Chief Architect
Architectural Home Design Software

# Adding a Custom Backdrop Image to Camera Views

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## QUESTION

I have created a number of custom backdrop images. I have copied the images from my digital camera to my desktop, and now I would like to make them usable in Chief Architect. How do I add them to the program?


## ANSWER

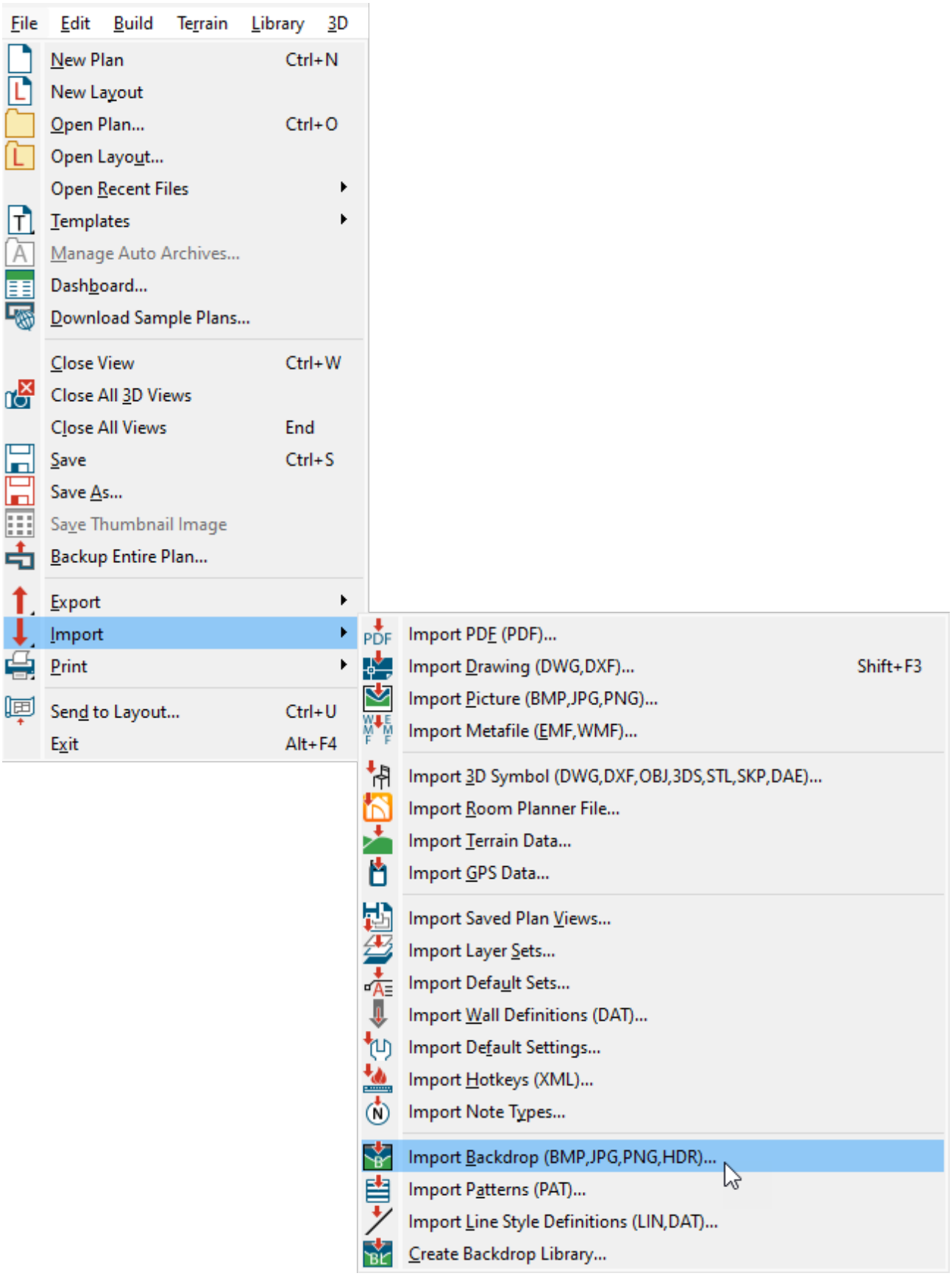
Backdrops are images that display behind the model in 3D views, and new backdrops can be created using a variety of graphic file formats such as .BMP, .JPG, .PNG, and

.HDR. In this article, we will cover the following topics:

- Importing a custom image to be used as a backdrop
- Adding a folder of custom backdrop images to the library
- Applying custom backdrop images to the camera defaults
- Applying a custom backdrop image to a single camera view

## To import a custom image to be used as a backdrop

1. Select **File> Import> Import Backdrop**  .

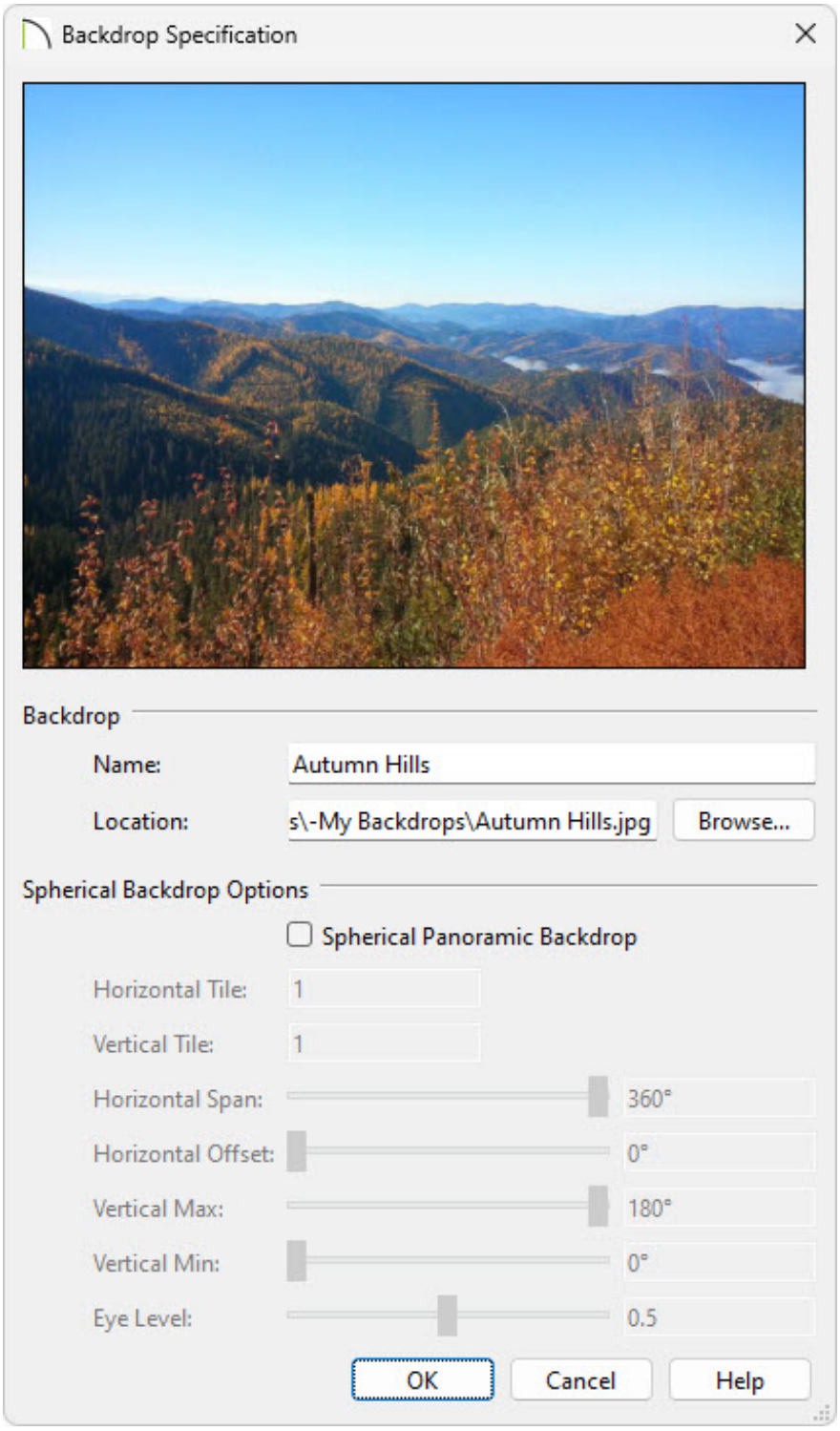



2. The **Import Backdrop File** dialog, which appears next, allows you to browse for an image on your computer. Once you have located the image you want to use, select it, then click the **Open** button.

**Note:** In X16 and newer you are able to import .HDR files which can be used to create high-quality backdrops, and can also provide more realistic scene lighting in GPU ray traced views. A collection of HDR backdrops are also available for download in the Backdrops No.2 HDRI (https://www.chiefarchitect.com/3d-library/index.php?r=site/detail/1303) bonus catalog.

For more information on HDR backdrops, please access your program's documentation.

3. In the **Backdrop Specification** dialog that displays, specify a **Name**, whether it's a Spherical Panoramic Backdrop or not, then click **OK**.




**Note:** The Spherical Backdrop Options should only be used if the selected backdrop was specially created to serve as a spherical panoramic backdrop. When enabled, the image will be projected onto a sphere that surrounds the model in camera views. When you import a .HDR file it will automatically come in as a spherical backdrop.

- Horizontal Tile allows you to specify how many times to tile the selected backdrop image, side-by-side.

- Vertical Tile allows you to specify how many times to tile the selected backdrop image, one above the other.
- Horizontal Span is how much of the sphere the backdrop is applied to. A value of 360° wraps the entire sphere.
- Horizontal Offset allows you to specify a value, in degrees, to shift the backdrop image or tiled images in a clockwise direction.
- Vertical Max is the height of the bottom of the backdrop, measured relative to the top of the sphere.
- Vertical Min is the height of the bottom of the backdrop, measured relative to the bottom of the sphere.
- Eye Level controls the vertical position of the camera within the sphere. A value of 0 positions the camera at the bottom of the sphere while a value of 1 positions it at the top. The default value is 0.5., which centers the camera inside the sphere.

Some experimenting with the Angle values may be necessary to achieve the desired results. You may prefer to do this after adding the backdrop to a plan.

4. The backdrop can now be found in the User Catalog section of the **Library Browser** .

## To add a folder of custom backdrop images to the library

1. Select **File> Import> Create Backdrop Library** to open the **Select a Backdrop Folder** dialog.

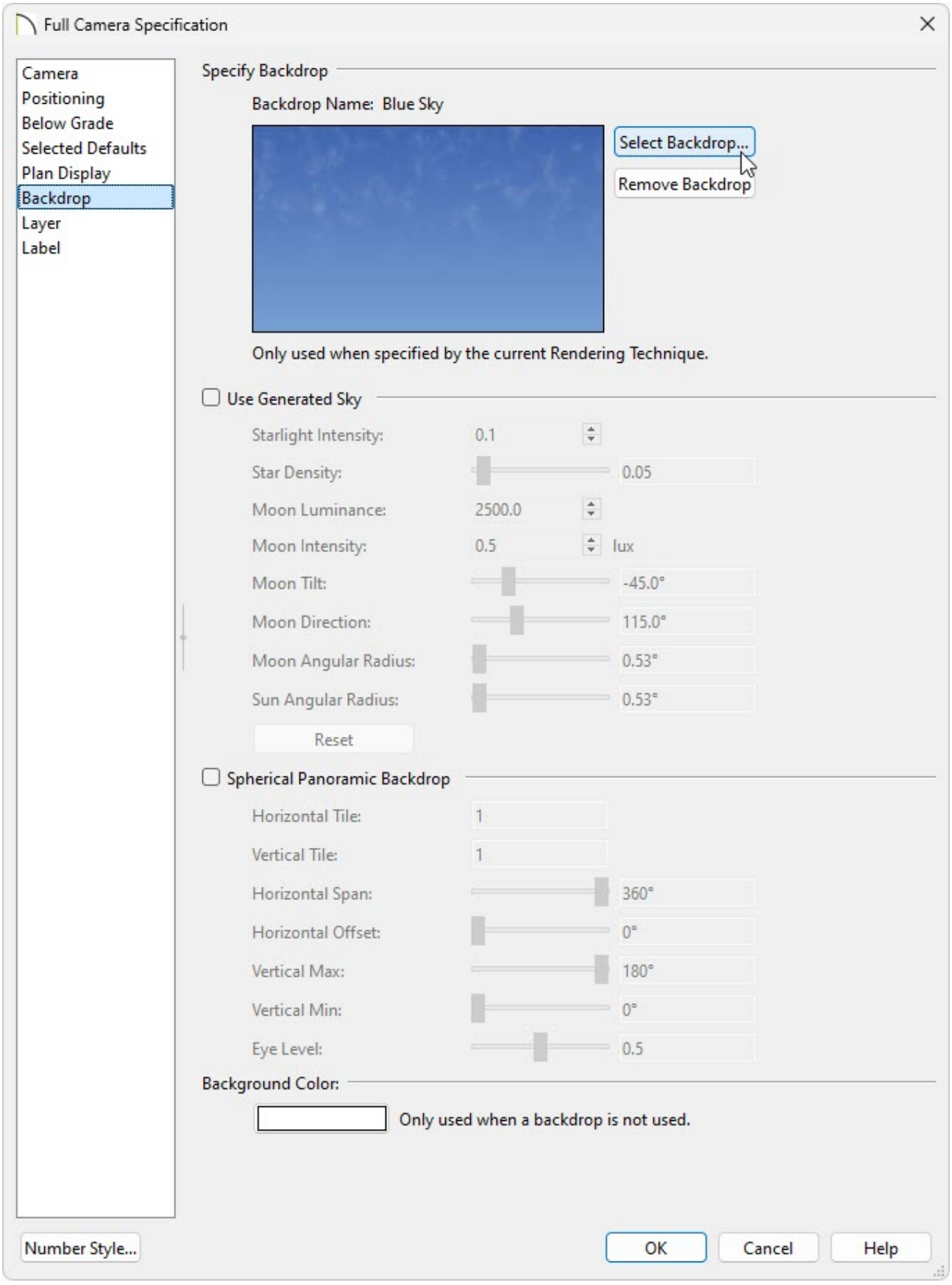
2. Browse for and select the folder containing images you'd like to import as backdrops and then click the **Select Folder** button.

3. An Information message will display once the import has completed. The folder containing the backdrop images will be located in the User Catalog.

## To apply custom backdrop images to the camera defaults

1. From the menu, navigate to **Edit> Default Settings** , expand the **Camera Tools** category, select a camera tool that you'd like a custom backdrop to be applied to, such as **Full Camera**, then click **Edit**.

2. On the BACKDROP panel of the **Full Camera Defaults** dialog that opens, click on the **Select Backdrop** button.




- In the **Select Library Object** dialog that opens next, navigate into the **User Catalog**, find the backdrop image that you'd like to use, and select it.

- Click **OK** to confirm the change.

> **Note:** For more information on the various options located on the Backdrop panel, please refer to your program's documentation, which can be accessed by clicking the Help button at the bottom of the Specification dialog.

3. Click **OK** a second time, then click **Done** to confirm the changes and close out of the dialog boxes.

4. Create a new, **Full Camera** view to see the custom backdrop image displayed behind the model.

> Certain rendering techniques, such as Vector View and Glass House, are not setup to display backdrops by default. To adjust this setting, navigate into Edit> Default Settings, expand 3D View Defaults, select Rendering Techniques, then click Edit. In the Rendering Technique Defaults dialog, select the rendering technique in which the specified backdrop is not displaying in, check the Use Backdrop... box, then click OK.

## To apply a custom backdrop image to a single camera view

1. Select **3D> Create Perspective View** or **3D> Create Orthographic View**, select a camera tool of your choice, then create a camera view.

2. Once the view has generated, navigate to **Tools> Active View> Edit Active View** .

3. On the BACKDROP panel of the Specification dialog that opens, click on the **Select Backdrop** button

    - In the **Select Library Object** dialog that opens, navigate into the **User Catalog**,

find the backdrop image that you'd like to use, and select it.

- Click **OK** to confirm the change.

4. Click **OK** a second time to confirm the change and close out of the dialog.

> **Note:** If a camera view is not saved in the plan you're working in, and the view is subsequently closed, the backdrop will no longer appear when a new camera view is taken unless the backdrop was specified in the default settings.

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Related Articles

- Incorporating Custom Colors (/support/article/KB-00730/incorporating-custom-colors.html)
- Obtaining and Updating Library Content (/support/article/KB-00090/obtaining-and-updating-library-content.html)
- Using the Screen Capture Tool to Create a Picture, Backdrop, Material, or Image (/support/article/KB-00791/using-the-screen-capture-tool-to-create-a-picture-backdrop-material-or-image.html)

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