

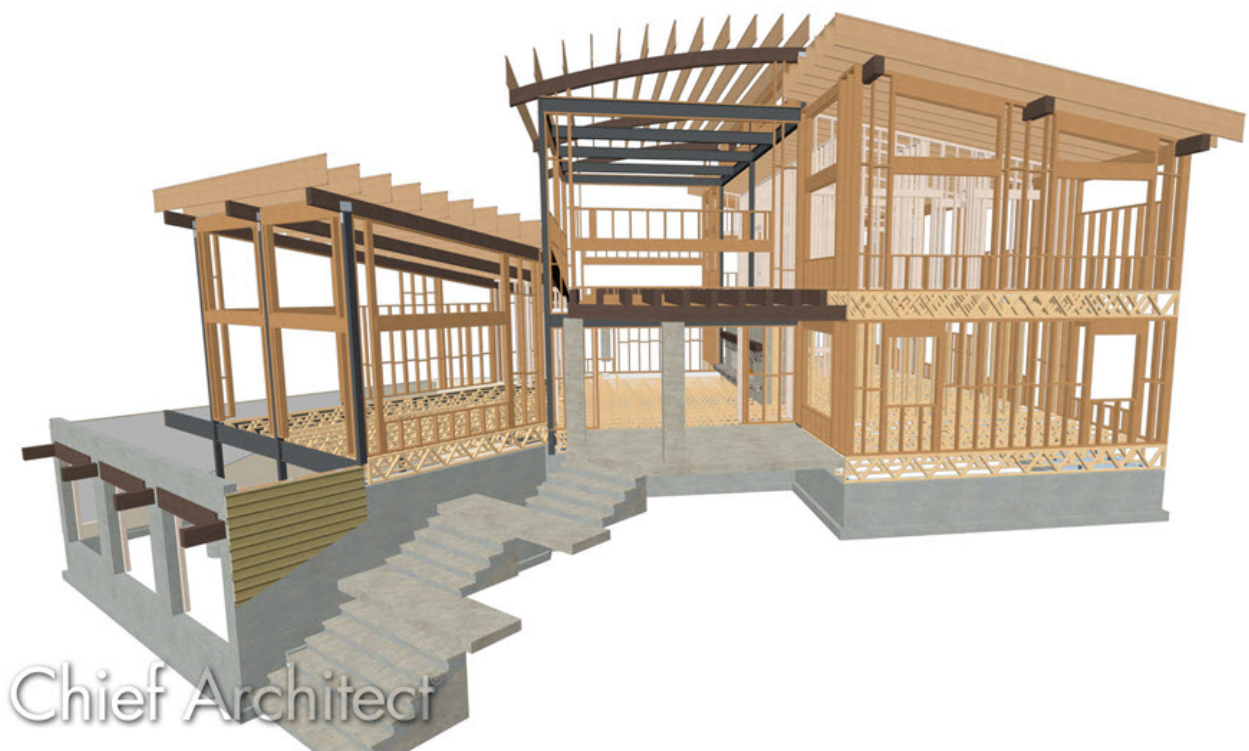
General Framing Guidelines

Reference Number: **KB-00465**

Last Modified: **October 30, 2025**

QUESTION

What is the best way to approach framing in Chief Architect?



ANSWER

In this tutorial, we will describe recommended framing practices in Chief Architect. Specifically, we will discuss:

- [Setting up framing defaults](#)
- [Generating automatic framing](#)
- [Manually building and editing framing](#)
- [Changing framing defaults in an existing plan](#)

Before you begin drawing your plan, it's recommended that you set up your framing defaults to reflect the way you want the structure to be built. Changing these defaults after the structure is complete may cause problems, requiring you to re-do work and lower your productivity.

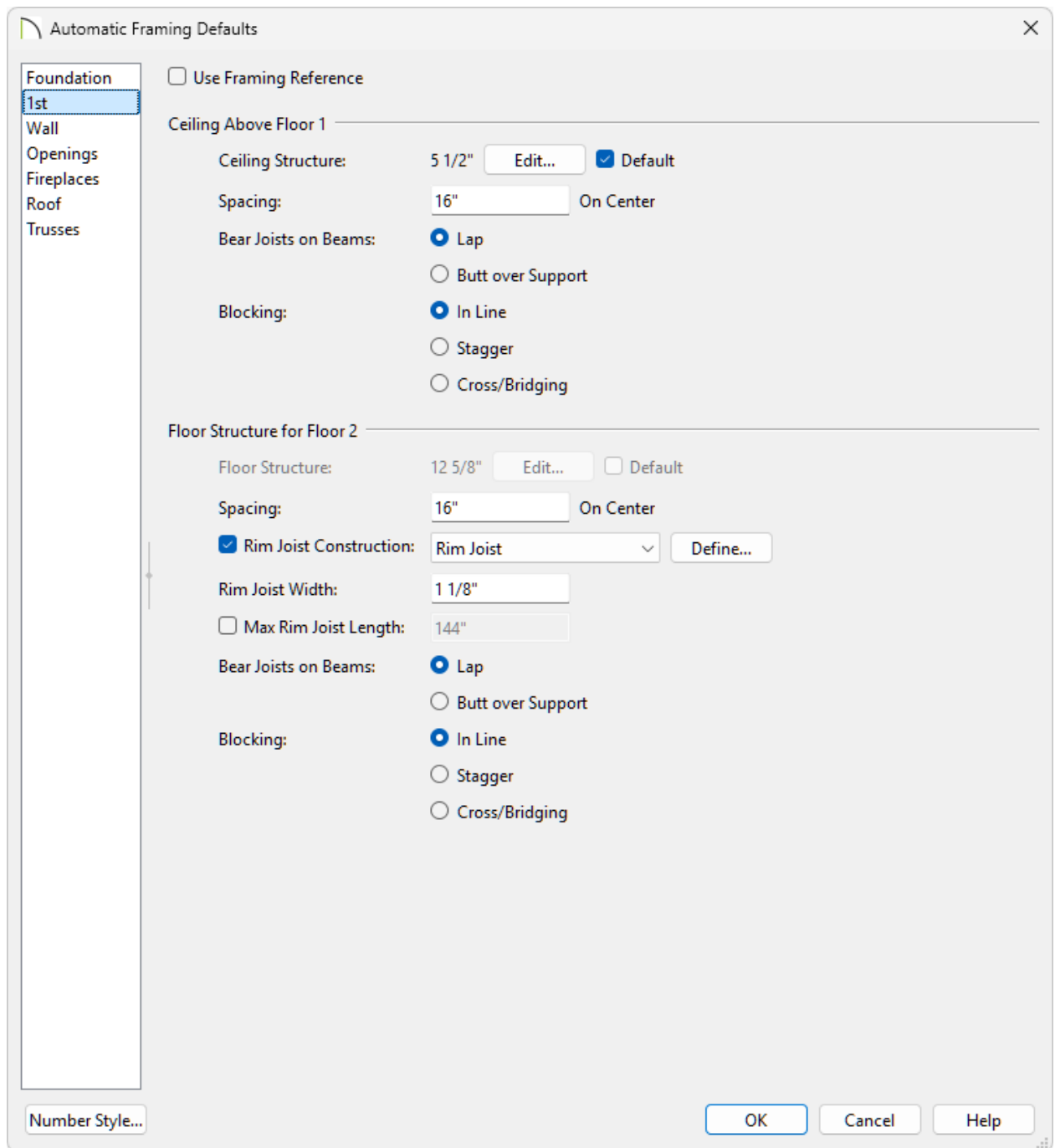
To setup framing defaults


1. Select **Edit** > **Default Settings** , expand the **Framing** category, highlight **Automatic Framing**, then click **Edit**.

In X16 and prior, select the **General Framing** option instead.

2. In the **Automatic Framing Defaults** dialog, visit each panel and specify the spacing, framing member size, framing member type, and other relevant information.

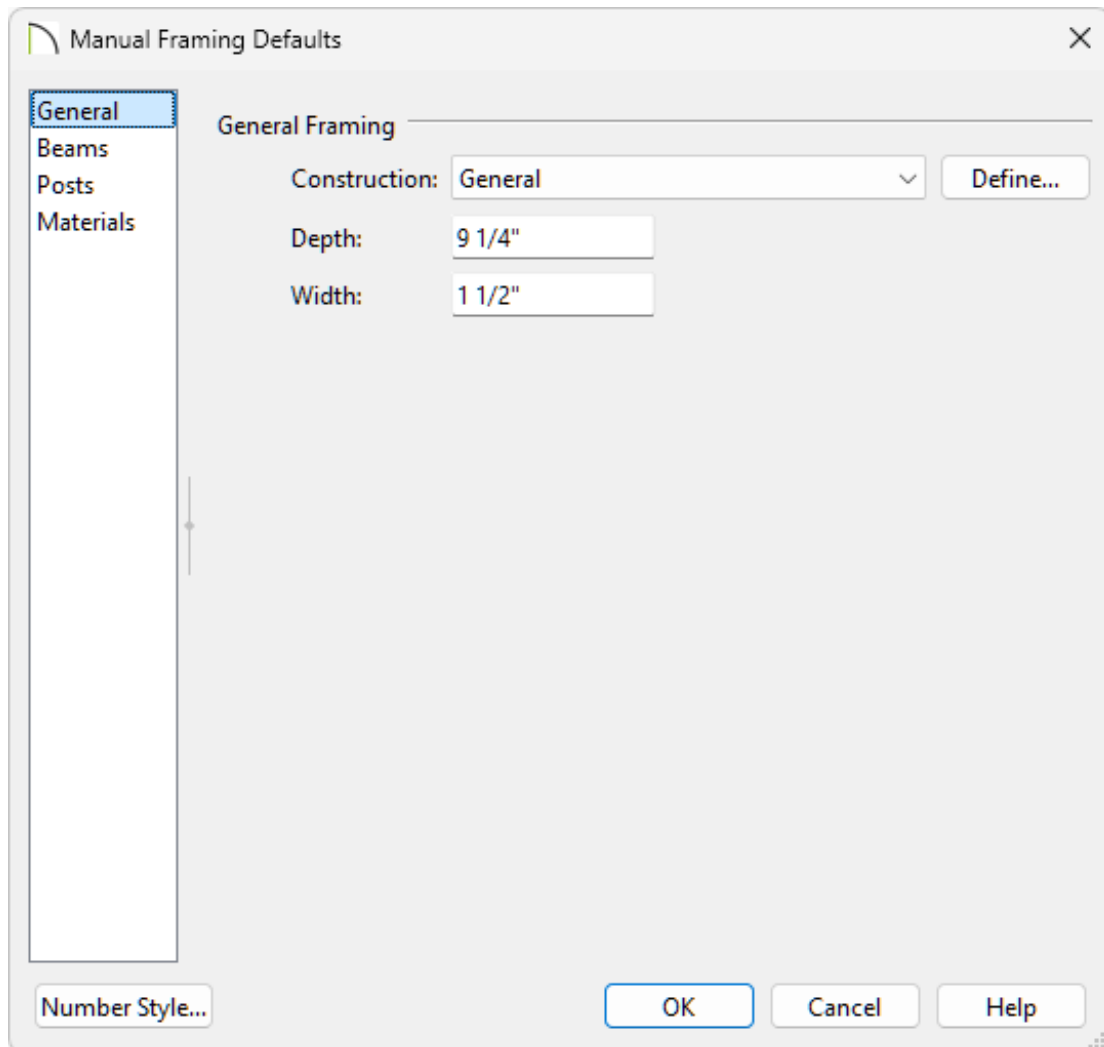
Note: While all framing default settings are important to your structure, the floor framing will be the most time-consuming to change after your plan is complete.




3. When you have setup your automatic framing defaults to your satisfaction, click **OK**.
4. Select **Edit** > **Default Settings** , expand the **Framing** category, highlight **Manual Framing**, then click **Edit**.

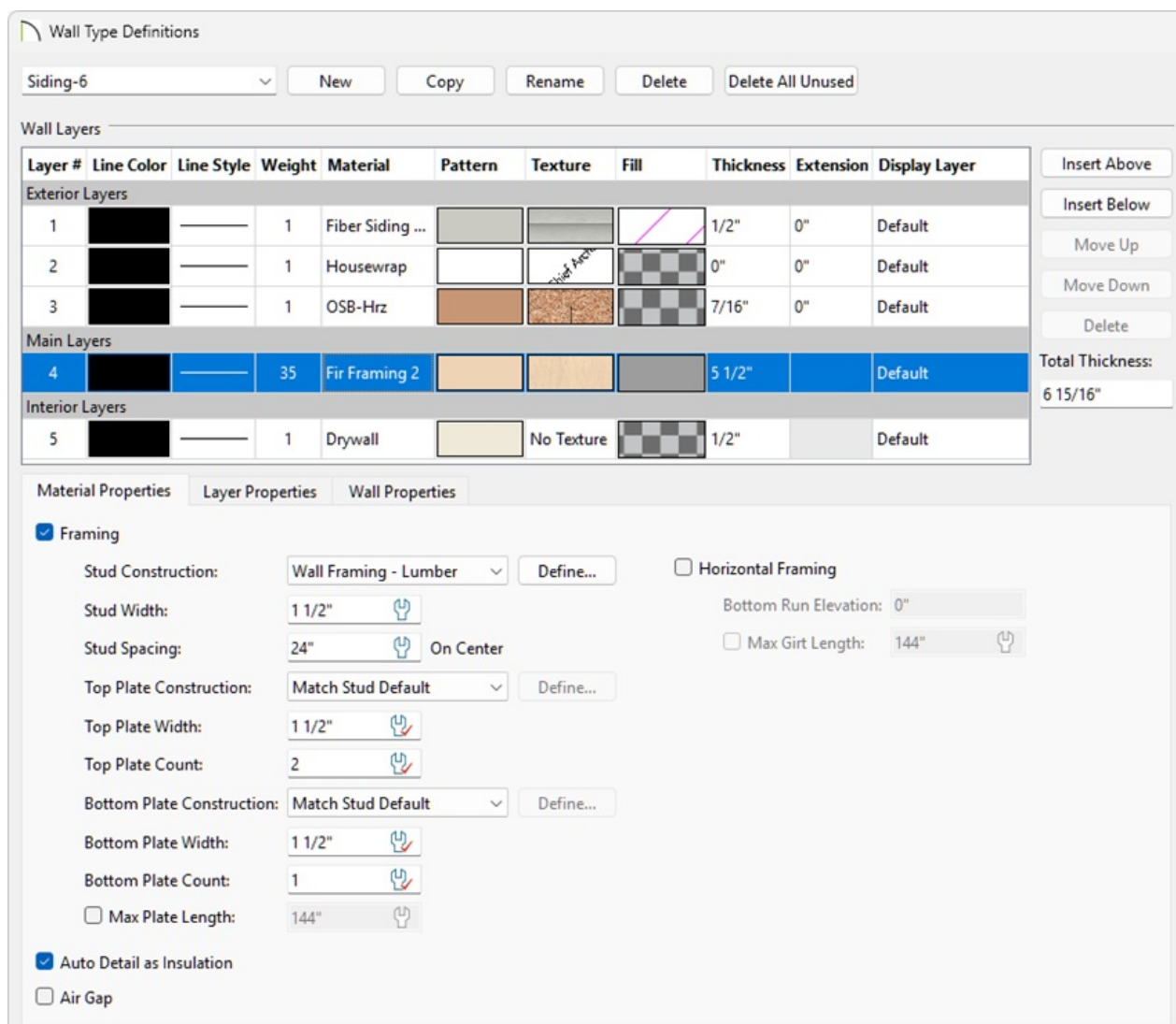
In X16 the manual framing defaults are included under **General Framing**.

5. In the **Manual Framing Defaults** dialog, visit each panel to specify sizing and construction type for manually placed framing members.



6. When you have setup your manual framing defaults to your satisfaction, click **OK**.

7. Framing layers associated with Wall Types can also be modified to your liking. Navigate to **Build> Wall> Define Wall Types** , and in the **Wall Type Definitions** dialog that opens:



- Choose the Wall Type you'd like to modify using the drop-down menu located in the top left corner.
- Wall layers that are to be framed will typically be listed under the Main Layers category. Select the desired wall layer to make modifications, or select the **Insert Above** or **Insert Below** buttons to add a new wall layer above or below the selected layer.
- Specify your desired framing **Material** as well as an appropriate **Thickness** value for your framing layers.
- Check **Framing** to produce framing for the selected layer when wall framing is generated. Select the appropriate framing **Stud Construction** from the drop-down menu, the

Stud Width, as well as the **Stud Spacing**.

Starting in X17, you can set the **Stud Construction**, **Top Plate Construction**, and **Bottom Plate Construction** separately.

- Set your **Top** and **Bottom Plate Width** and **Count**, as well as the **Max Plate Length**, if necessary.
- Check **Horizontal Framing** to produce framing that runs horizontally instead of vertically, sometimes referred to as girts. When checked, the settings below are enabled and most of the settings on the left are replaced by settings that control how girts are generated. For more information on the settings related to horizontal framing, please access your program's documentation by clicking on the **Help** button at the bottom of the dialog.
- Once the framing wall layers are setup to your liking for each of your Wall Types, click **OK**.

Note: Floor and ceiling heights, which determine wall heights, are set in the Floor Defaults dialog for each floor in your plan. Before drawing on each new floor, be sure to specify these values, as well.

When you are confident that your plan is in its final state, it's a good time to generate framing. You can build framing at any time, however, if changes are made to the plan, manual framing will not update to reflect the changes.

To generate automatic framing

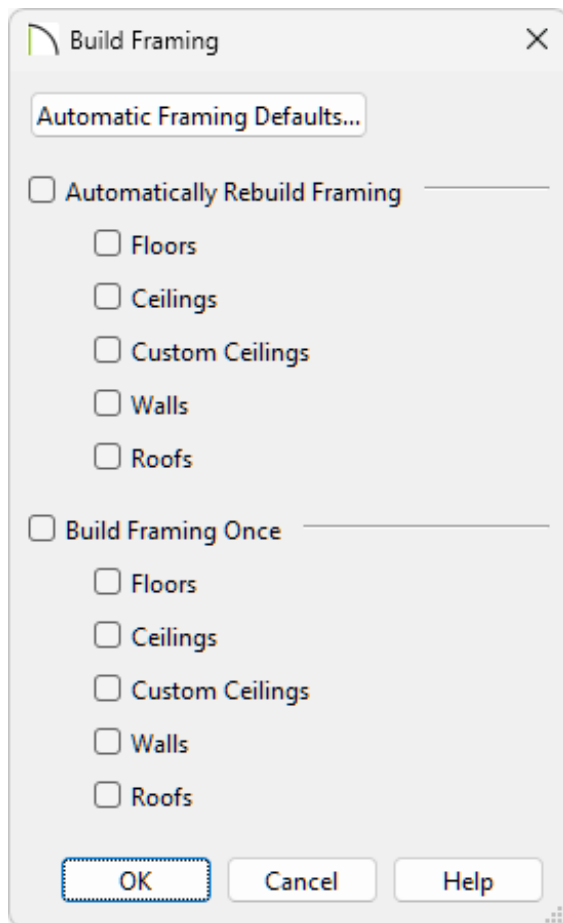
1. Select **Build> Framing> Build Framing**  from the menu.

You can also select **Build> Framing> Build All Framing**  to build roof, wall, platform, and deck framing with a single click.

2. In the **Build Framing** dialog, click the **Automatic Framing Defaults** button to open your **Automatic Framing Defaults** and visit each panel to verify that the default information is correct. Once you have verified that the information is correct, click **OK**.

Some important framing information to be aware:

- Floor framing for a particular floor in your plan is accessed on the floor below. Floor 1 floor framing, for example, is built on Floor 0 (foundation level), with their settings located on the FOUNDATION panel.
 - In order to create the floor framing for Floor 1, a Floor 0 must be present. If a Floor 0 has not been built, the Build Floor Framing checkbox on the Foundation panel will not be available.
 - Ceiling framing for a particular floor in your plan is accessed on that floor
3. In the **Build Framing** dialog, check the appropriate **Build** box for each type of framing that you would like to generate, then click **OK**.







It's common to use a combination of both automatic and manual framing in a single Chief Architect plan.


To build or edit framing manually


With the exception of posts, framing objects are drawn by clicking and dragging in a straight line, similar to other line-based objects. The manual framing tools, which can be accessed by navigating to Build> Framing from the menu, are organized into categories: general framing, roof framing, and floor/ceiling framing. The category that a drawing tool belongs to determines where it can be used:

- Roof framing objects can only be drawn within the area of one or more roof planes.
- Floor and ceiling framing objects can only be drawn within one or more floor or ceiling platforms.

- **General Framing**  objects and **Posts**  can be drawn anywhere in a model.
- **General Framing**  objects can also be drawn in CAD Details.
- **Wall Bridging**  can only be drawn in a Wall Detail.

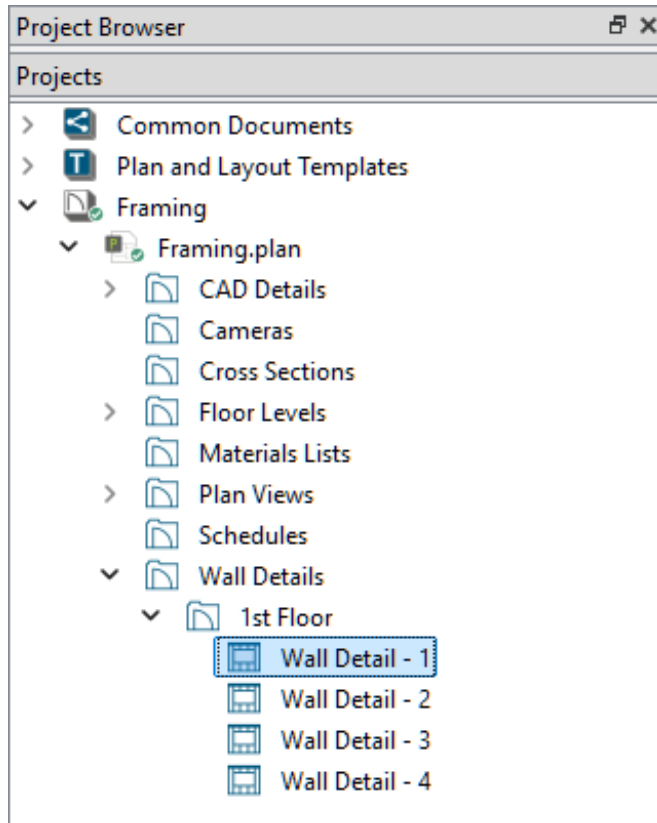
Manually drawn floor, ceiling, and roof framing is typically unaffected when automatic framing is rebuilt and remains along with the newly produced automatic framing.

1. Once framing is automatically generated or manually created, it can be edited further.
2. Use Wall Detail views to edit wall framing components. Wall Details can be accessed from the Project Browser or by right-clicking on a wall and selecting the **Open Wall Detail**  edit button.

If you do not see the Project Browser, select **View> Project Browser**  to turn on its display.

Note: Wall Details are a special type of elevation view in which only the studs, plates, girts, headers, and bridging used to frame an individual wall display.

A Wall Detail view for each framed wall in your plan is automatically created by the program when its wall framing is built.



3. Floor and roof trusses can be edited by selecting and opening their specification dialog. The chord and webbing thicknesses can be set, as well as horizontal span and some additional options like Kingpost and Energy Heel.

Additional information on each of the options in this dialog can be found by clicking the **Help** button at the bottom.

Roof Truss Specification

General

- Line Style
- Fill Style
- Materials
- Label
- Components
- Object Information
- Schedule

Member Sizing

Top Chord: 3 1/2"

Bottom Chord: 3 1/2"

Webbing: 3 1/2"

Thickness: 1 1/2"

Maximum Horizontal Span

Top Chord: 60"

Bottom Chord: 75"

Horizontal Blocking


Vertical Spacing: 24" On Center

Rollout Offset: 24" Automatic



Options

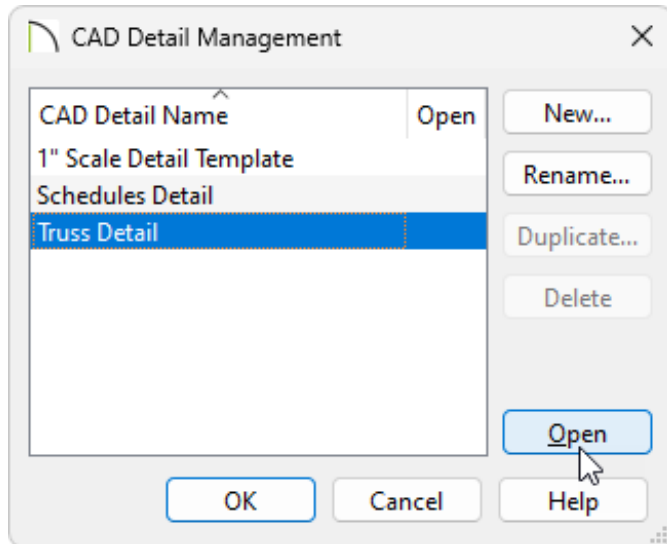
- Require Kingpost
- End Truss
- Energy Heel
- Drop Hip Truss
- Reduced Gable
- Attic Truss
- Sloping Flat Truss
- Force Truss Rebuild
- Lock Truss Envelope And Webbing
- Use Special Snapping

4. Trusses can also be modified in the **Truss Detail**. A Truss Detail is a special CAD Detail window in which a diagram of each truss configuration present in the plan is drawn.


The trusses in a Truss Detail are linked to the actual trusses in the plan. If you modify a truss in a Truss Detail, it will be modified in the model as well. To modify the information in a Truss Detail without affecting the model, use **CAD> CAD Detail From View**  to create a line-drawn copy first.

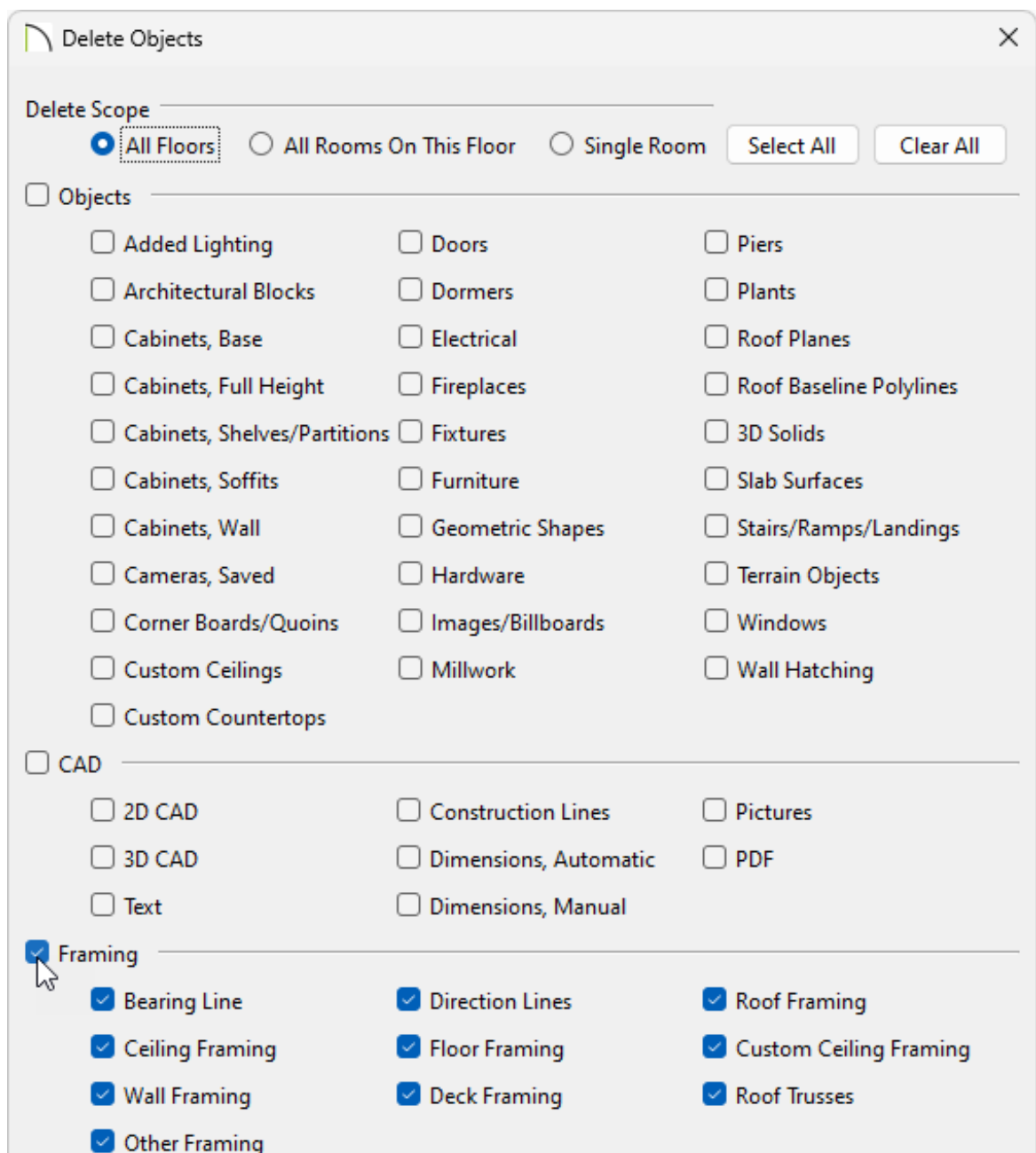
Note: The Truss Detail is typically for display of trusses only. Editing the members that make up the trusses in the Truss Detail is possible and recommended only if absolutely necessary.

To open a plan's Truss Detail, select **CAD> CAD Detail Management**  from the menu, select the **Truss Detail**, then click **Open**. You can also use the **Project Browser**  to access your Truss Details.




To change framing defaults in an existing plan

1. Before making changes that will affect floor, ceiling and/or roof plane heights, it is recommended that you first delete your framing - including wall framing.
 - Click On **Edit> Delete Objects**  to open the **Delete Objects** dialog box.
 - Click the radio button beside **All Floors**.



- Check the boxes in the **Framing** category that you want to remove, or select the Framing heading to check all of the boxes in this category.
- Click **Delete** to close the dialog and delete the specified framing objects in your plan.

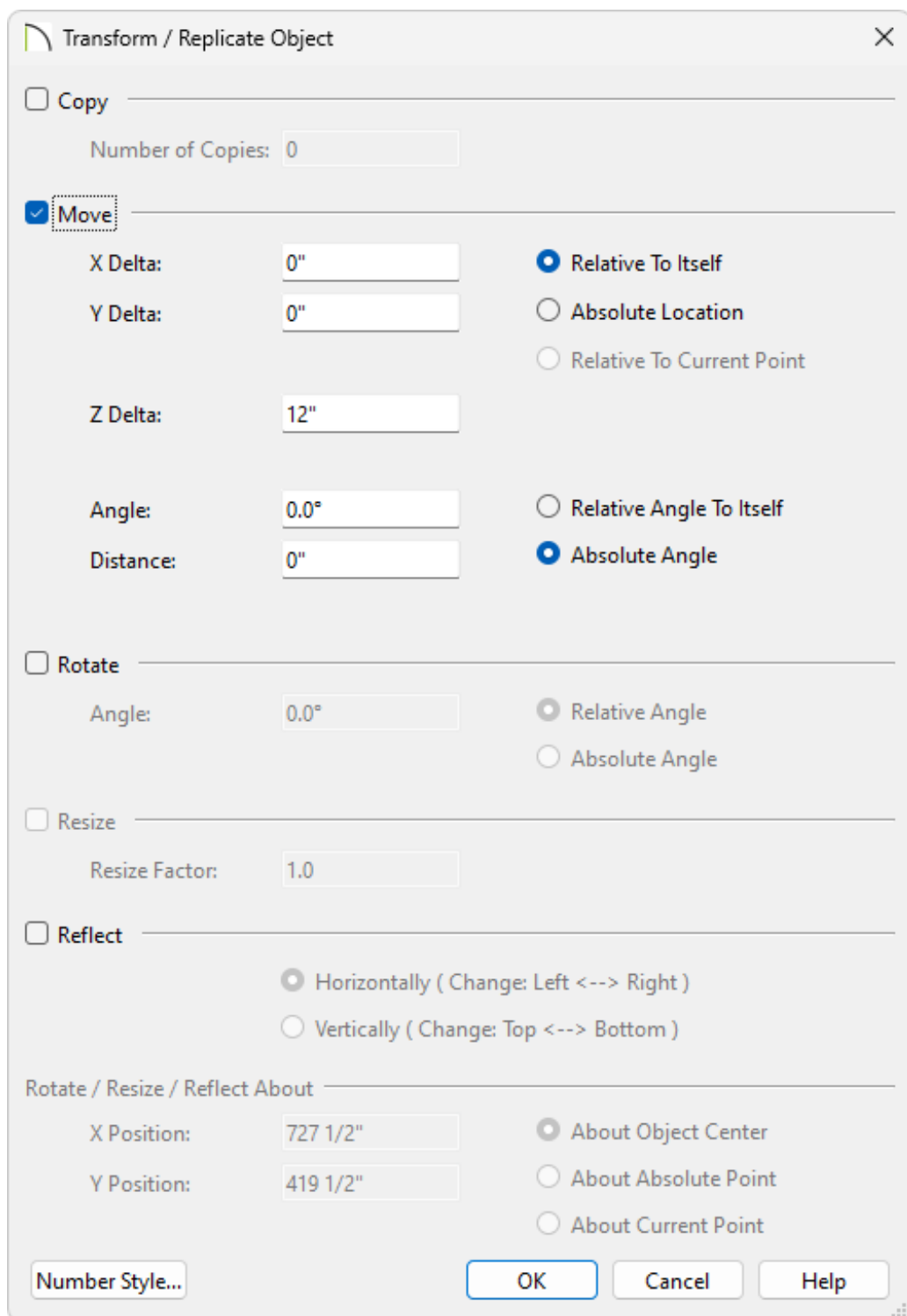
2. If you are raising or lowering your floor and/or ceiling heights and you do not have Auto Rebuild Roofs turned on, you may need to raise or lower your roof manually.

- To raise the roof planes enough to accommodate your changes, hold down the **Shift** key, select the roof planes you'd like to modify, then click the **Transform/Replicate Object**  edit button.

To learn more about group selecting objects, such as roof planes, please see the appropriate resource in the [Related Articles](#) section below.

- In the **Transform/Replicate Object** dialog that displays, check the box beside **Move**, select the **Relative To Itself** radio button, then specify the desired distance to raise or lower the roof planes along the **Z Delta**.

A positive number here will raise the roof planes while a negative number will lower the roof planes.



3. Make the needed changes to your plan's structure and framing defaults.

- Begin on the lowest floor and work upwards towards the attic.
- Remember that changes made to the Framing and Floor

Defaults will not affect any rooms that are not using the default values. For example, rooms with sunken floors should be examined individually and their heights adjusted as needed.


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