

Basic Tutorials Series:

Define Layers

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1 Define Layers

What are Layers?

A layer is a product-specific user defined area in a project that you may apply product, shading and perspective to.

The process of defining these layers is called masking. Masking is necessary to tell the program where you would like products applied on your home.

Each separate layer you define allows you to apply different products, colors and shading, to achieve realism in your project. This is where having the best quality photo comes in handy. The clearer the image that you have selected to mask, the easier this step will be.

When you start defining layers, the first layer will generally be green in color. From there you will cycle through a group of bright colors. You must cut out any areas that you do not want products applied to but were not masked as foreground (for example windows, doors or shutters).

Why does the program use layers?

Layers are used so that users may apply a combination of products to an image and be able to edit and adjust individual parts of their project. Layers give the freedom to edit parts separately.

To have a combination of different products applied to your project, you must have multiple layers.



Example 1A: Masked Home

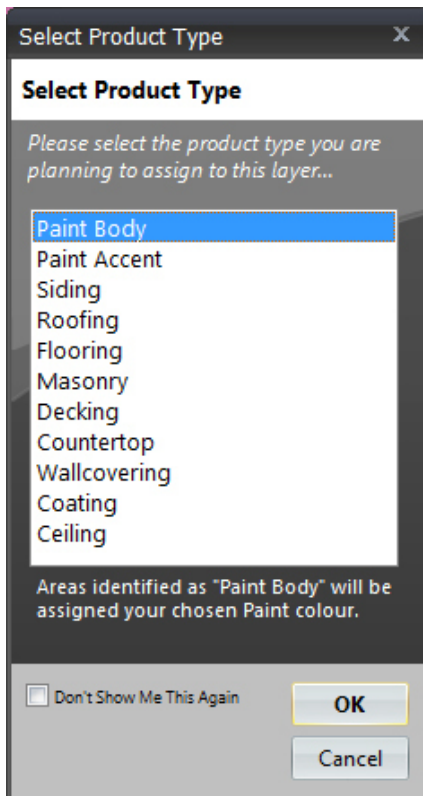
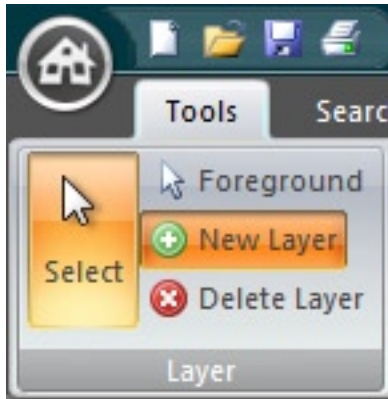
This is an example of a fully masked house. Notice how the siding is split into several different layers masks. This is so that different shading and perspective can be applied to these layers. This will increase the realism you are able to attain in your project.

Modifications to a layer can be done at any time, however it is easiest to edit layers when there is no product applied, as it is easier to see the edges of the home.

Layers cannot be copied or moved! Any edits to the shape and location of the layer must be done using the masking tools.

Front-on photo vs. other views

Photos that face a home from the front often have fewer layers than homes that were taken at an angle. This is due to the perspective of the products on the home, as well as the shading required.



How to Define Layers

1. Define your first layer

- Click on the **Tools Tab**
- Click on “**New Layer**” to start defining your first layer
- Choose the appropriate layer type
- Press “**OK**”
- Click on **ONE** of the masking tools from the Masking Tools Menu
- Using your mouse, left-click with your masking tool to define the shape of your layer



NOTE: Be as accurate as possible when defining your Layers. This will add realism to your finished product. Zoom in using the zoom tool if necessary to better see your project when masking

2. Correct Mistakes

- Right-click** your cursor over the areas you wish to erase

OR

- Select “**Erase**” on the Masking Tools Menu and **left-click** over the area you wish to erase

3. Erase Window or Door areas (if applicable)

Use one of the masking tools to erase the portion of each layer that covers over any window or door areas. The layer must be active first before you can erase.

4. Define More Layers

- Click on “**New Layer**” to start masking your next layer
- Follow steps 1-3 for each new layer you need to define.

The number of layers necessary will depend on the size and shape of your home, as well as the view the photograph was taken from.

If you find you have “messy edges” try to refine your layer, by zooming in and masking. This will allow you to more accurately see and define the corners and edges of the project. You can also use the rectangle tool to create perfectly straight edges while masking.

! **REMEMBER: Save regularly throughout this process to prevent losing your work.**



Example 1B: House with One Layer Defined

After following steps 1-3 of the tutorial, your image should have one layer defined like the home above. You do not have to start with the roofing layer. You can start anywhere on your project that you feel comfortable.



Example 1C: House with Multiple Layers Defined

Here is the same home after defining more layers. Now the roof and siding are masked. This means you are able to apply product to these areas.