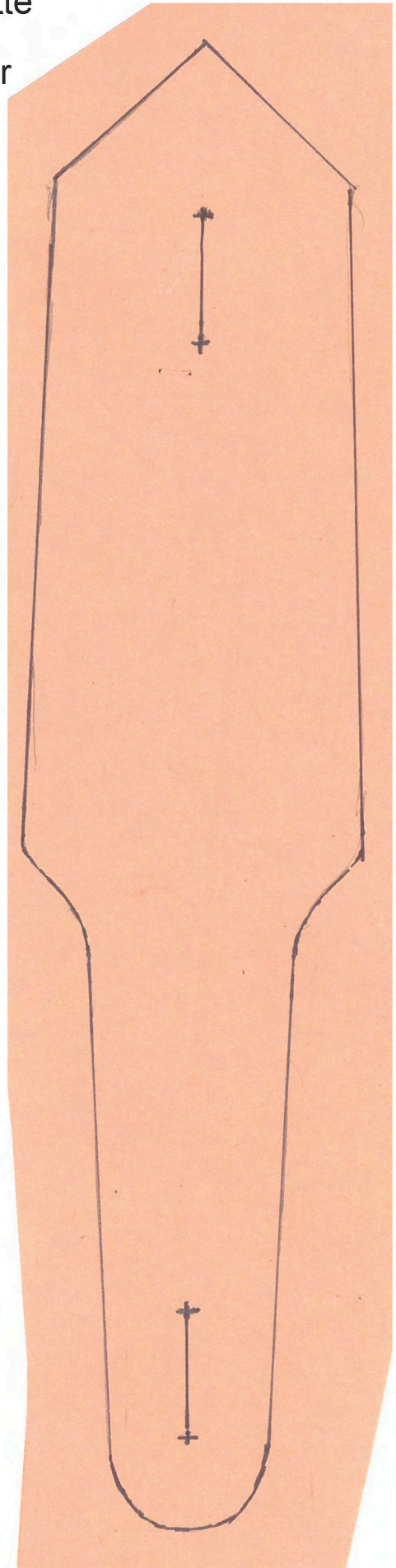
8 cm loop for waist x 2

4a



6 cm loop for shoulders x 2,  
6 cm loop for sleeves x 6

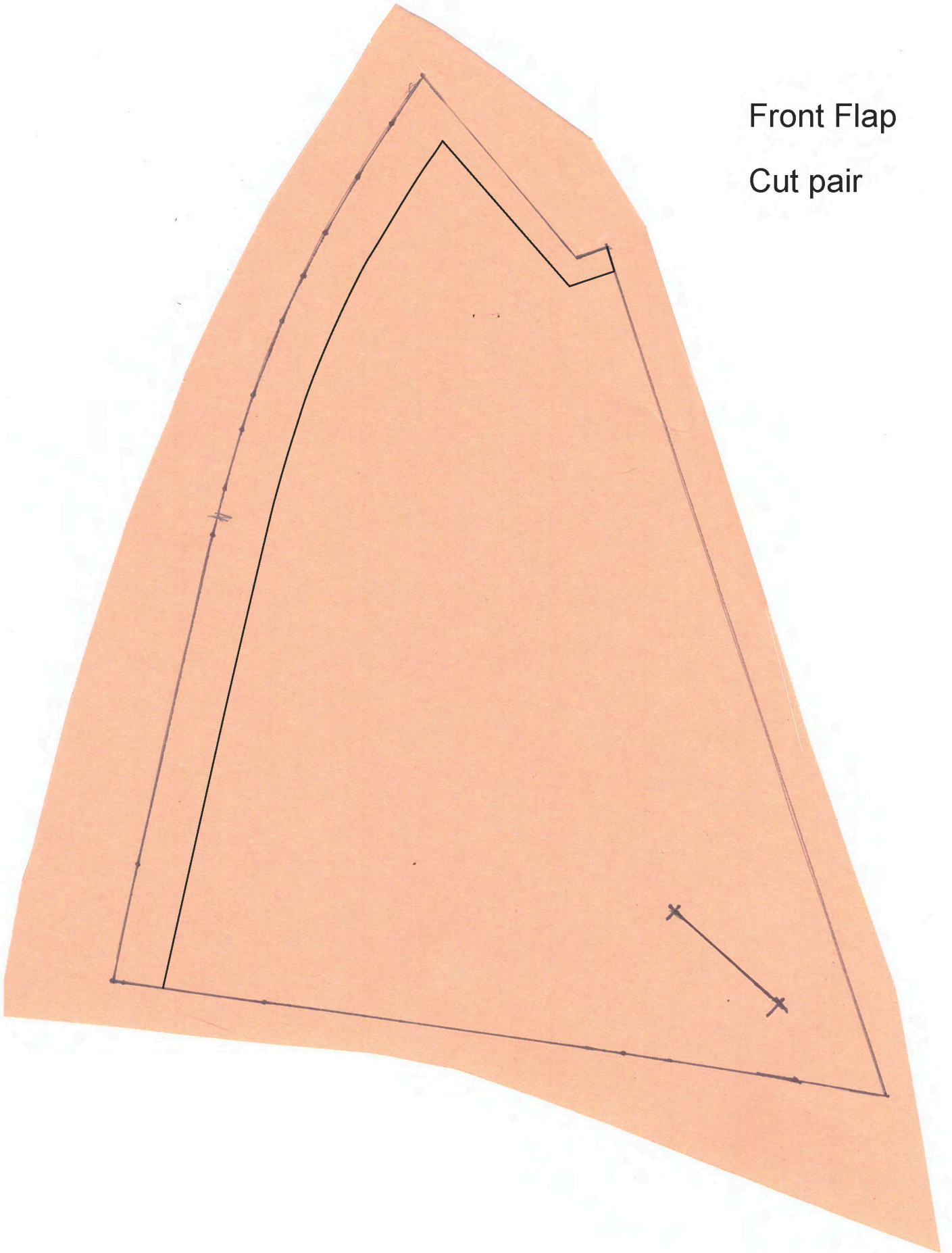
Epaulette  
Cut Pair





Front Flap

Cut pair





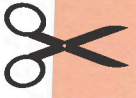
Front Facing 1, Cut pair





Front Facing 2, Cut pair

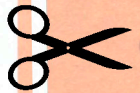
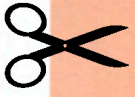
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Front Facing 3, Cut pair

6





Front Facing 4, Cut pair

6



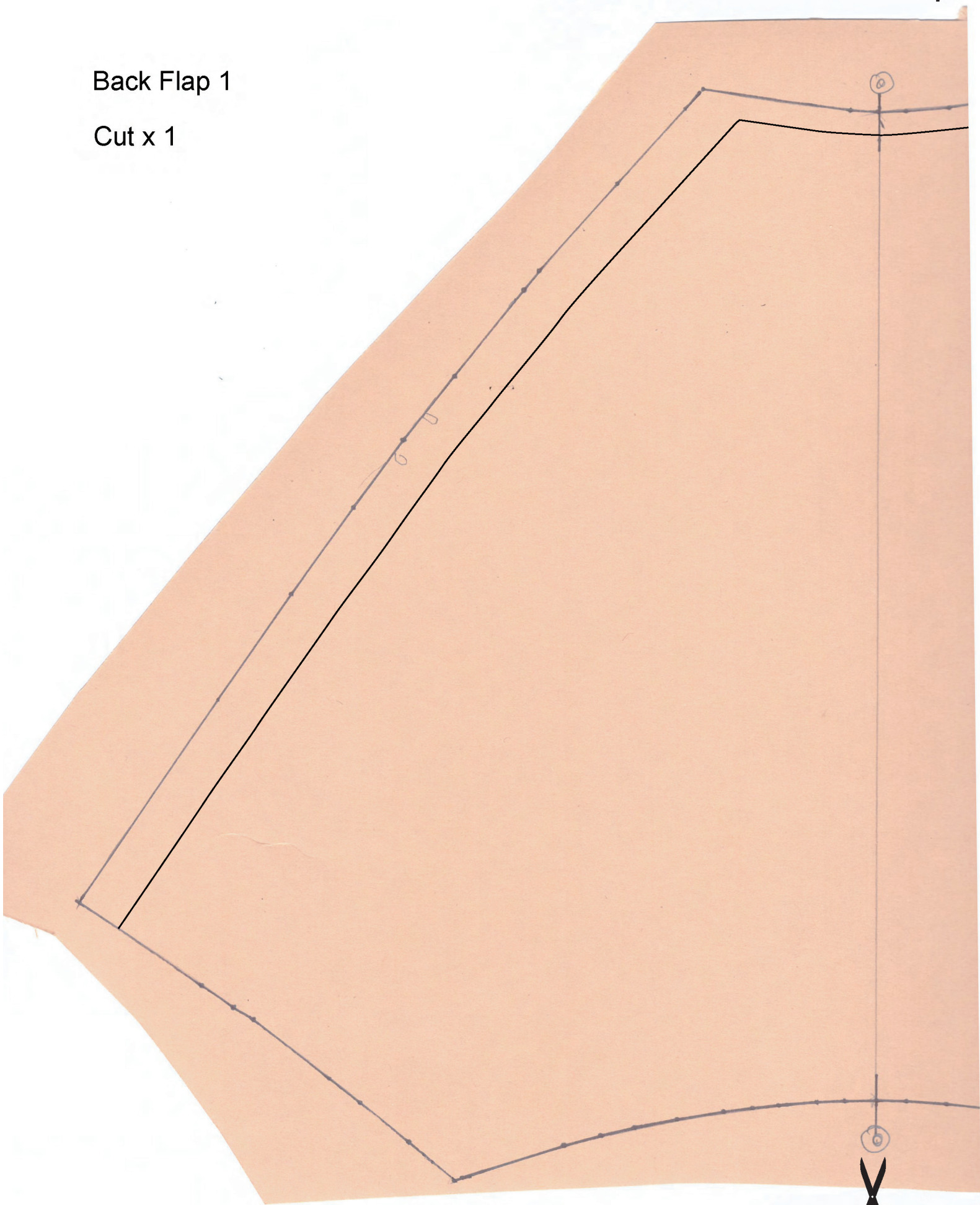






Back Flap 1

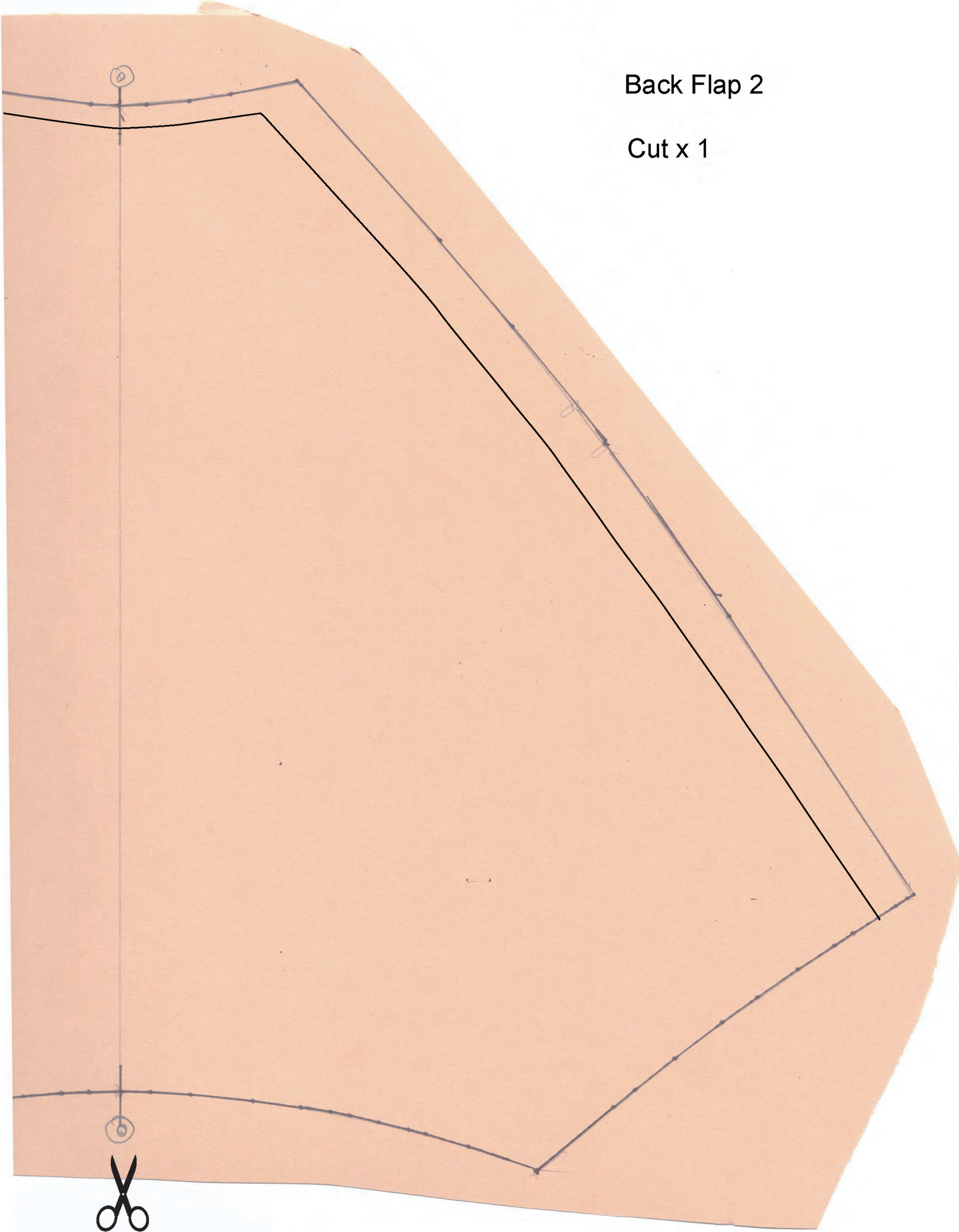
Cut x 1





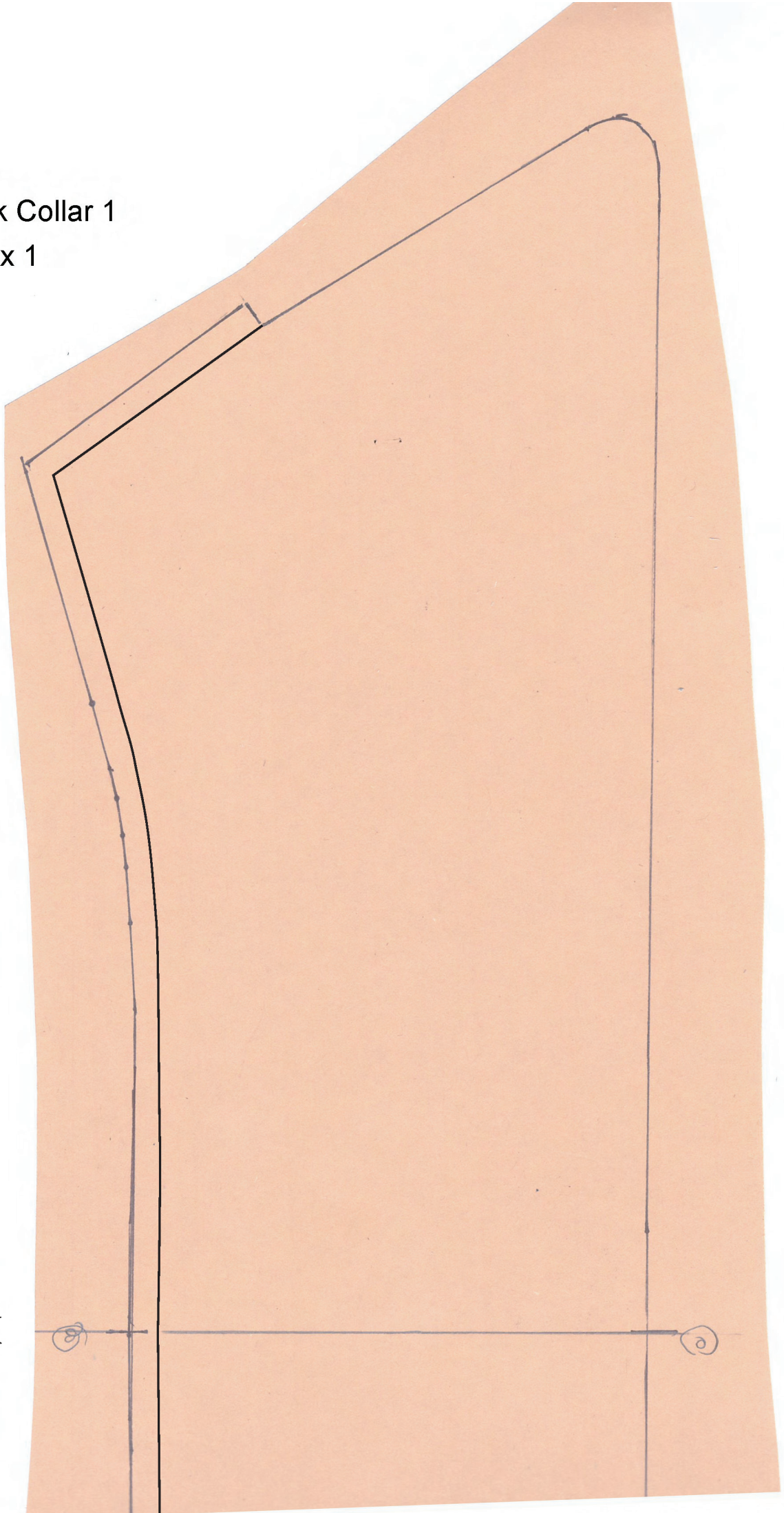
Back Flap 2

Cut x 1





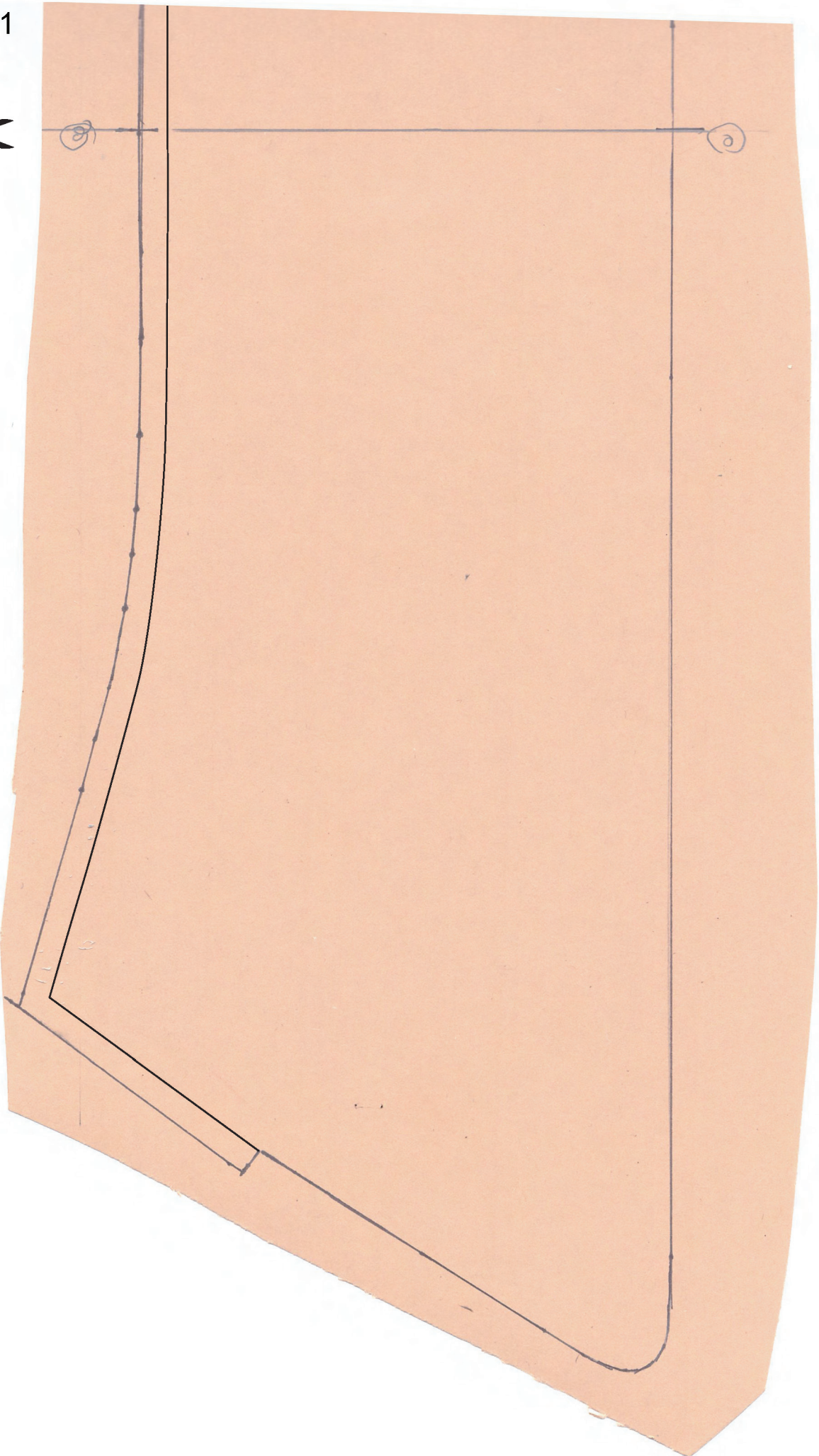
Back Collar 1  
Cut x 1

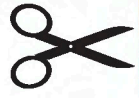




Back Collar 2

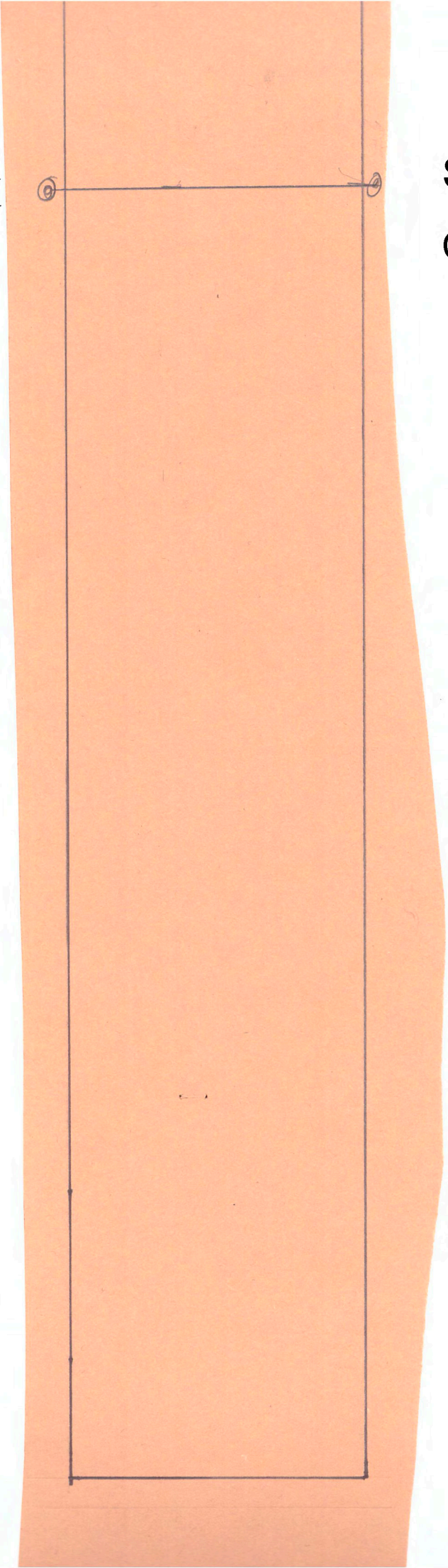
Cut x 1





Slit 2

Cut x 2





Slit 1

Cut x 2

