

Getting started with miniPLAN GO!

miniPLAN Help Index

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An overview of miniPLAN

miniPLAN is designed to be a simple way of producing floor plans as you measure a building, without the need to draw up the plans in CAD back in the office.

The basic principles behind miniPLAN are that you sketch your room on the screen, add features such as doors, windows, staircases, etc., then as you are prompted for each measurement, you use a Bluetooth Disto to take the required distances and then transmit them into miniPLAN. As the measurements are received miniPLAN resizes the sketch to the correct size. Walls, doors, windows and other reference points are used to link each room to build up the floor plan and existing CAD drawings can be imported to control the shape of a building.

Rooms can be drawn in orthogonal mode i.e. with all their walls at right angles to each other, in non-ortho mode i.e. with their walls at different angles, or by using a combination of the two methods. miniPLAN has a number of tools available that allow any shape of room to be measured. When more complicated room shapes are encountered it is often a good idea to get the shape of the room correct before adding the features. Make sure you are familiar with the different methods of fixing walls before using miniPLAN to measure complicated buildings and always take time to consider the best methods to measure a room.

When importing an existing CAD drawings of the building shell, always survey the rooms adjacent to the external walls first, then create the internal rooms off these. This should lead to better results. Due to small measurement errors and other factors, on occasion your building might not fit together perfectly. miniPLAN allows each room to be exported as a block into CAD so that, if required, their position can be shifted slightly so that the building fits together correctly.

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The image below gives a brief description of the miniPLAN desktop



Ortho

On/Off

Set to draw walls & line features orthogonal to each other or at an angle



Select/Clarify

Use to select items or switch to Clarify to pick an item close to other items



Undo & Redo

Use to go back to previous actions or selections or forward again



Delete

Deletes the selected item



Control Point

Add Control Point to create a new room or move the 0m chainage point



Feature Selection

Add features, create new floors & rooms, add reference points.



Brace

Fix walls by measuring diagonals & position features from 2 fixed wall corners



Zoom Out

Zooms further out each time button is tapped



Match Bearing

Matches the bearing of a wall to that of another wall



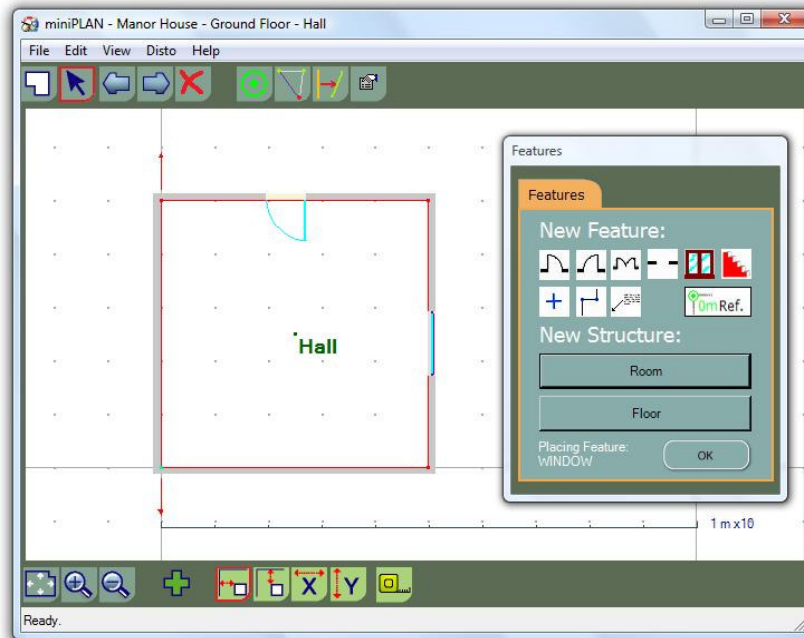
Zoom in

Tap point on the screen to zoom in to or drag a window around an area to zoom in to it



Properties

View and edit the properties of items in the project



Zoom Extents

Zooms to the extent of the current room or floor



Manual Measurement

Enter tape distances



Chainage

Use to enter the chainage along a wall of an object



Offset

Use to enter the offset from a wall of an object



X Dimension

Use to input sizes of features



Y Dimension

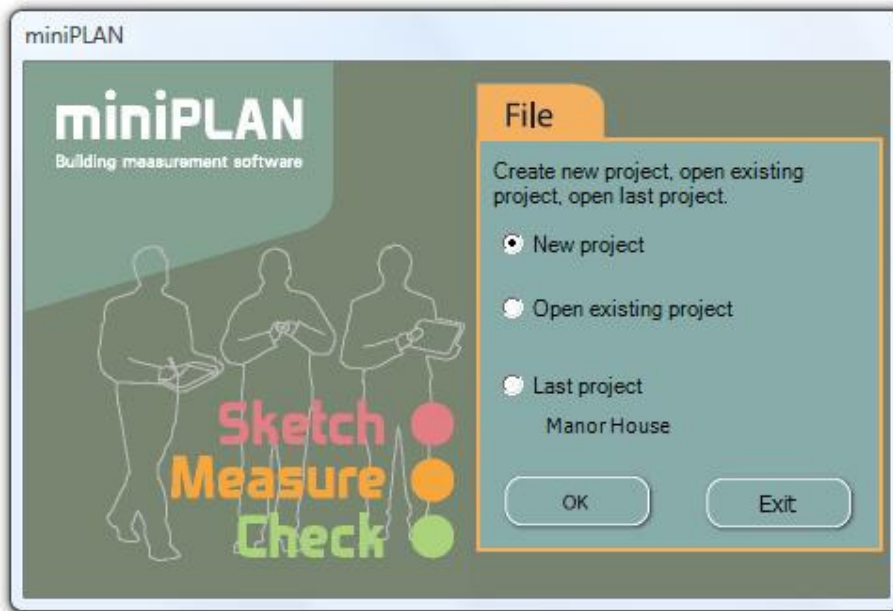
Use to input sizes of features, length of lines & width of walls

Creating a new project



Run miniPLAN by selecting the desktop icon

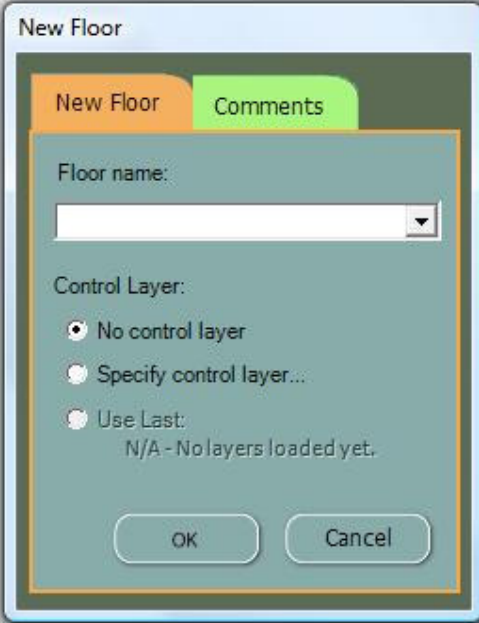
Select New Project



Enter the project name

(tip – if using a umpc either use the keypad if there is one or tap the keyboard icon next to the Windows Start button at the bottom left of your screen – this will bring up the screen keypad).

Enter the Floor name – either select one from the list or type in a name

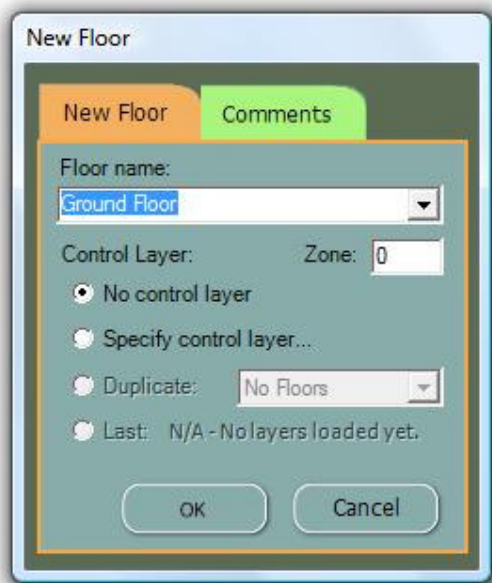


The image shows a dialog box titled "New Floor". It has two tabs: "New Floor" (active) and "Comments". Under the "New Floor" tab, there is a "Floor name:" label above a dropdown menu. Below that is the "Control Layer:" section with three radio button options: "No control layer" (selected), "Specify control layer...", and "Use Last: N/A - No layers loaded yet.". At the bottom are "OK" and "Cancel" buttons.

Any notes relating to the floor can be added by selecting the Comments tab – these will be saved, but will not appear on the drawing. To view these notes at any time, just click on the properties button, tap to view **Room Attrib's** including your previously entered comments.

Below the **Floor name** you will see options for **Control Layer**. This allows the user to bring in an exploded DXF drawing into miniPLAN (e.g. an existing survey drawing) and use it to position rooms with. We will try this option later. At the moment make sure 'No control layer' is selected then tap on OK

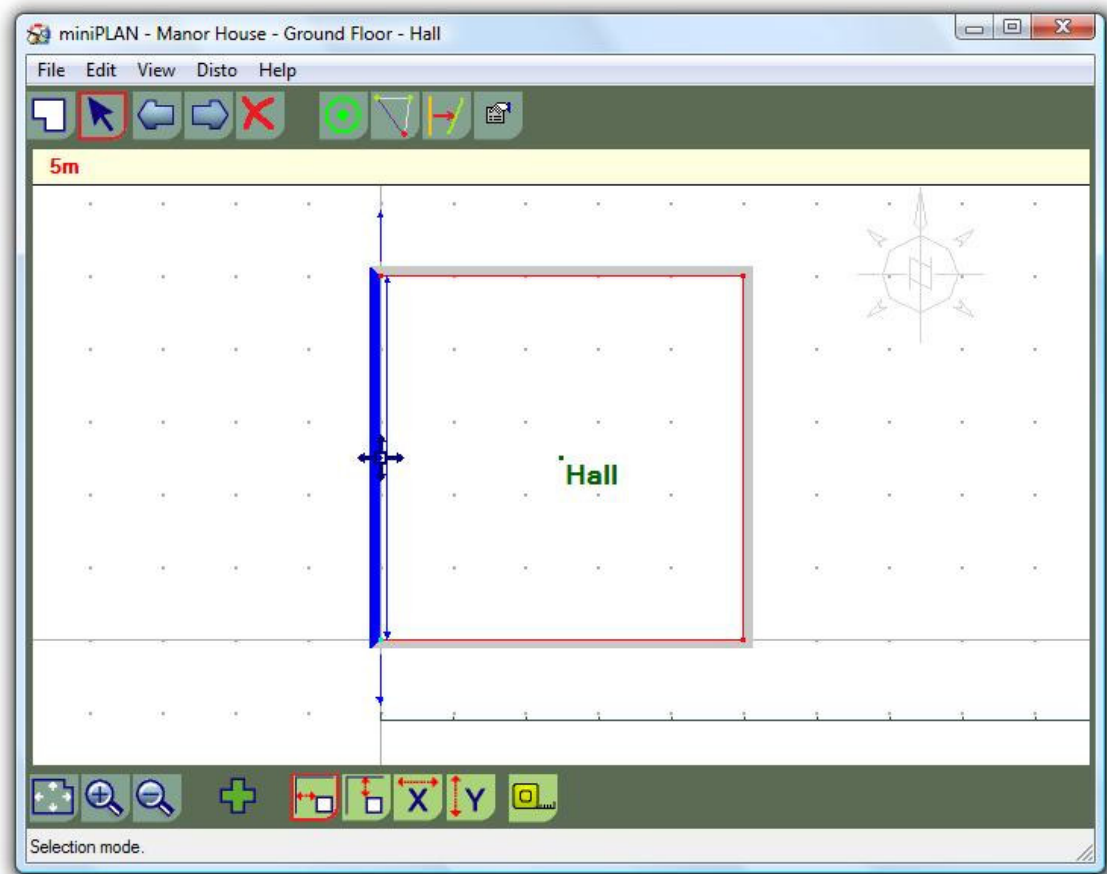
The New Room window will now be displayed



Enter the name or number of the new room – either select one from the list or type in a name


Select Four-sided - any notes relating to the room can be added via the **Comments** tab

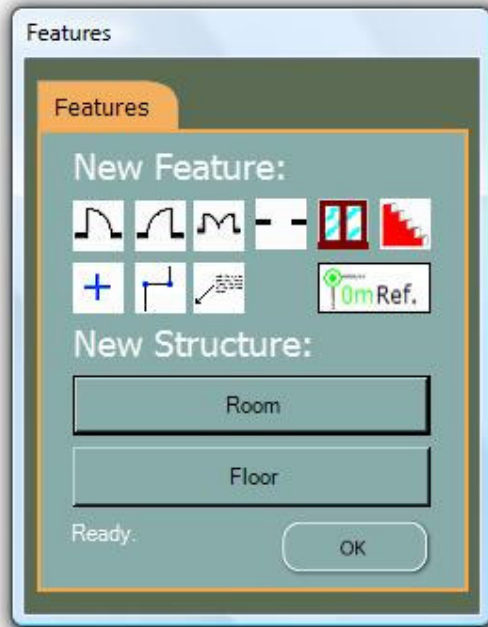
Press **OK** and a 4 sided room 5m by 5m will be drawn on the screen with the left hand wall highlighted blue and the room name is displayed in the middle of the room



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We can now add some features to the room.

Tap on the Add Feature button  (bottom centre of the screen). You will now have the Feature Selection window displayed on the screen.






This consists of two parts:


The **New Features** area contains the Features that can be added to the floor plan. Features can be added by selecting their icon then selecting the correct position of in the room to place it. The buttons in the **New Structure** area are used to add a new **Room** or a new **Floor**.

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Dimensions can be added to Staircases, Lines and Walls to scale them to the correct size, by using

the **X dimension**  or **Y dimension**  buttons. The Length of a Line Feature can be altered by selecting the **Y Dimension** button.

Tap on the top left icon in **Top Items** . This is a Door Left – a door that opens to the left and opens into the room. Make sure you have tapped firmly and the feature you have selected has its name displayed at the bottom left of the Feature Selection window.

Now tap on the upper wall of the room. The door is drawn on the wall. Now select the Window icon  and place it on the right hand wall. If you make a mistake you can either use the undo button



or select the item you want to get rid of by tapping on the select button

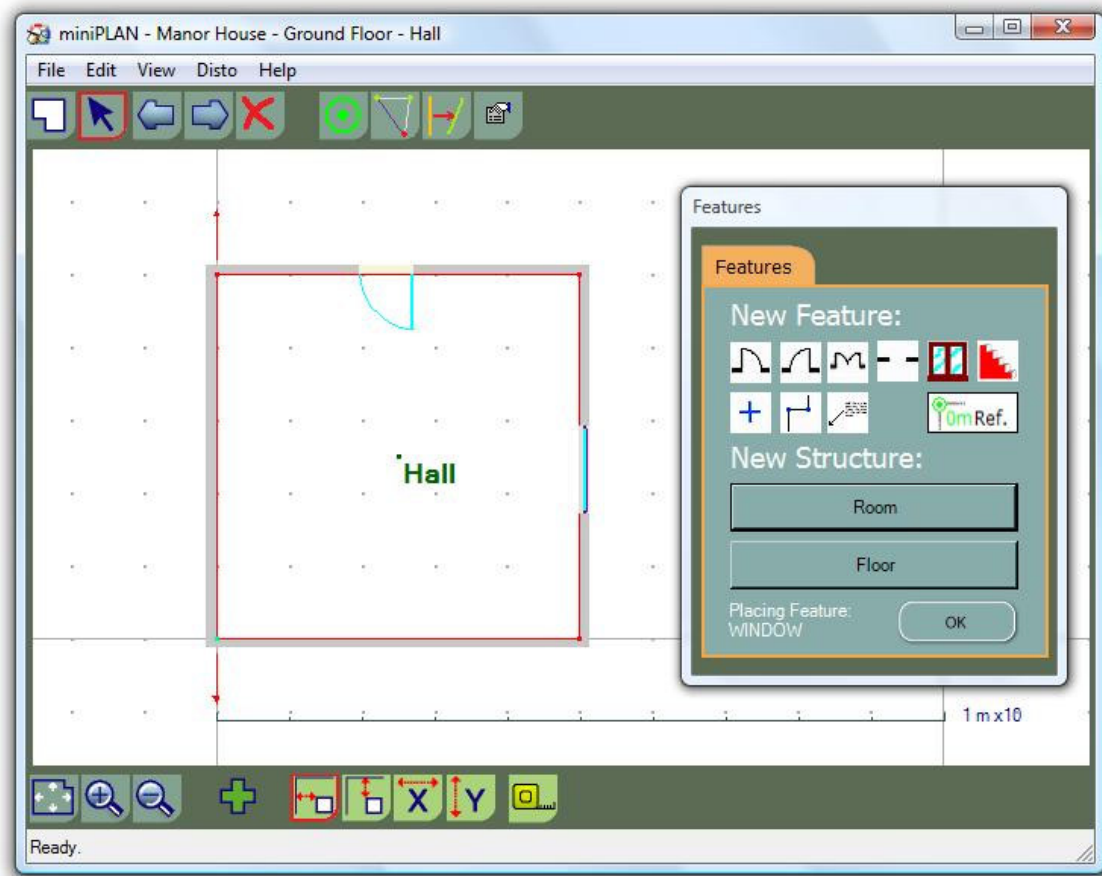


then tap on

the feature, followed by tapping the Erase button







Your sketch should now look something like this:




Tap the **OK** button on the Feature Selection window to close it

Before we do any measuring it's a good idea to get the hang of the zoom and pan functions. There are 3 zoom buttons on the toolbar at the bottom left of the screen. The 1st is zoom


extents , the 2nd is zoom window  and the 3rd is zoom out . Select the zoom window button. Tap to the bottom left of the WC, then drag the box somewhere past the top right of it. When you lift the stylus off the screen miniPLAN will zoom to the WC. This button can also be

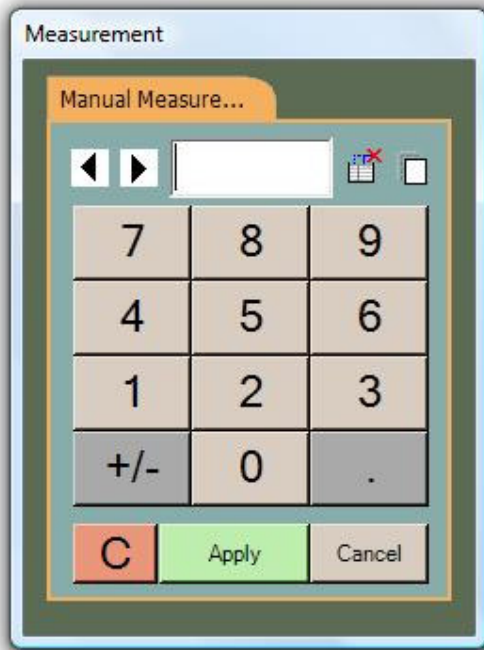
used to just zoom in closer to a selected point on the screen. To do this, select the  and tap on the point on the screen that you want to zoom in to. Tap the zoom out button to zoom out – a

fairly simple concept! If you now tap on the select button  (the arrow icon – 2nd left on the toolbar at the top left of the screen) then place the stylus on the screen in an area where there are no features, walls or text, then drag the stylus across the screen. The drawing now pans to a new position. Tap on the zoom extents button to get the whole room into view. Zoom extents will always room to the extents of the current room unless we are in the view floor mode when it will zoom to the extents of the whole floor we are working on.

OK – let's now measure our room!

Tap on the left hand wall. It will highlight blue again. The right hand icon on the bottom toolbar is a

tape measure . Tap on this and the manual Measurement input box will appear.



This allows the input of manual measurements – this is mostly used for entering short distances that cannot be measured with a Disto in Bluetooth mode, although it could be used to enter all measurements if a tape or a non-Bluetooth Disto is being used to carry out a survey.

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We will be using it to enter all the measurements for this particular room. Enter 6.53 into the keypad then tap the **Apply** button. The room automatically adjusts to 6.53m by 5m. The first side of the door is now highlighted and a message is displayed next to it asking us to measure its first point. Enter 1.2 and **Apply** it. The door moves to the correct position. We now need to enter the measurement for the other side of the door. Enter 1.95

The wall should now be highlighted blue. Enter a distance of 7.46

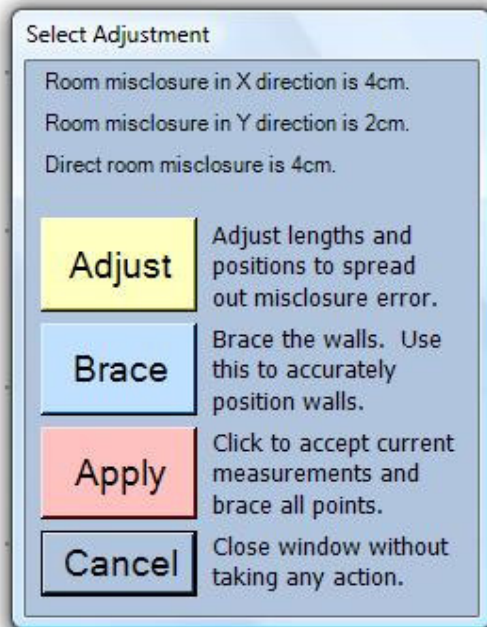
The room again resizes. If we were happy that the room is perfectly square there is no need to measure any more wall lengths but for this exercise we will be measuring all the walls to demonstrate how miniPLAN spreads any measurement errors around the room.

The start of the window on the right hand wall should now be highlighted. Enter a distance of 1.6

Enter 2.68 for the end of the window. We are now prompted for the wall length, enter 6.55 and for the bottom wall enter a distance of 7.42

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The Select Adjustment window is now displayed.



At the top of this window our misclosure is displayed – i.e. how far away from our start point we are once we have measured all around the room. We have an error of 4cm in the X direction (across the screen left to right) and 2cm in the Y direction (across the screen top to bottom).


The **Adjust** button will spread this misclosure around the room – the wall lengths will be slightly altered – the longer the wall the more of the error it absorbs. If we had quite a large misclosure this will either indicate that a mistake has been made or that the walls are not all at right angles to each other. Mistakes can easily be rectified by re-measuring. Walls can be re-measured by simply selecting them and entering a new distance. If there are walls that are not orthogonal to each other then we can use the Brace button to fix them by measuring diagonal distances across the room. Remember – even if there is a small misclosure the room could still be skewed and bracing may still be required. We will return to this later. In this instance we will use the Adjust button to spread the error around the room.


The **Apply** button is used to fix the position of walls without carrying out an adjustment, this function is very useful when surveying complex rooms – we will return to this function later.

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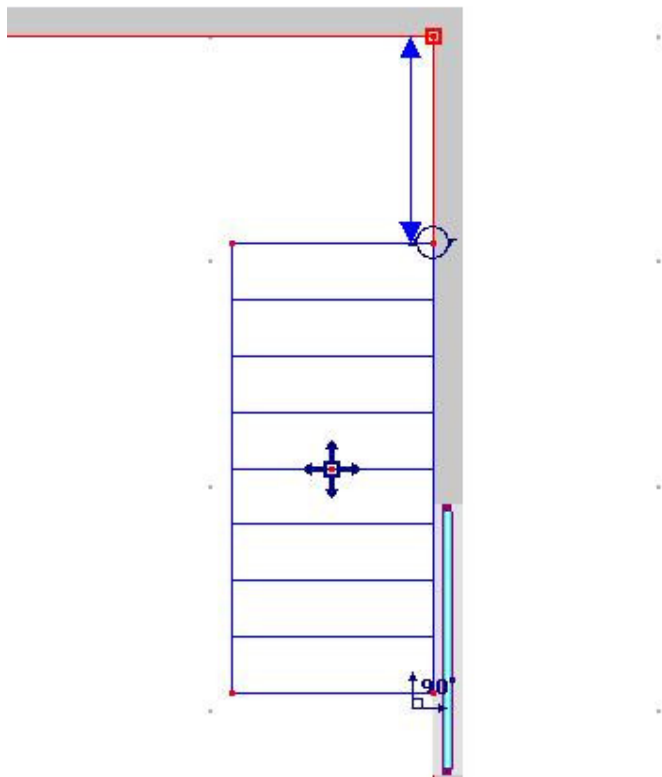
It is important to understand what miniPLAN is asking for when you are measuring the position of features in a room. A feature in miniPLAN has its position fixed by a **chainage** and an offset for items that are not on a wall. Chainage is the distance along a wall a feature is placed and offset is the perpendicular distance that the feature is off the wall. The points in the chainage are in relation to the nearest wall, which is highlighted with a blue arrow. By inputting these measurements as shown by the arrows, we can fix the position of the feature with ease.

The chainage of an object can be entered by pressing the **Chainage** button . And its **Offset**

by pressing the **Offset** button . The offset distance will now turn blue and a measurement can be entered.

Before we see how to move on to a new room, we will just take a look at the properties of features and how to move and rotate them. Add a staircase to the room by tapping the **Staircase** icon . The staircase will snap itself to the nearest wall.



Zoom in to the staircase and select it. You will see 3 icons on it.

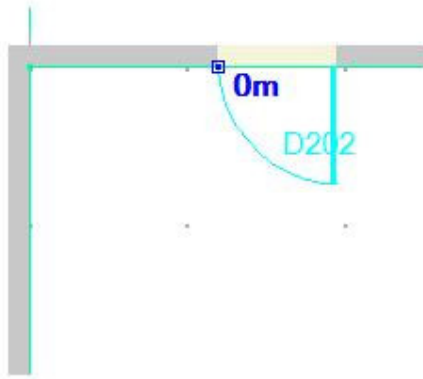


At the bottom right is the **Rotate 90** icon, at the top right is the **Free Rotate** icon and the move icon in the centre of the staircase symbol.


Tap and hold the stylus on the **Move** icon, the symbol can now be dragged away from the wall. Next tap and hold the Rotate 90 icon then drag the stylus towards the top of the screen. The staircase will rotate 90 degrees clockwise. This function will rotate in steps of 90 degrees and is useful if a feature needs to be flipped around to the correct orientation. You may need to re-select the staircase after rotating it. Now tap and hold the Free Rotate icon, drag the stylus across the screen to rotate the staircase.

It's now time to create a new room adjacent to our current room. Tap on the Zoom Extents

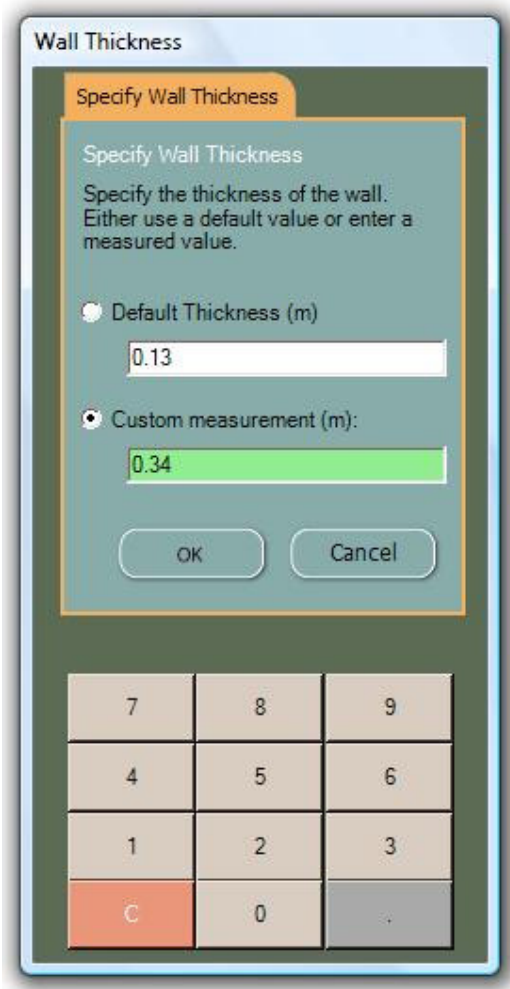
icon , then tap on the Control Point icon , zoom to the door on the top wall and tap on the left hand side of the door.



A blue point will have appeared with **0m** written next to it. This is the point we are going to use to fix

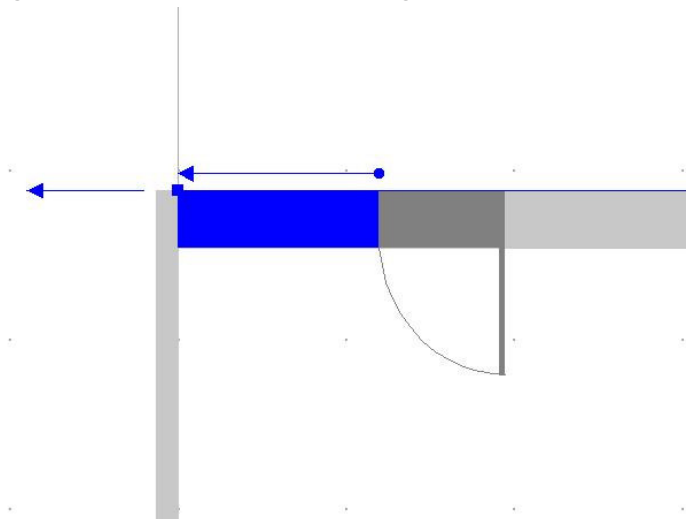
the position of our new room in relation to the current room. Tap on the **Add Feature** button , then tap the **Room** button. Enter a room name. We now want to change the wall thickness so tap on the **Set** button next to the Wall Thickness of adjacent room box.


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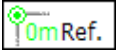
In the **Custom** measurement box enter a value of 0.34 then press OK.

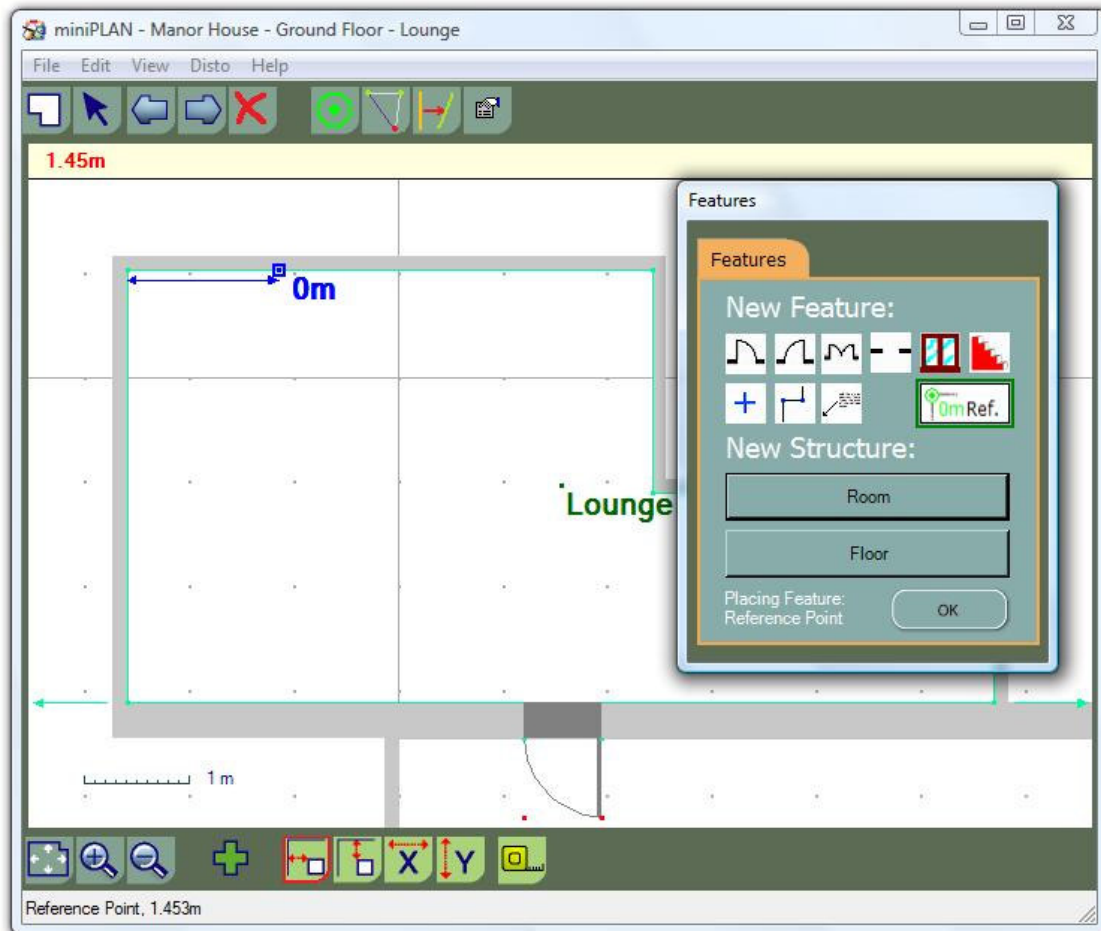
Select **Sketch** as the Draw Method. Tap **OK** and a new wall will be drawn in parallel with the wall the door was on. If necessary tap **Zoom Extents** to see the whole wall. Now measure the **Section Length** (the distance from the door edge to the left wall corner).




Select the left hand wall , enter 4.18, then for the other walls enter 5.04, 2.13, 3.27 and 1.99


Adjust out the misclosure


Tap on the **Add Feature**  button then on the **Reference**  button. Then tap on a point on the top wall – the wall with a length of 5.04m. 0m will appear at the point you have tapped.




Enter a chainage of 1.69 to fix its position. **Reference Points** are points that we can attach **Control Points** to if we do not wish to use a doorway etc to control the relationship of one room to the next. As many as are required can be added to a room, but only 1 **Control Point** at a time can be placed. **Control Points** cannot be placed in the corners of a room as miniPLAN will not be able to tell which

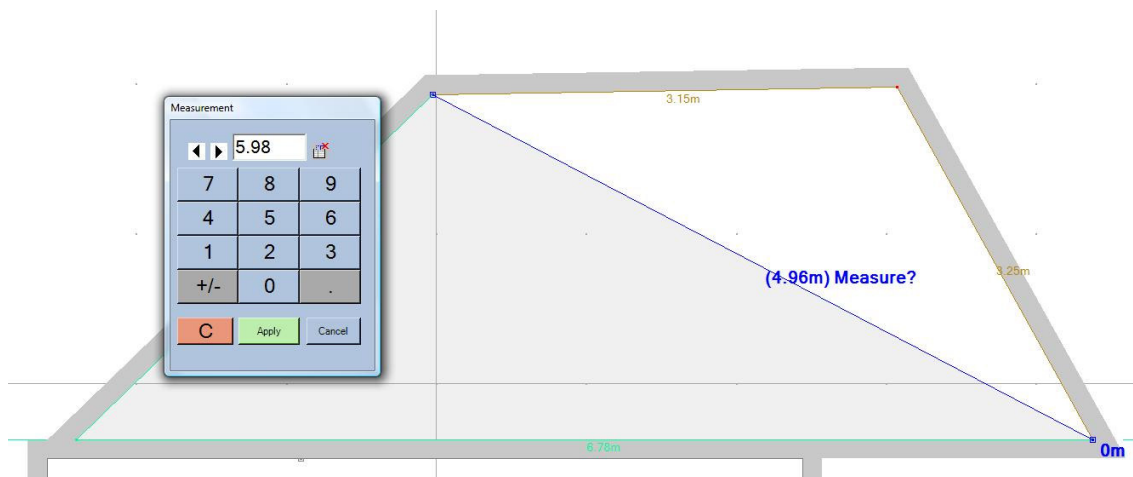
wall is to be offset to create the new room. Tap on the **Control Point** icon  and place a new **Control Point** on the **Reference Point**. Now add a new room, enter a name, leave the wall thickness as 0.13 and set the **Draw Method** as **Sketch**. Enter a **Section Length** of 1.5 and an **Entire Wall Length** of 6.78

The icon on the left end of the top toolbar is the Ortho button , tap on it to switch to Non-

Ortho  mode – this allows us to draw walls at different angles. Zoom out a bit then tap the screen at a point that is about 2m to the right and 3m above the 0m point. Now tap about 3m to the right, then close back onto the end point of the wall. Your sketch should look something like this:



The left hand wall should now be highlighted – if isn't, select it  yourself. Enter a length of 4.1, then enter 3.15 and 3.25 for the other walls. As this is not an orthogonal room we will need to brace it. The **Select Adjustment** window will now be displayed, tap the **Brace** button. Select the top left point of the room (where the 4.1m long wall and the 3.5m one join). Now select the right hand end of the bottom wall – this wall is shown as green which means we know the position of it and its end points. We are now asked for the diagonal length between the two points.

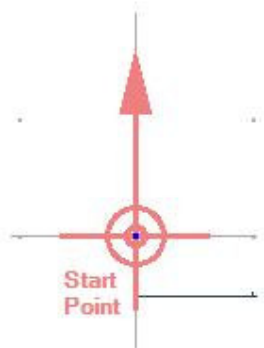


Enter 5.98, as this is a 4 sided room the position of the rest of the walls is solved automatically from just the one diagonal measurement.

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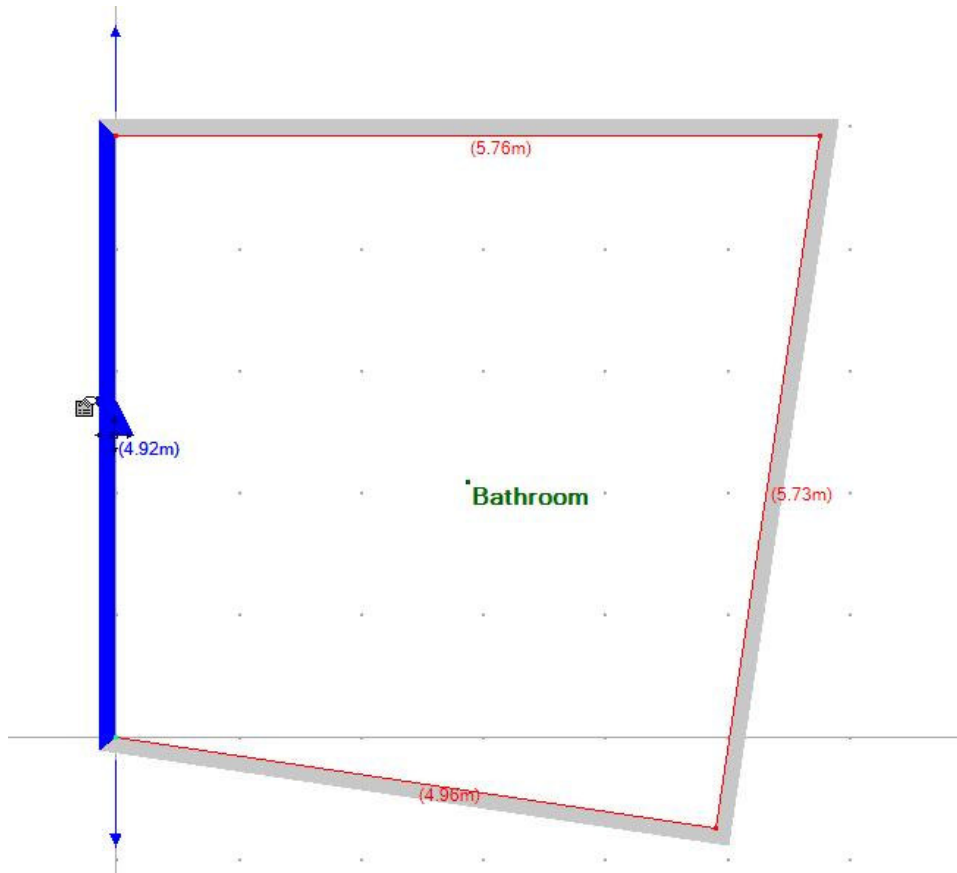


We will now create a new floor. Tap on the **Add Feature** button and select the **Structure** tab, then select the new **Floor button**. Choose a floor name, make sure **Control Layer** is set to **No control layer** then press **OK**. Enter a room name, set the **Draw Method** to **Sketch**.



The **Start Point** icon is displayed when sketching the first room on a floor. The first point entered by the user should be above the arrow head, a wall will then be drawn from the Start Point to selected position.

Make a sketch similar to the one shown below (**TIP** - turn ortho off after drawing the 2nd wall, turn it on again after drawing the 3rd on then turn it off again to close back onto the 1st point. You will have noticed that when Ortho is on it always draws the line orthogonal to the previous wall)



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Connecting to your Disto

Before measurements can be taken from the Disto, a Bluetooth connection must be established between the Disto and the device miniPLAN is running on.

On the **menu** tap on Disto and Connect . Ensure the Disto is turned on and the Bluetooth logo is flashing on the Disto's screen. If you are using Disto Plus also ensure that the 2nd button is pressed.



Press the **Discover** button in miniPLAN. When your Disto's ID appears on the screen tap on it and the Disto will connect to miniPLAN. The Disto **Settings** screen will automatically close.

If the Bluetooth connection is lost, select Disconnect in the Disto menu, then repeat the above process.

Now our Disto is connected, we can see how to get measurements from it into miniPLAN.

The left-hand wall should be highlighted in blue. Measure a distance with the Disto (try and measure a distance similar to the distance displayed on your sketch) , then press the Bluetooth button on the Disto to send the measurement direct to miniPLAN. Take 3 more measurements (again, try and make them similar to the sketched distances, and Bluetooth them to miniPLAN.

The **Select Adjustment** screen will now be displayed. Just press **Cancel** – the exercise we have just carried out was just to show how measurements are transferred from the Disto to miniPLAN.

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Measuring Room Diagonals


It can be difficult to get accurate results when measuring room diagonals. Luckily the Disto can get round this problem with the maximum/minimum function. This allows us to accurately measure to internal or external wall corners. To enter the max/min mode press and hold the measure button. The Disto will then take multiple measurements around an area which you scan e.g. a corner. Press the measure button again to stop the measurements. The measurements taken will be the maximum distance and the minimum distances recorded from your position. Press and hold the “-“

(minus) button to scroll through the maximum and minimum distance and then press the Bluetooth button to import the distance required. The rear bracket on the Disto can also be fully extended so we can measure accurately from an internal wall corner. See your Disto's manual for further details.

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Top Items buttons and how they are used



When you bring up the **Feature Selection** window by pressing the  button, in the **Top Items** tab 30 icons are displayed. These are the default features that are supplied with miniPLAN. These features are:



Door left- Door that opens left, into the room



Door Right- Door that opens right, into the room



Double door- Door that opens into a room



Doorway – Doorway in a wall without a door



Window- Window in a wall



Staircase – Adds a staircase symbol



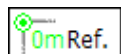
Single Point feature – adds a cross to the drawing. Text descriptions and/or Disto readings are then added.



Line feature – adds a line to the drawing



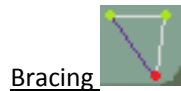
Callout Text – adds text with a leader arrow. Once placed either end can be dragged into another position.



Reference Point – used to attach a Control Point to in the absence of a Door or Window to use for creating a new room.

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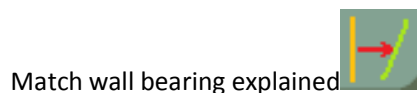
Top Toolbar



Bracing

For rooms which have a large misclosure, bracing will be needed as adjusting out the misclosure may mean a loss of accurate wall measurements. Four sided rooms will only need one brace line, to solve the room measurements. For walls which have many right angles on a non-orthogonal wall, these can be braced, but it maybe easier to use the hinge function, see Hinge Function for more information. Bracing is useful for rooms which are non-orthogonal/have many walls as we can take diagonal measurements to fix walls, in position, accurately. Bracing is also useful for measuring features into a room such as a ceiling light, ceiling hatch and a skylight when it is difficult to enter chainage and offset measurements, i.e. when walls are non-orthogonal to the feature. The Tutorial 4 video shows this operation in detail.

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Match wall bearing explained


Matching wall bearings is a very useful function that allows a wall bearing to be set the same as another wall. Click on the Match wall bearing icon, select the wall that you want to copy the bearing of, then select the wall that you want to inherit the bearing.

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Undo and re-do function

If we make a mistake at any time when drawing a room or adding a feature, we can undo our

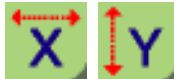
previous command by pressing the  button if we press the undo button too many times we can use the re-do button to correct the undo. Note: miniPLAN can only undo in order to a certain point. If we have made a mistake and realise when we are well into our drawing, we can use the

erase function . Just select the feature or wall you wish to delete then tap the erase button to complete the command.

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Bottom Toolbar



We have already discovered the zoom extent, zoom in and zoom out and tape measure function on the bottom toolbar, but there are two other functions we need to know about.

X and Y Dimension feature buttons 

On the bottom of the toolbar in miniPLAN, there are two buttons for the X and Y dimensions, these can be used for measuring the dimensions of features before we measure the feature itself, into our room. We just select the feature we require to measure and press the X or Y dimension button to bring up the measurement highlighted in blue, enter the measurement. We can now measure the feature into the room, we can do this either by bracing the feature or measuring the features' chainage.

Chainage and Offset

On the bottom tool bar there are two measurement modes which you can select at any time to change measurements of features within a room. The two measurement modes available in

miniPLAN are the chainage measurements  and offset measurements , both of these measurement modes we have already encountered in miniPLAN. We can use these buttons to

change specifically the chainage and offset measurements of features, just select the feature you wish to edit the measurements and select which measurement you would like to edit, chainage or offset.

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Menu Bar Functions

There are more functions which we can use with miniPLAN which are located within the menu bar of miniPLAN, these functions may not be used as commonly as the other features, but nevertheless, still remain important functions.

Exporting your miniPLAN drawing as a DXF file

MiniPlan allows you to export your drawing as a DXF file so you can edit the drawing in AutoCAD or any other CAD program. To do this, all we have to do is select the file tab on the menu bar. Then we select the export option, a mini screen pops up asking us what you would like to export. We can export part of the current project we are working on e.g a floor or a room or the whole project. Select one of these options which fits your needs. Then we click the box which gives us the option to export project as DXF blocks. Then we select save and the project will be saved in a destination folder of your choice as DXF blocks.

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The menu bar

File New – create new project

Open – open an existing project

Save – save the current project

Export – export drawings to CAD via DXF or to drawing packages via BMP, JPG, etc.

Building Report... - produces a report of every element of the current project in CSV format

Energy Assessor Report... - produces a report to input into SBEM in CSV format

Feature Report... - produces a report of the features in a project in CSV format

Import DXF control – import an existing drawing into miniPLAN to use as a base for your floorplan

Exit – close miniPLAN

Edit Flip – reverses the direction of a wall, or flips a door so it opens out of the current room

Brace/Unbrace – fixes the position of the selected wall or un-fixes it so it can be moved

Split wall – splits a wall line into 2 segments

Calculate room misclosure – once a room has been measured the misclosure can be calculated, bracing can be carried out or the measurements can just be applied.

Fix all walls – sets all walls in the current room to be fixed in their current position

Compass orientation – allows the user to rotate the compass to the correct bearing. This only needs doing once in the project as it is applied to all floors. Click on the tick to set it, or the cross to cancel.

Delete Floor – deletes the current floor

Delete Room – deletes the current room

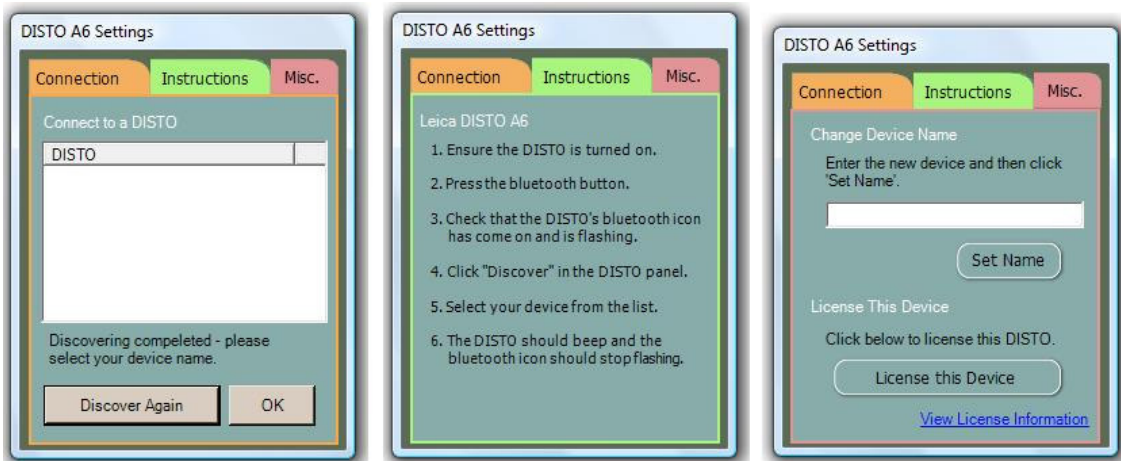
View Building – shows a view of all the floors in the building. Click on a floor to open it. If you have a large number of floors in a project the image can be dragged up or down by holding the stylus on the screen & sliding it up or down

Floor – shows a view of the current floor. Select any room to open it.

Room – zooms to the extents of the current room

Zones – allows zones to be set and external walls defined for EPC surveys or other purposes


Disto Connect – brings to the screen to connect to the Bluetooth Disto

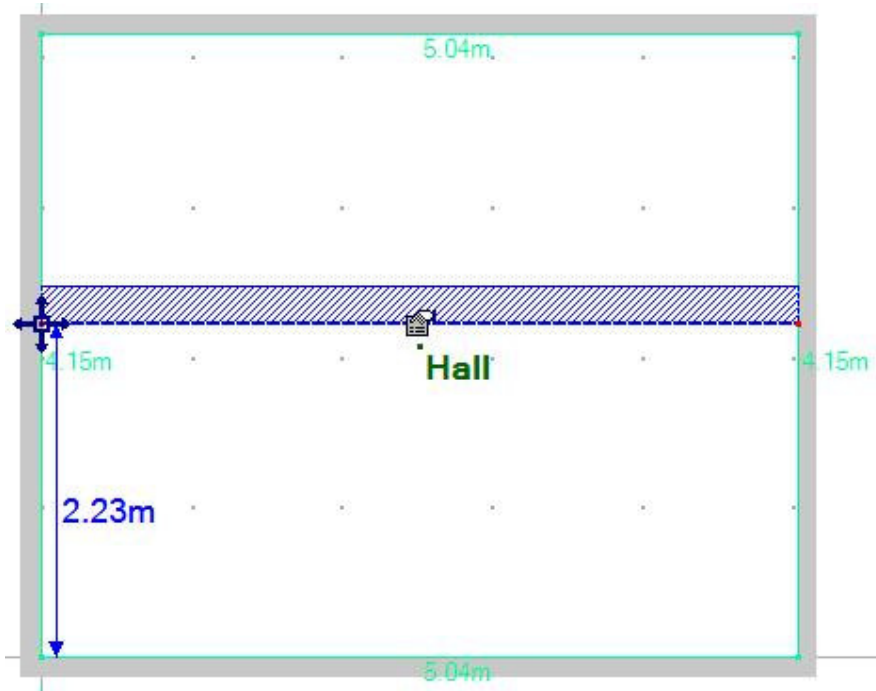


<u>Connection tab</u>	<u>Instructions tab</u>	<u>Misc. tab</u>
Connect to a Disto	Follow these instruction to connect your Disto	You can change the name of your Disto to a more memorable name here. The name must be prefixed with Disto, e.g. if you were colour coding your Distos you may wish to rename one to Disto red .

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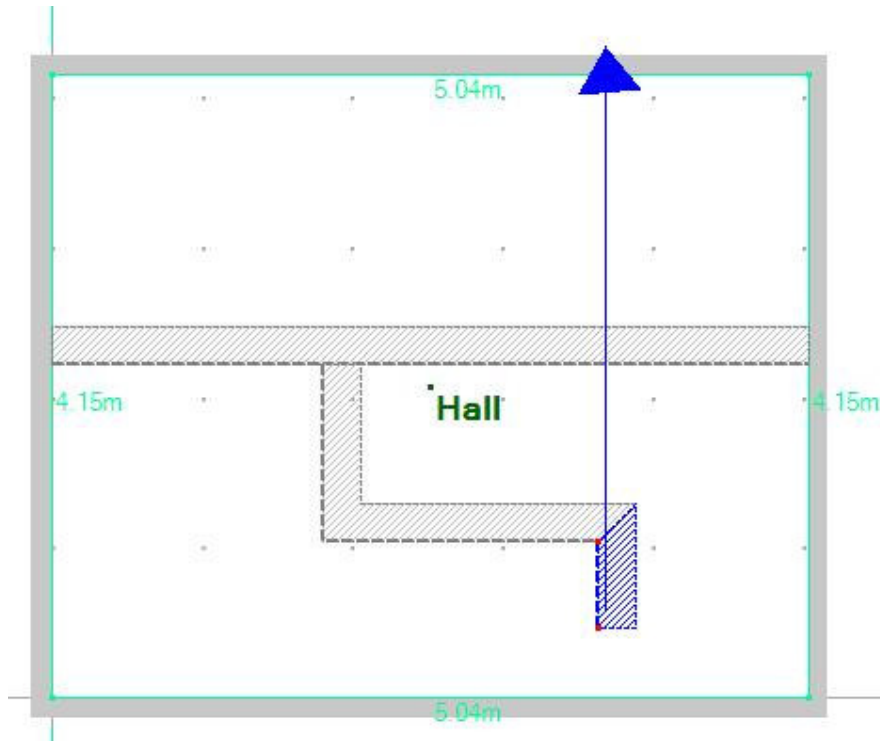
Line Features

The **Line feature** is a linear feature between two points that can be added to a room either in Ortho or Non-Ortho mode. Select Line feature  icon from the **Features** window. Check Ortho mode is on, tap on one wall, then the opposite one to place the line.

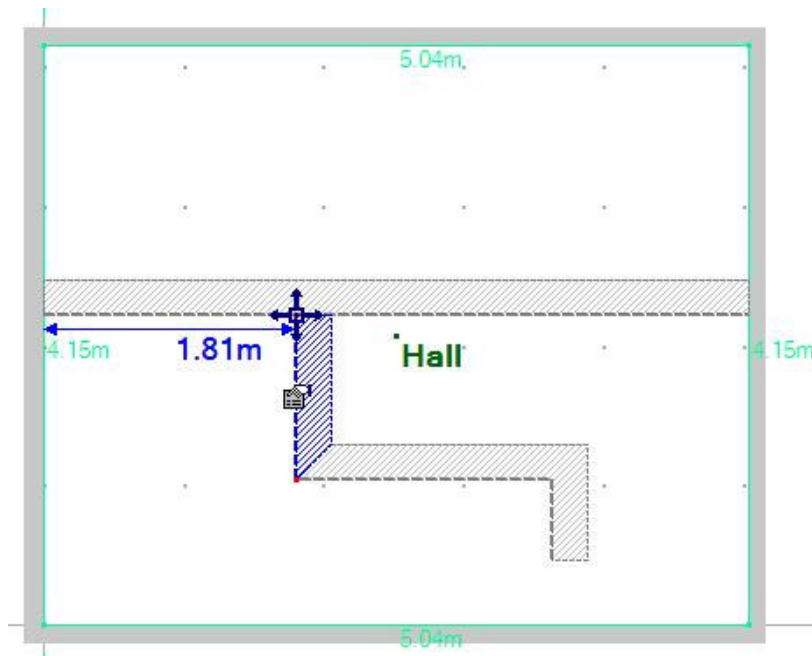


Select one end of the beam and enter a chainage – the whole beam will then move to the measured position. If the other end of the beam is selected and a chainage is entered, then that end will move along the wall to a new position, leaving the first end in its original position.


Line features can be drawn off walls or off other Line features. The ends can be fixed by chainage if they are attached to walls or line features. Let's now add another line off the one we have just drawn.

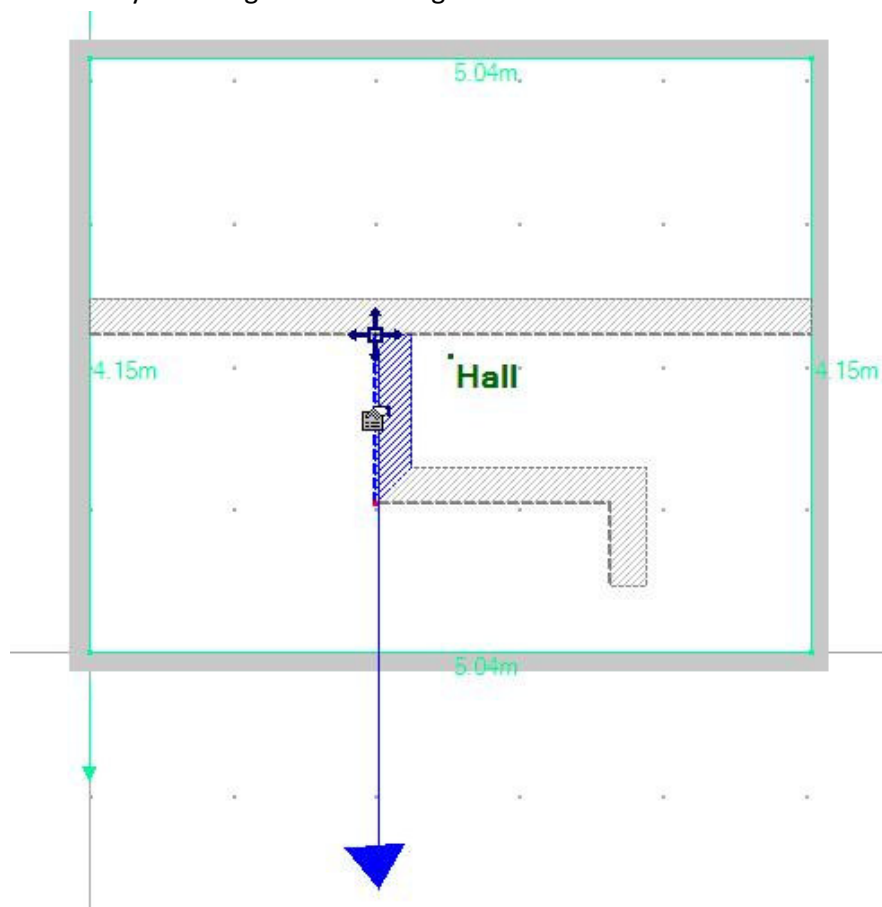


Then select the start of the 2nd beam where it joins the first one. And enter a chainage distance.



The length of the first segment is now prompted for. The length of a segment can also be

entered by selecting it and entering a new Y Dimension 



Enter a length, the following segments are then selected and their lengths can be entered.

End points that are not attached to walls can be dragged to join onto a wall or another line feature.

Lines can be drawn in Ortho  or Non-Ortho  mode.

To switch the beam width to the other side of the beam (or any other line feature with a width) use Edit/Flip

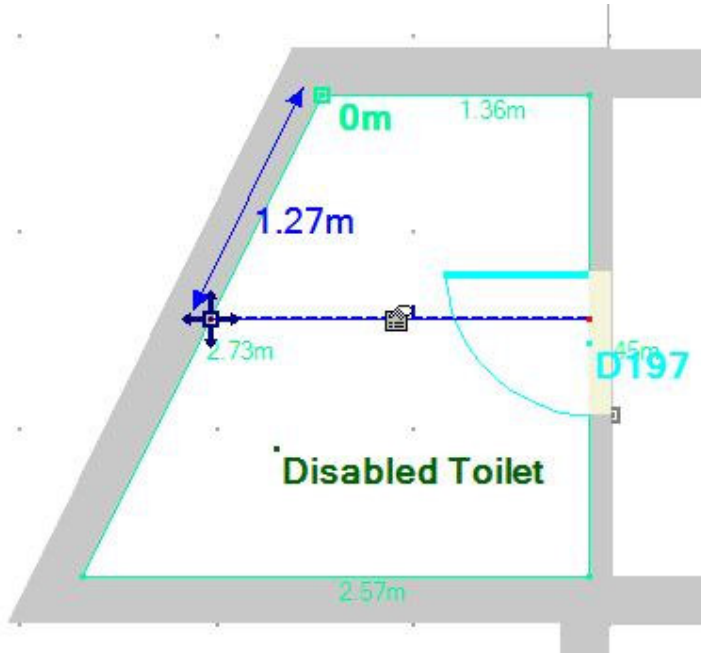
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Changing the direction of chainage

Chainage by default runs clockwise around a room, but measurements can be taken in the opposite direction, or the start point for chainage (0m) can be moved to a **Door**, **Window** or **Reference Point** placed on the wall.

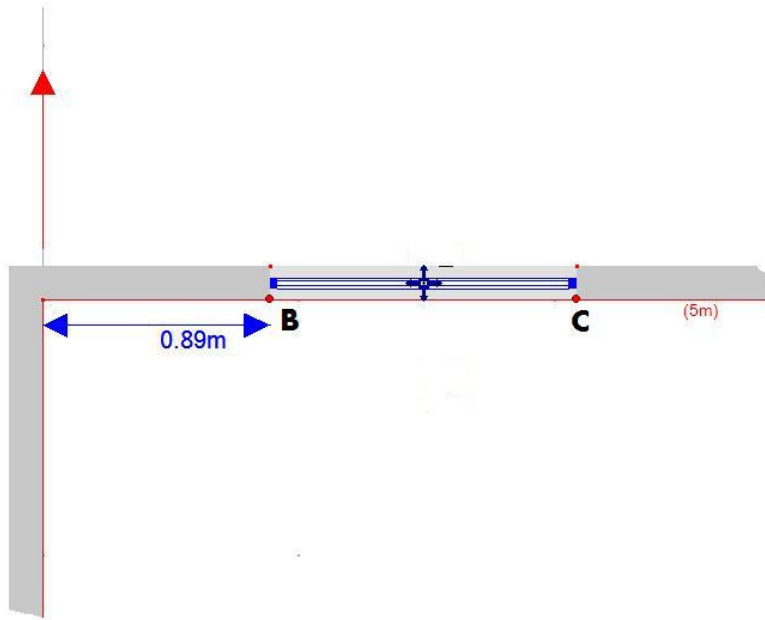


If you need to measure from the other end of the wall, place a Control Point on the other end of the wall, then select the feature you wish to measure the position of. The prompted for chainage will now run from the other direction along the wall.



Dragging doors & windows

Once a door or window has been placed on a wall it can be moved along the wall to a new position or stretched to a new size if exact measurements are not required or for reasons of making the initial sketch clearer. The image below shows the 2 points on a window (these also appear on doors) that are used to move or resize it. To adjust the width of the window or , hold the cursor on point **B** or **C**, drag to the required width then release.





Control layers

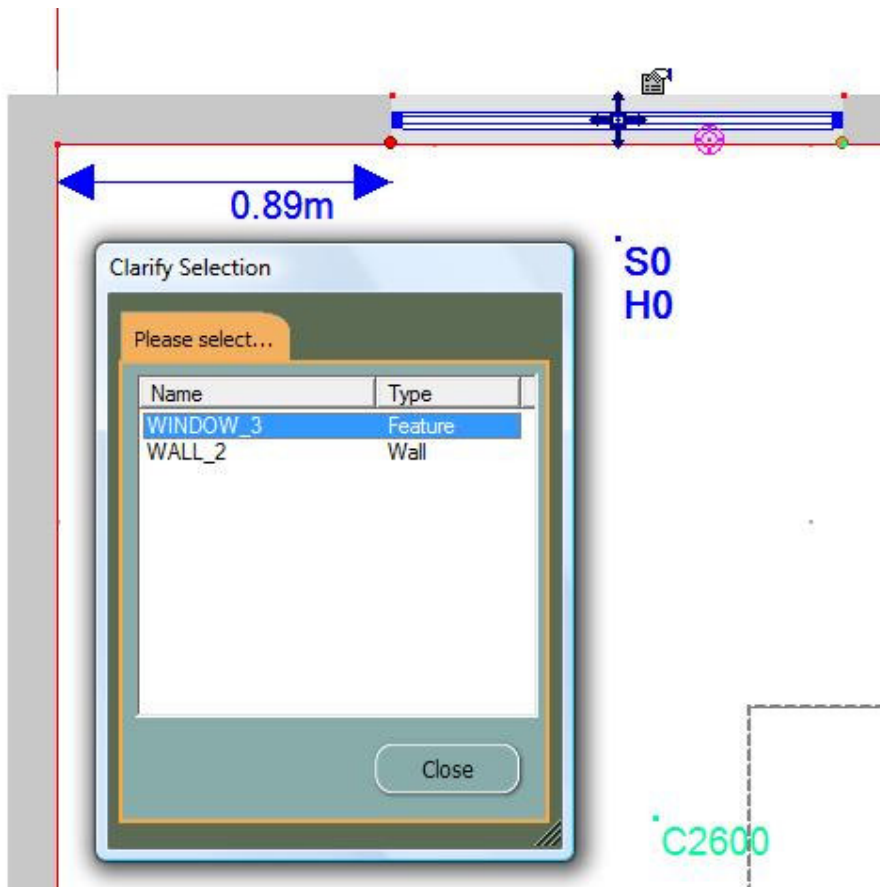
Control lines for room creation

Multiple select

In cases where objects are in close proximity to each other or where a door or window is inserted into a wall, it may be difficult to select the correct object. To ensure the correct object can always be selected, miniPLAN has a Clarify Selection feature. To switch to Clarify Selection mode, click on the

Select  button once or twice until it changes to look like this 

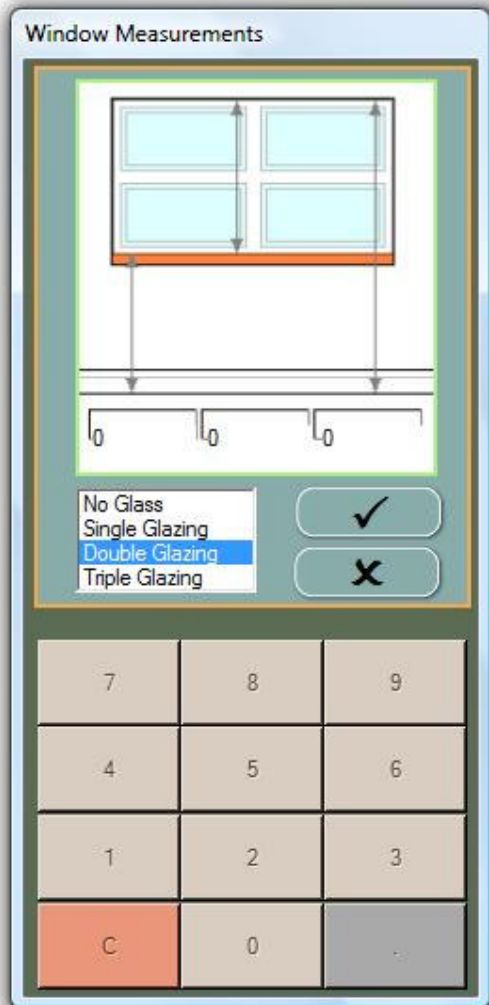
If we now select a window we will get the Clarify Selection window displayed.



All of the objects in the proximity of the point selected are now displayed, in the case shown these are the window and the wall that it's inserted in. Select the name of the object that is to be edited then click on the Close button. The required object is now selected.

Window Properties

To edit the properties of a window select the Properties icon. The image below show the layout of the Window Properties box.



The **Window Glazing** box allows the type of glazing to be set.

The left sizing box allows the floor to sill height to be set, the centre sizing box allows the window height (sill to head) to be entered and the right hand sizing box allows the input of floor to head height.

Reports

Reports can be generated from miniPLAN in CSV format that can be read directly into an Excel spreadsheet or many other applications. The creating of reports can be carried out via the **File** menu.

The three types of report currently available are:

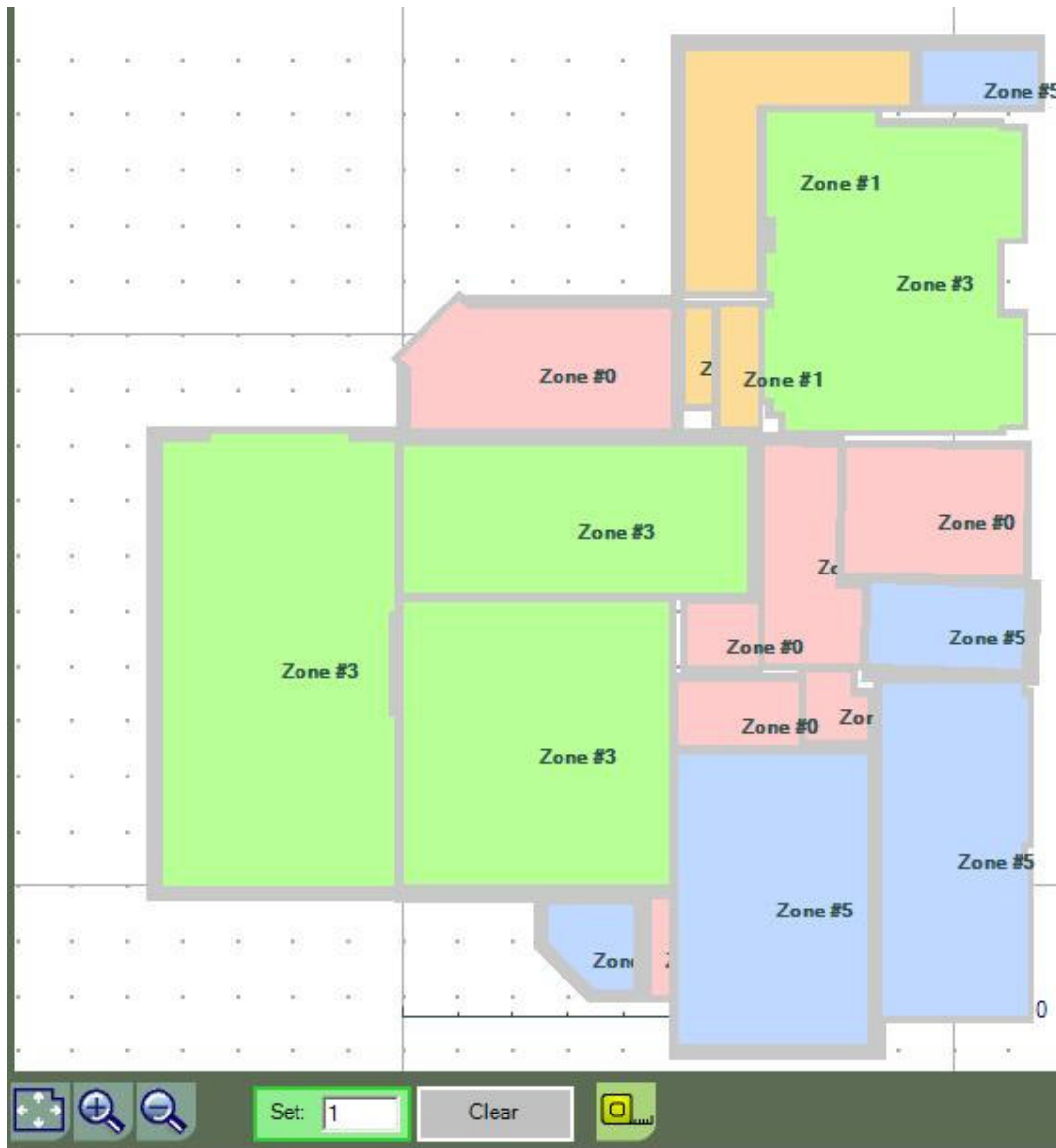
Building Report – contains all elements in a building

Energy Assessor Report – contains information specifically for input into SBEM for generating Energy Performance Certificates for commercial premises. Providing all external walls have been defined in miniPLAN's Zones mode, all floor areas will be calculated up to the face of external walls and to the centre line of internal walls.

Feature Report – contains a list of all the features in each room of the building

Zoning

Buildings can be zoned for producing EPC reports or dividing up rental areas, for example. To access this facility select **Zones** under the **View** menu.



In the Set: box at the bottom of the screen, enter your zone number, then tap in a room to include it in that zone.