GENERAL

archicad 19 the definitive guide albionarchers

Published: September 19, 2026 | Index ID: #-

In the fast moving world of Building Information Modeling (BIM), staying current with the latest software releases is essential for architects, designers, and BIM managers who demand precision, efficiency, and collaboration. ArchiCAD 19, released in late 2020, brought a host of new features that streamline workflows, improve model quality, and enhance interoperability with other tools. Whether you're a seasoned ArchiCAD user looking to upgrade or a newcomer eager to learn the ropes, this comprehensive guide – brought to you by the seasoned experts at **Albion Archers**– will walk you through every aspect of ArchiCAD 19, from installation to advanced modeling techniques.

Why ArchiCAD 19? An Overview of the New Features

ArchiCAD 19 was designed with the modern design studio in mind. Its most significant additions include:

- Enhanced 3D Viewport – Real time rendering, improved lighting, and a new "Bim360" integration.
- Revit Compatibility – A more robust .rvt import/export workflow that preserves element data.
- New Families and Libraries – Expanded stock library with updated architectural elements and a streamlined library manager.
- Performance Optimizations – Faster file opening, reduced memory usage, and improved GPU acceleration.
- Collaboration Tools – Built in cloud collaboration via BIMcloud and new "Project Sharing" features.

These changes make ArchiCAD 19 a powerful tool for any project, from small residential designs to complex commercial developments.

Getting Started: Installation and Setup

System Requirements

Before you install ArchiCAD 19, verify that your workstation meets the minimum requirements. A 64 bit operating system, at least 8 GB of RAM (16 GB recommended for large models), and a dedicated graphics card (DX11 or newer) are essential for optimal performance. The software also supports Windows 10/11 and macOS 10.14 or newer.

Installation Steps

1. Download the installer from the Graphisoft website or your licensed distribution portal.
2. Run the installer and follow the on screen prompts. Choose the "Custom" installation if you want to select specific components.
3. After installation, launch ArchiCAD and activate your license using the provided key or via the Graphisoft Cloud.
4. Optional: Install the ArchiCAD 19 Add Ons pack, which includes advanced rendering and analysis tools.

First Time User Experience

When you open ArchiCAD 19 for the first time, you'll be greeted by a clean, intuitive interface. The **Project Manager** opens automatically, allowing you to create a new project or open an existing one. The **Toolbox** on the left hosts all the modeling tools, while the **Toolbar** at the top provides quick access to frequently used functions.

Understanding the ArchiCAD 19 Interface

The Project Manager

The Project Manager is the central hub for all your projects. It offers:

- Project creation wizard with customizable templates.
- Project properties: units, scale, and project settings.
- Project browser for quick navigation to files, layers, and views.

The Toolbox and Toolbar

The Toolbox contains all the drawing and modeling tools, grouped by category (walls, floors, roofs, etc.). The Toolbar can be customized to include the tools you use most often. Dragging a tool from the Toolbox to the Toolbar is a quick way to keep your workflow efficient.

Viewports and Panels

ArchiCAD 19 introduces a flexible viewport system. You can have multiple 2D and 3D views open simultaneously. The **Property Editor** panel displays the properties of the selected object, while the **Layer Manager** allows you to control visibility and color coding.

Building Your First Model: Step by Step Workflow

Setting Up a New Project

1. Open the Project Manager and select “New Project.”
2. Choose a template that matches your project type (e.g., residential, commercial, or custom). Templates come pre configured with standard layers and drawing styles.
3. Specify project units (meters or feet) and set the scale for your drawings.
4. Save the project in a dedicated folder to keep all related files organized.

Creating Walls and Floors

Start by drawing the perimeter walls using the **Wall** tool. Drag to create straight lines or click to specify start and end points. Adjust wall thickness, height, and material in the **Property Editor.** For interior walls, use the **Internal Wall** tool to create partitions quickly.

Next, add floors with the **Floor** tool. Click on the wall edges to define the floor boundary, then adjust the floor level and thickness. The floor will automatically generate a 3D representation, making it easy to visualize the model.

Adding Roofs and Slabs

ArchiCAD 19’s roof tool now supports complex geometry, including slopes, overhangs, and integrated skylights. Click on the floor edge, choose the roof type, and drag to set the slope. For flat roofs, use the **Flat Roof** tool and add a **Roof Slab** for structural support.

Inserting Doors, Windows, and Fixtures

The **Library Manager** hosts a vast collection of architectural elements. Search for “doors” or “windows” and drag the desired item onto the model. Adjust the placement and orientation directly in the viewport, then fine tune properties such as material, size, and finish in the **Property Editor.** For custom fixtures, use the **Object** tool to import .archiCAD files or create your own from scratch.

Leveraging ArchiCAD 19 Libraries and Families

Stock Library Enhancements

ArchiCAD 19's stock library has expanded to include over 2000 new elements. The library is organized into categories like "Architectural," "Interior," "Landscape," and "Mechanical." Each element comes with predefined properties, ensuring consistency across projects.

Creating Custom Families

When the stock library doesn't meet your needs, you can create custom families:

1. Open the Object Library Manager.
2. Select "New Object" and choose the type (e.g., wall, column, or custom).
3. Use the 3D modeling tools to design the element, then define its properties.
4. Save the family to your local library or a shared network folder for team access.

Library Management Best Practices

- Keep libraries organized by naming conventions.
- Use the Library Browser to search by keywords or properties.
- Regularly update your libraries with new elements to maintain a modern design language.

Advanced Modeling Techniques in ArchiCAD 19

Parametric Design and Constraints

ArchiCAD 19 enhances parametric modeling with new constraint tools. You can set geometric constraints (e.g., parallel, perpendicular) and dimension constraints that automatically update when you modify the model. This reduces errors and speeds up design iterations.

Section and Elevation Views

Use the **Section** tool to create cross sections that slice through your model. Drag a section line across the viewport and adjust the section depth in the **Property Editor.**Elevation views are generated automatically when you create a new level, providing a quick way to review façade details.

Modeling Complex Geometry

For projects requiring intricate geometry (e.g., curved façades, vaulted ceilings), use the **Curved Wall** tool or the **Freeform**tool. These allow you to sculpt surfaces with precision, then convert them into standard BIM objects for analysis.

Collaboration and Cloud Integration

BIMcloud and Project Sharing

ArchiCAD 19's BIMcloud integration simplifies collaboration across teams. With a single click, you can share your project file with colleagues, control access permissions, and track changes in real time. BIMcloud also supports **Model Checking** to identify clashes and errors before construction.

Co Authoring and Version Control

Multiple users can work on the same file simultaneously. ArchiCAD automatically merges changes, and the **History** panel allows you to review previous revisions. For teams that require strict version control, consider using a dedicated versioning system like Git in combination with BIMcloud.

Exporting and Interoperability

ArchiCAD 19 supports a wide range of export formats:

- .rvt (Revit) – for seamless handover to Revit users.
- .ifc – for open BIM workflows.
- .dwg/.dxf – for CAD integration.
- .pdf – for documentation and presentations.

These export options ensure that your model can be shared with contractors, engineers, and stakeholders who use different software.

Rendering and Visualization in ArchiCAD 19

Built In Rendering Engine

ArchiCAD 19's built in rendering engine offers high quality images with realistic lighting, shadows, and materials. Use the **Render Settings** panel to adjust output resolution, sampling, and rendering style.

Ray Tracing and GPU Acceleration

Ray tracing is now faster thanks to GPU acceleration. Choose your graphics card in the **Preferences** menu, then enable ray tracing for real time previews. This feature is particularly useful for quick visual checks during design iterations.

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