

Modifying the Scale of an Imported DWG/DXF

Reference Number: **KB-00199**

Last Modified: **July 15, 2021**

The information in this article applies to:



QUESTION

I have a DWG drawing that was drawn at a scale of 1" = 20', and when imported into Chief Architect it is the wrong size. How can I change the scale so it displays at the correct size?

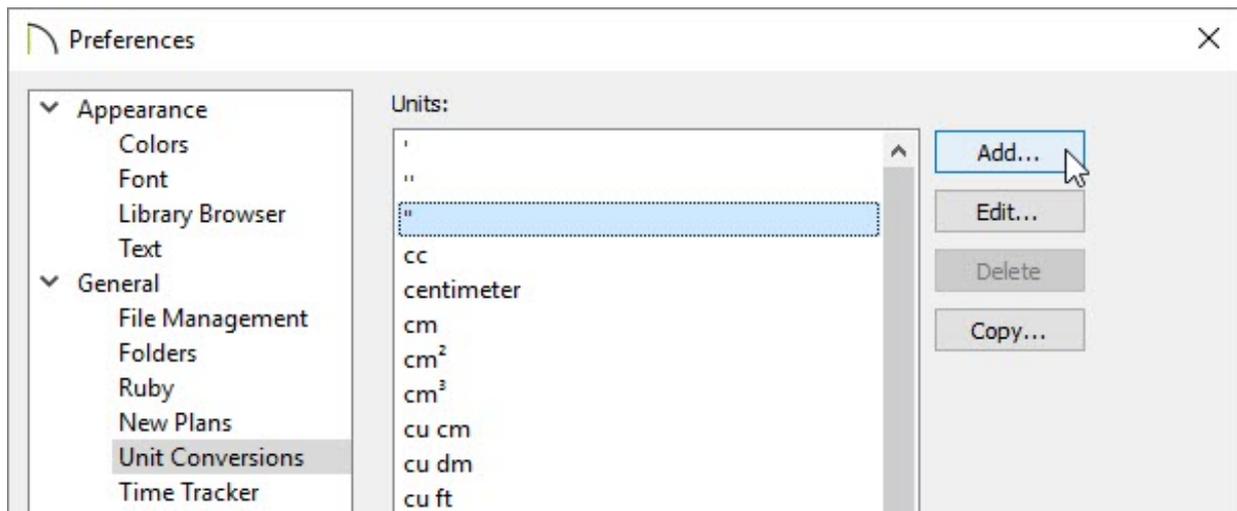
ANSWER

In Chief Architect, all architectural and CAD drawings in plan files are drawn at a one to one scale. A 24" X 24" cabinet really is 24" square, and a CAD line 8" long really is that length - regardless of how far you zoom in or out. To produce a scaled working drawing, the desired scale is specified when a view is sent to layout or printed.

Since drawings are not scaled in the Chief Architect drawing window, it is not possible to assign a scale to an imported drawing. If you have a DXF or DWG drawing that was not drawn at 1:1, it needs to be imported using a custom unit of measurement that takes the drawing's scale into account and converts it to a 1:1 drawing.

To create a custom unit conversion

1. Open the Chief Architect plan in which you would like to import a DXF or DWG drawing and select **Edit> Preferences**  from the menu if you're on a Windows PC or **Chief Architect> Preferences**  if you're on a Mac.
2. On the **UNIT CONVERSIONS** panel of the **Preferences** dialog, click the **Add** button.



3. In the **Add Unit Conversion** dialog that appears next:

The image shows a software dialog box titled "Add Unit Conversion". It has several sections:

- Unit Name:** A text box containing "1 inch equals 20 feet". Below it is an unchecked checkbox labeled "Default Unit".
- Measurement Type:** Three radio buttons: "Length" (selected), "Area", and "Volume".
- Conversion:** A text box "Multiply by:" containing "20.0", followed by "to convert to" and a dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is open, showing a list of units: "m", "centimeter", "cm", "dm", "foot", "ft" (highlighted with a mouse cursor), "in", "inch", "m", "meter", "mi", "mil", "mile", "millimeter", "mm", "yard", "yd".
- Sample:** A text area showing four conversion examples:
 - 1 1 inch equals 20 feet = 65.6167979002625 ft
 - 1 1 inch equals 20 feet = 787.40157480315 in
 - 1 1 inch equals 20 feet = 20 m
 - 1 1 inch equals 20 feet = 2000 cm
- Buttons:** "OK" and "Cancel" buttons at the bottom.

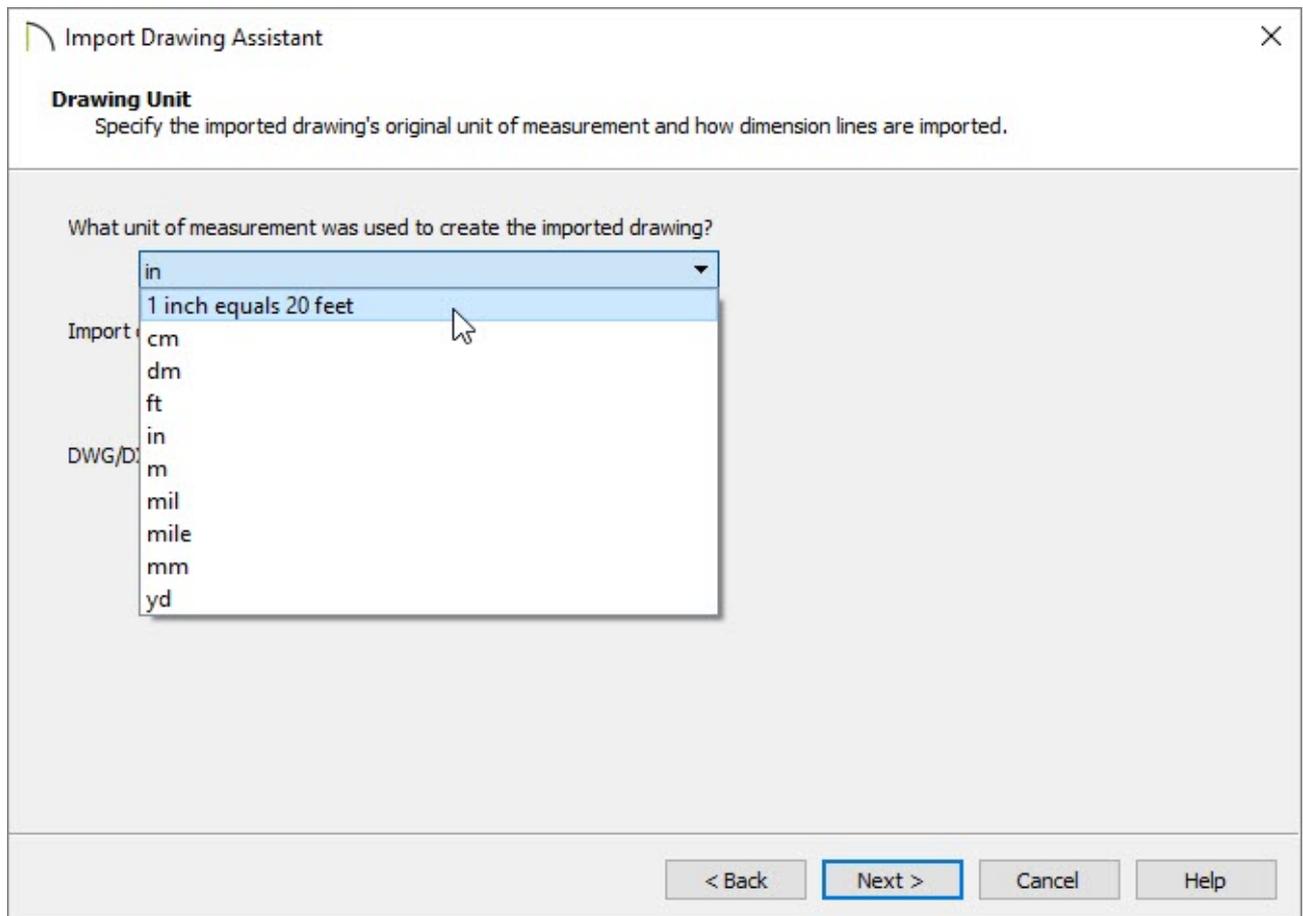
- Type a short, descriptive name for your custom unit in the **Unit Name** field.
- Select a **Measurement Type** of length.
- In the **Multiply by** field, type the scaling factor that the drawing is using. In this example, 20 is used.
- In the **to Convert to** drop-down list, change the unit of measurement to the unit you want to convert to. In this example we are converting to feet so ft is selected from the drop-down.
- Click **OK** to close the dialog and add your custom conversion to the Units list.

There are several ways to do a unit conversion. For example, a scale of 1" = 20' can be re-scaled by multiplying by 20 and converting to feet. Or, it can be multiplied by 240 (12" X 20) and converted to inches.

4. Click **OK** to close the dialog and accept your changes.

To import a DXF or DWG file using a custom unit of measurement

1. Select **CAD> CAD Detail Management**  from the menu and open a new CAD Detail window to import your drawing into.
2. Select **File> Import> Import Drawing**  from the menu.
3. Follow the steps in the **Import Drawing Assistant** until you get to the **Drawing Unit** screen and select your new unit conversion from the drop-down.



4. Click the **Next** button and finish importing the drawing. You can use the dimension

tools to verify that the drawing is not at the correct scale.

Related Articles

[📄 Converting Plan Files to DWG or DXF \(/support/article/KB-00013/converting-plan-files-to-dwg-or-dxf.html\)](/support/article/KB-00013/converting-plan-files-to-dwg-or-dxf.html)

[📄 Importing Terrain Elevation Data from a DWG or DXF File \(/support/article/KB-00719/importing-terrain-elevation-data-from-a-dwg-or-dxf-file.html\)](/support/article/KB-00719/importing-terrain-elevation-data-from-a-dwg-or-dxf-file.html)

[📄 Troubleshooting DWG/DXF File Import Issues \(/support/article/KB-00283/troubleshooting-dwg-dxf-file-import-issues.html\)](/support/article/KB-00283/troubleshooting-dwg-dxf-file-import-issues.html)

[📄 Using CAD to Walls from an Imported DWG/DXF \(/support/article/KB-00170/using-cad-to-walls-from-an-imported-dwg-dxf.html\)](/support/article/KB-00170/using-cad-to-walls-from-an-imported-dwg-dxf.html)



[\(https://chieftalk.chiefarchitect.com/\)](https://chieftalk.chiefarchitect.com/)

[🗉 \(/blog/\)](/blog/)



[\(https://www.facebook.com/ChiefArchitect\)](https://www.facebook.com/ChiefArchitect)



[\(https://www.youtube.com/user/ChiefArchitectInc\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ChiefArchitectInc)



[\(https://www.instagram.com/chiefarchitect/\)](https://www.instagram.com/chiefarchitect/)



[\(https://www.houzz.com/pro/chiefarchitect/\)](https://www.houzz.com/pro/chiefarchitect/)



[\(https://www.pinterest.com/chiefarchitect/\)](https://www.pinterest.com/chiefarchitect/)