

## Tech Sheet No. 2: Creating Plot Files

### About Plot Files

Drawing files are stored in a format specific to the CAD application, such as AutoCAD which uses .dwg, MicroStation uses .dgn etc.

Plotters do not have the ability to print files in these drawing formats. In order to plot, your CAD application uses a 'driver' to convert your CAD file into a format a plotter can use.



For example, the Hewlett Packard 450C colour plotter accepts the HPGL/2 plot format. To plot to this device your CAD application must have the HPGL/2 plotter driver. However, some CAD applications use a standard Windows driver for plotting, so you would need this driver loaded into the Windows Operating System.

The ability to create accurate, reliable Plot Files is the first and most important step in dependable set plotting because Plot Files are a completely encapsulated representation of the original drawing file printed how you want it to look.

In other words, all of the pen settings, fonts and reference files that usually need to accompany a CAD file have been put into the single Plot File, by the driver.

Normally your plotter accepts this information through a printer cable connected to your PC or to a network port on the plotter. In order to create Plot Files, you just redirect this HPGL/2 stream of data to a file on your local or network disk called a Plot File.

The method varies, but generally right before the plot function occurs you are prompted for the file name.

Your drawings are now in a format that can be transported or transmitted to other plotters. You could copy or e-mail these files to a colleague who can then plot them to any HPGL/2 compatible plotter, without the need for the CAD application that created the files!

Do you want colour plots?	If YES go to <b>D.</b> below
Do you want mono (Black & White) plots?	If YES go to <b>A.</b> below

***Yes....we can print your CAD Plot Files while you wait.***

Visit our Internet site: [www.nom.com.au](http://www.nom.com.au)  
or E-mail to [plots@nom.com.au](mailto:plots@nom.com.au)

## **A. How to create a plot file in AutoCAD 2002 & 2004**

AutoCAD 2002 & 2004 have the printer configuration files for our wide-format **Oce** "laser-type" printer so you will get perfect results if you follow these instructions.

1. Select the correct pen settings for how you want the drawing to look when printed.
2. From the drop down menu, select **File** and then **Plotter Manager**.
3. a) Double click on the **Add a Plotter Wizard**, next
  - b) My computer
  - c) Manufacturer - **Oce**
  - d) Model - **9400LV-4.x**
  - e) Next, Next
  - g) Ports, select **Plot to file**
  - h) Name - **Oce 9400 LV-4.x**
  - i) Finish (You have now installed the Driver and are ready to plot)
4. From the drop down menu, select **File** and then **Plot**.
5. You should automatically be in 'Plot Device' tab
6. In Plotter Configuration, select the **Oce 9400**, from the drop down list.
7. Make sure the '**plot to file**' box is ticked. Save the file name and location.
8. Click on the '**Plot Settings**' tab.
9. Choose the correct paper size, according to the drawing size that you want.
10. Choose the correct drawing orientation - Landscape or Portrait.
11. Always do a full preview to ensure that the plot file is complete with title blocks & all views, and that it will fit onto the paper size selected with the correct scale. To exit this view press enter or esc.
12. All OK? Select OK. A plot file should have been created.

Use Winzip, or similar, to compress the file, for transport to NOM, or send to [plots@nom.com.au](mailto:plots@nom.com.au) with quantity and size of prints required, white paper, tracing or film, your name and a contact telephone number. When ready ring on 4969 2855 to advise us.

If you have AutoCAD 2004 it may have the Oce TDS400 plotter as a selection, use it instead of the Oce 9400 recommended above as it is the actual machine that we have installed, it's just that it may not appear in earlier programs so we suggest the 9400 as a basic model.

## **B. How to create a plot file in Archi-CAD**

Archi-CAD has the printer configuration files for our wide-format **Oce** "laser-type" printer so you will get perfect results if you follow these instructions.

1. Select the correct pen settings for how you want the drawing to look when printed.
2. In Plotmaker from the drop down menu, select **File** and then **Plot Setup**.
3. a) Manufacturer - **Oce**
  - d) Model -
  - e) Next, Next
  - g) Ports, select **Plot to file**
  - h) Name - **Oce 9400 at NOM**
  - i) Finish (You have now installed the Driver and are ready to plot)
4. Use plot maker to make a plot file. (plt extension ONLY)
5. In Plotter Configuration, select the **Oce 9400**, from the drop down list.
6. Select your orientation by using your x and y axis to set up your paper roll (or your paper size). For example if you want to plot at a landscape A1, set your 'X' axis to 841mm and 'Y' axis to 594mm.
7. Click on 'Plot' as we want to plot to file, rather than plot to a printer.

8. In your destination field choose "File" not plotter as you don't have a plotter connected.
9. Paper Feed as auto roll.
10. Plot with: "grey scale" – "element" , Plot Order: "by Draw Order", Pen Parameters: "Use Pens & Colours".
11. Before saving the file, make sure you choose where you want to send the file, for example C:/my documents, in destination & then copy to CD or USB Drive etc.
12. All OK? Select OK. A plot file should have been created.

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### **C. How to create a plot file in other programs**

Because we ask you to create a plot file it is possible for us to plot your drawings created in almost every type of Windows or DOS program.

You will need to install a new driver and it is best to select a standard HPGL/2 driver.

1. Go to the Start button on the Task Bar and select Settings and then Printers.
2. Select the Add Printer icon and select the Hewlett Packard HPGL/2 Plotter or the HP Design Jet 650 or 750 in the A0 (E) size.
3. Set this plotter as the default printer and you should be OK. Remember to change the default printer back to your A4 printer when finished so that your typed documents will print OK.
4. Follow Steps 6 to 12 above.

### **D. Colour Plots**

- We are able to plot up to A1 size in full colour, even 1600 x 600mm if you need a poster. Our colour plotter is a HP DesignJet 100 and we can print from JPEG or colour PDF files. If you have AutoCAD we can plot from a DWG file if we are supplied the pen .ctb file as well as all fonts used and XREF's. The best way to send a DWG file is go to "File" – "e-Transmit" and this will create a self-extracting .exe file with all fonts, pen set, Xref drawings & logos. Send us this .exe file with your instructions. Plotting from Drawing Files will incur an additional charge.

### **E. Miscellaneous**

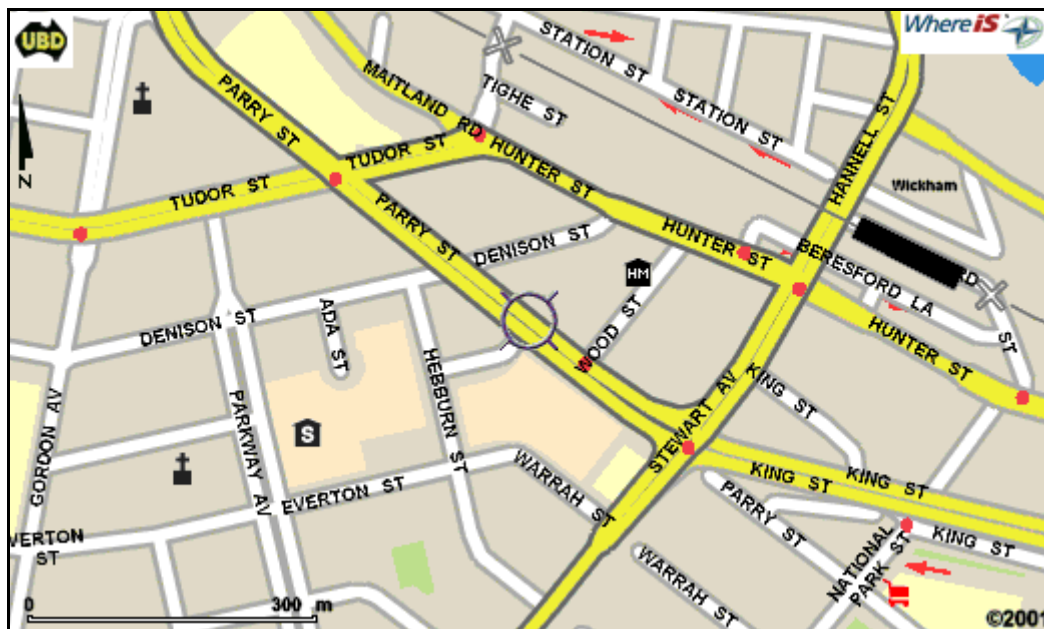
- For your first test plots bring the plot file and drawing files with you on disc.
- We print onto a Mono (Black on White) Oce TDS400 "Laser-Type" Plan Printer - Plotter-Scanner that will enlarge, reduce, plot and scan-to-file. All of these functions are available from our bureau as well as laminating up to 1000mm width.
- Prints can be up to 841mm wide x 6000mm in length onto paper, tracing paper or film. Specialty papers must be smooth & only up to 110-120gsm thickness.
- Large-format scanning is usually done to TIFF Group 4 format whilst documents are usually scanned to a multi-page TIFF format. Conversion to PDF is available at a surcharge.

## F. If all else fails!

- In an emergency we may be able to print drawing files, however, we make no guarantee that the fonts will print correctly, or that the pen sizes and line types will be correct. Plotting from Drawing Files will incur an additional charge.
- If you are unable to create a plot file using the above methods, we can print black and white pdf and tiff files. If you are able to create a single page pdf or single page tiff file from the program you are using, we should be able to plot directly from that file, as long as it is saved as a Black and White version.

## Where to find us

NOM Office Solutions is to be found on the first floor of the yellow building opposite the Mobil Petrol Station, at 188 Parry Street West, Newcastle West. Enter through the doorway at the right side of the building. We are open from 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, and at other times by arrangement only.



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