

Creating Custom Balusters and Railing Panels

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The information in this article applies to:



QUESTION


I have a custom railing I need to create for a client. How can I create custom balusters and panels?

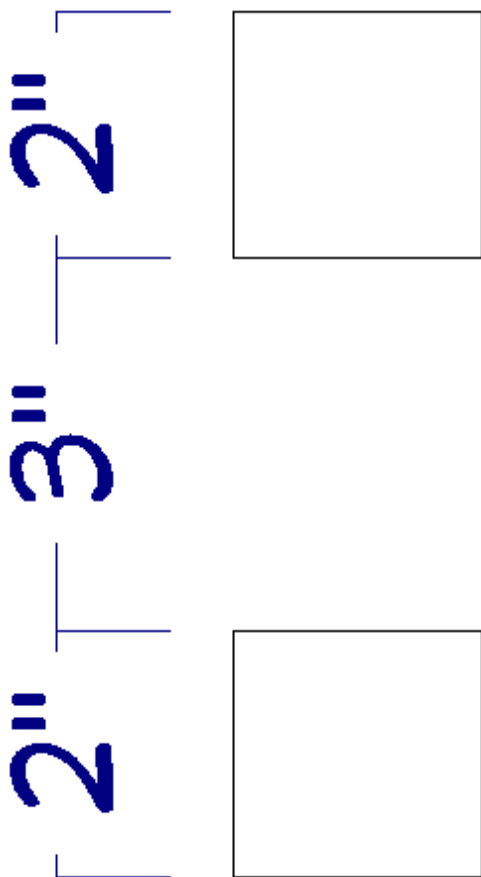


ANSWER


Custom railing panels, newels, and balusters can all be created using shapes or solids, and then converting them into millwork symbols, allowing them to be used in the Railing Specification dialog. This article discusses how to create different space intervals for balusters and creating a custom panel. Newels, balusters and panels can be created with any 3D item that has been added to the library as Millwork. For this example, Polyline Solids are used.

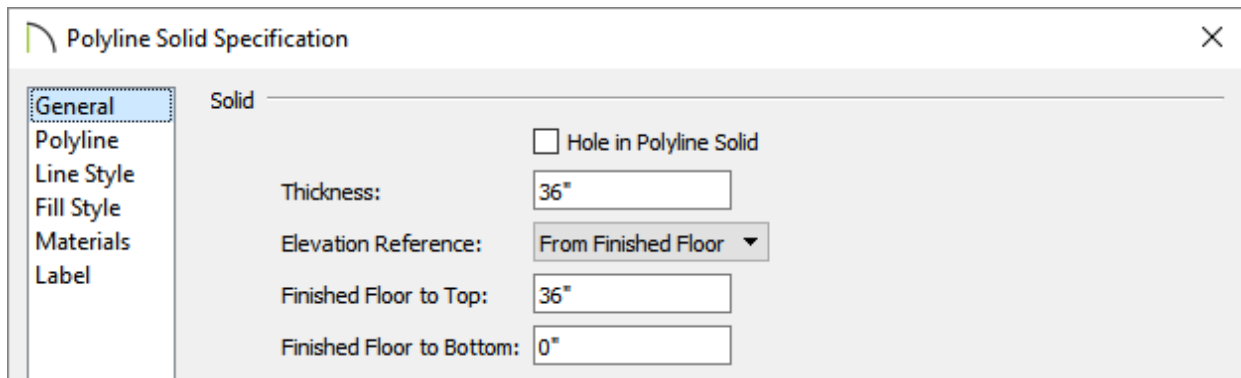
To create a custom baluster or newel

1. In a **New Plan**  file, select **Build> Primitive> Polyline Solid** , and click and drag to draw two Polyline Solids 2" in size, spaced vertically, 3" apart.






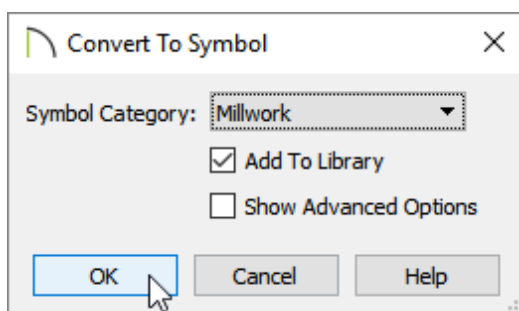
When creating a custom newel or baluster, it's imperative that it's drawn vertically in the drawing space. Otherwise you will need to rotate the symbol before you apply the symbol to a railing.

- Group select the two solids, click the **Open Object**  tool to open the **Polyline Solid Specification** dialog, specify the **Thickness** as 36", which will act as the total height of the baluster, then click **OK**.



Materials can be specified on the Materials panel at this time if desired. If materials are not changed now, it's possible to change them later when the balusters are applied to the railing.

- Select **3D> Create Perspective View> Full Camera** , then click and drag a camera pointing at the two balusters.
- Once the view has generated, select **Tools> Symbol> Convert to Symbol**  from the menu.
 - In Chief Architect X11 and newer program versions, you can also select objects and use the **Convert Selected to Symbol**  edit button to create custom symbols.
- In the **Convert to Symbol** dialog, select **Millwork** from the **Symbol Category** drop-down menu, put a check in the **Add To Library** box , then click **OK**.





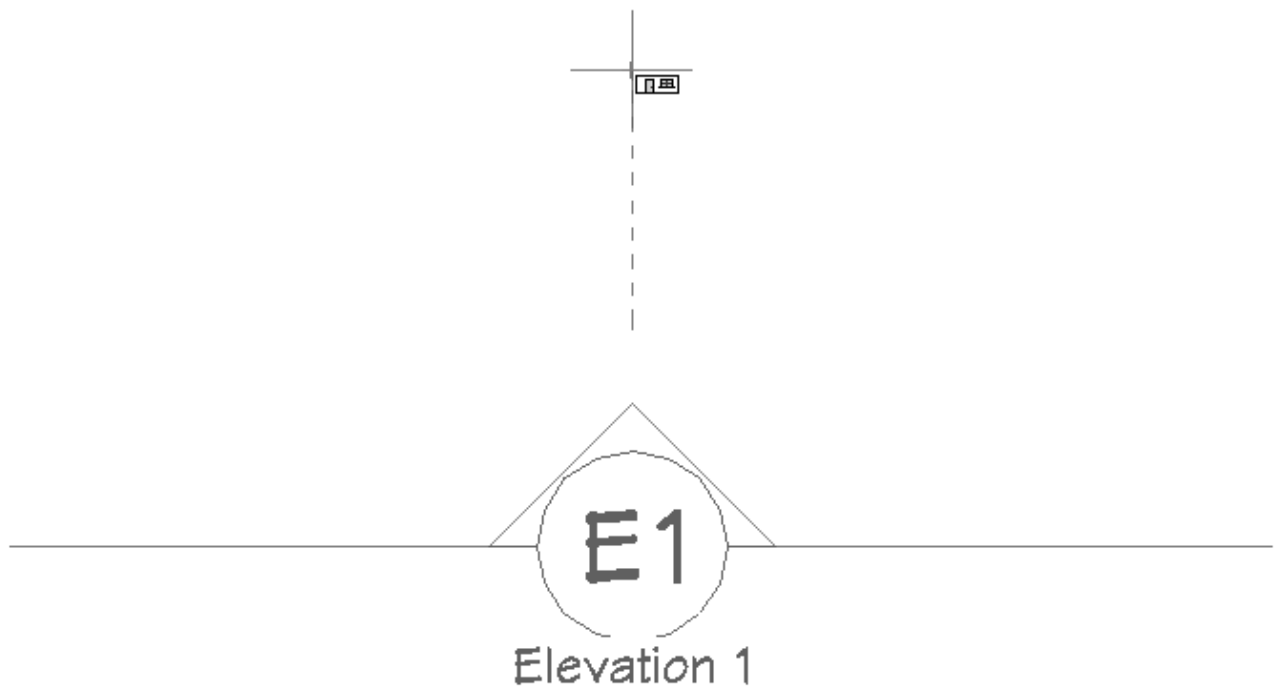
6. In the **User Catalog** of the Library Browser, a new **Untitled** item will be created. Right-click on this item, choose **Rename**, and type in a descriptive name of your choice.

In this example, the name **Double Baluster** is used.


To create a custom panel

Panels can be created using a single Polyline Solid with a hole cut into it, or by using several pieces put together.

1. In a **New Plan**  file, select **3D> Create Orthographic View> Cross Section/Elevation** , and click and drag from the bottom of the screen up.




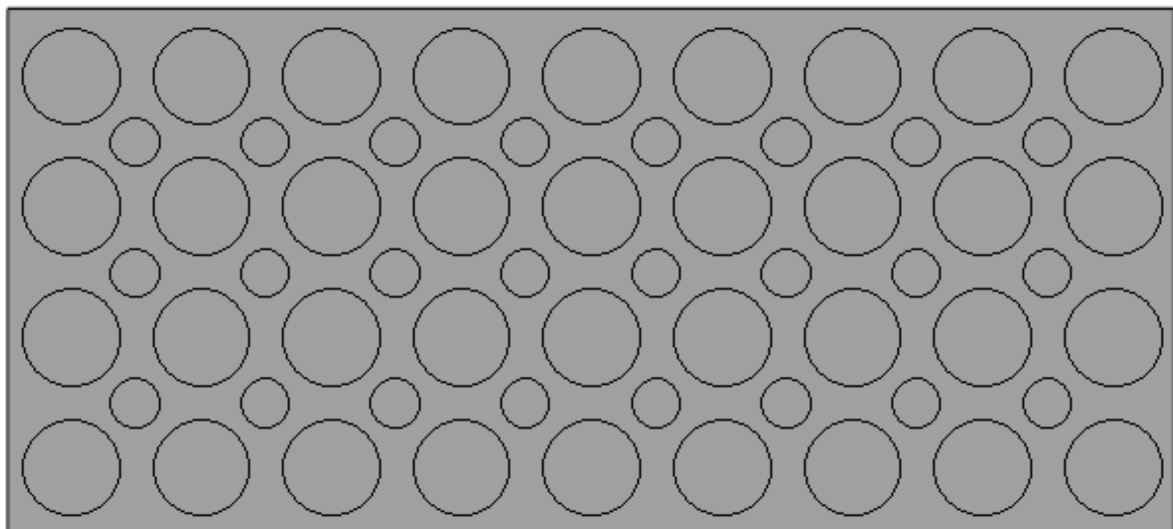
When creating a custom railing panel it's imperative that it's drawn horizontally in the drawing space. Otherwise you will need to rotate the symbol before you apply the symbol to a railing.




2. In the elevation view select **Build> Primitive> Polyline Solid**  from the menu, then click and drag to create a Polyline Solid the desired size for the panel.



Materials can be specified on the Materials panel of the Polyline Solid Specification dialog now, or you can wait and change the material when you apply the symbol to your railing.

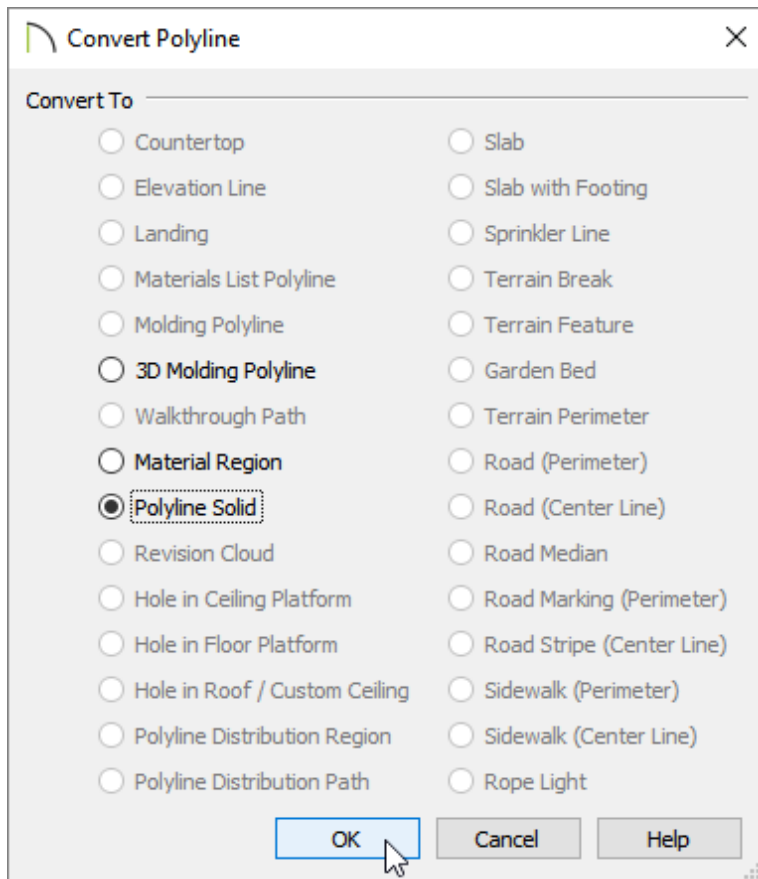
3. Next, select **CAD> Circles> Circle**  and click and drag several circles within the Polyline Solid, of which will be cut out to create several holes. Continue drawing circles or other shapes that will be cut out of the polyline solid.



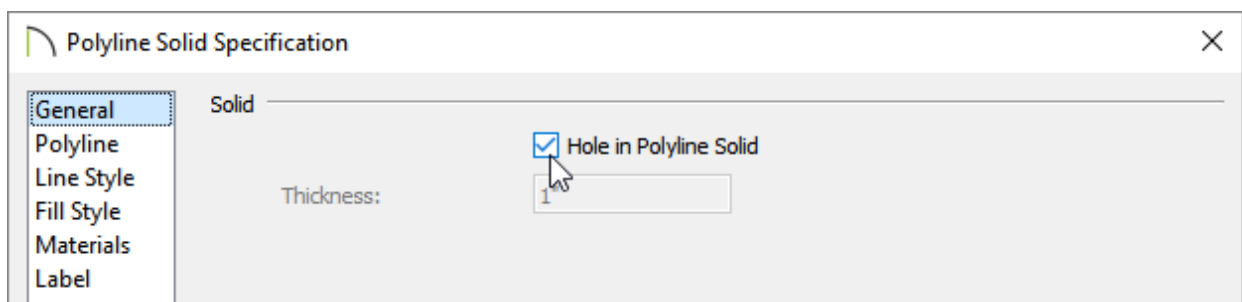
- You may want to use a variety of edit tools such as **Multiple Copy** , **Transform/Replicate** , and **Align/Distribute Along Line**  to create copies of the circle or preferred shape within this panel.

4. Group select the CAD circles, click the **Convert Polyline**  edit button, and in the

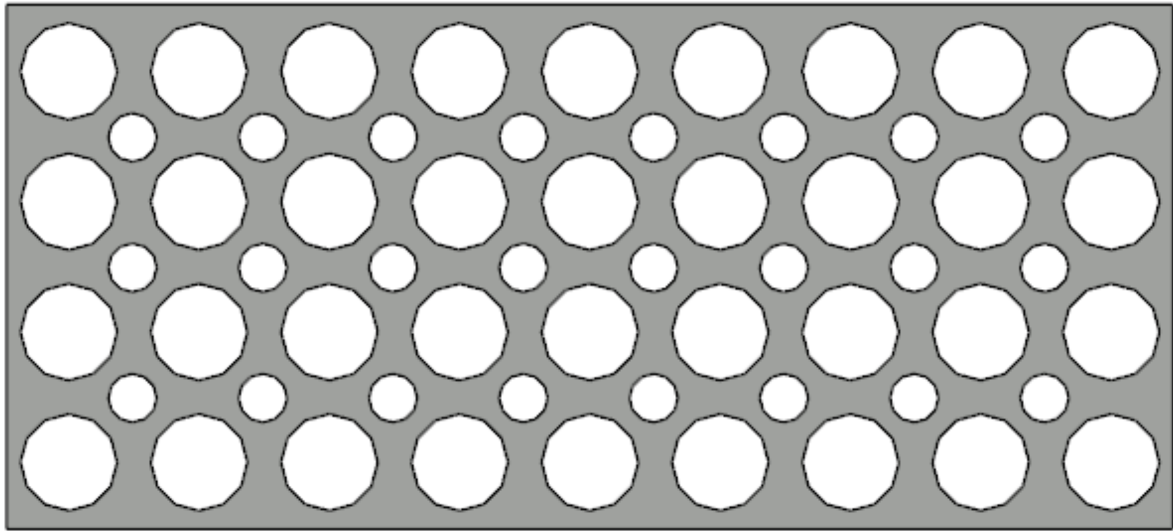
Convert Polyline dialog that opens, select **Polyline Solid** from the list, then click **OK**.





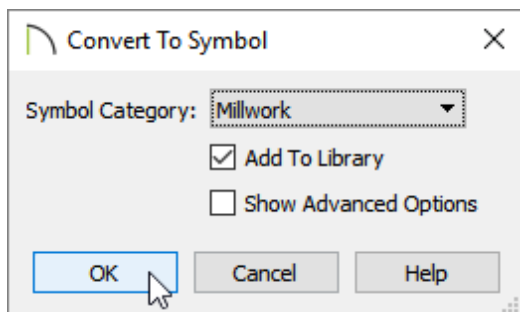
5. In the **Polyline Solid Specification** that opens next, put a check in **Hole in Polyline Solid** box and click **OK**.



6. The Polyline Solid will now have holes cut into it.






7. Select **Tools> Symbol> Convert to Symbol**  from the menu.
 - In Chief Architect X11 and newer program versions, you can also select objects and use the **Convert Selected to Symbol**  edit button to create custom symbols.
8. In the **Convert to Symbol** dialog, select **Millwork** from the **Symbol Category** drop-down menu, put a check in the **Add To Library** box , then click **OK**

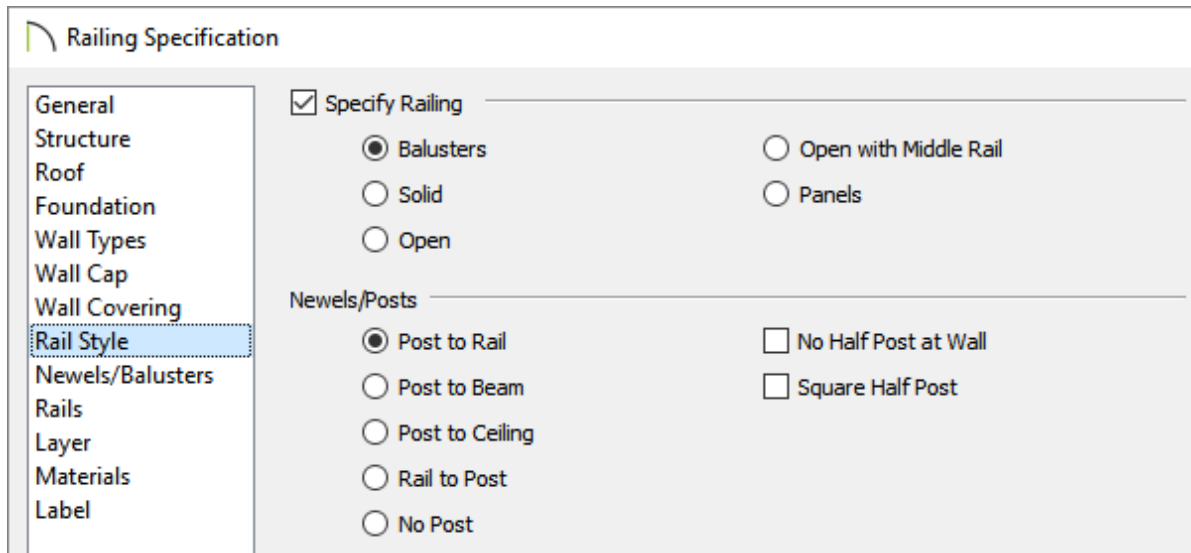


9. In the **User Catalog** of the Library Browser, a new **Untitled** item will be created. Right-click on this item, choose **Rename**, and type in a descriptive name of your choice.

To apply the custom baluster or panel to a railing


1. Select an existing railing or select **Build> Railing and Deck> Straight Deck Railing**  or **Straight Railing** , then click and drag to create a railing.

2. With the railing selected, click **Open Object**  to display the **Deck Railing Specification** dialog.
3. On the **RAIL STYLE** panel, select either **Balusters** or **Panels** under the **Specify Railing** section.




In this example, Balusters is selected.


4. On the **NEWELS/BALUSTERS** panel, there are different sections for **Newels/Posts**, **Balusters**, and **Panels**. Depending on the option chosen in step 3, either the Balusters or Panels section will be grayed out.

- To specify a custom Newel/Post, click the **Library** button next to the **Type** option in the **Newels/Posts** section.
 - To specify a custom Baluster, click the **Library** button next to the **Type** option in the **Balusters** section.
 - To specify a custom Panel, click the **Library** button next to the **Type** option in the **Panels** section.
5. In the **Select Library Object** dialog which opens next, browse to the **User catalog** and select the custom baluster, newel or panel created earlier, then **OK**.
 6. Back in the **Railing Specification** dialog, it may be necessary to adjust spacing - for example, if you chose the Double Baluster created in the first section of this article, you might want to set the width to 5" and the spacing to 12".
 7. Once all desired changes are made, click **OK** to close out of the dialog and take a **Camera**  view to see the results.




Related Articles

 [Modeling Custom 3D Objects \(/support/article/KB-00761/modeling-custom-3d-objects.html\)](/support/article/KB-00761/modeling-custom-3d-objects.html)

 [Specifying Glass, Cable, or Decorative Railing Panels \(/support/article/KB-01029/specifying-glass-cable-or-decorative-railing-panels.html\)](/support/article/KB-01029/specifying-glass-cable-or-decorative-railing-panels.html)



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