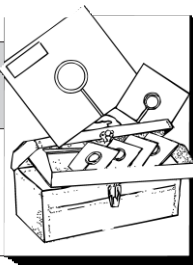


Floor Plans Made Easy

by Craig Savage



Chief Architect version 2.0 (\$595) requires an IBM-compatible 386 processor, 4MB RAM, one hard drive and one floppy drive, a mouse, and

Windows 3.1. For more information, contact Advanced Relational Technology, 15640 Oakridge Ct., Morgan Hill, CA 95037; 800/482-4433.

A new Windows-based design tool called *Chief Architect* was created to do one thing well: design floor plans with client participation. That's a tough assignment: It requires being quick and simple enough to compete with pencil and paper so the client doesn't get lost in the process. But *Chief Architect* lives up to the challenge. Ordinarily, a program like this means spending hours reading manuals and battling on the telephone with technical support — a long learning curve. In contrast, after 30 minutes with *Chief Architect*, I had the program loaded, the Quick Start Card memorized, and was well on my way to designing my first floor plan, complete with doors, windows, cabinets, furniture, and plumbing and electrical fixtures.

Tool Palette

To design a floor plan with the *Chief*, you work from a palette of 12 tools. To draw double-line walls, for example, you use the

wall tool, which is customizable to different wall widths (4 inches, 6 inches, etc.). With the mouse, you pull a wall out in a straight line till it reaches the length you want as indicated by a digital readout. You don't need to hit intersections exactly because when walls come close to each other, they automatically snap together to make a corner. The program encourages you to draw all the walls straight through, then come back later to create openings. This means that closets and hallways are first drawn as closed boxes into which you can either "cut" an opening in the wall or place a door or window using the proper tool.

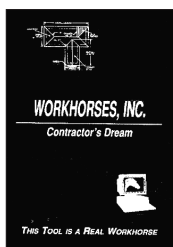
To place a door, for example, you first click on the door icon in the tool palette, which changes the bottom row of tools to icons for specific doors, such as swinging, bifold, bypassing, pocket, and garage doors. (The window tool works the same way, with four types of windows: double-hung, bow, bay, and sliding.) You place the door you've selected into the drawing by clicking on the wall in the proper spot. To change the width, you pull with the mouse on small "handles" at each end of the symbol. A third button in the center of the symbol lets you drag the door or window along the wall, and handy dimensions pop up from the outside wall corners to continually tell you where the center of the door is. To establish the door swing arc, you pull an end handle into the room.

Setting base and wall cabinets follows the same "select and place" method. Cabinets are stacked in 24-inch modules, just like real cabinets, including corner cabinets and custom end units. A "staircase tool" and a "fireplace tool" complete the major parts. You can also check the plan for clearances by placing furniture.

When you and your client are happy with the plan, the *Chief* will automatically dimension it, label the rooms, and add all outlets, lights, switches, fans, and telephone and TV jacks. Finally, before your client leaves your office with a printout of the plan, you can run the "Plan Check" function, which scans the plan to see if you forgot smoke alarms, egress windows, exhaust fans, and GFCI circuits.

By the time you read this, version 2.0 will be on the market. It can generate interior perspectives and elevations, as well as a 3-D overview, which is like looking into the house from above. It also includes CAD line, circle, and arc drawing functions, so you can create your own symbol libraries. The new version can also produce a bill of materials that can be exported as a tab-delimited file to many spreadsheets, word processors, and databases, and to some estimating programs.

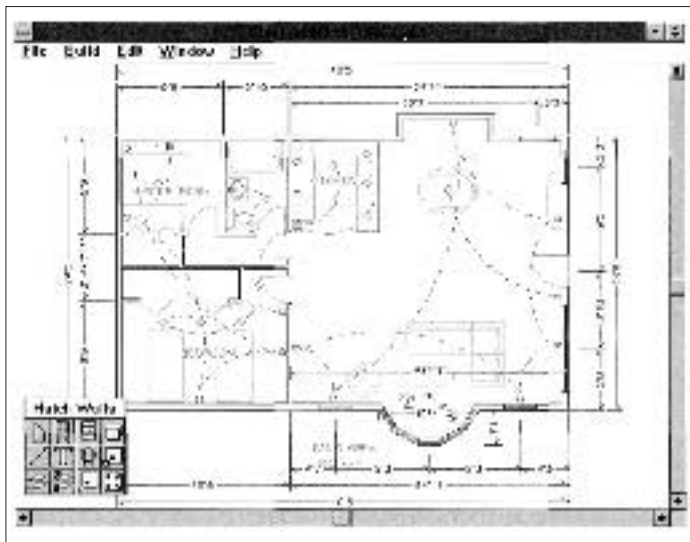
Recurring Dream



Contractor's Dream version 4.5 (\$275) uses System 6, but takes advantage of System 7. It is available directly from Workhorses, 805 14th St., Golden, CO 80401; 800/777-2477.

Contractor's Dream is a stand-alone estimating application designed "by a carpenter for use by contractors." Basically, it's a "stick" estimator that requires you to input every item to get an estimate. Each item called up from the built-in database has its own screen, which holds detailed information about the item, such as cost per unit. When you enter the measurements in feet and inches, the program calculates quantities and price. Labor is treated as a separate item, a feature I like, but which some may find cumbersome.

The program lets you build assemblies — groups of materials found in a unit of construction — by clicking the mouse on separate items. For instance, one linear foot of an exterior wall assembly might contain one 2x6, 8 square feet of drywall, 8 square feet of R-19 fiberglass batt, 8 square feet of 1/2-



With Chief Architect, you can draw and rearrange floor plans while your clients watch. It automatically dimensions the walls, and lets you place windows, doors, and electrical devices. You can even rearrange the furniture.

Stairs Cutting List

Height of Opening: 8,0,0/16
 Tread Depth: 11,1,1/4
 Overlap: 0,8,0/16
 Tread Length: 3,0,0/16
 Minimum Rise: 0,7,0/16

Number of Tread: 12
 Rise: 0,7,3/0
 Run: 0,10,1/4
 Length of Opening: 10,0,1/2
 Floor Space Needed: 10,3,0/16
 Length of Main Runner: 14,0,0/16
 Linear Feet of Tread: 36,0,0/16

Using any thickness, this is what you cut!

+ 3 ft. for the Landing

Estimate Table (Inset):

Item	Description	Quantity	Unit	Price	Total
1	2x4 SYP	12	LF	1.50	18.00
2	2x6 SYP	12	LF	2.50	30.00
3	2x8 SYP	12	LF	3.50	42.00
4	2x10 SYP	12	LF	4.50	54.00
5	2x12 SYP	12	LF	5.50	66.00
6	2x14 SYP	12	LF	6.50	78.00
7	2x16 SYP	12	LF	7.50	90.00
8	2x18 SYP	12	LF	8.50	102.00
9	2x20 SYP	12	LF	9.50	114.00
10	2x22 SYP	12	LF	10.50	126.00
11	2x24 SYP	12	LF	11.50	138.00
12	2x26 SYP	12	LF	12.50	150.00
13	2x28 SYP	12	LF	13.50	162.00
14	2x30 SYP	12	LF	14.50	174.00
15	2x32 SYP	12	LF	15.50	186.00
16	2x34 SYP	12	LF	16.50	198.00
17	2x36 SYP	12	LF	17.50	210.00
18	2x38 SYP	12	LF	18.50	222.00
19	2x40 SYP	12	LF	19.50	234.00
20	2x42 SYP	12	LF	20.50	246.00
21	2x44 SYP	12	LF	21.50	258.00
22	2x46 SYP	12	LF	22.50	270.00
23	2x48 SYP	12	LF	23.50	282.00
24	2x50 SYP	12	LF	24.50	294.00
25	2x52 SYP	12	LF	25.50	306.00
26	2x54 SYP	12	LF	26.50	318.00
27	2x56 SYP	12	LF	27.50	330.00
28	2x58 SYP	12	LF	28.50	342.00
29	2x60 SYP	12	LF	29.50	354.00
30	2x62 SYP	12	LF	30.50	366.00
31	2x64 SYP	12	LF	31.50	378.00
32	2x66 SYP	12	LF	32.50	390.00
33	2x68 SYP	12	LF	33.50	402.00
34	2x70 SYP	12	LF	34.50	414.00
35	2x72 SYP	12	LF	35.50	426.00
36	2x74 SYP	12	LF	36.50	438.00
37	2x76 SYP	12	LF	37.50	450.00
38	2x78 SYP	12	LF	38.50	462.00
39	2x80 SYP	12	LF	39.50	474.00
40	2x82 SYP	12	LF	40.50	486.00
41	2x84 SYP	12	LF	41.50	498.00
42	2x86 SYP	12	LF	42.50	510.00
43	2x88 SYP	12	LF	43.50	522.00
44	2x90 SYP	12	LF	44.50	534.00
45	2x92 SYP	12	LF	45.50	546.00
46	2x94 SYP	12	LF	46.50	558.00
47	2x96 SYP	12	LF	47.50	570.00
48	2x98 SYP	12	LF	48.50	582.00
49	2x100 SYP	12	LF	49.50	594.00
50	2x102 SYP	12	LF	50.50	606.00
51	2x104 SYP	12	LF	51.50	618.00
52	2x106 SYP	12	LF	52.50	630.00
53	2x108 SYP	12	LF	53.50	642.00
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57	2x116 SYP	12	LF	57.50	690.00
58	2x118 SYP	12	LF	58.50	702.00
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