Estimating Material Take Offs in Home Designer Pro

Reference Number: **KB-00453**

Last Modified: **October 25, 2021**

The information in this article applies to:

QUESTION

Where do the materials on the materials list come from in Home Designer Pro?

ANSWER

In this article, you will learn some of the places where materials are configured, and how to create a materials list for quantity and cost estimation.

The materials list will only be as accurate as the model you have created. The more accurate and detailed your model, the more accurate the estimation will be.

> The materials list is based on certain assumptions which may or may not match your building style. Chief Architect Inc. makes no representation as to the accuracy or reliability of the materials list generated by Chief Architect or Home Designer.
>
> Always compare the materials list with a manual take off before providing a quote or ordering material for a job.

In the example below, we will generate a basic quantity estimation based on a single four-walled room with 20 foot walls on each side.

LIVING AREA
400 SQ FT
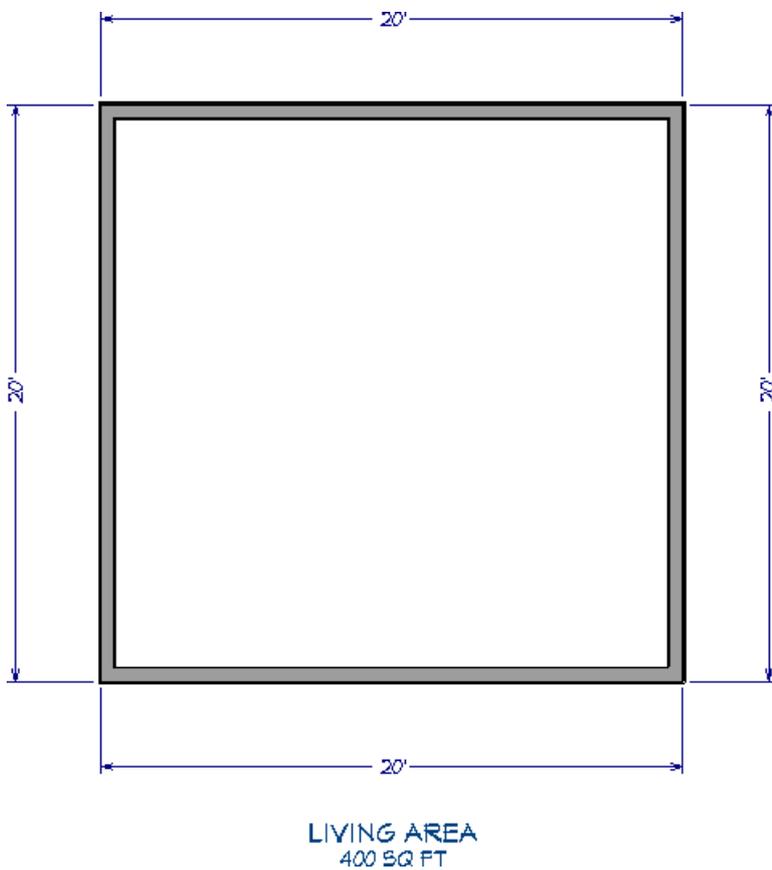
To examine wall materials

1. Use the **Select Objects** tool to select one of the exterior walls, then click on the **Open Object** edit button to display the **Wall Specification** dialog.

2. On the WALL TYPES panel, click the **Define** button next to the Wall Type drop-down menu.
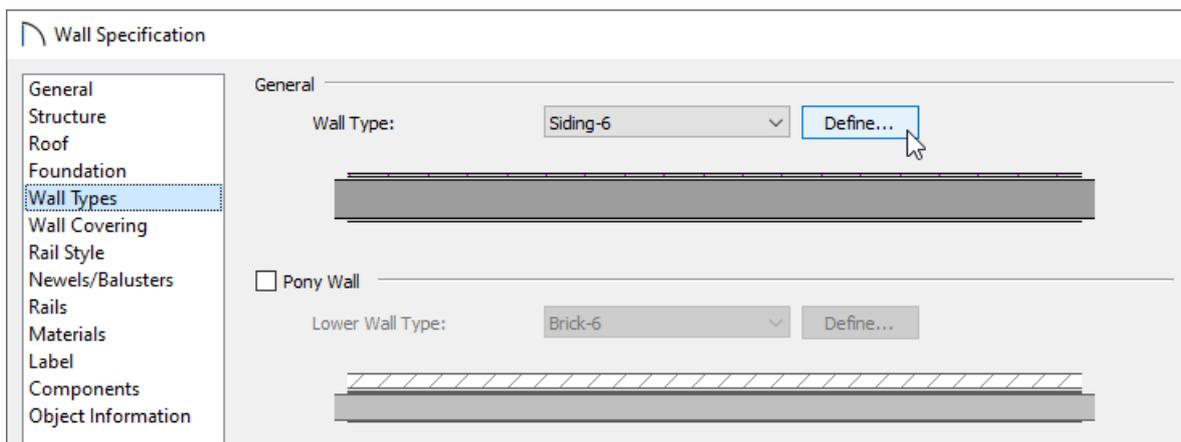
3. In the **Wall Type Definitions** dialog that opens, you can see that the wall is broken down into layers. Go ahead and click **Cancel** to return to the previous dialog.

Wall Type Definitions

Siding-6 | New | Copy | Rename | Delete | Delete All Unused

Wall Layers

Layer #	Line Color	Line Style	Weight	Material	Pattern	Texture	Fill	Thickness
Exterior Layers								
1			1	Lap Siding				1/2"
2			1	Housewrap				0"
3			1	OSB-Hrz				7/16"
Main Layers								
4			35	Fir Framing 2				5 1/2"
Interior Layers								
5			35	Drywall		No Texture		1/2"
6			1					

Insert Above
Insert Below
Move Up
Move Down
Delete

Total Thickness:
6 15/16"

Selected Wall Layer Line

Line Color: ☐ By Layer [black]
Line Weight: ☐ By Layer 1
Line Style: ☐ By Layer [———————]

Material Layer

☐ Framing
   ☐ Use Default Framing Material
   Type: Lumber
   Spacing: 4"   On Center
   Width: 3/4"
   ☐ Horizontal Framing
   Bottom Run Elevation: 0"
☐ Air Gap

Wall Settings

Build Platform to Exterior of Layer: 4 - Fir Framing 2
Dimension to Exterior of Layer: 4 - Fir Framing 2

Note: For more information on modifying wall types, please see the Related Articles (https://kb.chiefarchitect.com/admin/index.php?/front/#Related) section below.

---

4. Now, select the COMPONENTS panel and notice that the wall layers we just saw are listed here as well, along with some additional information such as ID, Size, Description, etc.

   The information on this panel is what is reported to the materials list. This information is supplied by what is already specified in the dialog, but you can also manually edit this information to your liking.
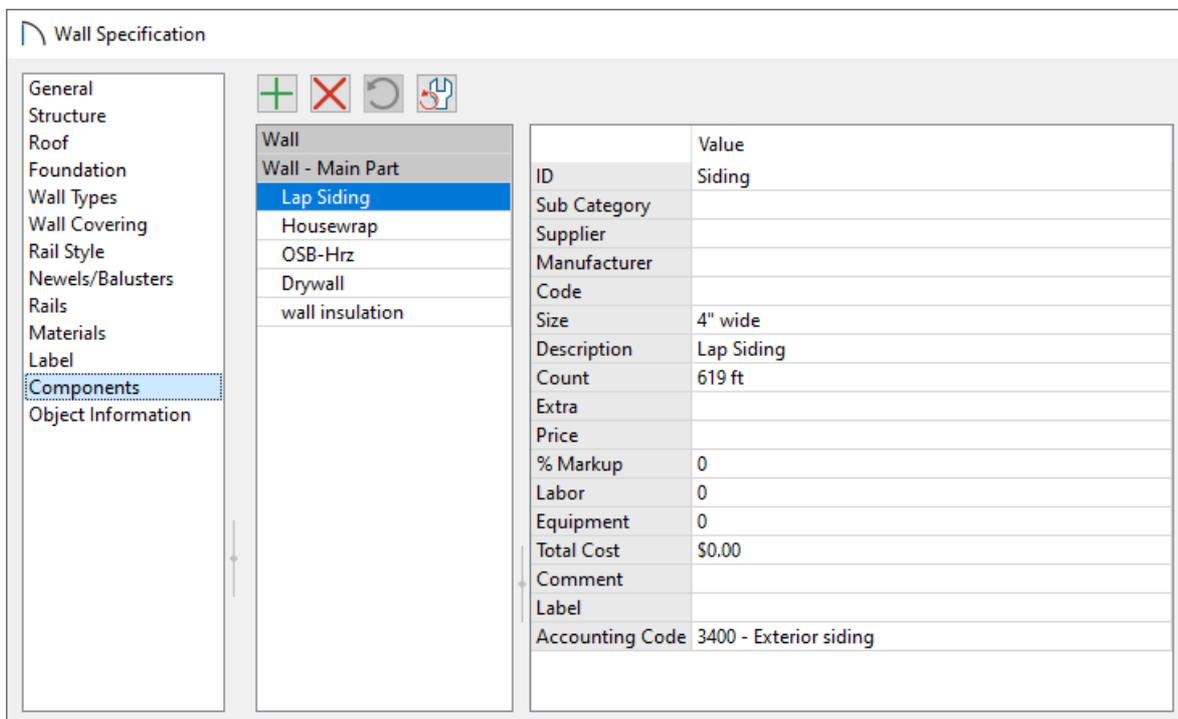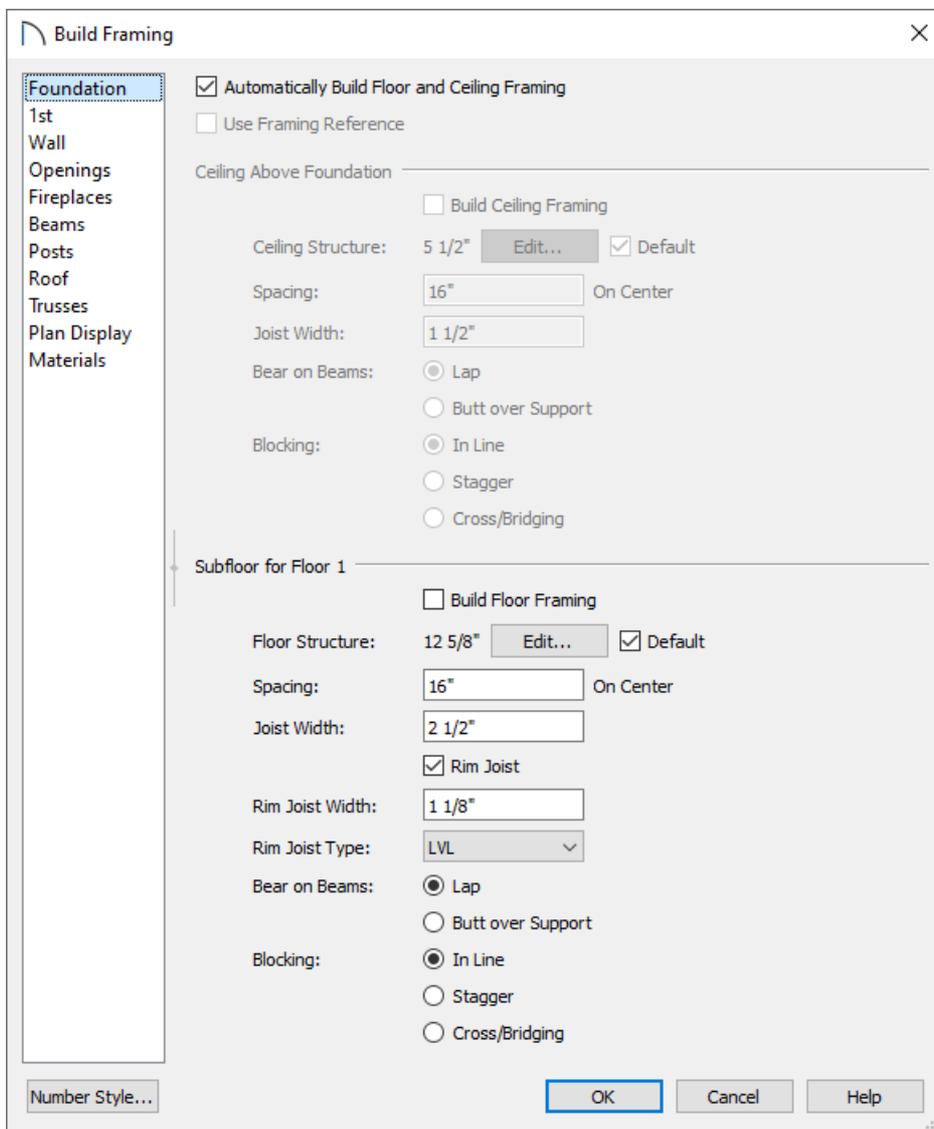
You can modify most all of the Value fields listed on the Components panel. To learn more about this dialog panel, select the Help button at the bottom.

5. Click **Cancel** to close the dialog without making any changes.

Now let's look more closely at framing.

To examine framing materials

1. Select **Build> Framing> Build Framing** 🏠 to display the **Build Framing** dialog.

2. Navigate to the FOUNDATION and 1ST panels to see where to set joist width and spacing for the subfloor, and navigate to the WALL panel to examine stud thickness and spacing,

   All of these values affect your materials. Observe that these values are important considerations for cost estimation and the materials list will use these automatically.

   Note: For more information generating framing in Home Designer Pro, please see the Related Articles section below.

After you have examined wall materials and framing, take a look at room materials.

To examine room materials

1. Use the **Select Objects** tool to select the room enclosed by the exterior, then click on the **Open Object** edit button to display the **Room Specification** dialog.

2. On the STRUCTURE panel:
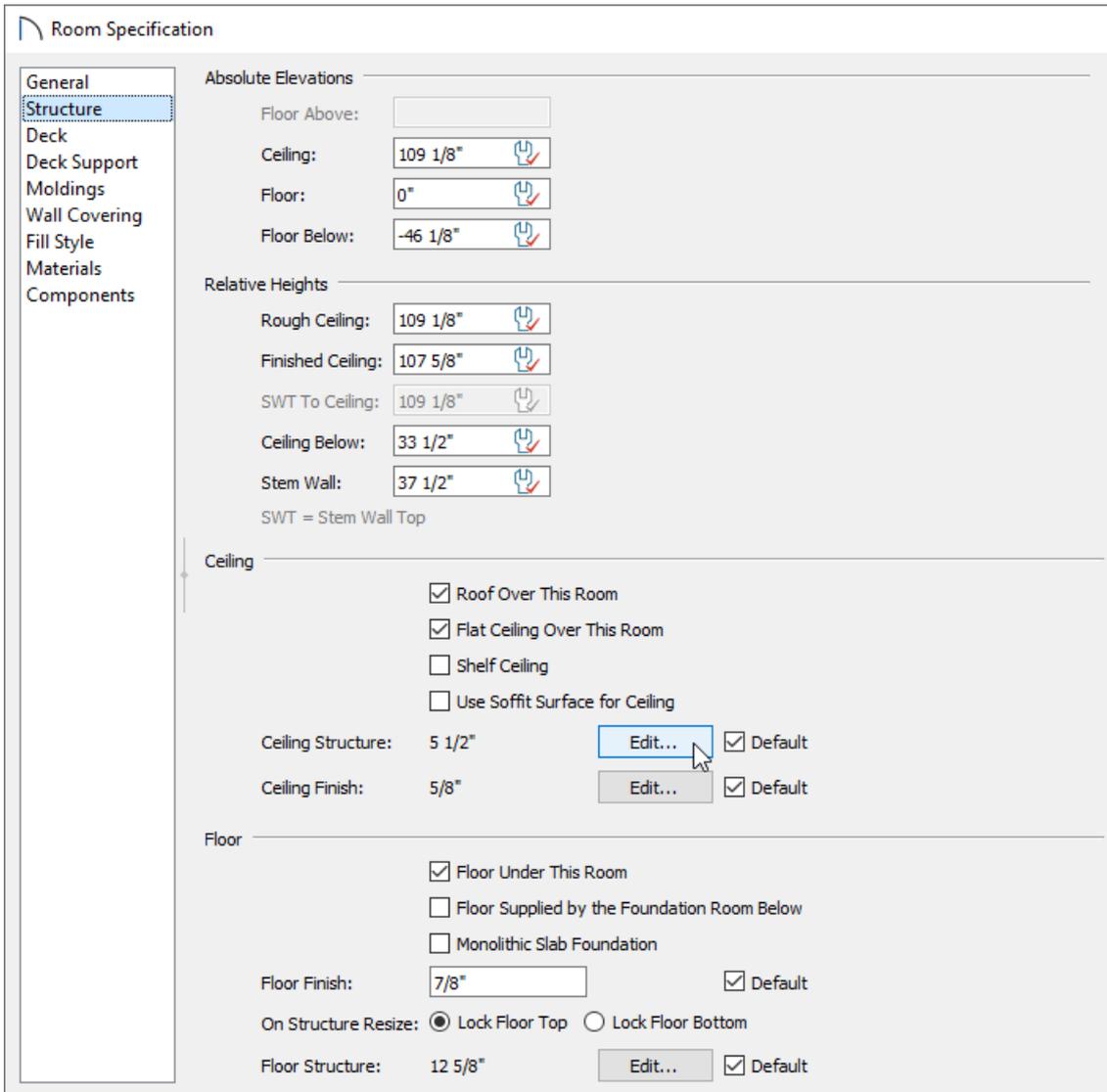
- Click the **Edit** button next to Ceiling Structure to open the **Ceiling Structure Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the ceiling platform.

- Click the **Edit** button next to Ceiling Finish to open the **Ceiling Finish Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the finished ceiling surface.

- Click the **Edit** button next to Floor Finish to open the **Floor Finish Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the floor surface.

- Click the **Edit** button next to Floor Structure to open the **Floor Structure Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the floor platform.

> **Note:** These properties can also be specified for the entire plan, for each individual floor level, or for specific room types by accessing the Default Settings.

3. Click on the MATERIALS panel to specify your desired materials for the moldings and wall coverings that are

applied for the room, if applicable.

4. Much like with walls, you can select the COMPONENTS panel while in this dialog to see what will be reported to the materials list based upon what has been defined for the room.

These are only some of the important materials. Other designs will likely include roofing, windows, doors, cabinets, and other objects. For this simple design, however, you've seen where the materials can be set, so now it's time to do a quantity estimation.

To generate a material's list

1. Select **Tools> Materials List> Calculate Materials For All Floors** .

> **Note:** There are additional tools to create materials lists of more specific areas of your plan. If you want to learn more, see Video 2293: Materials Lists (https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/videos/watch/2293/materials-lists.html).

2. Scroll to the bottom of the materials list, and locate the Interior Trim section, where you can see that there is 76 feet of base molding required.

	ID	Floor	Size	Description	Count	Extra
1	**Interior Trim**					
2	T1	1	5/8"x3 1/2"	Default Base Molding	76 ft	
3						
4						

3. Also take a look at the Wall Board, where you can see that you require 22 4' x 8' sheets of 1/2 inch Drywall for the walls.

You can also see another entry for 12 4' x 8' x 5/8 inch sheets used for the ceiling.

	ID	Floor	Size	Description	Count	Extra
1	**Wall Board**					
2	> WB1	1	48"x96"x1/2"	Drywall	22	
3	WB2	1	48"x96"x5/8"	Drywall	12	
4	WB3	1		Color - White	361.00 sq ft	
5						
6						

4. If you scroll back up, you can examine other categories, such as the Siding category.

	ID	Floor	Size	Description	Count	Extra
1	**Siding**					
2	> S1	1	4" wide	Lap Siding	2480 ft	
3	> S2	1		Housewrap	824.70 sq ft	
4	> S3	1	48"x96"x7/16"	OSB-Hrz	26	
5						
6						

To close the materials list, select **File> Close View**. You will be prompted to save it. Using saved materials lists, you can create quantity and cost estimations for various stages of your project, or you can create estimates for small subsections of the design for remodeling purposes. For now, specify a name, then click **Save** to close the materials list.

> Every saved materials list is a saved snapshot of the current state of the design. If you save the materials list and make changes to the design, you will need to regenerate a new materials list; the previously saved materials list will not update.

Home Designer Pro also maintains a master list of materials that can be used with all of your plans. Here, you can store pricing, suppliers, manufacturers, descriptions and other useful information for use with materials lists you create in any plan.

To use a master list

The master list can be accessed by selecting **Tools> Materials List> Master List** .

To add line items to a master list, first start by opening a materials list. You can access a saved materials list by navigating to **Tools> Materials List> Materials List Management** from the menu, then selecting the **Edit** button. With the materials list now open, click on a row number for the line item that you would like to add, then select the **Update to Master** edit button or navigate to **Tools> Update to Master** .

You can update a line item to use the information from your master list by clicking on the desired row number, then selecting the **Update from Master** edit button or by navigating to **Tools> Update from Master** .

> For additional information on the master list, navigate to Help> Launch Help, then search for: the master list.

Related Articles

Controlling the Information that's Displayed in a Materials List (/support/article/KB-00511/controlling-the-information-that-s-displayed-in-a-materials-list.html)

- Creating a Framing Cut/Buy List (/support/article/KB-00182/creating-a-framing-cut-buy-list.html)
- Creating a Materials List for an Event (/support/article/KB-01000/creating-a-materials-list-for-an-event.html)
- Editing the Fields in a Materials List (/support/article/KB-00293/editing-the-fields-in-a-materials-list.html)
- Generating Framing in Home Designer Pro (/support/article/KB-00462/generating-framing-in-home-designer-pro.html)
- Modifying a Wall Type (/support/article/KB-00382/modifying-a-wall-type.html)
- Printing, Exporting, and Saving Materials Lists (/support/article/KB-00275/printing-exporting-and-saving-materials-lists.html)