

# Customizing a Library Material

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The information in this article applies to:



## QUESTION

I found a material in Chief Architect's library that I want to modify. How can I make a customized library material that I can use in future plans?



# ANSWER


Much like objects, materials in Chief Architect can be edited so that they better suit your design needs.



The Adjust Material Definition tool is useful for quickly changing plan materials directly from a 3D view, however, changing a materials definition with this tool affects all objects in the current plan that are using that material. It does not affect any materials saved in the library or materials used in other plans, though, so it's not useful if you want to be able to edit the material on just a single object, or reuse the altered material in the future.

If you wish to customize a material that you see in the Library Browser, and make those changes available for use in other plans or for exporting, begin by creating a copy of the material and then modify it as needed.

- To create a copy of a library material
- To customize a material
- To save an already modified material to the library

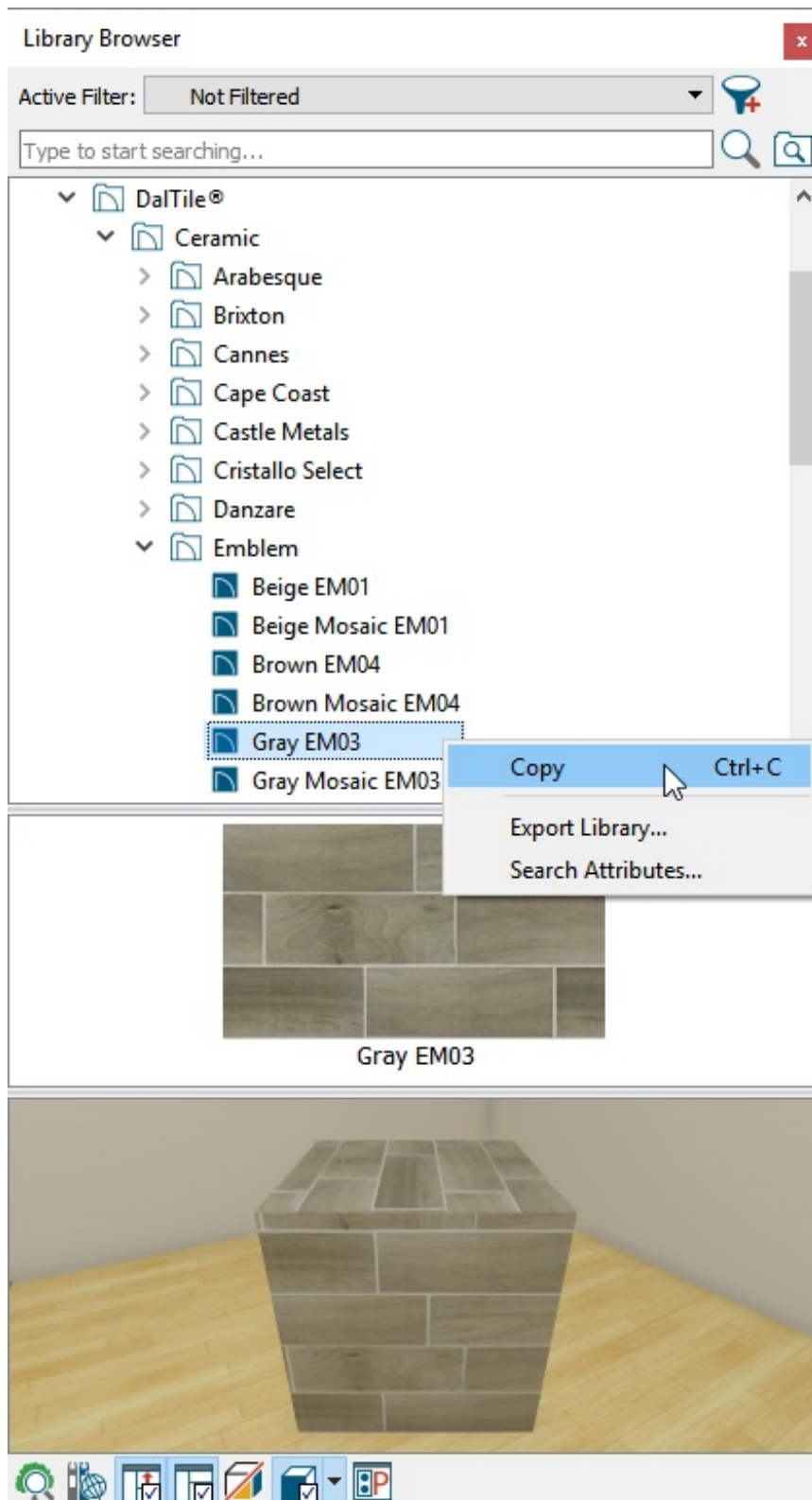
## To create a copy of a library material

1. Select **View> Library Browser**  to display the Library Browser if it's not already displayed.
2. Browse to the material that you would like to customize.

In X13 and newer versions, you can also make a copy of a material after selecting a material with the **Material Eyedropper**  tool, **Material Painter**  tool, or the **Define Material** dialog.

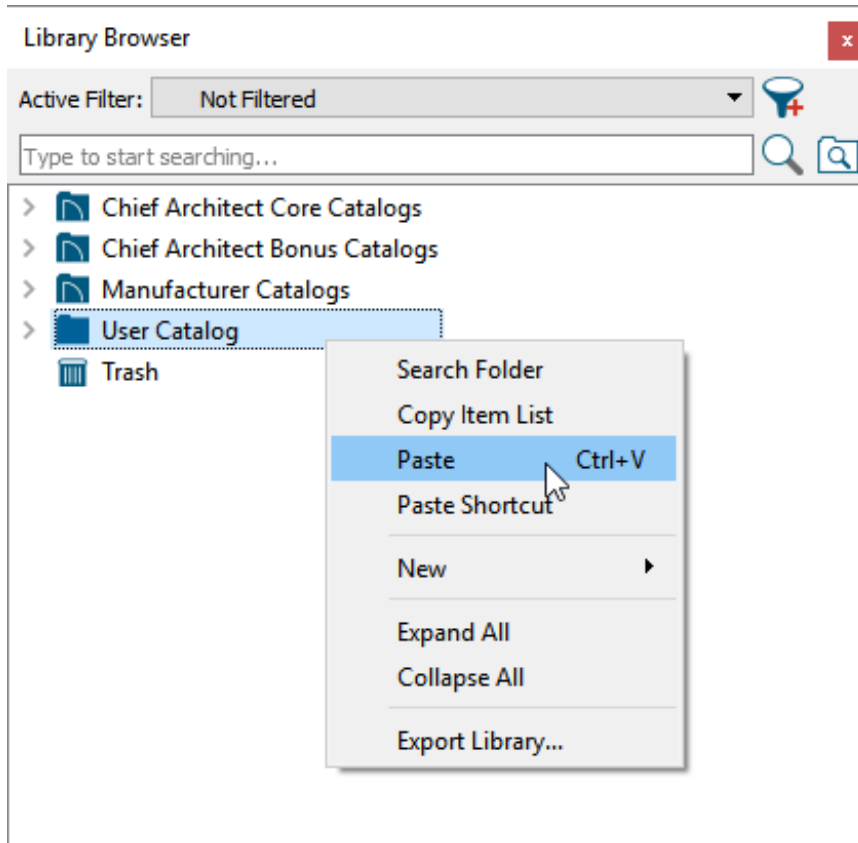
For the purposes of this example, the **Gray EM03** material is used, which can be found in the DalTile® (<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/3d-library/index.php?r=site/detail/684>) Manufacturer catalog.

3. Right-click on the material and choose **Copy** from the contextual menu.



You can also right-click on your user catalog and select New> Material to create a new material from an image file saved on your computer and edit it in the same manner as described in this article. For more information, see the article on "Creating a New Material" listed in the [Related Articles](#) section below.

4. Browse to the **User Catalog**, right-click on either the category name, or a folder within it, and select **Paste**.



When this material is pasted, it retains the same material name as the original which we copied it from.

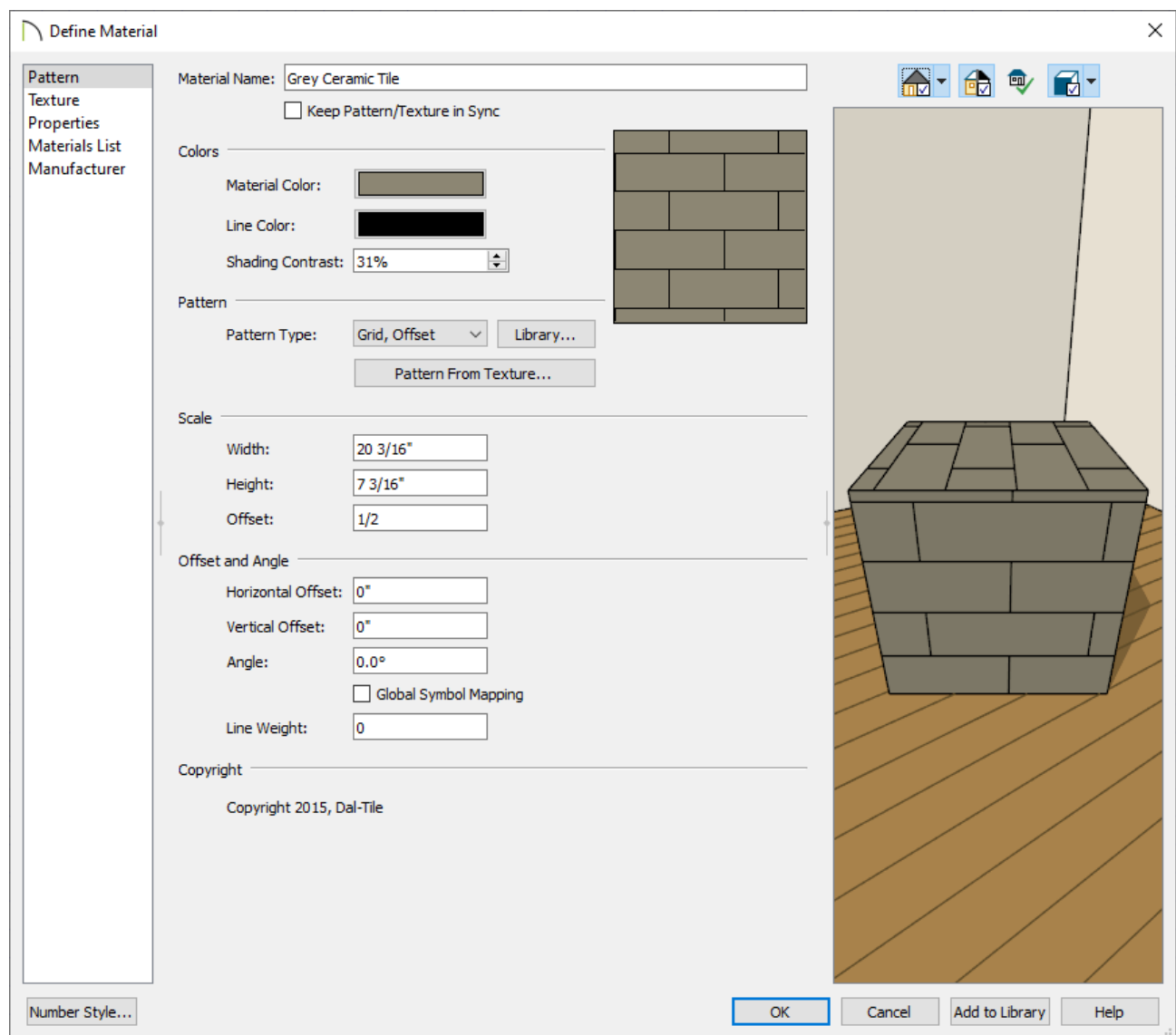
5. The pasted copy of the original material is now ready to be modified.

## To customize a material

1. Right-click on the newly pasted material and select **Open Object** to display the **Define Material** dialog.
2. Select the **PATTERN** panel.

Type a descriptive name for the custom material. This name will display in the Library Browser. For the purposes of this example, we will call the new material **Gray Ceramic Tile**.

Materials have two attributes that determine what they look like in 3D views, patterns and textures. The **PATTERN** panel addresses how patterns display. Patterns are composed of CAD lines and are used to represent materials in 3D views using the Technical Illustration, Line Drawing and Vector View rendering techniques.



- Specify the **Color** properties of the pattern, the **Pattern Type** or style, the **Scale** or size (Height and Width), along with the **Offset and Angle** of the pattern.

Check the **Keep Pattern/Texture in Sync** option to maintain consistent Scale and Offset and Angle settings between the pattern and texture if these settings are modified. You can also specify a custom pattern to be used from the Library, or generate a pattern based upon a texture image by selecting the **Pattern From Texture** option.

Starting in Chief Architect X13, an **Offset** field is available under the Scale section when certain Pattern Types are chosen, allowing you to offset the rows/columns of a chosen material.

In this example, the default colors and pattern type are used, each tile is 20 3/16" wide and 7 3/16" high, and no offset or angle is specified.

- Once a change has been made, select the **Tab** key on your keyboard to update the dialog without exiting. This will allow you to see changes as they are made in real-time using the 3D preview on the right.
- You can also change the Preview properties located in the top right corner. You can choose to see a 3D preview of the material in color or in black and white, you can change the rendering technique, and you can select what preview shape you'd like to see while in the dialog.

**Note:** Both pattern and textures are assigned origins, which determine where the pattern or texture begins on an X/Y axis. Depending on the placement of a particular object relative to this origin, a material applied to it may not look right in 3D. You can address this by specifying a new origin for the material's pattern and/or texture. By default, this origin is 0,0 for the Horizontal and Vertical Offset.

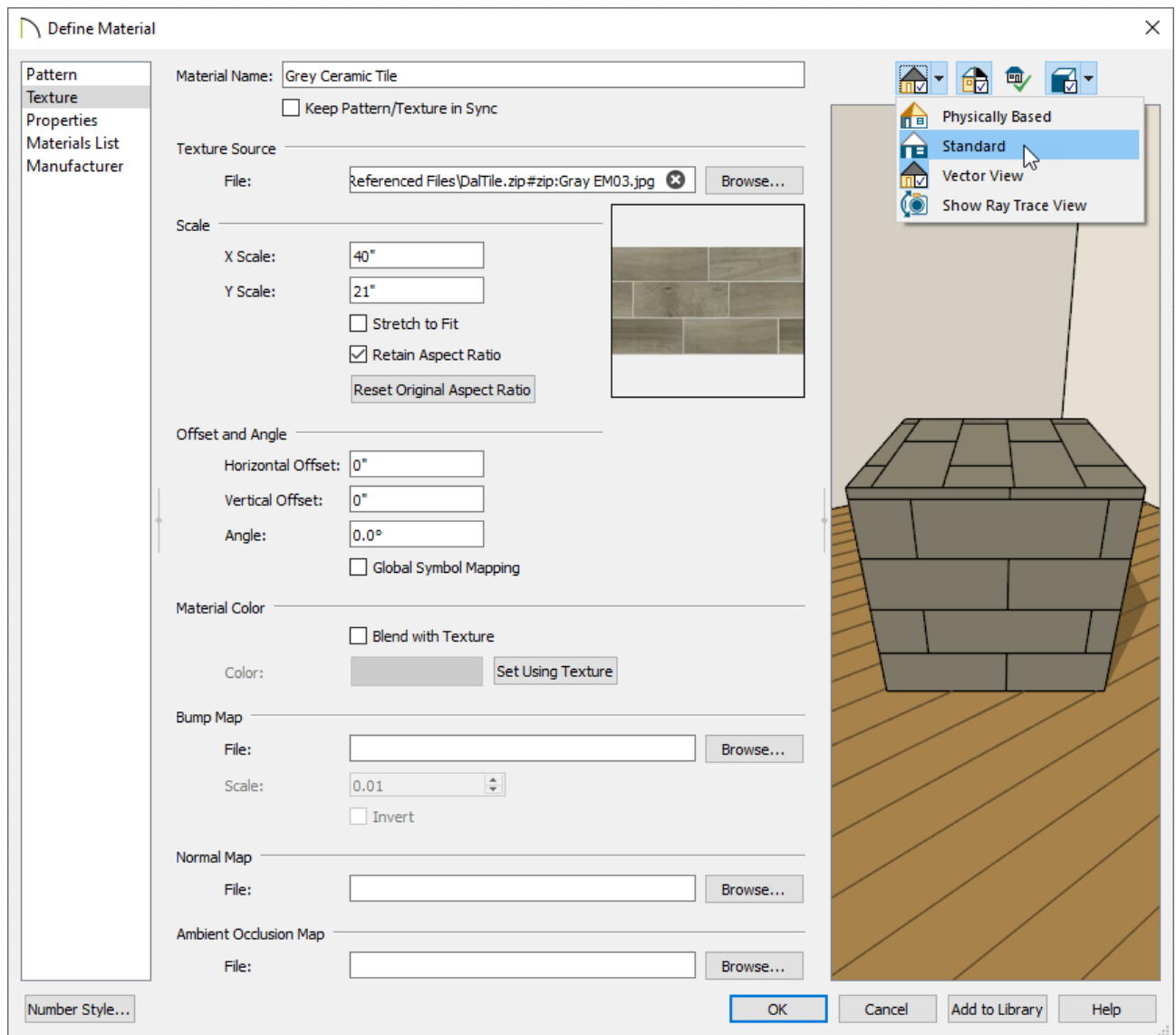
For directions on determining the origin, see the "Mapping Patterns and Textures" section in the Materials chapter of the Chief Architect Reference Manual, which is available under the software's Help menu.

- To learn more about these various settings, click on the **Help** button at the bottom of the dialog.

### 3. Select the **TEXTURE** panel.

The **TEXTURE** panel determines how textures are displayed. Textures are based off of image files and are used to represent materials in 3D views using the Standard, Physically Based, Duotone, Painting, and Watercolor rendering techniques, as well as for Ray Trace renderings.

The 3D preview on the right of the dialog may still be displaying a Vector rendering technique. Go ahead and switch this to use the **Standard** option to see textures.



- Notice that the **Texture Source** is referencing an image file demonstrated by the **.jpg** file extension.
- Specify the **Scale** or size (Height and Width) of the texture, along with the **Offset and Angle**.

Check the **Keep Pattern/Texture in Sync** option to maintain consistent Scale and Offset and Angle settings between the pattern and texture if these settings are modified.

In this example, the entire texture image that is displayed next to the scale properties is 40" wide (X scale) and 32" high (Y Scale), and no offset or angle is specified. .

- You can check the **Blend with Texture** box to blend the texture with a solid color, then click the **Color** box to specify the color you want to blend it with.

A **Set Using Texture** button is also available that allows you to use the predominant color of the texture.

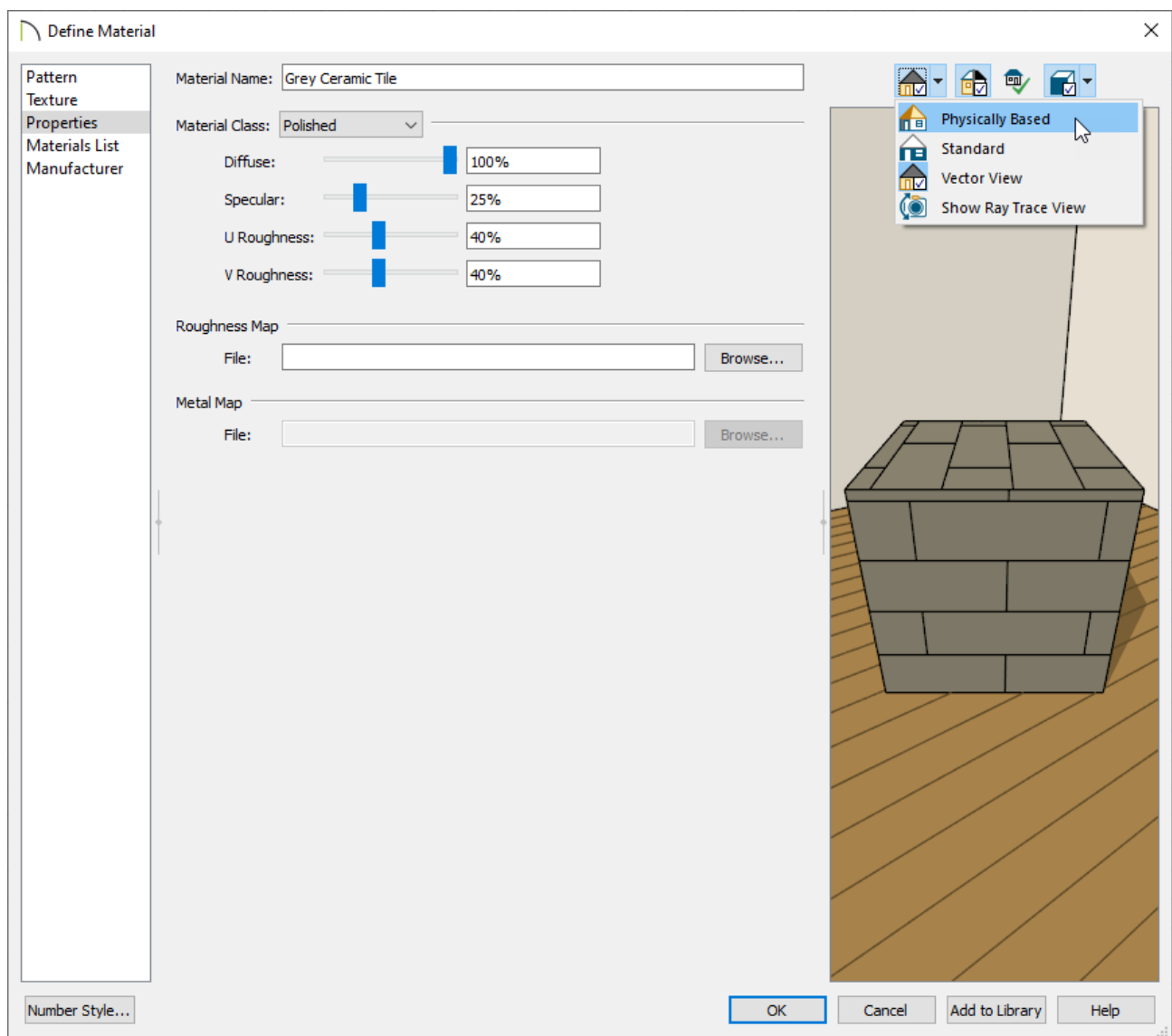
**Note:** If you have found colors at manufacturers' websites, in digital photos, or in other files, and want to incorporate these colors into your design, see the article on "Using the Color Chooser" listed in the [Related Articles](#) section below.

- Material Maps can also be created and specified for textures. These are specifically produced image files that can add realism to a material's appearance in rendered and ray trace views by making it appear contoured instead of flat, or rough instead of smooth or glossy.
- To learn more about these various settings, click on the **Help** button at the bottom of the dialog.

#### 4. Select the **PROPERTIES** panel.

The settings here control how the material appears in most rendered and ray traced 3D views. Prior to making adjustments to material properties, it's recommended that you're using either the **Physically Based** or **Show Ray Trace View** camera preview option. This will show you in real-time, what these material changes will look like in a realistic rendering.





- You may notice that each material falls into a particular class. Feel free to change the materials class and experiment with the different settings related to each.

In this example, the material being used is categorized into the **Polished** Material Class.

- Additional Material Maps can be added here as well.
- Again, if you'd like to learn more information about these various properties or settings, click on the **Help** button at the bottom of the dialog.

5. On the **MATERIALS LIST** panel, specify the properties to be used for calculation purposes when generating a materials list.

6. If the selected material was copied from a manufacturer specific library, like in this


example, contact information for the manufacturer will be displayed on the **MANUFACTURER** panel.


7. Once you have completed making changes to the material, click **OK**. You are now ready to use your customized material in your plans.


You can repeat this process to create as many copies of the materials that you need in different colors, rotations, scales, reflectivity, with various origins, etc.

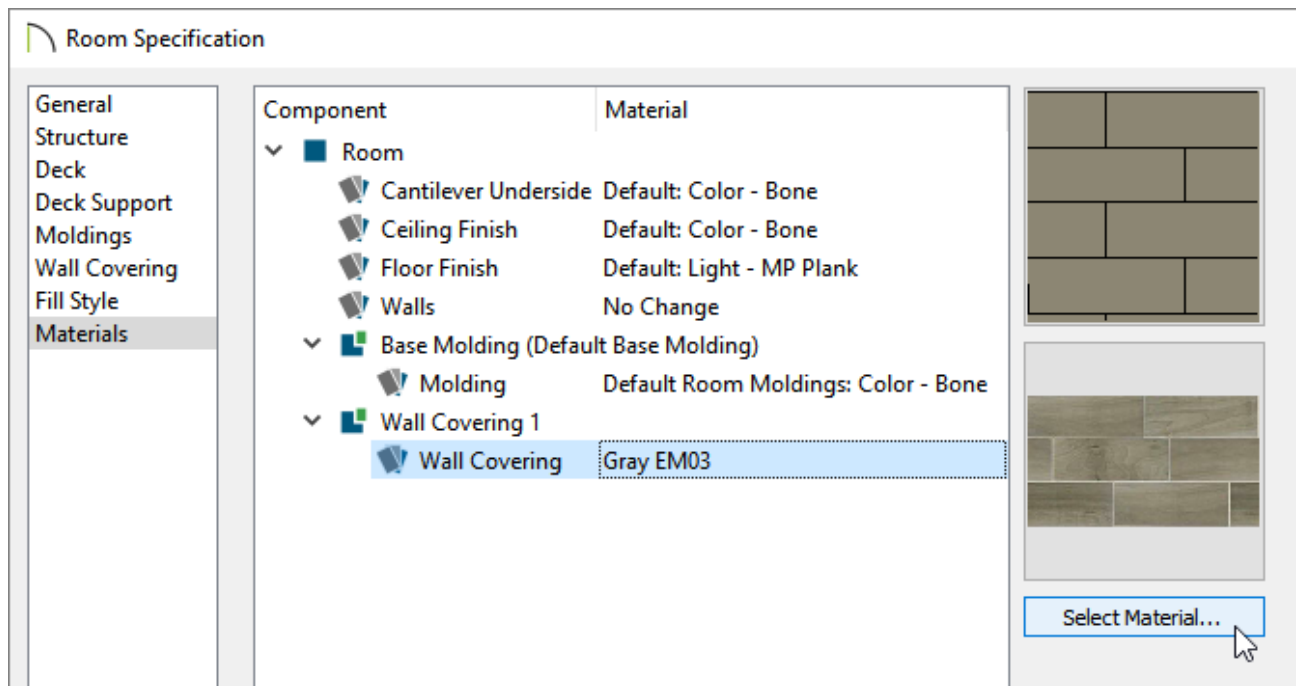
If you have already modified a library material in a plan, and did not first create a copy of it so it can be used in different plan files, you can still add it your User Catalog for future use by following the steps below.

## To save an already modified material to the library

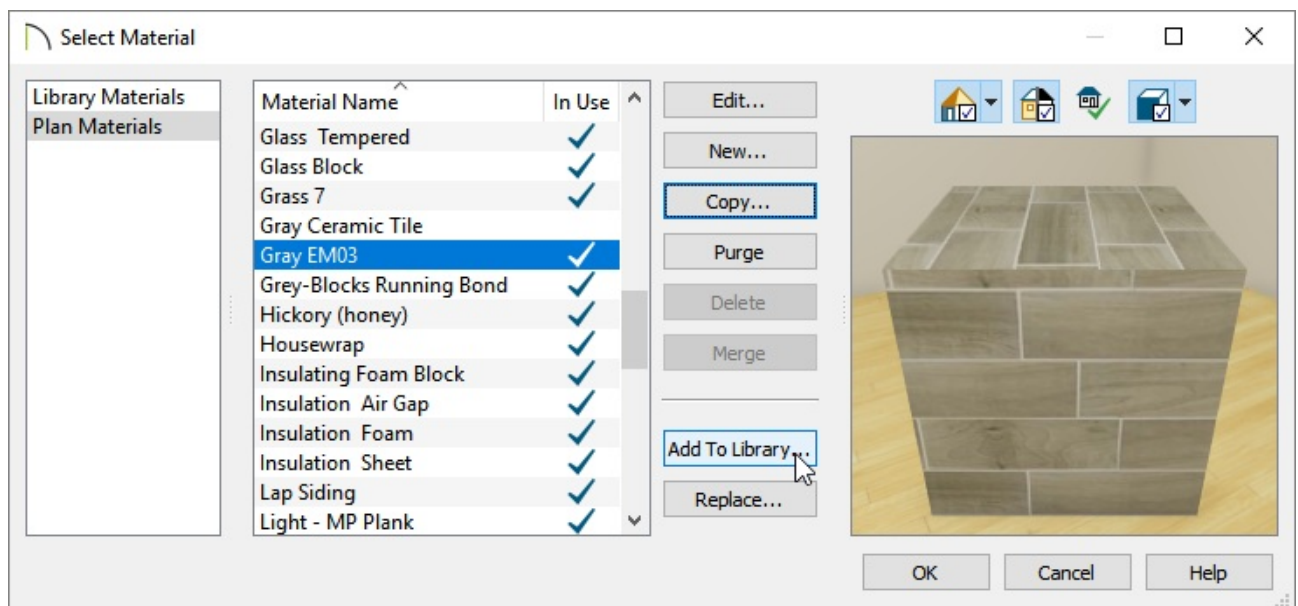
1. Create a 3D view looking at an object that is using a modified material, click the **Select Objects**  tool, then click on the object to select it.

Alternatively, if you recall the name of the material you modified, you can navigate to **3D> Materials> Plan Materials**  and skip to Step 3 below.

2. Click the **Open Object**  edit button to open the object's specification dialog and select the **MATERIALS** panel.



- Select the component that has your modified material applied to it and click on the Select Material button.
  - In the **Select Material** dialog that opens, select the **PLAN MATERIALS** panel.
3. Confirm that your modified material is highlighted in this list; or instead select the customized material you'd like to add, then click the **Add to Library** button on the right side of the dialog.



- Your modified material will be now added to your User Catalog.
- Click **OK** to close the dialog, then click **OK** once more to close the selected object's



specification dialog if it was opened.

4. The copy of you material can now be found in your **User Catalog** located in the Library Browser. At this time, you can right-click on the material located in your User Catalog, choose **Rename**, and specify a different name if desired.

You may also find it helpful to create sub-folders for different types of customized materials at this time.

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#### Related Articles

-  [Creating a New Material \(/support/article/KB-00767/creating-a-new-material.html\)](/support/article/KB-00767/creating-a-new-material.html)
-  [Incorporating Custom Colors \(/support/article/KB-00730/incorporating-custom-colors.html\)](/support/article/KB-00730/incorporating-custom-colors.html)



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