Chief Architect®

Architectural Home Design
Software

Converting Plan Files to DWG or DXF

Reference Number: **KB-00013**

Last Modified: **January 31, 2024**

The information in this article applies to:

PREMIER INTERIORS

QUESTION

I have a Chief Architect plan file that I need to open in AutoCAD®. How do I convert it from a .plan to a DWG or DXF file type?

ANSWER

Converting a Chief Architect plan file into either a two- or three-dimensional AutoCAD® compatible DWG or DXF file can be done easily using the export functions.
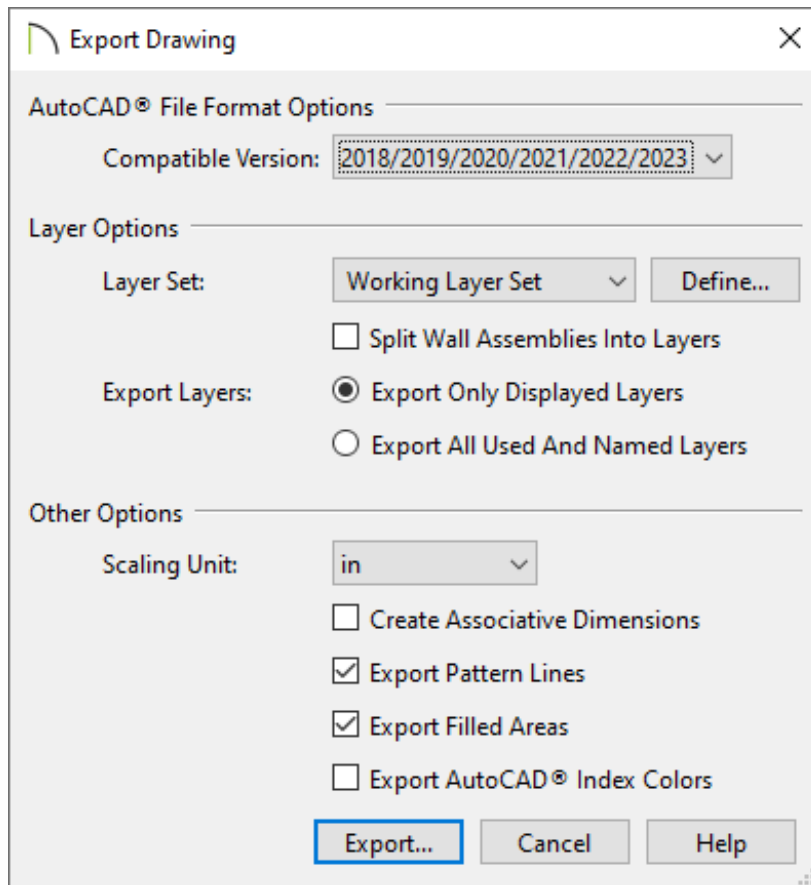
Line drawings, such as Plan view, elevation views, and CAD Details can be exported to DWG or DXF files.

To export a 2D DWG or DXF

1. Select **File> Export> Export Current View (DWG, DXF)** or **Export All Floors (DWG, DXF)** from the menu.

> **Note:** Export All Floors is only accessible from a floor plan view.

2. In the **Export Drawing** dialog that displays:

- From the **Compatible Version** drop-down list, select the version of AutoCAD® that you want the exported DWG or DXF file to be compatible with.

- Specify appropriate Layer Options, such as the **Layer Set** that you would like to export, whether to split wall assemblies into layers, as well as if you would like to only export displayed layers or all used and named layers.

  - **Split Wall Assemblies Into Layers** allows you to export each wall layer line onto separate layers, allowing them to be displayed independently.

  - **Export Only Displayed Layers** only exports layers that are displayed on screen. This is what always occurs when exporting from a layout.

  - **Export All Used And Named Layers** exports all layers that either have something on them or have a layer name specified. Not available in layout

files.

> For more information on layers and Layer Sets, and how they function in Chief Architect, please see the Related Articles section below.

- Specify the Other Options, as needed.

  - The **Scaling Unit** allows you to select the unit of measurement to be used. For best results, choose inches or feet for U.S. Unit plan or layout files, or metric units for metric files.

  - Uncheck **Create Associative Dimensions** to export dimensions as simple CAD entities that are not recognized dimensions by other programs. Associative dimensions are recognized by AutoCAD® and many other CAD programs.

    When exporting a layout page, it is often best to uncheck this box.

  - Check **Export Pattern Lines** to export pattern lines. Pattern lines are exported as normal CAD lines.

  - Check **Export Filled Areas** to export filled areas as AutoCAD® 2D solid entities.

  - Check **Export AutoCAD® Index Colors** to automatically map all colors used in the drawing to the closest 256 AutoCAD® Index Color (ACI). Black (RGB 0,0) and white (RGB 255,255,255) are mapped to ACI 7. When unchecked, colors are exported using RGB colors.

    > **Note:** Dimension lines using non-default primary or secondary formatting will lose their changes and will use the default format(s) upon export.

- Click the **Export** button.

3. A dialog will appear prompting for a save location:

- Specify an appropriate File name and location to save the file to.

- Use the **Save as type** drop-down to choose between AutoCAD® Drawing (*.dwg), DXF (*.dxf), or Binary DXF (*.dxf) file types.
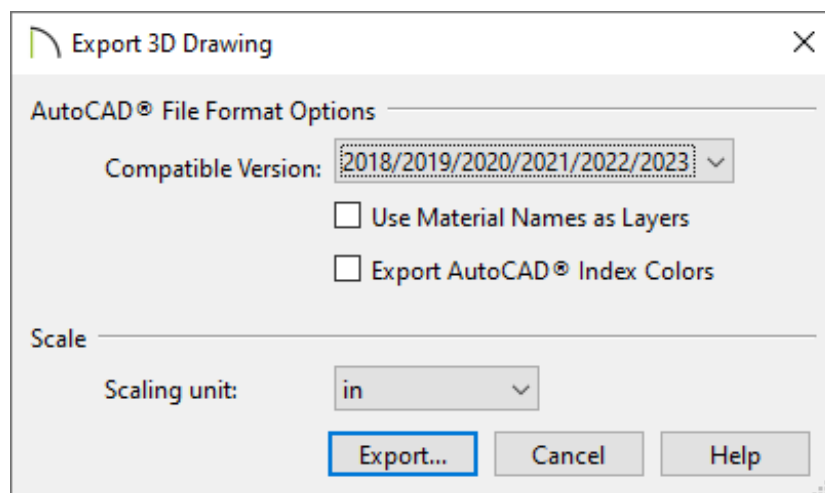
> **Note:** Binary DXF (*.dxf) is easier for computers to read, is more accurate, and occupies less disk space, but some applications do not support Binary DXF (*.dxf).

- Click **Save** to save the file

Any perspective or orthographic camera view can be exported as a 3D model, including AutoCAD® compatible DWG or DXF files. These model files can then be opened by any program that uses AutoCAD®'s 3D DWG or DXF format.

To export a 3D DWG or DXF

1. Enter a 3D view by selecting **3D> Create Perspective View> Perspective Full Overview** .

2. Select **File> Export> Export 3D Model (DWG, DXF)** .

Export 3D Drawing

AutoCAD® File Format Options

Compatible Version: 2018/2019/2020/2021/2022/2023

☐ Use Material Names as Layers

☐ Export AutoCAD® Index Colors

Scale

Scaling unit: in

Export...   Cancel   Help

- From the **Compatible Version** drop-down list, select the version of AutoCAD®

that you want the exported 3D drawing to be compatible with.

- Set the **Scaling unit** that you would like to use.

- Click the **Export** button.

3. Specify an appropriate File name and location to save the model to in the dialog that appears, then click **Save**.

> **Note:** The entire 3D model, including geometry is exported. However, 3D models exported in a DWG and DXF format do not include material and texture information.

Related Articles

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

Modifying the Scale of an Imported DWG/DXF (/support/article/KB-00199/modifying-the-scale-of-an-imported-dwg-dxf.html)

Organizing your Plan and Layout Files (/support/article/KB-00562/organizing-your-plan-and-layout-files.html)

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

Understanding Layer Sets (/support/article/KB-00765/understanding-layer-sets.html)

Understanding Layers (/support/article/KB-03183/understanding-layers.html)

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

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