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Étude et réalisation d'un système de rétro-conception basé sur
la connaissance pour la modélisation déclarative de scènes

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
LIST OF FIGURES	5
LIST OF TABLES	9
LIST OF ALGORITHMS	11
CHAPITRE 1 INTRODUCTION	13
1.1 LES DOMAINES DE LA RECHERCHE	14
1.2 LES OBJECTIFS DE LA RECHERCHE	16
1.3 L'ORGANISATION DE LA THESE	18
CHAPTER 2 RELATED RESEARCH AREAS	21
2.1 GEOMETRIC MODELLING	21
2.2 DECLARATIVE MODELLING	24
2.2.1 <i>General and dedicated declarative modellers</i>	30
2.2.2 <i>The declarative conception cycle</i>	30
2.2.3 <i>The iterative design process</i>	32
2.2.4 <i>Levels of abstraction and levels of detail</i>	33
2.2.5 <i>Declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition</i>	34
2.2.6 <i>MultiCAD system architecture</i>	37
2.3 FEATURE-BASED MODELLING	40
2.4 REVERSE ENGINEERING	43
2.4.1 <i>Reverse engineering in scene modelling</i>	44
2.4.2 <i>Reverse engineering and geometric modelling</i>	47
2.4.3 <i>Reverse engineering and feature-based modelling</i>	49
2.4.4 <i>Reverse engineering and declarative modelling</i>	52
2.5 DISCUSSION	54

CHAPTER 3	THESIS PROPOSAL AND IMPLEMENTATION	57
3.1	INTEGRATION OF THE TWO MODELS	58
3.2	RECONSTRUCTION PHASE	60
3.3	EXTENDED DESIGN METHODOLOGY	61
3.4	RS-MULTICAD SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE	62
3.4.1	<i>Data and knowledge storage</i>	65
3.4.2	<i>The stratified representation</i>	70
3.4.3	<i>Scene modifications</i>	72
3.4.4	<i>The propagation policy</i>	74
3.4.5	<i>The resultant declarative description</i>	75
3.5	RS-MULTICAD PROTOTYPE	76
3.5.1	<i>Geometric representation</i>	76
3.5.2	<i>The construction of the stratified representation</i>	79
3.5.3	<i>Extraction of relations and properties</i>	82
3.5.4	<i>The propagation policy</i>	85
3.5.5	<i>Scene modifications</i>	86
3.5.5.1	Move operation	86
3.5.5.2	Scale-resize operation	88
3.5.5.3	Insert operation	90
3.5.5.4	Deletion operation	91
3.5.5.5	Extra geometric characteristics operation	91
3.5.6	<i>The resultant declarative description</i>	91
CHAPTER 4	EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS	95
4.1	RS-MULTICAD ENVIRONMENT	95
4.1.1	<i>Select mode</i>	98
4.2	CASE I – INTERNAL MULTICAD GEOMETRIC MODEL	98
4.2.1	<i>Scene modifications</i>	100
4.2.1.1	Object rename	100
4.2.1.2	Move	100
4.2.1.3	Scale-Resize	105
4.2.1.4	Insert	110
4.2.1.5	Delete	112
4.2.1.6	Change extra geometric characteristics	113
4.2.1.7	Change the rule set	113
4.2.2	<i>Model storage</i>	116
4.2.2.1	Save the declarative description	116
4.2.2.2	Save the geometric solution	117

4.2.3 <i>Reduction of the solution space</i>	117
4.2.3.1 Automated way	118
4.2.3.2 Manual way	120
4.3 CASE II – EXTERNAL GEOMETRIC MODEL	122
4.3.1 <i>Scene modifications</i>	123
4.3.1.1 Import geometric model	123
4.3.1.2 Object rename and type selection	124
4.3.1.3 Insert	125
4.3.1.4 Change the geometric characteristics	126
4.3.1.5 Delete	126
4.3.1.6 Change the rule set	127
4.3.1.7 Move	129
4.3.1.8 Scale-Resize	131
4.3.2 <i>Model storage</i>	134
4.3.2.1 Save the declarative description	134
4.3.2.2 Save the geometric solution	135
4.3.3 <i>Reduction of the solution space</i>	136
4.3.3.1 Automated way	136
4.3.3.2 Manual way	137
4.4 DISCUSSION	140
CHAPITRE 5 CONCLUSIONS ET PERSPECTIVES	143
5.1 REMARQUES DE CONCLUSION	146
5.2 PERSPECTIVES DE RECHERCHE	149
BIBLIOGRAPHY	151
APPENDIX A RELATIONS AND PROPERTIES	163
A.1 RELATIONS	163
A.2 PROPERTIES	169
APPENDIX B DXF FORMAT	171
APPENDIX C THE TRADITIONAL GEOMETRIC MODELLER	175

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Example of polyhedron generated by PolyFormes _____	27
Figure 2.2 Example of box arrangement and form growth by VoluFormes _____	28
Figure 2.3 Scenes created by Dem ² ons _____	29
Figure 2.4 Examples of generated buildings by BatiMan _____	29
Figure 2.5 The declarative conception cycle _____	31
Figure 2.6 The iterative design process _____	32
Figure 2.7 Evolution of the design process _____	33
Figure 2.8 A typical example of a decomposition tree _____	36
Figure 2.9 Solutions of MultiFormes _____	36
Figure 2.10 The working space of MultiCAD _____	39
Figure 2.11 A boundary model _____	42
Figure 2.12 The transformation of models _____	45
Figure 2.13 Models according to the level of abstraction _____	47
Figure 3.1 Type of acquired knowledge according to level of abstraction _____	58
Figure 3.2 The transformation of a geometric model into declarative _____	59
Figure 3.3 The new declarative conception cycle _____	60
Figure 3.4 Extended design methodology and modelling levels _____	61
Figure 3.5 General architecture of RS-MultiCAD system _____	62
Figure 3.6 Detailed system architecture of RS-MultiCAD system _____	64

Figure 3.7 The inner operation cycle of RS-MultiCAD _____	65
Figure 3.8 The ER diagram of data and knowledge storage _____	66
Figure 3.9 The basic structure _____	70
Figure 3.10 A typical stratified representation _____	71
Figure 3.11 The propagation policy _____	74
Figure 3.12 The generalization factor _____	75
Figure 3.13 The roof morphology _____	77
Figure 3.14 Control points of B-Spline curves _____	78
Figure 3.15 A typical linked list of the declarative layer _____	79
Figure 3.16 A tree of two decomposition levels _____	80
Figure 3.17 The decomposition tree _____	81
Figure 3.18 The calculation of spatial relations _____	84
Figure 3.19 The IDEF3 diagram of the propagation policy _____	86
Figure 4.1 The working space of RS-MultiCAD _____	96
Figure 4.2 The stratified representation of Case I _____	99
Figure 4.3 Move “long_building” to new position _____	100
Figure 4.4 Move “kitchen_8” to new position _____	100
Figure 4.5 Move “flat_7” to new position _____	102
Figure 4.6 Violation of “kitchen_8” move _____	103
Figure 4.7 Move “kitchen_8” to new position ignoring the rule set _____	103
Figure 4.8 Position not available _____	104
Figure 4.9 Move “long_building” _____	105
Figure 4.10 Resize “bathroom_9” _____	106

Figure 4.11 Resize “flat_7” to a new length _____	106
Figure 4.12 Violation of resize “flat_7” _____	107
Figure 4.13 Resize “storage_12” to a new height _____	107
Figure 4.14 Position not available _____	108
Figure 4.15 Scale “aux_building” _____	109
Figure 4.16 Position not available _____	109
Figure 4.17 Object insertion _____	110
Figure 4.18 Further objects insertion _____	111
Figure 4.19 Insert an abstract object _____	111
Figure 4.20 The result of the insertion _____	112
Figure 4.21 Delete an object _____	112
Figure 4.22 Change extra geometric characteristics _____	113
Figure 4.23 Rule set enhancement _____	115
Figure 4.24 Save the declarative description _____	116
Figure 4.25 Save the geometric solution _____	117
Figure 4.26 Reduce the solution space _____	118
Figure 4.27 Experimental results of automated reduction of the solution space _____	119
Figure 4.28 Geometric solutions generated by the automated way _____	120
Figure 4.29 Experimental results of manual reduction of the solution space _____	121
Figure 4.30 Geometric solutions generated by the manual way _____	122
Figure 4.31 An external geometric model _____	123
Figure 4.32 Import of an external geometric model _____	123
Figure 4.33 Type declaration and object rename _____	124

Figure 4.34 Insert an abstract object of type “house” _____	125
Figure 4.35 Insert an object of type “roof” _____	125
Figure 4.36 Change extra geometric characteristics _____	126
Figure 4.37 The deletion of the object “roof_11” _____	127
Figure 4.38 Spatial relations _____	128
Figure 4.39 Move object “kitchen” _____	129
Figure 4.40 Move the object “office” ignoring the rule set _____	130
Figure 4.41 Position not available _____	130
Figure 4.42 Resize “kitchen” to a new length _____	131
Figure 4.43 Resize “kitchen” to a new width _____	132
Figure 4.44 Position not available _____	132
Figure 4.45 Resize “vcorridor” to a new length _____	133
Figure 4.46 Violation of scaling the “house_10” _____	134
Figure 4.47 Save the declarative description _____	134
Figure 4.48 Save the geometric solution _____	135
Figure 4.49 Geometric solutions generated by the automated way _____	137
Figure 4.50 Experimental results of automated reduction of the solution space _____	137
Figure 4.51 Geometric solutions generated by the manual way _____	139
Figure 4.52 Experimental results of manual reduction of the solution space _____	139
Figure B.1 The DXF file of a 3D box _____	173
Figure C.1 The object model of VectorDraw _____	177

List of Tables

Table 3.1 The spatial relations _____	67
Table 3.2 The declarative properties _____	68
Table 3.3 The reflective relations _____	69
Table 3.4 The pure geometric properties _____	69
Table 4.1 Spatial Relations – Case I _____	98
Table 4.2 Reflective Relations – Case I _____	99
Table 4.3 Properties – Case I _____	100
Table 4.4 Additional Reflective Relations – Case I _____	114
Table 4.5 Additional Spatial Relations – Case I _____	114
Table 4.6 Additional Properties – Case I _____	115
Table 4.7 Automated reduction of the solution space – Case I _____	119
Table 4.8 Manual reduction of the solution space – Case I _____	121
Table 4.9 Properties – Case II _____	127
Table 4.10 Automated reduction of the solution space – Case II _____	136
Table 4.11 Manual reduction of the solution space – Case II _____	138
Table B.1 Group code value types _____	172
Table B.2 Group codes _____	172

List of Algorithms

Algorithm 3.1 Convert a linked list into a decomposition tree _____	82
Algorithm 3.2 Extract relations and properties _____	83
Algorithm 3.3 Compute the spatial relations _____	84
Algorithm 3.4 Move operation _____	87
Algorithm 3.5 Scale and resize operation _____	89
Algorithm 3.6 Insert operation _____	90
Algorithm 3.7 Set the generalization factor _____	92

Chapitre 1

Introduction

Lors des dernières décennies, la modélisation géométrique est devenue un outil précieux pour diverses applications dans de nombreux domaines tels que la conception industrielle et architecturale, la fabrication ainsi que l'ingénierie électrique et mécanique. La conception et la fabrication d'objets, aussi diverses que des bâtiments, des voitures, des bateaux etc., exploitent les avantages de la technologie naissante. En conséquence, les objets physiques ont été largement remplacés par des modèles géométriques puisque les systèmes assistés par ordinateurs imposent cette tendance et facilitent l'applicabilité dans cette direction. Ceci offre des produits meilleur marché et de meilleure qualité car ils sont plus simples à analyser et plus faciles à changer que les précédents.

Le processus de conception est fréquemment considéré en termes de plusieurs phases séquentielles [Pahl 96]: conception conceptuelle, conception préliminaire ou d'ensemble et conception détaillée. Pendant la conception conceptuelle, la fonctionnalité désirée d'un produit est déterminée, les solutions de conception potentielles et leurs performances correspondantes sont développées. En outre, les dépenses prévues sont estimées, les restrictions aux solutions potentielles sont imposées et une spécification générale du produit, consistant en une description des concepts de conception avec des contraintes de fonction et de comportement, est définie. Le fondement essentiel de la conception conceptuelle est de réaliser les objectifs, la fonctionnalité et les propriétés satisfaisant les objectifs d'un nouveau modèle. Dans la conception d'ensemble, le foyer passe de la synthèse du modèle conceptuel à l'exploration des solutions de conception potentielles. Un ensemble de configurations réalisables du modèle est défini suite à l'examen des diverses combinaisons des composants de modèles, leurs contraintes et interactions, ainsi que les ressources et les technologies disponibles pour garantir que tous les composants peuvent être principalement manufacturés. L'objectif de la conception détaillée est de développer l'efficacité la plus élevée possible de tous les composants modèles, afin de produire des schémas nécessaires, des détails techniques, des caractéristiques et des tolérances qui permettront au modèle d'être fabriqué.

Le processus de conception architectural [Simon 96] se concentre sur la définition détaillée d'un modèle spatial de manière à permettre sa réalisation matérielle. Pour tout produit ou système architectural, le processus de conception débute par la conception conceptuelle dont le but est de produire un modèle ou la représentation d'une entité qui sera plus tard construite. Le processus traite de la combinaison de l'intuition et du jugement basés sur l'expérience acquise par la construction de modèles semblables. De plus, le processus traite d'un ensemble de principes dans le cadre duquel le modèle évolue, d'un ensemble de critères qui permet à la qualité d'être jugée et d'un processus d'itération qui mène à une représentation de conception finale.

1.1 Les domaines de la recherche

La modélisation déclarative [Lucas et al., 90] est une méthode de modélisation alternative qui adapte le processus de conception, surmonte les inconvénients de la modélisation géométrique et permet au concepteur de décrire la scène désirée en définissant ses propriétés, qui peuvent être précises ou imprécises, et ce sans indiquer la façon d'obtenir une scène avec ces propriétés. La modélisation déclarative libère le concepteur de l'obligation de définir les propriétés géométriques des entités et facilite la description de scène en requérant uniquement quelques propriétés déjà connues. La modélisation déclarative traite de la description vague des objets et offre au concepteur un environnement pratique pour l'expression précise de l'idée de conception conçue [Plemenos et al., 02]. Une approche spéciale de la modélisation déclarative est la modélisation déclarative par décomposition hiérarchique [Plemenos 91], [Plemenos 95]. Cette approche fournit au concepteur la capacité de décrire la scène désirée en décomposant la scène de manière descendante (de haut en bas) à des niveaux de détails différents et facilite la description de scènes complexes. Au contraire, les systèmes de conception conventionnels assistés par ordinateur encouragent le concepteur à employer une approche de conception ascendante (de bas en haut).

La modélisation déclarative de scènes est basée sur le cycle de conception déclaratif, qui consiste en trois phases séquentielles. La première est la description de scène déclarative où le concepteur décrit comment elle/il perçoit la scène désirée en définissant des propriétés de la scène ou sans les définir. La seconde est la phase de génération où le mécanisme générateur de solutions produit un ensemble de solutions géométriques alternatives qui

vérifient les propriétés définies [Lucas et al., 90], [Lucas et al., 95]. Finalement, la troisième est la phase de compréhension de solution où les solutions géométriques sont visualisées par un modéleur géométrique [Lucas et al., 95], [Plemenos 95].

La modélisation déclarative permet le processus de conception itératif par l'exécution du cycle de conception déclaratif et ensuite, facilite le concepteur dans sa réévaluation de la description initiale de scène [Desmontils 95]. Le but fondamental des cycles d'exécution successifs est que le système doit converger vers un ensemble de solutions géométriques alternatives qui sont plus fidèles aux exigences du concepteur. Le processus itératif se termine lorsque le concepteur estime qu'elle/il a atteint le but escompté.

L'architecture MultiCAD [Miaoulis et al., 96], [Miaoulis et al., 98] est une architecture des systèmes d'information multimédia et intelligents pour la Conception Assistée par Ordinateur (CAO) libérées de l'inflexibilité géométrique qui met en application la modélisation déclarative en acceptant une description de scène et en produisant un ensemble de solutions géométriques alternatives qui satisfont la description de scène elle-même. Parmi d'autres bases de données, MultiCAD incorpore une base de données de connaissance qui contient la connaissance spécifique du domaine, en d'autres termes toutes les informations nécessaires sur le type d'objets, le type de relations et le type de propriétés d'un domaine spécifique. Le concepteur exploite la base de connaissance pendant la phase de description de scène afin de définir les objets, les relations et les propriétés appropriés selon la connaissance de domaine spécifique.

La rétro-conception transforme, dans le concept de modélisation, un modèle de niveau d'abstraction spécifique en modèle d'un niveau d'abstraction plus élevé; ce qui constitue une étape largement reconnue comme étape cruciale dans le cycle de conception du produit. La rétro-conception s'oppose à l'ingénierie directe qui est un processus produisant les pièces physiques à partir du modèle géométrique. Beaucoup de techniques ont été développées et décrites dans une vaste littérature sur la rétro-conception. La méthodologie de la rétro-conception a été combinée avec de nombreuses méthodes de modélisation telles la modélisation géométrique et la modélisation par les caractéristiques. La reconstruction en trois dimensions (3D) est une des branches principales de la rétro-conception où un objet physique est transformé en modèle géométrique de diverses représentations [Varady 97].

La rétro-conception incorpore un processus de bas niveau pour la reconstruction du modèle géométrique en 3D et un processus de haut niveau basé sur la connaissance pour la compréhension sémantique de la scène. L'approche basée sur la connaissance dépasse les méthodes d'extraction par des caractéristiques puisqu'elle est employée pour extraire des rapports et des propriétés à partir d'un modèle géométrique donné et pour saisir l'information géométrique et non-géométrique dans le même schéma de représentation intelligente.

Le processus de conception déclarative produit un ensemble de modèles géométriques alternatifs qui sont basés sur un modèle déclaratif et abstrait. Dans la méthode de modélisation déclarative, la rétro-conception pourrait jouer un rôle significatif et sera adaptée afin de transformer un modèle géométrique en modèle plus abstrait, le modèle déclaratif.

La motivation de cette recherche doit combiner la méthode de modélisation déclarative, telle qu'elle est appliquée dans l'architecture MultiCAD, avec la méthodologie de rétro-conception afin de fournir une compréhension sémantique des modèles géométriques, qui sont produits à partir de l'architecture du système MultiCAD. Le processus de rétro-conception de haut niveau est une approche sémantique qui saisit l'information géométrique et non-géométrique, toutes deux extraites de la représentation géométrique en appliquant la connaissance de domaine spécifique, dans la même représentation intelligente. La base de connaissance du système MultiCAD incorpore la connaissance spécifique de domaine relative au type d'objets, de rapports et de propriétés. La connaissance fait référence à la conception architecturale des bâtiments.

1.2 Les objectifs de la recherche

Le but principal de la thèse est de transformer un modèle géométrique en modèle déclaratif dans le cadre de la modélisation déclarative pendant la première partie du processus de conception. Afin d'atteindre ce but, une approche de rétro-conception basée sur la connaissance a été développée dans le but de réaliser le couplage d'un modèleur géométrique classique à un modèleur déclaratif. L'approche est placée dans le cadre de la modélisation déclarative et de la rétro-conception.

L'approche de rétro-conception basée sur la connaissance implique le développement d'un système intelligent de prototype, qui fonctionne dans l'architecture MultiCAD, pour la conception architecturale des bâtiments.

MultiCAD reçoit une description déclarative des conditions de bâtiment et produit un ensemble de modèles géométriques alternatifs. Le concepteur choisit une représentation géométrique désirée. Le système intelligent de prototype comprend sémantiquement la représentation géométrique sélectionnée et permet au concepteur d'effectuer des modifications géométriques et topologiques sur la scène spécifique. Le système vérifie si les modifications sont conformes ou non aux conditions initiales du bâtiment. Le système aboutit sur un modèle déclaratif, qui incarne les modifications du concepteur. Cette nouvelle description déclarative est fournie à la phase déclarative de description MultiCAD et, une nouvelle itération débute. Une démonstration d'une série de résultats expérimentaux fournit la certitude qu'un tel système est réalisable et efficace.

Afin d'accomplir le but principal les objectifs suivants doivent être pris en considération:

- Surmonter les problèmes de l'intégration du modéleur géométrique et déclaratif dans le cycle conceptuel déclaratif. Une description de scène déclarative produit un ensemble de modèles géométriques alternatifs qui répondent aux exigences du concepteur. D'autre part, un modèle géométrique peut correspondre à plus d'une description de scène déclarative. Ceci se produit parce que le modèle géométrique spécifique appartient à l'intersection de plusieurs ensembles de modèles géométriques (espaces de solutions) qui ont été produits à partir de modèles déclaratifs différents. Par conséquent, les différentes descriptions de scène déclaratives peuvent mener à la même représentation géométrique et aussi, une représentation géométrique spécifique pourrait mener à plusieurs descriptions de scène déclaratives.
- Surmonter les problèmes de saisie d'information géométrique et non-géométrique. Les représentations classiques sont incapables de saisir et de manipuler l'information géométrique et non-géométrique sous la même forme, leurs natures étant différentes. L'intelligence artificielle et les approches orientées-objet fournissent une représentation

spécialisée afin de saisir et gérer correctement l'information géométrique et non-géométrique sous la même représentation.

- Surmonter les problèmes relatifs aux modifications effectuées par le concepteur sur la scène. Dès que le concepteur a choisi un modèle géométrique désiré, elle/il a la capacité d'effectuer les modifications qui changent la géométrie des objets qui constituent la scène et/ou qui affectent la topologie de la scène. Toutes les modifications doivent être vérifiées en fonction des exigences initiales du concepteur et doivent être également prises en considération pour le modèle déclaratif résultant.
- Surmonter les problèmes d'importation des modèles géométriques construits par un autre modéleur géométrique classique. MultiCAD produit les modèles géométriques qui bien qu'ils contiennent l'information géométrique, ils contiennent également le type d'objets qui constituent la scène. L'approche basée sur la connaissance de rétro-conception supporte également l'importation des modèles géométriques construits par un autre modéleur géométrique classique en fournissant les équipements nécessaires pour recueillir toute l'information appropriée au concepteur. De cette façon, le concepteur a la capacité de continuer les manipulations, de modifier la scène et d'inclure la scène dans le cycle conceptuel déclaratif.

1.3 L'organisation de la thèse

Le chapitre 2 illustre les domaines de recherches principaux de cette thèse: le cadre de modélisation déclarative, le cycle de conception déclaratif ainsi que le processus itératif de conception de la modélisation déclarative sont présentés. Une brève vue d'ensemble des représentations géométriques de base est présentée avec les avantages et les inconvénients de la modélisation géométrique. En outre, on présente la méthode de rétro-conception qui permet la transformation d'un modèle en un modèle de niveau d'abstraction plus élevé. Le chapitre propose une brève révision de la reconstruction 3D qui présente le processus de bas niveau du rétro-conception en modélisation. En outre, la rétro-conception dans la modélisation par les caractéristiques est esquissée afin d'accentuer le champ d'identification du dispositif. La dernière sous-section présente que la rétro-conception dans l'approche de la

modélisation déclarative qui est employée pour transformer un modèle géométrique choisi en un modèle de niveau d'abstraction plus élevé, le modèle déclaratif.

Le chapitre 3 illustre la proposition et la réalisation de la thèse. L'intégration des deux modèles, déclaratif et géométrique, a lieu par l'introduction d'une nouvelle phase, la phase de reconstruction dans le cycle de conception déclaratif. L'architecture du système proposé et la représentation dynamique de la mémoire sont présentées. Par ailleurs, une série de modifications de scène est définie et une politique de propagation, suivie par le système proposé afin d'absorber ou de ne pas absorber des modifications de scène, est esquissée. La politique de propagation est utilisée, après une modification de scène, afin que le système mette correctement à jour la représentation intelligente. La sous-section suivante décrit la construction de la description déclarative résultante qui sera transmise à la phase de description déclarative dans l'itération MultiCAD suivante. De plus, la sous-section suivante est consacrée à la mise en oeuvre et présente les algorithmes principaux que le prototype proposé incorpore. De tels algorithmes concernent la construction de la représentation de la mémoire dynamique, la manipulation des modifications de scène ainsi que la construction de la description déclarative résultante. En conclusion, la dernière sous-section illustre les conditions du réalisateur pour le choix du modelleur géométrique classique d'une part et, d'autre part, présente les caractéristiques principales du modelleur géométrique classique choisi.

Le chapitre 4 présente les résultats expérimentaux qui sortent de la fonctionnalité soulignée du système proposé. La première sous-section présente un bref mode d'emploi de l'environnement de travail proposé et dans la deuxième et la troisième sous section illustrent des cas différents.

Enfin, le chapitre 5 présente les remarques de conclusion et les nouvelles directions pour la future recherche.

Chapter 2

Related Research Areas

The objective of this chapter is to illustrate the main research areas of this thesis. Declarative modelling transforms an abstract model into a set of geometric representations so a brief overview of the basic geometric representations is presented along with the advantages and the disadvantages of geometric modelling.

Besides, the state of the art of declarative modelling is presented, describing the general and dedicated declarative modellers, the declarative conception cycle, and the iterative design process of declarative modelling.

Afterwards, the levels of abstraction and the levels of detail of declarative modelling are discussed. A special attention is given on the MultiFormes system and a detail presentation of the MultiCAD system is illustrated since it will be the system framework under which the proposed system of this thesis will develop.

Finally, the reverse engineering paradigm is presented which permits the transformation of one model into another one. In the framework of geometric modelling, reverse engineering is used in order to construct a 3D model from a physical model. Even if it is out of scope of this thesis, a brief presentation is given. Furthermore, the reverse engineering in feature-based modelling is sketched in order to highlight the field of feature recognition. Finally, in the declarative modelling approach, reverse engineering is used to transform geometric model, which corresponds to a geometric solution, into a more abstract model, the declarative model.

2.1 Geometric modelling

Geometric modellers are powerful design tools with which complex shapes can be modelled, edited, manipulated and graphically verified. There are three types of geometric representations, i.e. wire-frame, surface and solid models [Mortenson 85]. Wire-frame models only contain vertex and edge information about objects and are therefore unsuited to

reasoning about the transformation of solid objects. However, lack of explicit surface information can lead to models which are ambiguous, incomplete or even impossible to manufacture as they can correspond to no physical 3D object [Goldman 87]. These drawbacks led to the search of more sophisticated schemes and gave way to surface and solid modellers. Similarly, surface models suffer from only containing face information while solid models are capable of a complete and unambiguous geometric description of objects.

Surfaces are used explicitly to describe an object in surface modellers. More complex shapes can be modelled with surface modelling than with wire-frames. By definition, a solid is a 3D object with a well defined inside and outside separated by a two-dimensional (2D) boundary. Many techniques have been developed for generating and storing geometric models which are represented as solids, such as Constructive Solid Geometry (CSG), Boundary representation (B-rep), octrees and others [Requicha 80]. CSG models use geometric primitives which are attractive for the creation of feature primitives, but do not contain sufficient structured or detailed information about the faces, edges and vertices of components. This kind of information, which is essential for reasoning about the geometry and for tolerance definition, is explicitly represented in B-rep models.

From the point of view of the techniques used for geometric modelling purposes, there are two basic approaches: transfinite interpolation and discrete approximation and interpolation. In transfinite interpolation, a surface is constructed such that it goes through a given collection of curves. Cross-sectional design is an example of a method that falls into this category [Woodward 87]. In discrete approximation-interpolation, a surface that approximates/interpolates a given set of data points is constructed.

Based on the manner in which a change in the data affects the curve or surface to be constructed, we can categorise methods into global and local. In global methods, a change in the data affects the whole surface while in local methods such a change affects the surface locally. In the first category there are methods like the Gordon surface [Gordon 69] and polynomial Bézier surfaces. However, if there are a lot of data the degree of the polynomial surface required to fit the data is high, which makes the resulting surface unreasonably complicated for further manipulations. Therefore, designers are more interested in local methods in which a change in the data affects the curve or surface locally. Local methods

invoke piecewise triangular polynomials or bipoynomials to define the desired surface. Such techniques include piecewise Bézier, B-Splines, Rational B-Splines and NURBS curves and surfaces.

Usually, there is an initial polygonal or polyhedral approximation of the desired object given in terms of a triangulation [Schumaker 93] or a rectangular grid of control points. The initial polygon or polyhedron is then smoothed using triangular or rectangular piecewise smooth patches. For piecewise Bézier, one has to enforce smoothness conditions between adjacent patches [Gregory 89], [De Rose 90], but with the B-Spline or NURBS scheme, this comes without any special tricks.

A drawback of rectangular patches is their limited ability to model complex topologies. Very often there are n-sided holes within a rectangular patch complex. Techniques for filling such holes with smooth triangular or rectangular patches have been reported earlier [Farin 82]. However, such problems are avoided using triangular patches, as more complex topologies can be modelled with triangles rather than with rectangles. However, triangular or rectangular patches are not the only ones available for modelling purposes. There have also been n-sided patches and smoothing techniques based on them reported in the literature [Charrot et al, 84], [Várady 91].

The current CAD applications are based on parametric tools and need all relevant information to create the desired object which means that do not offer any assistance at the conception itself, since the designer should know all the details of the object to be created before calling upon the CAD system. A CAD system in order to overleap this disadvantage should deal with the lack of information on the non-geometrical aspects of the object, the lack of levels of abstraction, and the possibility to input imprecise description.

Geometric models are collections of components with well-defined geometry and often, interconnections between components [Foley et al., 99]. One of the problems is to give an accurate geometrical representation to an object. Primitives must be used for modelling an object. The primitives are often selected dependent on the specific object and the level of accuracy required.

Practically, traditional geometric modelling is generally applied to well defined, simple objects and objects without well defined geometry by their nature cannot be represented and even more, a complex object may require hard work to be represented. Furthermore, geometric modelling suffers from poverty on scene construction which obliges the designer to know with precision all objects that constitute the scene in advance.

A classic geometric model cannot hold information on the non-geometric aspects of the objects. This may include physical properties, such as colour, density, cost and other properties. A geometric model misses a level of abstraction, which means that the model represents a specific object and not all or few similar objects. The geometric model is defined in terms of a precise geometry.

The designer has to convert his/her mental idea into specifications in an imperative way in terms of co-ordinates and dimensions of the various objects. When the number of different objects is large that turns to be impossible task. The designer must be able to describe an image in a more abstract way by stating the relations and the properties of the objects without worrying about the geometry of the objects.

2.2 Declarative modelling

Declarative modelling is an approach [Lucas et al., 90] that can deal with the insufficiency of CAD applications. Declarative modelling allows the designer to use imprecise information in a scene description. The declarative modelling paradigm introduces property based modelling techniques by providing the possibility of scene description using properties, which can be either precise or imprecise [Plemenos 91], [Plemenos 95], [Lucas et al., 90] and differentiates from traditional geometric modelling since does not require precision modelling tools. Declarative modelling is a total approach of the designing process [Plemenos et al., 02]. Declarative modelling permits the designer to describe a desirable scene by only giving some expected properties of the scene and letting the declarative modeller find alternative solutions, if any, verifying these properties.

The designer can describe a scene intuitively in declarative modelling. An abstract description and a vague description of the properties of the desired scene are acceptable by the declarative modelling. When the designer describes a scene intuitively in terms of common expressions,

the described properties are in many cases imprecise. The imprecision of a described property is presented when many values can satisfy that property on one hand, while on the other hand is presented due to the fuzziness of a property [Plemenos et al., 02]. Both cases lead declarative modelling to be characterised as a time consuming modelling approach.

The designer has to supply a description of the desired scene from the designer along with the relations of the different parts of the scene. The designer does not concern about checking the properties of the desired scene this is done by the modeller. The solution adopted at the end of the process will thus check the whole of the criteria of description.

A declarative modeller can also handle other information than purely geometric. The designer can describe a desirable scene on high level of abstraction. For example, the weight of an object design can be a criterion taken into account for a relation between several objects in the design process.

Declarative modelling is adapted to the integral management of the design process. The same object can be perceived differently according to the domain, which means that the same object looks like differently and its usefulness varies in several domains. Besides, another designer could describe in another way the same object by using different properties. Declarative modelling can deal with the whole of the process of design since various properties are checked on the design process.

On the other hand, the interpretation of description is a significant problem of the declarative modelling since the handling of high-level concepts often leads to various interpretations.

The majority of declarative modellers use the exploration of a universe to seek the scenes that meet the properties of description. This search can lead the designer to solutions, which he did not consider. However, the presentation of all the possible solutions can be a deliberated choice of certain modellers, regardless the number of the solutions. Thus, the designer should manage different solutions that appear similar.

Declarative modelling has preoccupied the scientific community during the last fifteen years. Kochhar of MIT worked on declarative modelling in [Kochhar 90] and [Kochhar 94].

Kochhar accentuates the exploratory aspects of geometric modelling where the modelling is broken up into two sub-tasks, the design and the articulation. The design comprises the creative aspects of modelling and the articulation comprises the specification of the geometry and the physical properties.

Kochhar introduces the Cooperative Computer Aided Design in [Kochhar 90] and [Kochhar 94] in order to facilitate the integration of generative and traditional modelling systems by allowing the designer to guide the generative system through successive rounds of automated geometric modelling. The notion of generative modelling is very close to the notion of declarative modelling, as in both cases imprecise descriptions can generate many solutions. An experimental cooperative scene modeller was implemented for a generative system based on the formal language of schema grammars.

The Cooperative Computer Aided Design framework is based on the fact that a generative geometric modelling (GGM) system exists and generates a set of designs based on some designer-defined constraints or properties, the GGM system is supposed that does not produce perfect designs so it must be guided to search for better designs by the human designer and finally the GGM system produces a large set of designs, a specialised browsing system allows the designer to search the set of generated designs in a directed manner.

A typical modelling session using the CCAD system proceeds as follows:

- The designer uses the traditional geometric modelling (TGM) system to generate a nascent design to be used in the first iteration of automated modelling.
- The designer then uses a dialog with the GGM system to define the constraints to be used during the generation process.
- The GGM system then instantiates all valid geometric designs. These designs are presented as icon-like buttons in a large screen area and the designer can get a large image of a design by clicking on the corresponding button.
- The designer then selects a set of promising designs using the browsing system.

- The selected designs are then returned to GGM system and the last four steps are repeated until the desired design has been constructed.

Many declarative modellers have been germinated in France most of them are limited to very restricted domains:

- PolyFormes. In [Martin P. and D., 88], [Martin P. and D., 89] PolyFormes is a specialised declarative modeller which is based on regular and semi-regular polyhedra that can be very complex. The goal of PolyFormes is to generate all regular and semi-regular polyhedra according to user's requests which are expressed through dialog boxes. The use description is translated into an internal model which is expressed in terms of rules and facts. PolyFormes in order to generate solutions uses an inference engine which applies rules to the facts and creates new facts and explores the solution space. Figure 2.1 presents an example of polyhedron generated by PolyFormes.

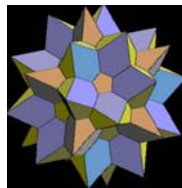


Figure 2.1 Example of polyhedron generated by PolyFormes

- PastoFormes. In [Colin 88], [Colin 90] PastoFormes is a declarative modeller based on elementary polyhedrons. Objects are modelled by joining elementary polyhedrons.
- UrbaFormes. In [Le Goff 90] is presented a declarative modeller for urban morphology. This modeller proposes to establish in a declaratory way a route and allows discovering urban aspects of a given city.
- MultiFormes. In [Plemenos 91] is presented a declarative modeller based on hierarchical decomposition (further details in 2.2.5).
- SpatioFormes. In [Poulet 94] a declarative modeller is presented which allows the description and the generation of three-dimensional scenes constructed by matrices of voxels.

- FiloFormes. In [Pajot-Duval 94] is presented a declarative modeller which receives a user description and produces all possible configurations of segments.
- VoluFormes. In [Chauvat 94], [Chauvat 95] is presented a declarative modeller for spatial control. The user defines boxes in the space whose purpose is to check the growth of forms. VoluFormes consists of two modules, Volubottes and Voluscenes. The Volubottes module permits the user to define the boxes where the spatial control takes place. The definition of the boxes is performed by using natural like language. The Voluscenes module allows using growth mechanisms applied to elementary germs and creating forms taking into consideration the spatial control boxes. The generation takes place in an incremental manner. Each box is placed in the space and, if the user does not like the proposed box and placement, another solution is generated. Once the current box is placed in the space, the same process applies to the next box. Figure 2.2 presents the form growth of VoluFormes.

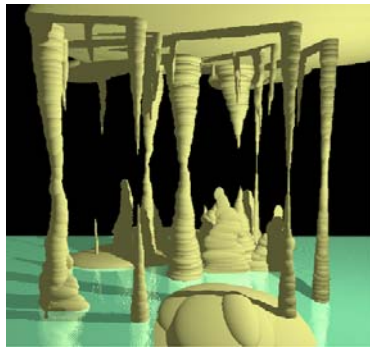


Figure 2.2 Example of form growth by VoluFormes

- MégaFormes. In [Poulet et al., 96] is presented a modeller for the modelling of megalithic monuments. The objective of this modeller is to be able to rebuild megalithic monuments starting from a declaratory model and then visit them in a virtual way.
- Dem²ons. In [Kwaiter et al., 97] a declarative modeller is presented for object placement in 3D scene surface and provides an object library and space constraints for defining the positions of the objects. Dem²ons generate one solution per description. The modeller uses a multi modal interface allowing descriptions by means of the voice, the keyboard (natural language), a data glove or 3D captors informing the system of the user's position. The

description is translated in an internal model made of linear constraints. The generation engine of Dem²ons uses a linear constraint solver, called Oranos, able to process dynamic constraints (new constraints can be added during generation) and hierarchical constraints. Hierarchical constraints are constraints with priorities assigned by the user. Whenever there is no solution for a given description, constraints with low priority are released in order to always get a solution. In [Sanchez et al., 03] another approach is presenting which applies a generic algorithm to the constraint solver. Complex scenes are produced from basic and complex sets of constraints combined with Boolean trees. [Le Roux et al., 04] presents a generic constraint solver based on classical constraint satisfaction techniques and a declarative modeller for virtual 3D-environnements, called DEM²ONS-NG. Figure 2.3 presents scenes created by Dem²ons.



Figure 2.3 Scenes created by Dem²ons

- BatiMan. In [Champciaux 98] a declarative modeller is illustrated which deals with the architectural construction of buildings, and introduces an incremental training for solution reduction since the generation of solutions is very time-consuming process and the visualisation of all solutions is unrealistic. Figure 2.4 presents a building created by BatiMan.

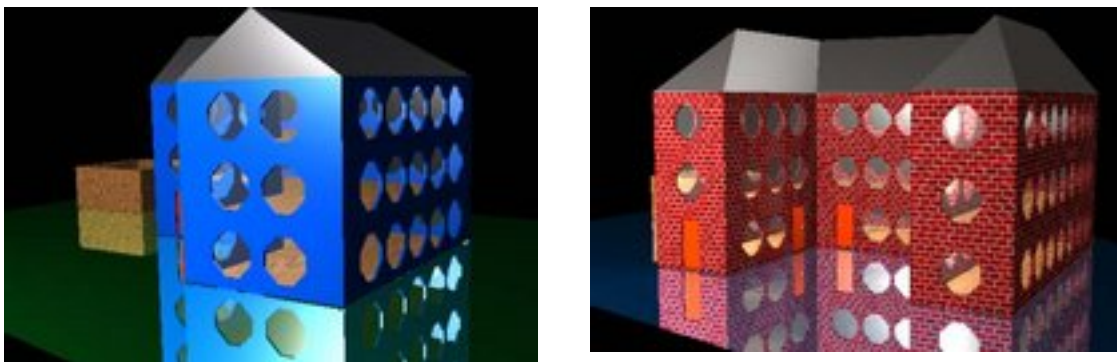


Figure 2.4 Examples of generated buildings by BatiMan

- In [La Greca et al., 04] and [La Greca et al., 06] a declarative approach of parametric surface modelling is presented which is based on B-Spline and NURBS representation. The designer gives to the system a description, set of geometric, topological or physical properties. The object shape is designed by manipulating several control points and the result is a set of parametric surfaces corresponding to the user requirements.

2.2.1 General and dedicated declarative modellers

There are two families of declarative modellers one can meet according to the treated field:

- The general purpose modellers cover a large set of possible applications, imply generality and consider as open since they are domain-independent. The solution generation engine can process several kinds of general properties trying to cover different domains and incorporating extendable capabilities. On the other hand, general purpose modellers suffer from their lack of efficiency, because of the generality of the solution generation mechanism [Plemenos et al., 02]. MultiFormes and Dem²ons are some of the general purpose declarative modellers.
- The dedicated modellers whose field of application is very precise. The main advantage of the dedicated modellers is a significant precise vocabulary since the domain is almost closed, and their efficiency because their solution generation engine can be well adapted to the properties of the specific domain. On the other hand, it is difficult for such a modeller to evolve in order to be able to process another specific modelling area. PolyFormes and VoluFormes are some of the dedicated declarative modellers.

2.2.2 The declarative conception cycle

Generally speaking, the operation of a declarative modeller is based on declarative conception cycle which is cut out in three phases, more or less sequential [Lucas et al., 95], [Desmontils 95], [Colin et al., 97]:

- The scene description phase. A declarative modeller starts with the description of the desired scene. The designer describes how he perceives the scene by specifying properties

of the scene or leaving them ambiguous. Declarative modellers use description languages close to the natural language while others use graphical user interfaces allowing designers to declare the structure of the desired scene. Finally, a transformation takes place translating the description of the scene into a model, called internal declarative model.

- The generation phase. The scene generator inputs the internal declarative model and produces a set of solutions that meet the description of the desired scene. The capacities of the generator characterize completely the declarative modeller since this phase is the heart of the modeller. The effectiveness of the modeller depends on the speed of treatment of input data and its extensibility and flexibility deals with the capacity to integrate new parameters of description whereas it is already in the course of generation.
- The scene understanding phase. The scene understanding phase completes the declarative conception cycle where the scenes solutions are visualised to the designer through a traditional geometric modeller. Certain modellers incorporate special mechanisms for scene understanding such as "good point of sight "static or dynamic, or information about what is presented. Figure 2.5 presents the declarative conception cycle.

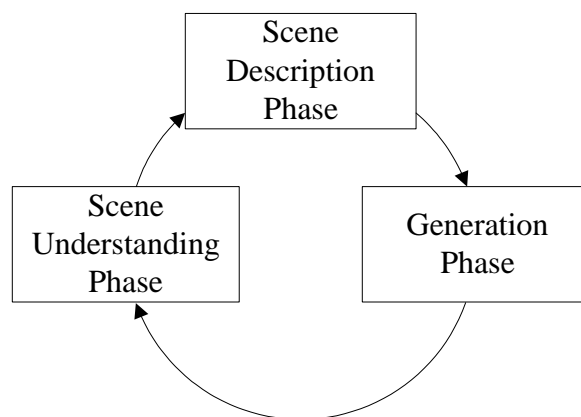


Figure 2.5 The declarative conception cycle

A declarative modeller permits the designer to describe the desirable scene with specifying the properties of the components that constitute the scene. The designer rather than describing the desirable scene, he describes the components of the scene. Therefore, a total property describes the whole of all the components of the scene whereas a local property describes a subset of these components. A declarative modeller must incorporate three types of tools:

- Description tools are tools that aid the designer to describe the components of the scene with the assistance of a generic or specific vocabulary which reflects the various properties that these components have. The modes of interaction are varied: natural language, graphical user interface et cetera.
- Generation tools are tools that accept the declarative description of a desirable scene, in terms of properties of the components of the scene, and produce a set of alternative geometric solutions that meet the designer requirements which have been already specified by the designer in the scene declarative description phase. The modes of generation are various such as constrain satisfaction, genetic algorithms etc.
- Understanding tools are tools that allow visualization, selection and comprehension of the geometric solutions. These tools may incorporate mechanisms for representing realistic images, exploring the solution space etc.

2.2.3 The iterative design process

The design process in declarative modelling is iterative. Each cycle consists of executing the phases of description, generation, understanding, and then the designer has to reconsider the initial description. After the execution of successive cycles the system must converge towards a set of alternative geometric solutions that are closer to the designer requirements. The process stops when the designer estimates that has achieved the goal.

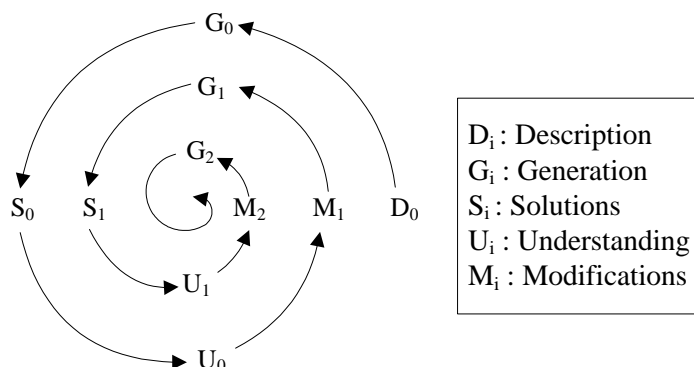


Figure 2.6 The iterative design process

The iterative process can be represented by a spiral where in each successive iteration, a set of geometric solutions are produced from a scene description which has been modified in order the solutions to converge to the most recent description. Figure 2.6 illustrates the iterative design process within the declarative modelling framework.

The concept of iterations has been discussed from many researchers. [Desmontils 95] speaks about the concept of outline, [Liège 96] presents the spiral diagram of problem solving, [Siret 97] organizes in cycles the sequence description, generation, forms, and [Colin et al., 98] proposes also various working methods within the framework of the iterative design process.

2.2.4 Levels of abstraction and levels of detail

The design process is considered as decomposable in several successive distinct stages pointing to the initial goals [Miaoulis 02]. The design process can be viewed as a succession of transformations between descriptions. These descriptions can be classified to a representation hierarchy of most abstract to most concrete on levels of abstraction. In the framework of the declarative modelling, the design process transforms a declarative description into a set of alternative geometric solutions. Thus, two distinct levels of abstraction are presented the declarative, which represents the most abstract, and the geometric, which represents the most concrete.

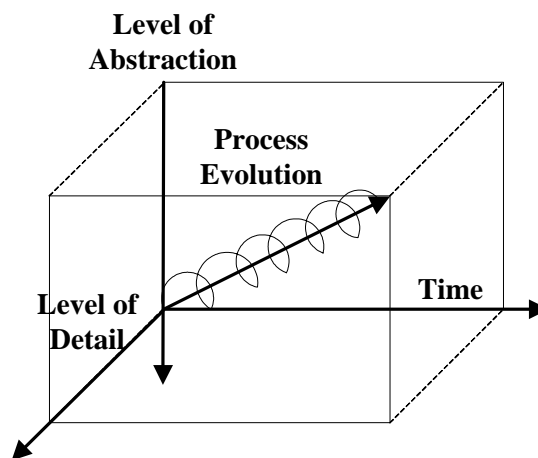


Figure 2.7 Evolution of the design process

Generally speaking, the design process follows a walk from the general to specific [Miaoulis 02]. In the majority of cases we start from an initial idea and arrive to details stage by stage. The levels of detail represent the hierarchical top-down or bottom-up approach of the design process. In the framework of the declarative modelling, the levels of detail are represented on the decomposition tree of the declarative description

The evolutionary character of the design process is traced by the axis of time, the levels of abstraction and the levels of detail [Miaoulis et al., 00]. The design process is defined as a succession of similar stages for reaching the final model and can be represented as a spiral in a three-dimensional space. An initial idea serves as a starting point. As time evolves the level of detail increases while the level of abstraction decreases until the achievement of the final model. Figure 2.7 illustrates the evolution of the design process.

2.2.5 Declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition

A special approach of the declarative modelling is declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition [Plemenos 91], which gives the user the ability to describe a scene by top-down decomposition at different levels of detail. The objective of this method is to remedy the disadvantages of the traditional geometric modelling by allowing the description of a scene by its properties, which can be imprecise and incomplete. More accurately, the declarative modelling makes possible to indicate the properties, which verify the desirable scene in several levels of detail allowing thus a top-down design. Thus, the structure of a scene can easily be represented by a hierarchical decomposition tree. Apart from the description of the scene, the decomposition tree is used in the generation phase as well.

Declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition is an approach that allows the designer to describe even more complex scenes [Plemenos 91], [Plemenos 93], [Plemenos et al., 97], [Bonnetfoi et al., 02]. The major advantages of the declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition are the following:

- The designer can describe the desirable scene in a progressive manner at various levels of detail in logical and spatial way. The level of detail of a sub-part of the desired scene can differentiate from the level of detail of another sub-part, enforcing the locality and allowing the designer to specify the levels of detail as he/she deems.

- The hierarchical decomposition authorises the factorisation of properties and specially the placement properties.
- The designer can describe locally the properties without worrying about the rest of the scene. Thus, the hierarchical decomposition permits the independence between nodes of the decomposition tree with the same ancestor.
- The designer can control the generation process since it can be made in various levels of detail. Thus, the designer can stop the generation process at a given detail level, even if the description includes additional levels of detail.
- The generation process insures the inheritance of properties by means that the bounding box of a scene includes all bounding boxes of its sub-scenes.

MultiFormes is a declarative modelling prototype system and implements the hierarchical decomposition which has been developed at the laboratory XLIM of the University of Limoges. MultiFormes models complex scenes by hierarchical decomposition [Plemenos 95], [Bonnetoi 99], [Ruchaud 01] where a scene is decomposed into sub-scenes which are recursively described by the designer up to a certain level of detail. MultiFormes [Plemenos 95] deals with complex scenes and the hierarchical decomposition is implemented by dividing these scenes into a number of sub-scenes. The hierarchical decomposition allows the designer to describe a complex scene by top-down decomposing into a number of sub-scenes and results to decrease the complexity of the whole scene. The decomposition of the scene can be recursive permitting the designer to describe the scene by using logical and spatial criteria. The designer builds a hierarchical decomposition tree which contains nodes. The hierarchical decomposition is implemented by declaring that a specific node is decomposed into a number of descendants. The description of the descendants is easier concerning the complexity of the ancestor.

Apart from the logical and spatial decomposition of the scene, the designer specifies the properties and relations that are necessary from his point of view. A property to a node operates as a constraint and obliges the object, to respect that specific property, since it will participate to the generation phase. Figure 2.8 illustrates a typical decomposition tree along with the relations and the properties. The example is adopted from [Plemenos 95].

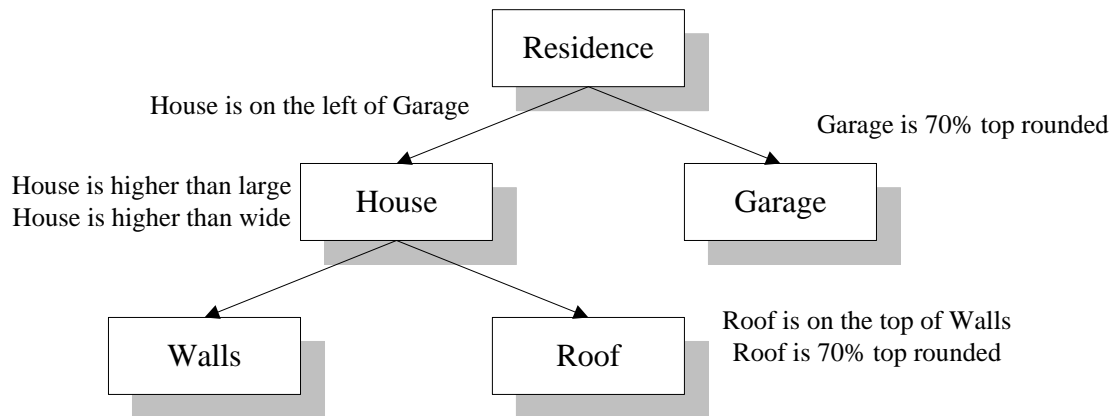


Figure 2.8 A typical example of a decomposition tree

The generation phase of MultiFormes produces objects which are described by their bounding boxes. Each of these bounding boxes is described by a starting position, in terms of X, Y and Z coordinates, and a displacement vector defining the width, the height and the depth of the associated bounding box. Each bounding box is described by at least six numeric variables. Besides, some other relevant information is associated like the colour or the texture of the object. MultiFormes associates the properties with the starting position and the size of the bounding box of the object. A workspace is defined, and all bounding boxes of objects take place in this workspace. MultiFormes uses a numeric constraint solver and several researchers have worked on the aforementioned solver [Tamine 95], [Plemenos et al., 97], [Bonnetoi 99]. Figure 2.9 illustrates different solutions of MultiFormes.

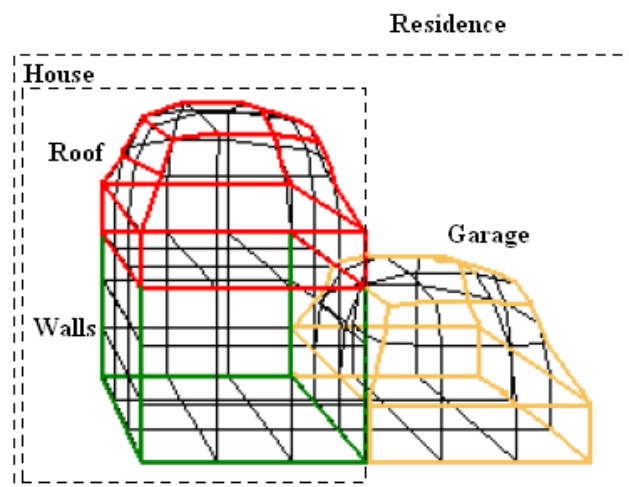


Figure 2.9 Solutions of MultiFormes

MultiFormes has been designed to produce all possible geometric solutions that satisfy the constraints which have been declared by the designer in terms of properties. Therefore, the predefined properties operate as constraints and reduce the range of the values that the starting position and the size of the bounding boxes can take. The set of different geometric solutions is produced from an exhaustive exploration of all permitted values that can be applied on the starting position and the size of each bounding box within a specific workspace. Besides, the number of the predefined properties along with the complexity of the described scene affect the generation time of the geometric solutions. Special suggestions for improvement of the description and generation phase of MultiFormes take place in [Bonnefoi 99] and [Ruchaud 01].

Fribault in [Fribault 98], [Fribault 04] proposes and implements an information system associated with a declarative modeller for the assistance of habitation edifices. The necessary properties are defined for describing a building along with the assembly rule utilised in the architectural design. According to the declarative modelling, the description phase evaluates the scene description for coherence and the generation phase incorporates a resolution engine, which has been implemented within the GNU-Prolog environment, and deals with the constraints resolution on finite domains.

2.2.6 MultiCAD system architecture

MultiCAD [Miaoulis et al., 96], [Miaoulis et al., 98] is a proposed multimedia CAD system, liberated of geometric inflexibility, which will be used for the creation of scenes. MultiCAD is a software architecture framework for the development of multimedia and intelligent information systems in order to support declarative design processes [Miaoulis 02]. The MultiCAD system is based on the declarative modelling of scenes by hierarchical decomposition. The objective of this method is to remedy the disadvantages of the traditional geometric modelling by allowing the description of a scene by its properties, which can be imprecise and incomplete [Lucas et al., 90], [Plemenos 91], [Plemenos 95]. More accurately, the declarative modelling makes possible to indicate the properties, which verify the desirable scene in several levels of detail allowing thus a top-down design.

The design environment of MultiCAD features a rich set of modules. These include alternative modules for solution generation using constraint satisfaction programming [Bonnefoi et al., 02], [Plemenos et al., 97] or genetic algorithms [Vassilas et al., 02], [Makris 05] as well as modules responsible for introducing architectural knowledge [Ravani et al., 03], representation of architectural styles [Makris et al., 03], collaborative design [Golfinopoulos et al., 04], and intelligent user profile [Plemenos et al., 02], [Bardis et al., 04], [Bardis et al., 05]. The main disadvantages of the constraint satisfaction programming search strategy is the exhaustive search which leads to unacceptably long times in relatively large problem spaces, the inability to interact with the designer and derive solutions that satisfy the designer aesthetics. [Makris 05] proposes a generation engine based on generic algorithms and handles with limitations the latter disadvantage while [Bonnefoi et al., 02] deals with the first disadvantage.

The directions of MultiCAD software architecture framework are defined through a research project supported by the Laboratory XLIM of the University of Limoges along with the Intelligent Information Systems Engineering Team of Informatics Department of TEI (Technological Education Institute) of Athens. MultiCAD is a multi-layered architecture that comprises the following main layers [Miaoulis 02]:

- The interface layer incorporates functions such as intelligent visualisation of scene models and documents, creation and editing of models and description, formulation of the request (traditional formulations of SQL, spatial SQL or free text search), navigation and browsing of databases, acquisition and editing the different types of knowledge and information, application and interaction control.
- The process layer comprises functions such as generation or understanding between the different levels of models, converting the different types of the same level's models.
- The information and knowledge management layer is used for structuring, management, searching and exploitation of the different databases.

MultiCAD follows the declarative conception cycle where in the description phase the designer describes the desired scene by defining the scene's decomposing objects, their properties and relations in many ways:

- Tree-formed representation. This form explicitly represents the hierarchical decomposition of the scene. Figure 2.10 presents the working space of MultiCAD.
- Text-formed representation. It is expressed in a formal Prolog-like language [Plemenos 95] representing the internal declarative representation of the scene.
- Representation in an object-relational database [Miaoulis 02]. The scene's description is stored as an assembly of objects having properties, and being related to each other through relations.

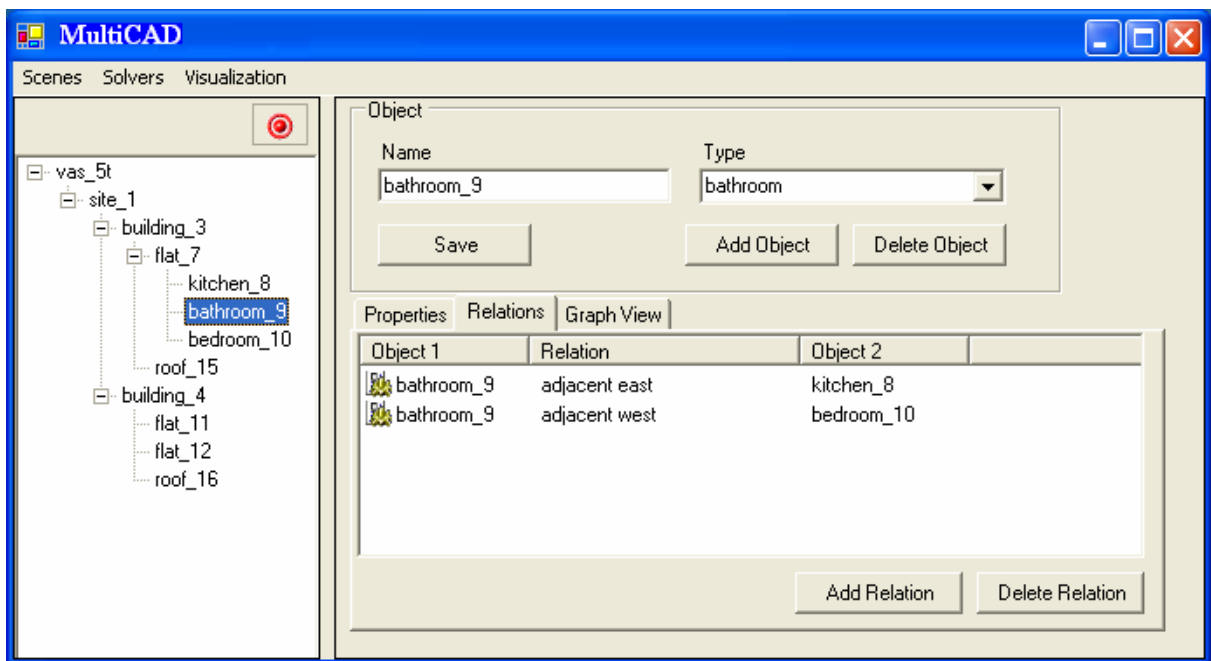


Figure 2.10 The working space of MultiCAD

MultiCAD incorporates an object-relational database [Miaoulis 02], which consists of five logical inter-connected databases:

- The scene database contains information describing the scene models (internal declarative representation models, relations between the composing objects et cetera).
- The multimedia database contains all types of documents related to the project (geometric models, geometric primitive shapes, multimedia information et cetera).

- The knowledge base contains all the necessary information about entities type, their properties along with their relations.
- The project database deals with data concerning planning, financial and other special aspects of each project.
- The concept database [Ravani et al., 04] includes concepts representations.

The Scene database is configured following the Scene Conceptual Modelling Framework (CMF) [Miaoulis et al., 00], where the description of a scene contains entities, such as:

- objects defined by their properties, simple or generic ones, a single object corresponds to the existence of a real 3D object with well-defined characteristics and properties, a generic object covers a group of simple objects with properties in common,
- three types of relations between objects: meronymic relations which are used to describe physically or conceptually part-of relations (“is-part-of”, “is-included-in”), spatial organization relations which are used to specify the relationships between objects (“near-by”, “on-left”, “higher-than”) and reflective relations which are used to describe comparisons of the same object (“higher-than-large”, “higher-than-deep”),
- and properties that characterise and describe the objects (“is_tall=’high’”, “colour=’green’” et cetera).

The generated scene solutions are visualised through their geometrical representation: Bitmaps [Miaoulis 02], VRML [Vassilas et al., 02], and AutoCAD designs [Makris et al., 03]. The designer can evaluate the solutions according to his/her criteria either by selecting the best ones or by setting a score to each of them [Vassilas et al., 02].

2.3 Feature-based modelling

Feature-based modelling is used for modelling products the last years. One of its main advantages over the geometric modelling is the ability to associate functional and engineering information to shape information in a product model. The basic entity of a feature model is

the feature, defined as a representation of shape aspects of a product that are mappable to a generic shape and are functionally significant for some product life-cycle phase. In general, feature model is the elementary part of the products. These parts define in turn assemblies which they define feature models. Typical examples of features are holes, slots, pockets, protrusions, et cetera for general mechanical components.

There are many types of features and can be categorized according their function, complexity, and level of detail of the geometric description. According to their function, features are categorized into form features, material features, and pattern features.

Besides, features are distinguish by their degree of complexity into elementary features, which are basic simple and cannot be decomposed into more simple features, and compound features [Bronsvoort 93], which are composed of several other features.

Furthermore, there are features which are described by parameters, they are not evaluated into a precise geometric description, their exact shape is not represented and it is merely implied. Explicit features have their shape explicitly described by a geometric model while their resulting geometry is evaluated [Bronsvoort 93].

Features use properties for their definition. Intrinsic properties refer to the fact that they affect only the feature itself. Extrinsic properties affect and depend on the properties of other features. Other characteristic properties of the features are derived and non-derived properties. Derived properties are such their values do not determined by the user, but derived from other features.

It has been often remarked that feature modelling is nothing more than advanced geometric modelling, only offering parametric and constraint-based modelling facilities, in addition to the normal geometric modelling facilities.

Almost all current feature modelling systems are parametric, history-based systems, using a boundary representation as main geometric representation. History-based modelling systems are procedural systems that keep track of information about each modelling operation performed such as the type of feature created, its parameter values and its positioning. The sequence of modelling operations creates the model history, completely determines the

resulting boundary representation. The creation of a feature produces the shape imprint characteristic of its feature type. Feature instances can be modified by specifying new values for their parameters, or be deleted from the model. This is achieved by modifying or deleting the respective feature creation operation in the model history. The new feature model is evaluated by sequentially re-executing the operations in the model history. In figure 2.11 a boundary model is illustrated which consists of a base block, a blind hole and a protrusion. The example is adopted from [Bidarra 99].

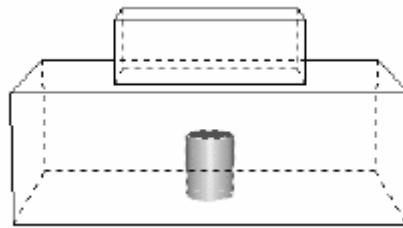


Figure 2.11 A boundary model

According to [Bidarra 99] history-based systems suffer from the strong dependency on the chronological order of the feature creation, the limitations of constraint solving and the historical evolution of the entities in the evaluated boundary model.

The current feature-based modelling approach has the following drawbacks [Bronsvoort 01]:

- The meaning, or semantics, of features is poorly defined, limiting the capability of capturing design intent in the model. Moreover, semantics are often not adequately maintained during modelling. An answer to this drawback is given by [Bidarra 99] where the definition of the semantic feature modelling is taken place. In semantic feature modelling the feature specification is done in feature classes which are structured descriptions of all properties of a given feature type. A semantic feature model is developed to represent a product and consists of a feature dependency graph, which is a set of interrelated features and constraints, and the geometric representation. The validity maintenance monitors each modelling operation in order to assess the conformity of all features in the semantic feature model.

- The product development phases lack product models with multiple feature views. In general, current only form feature views are supported by multiple-view feature modelling systems.
- The feature modelling systems does not support yet a collaboration environment of several users in product development.

On one hand, there are similarities between feature-based and declarative modelling. The main similarity is based on the fact that both modelling approaches permit the designer to describe the desired scene in an abstract way. Besides, both offer constraint-based techniques through parameters in feature-based modelling and through property specification in declarative modelling. Another similarity is the object-oriented nature, where the designer approaches the design itself through objects instead of handling geometric primitives.

One the other hand, feature-based has differences with declarative modelling. A boundary model needs all relevant geometric information in order to be constructed while declarative modelling can handle the imprecise information. In addition, declarative modelling produces a set of alternative solutions while feature-based modelling produces just one geometric solution. Feature-based systems are usually history-based since they keep track of the designer operations. Changing the order of the designer operations may lead to different boundary model. Declarative modelling incorporates a solution generator, which produces solutions according to the property specifications despite of the order.

2.4 Reverse engineering

Engineering is the process involved in designing, manufacturing, constructing, and maintaining of products, systems, and structures. At a higher level, there are two types of engineering: forward engineering and reverse engineering.

Generally speaking reverse engineering is the process of taking something (a device, an electrical component, a software program, et cetera) apart and analyzing its workings in detail, usually with the intention to construct a new device or program that does the same thing without actually copying anything from the original. In other words, reverse engineering is the process of analyzing a subject system to (i) identify the system's components and their

interrelationships and (ii) create representations of the system in another form or a higher level of abstraction [Chikofsky et al., 90].

Forward engineering is the traditional process of moving from high-level abstractions and logical, implementation-independent designs to the physical implementation of a system [Chikofsky et al., 90]. Reengineering (also known as renovation and reclamation) is the examination and alteration of a subject system to reconstitute it in a new form and the subsequent implementation of the new form. Reengineering is the modification of a system that takes place after it has been reverse engineered, generally to add new functionality.

Reverse engineering is very common in such diverse fields as software engineering, entertainment, automotive, consumer products, microchips, chemicals, electronics, and mechanical designs. In some situations, designers give a shape to their ideas by using clay, plaster, wood, or foam rubber, but a CAD model is needed to enable the manufacturing of the part. As products become more organic in shape, designing in CAD may be challenging or impossible. There is no guarantee that the CAD model will be acceptably close to the sculpted model. Reverse engineering provides a solution to this problem because the physical model is the source of information for the CAD model.

Another reason for reverse engineering is to compress product development time. Rapid product development refers to recently developed technologies and techniques that assist manufacturers and designers in meeting the demands of reduced product development time. By using reverse engineering, a three-dimensional product or model can be quickly captured in digital form, re-modelled, and exported for rapid prototyping/tooling or rapid manufacturing.

2.4.1 Reverse engineering in scene modelling

As mentioned before, the design process can be viewed as a successive transformation between models. These models can be classified into a representation hierarchy of most general to most specific according to the levels of abstraction. Usually, we start the design process indicating a conceptual model which is transformed into specific model. Within the framework of MultiCAD, several scene model types exist according to levels of abstraction [Miaoulis 02]:

- **Abstract/conceptual models:** The abstract models are scene models, necessarily generic and can give a series models of lower level of abstraction. The type of these models can be internal declarative representations or documents in natural language or models based on semantic networks.
- **Intermediate models:** They are primarily geometric models. These models are concrete from the point of view of the geometric properties of objects, of their composition and of their of space arrangement. Geometrical models can produce several different models of the lower level of abstraction if for example differ the properties of appearance such as the color or texture of the objects.
- **Physical models:** The models of the physical level contain information appropriate to the direct visualization of the 3D objects that constitute the scene. They contain all necessary object properties in order to represent real situations.

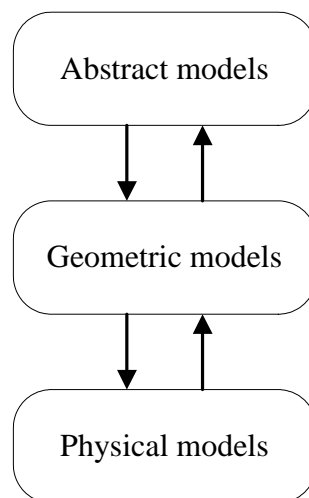


Figure 2.12 The transformation of models

[Miaoulis 02] introduces the notion of vertical transformation of the levels of abstraction. An abstract model is transformed or generates a set of concrete models in terms of more concretion and less ambiguity. The reverse process of the generation is the comprehension where a physical model is transformed into geometric and abstract model with less concretion and more ambiguity. Figure 2.12 illustrates the transformation of the models. The comprehension process is actually the reverse engineering within the framework of the design process.

Reverse engineering is an important branch of the design process and has been widely recognized as a crucial step in the product design cycle. Differing from the traditional design idea and method, reverse engineering technology enables one to start a design from an existing product model by combining computer technology, measurement technology and CAD/CAM technology [Varady 97]. In the forward design process the operation sequence usually starts from an idea, an abstract model via computer-aided design (CAD) techniques, and ends with generation of the geometric model that represents the initial idea. In contrast to this conventional design process, reverse engineering represents an approach for the new design of a product that may lack an existing CAD model. In the process of the product design and research, the use of reverse engineering will reduce the production period and costs. Reverse engineering technology is not to copy an existing product but to acquire a design concept from an existing physical model and create a complete geometric model and further to optimize the product design.

According to [Peng et al., 01] the application areas of a reverse engineering process include:

- The reverse design: either creating a new product from an initial model or feeding a recovered result back to an existing product model to compare and update. This is a widely used technique in the tool, die, and mould-making industries.
- The customized design: customized products are worn on our bodies, or have prolonged functional contact with the human body. There can be considerable variation in performance and function required for this kind of products and it is, therefore, essential to involve the customer in the design process.
- The virtual environment: to build the virtual reality environment in which the overall design of a product can be evaluated quickly and effectively.

Reverse engineering and modelling techniques can be combined into tools as meant from the current literature. Figure 2.13 presents the correspondence between the type of models and the levels of abstraction. Declarative models are characterised as the most abstract models since none geometric information is included. Feature models consist of both geometric and feature-based information.

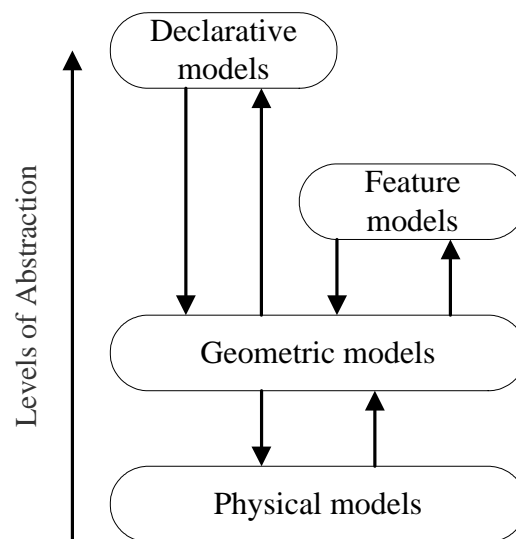


Figure 2.13 Models according to the level of abstraction

2.4.2 Reverse engineering and geometric modelling

The 3D reconstruction is a huge field and of course there is a vast literature on the specific subject. The input of reverse engineering process is the physical object of interest, while the output is its CAD model: either a surface representation or a volume representation. The conversion between surface and volume model can be done by mature algorithms such as voxelization and marching cube algorithms. Surface representations and fitting methods for reverse engineering are summarized in [Chivate et al., 95], [Petitjean et al., 02]. In conventional reverse engineering processes, 1D (point cloud data) or 2D (range images) sampling data of the surface of interest is acquired by digitizing devices (CMM, laser scanner, etc.) or photographing devices (CCD camera, ICT, MRI, etc.), respectively.

Reverse engineering methods diverges from data measuring strategies. Commonly used data acquiring devices can be categorized into contact or non-contact devices. Contact type devices are generally more accurate but slow in data acquisition, and vice versa for non-contact type devices. According to whether the probe is held by operators, contact devices can be further divided into two classes: automatic devices and manually holding devices. The common drawback of contact devices is that they may deform or even damage the surface of the object being digitized because of the direct physical contact. Non-contact devices measure the point coordinates using distance measuring methods, such as laser scanner and sonar. The

merit of non-contact distance measuring methods is high scanning speed. The accuracy of this type of digitizers is dependant on surface reflectance, the light paths to the sensor, and the material (transparent or semitransparent et cetera).

In engineering areas such as aerospace, automotives, shipbuilding and medicine, it is difficult to create a CAD model of an existing product that has a free-form surface or a sculptured surface. In these cases, reverse engineering is an efficient approach to significantly reduce the product development cycle [Zhang 03]. It is often used in cases such as the following:

- Where a prototype of the final product has been modelled manually and therefore no CAD model of the prototype exists, e.g. clay model in automotive industry.
- Where a CAD is introduced in a company and all existing products must be modelled in order to have a fully digital archive. Particularly, the CAD model of a complex shaped part is modelled because it is difficult to create its CAD model directly.
- Where complex shaped parts must be inspected and therefore the reverse engineering model created will be compared to an existing CAD model.

In medical engineering a representative example of reverse engineering is the customized artificial joint design [Lina et al., 05], where in order to meet the requirements and to reduce the production cycle and cost, a method is presented to generate the complex surface of an artificial knee joint by co-ordinate measuring machine from the normative prosthesis, and form the model data base. The method gets the better data points among point cloud data and then, the free-form surfaces are constructed from the point cloud data using the reverse engineering software —Surfacer. The solid CAD model of the artificial knee joint is created from the surfaces by extension, intersection. These models formed the data base of the prosthesis, in which we can select a suitable kind of artificial knee joint model to customize for the patient. It is only needed to change the local data of the corresponding CAD model to meet the different requirements of the patient.

In [Stamati et al., 05] is introduced the ByzantineCAD, a geometric parametric CAD system for the design of pierced jewellery. The ByzantineCAD is an automated parametric

system where the design of a piece of jewellery is expressed by a collection of parameters and constraints and the user's participation in the design process is through the definition of the parameter values for reproducing traditional jewellery. The design of the traditional pierced jewellery is based on the voxel-oriented feature-based Computer Aided Design paradigm where a large complex pierced design is created by appropriate placing elementary structural elements. The final piece of jewellery is produced by applying a sequence of operations on a number of elementary solids. An algorithm for scaling pierced patterns and designs has been introduced to enlarge pierced figures without altering the size of the structural elements used to construct them. The reverse engineering process is focused on providing manually the elementary structural elements to the system instead of capturing these elements from existing artifacts and using them to reproduce the originals.

2.4.3 Reverse engineering and feature-based modelling

In the feature modelling field, object semantics are semantically represented for a specific application domain. In other words, a semantic feature is an application-oriented feature defined on geometric elements. There are three approaches for building a feature model:

- the design by feature approach creates the feature model of an object by composing the available features in a feature library,
- the feature recognition approach recognizes various features from a geometric model of an object according to the feature templates defined in a feature library,
- the feature conversion approach enables the definition of other feature models based on a feature model of a product already created. The new feature model corresponds to alternative views of the same product. Feature conversion is a technique that defines the basis for multiple-view feature modelling systems [Bronsvoort 01].

In order to create a feature model of an object from a point cloud, the embedded features must be recognized. These features are then used to constrain the fitting process. Feature recognition methodologies can be classified into two major categories: surface recognition and volume recognition. The main difference between these two categories is

mainly due to the feature definition and object description in the recognition method. The features and object description in the surface recognition category are expressed in terms of a set of faces and edges. The graph-based method discussed by [Little et al., 98], syntax-based method proposed by [Li 88], rule-based method discussed by [Henderson 84] and neural network method raised by [Prabhakar et al., 92] are examples of this category. On the contrary, the features and object description are defined in terms of primitives in the volume recognition category. Typical examples are the convex hull algorithm by [Kim 92], hint-based reasoning method by [Han et al., 98] and curvature region approach by [Sonthi et al., 98]. Although many different methods are proposed to recognize the features from an object description, only regular shaped objects can be handled [Little et al., 98], [Sonthi et al., 98].

In [Au et al., 99] is discussed the issues of applying feature technology to reverse engineering technology of a mannequin. According to that, the feature model of a mannequin consists of the major features of the torso for garment design, and the features are recognised from the point cloud by comparing it with a generic feature model. Association is set up between the point cloud and the mannequin feature. Fitting the generic model to the point cloud yields the mannequin feature model of a specific person. This is achieved by optimizing the distance between the point cloud and the feature surface, subject to the continuity requirements. However the task of matching the critical points is done manually. Since surface fitting forms the shape of the human model it is hard to capture details of the mannequin and the process of surface fitting is time consuming.

In [Wang et al., 03] a feature-based approach is presented of building a human model from a point cloud. The noisy points are removed and the orientation of the human model is adjusted. A feature based mesh algorithm is applied on the point cloud to construct the mesh surface of a human model. The semantic features of the human model are extracted from the surface. The advantages of the specific approach are the topology of the human models preserved, more details can be included in the feature human model, and the algorithm seems more efficient.

Apart from these, in [Fisher 04] is presented the contribution of knowledge in reverse engineering problems. In particular, it is discussed the applicability of domain knowledge of standard shapes and relationships to solve or improve reverse engineering problems. The

problems considered are how to enforce known relationships when data fitting, how to extract features even in very noisy data, how to get better shape parameter estimates and how to infer data about unseen features. Even if the current work focuses on the reconstruction, it shows that the applicability of domain knowledge, in the general framework of the knowledge-based approach, plays a significant role in the reverse process. The paper explores techniques, made at Edinburgh University, to improve reverse engineering of objects from three-dimensional (3D) point data sets by applying constraints on feature relationships in manufactured objects and buildings in order to improve the recovery of object models, by applying general shape knowledge for recovery even when data is very noisy, sparse or incomplete. Many of these recovery problems require discovery of shape and position parameters that satisfy the knowledge-derived constraints. Evolutionary search methods can be used to do this search effectively.

The research from the University of Utah [Thompson et al., 99], [de St Germain et al., 97] who have also been investigating constrained reconstruction of parts from 3D data sets, particularly parts with pocket profiles. They categorized the types of engineering knowledge as domain-specific and pragmatic, and functional constraints. They exploit this knowledge to select surface types and manufacturing actions. Thus, with some user assistance, planar features that bound pockets are found. The contour that is swept to form the pocket can then be found automatically. Shape and positional constraints are represented and solved in a manner similar to [Fisher 04].

The research from the University of Cardiff [Benkó et al., 02], [Benkó et al., 01] exploits designed-in relationships to improve reconstruction. In their case, a much larger set of relationships was explored, and the constraints arising from the relationships were used to reduce the dimensionality of the reconstruction parameter space. A sequential numerical constraintment process is used, which allowed them to detect and automatically reject inconsistent constraints. A nice alternative to fitting tangential and blend surfaces was to parameterize swept 2D features, with the cross-section of the inter-surface join/blend as the 2D feature.

A special branch of reverse engineering is the reverse design where in [Vergeest et al., 05] during the reverse design of free-form shapes, existing shapes or features can be extracted

and be inserted into a model, or otherwise reused for the creation of a new design. Here it is essential to note that the existing features might not be designed as such, but are perceived as an entity by the designer. In addition, the designer might expect that the feature possesses parameters that he/she can control, whereas such parameters were never defined. An important aspect of reverse design is therefore the interactive assignment of complex controls to shapes or features. These controls are needed by the designer to achieve shape modifications, which could be very situation dependent. The interactive assignment can be dependent on, or expressed in terms of, for example, characteristic points or curves in the shape under construction or in any other existing shape. This referring to features which were not designed as such is one form of reverse design.

2.4.4 Reverse engineering and declarative modelling

Reverse engineering in the declarative modelling framework acquires a geometric solution which can be modified by the designer and results a new declarative description to the next iteration of the declarative conception cycle.

The XMultiFormes project [Sellinger 98], [Sellinger 95] is a previous work that tries to integrate the two modellers by using a special interface system to ensure that there is full and complete transfer of information between the declarative and a traditional geometric modeller. This system is composed of four sub-processes, each of which is responsible for one aspect of the information transfer.

The geometric convection process translates the geometric representation generated by MultiFormes into one that is more suited to interactive modelling. The principal geometrical entity used by solution generator of MultiFormes is a closed parallelepiped which is formed by six connected surfaces of Bézier and is converted into three linked lists [Sellinger et al., 97]. At the lowest level is a list of vertices which are used to implement a set of geometric primitives, the second level of representation. At the third level is the compound primitive of MultiFormes. At the highest level is the object entity, which is constructed from either a set of primitives or other objects.

The labelling system is responsible for capturing non-geometric information, which is implied in the declarative description. The principle source of non-geometric information is

the sub-scene names in the declarative description. These names typically contain an explicit high-level description of the meaning of the sub-scene, and are maintained by the labelling system as a set of properties called labels. After a geometric representation has been created a special process is used to traverse the hierarchical description of the scene and to match decomposed sub-scene names to labels. This process requires the cooperation of the user since the label list must be adapted to the set of sub-scene names.

The geometric-to-declarative representation conversion process converts a geometric instance to declarative description by identifying all objects without parent, determining if the bounding boxes overlap and, if so, decompose the hierarchical objects, generating a scene hierarchy using a binary sub-scene agglomeration and describing each sub-scene and their relationships. The scene inclusion process provides a means for the inclusion of previously generated scenes in a declarative description. The designer can associate a sub-scene in the declarative description with an existence scene or a list of existing scenes.

Sellinger connects successfully a traditional geometric with a declarative modeller, gives special emphasis on retrieving the appropriate knowledge from the designer and gives special attention on man machine interaction.. However, the XMultiFormes project does not incorporate any database management system, which means that the designer is obligated to execute the whole design process at once, and can not store the most desired geometric solutions for further manipulation. The lack of a database management system also affects the update on the relationships since the available relationships are hard coded obviously, and inhibits the designer to work on different domain other than the architectural design of buildings.

The inclusion process of XMultiFormes provides to the designer the only ability to modify declaratively the scene by including a sub-scene in the declarative description with an existence scene which makes the process inflexible for further modifications. Besides, the geometric to declarative representation process requires computation time and the quality of the new declarative description, which is produced in each iterative cycle, is not evaluated since Sellinger does not present any convergence of the geometric solutions.

Generally speaking, the cooperative computer aided design paradigm (CCAD) was used by Sellinger as a framework for the integration of the two modellers. This paradigm was

originally developed to provide an interactive generative geometric modelling system with a cyclic design path and it is well adapted to the declarative modelling. The CCAD paradigm is based on the assumption that the system can not create perfect geometric solutions, but superior designs can be generated by allowing the designer to guide the system through successive rounds.

2.5 Discussion

Engineering is involved in designing, manufacturing, constructing, and maintaining of products, systems, models and structures. At a higher level, there are two types of engineering: forward engineering and reverse engineering.

Forward engineering is the traditional process of moving from high-level abstractions and logical designs to the physical implementation of a system or product. Reverse engineering can be viewed as the process of analyzing a system/model in order to identify the sub-components and their interrelationships, create representations of the system/model in another form or a higher level of abstraction and reengineer the physical representation of that system/model.

In designing, reverse engineering process permits the transformation of one model into another one. In the framework of geometric modelling, reverse engineering is used in order to construct a 3D model from a physical model. Furthermore, reverse engineering in feature-based modelling is used in order to extract features from feature instances of the geometric model.

In declarative modelling approach, reverse engineering is used to transform the geometric model into a declarative model. Sellinger's thesis presents a first attempt of coupling a traditional geometric modeller with a declarative modeller and is based on interactive modelling. Sellinger's approach is traditional, cooperative and gives a special emphasis on man-machine interaction since it gathers all relevant information from the designer in order to convert a geometric into declarative model.

There is room for further improvement by exploiting domain-specific knowledge and using an object-oriented approach which facilitates the designer to manipulate a selected

scene, states his/her requirements either in geometric or declarative way during the iterative design process and after a few iterations the designer gathers all promising geometric solutions. Thus, we concentrate on settling the high-level reverse engineering in declarative modelling framework. The knowledge-based reverse engineering approach is presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Thesis proposal and implementation

The objective of this chapter is to present a deep overview of the thesis proposal and implementation. The main hypothesis of this thesis is to integrate the two models, the declarative and geometric. The integration takes place in a new defined phase in the declarative conception cycle, the reconstruction phase. RS-MultiCAD has been designed in order to handle the integration of the MultiCAD declarative modeller with a traditional geometric modeller. RS-MultiCAD implements the knowledge-based reverse engineering approach in order to transform a geometric solution, which has been generated by MultiCAD, into a declarative model.

In the next sub-section the architecture of the proposed RS-MultiCAD system is presented. First of all, this sub-section starts with the presentation of the data and knowledge storage and indicates the interrelations between the databases. A special attention is given on describing the dynamic stratified representation. The stratified representation overcomes the problems of capturing geometric and declarative information by incorporating a declarative and a geometric layer. RS-MultiCAD system semantically understands a selected scene by exploiting the knowledge base of MultiCAD and permits a series of scene modifications to designer in order to alter the selected scene. The stratified representation absorbs the designer modifications by activating a propagation policy which correctly determines the transition of a selected scene from one state to another. Besides, RS-MultiCAD system provides the possibility to the designer to determine how the resultant declarative description is constructed which will be passed to the declarative description phase, in the next iteration of MultiCAD.

The last sub-section is dedicated to the implementation of RS-MultiCAD. It presents the geometric representation, the main algorithms that RS-MultiCAD prototype incorporates, such as the knowledge extraction and the construction of the stratified representation. Finally, this sub-section presents the algorithm for the manipulation of the scene modifications along with the construction of the resultant declarative description.

3.1 Integration of the two models

Geometric and declarative models have useful aspects but are also in some way limited. A declarative model corresponds to a set of alternative geometric models and a geometric model corresponds to a set of alternative declarative models. Thus, the correspondence of the two models is not univocal. It must be pointed out that one model complements the other one in a way that many problems of the one model are solved by the other model. For this reason the integration of the two models results in an extremely powerful design tool.

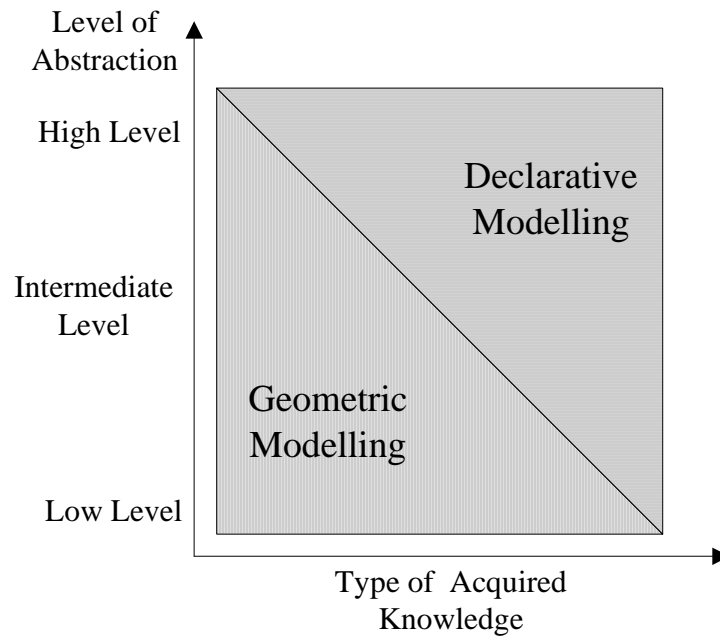


Figure 3.1 Type of acquired knowledge according to level of abstraction

Figure 3.1 presents the type of the acquired knowledge relative to the level of abstraction. On high-level of abstraction the valuable knowledge is more declarative than geometric and on low-level of abstraction the declarative is less than the geometric specific knowledge. On an intermediate level of abstraction the acquired knowledge is a combination of declarative and traditional geometric knowledge [Golfinopoulos et al., 05].

A model, in order to become another type of model, is gradually transformed into a sequence of different levels of abstraction by a sequence of processing steps. The

imperativeness of introducing an intermediate model derives from the fact that the nature of a declarative model differs from the nature of a traditional geometric model.

Our declarative model incorporates a decomposition tree representing the level of details, a set of object properties and a set of relations that connects the objects. A traditional geometric model incorporates a set of geometric information necessary for representing the objects of the scene. Thus, the intermediate model consists of declarative and geometric data of the scene that are connected properly.

Figure 3.2 shows schematically, the transformation of a geometric model into declarative via an intermediate model. The arrows that connect the different models show the reverse design within the declarative modelling framework.

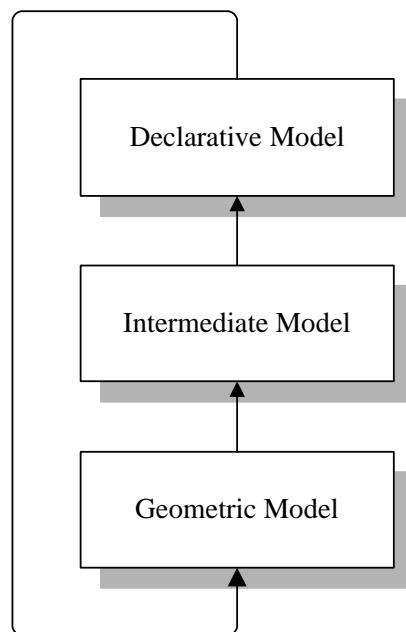


Figure 3.2 The transformation of a geometric model into declarative

In the framework of the declarative modelling all geometric models, which have been produced from a specific declarative description, differ onto the values of the object relations and the values of the object properties. The different values of the properties cause an object with a new shape and position on the scene while the different relations cause a new arrangement of the scene.

3.2 Reconstruction phase

The declarative conception cycle of MultiCAD system architecture (see section 2.2.6) can be extended to an iterative process by using a reconstruction phase [Golfinopoulos et al., 05] where the scene is semantically understood and refined by adding more detailed descriptions in successive rounds of declarative design process. In this case undesirable designs are cut from the set of solutions, the size of the solution set after each round of generation can be reduced and after a few iterations the designer gathers all promising solutions. Under the reconstruction phase an intermediate model is built in order to handle all the necessary information concerning the declarative and geometric side of the scene. The aim of the reconstruction phase is to receive a geometric model, provide a new declarative model enhanced with geometric constraints to the scene declarative phase and also permit the designer to change the geometry of the scene by modifying the geometric aspects of the objects. These changes are semantically checked and the intermediate model is updated.

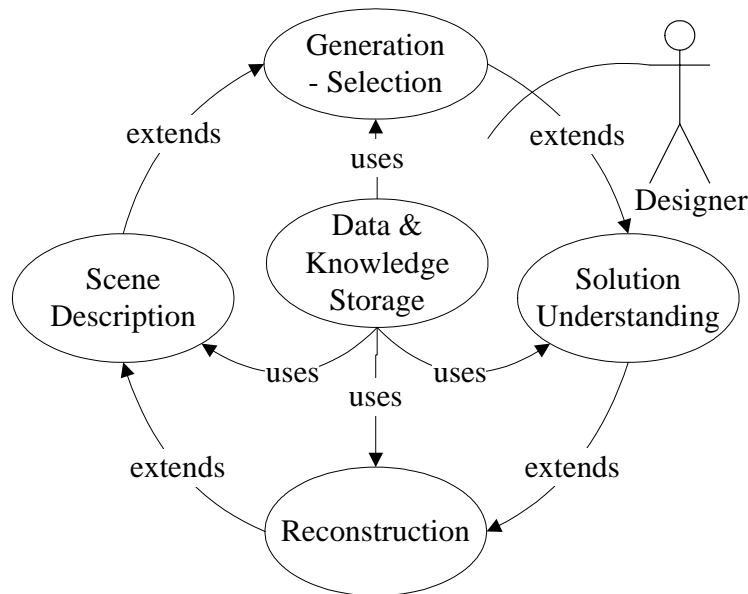


Figure 3.3 The new declarative conception cycle

Figure 3.3 presents the new declarative conception cycle by placing the new reconstruction phase in a UML use case diagram. The cycle starts with a declarative description, which produces a set of geometric solutions. The solutions are visualized and the designer selects the most desirable geometric solution. In the reconstruction phase, the designer can edit the geometric solution, a new declarative description is created, which

contains the changes and a new cycle starts resulting to more promising solutions. The iterative process aims to produce scenes, which meet the designer requirements, after refinement. The designer can proclaim his requirements declaratively and geometrically.

Due to the introduction of the reconstruction phase in the declarative conception cycle, the design methodology is extended and presented in the below sub-section.

3.3 Extended design methodology

The design methodology of the declarative modelling extends in order to include the reconstruction phase. The extended design methodology [Golfopoulos et al., 06] starts with the description of the desired scene in terms of objects, relations and properties through an interface. A rule set and object set are built representing the designer requirements.

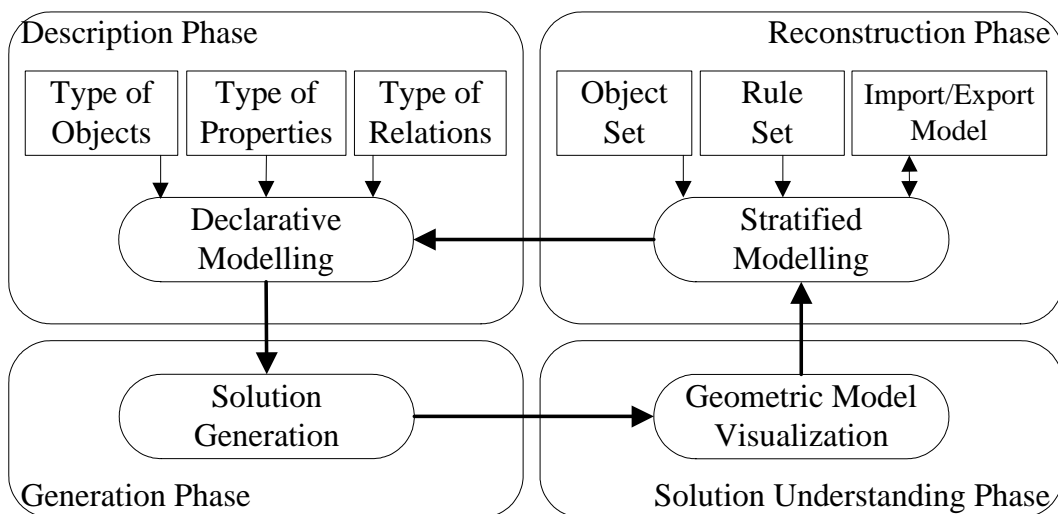


Figure 3.4 Extended design methodology and modelling levels

Initially, the object set consists of all objects of different level of abstraction, and the rule set consists of all relations, properties that the designer has declared during the declarative description phase. Based on that rule set, a set of geometrical solutions is produced by a solution generator. The solutions are visualized through a 3D viewer and the designer selects the most desirable solution, which can be edited.

The reconstruction phase is implemented through the RS-MultiCAD system, which receives the selected scene and converts into a stratified representation. The rule set and the

object set can be edited by adding, deleting, and changing the objects, relations and properties of the scene. The designer can proclaim his requirements declaratively and geometrically during the reconstruction phase. A new declarative description is constructed, which contains the changes and a new MultiCAD cycle starts resulting in more promising solutions. The iterative process aims to produce scenes, which meet the requirements, after refinement. Figure 3.4 presents the extended design methodology and the modelling levels.

3.4 RS-MultiCAD system architecture

The high level architecture of the proposed RS-MultiCAD system can be seen as three main modules [Golfinopoulos et al., 05]. Our geometric model consists of information about the types of the objects and the geometric aspects of the objects. The input file provides the types of the objects along with the position and dimensions of the bounding box, which specify every object on the scene.

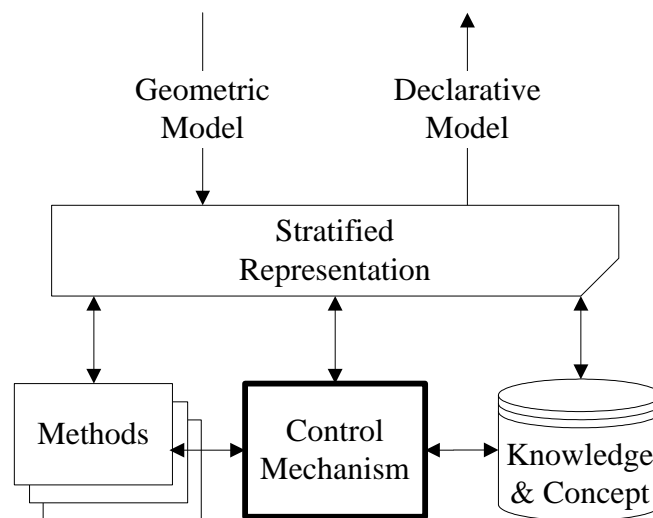


Figure 3.5 General architecture of RS-MultiCAD system

Generally speaking, the methods component consists of procedures and functions for extracting features and relations from the geometric model. The knowledge & concept component involves the knowledge database and concept database along with the mechanisms for retrieving the knowledge for the database. The control mechanism component incorporates all necessary mechanisms for building, handling and manipulating the

intermediate model whenever the designer tries to alter the objects geometry of the scene. Figure 3.5 illustrates the general architecture of the RS-MultiCAD system.

The RS-MultiCAD knowledge-based system incorporates architectural domain-specific knowledge for constructing buildings. The system architecture is modular giving the possibility to further extensions. The system is based on five main modules from a high level of detail [Golfinopoulos et al., 06].

The import/export module is responsible for the communication with the databases supporting the input and output of geometric solution, the output of a new declarative description which comes from designer modifications, and finally the import and export of a geometrical model of different file format (DXF file format). The latter enhances the interoperability of the system since the designer can either import a design from another CAD system and produce alternative solutions or export the solution to other CAD system and continue the design process. For further information on DXF file format see Appendix B.

The extraction module applies all domain-specific relation and property types (see Appendix A) in order to extract all valid relations and properties of the objects from a selected solution. The extraction module is domain independent and facilitates the extension of knowledge and concept database since it parses the available knowledge from the databases. It must be pointed out that only the knowledge base is used for the extraction of the appropriate properties and relations from the scene and the concept database will contain all necessary concept representations.

The control module incorporates all necessary mechanisms for building, manipulating and updating the stratified representation. The stratified representation is dynamic and constructed from the designer selected solution with a top-down approach and mainly consists of declarative and geometric information. Declarative information can be summarized into object set and rule set. Geometric information deals with the geometry of each object that constitutes the scene. The control mechanism is event-driven and is responsible for the stratified representation to ensure the correct transition from one state to another. It handles the designer scene modifications examining their semantic correctness and properly updates the stratified representation by propagating the changes in a mixed way.

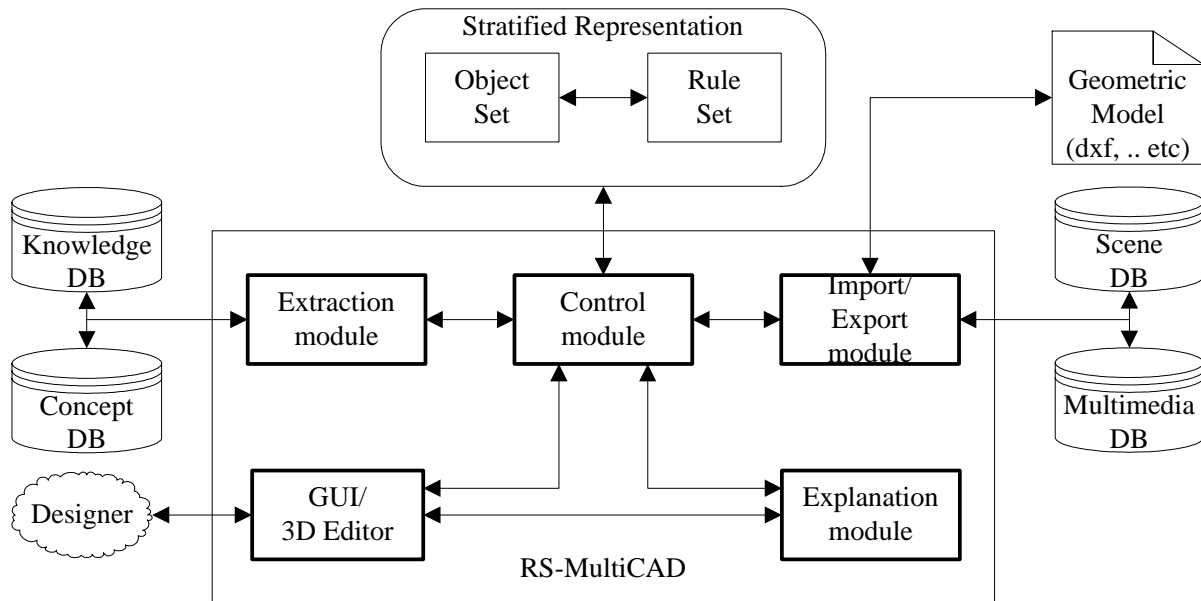


Figure 3.6 Detailed system architecture of RS-MultiCAD system

The explanation module provides valuable information about the system reasoning in cases where a scene modification violates the rule set. Finally, the RS-MultiCAD system incorporates a graphical user interface with a 3D editor in order to visualize the solutions and graphically receive the designer requests. Figure 3.6 illustrates the detailed RS-MultiCAD system architecture.

The inner operation cycle of RS-MultiCAD incorporates all necessary mechanisms for converting a geometric model into the intermediate model and finally into the respective declarative model. The construction mechanism is responsible for receiving a MultiCAD geometric model and converting into the stratified representation. The extraction mechanism operates on the stratified representation in order to extract all appropriate relations and properties from the geometry of the objects that constitute the scene.

Besides, RS-MultiCAD incorporates an appropriate mechanism which permits the designer to perform modifications on the scene. Every designer modification affects the stratified representation. The system applies a specific propagation policy in order to properly handle the stratified representation and activates the extraction mechanism perspective to update the intermediate model. Finally, the intermediate model is converted into the resultant declarative description. Figure 3.7 presents the inner operation cycle of RS-MultiCAD.

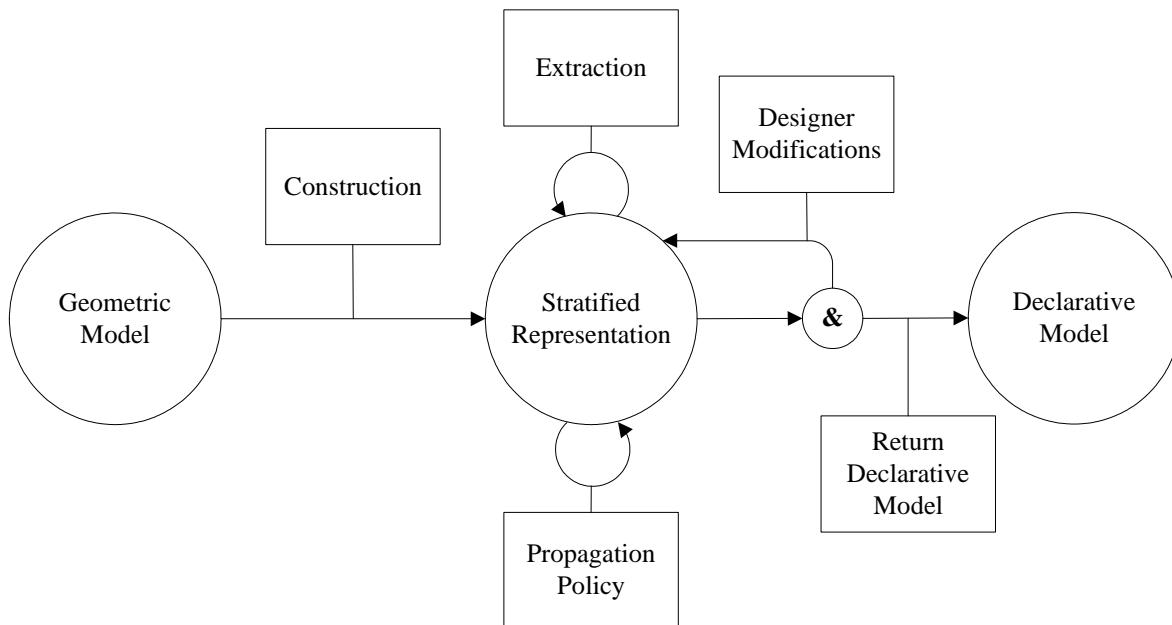


Figure 3.7 The inner operation cycle of RS-MultiCAD

3.4.1 Data and knowledge storage

A brief description of the MultiCAD database is given in [Maoulis et al., 00]. The RS-MultiCAD system in order to store a declarative description follows the guideline which is defined in [Miaoulis, 02]. A declarative description produces a set of alternative solutions that are stored in the multimedia database of MultiCAD.

Every geometric solution consists of a set of solution objects which in turn use geometric primitives which are expressed through geometric parameters. Thus, the multimedia database consists of a “Geometric Solution” table which is connected with the “Solution Object” and the “Solution Geometric Value” table. The “Solution Geometric Value” table incorporates the values of the parameters of the geometric primitive that describes every solution object of every geometric solution. Furthermore, the multimedia database has a direct connection with the knowledge database of MultiCAD. Additionally, the knowledge database incorporates two tables, the “Geometric Primitive” and the “Geometric Parameter” table. The “Geometric Primitive” table contains all primitive shapes which are supported by the system. The “Geometric Parameter” table includes all necessary parameters which characterize every primitive shape. Figure 3.8 presents the entity-relation diagram of data and knowledge storage.

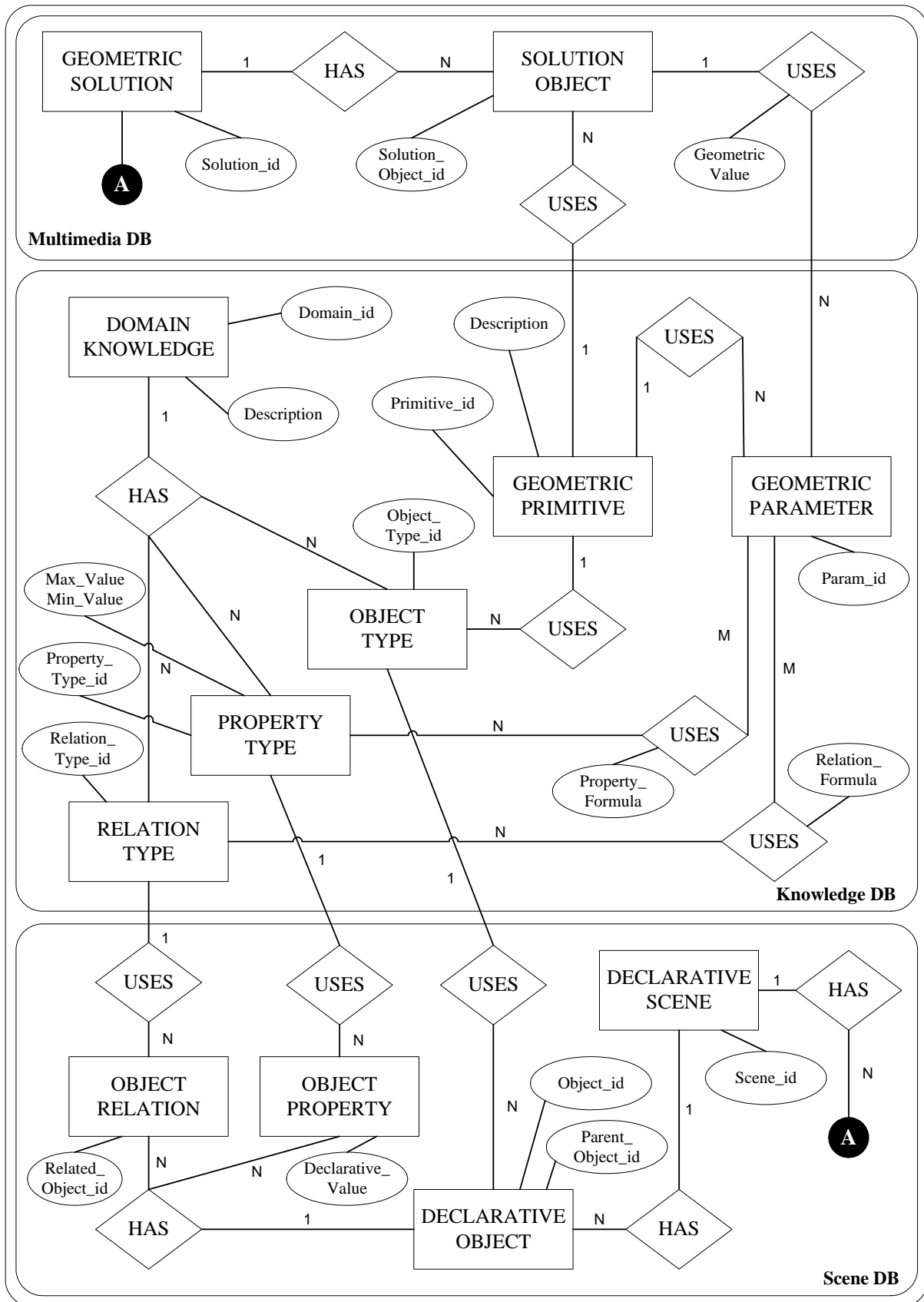


Figure 3.8 The ER diagram of data and knowledge storage

Every declarative description incorporates a set of objects. Every object corresponds to an object type. The declarative description also includes a set of object relations and a set of object properties. The object relation corresponds to a relation type indicating the relation between two objects. Every object property corresponds to a property type indicating the property which characterizes the object. Thus, the scene database contains the “Declarative Scene”, “Declarative Object”, “Object Relation” and “Object Property” table. The scene database is connected with the multimedia database indicating which geometric solutions correspond to each declarative description

Apart from that, the scene database has a direct connection with the knowledge database of the MultiCAD. Additionally, the knowledge database incorporates three tables, the “Object Type”, “Relation Type” and the “Property Type” table. The knowledge database includes all object types, relation types and property types which are supported by the system. All object types are defined along with their primitive shape in the “Object Type” table. The relation types are described through mathematical formulas in the “Relation Type” table. The mathematical formula is expressed through geometric parameters from the “Geometric Parameter” table. Finally, the property types are defined, within a range of a maximum and minimum value according to the domain in the “Property Type” table. The object property value corresponds to a declarative value which accrues from the subdivision of the range values into portions.

The knowledge database consists of all relation and property types which are supported by the system. The spatial relations, declarative properties, reflective relations and pure geometric properties are presented in Table 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 (see Appendix A).

Spatial Relation	Description
Adjacent_North (O_i, O_j)	If O_i is adjacent north to O_j , the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Adjacent_South (O_i, O_j)	If O_i is adjacent south to O_j , the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Adjacent_West (O_i, O_j)	If O_i is adjacent west to O_j , the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.

Adjacent_East (O_i, O_j)	If O_i is adjacent east to O_j , the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Adjacent_Over (O_i, O_j)	If O_i is adjacent over to O_j , the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Adjacent_Under (O_i, O_j)	If O_i is adjacent under to O_j , the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Equal_Length (O_i, O_j)	If O_i length equals to O_j length the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Equal_Width (O_i, O_j)	If O_i width equals to O_j width the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Equal_Height (O_i, O_j)	If O_i height equals to O_j height the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Longer_Than (O_i, O_j) Shorter_Than (O_i, O_j)	If O_i length is greater/less than O_j length the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Wider_Than (O_i, O_j) Narrower_Than (O_i, O_j)	If O_i width is greater/less than O_j width the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Higher_Than (O_i, O_j) Lower_Than (O_i, O_j)	If O_i height is greater/less than O_j height the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.

Table 3.1 The spatial relations

Declarative Property	Description
Is_Long (O_i)	Every property is defined within a range of a maximum and minimum value according to the domain. The range of values is divided into portions and the property can be set into declarative values (e.g. "Low", "Medium", "High").
Is_Wide (O_i)	
Is_Tall (O_i)	

Table 3.2 The declarative properties

Reflexive Relation	Description
Longer_Than_High (O_i)	If O_i length is greater than O_i height the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Longer_Than_Wide (O_i)	If O_i length is greater than O_i width the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Higher_Than_Long (O_i)	If O_i height is greater than O_i length the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Higher_Than_Wide (O_i)	If O_i height is greater than O_i width the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Wider_Than_High (O_i)	If O_i width is greater than O_i height the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.
Wider_Than_Long (O_i)	If O_i width is greater than O_i length the relation is TRUE otherwise is FALSE.

Table 3.3 The reflexive relations

Pure Geometric Property	Description
Position_X_Is (O_i)	The property equals to the X-axis value of O_i bounding box.
Position_Y_Is (O_i)	The property equals to the Y-axis value of O_i bounding box.
Position_Z_Is (O_i)	The property equals to the Z-axis value of O_i bounding box.
Length_Is (O_i)	The property equals to the length of O_i bounding box.
Width_Is (O_i)	The property equals to the width of O_i bounding box.
Height_Is (O_i)	The property equals to the height of O_i bounding box.

Table 3.4 The pure geometric properties

3.4.2 The stratified representation

The need of representing geometric and declarative information leads to an approach of using the stratified representation [Sagerer 97]. The stratified representation is an intermediate level model necessary for connecting the declarative with the geometric model, and embodies the two distinct interconnected layers of representation, the declarative layer which represents the scene description with the hierarchical decomposition and the geometric layer which encapsulates the geometric aspects of the objects [Golfinopoulos et al., 06].

The geometric layer of the stratified representation is based on the bounding box position and dimensions of each object which are expressed through the object pure geometric properties, along with any extra geometric information that can determine the shape of the object.

RS-MultiCAD inputs a geometric model which has been produced by the solution generator. That geometric model apart from the geometric information of all objects, that constitute the scene, provides their object type as well. The stratified representation is a dynamic semantic net with nodes and directed arrows. The node encapsulates declarative information of the object and the directed arrow reflects either the relation of the object with other objects or the object property or the level of detail. Every node is connected with a geometric node, which includes all relevant geometric aspects of the object, of the geometric layer. Figure 3.9 presents the basic structure schematically.

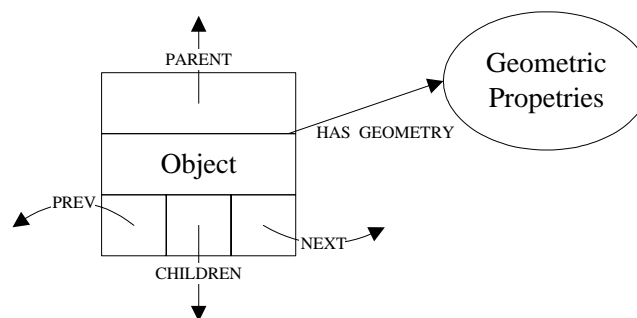


Figure 3.9 The basic structure

Every node corresponds to an object and every arrow label indicates the relations of the node. The labels denote the following meanings:

- The “parent” and “children” labels which connect nodes with same level of abstraction, different level of detail and represent the meronymic relations.
- The “next” and “previous” labels which connect nodes with the same level of abstraction and the same level of detail.
- The “has-geometry” label which connects nodes of different level of abstraction and represents the geometry of an object.
- The “has-topology” label which connects nodes of the same level of abstraction, indicating the topological relations among objects and represents the reflective and spatial relations.
- The “has-property” label is related to a node in order to indicate that the object has the specific property.

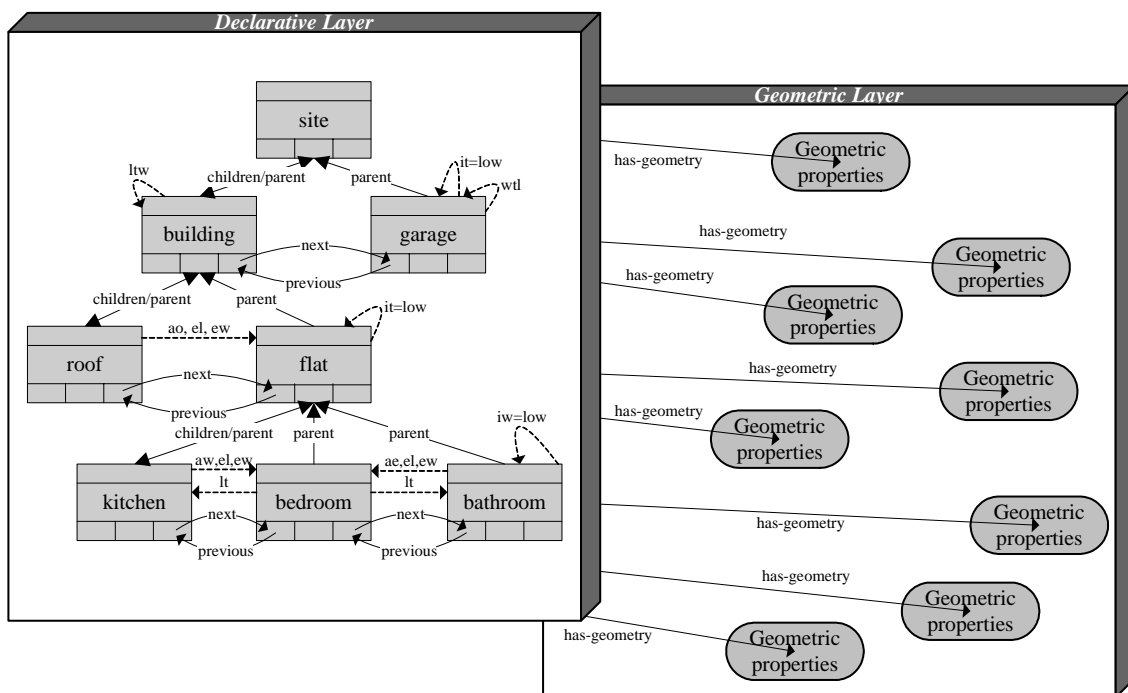


Figure 3.10 A typical stratified representation

The construction of the stratified representation is a top-down process where the hierarchical decomposition is built based on the geometric information coming from the

geometric model. For every object, a node is created on the geometric layer of the stratified representation. As long as all nodes have been created, the pure geometric properties lead to the hierarchical decomposition by creating interconnected nodes on the declarative layer of the representation. In Figure 3.10 appears a typical stratified representation.

3.4.3 Scene modifications

The dynamic stratified model of RS-MultiCAD allows the designer to perform geometric and topological modifications on the scene [Golfinopoulos et al., 06]. As soon as the designer modifies the scene a special process starts. Every designer modification must be checked according to the rule set for its validity and if so the stratified representation must be properly updated in order to reflect the real state of the scene. RS-MultiCAD follows the “generate-and-test” method and provides two inference options according to designer modification which may or may not be activated:

- Check the modification according to the rule set. A modification is valid as long as none relation or property of the rule set is violated otherwise the modification is invalid and it is cancelled. If the designer decides not to check the modifications according to the rule set, the control module performs a set of mandatory conditions ensuring the validity of the scene such as, none overlapping objects of the same level of abstraction, none object exceeding the overall scene limits, et cetera.
- Add pure geometric properties to the rule set that are inferred from the modifications. If the designer moves an object to a new position, pure geometric properties relative to move are added to the rule set.

The control module properly propagates the modification by updating the geometric layer of the stratified representation and activating the extraction module in order to recalculate all valid relations and properties. The control module assures that the transaction from one state to another one is valid since all relations, properties of the rule set are not violated and the changes are accepted while the new state of the stratified representation is valid. Otherwise, the explanation module is activated in order to record all violated relations, properties of the rule set and the control mechanism rolls the representation back to the previous state.

The modifications that can occur on the stratified model refer to abstract or leaf node and can be divided into two categories according to the geometric information that may be supplied by the designer. In particular, the declarative modifications are:

- Insert an abstract node by specifying its parent. The insertion of an abstract node in the stratified model can be done by specifying firstly an already existing node of the model as its parent and secondly the nodes that become children of the new abstract node. The result of such a change will affect the stratified representation since the object set changes.
- Delete a leaf/abstract node. The deletion of an abstract node will eliminate the sub-tree where the abstract node is root. The result of such a change will affect the object set and may affect the rule set as well. The stratified representation must be updated in order to reflect the current state of the scene.
- Set/unset relation, property. The designer changes the rule set by adding or deleting a relation or a property of a node.

Furthermore, the geometric modifications are:

- Move an object. The designer by providing the new position moves the object. The stratified representation must be updated since the move may affect the objects of higher and/or lower level of abstraction.
- Scale an object. The designer specifies the scale factor of the object.
- Resize object. The designer resizes the object by providing new values of the length, width and/or height of the object bounding box.
- Insert object. The insertion of a leaf node is carried out by specifying the geometric characteristics of the object.
- Alter the extra geometric characteristics of an object. In case where the shape of the object is complex, the designer can alter the extra geometric characteristics that define the shape of the object.

3.4.4 The propagation policy

The control module applies a specific propagation policy as soon as a modification occurs [Golfinopoulos et al., 06]. The propagation policy is necessary in order RS-MultiCAD system to recalculate and update the new position, new dimensions of the objects that are related to the object under modification. The main advantage of the propagation policy is the fact that the control module only updates the nodes that are related to the object under modification and leaves the rest nodes untouched. The main criterion of the propagation policy is based on the position of the object under modification into the decomposition tree of the stratified representation. An object under modification can correspond to a leaf node or an abstract node in the decomposition tree. Whenever a modification occurs on a leaf node then the propagation starts from recalculating and updating its brothers and continues to ancestors until the root node of the decomposition tree. On the left-hand side of the figure 3.11 is shown schematically that a modification on a leaf node (shaded area) affects its brothers and continues to ancestors (shaded area).

Whenever a modification occurs on an abstract node then the propagation starts from recalculating and updating its children and brothers and continues to children of brothers and to ancestors until the root node of the decomposition tree. On the right-hand side of the figure 3.11 is shown schematically that a modification on an abstract node (shaded area) affects first of all its children, then its brothers, children and continues to ancestors (shaded area).

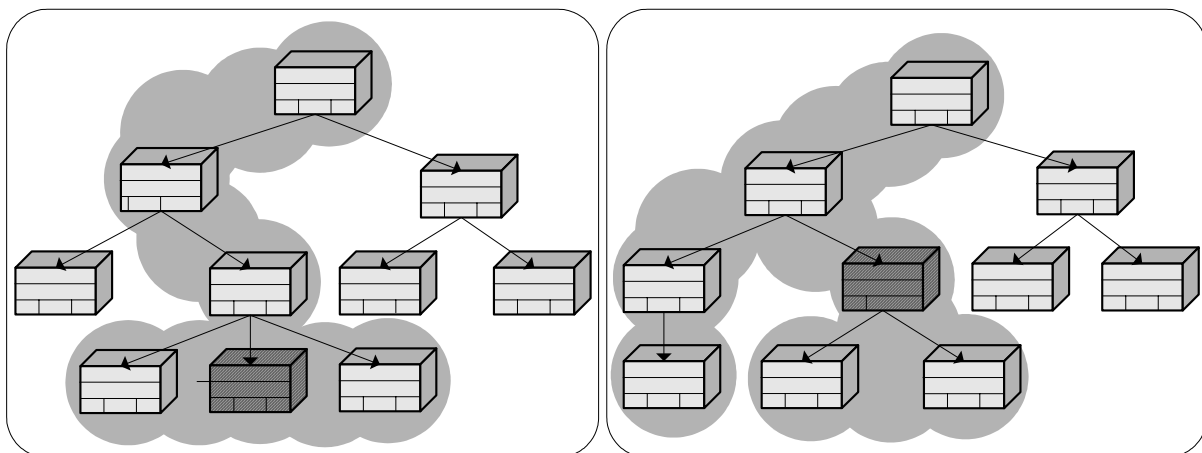


Figure 3.11 The propagation policy

Let us suppose that an object of type “house” is decomposed into an object of type “bedroom” and an object of type “kitchen” which are related with a relation of type “adjacent north”. A possible move, taking into consideration the aforementioned relation, of the object type “kitchen” causes the object of type “bedroom” to change its initial position, and afterwards causes the object of type “house” to change its position and dimensions respectively. At last, a possible move of the object type “house” causes the objects of type “bedroom” and “kitchen” to change their position.

3.4.5 The resultant declarative description

As soon as the designer has completed all modifications on the scene, RS-MultiCAD results in a new declarative description which includes all modifications required by MultiCAD in order to generate in the next iteration more promising solutions by reducing the initial solution space. The question that arises is which relations and properties must be included in the new declarative description? RS-MultiCAD replies to that question by providing two optional ways, manual and automated [Golfinopoulos et al., 06].

In particular, RS-MultiCAD in the manual way results in a new rule set that is based on the initial rule set along with the new relations and properties that have been changed by the designer. In this way, RS-MultiCAD offers the designer the possibility to drive the system to generate a solution space that is closer to his requirements.

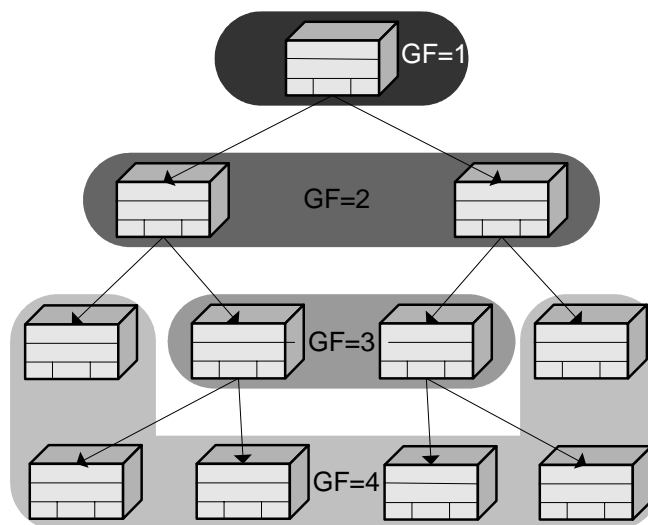


Figure 3.12 The generalization factor

Furthermore, the automated way is based on the generalization factor (GF). Every hierarchical decomposed tree is divided in distinct levels of detail. The generalization factor is related to levels of detail and its values vary from 1 to maximum tree depth. The rule set that accrues from the automated way is based on the initial rule set along with all designer modifications and also all pure geometric properties that are implied from the generalization factor. The nodes that provide their pure geometric properties to the rule set are the nodes that belong to the same and higher level of detail if and only if these nodes have descendants. If the designer set the generalization factor to the maximum tree depth all nodes of the decomposition tree provide their pure geometric characteristics to the resultant rule set.

Figure 3.12 schematically shows which pure geometric properties are included in the rule set according to generalization factor. If the generalization factor equals to 1, the pure geometric properties of the root node are included in the rule set. If the generalization factor equals to 3, the nodes that provide their pure geometric properties to the rule set are the nodes that belong to the first, second and third level of detail except the nodes which have none child. As it is obvious, if the generalization factor equals to 4, the rule set is enriched with pure geometric properties of all nodes, which it will lead to only one geometric solution in the next iteration of MultiCAD.

3.5 RS-MultiCAD prototype

RS-MultiCAD has been implemented on the Microsoft Visual Studio .NET platform by using the C# programming language and embodies the VectorDraw Viewer component (see Appendix C).

3.5.1 Geometric representation

RS-MultiCAD receives a geometric model which contains the pure geometric properties of the objects that constitute the scene, along with any extra geometric characteristics. MultiCAD geometric model also contains the object types. The object type indicates the primitive geometric shape which is used in order to represent the respective object. The objects are expressed by two main primitive geometric shapes, the parallelepiped and the “roof” shape.

The first primitive is a simple geometric shape, the parallelepiped which is represented by its position and basic dimensions. The position of the parallelepiped is an array of the X, Y and Z axis value of the 3D coordinate system. The basic dimensions of the parallelepiped form an array of the length, width and height as well. The parallelepiped is used in order to represent object of types “bedroom”, “kitchen”, “living-room”, “bathroom” et cetera.

The second primitive is a complex geometric shape which is used in order to represent the object of type “roof”. The object of type “roof” has been modelled, based on the approach which has described in [Makris 05]. The “roof” primitive geometric shape is represented through the position of the bounding box, its basic dimensions along with extra geometric characteristics. The extra geometric characteristics are the appropriate parameters which are used in order to construct and manipulate the respective primitive geometric shape.

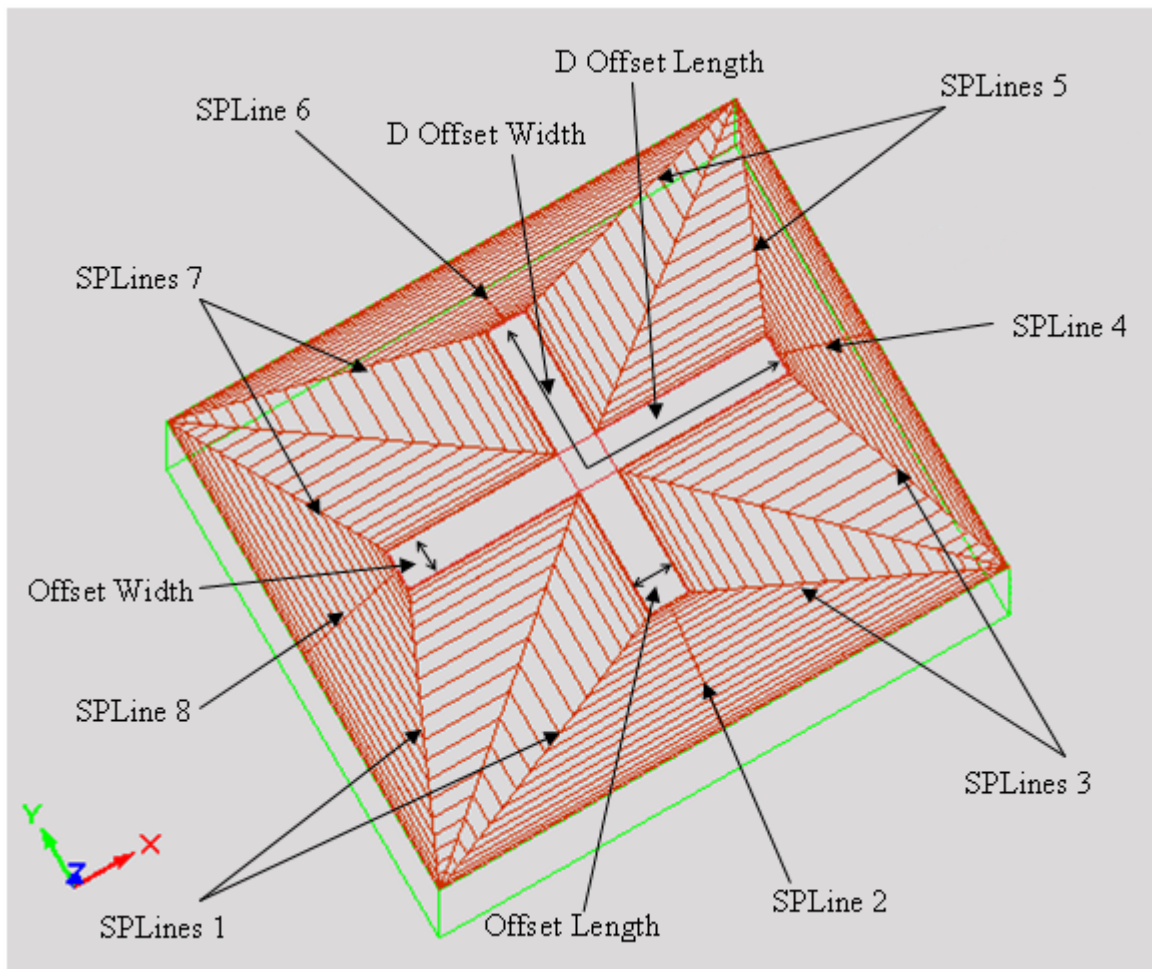


Figure 3.13 The roof morphology

The meaning of the parameters of the “roof” primitive geometric shape is shown schematically in Figure 3.13. The designer can set the values of the “centre point”, “offset length”, “offset width”, “D offset length”, “D offset width” and also the control points of the B-Spline curves that control the endpoint tangent vectors. The value of the control points varies from 1 to 100 as it is shown in Figure 3.14.

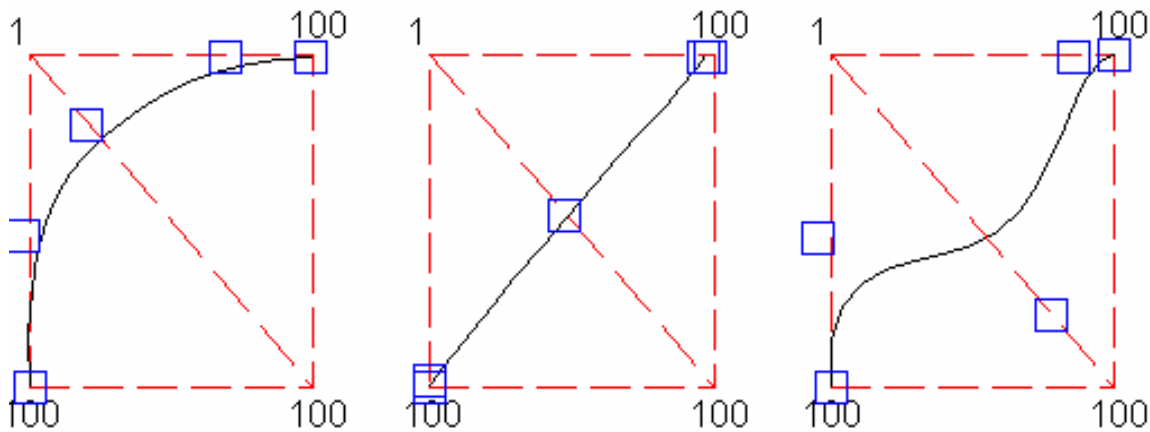


Figure 3.14 Control points of B-Spline curves

The construction of object type “roof” is based on controlling the complex geometric shape by eight cubic B-Splines. For simplicity each B-Spline’s projection on a plane is manipulated. Each B-Spline is defined by five points. The first point and last are the corresponding start and end point of the B-Spline and their position is relative to the position and size of the object “roof”. The remaining three control points are used to define the B-Spline shape as Figure 3.14 shows. These points cannot freely move on the plane in order to reduce the complexity of the final object. The first point can be moved only along the Y-axis and the X coordinate is always zero. It must be pointed out that the coordinates are relative to the B-Splines plane projection and not in world coordinate system. The second point can only be moved along the plane’s diagonal. The Y coordinate of the last point equals to the height of the plane which is the same with the height of the object “roof” and can be moved only along X axis. If the object “roof” has the “D offset length” and “D offset width” properties set then the B-Splines 1, 3, 5, 7 are duplicated as shown in Figure 3.13. Finally, for each B-Spline the control points are transformed into world coordinate system to form the frame of the object “roof”. Perspective to construct the final object every B-Spline is divided into equal sections and a vertex, face list are created. VectorDraw handles the “polyface” drawing once

it is added into the entities collection. Generally speaking in order to represent other objects of type “building”, “office” et cetera where geometric shape is the parallelepiped, a solid box is used. It is not necessary to construct a three dimensional box using a “polyface” object since VectorDraw Viewer component provides a method that constructs a “polyface box” given its position and dimensions.

The visualization of a scene is based on the nodes of the geometric layer of the stratified representation where all geometric information is captured in the pure geometric properties and the extra geometric characteristics of the objects. For every node, the system checks whether the corresponding node of the declarative layer is a leaf or abstract. Since the node has none child, RS-MultiCAD obtains the geometric information of the corresponding node of the geometric layer and visualizes the object on the graphical display. The process of visualization continues until all nodes of the geometric layer have been examined.

3.5.2 The construction of the stratified representation

The import of a geometric model needs a special process. The geometric model consists of geometric information of all objects that constitute the scene. RS-MultiCAD receives the geometric information of the objects and creates the respective nodes of the geometric layer of the stratified representation. The system creates one node of the declarative layer for every node of the geometric layer of the stratified representation. The nodes of the declarative layer constitute a linked list. Figure 3.15 illustrates a typical linked list of the declarative layer.

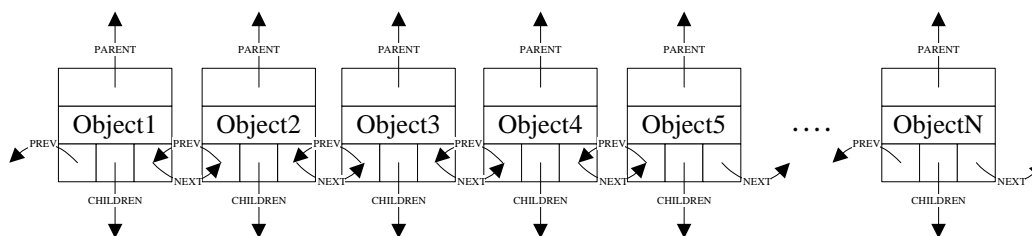


Figure 3.15 A typical linked list of the declarative layer

It must be pointed out that unlike the internal geometric model of MultiCAD, the external geometric model, which has been created by another commercial geometric modeller,

may not contain any information about the object type and the name. In such a case, RS-MultiCAD set the object type of every node as “unknown” type.

As the time that the linked list has been created, RS-MultiCAD activates a specialized process in order to convert the linked list into the decomposition tree based on the geometric information of the respective nodes. The specialized process applies two transition operators:

- The “consists-of” transition operator which determines if an object O_i consists of another object O_j . The comparison is based on the position and the dimensions of the bounding box of the two objects. In other words, if the bounding box of the object O_i includes the bounding box of the object O_j then the “consists-of” transition operator is applicable and the object O_i becomes parent of the object O_j .
- The “is-part-of” transition operator which determines if an object O_i is part of another object O_j . The comparison is based again, on the position and the dimensions of the bounding box of the two objects. In other words, if the bounding box of the object O_i is included in the bounding box of the object O_j then the “is-part-of” transition operator is applicable, the object O_i becomes child of the object O_j .

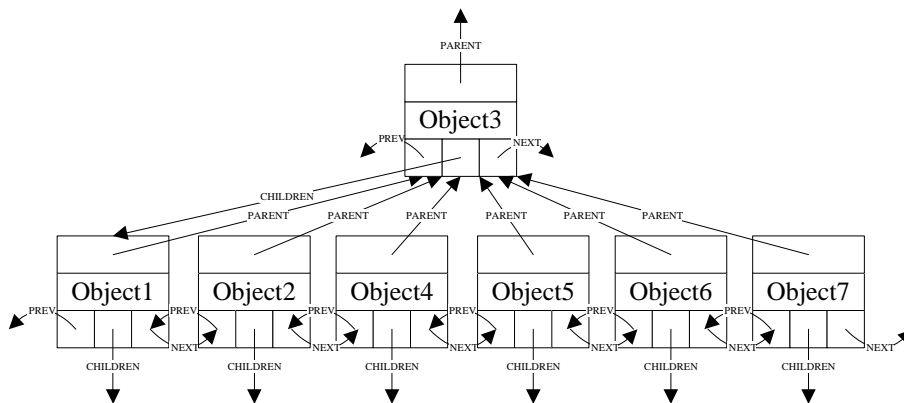


Figure 3.16 A tree of two decomposition levels.

The two transition operators are applied on every node of the linked list and when there is node where the “is-part-of” transition operator is not applicable with any other node, and the “consists-of” transition operator is applicable with all other nodes of the linked list, then it becomes parent of the rest nodes. In other words, the algorithm tries to find out which object bounding box includes all rest objects bounding boxes and simultaneously the former

object bounding box is not included in none other objects bounding boxes. Figure 3.16 illustrates how the linked list becomes a tree of two levels of detail.

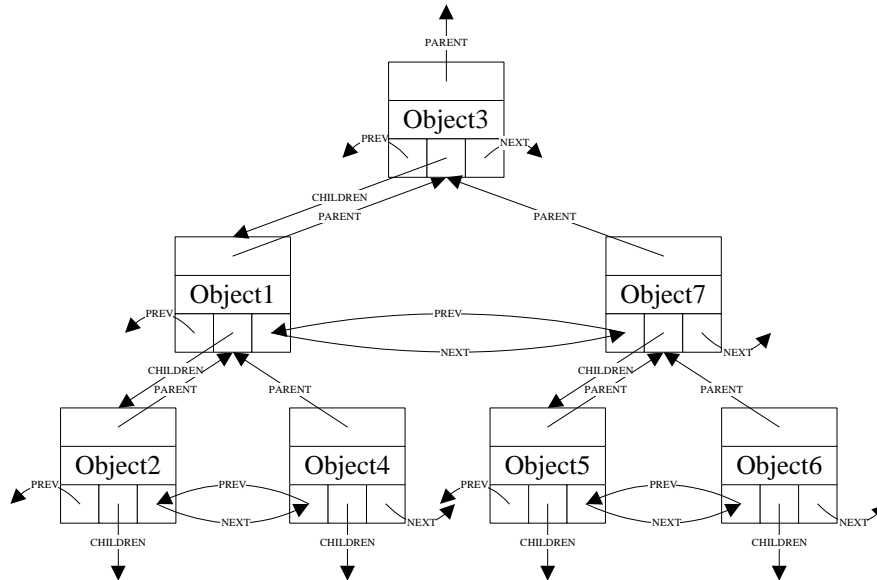


Figure 3.17 The decomposition tree

The construction of the decomposition tree is based on the depth-first search and the process continues recursively for every node as any of the transition operators is applicable. For every level of detail that is created, the respective arrows of the nodes, that constitute the detail level, are redefined to point to the appropriate nodes. When both transition operators are not applicable to none node of a level of detail then the process backtracks to some node of a higher level of detail and the process goes on a different direction. The process stops when both transition operators are not applicable and all nodes have been processed.

Figure 3.17 shows the decomposition tree after the process has been completed. Algorithm 3.1 illustrates the main core of the operation that converts a linked list into a decomposition tree.

At this point it must be pointed out that the algorithm is effective and all computations are quick. The algorithm has been tested with more than forty objects and it effectively operates on constructing the declarative decomposition tree and updating all respective arrow labels appropriately. Thereby, the intermediate model is appropriately constructed so it will be

enriched, with semantic knowledge by exploiting the knowledge base and it will be correctly updated whenever the designer applies modifications on the scene.

```

CONVERT_LIST_TREE (objectnode node)
Begin
  If (node.has_geometry is_part_of other node.has_geometry) Then
    If (node.next not null) Then
      node = node.next
      CONVERT_LIST_TREE (node)
    Else
      Return
    End If
  Else
    father = node
    If (node.has_geometry consists_of other node.has_geometry) Then
      set node as children of father
      node = node.children
      convert_list_tree (node)
      If (father.next not null)
        node = father.next
        CONVERT_LIST_TREE (node)
      Else
        Return
      End If
    Else
      If (node.next not null)
        node = node.next
        CONVERT_LIST_TREE (node)
      Else
        Return
      End If
    End If
  End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.1 Convert a linked list into a decomposition tree

3.5.3 Extraction of relations and properties

As soon as RS-MultiCAD has constructed the stratified representation, the next step is to extract all valid relations and properties which are accrued by applying all relation and property types of the knowledge database. Every node of the declarative layer of the stratified representation embodies two collection classes.

```

EXTRACTION (objectnode node)
Begin
  If (node.children != null) Then
    CALCULATE_PROPERTIES (node.children)
    CALCULATE_REFLECTIVE_RELATIONS (node.children)
    EXTRACTION (node.children)
  If (node.next != null) Then
    COMPUTE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (node)
    CALCULATE_PROPERTIES (node.next.geometry)
    CALCULATE_REFLECTIVE_RELATIONS (node.next.geometry)
    EXTRACTION (node.next)
  Else
    COMPUTE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (node)
    Return
  End If
  Else If (node.next != null)
    COMPUTE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (node)
    CALCULATE_PROPERTIES (node.next.geometry)
    CALCULATE_REFLECTIVE_RELATIONS (node.next.geometry)
    EXTRACTION (node.next)
  Else If (node.next == null)
    COMPUTE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (node)
    Return
  Else
    Return
  End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.2 Extract relations and properties

The first collection class contains all valid relations of the node and the second incorporates all properties along with their values. RS-MultiCAD uses a recursive algorithm, which is presented in Algorithm 3.2, in order to extract all relations and properties.

According to Algorithm 3.2, the system starts from the root node and uses a preorder way to traverse the decomposition tree. Using preorder the system visits, first of all, the root node, then the left sub-tree and finally the right sub-tree. On every node of the declarative layer of the stratified representation, the extraction module receives the geometric information of the object by following the “has-geometry” label. As the geometric data are known, the extraction module applies all stored properties in order to find out the current valid values.

```

COMPUTE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (objectnode node)
Begin
  objectnode temp = node
  While (temp.previous != null)
    temp=temp.previous
  End While
  While (temp.next != null)
    If (node != temp)
      CALCULATE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (node.geometry, temp.geometry)
    temp = temp.next
  End While
  If (node != temp)
    CALCULATE_SPATIAL_RELATIONS (node.geometry, temp.geometry)
  End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.3 Compute the spatial relations

The property types and their values are added to the property collection of the specific node. The system places the property type along with its declarative value, which has been properly calculated, to the property collection.

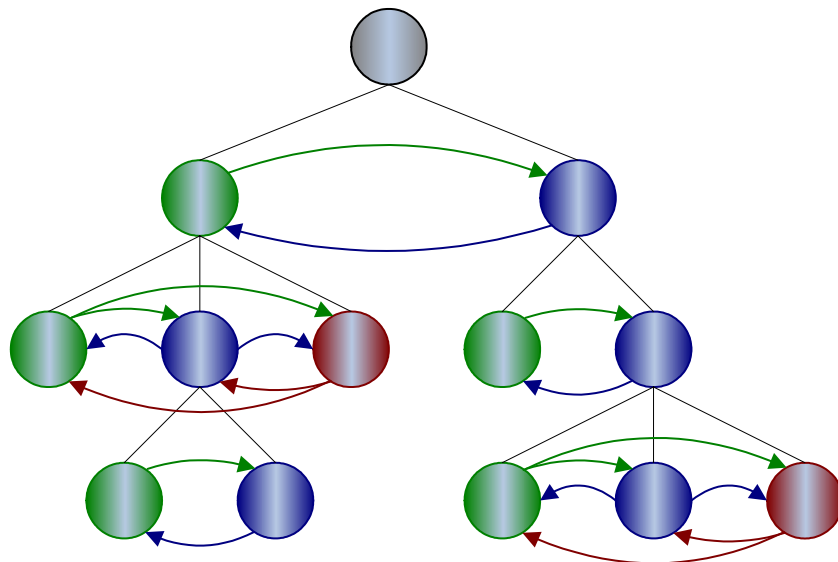


Figure 3.18 The calculation of spatial relations

The extraction module continues applying all stored reflective relations and infers which are valid or not. The valid reflective relations are added to the relation collection of the

specific node. The extraction module places the reflective relation type along with the object name to the relation collection. The extraction module also examines which spatial relations are valid. Preparative the system to compute which spatial relations are valid, it follows a specific tactic.

When the system visits a specific node in order to extract the spatial relations, it has to compare the geometry of the specific node with the geometry of the rest nodes, of the same level of detail, which share the same parent. Algorithm 3.3 presents the specific tactic which is followed by the extraction module in order to compare the visited node with the rest nodes. The specific tactic uses the “previous” and “next” labels of each node in order to traverse all appropriate nodes of the same level of detail. The extraction module places the spatial relation type along with the related object name to the relation collection of the node. Figure 3.18 schematically presents which comparisons have to be made on the geometry of the nodes in order the system to extract the spatial relations of the specific decomposition tree.

As soon as the process has been completed, the extraction module queries the scene database in order to find which are the relations and properties that were declared by the designer at the beginning. The extraction module then traverses the decomposition tree of the declarative layer in order to find out the respective relations and properties and mark them as “designer requirement”. The rule set consists of these relations and properties.

3.5.4 The propagation policy

The control module applies a specific propagation policy as soon as a modification occurs. Figure 3.19 presents the propagation policy. The object under modification and all related objects constitute a set. That set will be modified by the system. The control module calculates their new positions along with their new dimensions. Thus, RS-MultiCAD has already updated the geometric layer of the stratified representation only for the objects that belong to that set.

As the geometric layer of the stratified representation has been updated, RS-MultiCAD must update the declarative layer respectively. The process starts from the object under modification where the control module finds out the relations and the properties which have been marked as “designer requirements” and belong to the collection classes. These

relations and properties are applied on the new respective geometric node of the object under modification and if all these are valid, then the same process continues with the related objects, their descendants and ancestors. This match operation is necessary in order RS-MultiCAD to examine if all designer requirements are still valid.

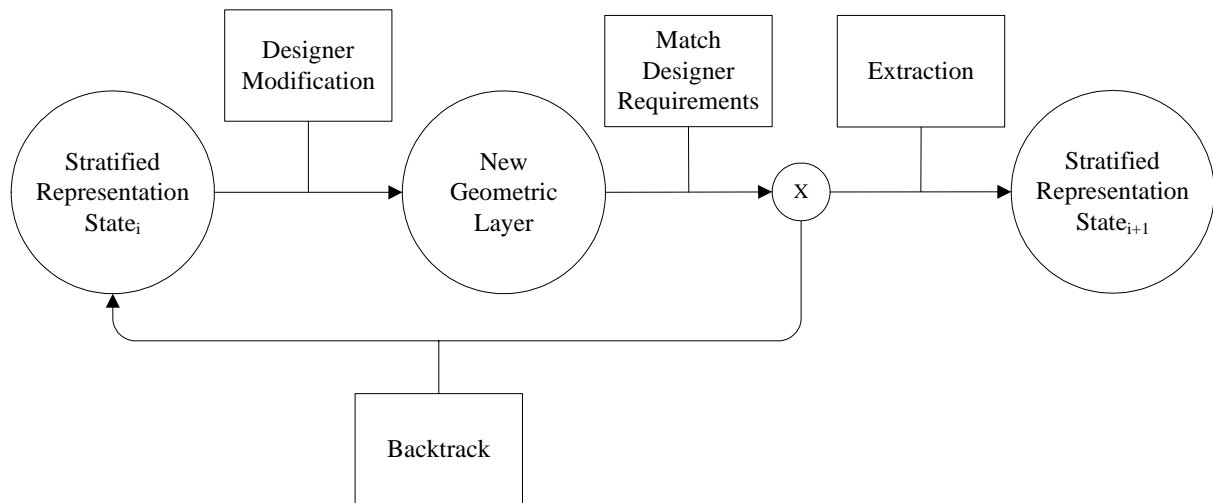


Figure 3.19 The IDEF3 diagram of the propagation policy

Otherwise the relations and properties which have been marked as “designer requirements” are not valid and they are sent to the explanation module. The process does not end and continues in order to find out all invalid relations and properties examining the related objects, their descendants and ancestors. The explanation module is activated informing the designer about the invalid relations and properties.

Whenever a modification occurs without taking into consideration the rule set, the control module through the propagation policy updates both layers of the object under modification, its descendants and ancestors without applying the match operation.

3.5.5 Scene modifications

3.5.5.1 Move operation

A selected scene can be modified by the designer in various ways. The move operation offers the designer the ability to alter the position of a selected object and can be performed with or without taking into consideration the rule set, which consists of predefined relations

and properties of the objects. The main idea that underlies the handling of the move operation is based on the calculation of a general bounding box that embodies all related objects. Algorithm 3.4 presents the move operation.

```

MOVE (object)
Begin
  If respect_rule_set Then
    find all related objects
  End If
  calculate bounding_box with all related objects
  calculate bounding_box with new positions of all related objects
  If bounding_box in site Then
    If space = available Then
      update all related objects with new positions
      update all descendants of all related objects with new positions
      update all ancestors of all related objects with new positions, dimensions
      If respect_rule_set Then
        check rule_set for all related objects
        check rule_set for all descendants of all related objects
        check rule_set for all ancestors of all related objects
        If OK Then
          MoveCode = "success"
          Return
        Else
          backtrack all ancestors to old positions, dimensions
          backtrack all descendants to old positions
          backtrack all related objects to old positions
          call explanation_module
          MoveCode = "rule_set_violation"
          Return
        End If
      Else
        MoveCode = "success"
      End If
    Else
      MoveCode = "position_not_available"
      Return
    End If
  Else
    MoveCode = "out_of_site"
    Return
  End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.4 Move operation

In case the designer takes into consideration the rule set, the general bounding box that will be moved is not only the bounding box of the selected object, but also the bounding boxes of all related objects of the selected object and furthermore the related objects of the related objects and so on recursively as the rule set indicates. On the other hand, in case the designer does not take into consideration the rule set, the general bounding box is identical with the bounding box of the selected object, ignoring the rule set.

Two main checks are executed in order to be clear whether the new position of the general bounding box is inside the scene and is not occupied by another object that is not enmeshed with the move operation. The control module applies the propagation policy and whereas the relations and properties that belong to the rule set are still valid, the new state is legalised. The next step is to recalculate the relations and properties of the nodes of the declarative layer. The new relations and properties are added to the collection classes respectively. If there is a violation, then stratified representation backtracks to the old state and the control module activates the explanation module.

3.5.5.2 Scale-resize operation

The scale operation aims to change the dimensions of the object relatively, while the resize operation changes the dimensions of the object according to the designer requirement. The scale and resize operations are treated in the same manner by the algorithm which is presented in Algorithm 3.5.

The scale-resize operation shares with the move operation the same underlying idea that is based on the calculation of a general bounding box that embodies all related objects. The main difference between the scale-resize and move operation based on the fact that the dimensions of the bounding box, of the object under scale-resize, are changed while the related objects must simply move to a new position.

At the time that the general bounding box has been calculated, RS-MultiCAD system examines if the general bounding box is inside the scene and its position is not occupied by another object which it does not belong to the related objects. The position of the all related objects and the position, dimensions of their descendants, ancestors are updated appropriately, implementing the propagation policy.

The control module applies the propagation policy and whereas the relations and properties that belong to the rule set are still valid then the new state is legalised. The next step is to recalculate the relations and properties of the nodes of the declarative layer in order the declarative layer to reflect the real state of the scene. The new relations and properties are added to the collection classes respectively. If there is a violation, then the stratified representation backtracks to the old state and the control module activates the explanation module.

```

SCALE_RESIZE (object)
Begin
  If respect_rule_set Then
    find all related objects
  End If
  calculate bounding_box with all related objects
  calculate bounding_box with new positions, dimensions of all related objects
  If bounding_box in site Then
    If space = available Then
      update all related objects with new positions, dimensions
      update all descendants of all related objects with new positions, dimensions
      update all ancestors of all related objects with new positions, dimensions
      If respect_rule_set Then
        check rule_set for all related objects
        check rule_set for all descendants of all related objects
        check rule_set for all ancestors of all related objects
        If OK Then
          ScaleCode = "success"
          Return
        Else
          backtrack all ancestors to old positions, dimensions
          backtrack all descendants to old positions, dimensions
          backtrack all related objects to old positions, dimensions
          call explanation_module
          ScaleCode = "rule_set_violation"
          Return
        End If
      Else
        ScaleCode = "success"
      End If
    Else
      ScaleCode = "position_not_available"
      Return
    End If
  Else
    ScaleCode = "out_of_site"
    Return
  End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.5 Scale and resize operation

3.5.5.3 Insert operation

The insert operation allows the designer to add a new object to the scene. The new object creation may correspond to a leaf node or an abstract node on the declarative layer of the stratified representation. The insertion of a leaf node is implemented with the specification of the position, dimensions, object type and its parent while the insertion of an abstract node needs the specification of the object type, parents and possible children of the new node. In the latter insertion, the specification of the position and dimensions are not required since the new abstract node inherits by recalculating the position and dimensions of the bounding box from the positions and dimensions of the specified children.

```

INSERT (object)
Begin
  If position_of_new_object in site Then
    If position_of_new_object = available Then
      create node on the declarative layer
      create node on the geometric layer
      If parent_of_new_object = abstract node Then
        read which children will be children of the new_object
        set children as children of the new_object
      End If
      update all ancestors of the new_object with new positions, dimensions
      InsertCode = "success"
    Else
      InsertCode = "position_not_available"
      Return
    End If
  Else
    InsertCode = "out_of_site"
    Return
  End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.6 Insert operation

Algorithm 3.6 presents the insert operation. After creating a node on the declarative layer and a node on the geometric layer, the RS-MultiCAD system performs two main checks in order to determine whereas the position of the new object is placed inside the scene and is not occupied by another object. In case the new object creation corresponds to an abstract node, a special manipulation is performed in order the pre-specified nodes to become children of the new node. The position and dimensions of the ancestors are updated appropriately. Finally, the extraction module is activated in order to calculate the relations and properties of

the new object and recalculate the relations and properties of the rest objects. It must be pointed out that the insertion of a new object is not compared with rule set since the relations and the properties of the stratified representation remain the same for the existing objects. The update of the stratified representation occurs only for the new inserted object.

3.5.5.4 Deletion operation

The deletion operation allows the designer to delete an existing object of the scene. The object under deletion may correspond to a leaf node or an abstract node on the declarative layer of the stratified representation. The deletion of a leaf node is implemented by erasing the relative nodes from the geometric and the declarative layer of the stratified representation. The deletion of an abstract node causes the collapse of the sub-tree, where the object under deletion is root, of the declarative layer and the deletion of all respective nodes of the geometric layer. The stratified representation is updated in order to reflect the new state of the scene after the deletion and the extraction module is activated in order to recalculate the relations and properties of the rest existing objects.

3.5.5.5 Extra geometric characteristics operation

Apart from the topological modifications that can be applied, the designer can affect the geometry of an object by changing its shape. The object modelling of type “roof” is parametric leaving the ability to the designer to affect the geometry of the object by changing the values of the parameters. The designer can alter the value of the “centre point”, “offset length”, “offset width”, “D offset length” and “D offset width” parameter. The designer can also modify the control points of the B-Spline curves reforming the curvature of the respective curves. In this way, RS-MultiCAD allows the designer to shape the object of type “roof” according to his/her requirements.

3.5.6 The resultant declarative description

The reconstruction phase returns the new declarative description to the declarative phase just when the designer has completed all modifications on the scene. RS-MultiCAD returns the new declarative description to MultiCAD by submitting the rule set. The rule set incorporates all relations and properties that have been declared by the designer. The new

declarative description must be enriched perspective the solution generator to produce less solutions on one hand and solutions which are closer to the designer requirements on the other hand. The enrichment of the declarative description can be done by influencing the rule set. The rule set can be influenced either by the designer or by the system.

```

SET_GENERALIZATION_FACTOR (objectnode node, int gf, int max_tree_depth)
Begin
  If (node.children not null) Then
    increase tree_depth
    If ( ( (tree_depth <= gf) AND (node.children.children not null) )
      OR (gf==max_tree_depth ) ) Then
      add geometric properties of node.children to the rule set
    End If
    SET_GENERALIZATION_FACTOR (node.children, gf, max_tree_depth)
  If (node.next not null) Then
    If ( ( (tree_depth <= gf) AND (node.next.children not null) )
      OR (gf==max_tree_depth ) ) Then
      add geometric properties of node.next to the rule set
    End If
    SET_GENERALIZATION_FACTOR (node.next, gf, max_tree_depth)
  Else
    decrease tree_depth
    return
  End If
Else If (node.next not null) Then
  If ( ( (tree_depth <= gf) AND (node.next.children not null) )
    OR (gf==max_tree_depth ) ) Then
    add geometric properties of node.next to the rule set
  End If
  SET_GENERALIZATION_FACTOR (node.next, gf, max_tree_depth)
Else
  decrease tree_depth
  return
End If
End

```

Algorithm 3.7 Set the generalization factor

The rule set is offered as it is, in the manual way, if the designer has already changed the rule set by adding relations and properties. In the automated way a set of geometric properties are added to the rule set according to the generalization factor since the solutions which are produced by the MultiCAD solution generator, differ on the position and dimensions of the object that constitute the scene. The main idea of the automated way is to

lock the position and dimensions of some objects and leave the solution generator to produce solutions about the rest objects.

Algorithm 3.7 illustrates the main core of the algorithm that handles which nodes of the decomposition tree will provide their geometric properties to the rule set. For this purpose, the pre-order traversal is used which traverses the left sub-tree (if any) and then traverses the right sub-tree (if any). The algorithm starts from the root of the decomposition tree and examines whereas any child exists. If so, the control passes to that node, which is the first child, and examines if the depth of the tree at this point is less than the generalization factor and if there is any descendant. In case of the checks are valid then the geometric properties of the node are added to the rule set. The algorithm is recursive and continues by calling the children of the node.

As soon as the current node is a leaf node of the decomposition tree, the algorithm examines whereas any brother exists. If so then the control passes to the node, which is the nearest brother and examines if the depth of the tree at this point is less than the generalization factor and if there is any descendant. If so then the pure geometric properties of that node are added to the rule set and the algorithm continues by calling itself recursively with the next brother of the node. The algorithm traverses the whole tree and adds only the pure geometric properties of the nodes whose depth is less than the generalization factor, which has been specified by the designer.

At this point it must be pointed out that if the generalization factor is less than the maximum tree depth then nodes with depth less than the generalization factor and without descendants are not allowed to add their pure geometric properties to the rule set. The main reason is based on the fact that the addition of the pure geometric properties of leaf nodes to the rule set will lead MultiCAD to generate geometric solutions with no diversity at these points since nodes inherit their topological position on the scene from their children. Unlike, if the generalization factor equals to tree depth then the pure geometric properties of all nodes are added to the rule set, leading MultiCAD to produce only one geometric solution in the next iteration.

Chapter 4

Experimental Results

The objective of this chapter is to present the experimental results that come out of the underlined functionality of RS-MultiCAD system. In the first sub-section a brief user guide of the RS-MultiCAD working environment is presented and in the second and third sub-section two different case studies are illustrated.

The choice of the case studies is based on two main reasons. The first reason is the origination of the geometric model. In the first case study an internal MultiCAD geometric model is used in order to demonstrate that the Extended Declarative Conception Cycle of MultiCAD operates properly. In the second case study an external geometric model, obtained from another geometric modeler, is used in order to show that RS-MultiCAD can operate as a link with other commercial CAD systems.

The second reason is based on the presentation of representative samples of reality. Both case studies incorporate elements which are indicated in real situations. In the first case study a block of buildings is evolved while in the second case study a layout of rooms is the objective of the experiment. The robustness of the system along with the flexibility, are good reasons against the complexity of the case studies.

Every time, the estimation of the results is based on the comparison with the correctness of the result as far as the scene modifications are concerned since the result is qualitative, in contrast with the estimation of the results of solution space reduction where the result is quantitative.

4.1 RS-MultiCAD environment

RS-MultiCAD environment includes panels, menus, a display and a toolbar. The declarative panel presents information about the decomposition tree of the declarative model, and the spatial, reflective relations, properties of the current selected object. The current geometric model is visualized on the graphical display. The pure geometric panel presents the

basic geometric characteristics of the selected object and the extra geometric panel presents the additional geometric characteristics of the current selected object. All panels provide scroll bars in order to hospitalize large scenes with many objects.

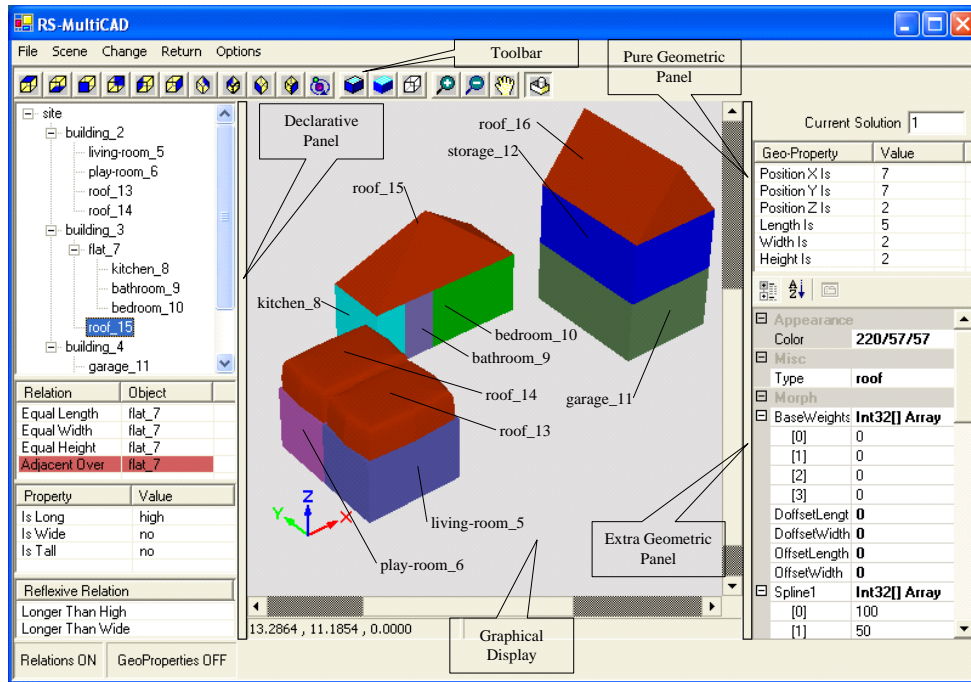








Figure 4.1 The working space of RS-MultiCAD

The toolbar provides many options to the designer to set the view point to top, bottom, left, right, front, back, southwest, southeast, northeast and northwest. Besides, the designer can start a continuous motion with the  button, by rotating the coordinate system around X and/or Y Axis.

Furthermore, the designer can shade the objects between polygon faces and colouring the object with its colour by using the  button or display the objects using lines and curves to represent the boundaries by using the  button. The  button combines the shade with the wire button. Additionally, the designer can zoom in/out the display and move the objects in the same direction by using the  button. The  button is used for perspective view.

On the “File” menu the designer can select menu commands for opening an existing database in order to load a geometric solution, saving a geometric solution and a declarative

description in a database and also opening and saving files with DXF file format (see Appendix B).

On the “Scene” menu the designer can set the view point of the scene through menu commands to top, bottom, left, right, front, back, southwest, southeast, northeast and northwest and also activate and deactivate the toolbar.

The “Change” menu consists of menu commands for moving an object of a selected geometric solution, scaling/resizing an object, inserting a new object and deleting an existing object. When the designer selects the “Move” menu command, the “Move” dialog box appears where the designer has to specify the new position of a selected object. When the designer selects the “Scale/Resize” menu command, the “Scale/Resize” dialog box appears which contains a tab control. The tab control is used to appear a dialog box for the “Scale” command and another dialog box for the “Resize” command. On the “Scale” dialog box the designer has to specify the percentage of scaling of a selected object. On the “Resize” dialog box the designer has to specify the new dimensions of the bounding box of the selected object.

When the designer selects the Insert menu command, the “Insert” dialog box appears. A tab control is used to appear a dialog box for the insertion of a leaf node and another dialog box for inserting an abstract node. On the “Leaf Node” dialog box the designer has to specify the object type, the node that will become parent, the position on the scene and the dimensions of the bounding box of the inserted object. On the “Abstract Node” dialog box the designer has to specify the object type, the node that will become parent along with the nodes that become children of the inserted object. When the designer selects the “Delete” menu command, a confirmation dialog box appears in order the designer to verify the deletion of a selected object.

The “Return” menu activates the “Return” dialog box which contains two radio buttons. One radio button is used for the reduction of the solution space by the manual way and the other is used for the reduction of the solution space by the automated way. When the radio button for the automated way is checked, a track bar (slider) is appeared and is used for visually adjusting a numeric setting. The track bar is used in order the designer to specify the generalization factor of the resultant declarative description.

4.1.1 Select mode

An object can be selected either by clicking on the declarative panel or on the graphical display. On the declarative panel, the decomposition tree offers to the designer the ability to select a leaf node or an abstract node as well. When the designer selects a node, all panels present the respective information of the node. On the graphical display the selection of an object, updates the panels with all relevant information of the object. An additional operation, the multi-selection is supported. The multi-selection permits the designer to select an abstract object after selecting all its descendants from the graphical display. In Figure 4.1, the selection of “building_5” object can be done by selecting the object “living-room_1” from the graphical display, holding down the CTRL button and continue selecting the “kitchen_2”, “bedroom_3”, and “bathroom_4” object from the graphical display. Besides, if the designer continues selecting the “garage_6” and the “roof_8” object then the object “site” is selected.

4.2 Case I – Internal MultiCAD geometric model

An initial declarative description produces a set of alternative geometric solutions. The Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the spatial, reflective relations and properties respectively, which the designer has declared during the declarative description phase and consist the rule set. A random solution is selected, which is illustrated in Figure 4.1, and is considered as the initial state for the below scene modifications. The stratified representation is presented in Figure 4.2.

Object1	Relation	Object2
living-room_5	adjacent under	roof_13
play-room_6	adjacent under	roof_14
roof_15	adjacent over	flat_7
storage_12	adjacent under	roof_16
storage_12	adjacent over	garage_11
bathroom_9	adjacent east	kitchen_8
bathroom_9	adjacent west	bedroom_10

Table 4.1 Spatial Relations

Object	Relation
building_3	longer than wide

Table 4.2 Reflective Relations

Object	Property	Value
building_3	is_tall	medium

Table 4.3 Properties

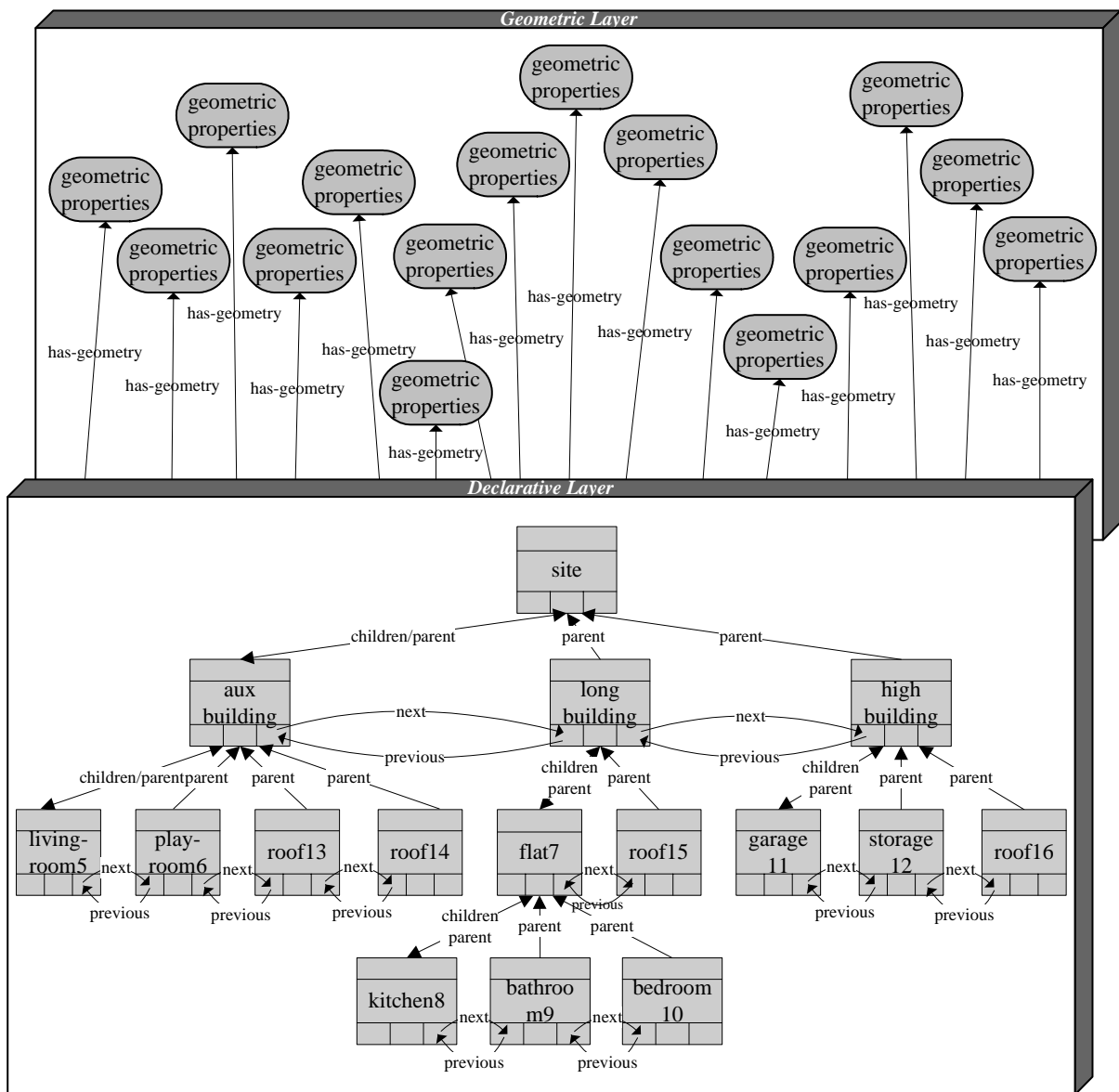


Figure 4.2 The stratified representation of Case I

4.2.1 Scene modifications

4.2.1.1 Object rename

The name of the object can be renamed by clicking on the object name and typing the new name that the designer prefers. The objects “building_2”, “building_3” and “building_4” become “aux_building”, “long_building” and “high_building” respectively.

4.2.1.2 Move

In case the designer moves the object “long_building” to a new position that causes a move of the children of the “long_building”. As soon as the new position of the object “long_building” is available and included in the “site”, the new position becomes current position of the object. The object “long_building” consists of the object “roof_15” and “flat_7” which decomposes further to “kitchen_8”, “bathroom_9” and “bedroom_10”. The modification is propagated to all descendants in order to update their current position accordingly. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

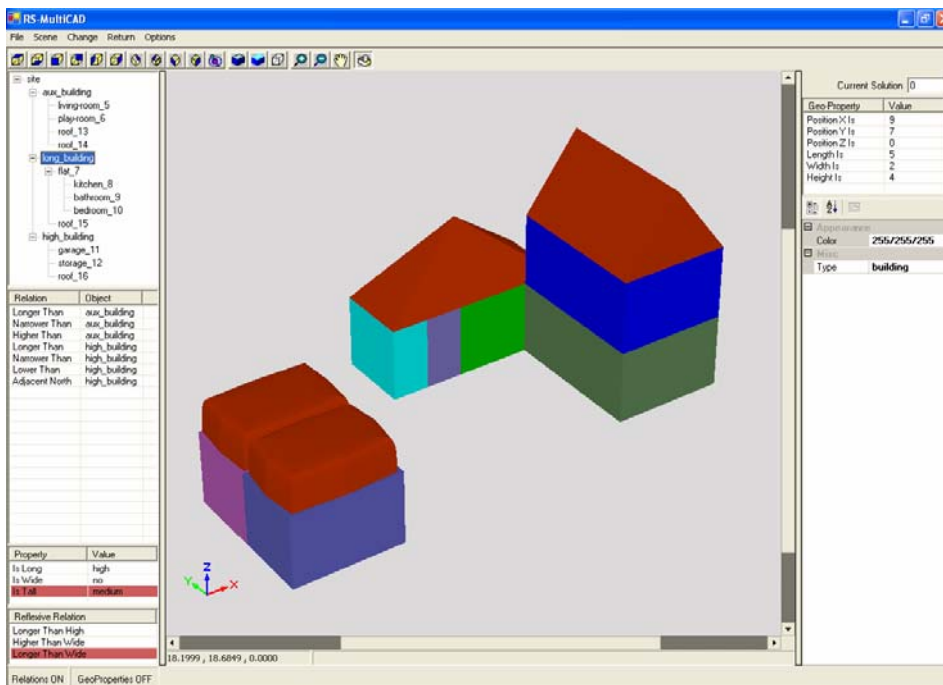


Figure 4.3 Move “long_building” to new position

In case the designer moves the object “kitchen_8” to a new position that causes a move of the brothers of the “kitchen_8”. The object “bathroom_9” is adjacent west to the object “kitchen_8” and adjacent east to the object “bedroom_10” according to the rule set, so the objects that are going to move are the “bathroom_9” and “bedroom_10” as well. The new positions are calculated and as they are available and included in the “site”, the new positions become current positions of the objects.

The move of the object “kitchen_8” is propagated to brothers because the designer wants to keep the relations that are relative to the specific object but also is propagated to ancestors of the “kitchen_8” so the positions of the object “flat_7” and “long_building” are updated. The object “roof_15” remains at the same position since the spatial relation “roof_15” is adjacent over to “flat_7”, is still valid. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.4

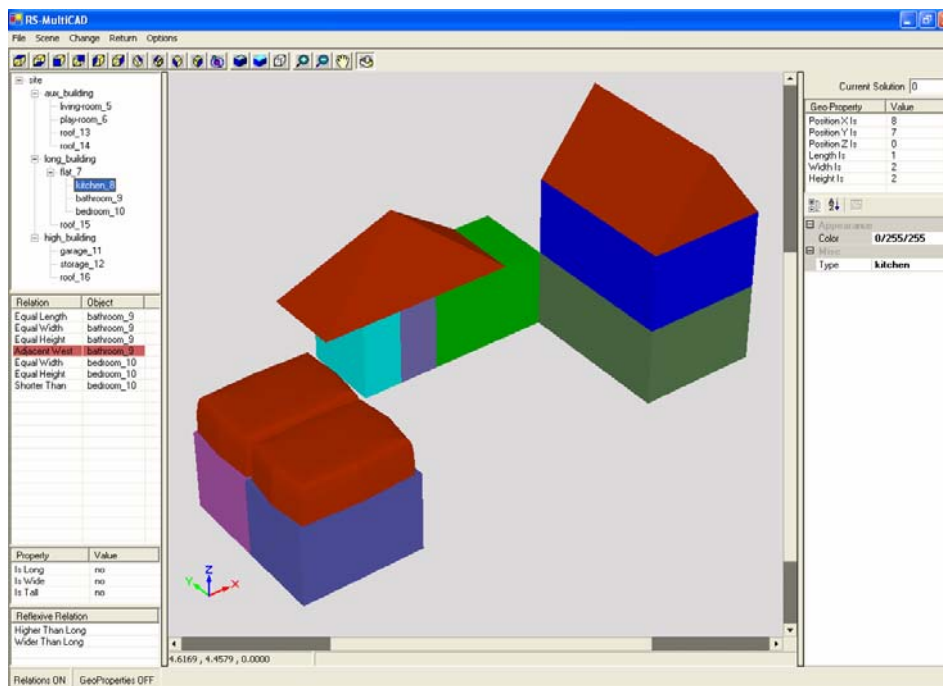


Figure 4.4 Move “kitchen_8” to new position

In case the designer moves the object “flat_7” to a new position that causes a possible move of the brothers and children of the “flat_7”. As soon as the new position of the object “flat_7” is available and included in the “site”, the new position becomes current position of the object. The system propagates the modification to object “roof_15” and updates its new position. Besides, the modification is propagated to ancestors and descendants of the object

“flat_7”. In other words, the system updates the object “long_building”, “kitchen_8”, “bathroom_9” and “bedroom_10” with their new positions. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.5.

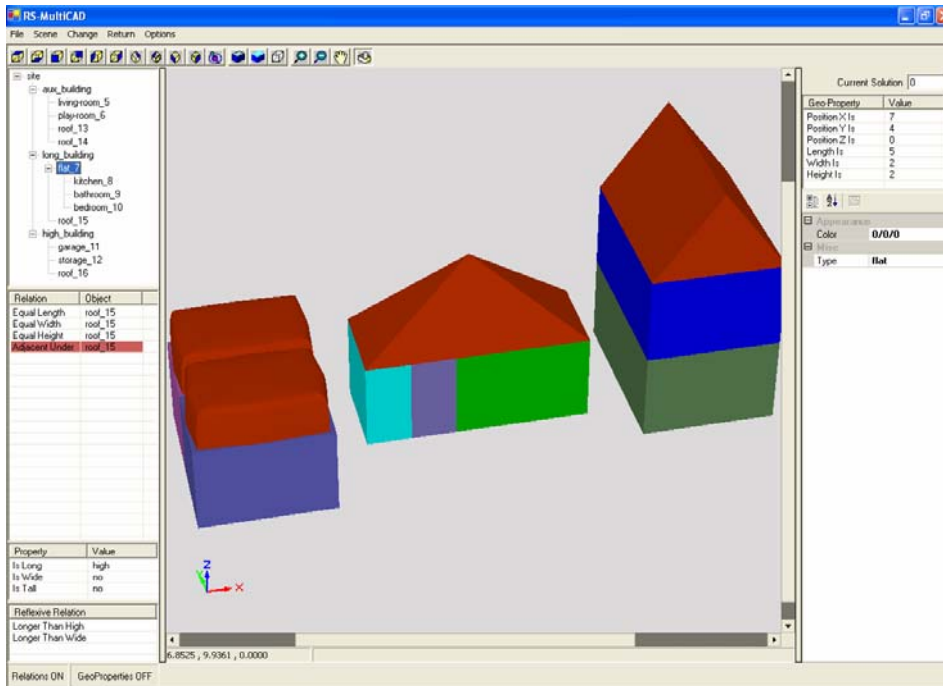


Figure 4.5 Move “flat_7” to new position

In case the designer moves the object “kitchen_8” to the (7, 11, 0) position that causes a violation of the rule set and the modification is canceled. The object “kitchen_8” is spatially related with the objects “bathroom_9” and “bedroom_10”. The system propagates the modification and calculates the new positions of the brothers of the object “kitchen_8”.

The objects “flat_7” and “long_building” are updated with their new positions. According to their new positions, there are two relations, “flat_7” is adjacent over with “roof_15” and “long_building” is longer than wide, which are violated and the modification is canceled. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.6.

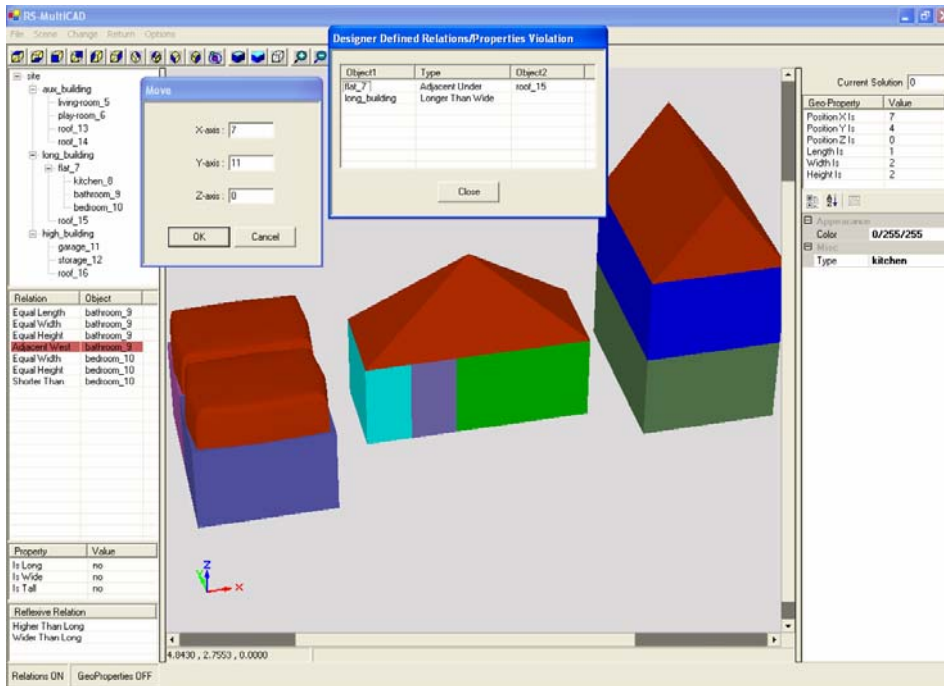


Figure 4.6 Violation of “kitchen_8” move

In case the designer moves the object “kitchen_8” to a new position without taking into account the rule set that causes a move ignoring the rule set. As soon as the new position of the object “kitchen_8” is available and included in the “site”, the new position becomes current position of the object.

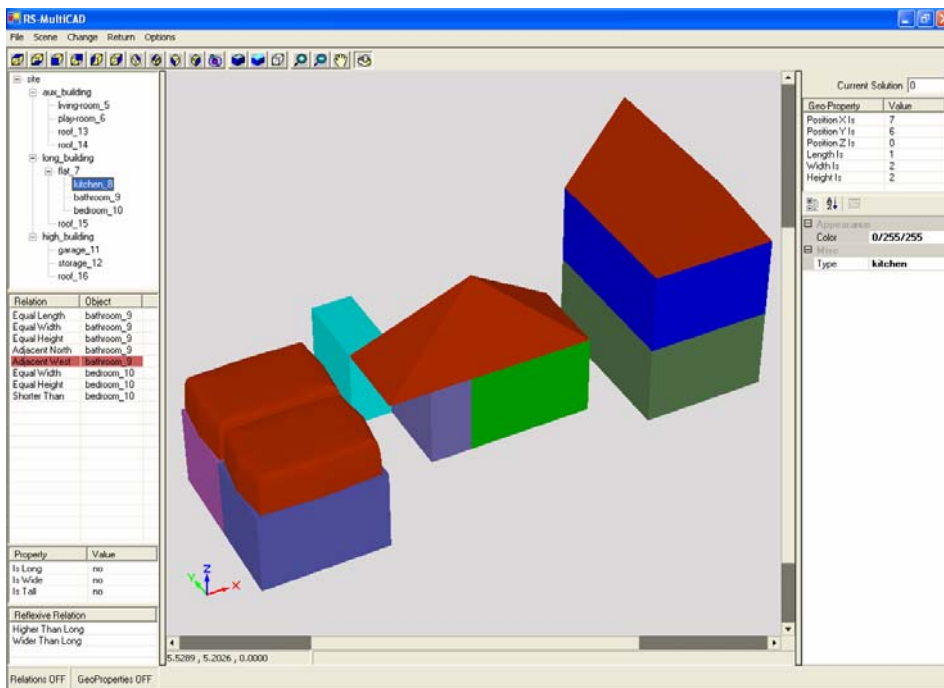


Figure 4.7 Move “kitchen_8” to new position ignoring the rule set

The system recalculates the relations of the object “kitchen_8” that are valid. The object “bathroom_9” is adjacent west to the object “kitchen_8”, which belongs to the rule set, but the relation is not valid any more and disappears from the declarative panel. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.7.

In case the designer moves the object “kitchen_8” to a new position that is occupied by another object, the move operation is canceled. Every time, the designer wants to move an object, two main checks take place. The new position must be available which means that none of the rest objects occupies the specific position. Besides, the new position must be included in the object “site”, which is the root of the scene.

In the current example, as the move of the object “kitchen_8” is propagated to its brothers, the new position of the object “bedroom_10” is occupied by the object “garage_11” and the modification is canceled. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.8.

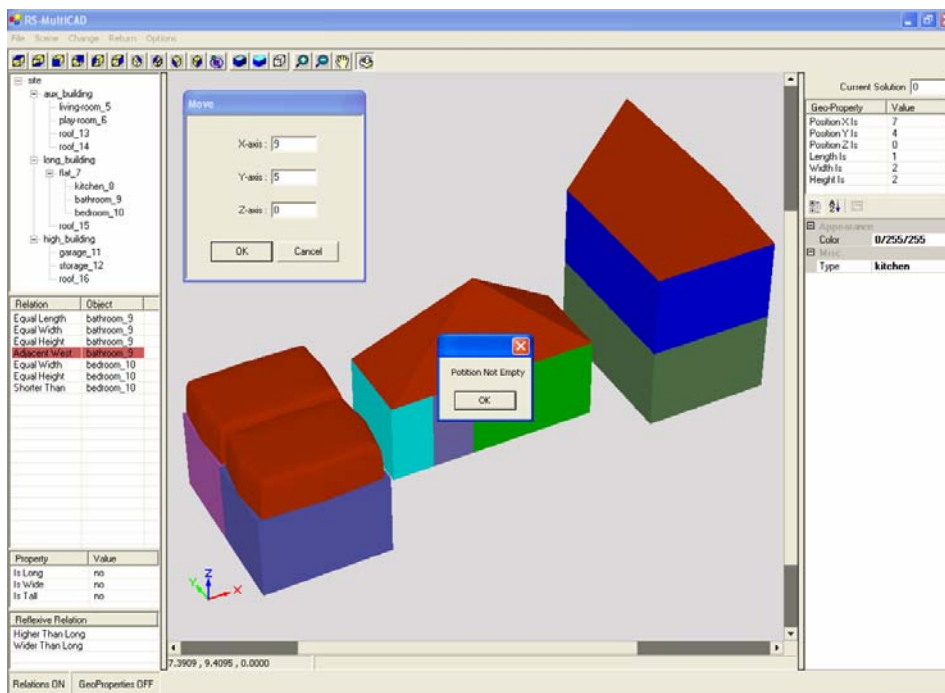


Figure 4.8 Position not available

In case the designer moves the object “long_building” to a new position that is next to “high_building” object, the relation “long_building adjacent north high_building” emerges.

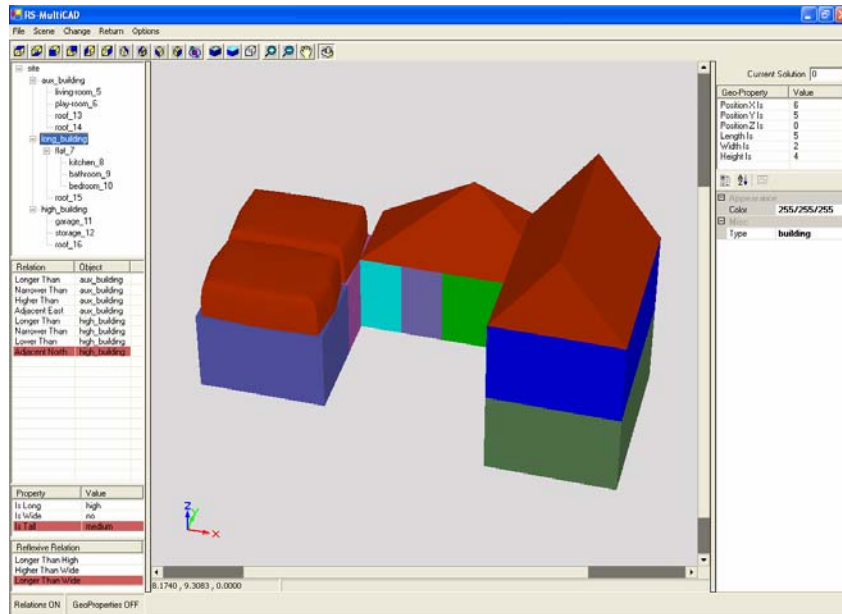


Figure 4.9 Move “long_building”

In that case if the designer adds the new relation to the rule set and moves “long_building” next to “aux_building” that causes a move of the “high_building” object as well. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.9.

4.2.1.3 Scale-Resize

In case the designer resizes the object “bathroom_9” to a new length equals to 2, the modification is applied. The object “bathroom_9” is adjacent west to the object “kitchen_8” and adjacent east to the object “bedroom_10” according to the rule set. Changing the length of the object “bathroom_9”, the modification is propagated to its brothers. The modification does not affect the object “kitchen_9”, which remains in the same position, but affects the object “bedroom_10”, which moves to a new position. The ancestors of the object “bathroom_9” are updated accordingly. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.10.

In case the designer resizes the object “flat_7” to a new length equals to 7, the changes are propagated to all children of the object “flat_7”. None of relations and properties, which belong to the rule set, is violated.

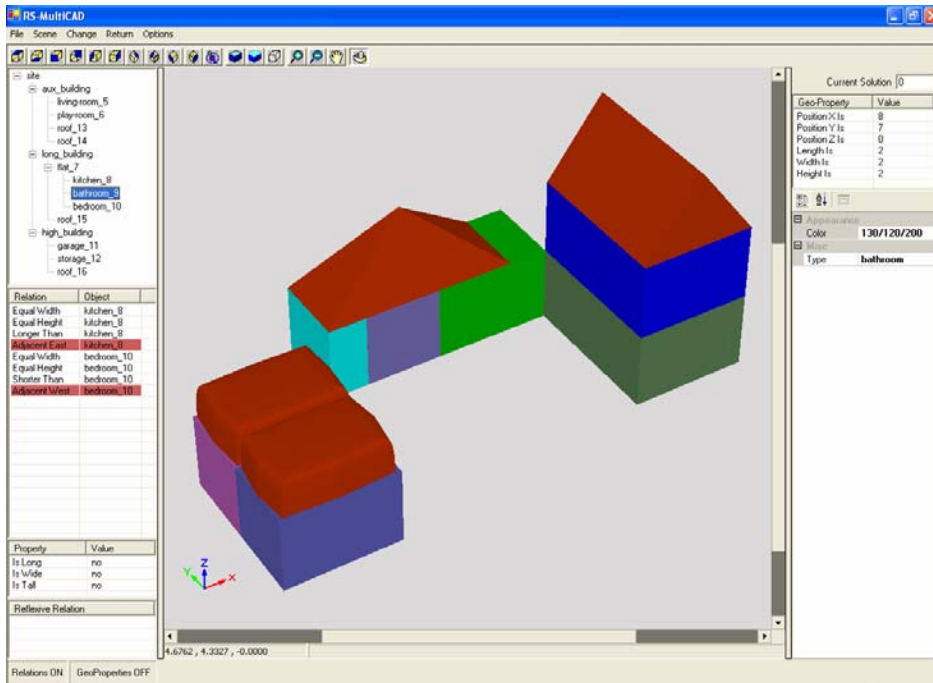


Figure 4.10 Resize “bathroom_9”

The descendants of the object “flat_7” resize their lengths accordingly. The lengths of the object “kitchen_8”, “bathroom_9” and “bedroom_10” becomes 1.4, 1.4 and 4.2 respectively. It must be pointed out, that the lengths rate of the descendants remains the same as before the modification. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.11.

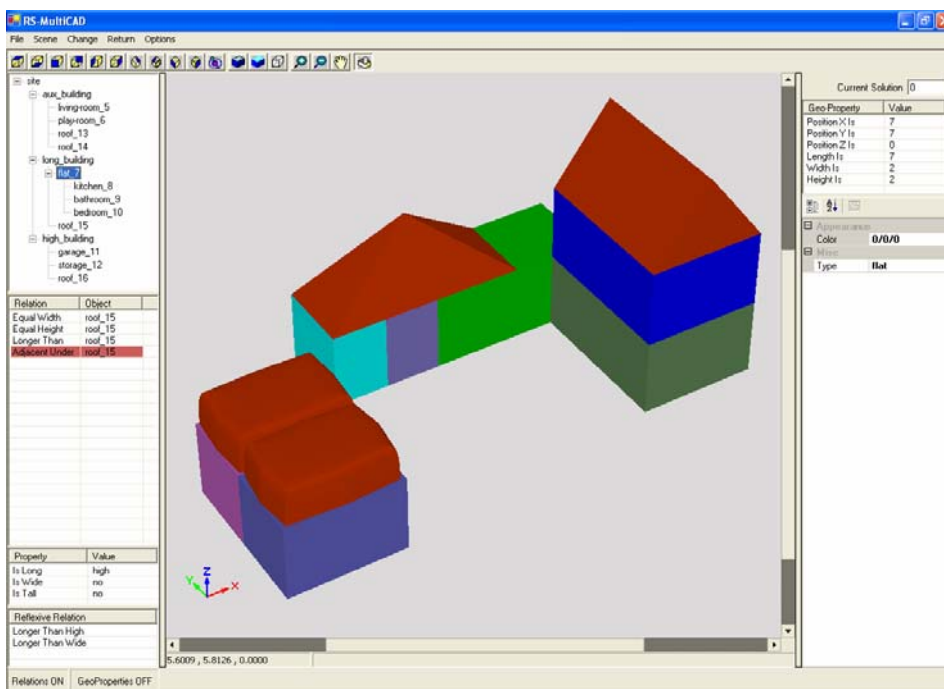


Figure 4.11 Resize “flat_7” to a new length

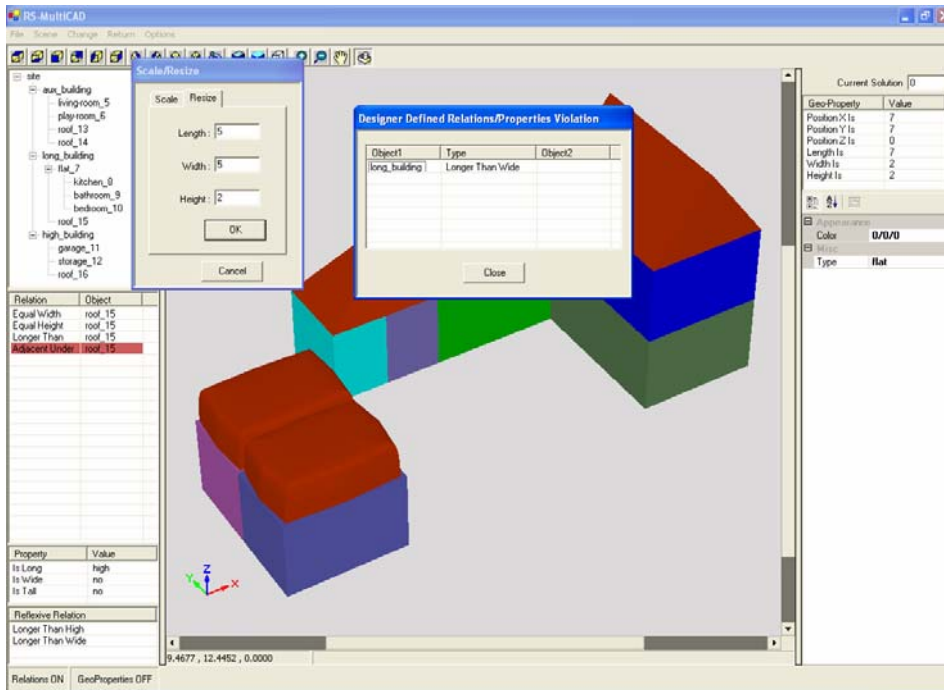


Figure 4.12 Violation of resize “flat_7”

In case the designer resizes the object “flat_7” to a new length and width equal to 5, the reflective relation “longer_than_wide” of the object “long_building” is violated and the modification is canceled. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.12.

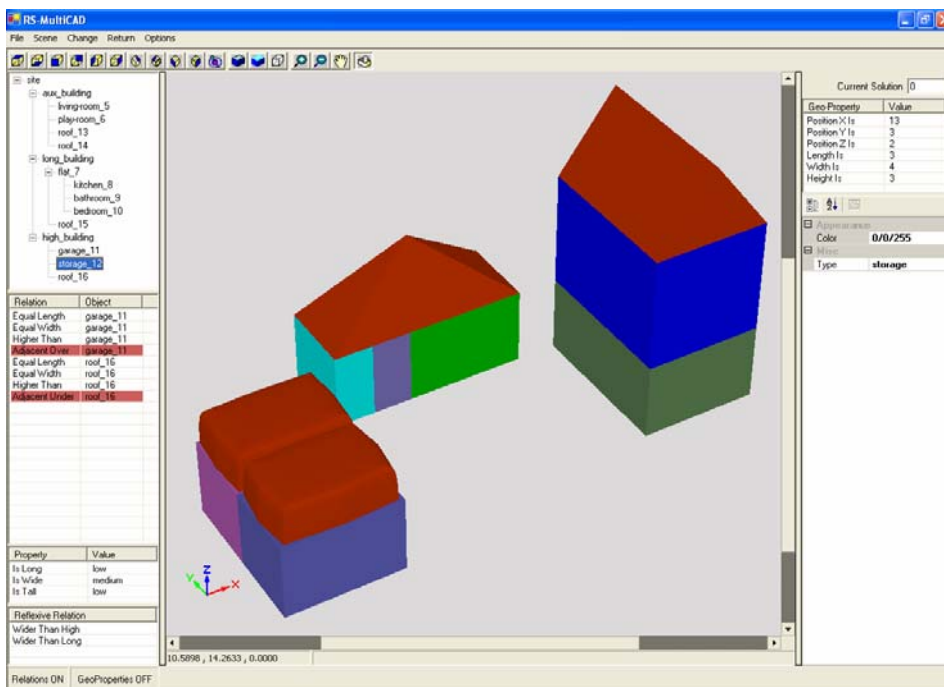


Figure 4.13 Resize “storage_12” to a new height

In case the designer resizes the object “storage_12” to a new height equals to 3, the modification is applied. The object “storage_12” is adjacent under to the object “roof_16” and adjacent over to the object “garage_11” according to the rule set. The new position of the object “storage_12” is occupied by the object “roof_16” but since the two objects are spatially related with a relation according to the rule set the modification is valid. Changing the height of the object “storage_12” causes a move of the object “roof_16” to a new position while the object “garage_11” remains at the same position. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.13.

In case the designer resizes the object “storage_12” to a new height equals to 4 without taking into account the rule set, the modification is canceled since the position is occupied by another object. As already pointed out, the modification of the object “storage_12” height is applied if and only if the object “roof_16” moves to a new position, setting the old position available to object “storage_12”. As soon as the object “roof_16” remains at the same position, since the rule set is not taken into account, the modification is canceled because the position is not available. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.14.

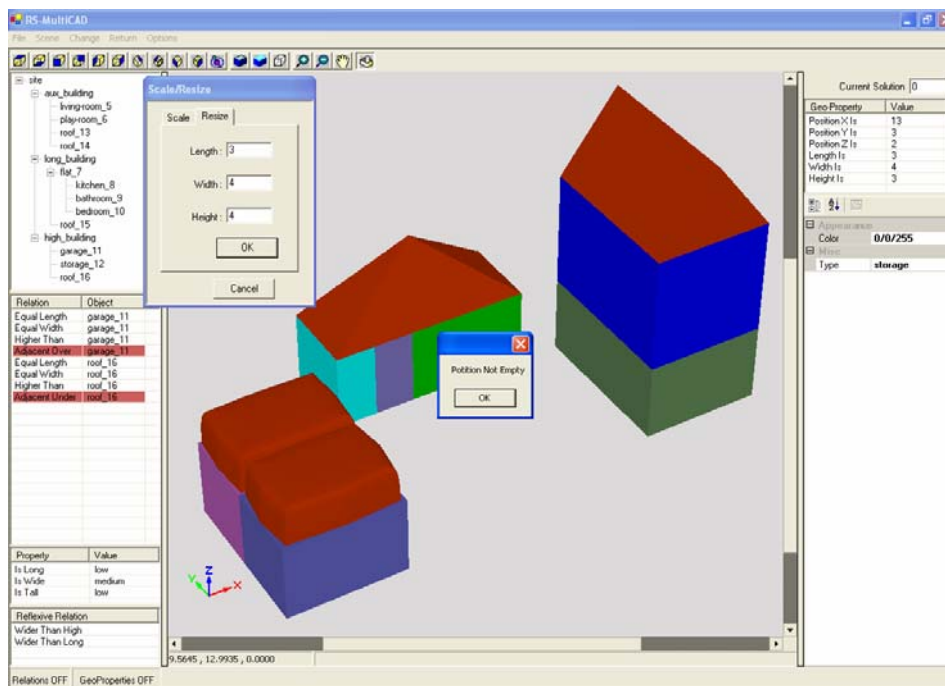


Figure 4.14 Position not available

In case the designer scales the object “aux_building” by 10%, the modification is applied. The descendants of the object “aux_building” are updated respectively. The

dimensions rate of the objects remains the same as before the modifications for all concerned objects. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.15.

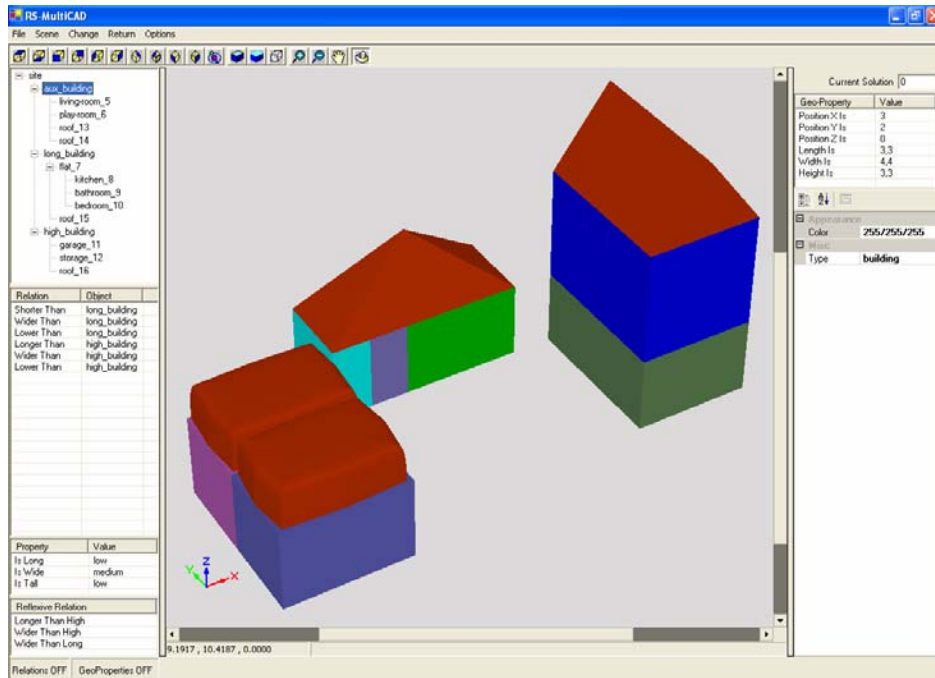


Figure 4.15 Scale “aux_building”

In case the designer scales the object “living-room_5” by 10% the modification is canceled since position is occupied by another object because there is none relation in the rule set for objects “living-room_5” and “play-room_6”. The result is presented in Figure 4.16.

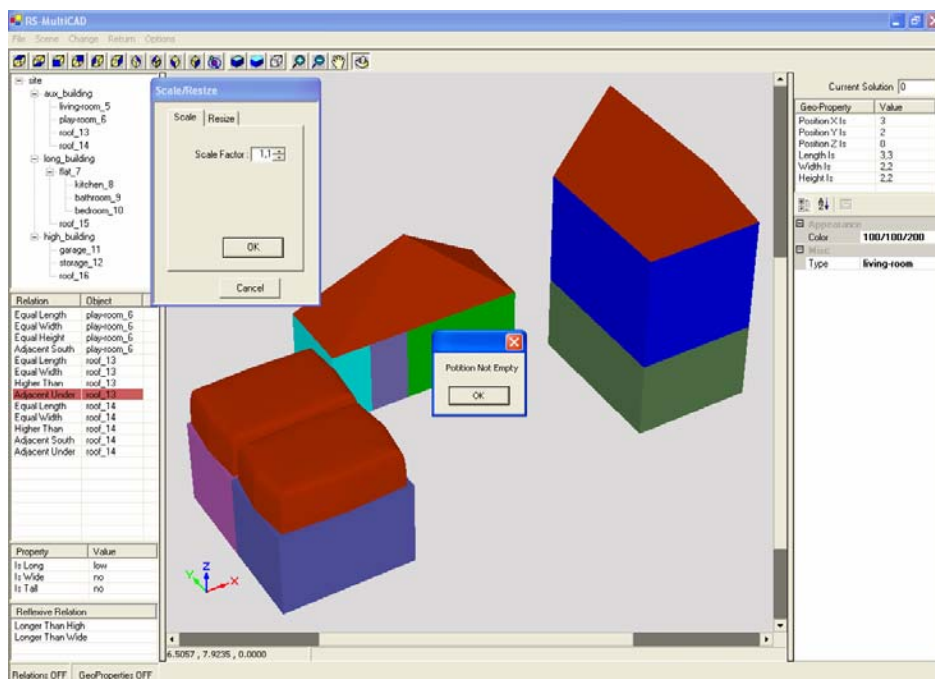


Figure 4.16 Position not available

4.2.1.4 Insert

In case the designer inserts a new object, he/she has first of all to define the object type, the position that will occupy the inserted object along with the dimensions of the object. Finally, the designer has to specify the parent object of the inserted object. Figure 4.17 illustrates the corresponding window that gathers all relevant information for object insertion.

The designer inserts a new object of type “office” with position at (7,0,0), and length, width, height equal to 2, 3, 2 respectively. The parent of the new object is the object “site”. The system examines whether the position is available and included in the “site” and if so creates the new object and updates the declarative panel along with the graphical display accordingly.

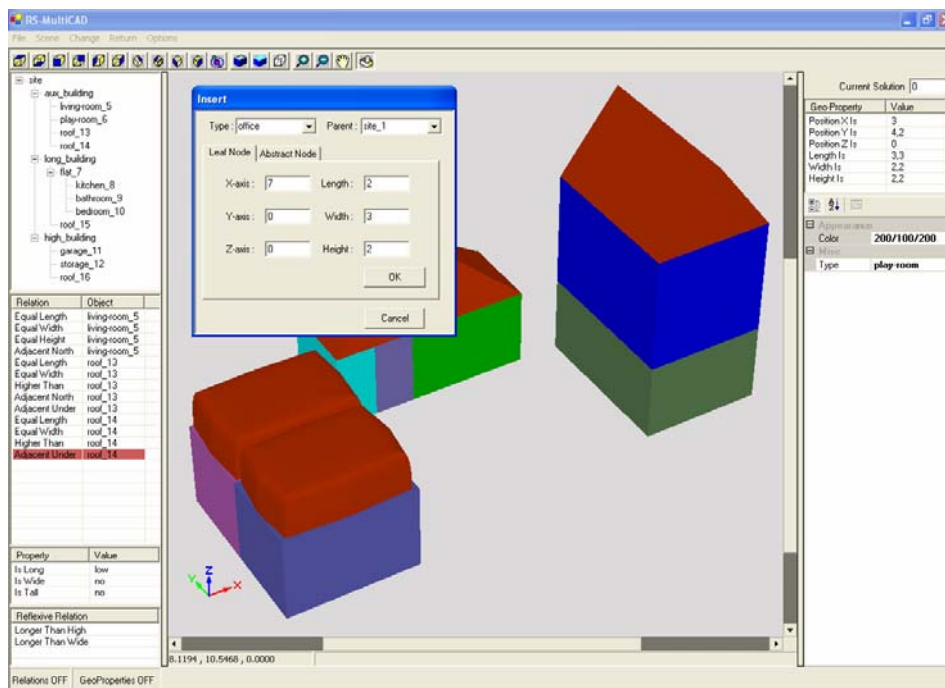


Figure 4.17 Object insertion

In case the designer inserts two new objects the “dining-room” and the “roof” as child of the object “site”, the modifications are applied since the positions are available. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.18.

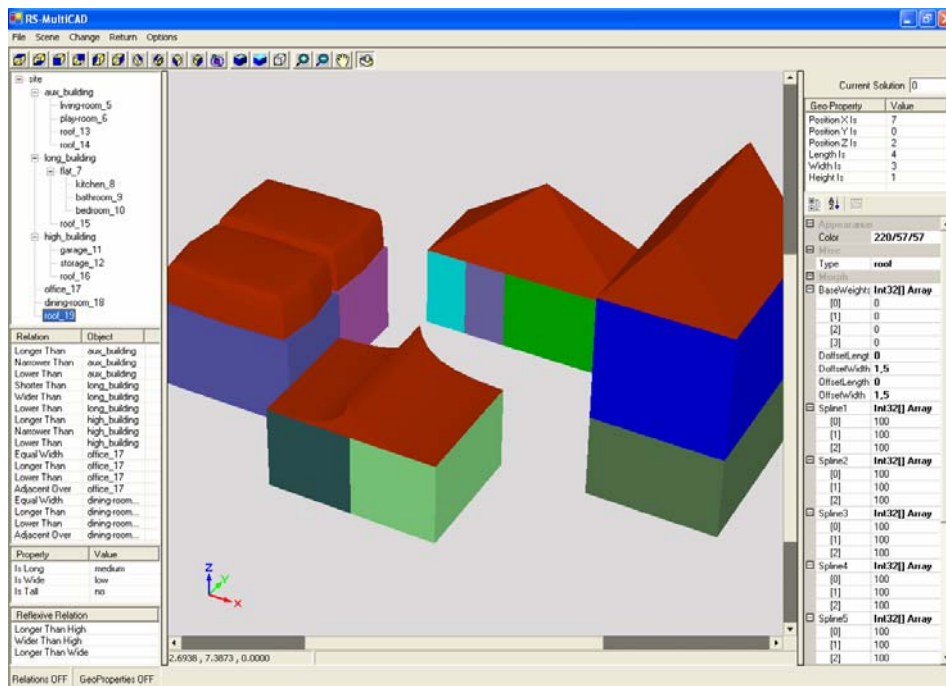


Figure 4.18 Further objects insertion

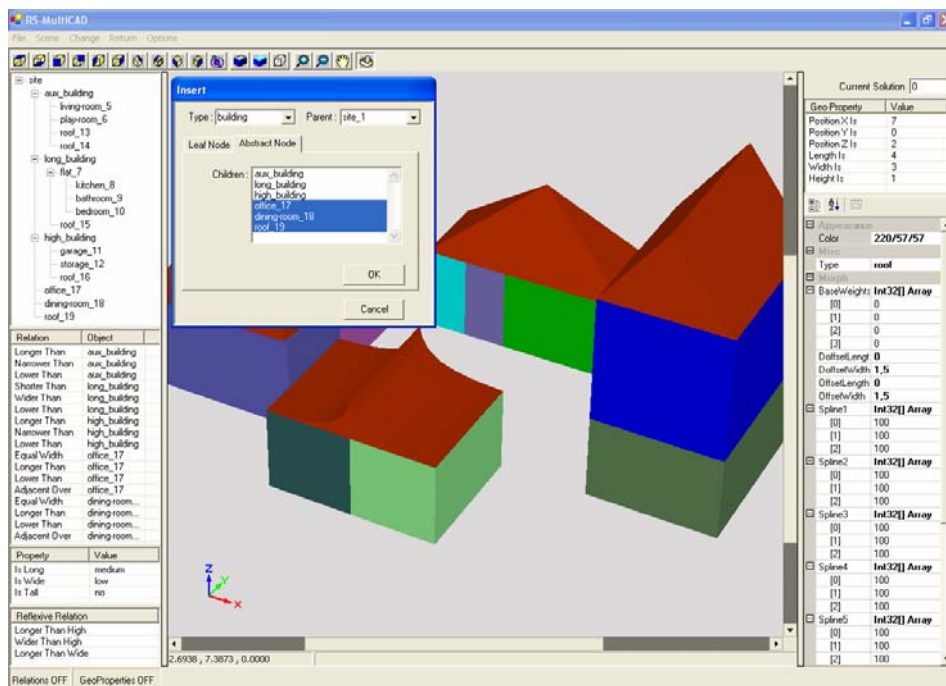


Figure 4.19 Insert an abstract object

In case the designer inserts a new abstract object, type “building” as child of the object “site” and defines that the objects “dining-room_18”, “roof_19” and “office_17” will be children of the new inserted object, the insertion is applied. Figure 4.19 illustrates the insertion. The result of the insertion of the abstract node is shown in Figure 4.20.

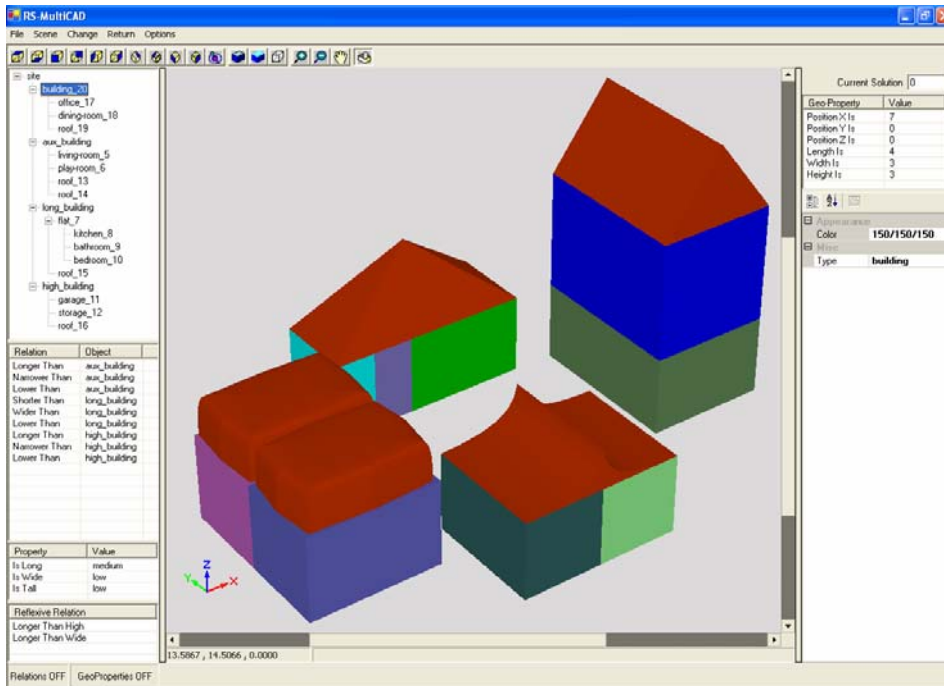


Figure 4.20 The result of the insertion

4.2.1.5 Delete

In case the designer deletes the abstract object the “building_20”, the system ignores the relations of the rule set and the modification is applied. Figure 4.21 presents the result.

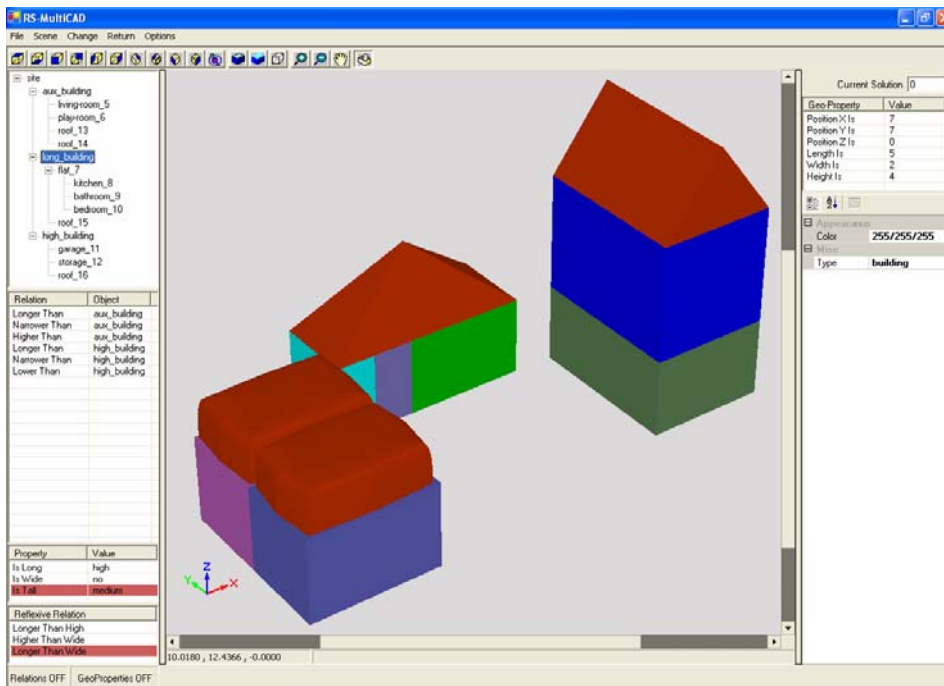


Figure 4.21 Delete an object

The deletion of a leaf node causes the deletion of the specific node while the deletion of an abstract node causes the collapse of the sub tree where the node is root. In such a case, all descendants are deleted and all relevant relations and properties that belong to the rule set are erased.

4.2.1.6 Change extra geometric characteristics

In case the designer changes the extra geometric characteristics of the object “roof_16”, causes changes inside the bounding box of the object. Changing the geometric characteristics “D offset length”, “D offset width” and all relevant B-Splines with new values, alters the geometry of the object “roof_16”. The position and the dimensions of the bounding box remain the same as before the modification. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.22.

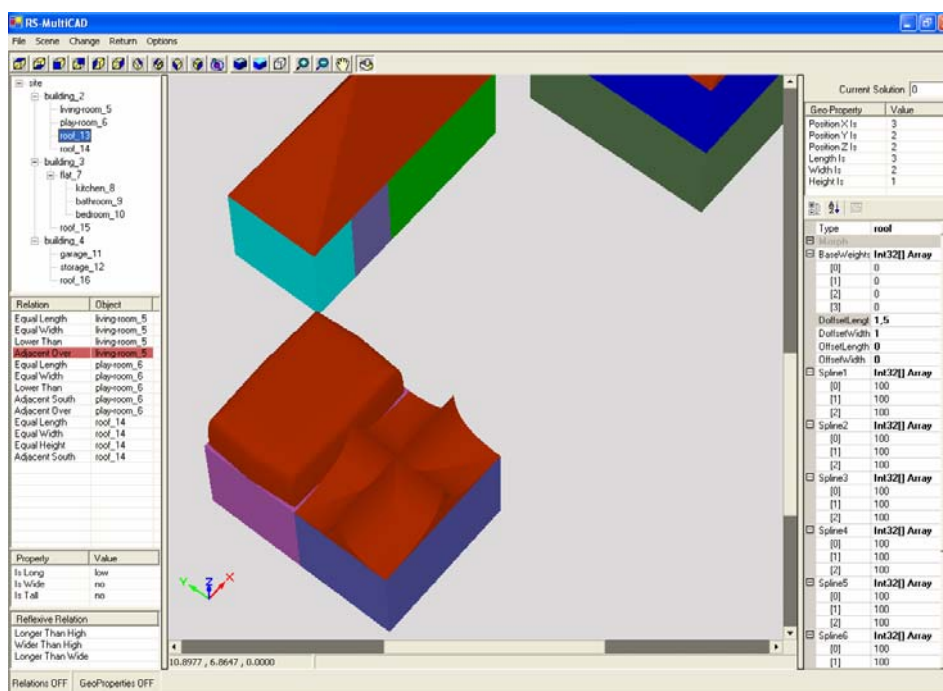


Figure 4.22 Change extra geometric characteristics

4.2.1.7 Change the rule set

In case the designer wants to change the relations, properties that belong to the rule set, by double clicking on the relation/property can add the specific relation/property to the rule set or remove an already relation, property from the rule set. The additional spatial,

reflective relations and properties are presented below. The tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 present the additional relations and properties and are illustrated in Figure 4.23.

Object	Relation
aux_building	wider than long
high_building	higher than long

Table 4.4 Additional Reflective Relations

Object1	Relation	Object2
aux_buildng	lower than, wider than	high_building
aux_building	wider than, shorter than	long_building
long_building	longer than, lower than	high_building
living-room_5	equal length, equal width, equal height	play-room_6
living-room_5	equal length, equal width	roof_13
play-room_6	equal length, equal width	roof_14
flat_7	equal length, equal width	roof_15
kitchen_8	equal width, equal height	bathroom_10
kitchen_8	equal width, equal height	bedroom_10
garage_11	equal length, equal width, equal height	storage_12
storage_12	equal length, equal width	roof_16

Table 4.5 Additional Spatial Relations

Object1	Property	Value
aux_building	is long	low
high_building	is tall is long, is wide	high low
long_building	is wide	low
living-room_5	is tall, is long, is wide	low
play-room_6	is wide	low
roof_13	is tall	no
roof_14	is tall	no
flat_7	is tall	low
kitchen_8	is tall, is long, is wide	low
garage_11	is long, is wide	low
roof_16	is tall	no
roof_15	is tall	no

Table 4.6 Additional Properties

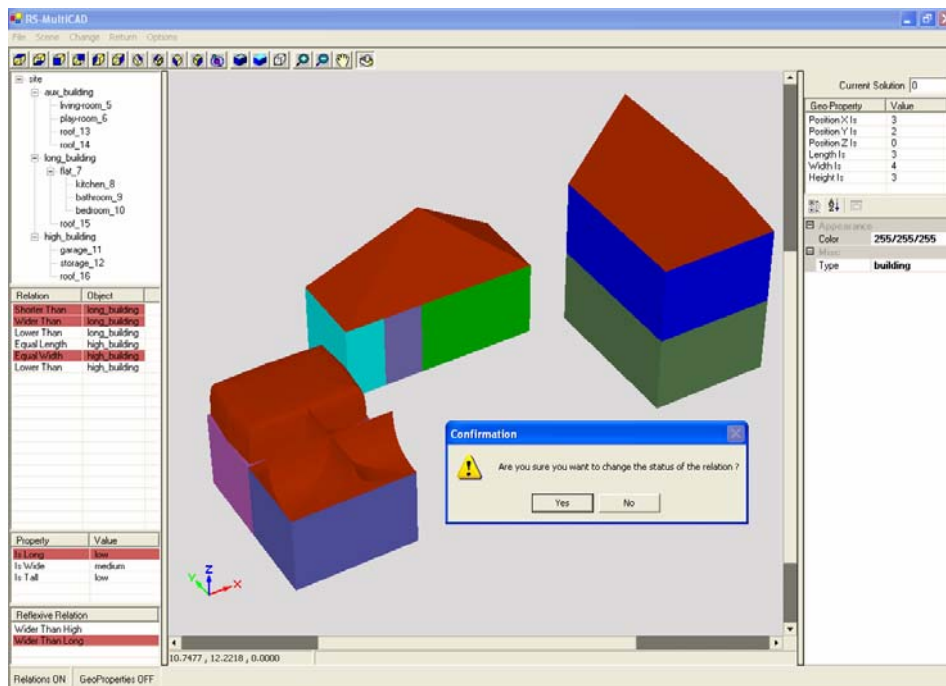


Figure 4.23 Rule set enhancement

4.2.2 Model storage

4.2.2.1 Save the declarative description

As soon as the designer has completed all modifications, he/she saves the new declarative description in the Scene Database of MultiCAD. The declarative description uses four interconnected tables. The “dm_scene” table contains information about the stored scenes such as “scene_id”, “scene_description” et cetera. The “dm_object” table contains the decomposition tree of each stored declarative description where the “part-of” relations are stored.

The “object_relations” table contains all relevant spatial and reflective relations of the declarative description and finally the “object_property” table incorporates all properties which have been declared by the designer. Figure 4.24 shows a typical example of a stored declarative description.

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Access interface with four tables open in Datasheet View:

- dm_scene : Table**

scene_id	scene_description	scene_auth
1	a house of saantoni	dimitris makris
10	vassilis1	vassilis
11	vassilis2 dm	vassilis
12	vassilis3	vassilis
13	vassilis4	vassilis
15	vassilis2	vassilis
17	llqTest	BasilZ
24	ilOCTestScene	Baz
26	MultiCAD Editor Sce	MultiCAD Edito
- dm_object : Table**

object_id	object_name	scene_id	parent_object_id	type_c
237	site	15	237	sit
238	aux_building	15	237	bld
239	long_building	15	237	bld
240	high_building	15	237	bld
241	living-room_5	15	238	lr
242	play-room_6	15	238	pr
243	roof_13	15	239	r
244	roof14	15	239	r
245	flat_7	15	239	fl
246	roof_15	15	239	r
247	kitchen_8	15	245	ktn
248	bathroom_9	15	245	bth
249	bedroom_10	15	245	br
250	garage_11	15	240	gg
251	storage_12	15	240	sg
252	roof_16	15	240	r
- object_relation : Table**

object_relation	object_id1	object_id2	type_relati
250	438	437	an
251	241	242	el
252	241	242	ew
253	241	242	eh
254	241	243	el
255	241	243	ew
256	242	244	el
257	242	244	ew
258	240	239	ht
260	243	241	ao
261	244	242	eo
262	252	251	ao
263	246	245	ao
265	247	248	ew
266	247	249	ew
267	247	248	eh
268	247	249	eh
271	251	250	al
272	251	250	ew
273	251	250	eh
274	251	252	el
275	251	252	ew
276	241	242	sg
280	240	240	htl
281	239	239	ltw
282	238	238	wtl
283	239	238	lt
284	239	240	lt
285	240	238	ht
286	238	239	wt
288	245	246	el
- object_property : Table**

object_type_pro	object_id	type_property_id	type_prop
230	243	il	no
231	244	it	no
232	246	it	no
233	252	it	no
238	250	il	low
239	250	lw	low
240	239	lw	low
241	241	it	low
242	242	lw	low
243	241	il	low
244	241	lw	low
245	247	it	low
246	247	il	low
247	247	lw	low
248	245	it	low
249	240	it	high
250	240	il	low
251	240	lw	low
253	238	il	low

Figure 4.24 Save the declarative description

4.2.2.2 Save the geometric solution

Apart from saving the declarative description, the designer can store the geometric solution as well at any time. A geometric solution can be stored in the Multimedia Database of MultiCAD, but can be stored in DXF format as well.

The geometric solution uses three interconnected tables in order to be stored. The “solution” table relates every geometric solution with the respective declarative description. The “solution_object” table contains information such as the shape of the objects of the geometric solution. The “solution_geo_value” contains the dimensions of the bounding box of each object along with any extra geometric characteristics that may have the object. Figure 4.25 shows a typical example of a stored geometric solution.

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Access interface with four tables open in Datasheet View:

- dm_scene : Table**

scene_id	scene_description	scene_auth
1	a house of santorini	dimitris makris
10	vassilis1	vassilis
11	vassilis2_dm	vassilis
12	vassilis3	vassilis
13	vassilis4	vassilis
15	vassilis5	vassilis
17	ilogTest	Bashiz
24	ILogTestScene	Baz
26	MultiCAD Editor Sce	MultiCAD Edito
- solution : Table**

solution_id	scene_id
1	1
3	10
4	11
5	12
6	13
61	15
109	11
1886	24
1887	24
1888	24
- solution_object : Table**

solution_obj	solution_id	primitive_id	dm_object_id
49	6	6	226
213	61	qdl	237
214	61	qdl	238
215	61	qdl	239
216	61	qdl	240
217	61	qdl	241
218	61	qdl	242
219	61	xrf	243
220	61	xrf	244
221	61	qdl	245
222	61	xrf	246
223	61	qdl	247
224	61	qdl	248
225	61	qdl	249
226	61	qdl	250
227	61	qdl	251
228	61	xrf	252
229	6	6	227
402	108	qdl	51
403	108	qdl	52
404	108	qdl	53
405	108	qdl	54
406	108	qdl	55
407	108	qdl	56
408	108	qdl	58
409	108	qdl	57
7518	1886	qdl	326
7519	1886	qdl	327
7520	1886	qdl	328
7521	1886	qdl	329
7522	1887	qdl	326
7523	1887	qdl	327
7524	1887	qdl	328
- solution_geo_value : Table**

param_id	solution_object	geo_value
qdl_col	213	110/180/90
qdl_l	213	30
qdl_w	213	30
qdl_h	213	30
qdl_ox	213	0
qdl_oy	213	0
qdl_oz	213	0
qdl_col	214	255/255/255
qdl_l	214	3
qdl_w	214	4
qdl_h	214	3
qdl_ox	214	3
qdl_oy	214	2
qdl_oz	214	0
qdl_col	215	255/255/255
qdl_l	215	5
qdl_w	215	2
qdl_h	215	4
qdl_ox	215	7
qdl_oy	215	7
qdl_oz	215	0
qdl_col	216	255/255/255
qdl_l	216	3
qdl_w	216	4
qdl_h	216	6
qdl_ox	216	13
qdl_oy	216	3
qdl_oz	216	0
qdl_col	217	255/255/255
qdl_l	217	3
qdl_w	217	2
qdl_h	217	2
qdl_ox	217	3
qdl_oy	217	2
qdl_oz	217	0
qdl_col	218	255/255/255
qdl_l	218	2

Figure 4.25 Save the geometric solution

4.2.3 Reduction of the solution space

RS-MultiCAD provides two main ways for MultiCAD iteration, the automated and the manual way. Figure 4.26 illustrates the two alternative ways for reducing the solution space.

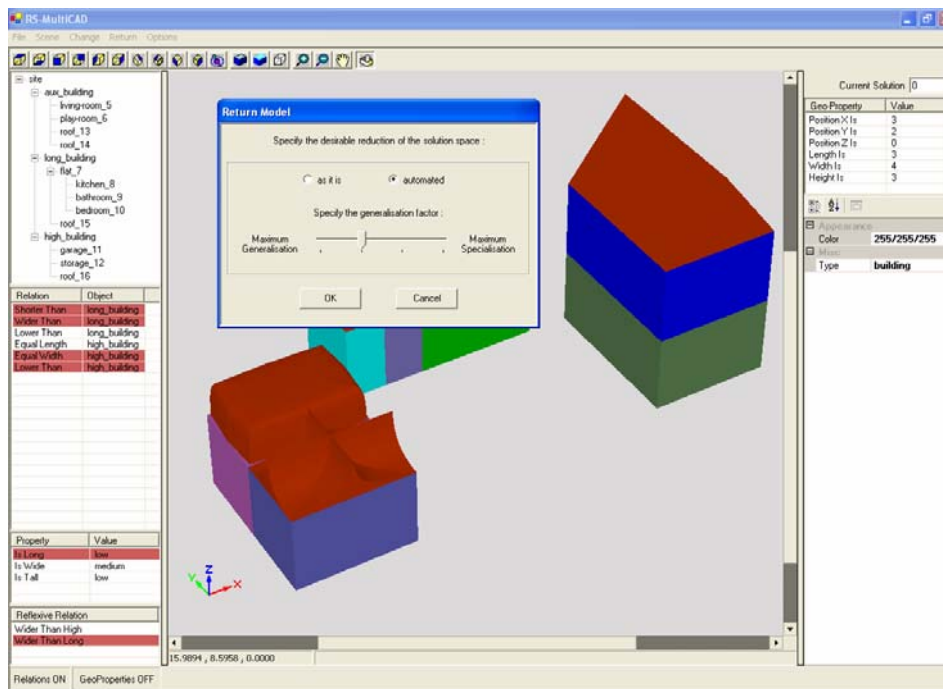


Figure 4.26 Reduce the solution space

4.2.3.1 Automated way

In each MultiCAD iteration, the RS-MultiCAD system adds pure geometric properties to the declarative description that depends on the generalization factor. The designer specifies the generalization factor and then RS-MultiCAD produces the respective declarative description. The first iteration of MultiCAD produces a set of alternative geometric solutions by supplying only the pure geometric properties of the object “site” and the rule set.

In the second iteration, the declarative description is additionally provided with the pure geometric properties of the next level of detail. In other words, the pure geometric properties of the objects “aux_building”, “long_building” and “high_building” are provided by RS-MultiCAD to the declarative description. In the third iteration, the resultant declarative description is supplied furthermore with the pure geometric properties of the object “flat_7”. The generalization factor equals to 3, which means that the pure geometric properties of the objects of the third level of detail must be added to the resultant declarative description. It must be pointed out that only the objects of the third level of detail with descendants provide their pure geometric properties to the resultant declarative description. As a result, only the object “flat_7” provides its position and dimensions of its bounding box. The object “living-room_5”, “play-room_6”, “roof_13”, “roof_14”, “roof_15”, “garage_11”, “storage_12” and

“roof_16” belong to the third level of detail but since they do not have any descendants, they do not provide their pure geometric properties to the resultant declarative description.

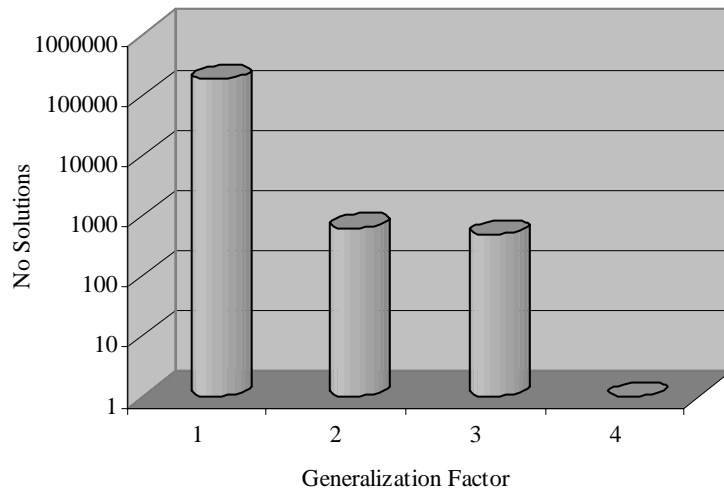


Figure 4.27 Experimental results of automated reduction of the solution space

When the generalization factor equals to 4, then all objects of the decomposition tree provide their pure geometric properties to the resultant declarative description. As a result, this declarative description produces only one geometric solution in the next iteration of MultiCAD indeed.

The experimental results of all possible iterations of the specific example are illustrated in Figure 4.27 where the z-axis of the chart is in logarithmic scale. The exact numbers of solutions per generalization factor are illustrated in Table 4.7. Figure 4.28 presents some solutions generated by the automated way.

Generalization Factor	N° Solutions
1	182988
2	630
3	490
4	1

Table 4.7 Automated reduction of the solution space.

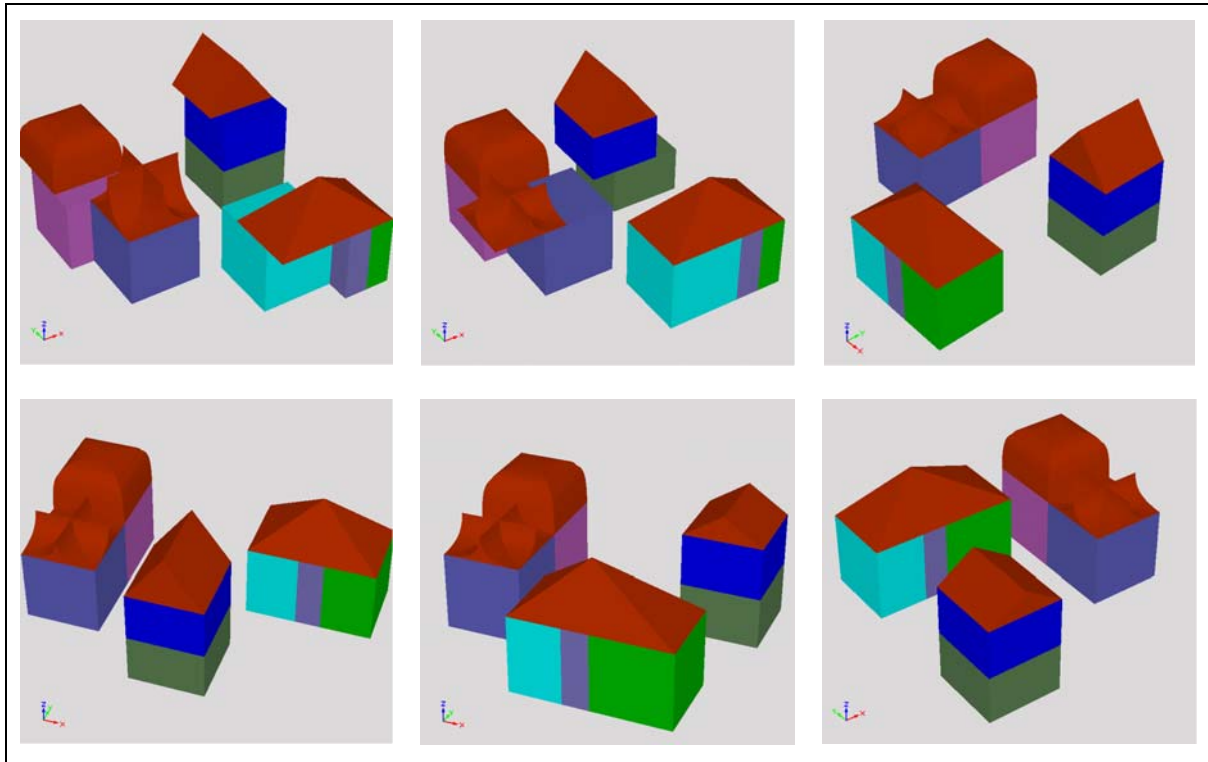


Figure 4.28 Geometric solutions generated by the automated way

4.2.3.2 Manual way

During the reduction of the solution space by the manual way the designer has the ability to change the relative rule set by adding or removing relations and properties from the rule set. In the second step, the designer adds the relation “long_building adjacent north high_building” to the rule set that result to a reduced solution space according to the solution space of step 1.

The designer continues to add relations and properties and finally in step 4 apart from the relations, he adds geometric properties of the object “high_building” that lead to further reduction of the solution space.

The experimental results of manual reduction of the solution space of the specific example are illustrated in Figure 4.29 where the z-axis of the chart is in logarithmic scale. The exact numbers of solutions per step are illustrated in Table 4.8. Figure 4.30 presents some geometric solutions generated by the manual way according to the steps of Table 4.8.

Step	Rule Set	No Solutions
1	Initial Set	182988
2	Initial Set + “long_building adjacent north high_building”	76636
3	Initial Set + “long_building adjacent north high_building” + “aux_building adjacent north long_building”	38318
4	Initial Set + “long_building adjacent north high_building” + “aux_building adjacent north long_building” + “high_building position_X=0”+ “high_building position_Y=0”+ “high_building position_Z=0”	24990

Table 4.8 Manual reduction of the solution space

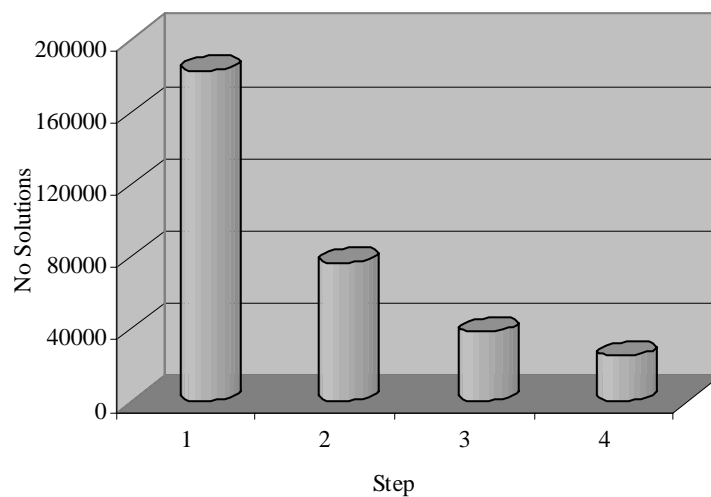


Figure 4.29 Experimental results of manual reduction of the solution space

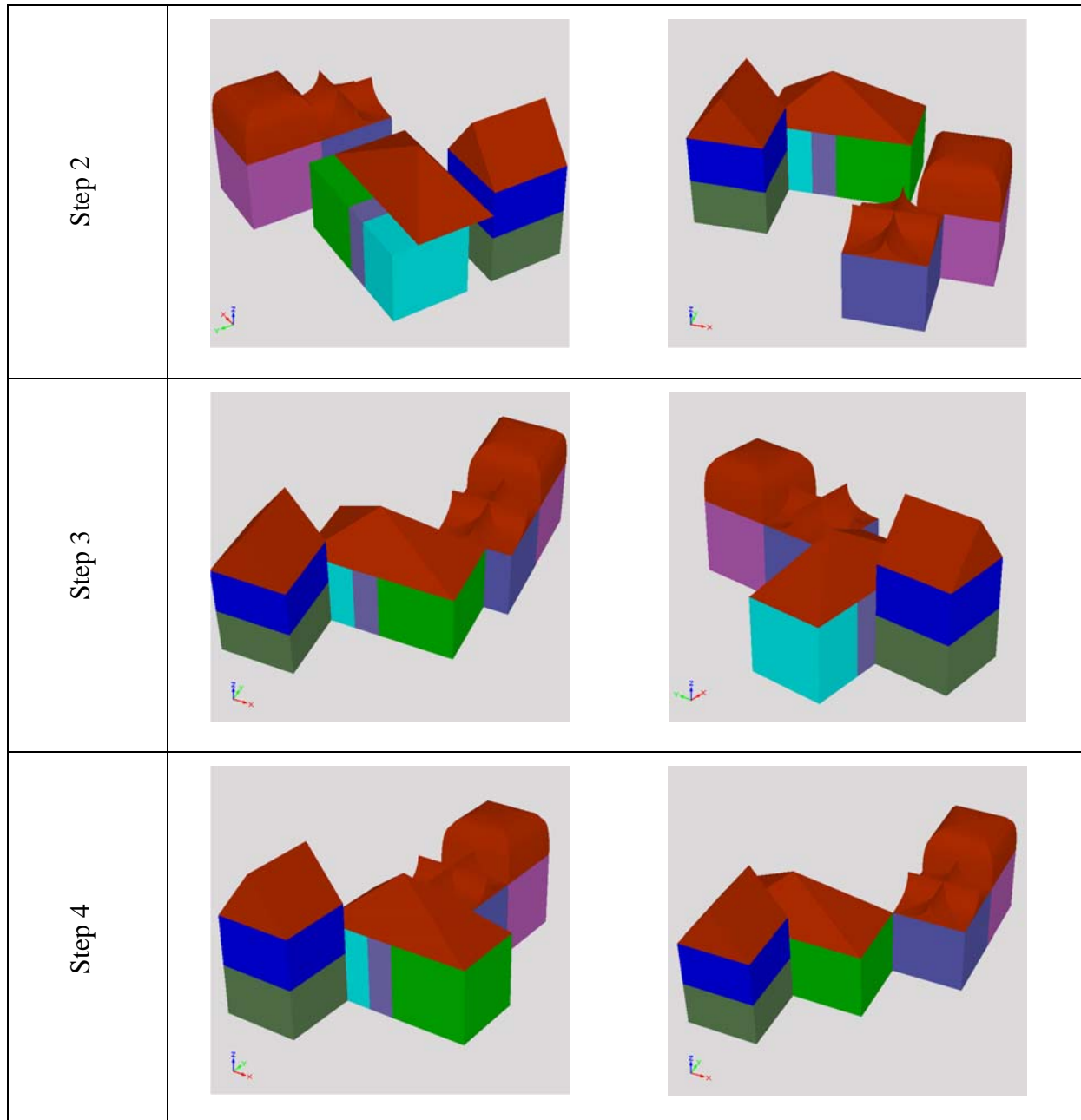


Figure 4.30 Geometric solutions generated by the manual way

4.3 Case II – External geometric model

The example of Case II is based on an external geometric model that has been created by a commercial geometrical modeler. The designer draws a 3D box which represents the site and afterwards places, inside the initial box, eight other 3D boxes which represent a layout of rooms. Figure 4.31 illustrates the design.

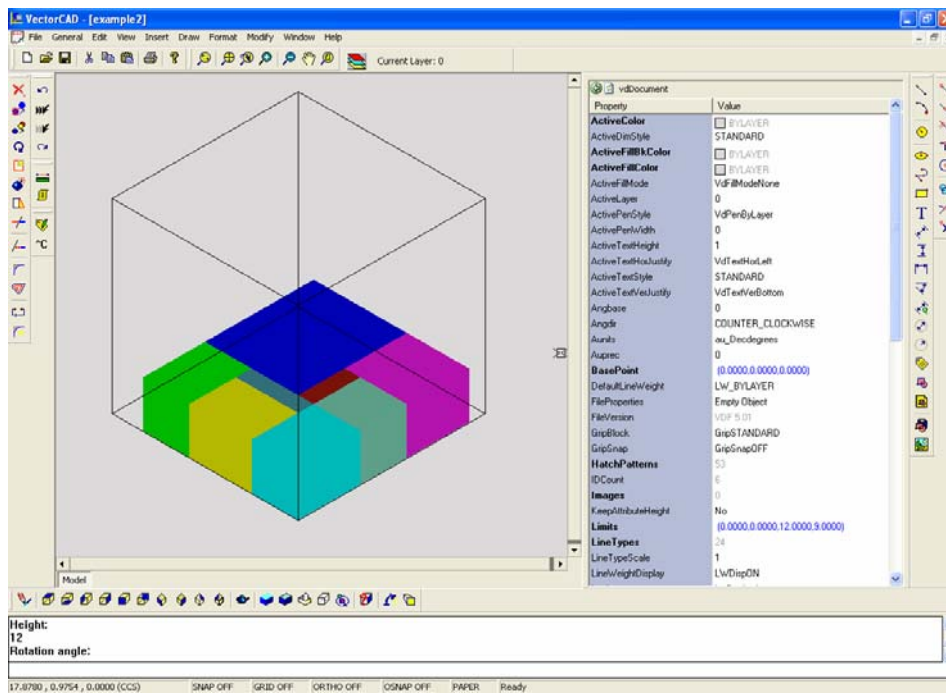


Figure 4.31 An external geometric model

4.3.1 Scene modifications

4.3.1.1 Import geometric model

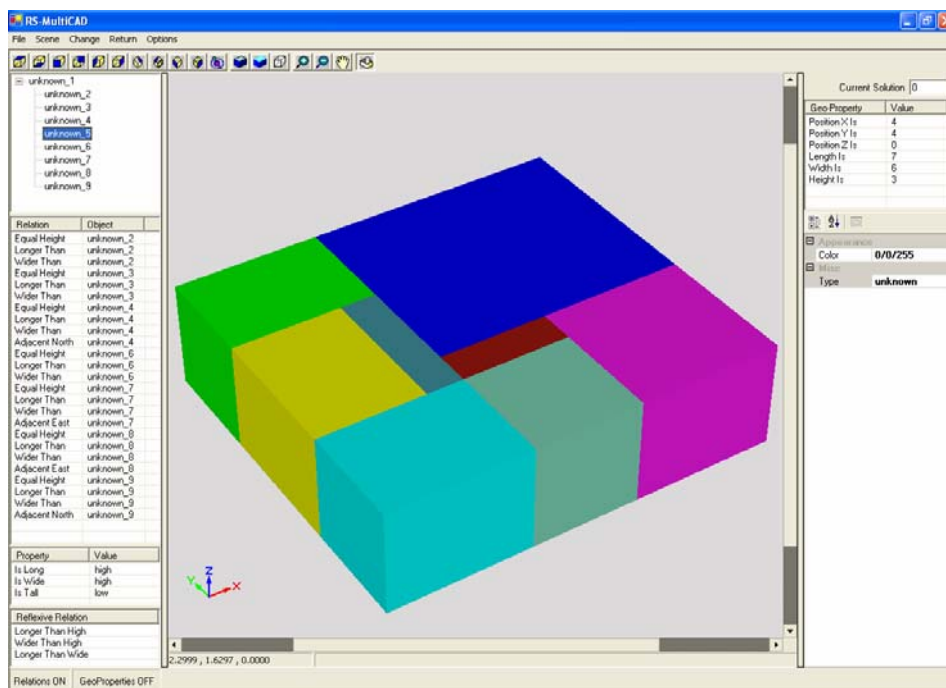


Figure 4.32 Import of an external geometric model

RS-MultiCAD provides to the designer the ability to import a DXF file which has been created by another geometric modeler. The decomposition tree is created, based on the coordinates of the boxes, and the relations, properties are extracted. Figure 4.32 illustrates the import of the external geometric model. The initial rule set is empty since there is no declarative description.

4.3.1.2 Object rename and type selection

The objects that are imported from the external geometric model are recognized as of type “unknown”. The designer can define their type by selecting the object and declaring their type from the “type” combo box. Besides, the name of the object can be renamed by clicking on the object name and typing the new name that the designer prefers. The names of the objects become “site”, “kitchen”, “bedroom”, “office”, “living-room”, “dining-room”, “bedroom”, “vcorridor” and “hcorridor” respectively. Figure 4.33 illustrates the type declaration and the rename of the objects.

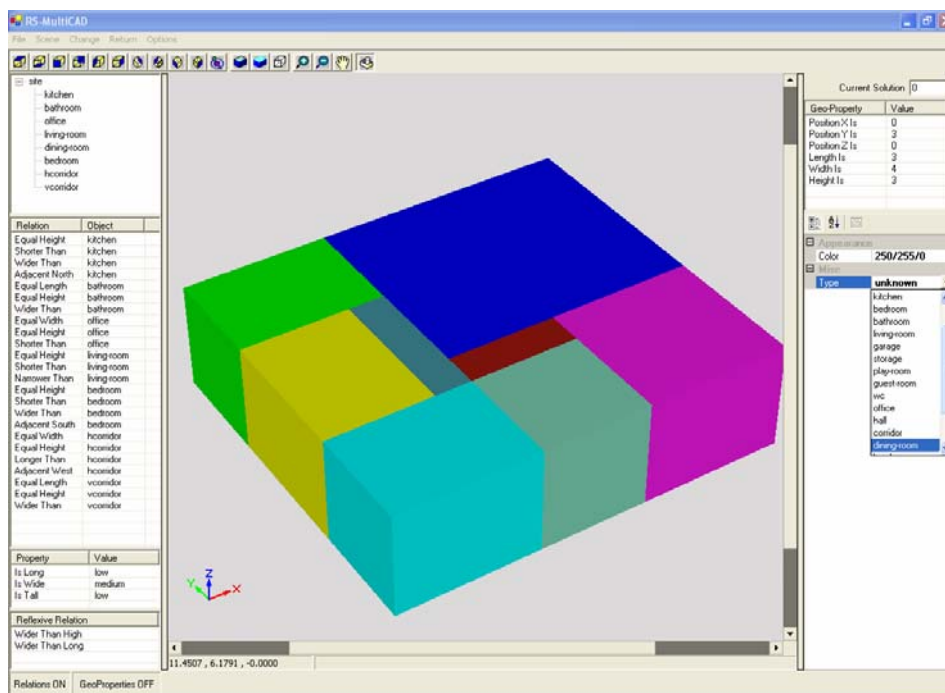


Figure 4.33 Type declaration and object rename

4.3.1.3 Insert

In case the designer inserts a new abstract object, type “house” as child of the object “site” and defines that the rest objects will be children of the new inserted object, the insertion is applied. Figure 4.34 illustrates the insertion.

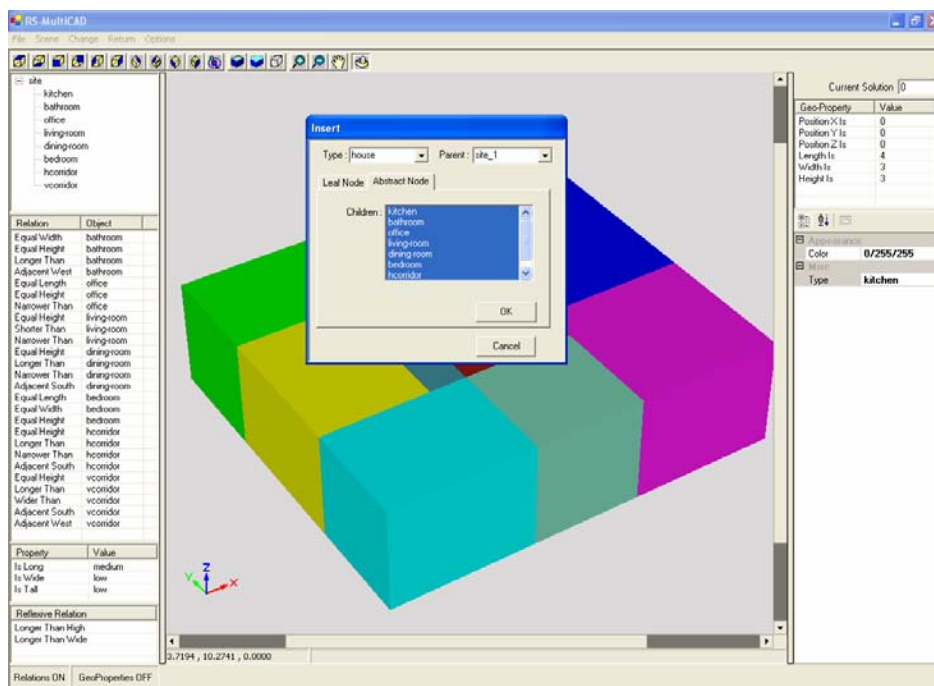


Figure 4.34 Insert an abstract object of type “house”

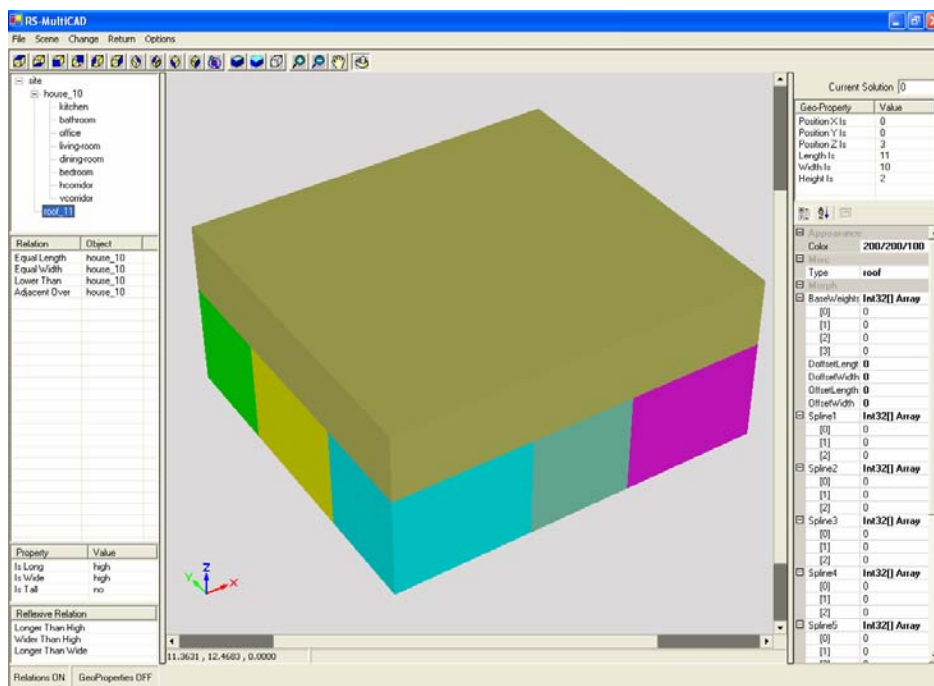


Figure 4.35 Insert an object of type “roof”

The designer inserts a new object of type “roof” with position at (0,0,3), and length, width, height equal to 11, 10, 2 respectively. The parent of the new object is the object “site”. The system examines whether the position is available and included in the “site” and if so, the system creates the new object and updates accordingly the declarative panel along with the graphical display. The result along with the output of the previous step is shown in the Figure 4.35.

4.3.1.4 Change the geometric characteristics

In case the designer changes the extra geometric characteristics of the object “roof_11”, it causes changes inside the bounding box of the object. Changing the geometric characteristics of the “Base Weights” and B-Splines with new values, the geometry of the object “roof_11” alters. The position and the dimensions of the bounding box remain the same as before the modification. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.36.

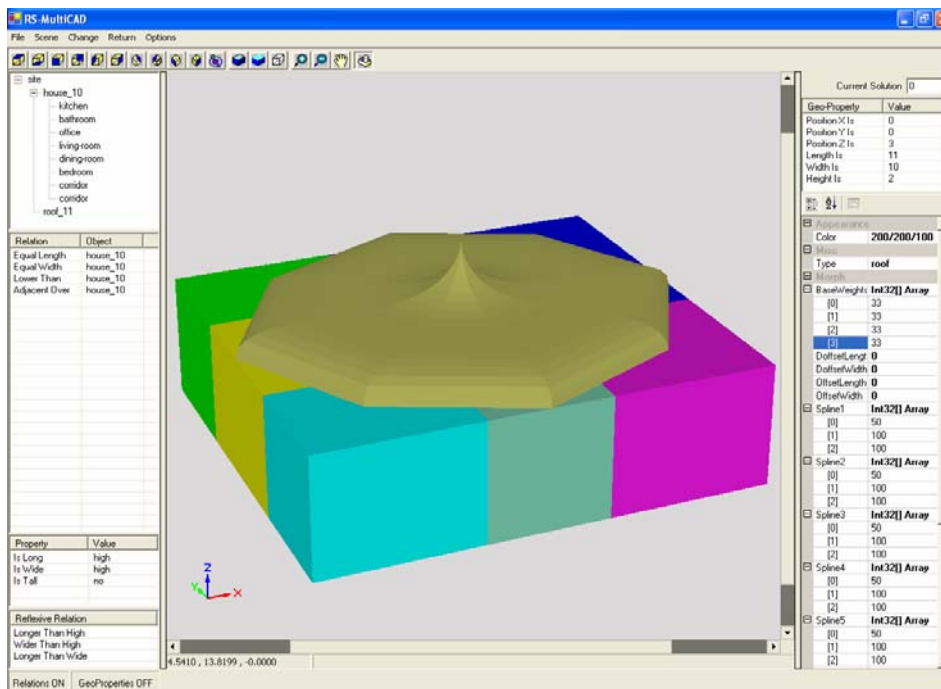


Figure 4.36 Change extra geometric characteristics

4.3.1.5 Delete

In case the designer deletes a leaf object such as the object “roof_11”, the object disappears and the system updates all panels in order to reflect the current status of the scene. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.37.

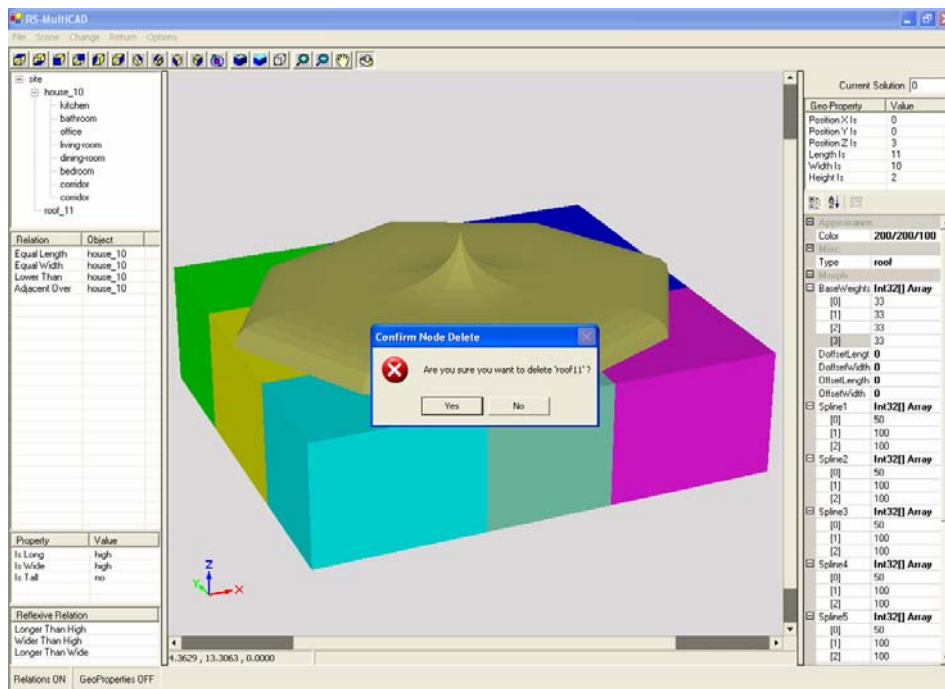


Figure 4.37 The deletion of the object “roof_11”

4.3.1.6 Change the rule set

Initially the rule set is empty since there is no declarative description. In case the designer wants to change the rule set, by double clicking on the relation/property can add the specific relation/property to the rule set. The properties are presented in the table 4.9.

Object	Property	Value
Kitchen	Is_long	Medium
	Is_wide	Low
Bathroom	Is_long	Low
	Is_wide	Low
Office	Is_long	Medium
	Is_wide	Medium
Living-room	Is_long	High
	Is_wide	High
Dining-room	Is_long	Low
	Is_wide	Medium
Bedroom	Is_long	Medium
	Is_wide	Low

VCorridor	Is_wide	Medium
HCorridor	Is_long	Low
Kitchen	Height_is	3

Table 4.9 Properties

Furthermore, since the rule set is empty the designer adds relations to the rule set in order to specify how the objects are related to each other. In other words, the designer defines that the object “kitchen” must be adjacent west to object “bathroom” and adjacent south to object “dining-room”, the object “bathroom” must be adjacent west to object “office” and adjacent south to object “hcorridor”, the object “living-room” must be adjacent north to object “office” and adjacent east to object “bedroom” and finally the object “dining-room” must be adjacent south to object “bedroom” and adjacent west to object “vcorridor”. Finally, the designer specifies that all objects have the same height. Figure 4.38 illustrates the spatial relations that belong to the rule set.

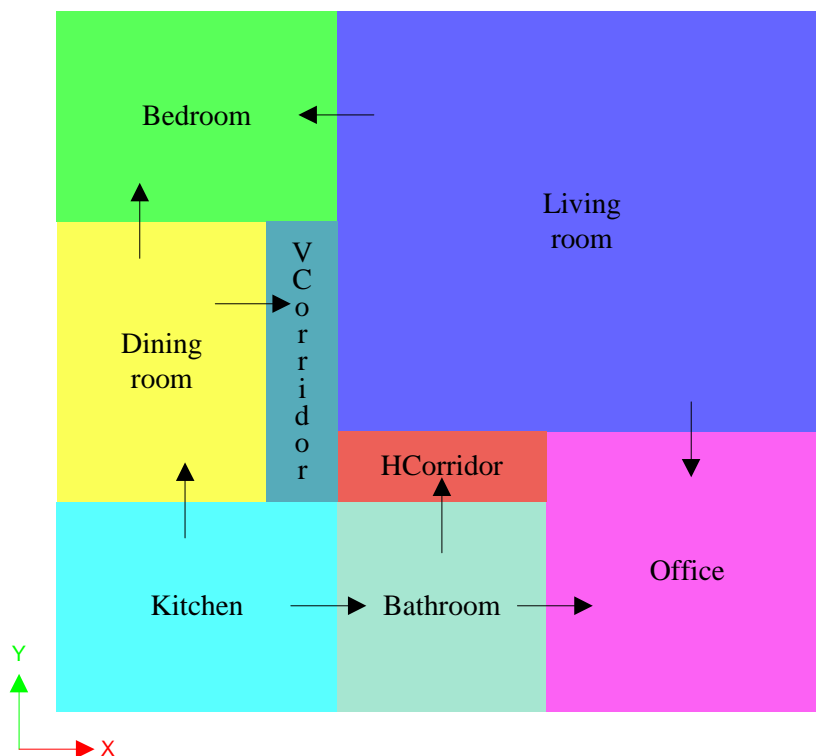


Figure 4.38 Spatial relations

4.3.1.7 Move

In case the designer moves the object “kitchen” to a new position that causes a move to all brothers. The same result will appear if the designer moves the object “house_10” to a new position.

As soon as the new position of the object “kitchen” is available and included in the “site”, the new position becomes current position of the object. RS-MultiCAD propagates the modification to the object “dining-room” and “bathroom” and updates their new positions. The object “dining-room” in turn, propagates the modification to the object “vcorridor” and “bedroom”. The object “bathroom” in turn, propagates the modification to the object “hcorridor” and “office”. Finally the object “bedroom” propagates the modification to the object “living-room” and the system updates the positions of all objects.

Besides, the modification is propagating to the ancestors of the object “kitchen”. In other words, the system updates the object “house_10” with its new position. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.39.

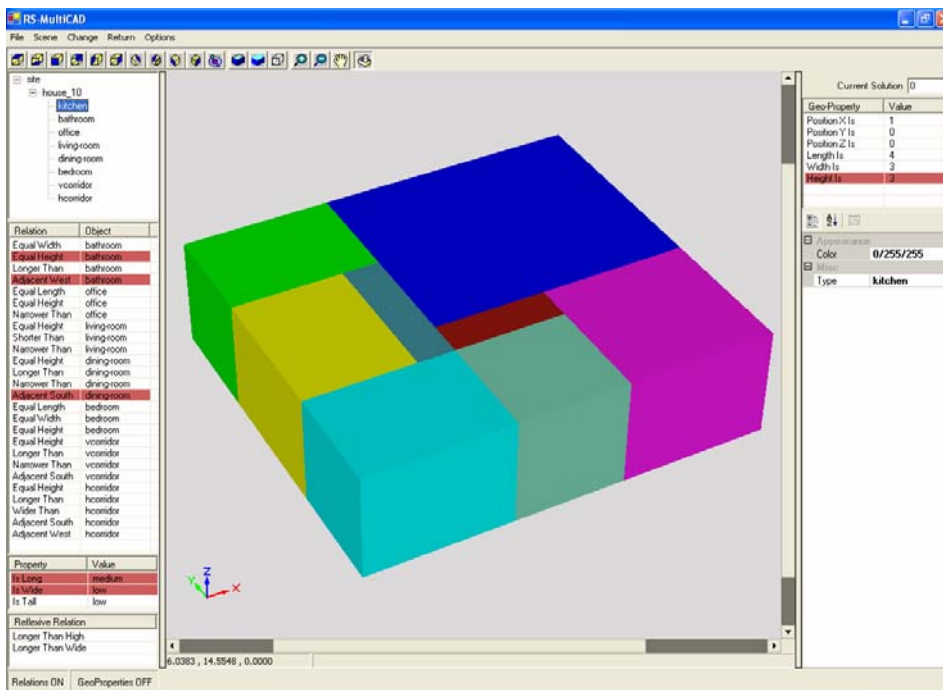


Figure 4.39 Move object “kitchen”

In case the designer moves the object “office” to a new position without taking into account the relations of the rule set, the modification is not propagated to other brothers.

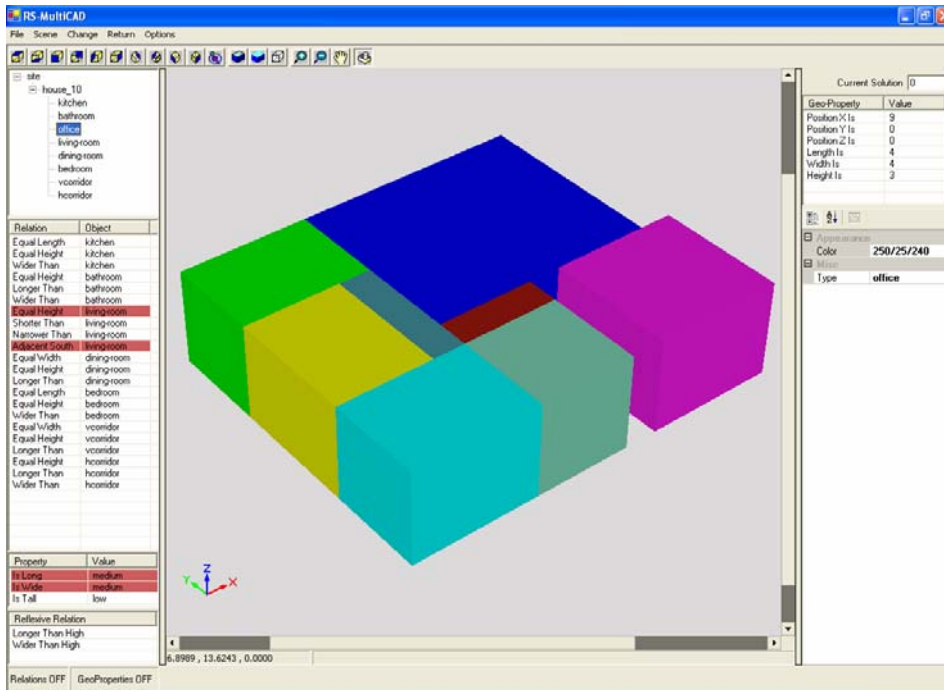


Figure 4.40 Move the object “office” ignoring the rule set

The system updates the object “office” along with the object “house_10” with their new positions. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.40.

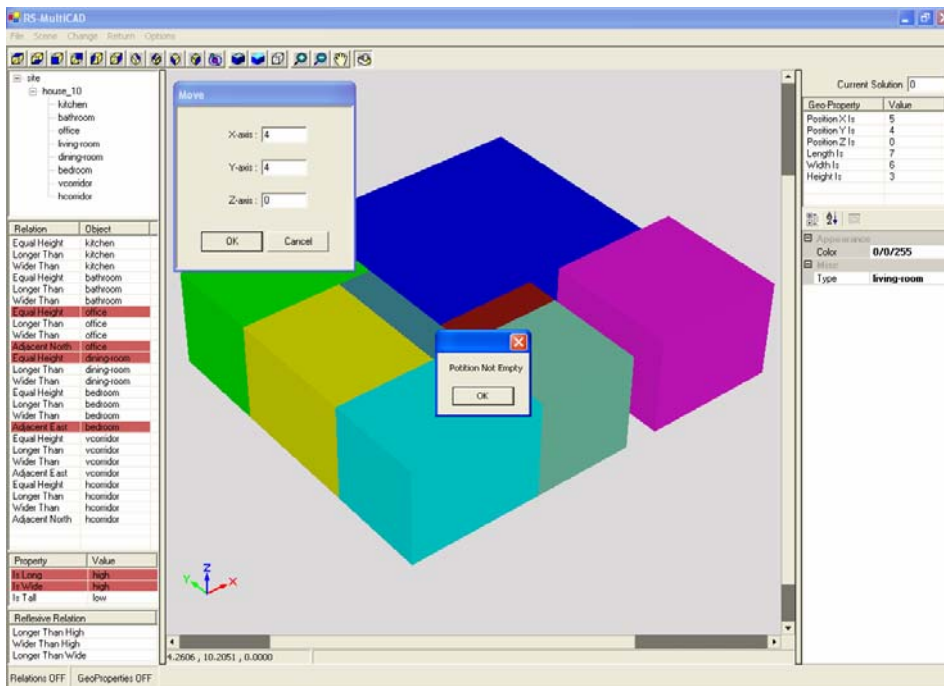


Figure 4.41 Position not available

In case the designer moves the object “living-room” to the position (4,4,0) which is occupied by another object and without taking into consideration the rule set, the modification is canceled since the modification is not propagating to the rest of brothers. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.41.

4.3.1.8 Scale-Resize

In case the designer resizes the object “kitchen” to a new length equals to 4.5, the modification is applied. The modification is propagated in a circular way affecting all brothers. According to the rule set, the new length dimension of the object “kitchen” affects the position of the object “bathroom” which in turn affects the position of the objects “office” and “hcorridor”. The object “office” in turn, affects the position of the object “living-room” which in turn affects the position the object “bedroom”. Besides, the position alters of the objects “dining-room” and “vcorridor”. The ancestors of the object “kitchen” are updated accordingly. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.42.

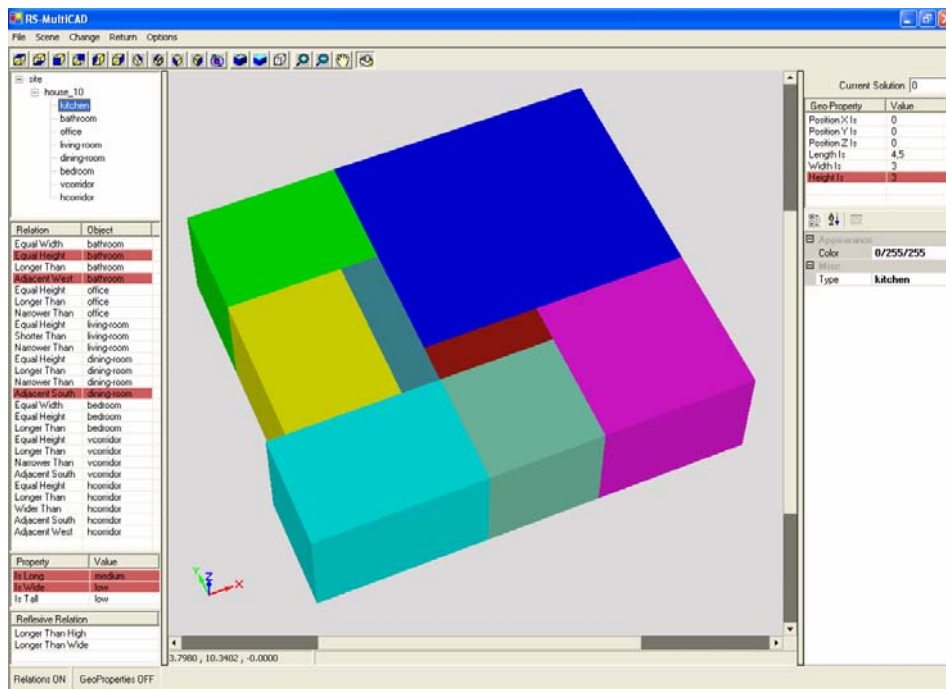


Figure 4.42 Resize “kitchen” to a new length

In case the designer resizes the object “kitchen” to a new width equals to 3.5, all brothers move to new positions in the same way as the above example. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.43.

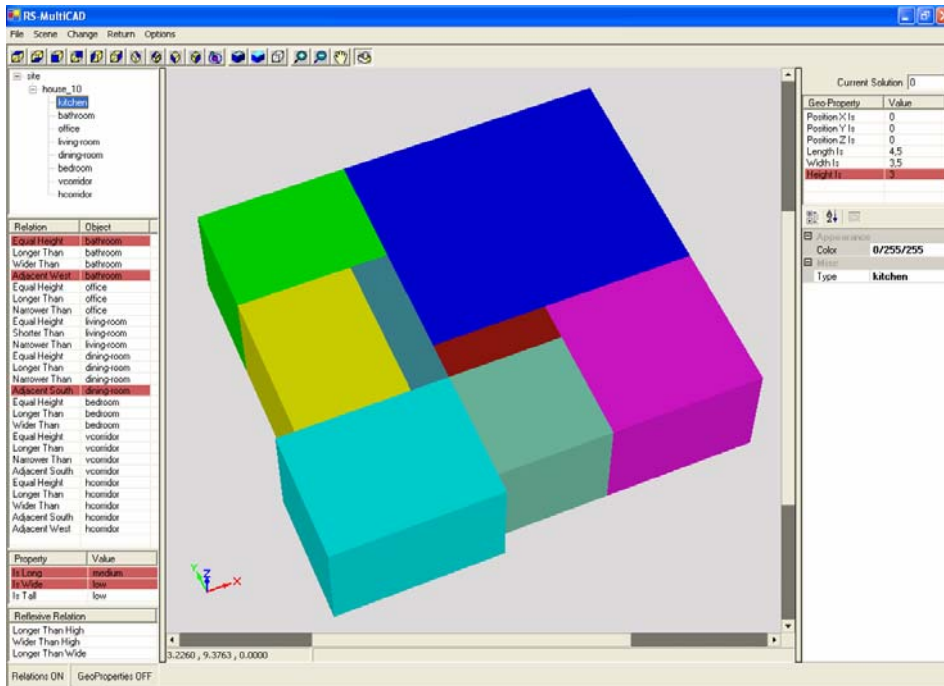


Figure 4.43 Resize “kitchen” to a new width

In case the designer resizes the object “vcorridor” to a new width equals to 4.5, the modification is canceled since the position is not available.

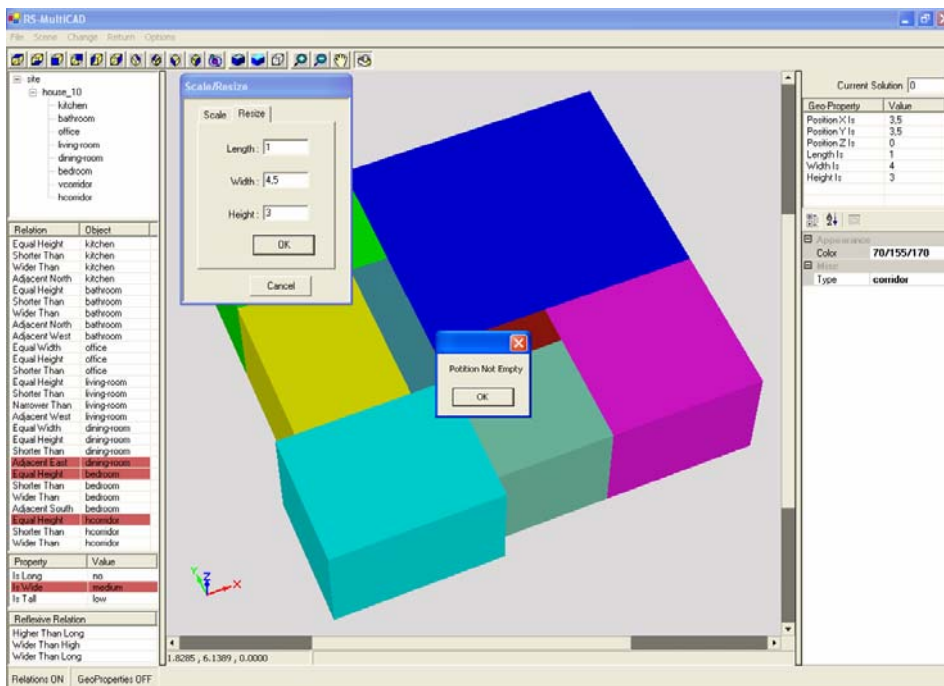


Figure 4.44 Position not available

Changing the width of the object “vcorridor”, the position of the object “dining-room” alters in order to be adjacent south to object “bedroom”. RS-MultiCAD alters the position of the object “kitchen” in order to be adjacent south to object “dining-room”. The new position of the object “kitchen” is occupied partially by the object “vcorridor” and this is the reason why the modification is canceled. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.44.

In case the designer resizes the object “vcorridor” to a new length equals to 1.5, the modification is applied. The modification is propagating in a circular way affecting all brothers. According to the rule set, the new length dimension of the object “vcorridor” affects the position of the object “living-room” which in turn affects the position of the objects “bedroom” and “office”. The object “office” in turn affects the position of the object “bathroom” which in turn affects the positions the objects “hcorridor” and “kitchen”. The ancestors of the object “kitchen” are updated accordingly. The result in top view is illustrated in Figure 4.45.

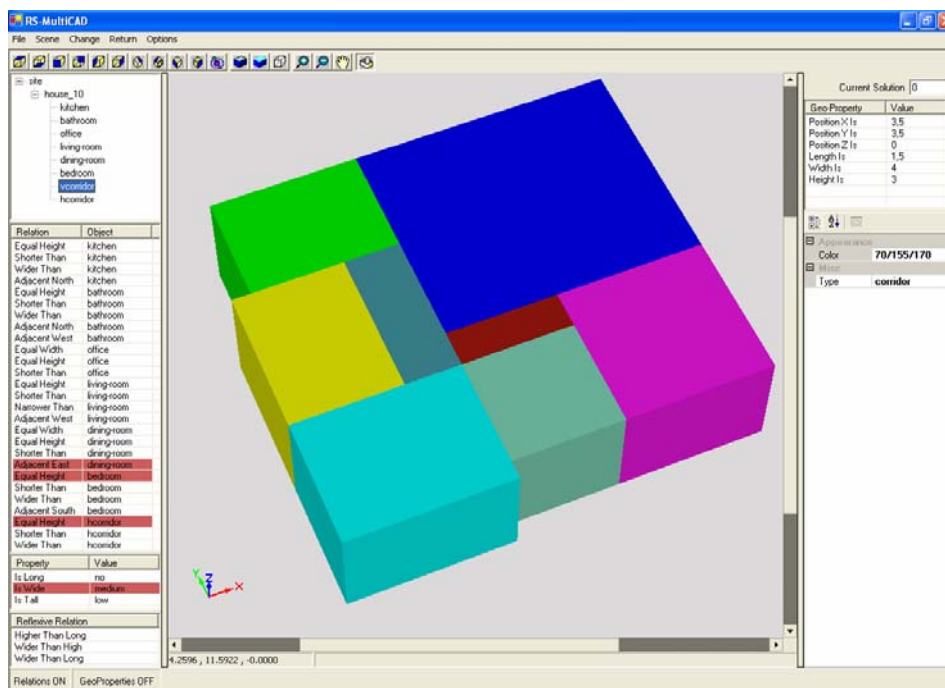


Figure 4.45 Resize “vcorridor” to a new length

In case the designer scales the object “house_10” by 10%, the modification is canceled since the property “Height_is = 3” belongs to the rule set and is violated. The result is illustrated in Figure 4.46.

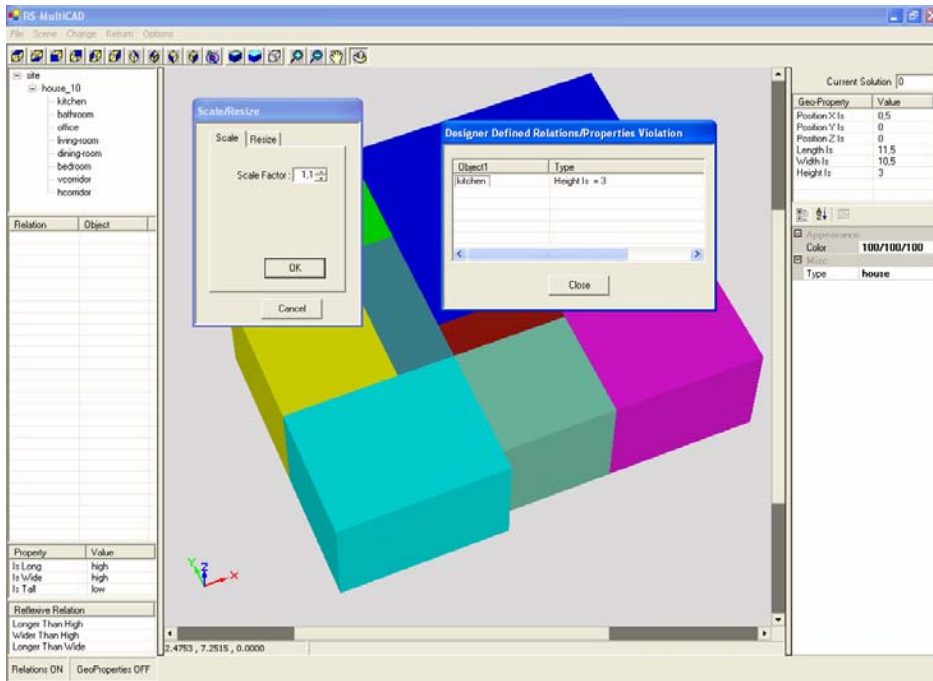


Figure 4.46 Violation of scaling the “house_10”

4.3.2 Model storage

4.3.2.1 Save the declarative description

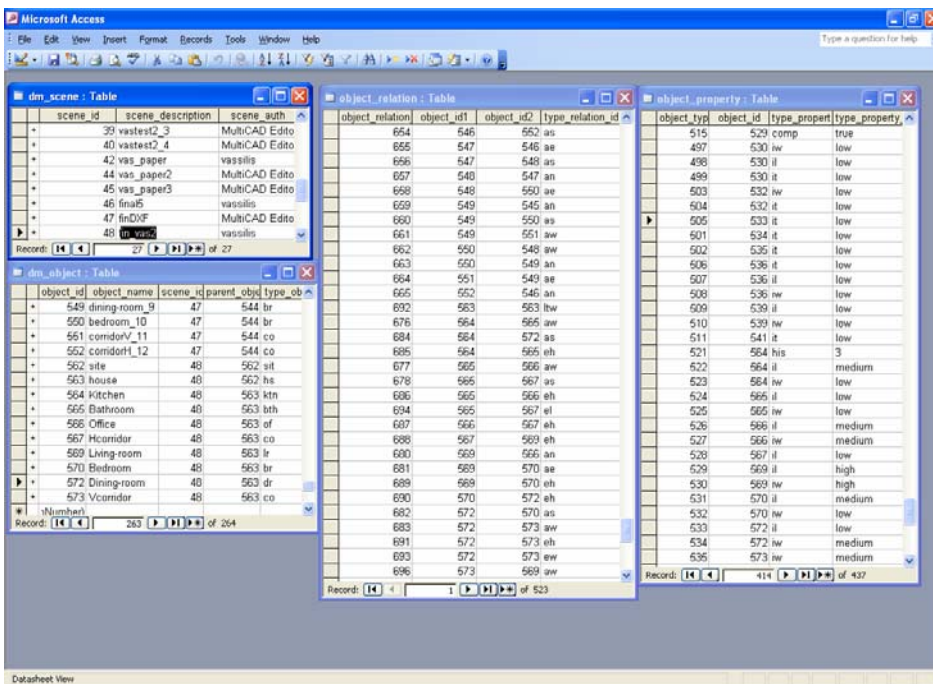


Figure 4.47 Save the declarative description

As soon as the designer has completed all modifications on the scene, saves the new declarative description in the MultiCAD database. Figure 4.47 illustrates the respective records that are stored of the above example in the Scene Database of MultiCAD.

4.3.2.2 Save the geometric solution

A geometric solution can be stored in the Multimedia Database of MultiCAD, but also can be stored in DXF format.

The geometric solution is related to the respective declarative description. The shapes of the objects along with the dimensions of the bounding boxes and any extra geometric characteristics, that may have any object of the scene, are stored. Figure 4.28 shows the respective records that are stored.

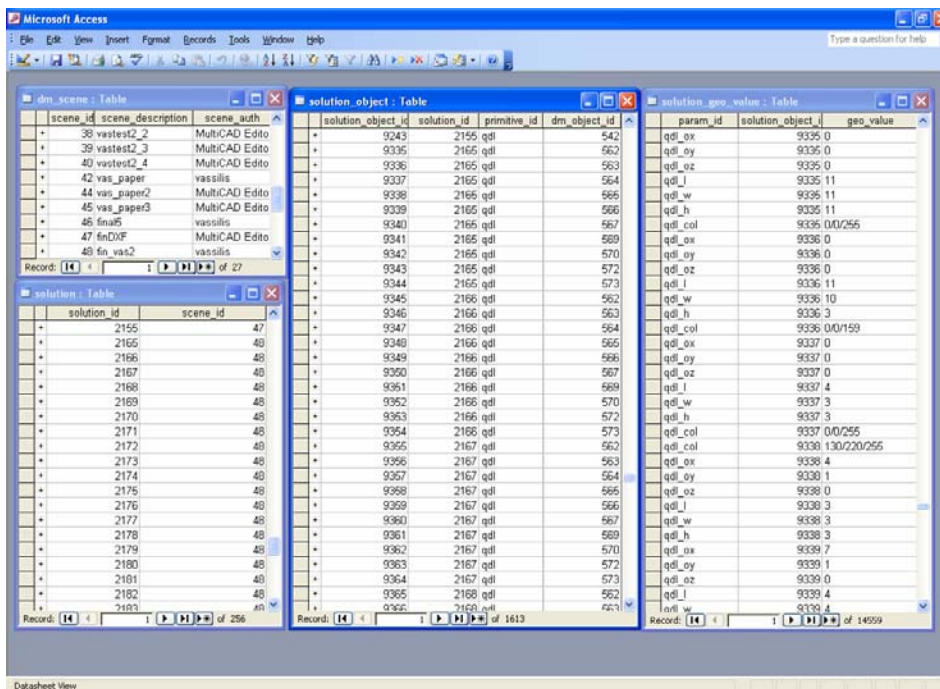


Figure 4.48 Save the geometric solution

4.3.3 Reduction of the solution space

The reduction of the solution space can be achieved by two alternative ways that are supported by the RS-MultiCAD system, the automated and the manual way.

4.3.3.1 Automated way

The first iteration of MultiCAD produces a set of alternative geometric solutions by supplying only the geometric properties of the object “site”. In the second iteration, the declarative description is provided additionally with the geometric properties of the next level of detail. In other words, the geometric properties of the object “house_10” are provided by RS-MultiCAD to the declarative description.

MultiCAD produces a set of alternative solutions that meet the designer requirements and the additional pure geometric properties of the declarative description. When the generalization factor is set to maximum tree depth, there is only one solution that meets the rule set indeed.

Generalization Factor	No Solutions
1	61072
2	80
3	1

Table 4.10 Automated reduction of the solution space.

The exact numbers of solutions per generalization factor are illustrated in Table 4.10. Figure 4.49 presents some solutions generated by the automated way. The experimental results of all possible iterations of the specific example are illustrated in Figure 4.50 where the z-axis of the chart is in logarithmic scale.

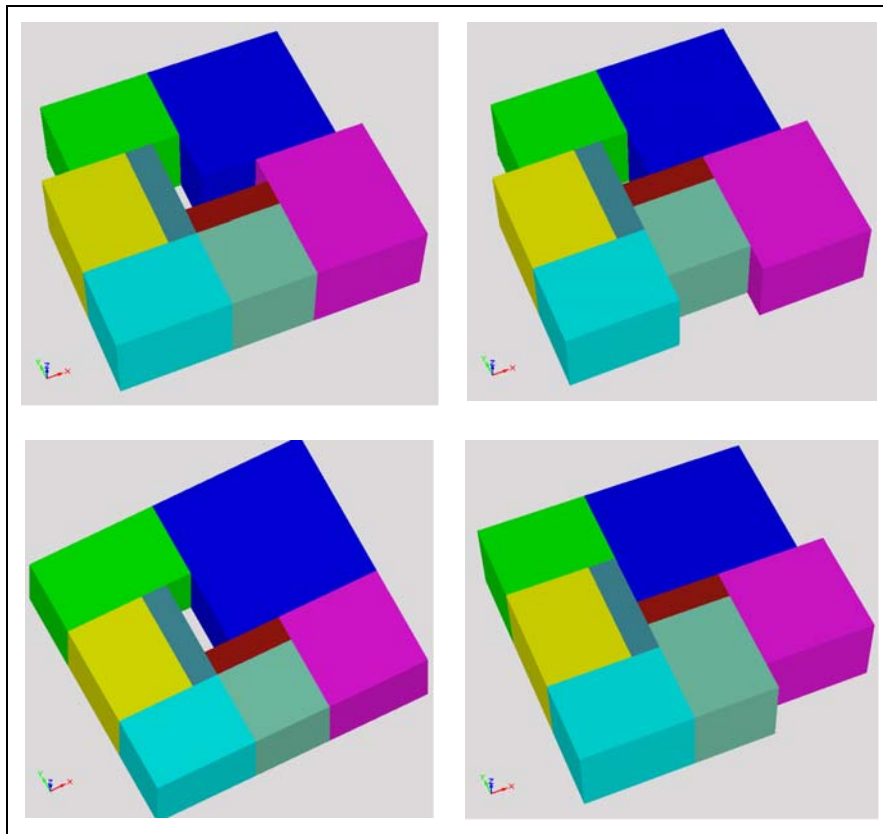


Figure 4.49 Geometric solutions generated by the automated way

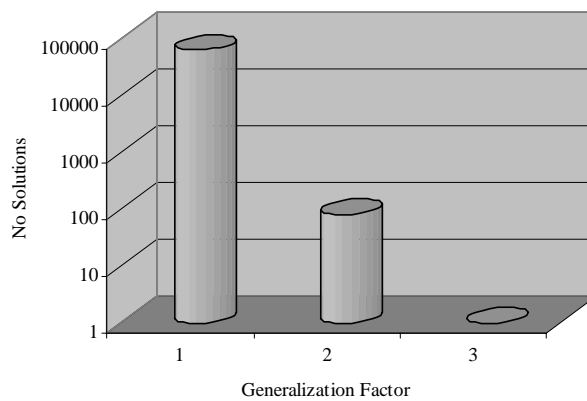


Figure 4.50 Experimental results of automated reduction of the solution space

4.3.3.2 Manual way

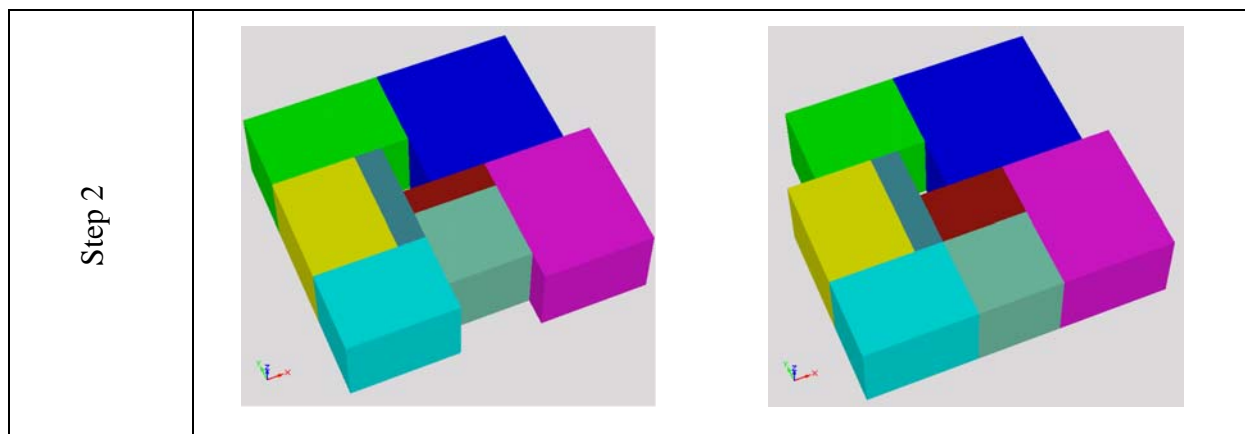
During the reduction of the solution space by the manual way the designer has the ability to change the relative rule set by adding or removing relations and properties from the rule set. In the second step, the designer adds the relation “hcorridor adjacent south living-

room” to the rule set that results to a reduced solution space according to the solution space of step 1. The designer continues adding relations such as “vcorridor adjacent west living-room” in step 3 and finally in step 4 enriches the rule set by placing the reflective relation “living-room longer than wide” that results to a reduced solution space of 2997 solutions.

Step	Rule Set	No Solutions
1	Initial Set	61072
2	Initial Set + “hcorridor adjacent south living-room”	31334
3	Initial Set + “hcorridor adjacent south living-room” + “vcorridor adjacent west living-room”	9152
4	Initial Set + “hcorridor adjacent south living-room” + “vcorridor adjacent west living-room” + “living-room longer than wide”	2997

Table 4.11 Manual reduction of the solution space

Figure 4.51 presents some geometric solutions generated by the manual way according to steps of Table 4.11. The experimental results of manual reduction of the solution space of the specific example are illustrated in Figure 4.52 where the z-axis of the chart is in logarithmic scale. The exact numbers of solutions per step are illustrated in Table 4.11.



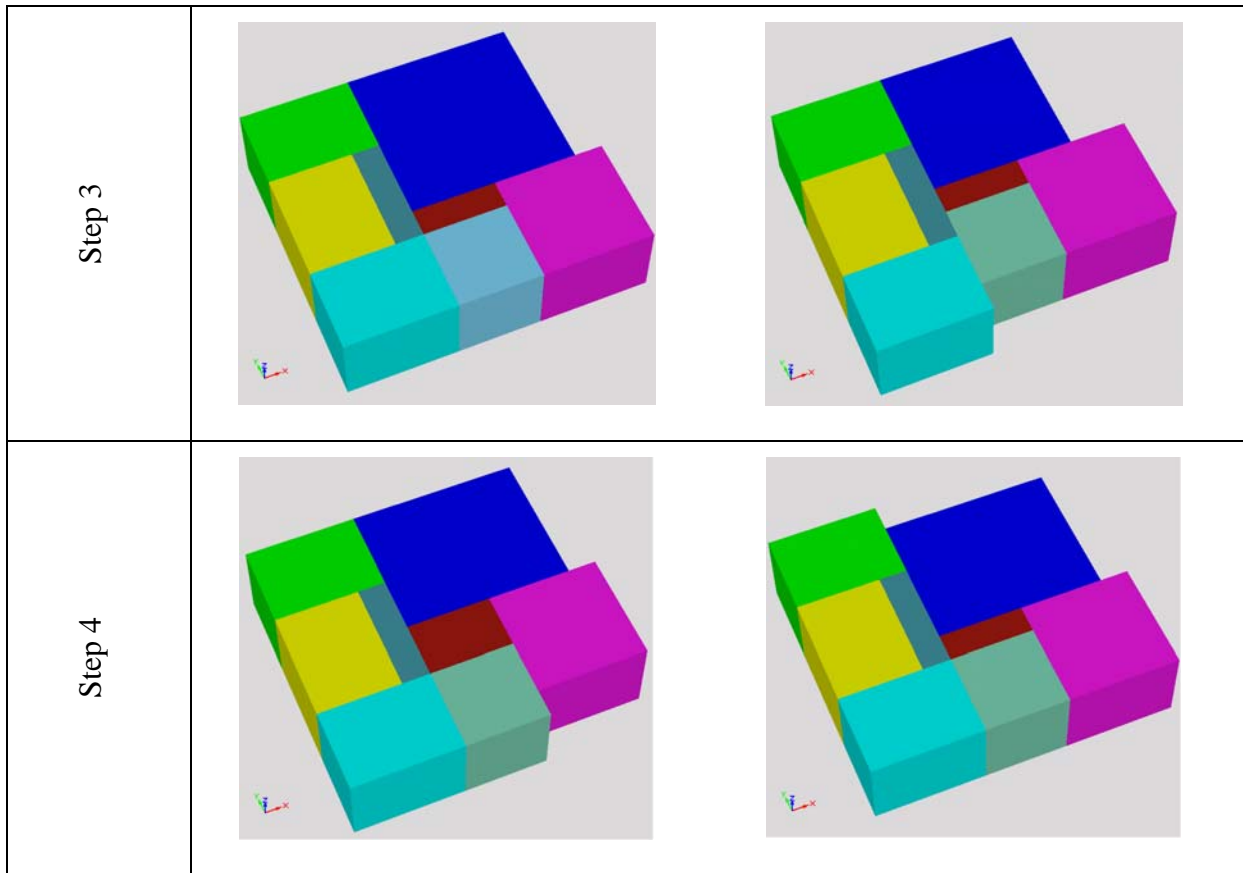


Figure 4.51 Geometric solutions generated by the manual way

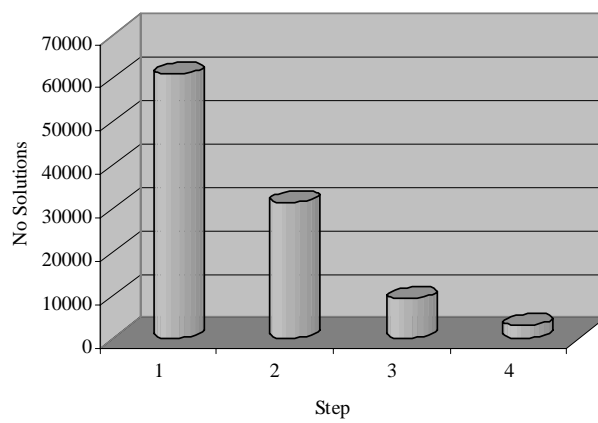


Figure 4.52 Experimental results of manual reduction of the solution space

4.4 Discussion

RS-MultiCAD system implements a knowledge-based reverse engineering approach in order to transform a geometric model, which is generated by MultiCAD system, into declarative model.

RS-MultiCAD system uses an intermediate model, the stratified representation, in order to semantically understand the selected scene. The stratified representation works properly and captures the geometric and the declarative information of the selected scene effectively. The control module of the RS-MultiCAD system is responsible for the construction, manipulation and update of the stratified representation. The algorithm of the construction is effective and the stratified representation is built by a top-down way based on the geometric information of the objects that constitute the selected scene. The stratified representation is updated correctly whenever the design modifies the selected scene. Besides, the declarative and the geometric layer of the stratified representation absorb the designer modifications. The propagation policy contributes in order the stratified representation to reflect the exact state of the scene.

Moreover, the system maintains a rule set and an object set. The rule set consists of the designer requirements in terms of relations, properties, geometric properties and characteristics. The object set consists of the objects that constitute the selected scene. Both sets are dynamics and give the designer the ability to redefine them at any time.

Furthermore, the designer has the ability to check if his/her modifications violate or not the rule set. In cases where the designer desires to check the modifications against the rule set the system infers correctly if there is a violation or not. In cases where the designer does not desire to check the modifications against the rule set the system ignores the rule set and updates the stratified representation as it should be.

The iterative design process of declarative modelling becomes supported by the machine with the contribution of the RS-MultiCAD system. The resultant declarative description is passed to the description phase of MultiCAD which in turn produces a set of alternative geometric solutions. The MultiCAD solution generator operates on the discrete values of the variable ranges. RS-MultiCAD provides an automated and a manual way to

construct the resultant declarative scene description. Both ways work properly on constructing the resultant declarative scene description. In each iteration cycle, the new declarative scene description reduces the initial solution space and produces more promising solutions.

Finally, the RS-MultiCAD system operates effectively, provides a robust environment and supports properly all the goals for what has been designed. The system user interface is user-friendly and facilitates the designer to perform modifications on a selected scene by providing dialog boxes. A future graphical support on designer modifications should enforce the user-friendliness of the system.

Chapitre 5

Conclusions et perspectives

Cette thèse a présenté l'hypothèse suivante: la possibilité de transformer un modèle géométrique en un modèle déclaratif dans le cadre de la modélisation déclarative pendant la première phase du processus de conception. Afin de confronter l'hypothèse, une approche de rétro-conception basée sur la connaissance a été développée et est responsable pour le couplage d'un modèleur géométrique classique avec un modèleur déclaratif. L'approche se place dans le cadre de la modélisation déclarative et de la rétro-conception de haut niveau ayant comme objectif principal la mise en valeur et l'exploitation de la connaissance du domaine d'application qui est accumulée dans un système de conception déclarative du type MultiCAD pour que soit possible d'un côté la compréhension sémantique de la scène (modèle géométrique) par le système et, d'un autre côté, les traitements postérieurs du modèle déclaratif consécutif (abstraite) par le concepteur en tenant compte de la dimension sémantique de la scène.

MultiCAD [Miaoulis 02] est un cadre d'architecture de logiciel qui met en application la modélisation déclarative par décomposition hiérarchique [Plemenos 91]. MultiCAD suit le cycle de conception déclarative qui se compose de trois phases fonctionnelles séquentielles: la phase de description de la scène, la phase de génération et la phase de compréhension de la scène. En outre, MultiCAD incorpore cinq type de bases de données reliées ensemble sous un schéma logiques, où entre elles la base de connaissance contient toutes les informations nécessaires sur le type d'objets, le type de relations et le type de propriétés que le système supporte. MultiCAD fournit au concepteur la capacité de décrire la scène désirée par décomposition descendante (de haut en bas) à différents niveaux de détails, et en indiquant les propriétés et les relations de la scène de manière imprécise et incomplète. La décomposition descendante (de haut en bas) avec les relations et les propriétés fonctionnent comme contraintes pour que MultiCAD produise un ensemble de modèles géométriques alternatifs qui sont visualisés à travers un modèleur géométrique.

Le système RS-MultiCAD a été développé pour faire face à notre hypothèse et est placé dans l'architecture du système MultiCAD. Le modèle géométrique qui est produit par

MultiCAD a été refondé et enrichi du type et de la forme des objets qui constituent la scène. Le modèle géométrique est exprimé par la position et les dimensions de la boîte englobante des objets avec n'importe quelles autres caractéristiques géométriques.

Le cycle conceptuel de la modélisation déclarative s'élargi, avec l'introduction de la phase de la reconstruction, ayant comme objectif ultime l'accomplissement et la fermeture de la boucle du cycle conceptuel déclaratif afin de reconstruire le modèle abstrait de départ. La fermeture du cycle conceptuel déclaratif rend le fonctionnement du système réellement itératif assisté par ordinateur et elle offre au concepteur la possibilité de raffiner plus efficacement les solutions géométriques produites. Le but de la phase de reconstruction est, d'une part, de comprendre sémantiquement la scène et d'autre part, de permettre au concepteur de réaliser des modifications sur la scène choisie. Pendant la phase de reconstruction, un ensemble de règles et un ensemble d'objets sont établis et mis à jour reflétant les exigences de concepteur. Les deux ensembles sont dynamiques, puisque pendant la phase de reconstruction, ils sont toujours susceptibles de modification.

Afin de comprendre la scène sémantiquement, le système RS-MultiCAD utilise une représentation stratifiée [Sagerer et al., 97]. Une telle représentation capture l'information géométrique et déclarative de la scène choisie dans la même représentation. La représentation stratifiée est un modèle de niveau intermédiaire qui incarne les deux niveaux de l'abstraction, en termes de deux couches distinctes reliées ensemble. La représentation stratifiée est constitué de la couche déclarative et la couche géométrique. La couche déclarative incarne la description de scène déclarative avec la décomposition hiérarchique. La couche géométrique englobe la représentation géométrique des objets qui constituent la scène choisie.

La couche déclarative de la représentation stratifiée est un filet sémantique dynamique avec des nœuds, qui correspond aux objets de la scène choisie et aux flèches orientées qui marquent les relations et les propriétés des objets. La couche géométrique de la représentation stratifiée présente la représentation géométrique des objets qui est exprimée par la position et les dimensions de la boîte englobante des objets et de toutes les autres caractéristiques géométriques supplémentaires qui définissent la géométrie des objets complexes.

Le système RS-MultiCAD est un système basé sur la connaissance qui utilise la connaissance essentiellement spécialisée en architecture pour la conception de bâtiments. La structure du système RS-MultiCAD est modulaire et se compose de cinq modules principaux.

Le module d'import/export est responsable de la communication avec le système de gestion de base de données. Toutefois, il supporte l'entrée et le stockage de la solution géométrique avec le stockage de la description déclarative de scène qui en découle. De plus, le module d'import/export traite de la possibilité d'importer un modèle géométrique qui arrive d'un autre modèleur géométrique classique et d'exporter le modèle géométrique dans un format approprié de dossier (voir Appendix B) afin que le concepteur le manipule à l'aide d'un autre modèleur géométrique classique.

Le module d'extraction emploie la connaissance spécialisée dans le domaine qui arrive de la base de connaissance de MultiCAD (voir Appendix A) afin d'extraire toutes les relations valides et les propriétés des objets à partir de la scène choisie.

Le module de contrôle est responsable pour la construction, la manipulation et la mise à jour de la représentation stratifiée. La construction de la représentation stratifiée est accomplie par une approche de descendante (de haut en bas) et est basée sur l'information géométrique des objets qui constituent la scène choisie. Quand le concepteur effectue des modifications sur la scène choisie, le module de contrôle manipulation et met à jour la représentation stratifiée afin de refléter le statut réel de la scène choisie. La manipulation et la mise à jour de la représentation stratifiée sont basées sur une politique de propagation où les ancêtres et les descendants de l'objet susceptible de modification doivent être contrôlés et mis à jour.

Le concepteur a la capacité d'effectuer des modifications déclaratives qui affectent premièrement la couche déclarative de la représentation stratifiée et ensuite, le module de contrôle vérifie et met à jour la couche géométrique de la représentation stratifiée si aucune relation/propriété qui appartient à l'ensemble de règles n'est violée. Par ailleurs, le concepteur effectue les modifications géométriques qui affectent premièrement la couche géométrique de la représentation stratifiée, et alors, le module de contrôle vérifie et met à jour la couche déclarative de la représentation stratifiée si aucune relation/propriété, qui appartient à l'ensemble de règles, n'est violée. En outre, le concepteur a la capacité d'ignorer l'ensemble de

règles et réalise une modification qui mène au module de contrôle pour réarranger la représentation stratifiée.

Le module d'explication est responsable pour l'approvisionnement d'informations valables au sujet du raisonnement du module de contrôle dans les cas où une modification du concepteur sur la scène violerait l'ensemble de règles. Finalement, le système RS-MultiCAD incorpore un interface-utilisateur graphique avec une édition en trois dimensions afin de visualiser les modèles géométriques et recevoir de manière graphique les demandes du concepteur.

Le système RS-MultiCAD reçoit le modèle géométrique, qui a été produit par MultiCAD, et aboutit sur une nouvelle description de scène déclarative. Le module de contrôle du système RS-MultiCAD produit la description déclarative de scène résultante en utilisant deux options alternatives, la manuelle et la manière automatisée. La description déclarative de scène résultante est constituée des relations et des propriétés qui appartiennent à l'ensemble de règles ainsi qu'à l'ensemble d'objets avec les relations « fait-partie-de » qui constituent l'arbre de décomposition hiérarchique. RS-MultiCAD manuel laisse le concepteur modifier seul l'ensemble de règles, en ajoutant de nouvelles relations/propriétés et/ou en effaçant relations/propriétés existantes qui appartiennent à l'ensemble de règles et l'ensemble d'objets en fonction des conditions ultérieures. La manière automatisée permet au concepteur d'effectuer toutes les modifications exigées, comme cela se produit dans la manière manuelle, mais qui plus est, RS-MultiCAD ajoute les propriétés géométriques des objets appropriés à l'ensemble de règles de la description déclarative de scène résultante.

5.1 Remarques de conclusion

Le système RS-MultiCAD agit dans les directions principales suivantes:

- La scène est comprise sémantiquement. Le système RS-MultiCAD reçoit un modèle géométrique et afin de produire une nouvelle description de scène déclarative, il construit un modèle intermédiaire qui contient des informations géométriques et déclaratives sur les objets qui constituent la scène choisie. En particulier, l'information déclarative de la scène émerge de l'exploitation de la base de connaissance du modéleur déclaratif de MultiCAD.

La base de connaissance actuelle de MultiCAD contient toute la connaissance appropriée sur des types d'objets, des types de relations et des types de propriétés qui sont impliquées dans la conception de bâtiments. En outre, le système de RS-MultiCAD a été conçu d'une manière modulaire afin de pouvoir comprendre n'importe quelle scène indépendamment de la conception.

- Le processus déclaratif itératif devient intégralement supporté par ordinateur. Le système RS-MultiCAD met en application la nature itérative de la modélisation déclarative en automatisant le processus. Une nouvelle description déclarative émerge chaque fois que RS-MultiCAD reçoit un modèle géométrique et fournit la description déclarative de scène de MultiCAD. Par conséquent, le concepteur libère du souci de redéfinir la description déclarative de scène pour l'itération suivante.
- La scène peut être modifiée pendant la phase de reconstruction. Le système RS-MultiCAD permet au concepteur de faire toutes les modifications nécessaires sur une scène choisie avant la construction de la nouvelle description déclarative de scène pour que le concepteur change ses conditions. Les modifications qui peuvent être réalisées sont classées par catégorie selon la manière où le concepteur informe le système. Par conséquent, le concepteur peut modifier la géométrie d'un objet directement en indiquant de nouvelles valeurs géométriques d'une part, et d'autre part, elle/il peut changer la topologie de la scène en effectuant des modifications sur les objets de la scène.
- La description déclarative de scène résultante peut être modifiée en adaptant convenablement les exigences du concepteur. Le système RS-MultiCAD maintient un ensemble de règles où les exigences du concepteur sont gardées en termes de relations entre les objets et les propriétés d'objet. Le concepteur peut changer l'ensemble de règles en ajoutant ou en supprimant des relations et/ou des propriétés. Par conséquent, en changeant l'ensemble de règles, la description déclarative de scène résultante inclut toutes les relations et les propriétés qui appartiennent à l'ensemble de règle.

RS-MultiCAD peut être comparé à XMultiForms [Sellinger 98] puisque les deux systèmes ont été conçus pour faire face au couplage d'un modèleur déclaratif avec un modèleur classique géométrique. Les deux systèmes diffèrent sur les points suivants:

- Le modèle géométrique qui est employé pour l'entrée est différent dans les deux systèmes. Le système XMultiFormes reçoit un modèle géométrique qui a été produit par le modelleur déclaratif MultiFormes. Le générateur de solutions MultiFormes produit les modèles géométriques qui sont exprimés en termes de parallélépipède fermé qui est constitué par six surfaces de Bézier reliées. Le système RS-MultiCAD emploie le modèle géométrique qui a été produit par MultiCAD et qui contient toutes les informations nécessaires sur la géométrie des objets qui constituent la scène mais qui contient également des informations supplémentaires sur la forme et le type d'objets. Chaque objet est exprimé en termes de position et les dimensions de base de sa boîte englobante avec n'importe quelles caractéristiques géométriques supplémentaires qui décrivent l'objet.
- Le système RS-MultiCAD construit un modèle intermédiaire afin de saisir l'information géométrique et déclarative. Le modèle stratifié est caractérisé par sa flexibilité à manipuler et absorber les modifications du concepteur. Le système XMultiForms emploie un système marquant afin de maintenir l'information déclarative et géométrique dans la même structure.
- Dans le système XMultiFormes, le concepteur a la capacité de changer la scène géométriquement à la différence du système RS-MultiCAD qui fournit les modifications géométriques et déclaratives de scène.
- Dans le système XMultiFormes, l'intégration du modelleur déclaratif et géométrique est claire mais ne pas intégrée dans un processus itératif de modélisation déclarative. D'autre part, RS-MultiCAD facilite et introduit la notion du processus itératif supportée par ordinateur de modélisation déclarative. La convergence de l'ensemble des modèles géométriques est réalisée par la manière automatisée, où le système RS-MultiCAD fournit les propriétés géométriques appropriées à la description déclarative de scène résultante, et manuellement, où le concepteur ajoute d'autres conditions à la description déclarative résultante de scène. Précisons que la convergence de l'ensemble des modèles géométriques de la manière automatisée présente une pente raide, à la différence de la manière manuelle, où le concepteur peut décider, la pente peut être plus douce.

Le système RS-MultiCAD améliore la méthodologie de la modélisation déclarative de scène par les points suivants:

- Le système RS-MultiCAD réduit le coût de modélisation déclarative en permettant d'abord de définir une ébauche de la scène par modélisation déclarative et par la suite, d'affiner l'ébauche à l'aide d'un modèleur géométrique intégré. Le concepteur peut modifier une scène choisie et changer l'ensemble de règles en ajoutant des relations et/ou des propriétés. En outre, le concepteur peut modifier l'arbre de décomposition de la description déclarative. Par conséquent, ces modifications mènent à une description déclarative de scène résultante qui correspondra à un ensemble de solutions géométriques répondant aux exigences du concepteur.
- Le système RS-MultiCAD fonctionne en tant que navigateur idiomatique. Le concepteur est à même de changer la topologie de la scène choisie et la géométrie des objets qui constituent la scène. L'ensemble de règles inclut toujours toutes les exigences de concepteur. Par conséquent, si ces modifications ne violent pas l'ensemble de règles, elles mènent à une autre solution géométrique qui appartient au même espace de solution que la solution choisie. En outre, si les modifications violent l'ensemble de règles et le concepteur souhaite réaliser ces modifications, elles mènent à un autre espace de solutions et une autre description déclarative de scène résultante.
- Le système RS-MultiCAD donne au concepteur la possibilité d'incorporer un premier modèle géométrique, qui est construit par un autre modèleur géométrique classique, dans la méthodologie de modélisation déclarative et pour tirer bénéfice de ses avantages. D'autre part, le concepteur reçoit du système RS-MultiCAD une solution géométrique et élabore la scène pendant le processus de conception détaillé avec un autre modèleur classique.

5.2 Perspectives de recherche

Cette thèse se place sur l'axe principal de la compréhension et de la gestion sémantique des scènes dans le cadre de la modélisation déclarative. L'approche sémantique choisie vise à élargir le cycle de conception en modélisation déclarative à fin de pouvoir

intégrer la reconstruction d'une description déclarative à partir d'un modèle géométrique d'une solution généré ou sélectionné. L'exploitation et la gestion de la connaissance, qui est ainsi fournie, contribue sensiblement à rendre le système de CAO déclaratif beaucoup plus souple pour le concepteur, qui dorénavant voit ses besoins d'intervention dans le processus de retro-conception se réduire. D'ailleurs, le concepteur peut guider le système avec une plus grande souplesse, à partir du moment où toutes les informations nécessaires sont disponibles afin que le système produise un ensemble de solutions géométriques qui seront plus respectueuses des exigences. Néanmoins, la compréhension et la gestion sémantiques des scènes ouvrent une nouvelle voie mais nécessitent aussi des améliorations sensibles pour être plus efficace.

Pour l'instant, le concepteur choisit une solution géométrique qui peut être éditée. Une recherche ultérieure du système courant est la possibilité pour le concepteur de choisir plus d'une solution géométrique. Le multi-choix des modèles géométriques mène à gagner certaines caractéristiques d'un modèle et d'autres caractéristiques d'un autre modèle géométrique. L'unification de ces caractéristiques dans la même description déclarative de scène peut mener à un ensemble de modèles géométriques alternatifs, dans la prochaine itération, qui exprime les exigences du concepteur plus facilement et plus rapidement.

Le système RS-MultiCAD construit l'arbre de décomposition de la description déclarative de scène exploitant l'information géométrique des solutions géométriques choisies. Une autre manière de construire l'arbre de décomposition est d'exploiter la base de concept, qui contient la représentation de concept et alors, l'arbre de décomposition sera basé sur l'organisation logique de la scène.

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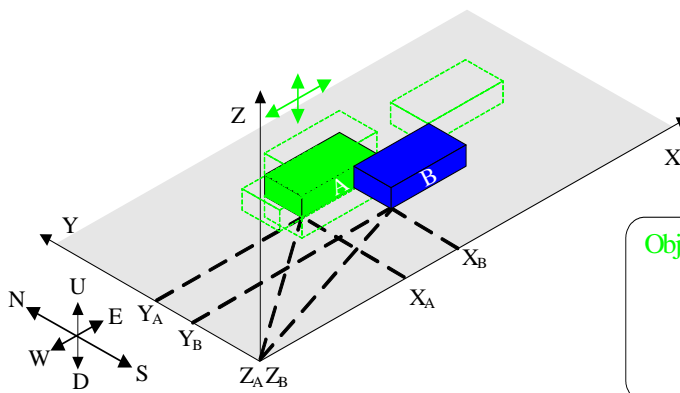
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Appendix A

Relations and Properties

A.1 Relations

Adjacent North



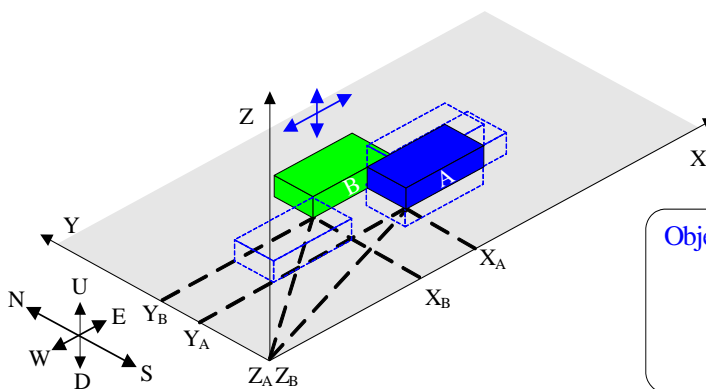
Object A Adjacent North Object B

$$X_B - L_A \leq X_A \leq X_B + L_B \wedge$$

$$Z_B - H_A \leq Z_A \leq Z_B + H_B \wedge$$

$$Y_A = Y_B + W_B$$

Adjacent South



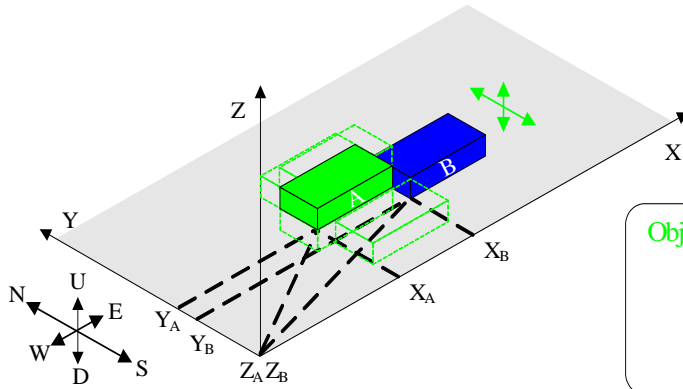
Object A Adjacent South Object B

$$X_A - L_B \leq X_B \leq X_A + L_A \wedge$$

$$Z_A - H_B \leq Z_B \leq Z_A + H_A \wedge$$

$$Y_B = Y_A + W_A$$

Adjacent West



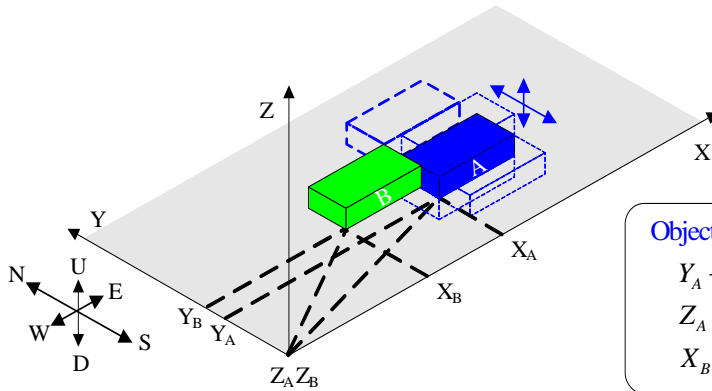
Object A Adjacent West Object B

$$Y_B - W_A \leq Y_A \leq Y_B + W_B \wedge$$

$$Z_B - H_A \leq Z_A \leq Z_B + H_B \wedge$$

$$X_A = X_B - L_A$$

Adjacent East



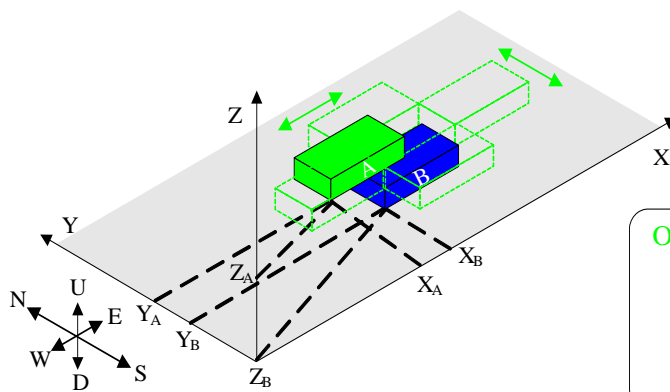
Object A Adjacent East Object B

$$Y_A - W_B \leq Y_B \leq Y_A + W_A \wedge$$

$$Z_A - H_B \leq Z_B \leq Z_A + H_A \wedge$$

$$X_B = X_A - L_B$$

Adjacent Over



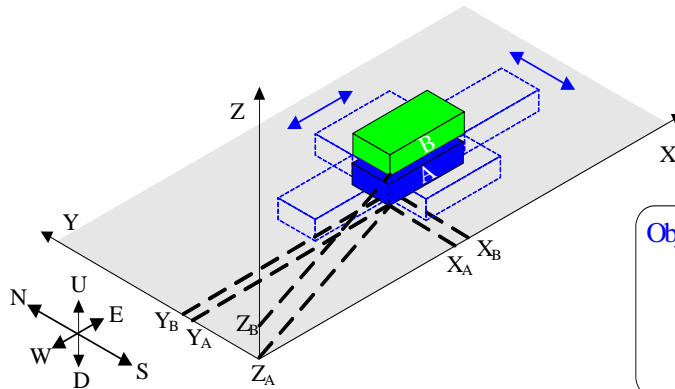
Object A Adjacent Over Object B

$$X_B - L_A \leq X_A \leq X_B + L_B \wedge$$

$$Y_B - W_A \leq Y_A \leq Y_B + W_B \wedge$$

$$Z_A = Z_B + H_B$$

Adjacent Under



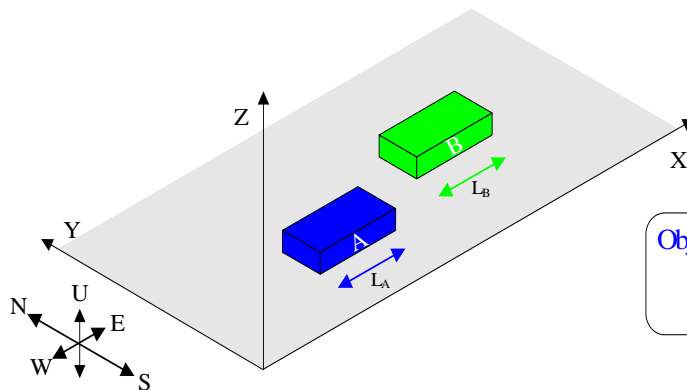
Object A Adjacent Under Object B

$$X_A - L_B \leq X_B \leq X_A + L_A \wedge$$

$$Y_A - W_B \leq Y_B \leq Y_A + W_A \wedge$$

$$Z_B = Z_A + H_A$$

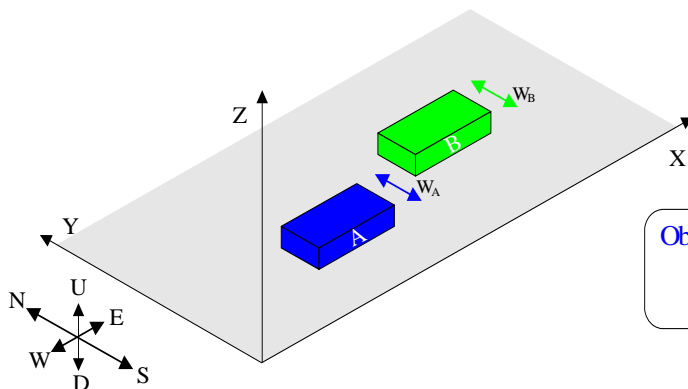
Equal Length



Object A Equal Length Object B

$$L_A = L_B$$

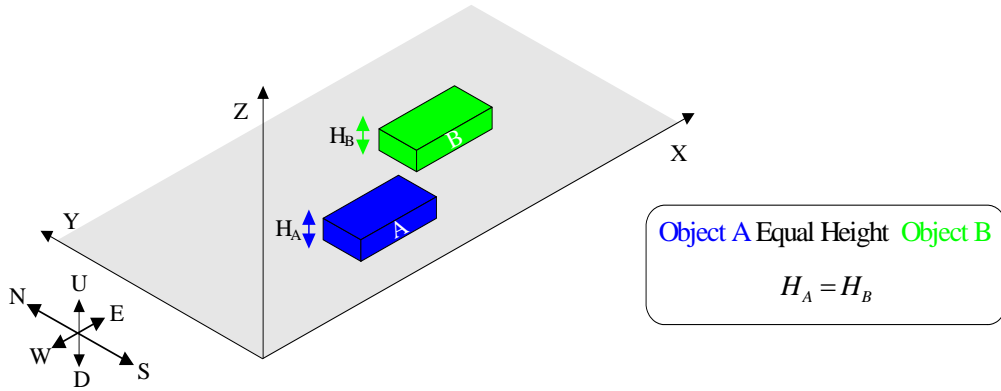
Equal Width



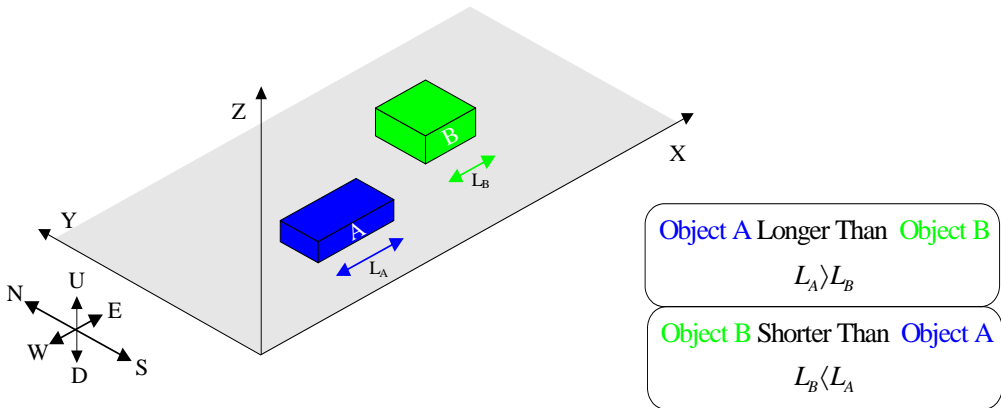
Object A Equal Width Object B

$$W_A = W_B$$

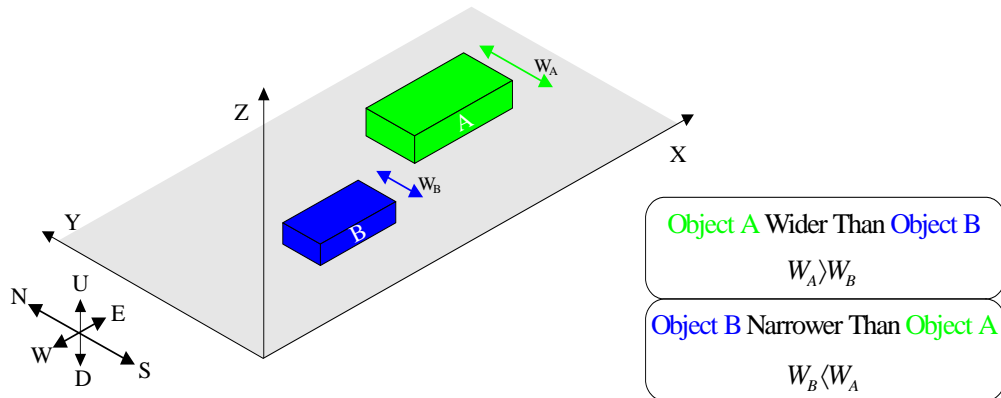
Equal Height



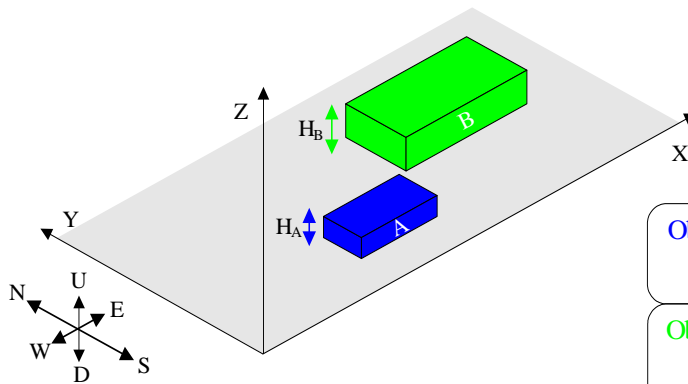
Longer Than – Shorter Than



Wider Than – Narrower Than



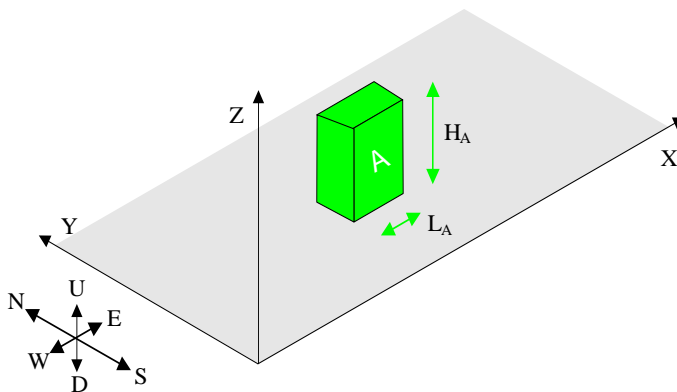
Higher Than – Lower Than



Object A Lower Than Object B
 $H_A < H_B$

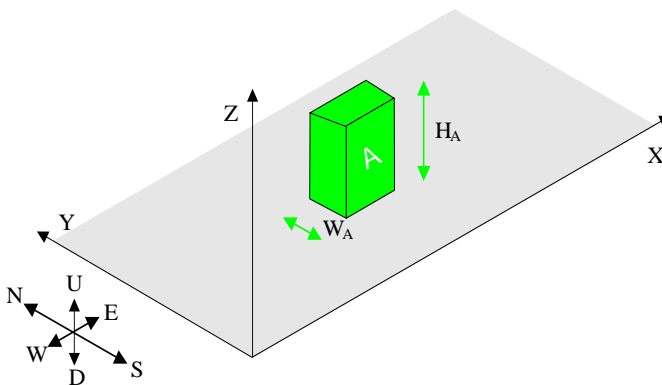
Object B Higher Than Object A
 $H_B > H_A$

Higher Than Long

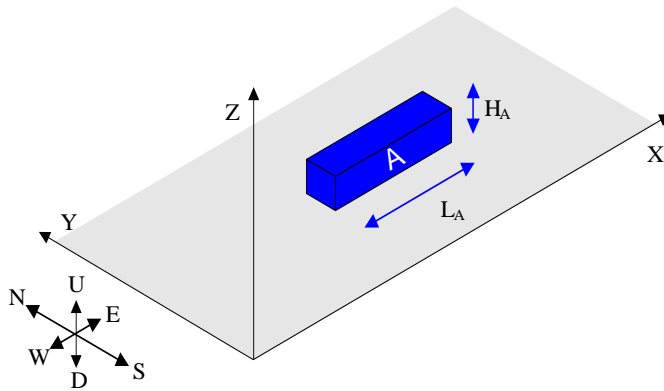


Object A Higher Than Long
 $H_A > L_A$

Higher Than Wide

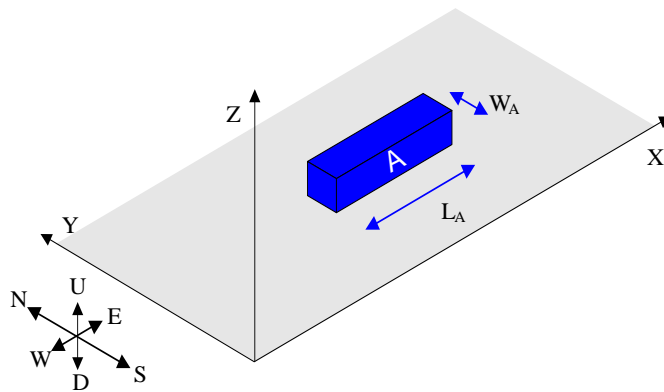


Object A Higher Than Wide
 $H_A > W_A$

Longer Than High

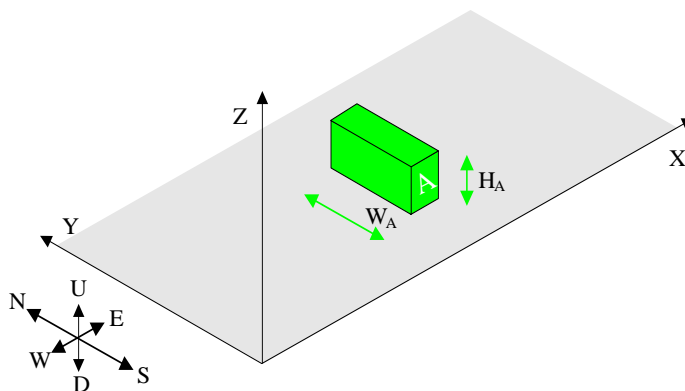
Object A Longer Than High

$$L_A > H_A$$

Longer Than Wide

Object A Longer Than Wide

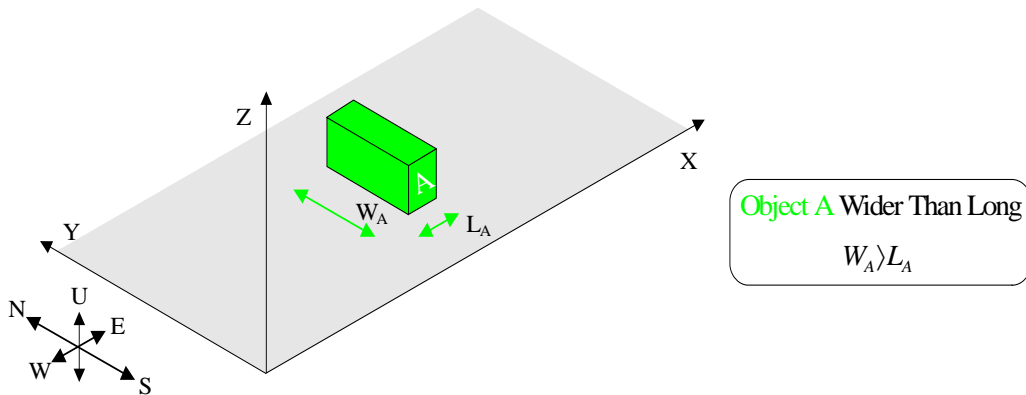
$$L_A > W_A$$

Wider Than High

Object A Wider Than High

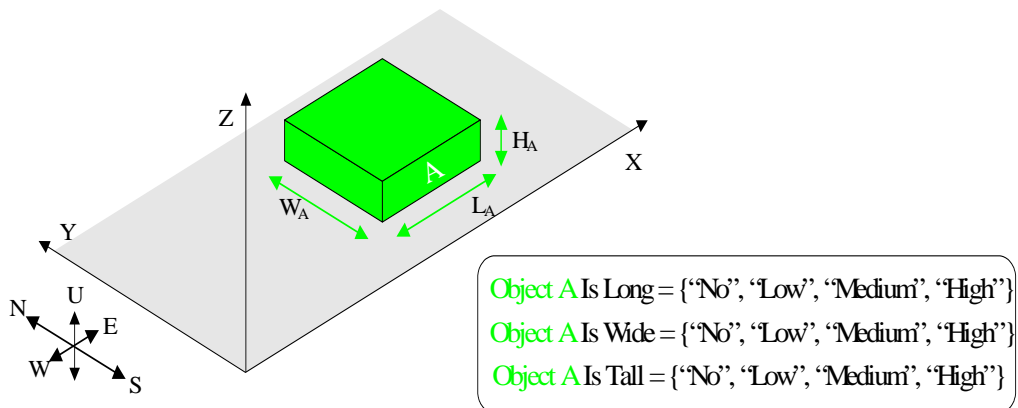
$$W_A > H_A$$

Wider Than Long

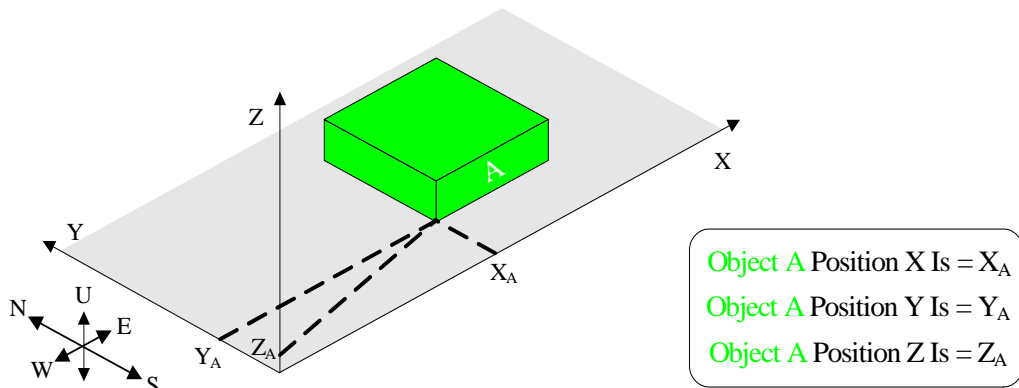


A.2 Properties

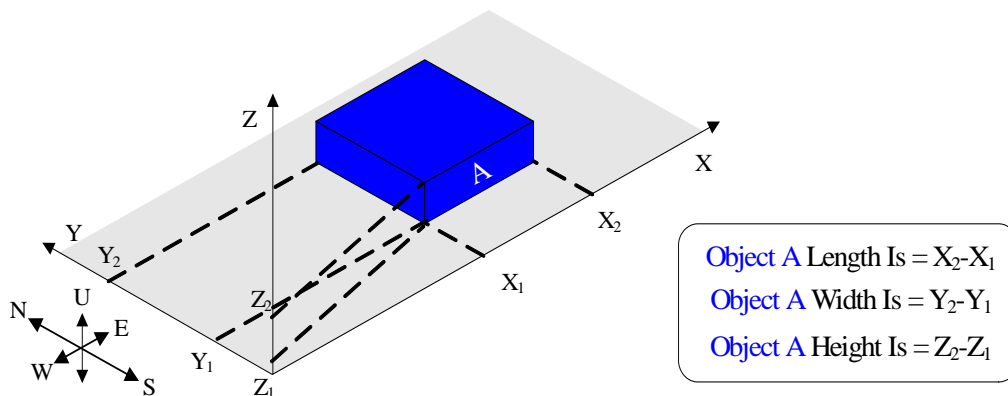
Is Long – Is Wide – Is Tall



Position X Is – Position Y Is – Position Z Is



Length Is – Width Is – Height Is



Where:

X_i, Y_i, Z_i : coordinates of the object **i**

L_i : length of the object **i**

W_i : length of the object **i**

H_i : length of the object **i**

Appendix B

DXF format

The DXF format is a tagged data representation of all the information contained in a CAD drawing file. Tagged data means that each data element in the file is preceded by an integer number that is called a group code. A group code's value indicates what type of data element follows. This value also indicates the meaning of a data element for a given object (or record) type. Virtually all user-specified information in a drawing file can be represented in DXF format.

A DXF file is divided in five major sections. The header section, which contains the settings of variables associated with the drawing. Each variable is specified by a 9 group code giving the variable's name, followed by groups that supply the variable's value.

The Classes section which holds the information for application-defined classes whose instances appear in the BLOCKS and ENTITIES sections of the database. The Tables section contains several tables each of which can contain a variable number of entries. The Block section contains an entry for each block reference in the Drawing. The Entities Section which describes all the drawing entities.

Some group codes that define an entity always appear; others are optional and appear only if their values differ from the defaults. The end of an entity is indicated by the next 0 group, which begins the next entity or indicates the end of the section.

Group codes also define the type of the associated value as an integer, a floating point number, or a string, the following table B.1 of group code ranges shows some of the basic types and their corresponding group code [Autodesk 04].

Group Code Value Types

10–39	Double precision 3D point value
40–59	Double-precision floating-point value
90–99	32-bit integer value
100	String (255-character maximum; less for Unicode strings)
290–299	Boolean flag value
320–329	String representing hex handle value

Table B.1

The following table B.2 shows some of the most commonly used group codes [Autodesk 04].

Group Code

0	Text string indicating the entity type
1	Primary text value for an entity
2	Name (attribute tag, block name, and so on)
5	Entity handle; text string of up to 16 hexadecimal digits
6	Line type name
8	Layer name
10	Primary point; this is the start point of a line or text entity, center of a circle, and so on DXF: X value of the primary point (followed by Y and Z value codes 20 and 30)
11-18	Other points DXF: X value of other points (followed by Y value codes 21–28 and Z value codes 31–38)
39	Entity's thickness if nonzero

Table B.2

A typical three dimensional box corresponds to a DXF file format which is presented in Figure B.1.

```
0
LWPOLYLINE
5
B
330
44
100
AcDbEntity
8
0
62
5
100
AcDbPolyline
39
5
90
4
70
1
43
0
38
0
10
0.410662348178138
20
0.774325506072875
10
8.63090526315789
20
0.774325506072875
10
8.63090526315787
20
6.75003400809717
10
0.410662348178117
20
6.75003400809717
1001
VDEXTRAPARAM
1071
1
1071
5
1071
5
1040
1
1000
Building1
1040
0
1040
0
1071
-1023410171
1071
-1023410171
```

Figure B.1 The DXF file of a 3D box

Appendix C

The traditional geometric modeller

The main task of RS-MultiCAD project is to integrate the MultiCAD declarative modeller with a geometric modeller. For this purpose the choice of the geometric modeller was based on the following requirements:

- An up-to-date commercial tool in order to support the present and any further extensions of the project.
- Portable, in order to be transferred from one environment to another.
- Interactive in order to allow the designer to define and redefine the geometric requirements.
- Friendly in order the designer can easily produce a drawing.
- Accurate in order the geometric outputs to be sufficiently precise and satisfy their intended use.
- Integrative with other developing environment in order to be captured with the declarative modeller.
- Light in order to bind low capacity of memory storage.

VectorDraw¹ is a CAD system built using ActiveX technology. It can be integrated with any developing environment that supports ActiveX components and gives the freedom of choosing a platform that corresponds with the developer needs. Provides an object oriented perspective of a CAD document and supports the most widely used file formats. The supported file formats are the followings:

- All Drawing (vdf, vdi, vdp, xml, emf, wmf)

¹ VectorDraw is trademark of VectorDraw Corporation

- VectorDraw Files (vdf)
- VectorDraw Compressed files (vdi)
- VectorDraw Project Files (vdp)
- XML Document (xml)
- EMF Files (emf)
- WMF files (wmf)
- DXF files (dxf), vdrawDXF.dll required
- All images (bmp, gif, jpg, tif, tga, png)

VectorDraw component fulfils the above requirements and is used as a traditional geometric modeller which is integrated with RS-MultiCAD system. Below further VectorDraw characteristics are presented.

The object model of VectorDraw component consists of various objects which the developer has the ability to manage in order to create a CAD application without be concerned about graphics library implementation details. The object model is presented in Figure C.1.

The major object is vdDocument which maps all the information of a CAD drawing. vdDocument has methods to open, save and export a document that saves the developer from parsing complex file formats. vdDocument holds collections of blocks, layers, images etc.

The most important collection is the vdEntities collection which stores the drawing elements of the document. The developer can easily add new objects to the document by simple add them to vdEntities collection. For example the code to add a line is:

```
VDraw.ActiveDocument.Entities.AddLine(StartPoint, EndPoint)
```

where StartPoint and EndPoint are double arrays with the corresponding coordinates.

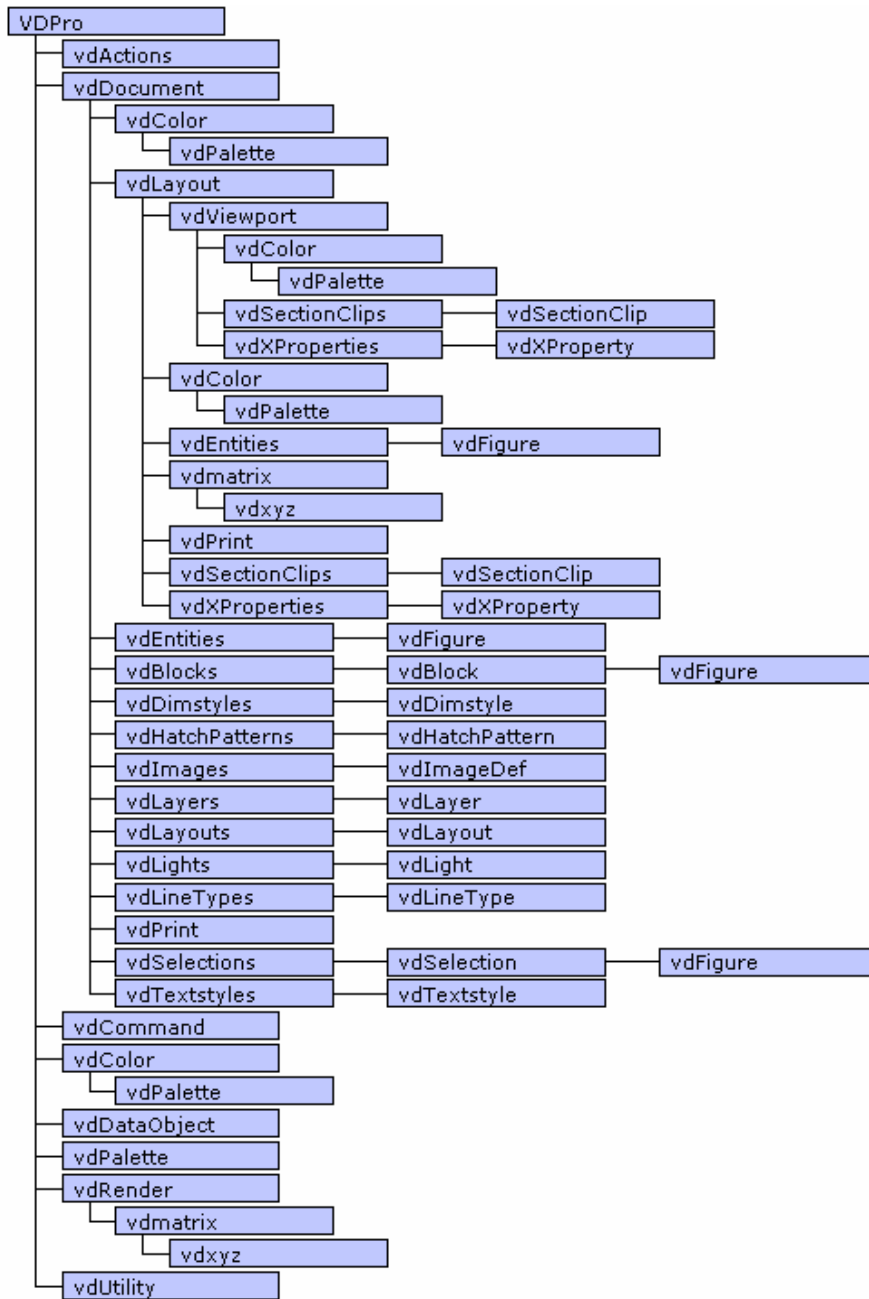


Figure C.1 The object model of VectorDraw

The vdFigure is the base class for all drawing elements and has the common properties and methods. Every drawing entity such as line, circle etc. inherits from vdFigure and extends it with extra methods and properties.

Titre: Étude et réalisation d'un système de rétro-conception basé sur la connaissance pour la modélisation déclarative de scènes.

Résumé

La modélisation déclarative permet au concepteur de décrire, sans devoir définir les propriétés géométriques, une scène en précisant ses propriétés qui peuvent être imprécises et incomplètes. La modélisation déclarative par décomposition hiérarchique est une approche spéciale qui donne à l'utilisateur la capacité de décrire une scène par décomposition descendante (de haut en bas) à différents niveaux de détail.

L'architecture du système MultiCAD met en application la modélisation déclarative par décomposition hiérarchique, elle accepte une description déclarative, elle produit un ensemble de solutions géométriques qui rencontrent la description et elle visualise les solutions par un modèleur géométrique. Le but de ce travail est d'établir le processus de rétro-ingénierie par le système RS-MultiCAD, qui est un système basé sur la connaissance, afin de coupler un modèleur déclaratif avec un modèleur géométrique classique.

Le cycle de conception déclaratif de la modélisation déclarative est prolongé, afin d'inclure le processus de rétro-conception, en introduisant la phase de reconstruction et le processus itératif de conception qui est supportée par ordinateur. Pendant la phase de reconstruction, le système RS-MultiCAD reçoit une solution géométrique choisie, qui est sémantiquement comprise, il permet au concepteur d'effectuer des modifications géométriques et topologiques sur la scène et débouche sur une description déclarative qui incarne les modifications du concepteur. Cette description déclarative résultante mène à des solutions plus prometteuses et réduit l'espace initial de solutions.

Mots-clés: Modélisation déclarative, Rétro-conception, Systems basé sur la connaissance, Conception assistée par ordinateur.

Title: Study and implementation of a knowledge-based reverse engineering system for declarative scene modelling.

Abstract

Declarative modelling allows the designer to describe a scene, without the need to define the geometric properties, by specifying its properties which can be imprecise and incomplete. Declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition is a special approach which gives the user the ability to describe a scene by top-down decomposition at different levels of detail.

The MultiCAD system architecture implements the declarative modelling by hierarchical decomposition, accepting a declarative description, generating a set of geometric solutions that meet the description and visualizing the solutions through a geometric modeller. The aim of the present work is to settle the reverse engineering process through the RS-MultiCAD system, which is a knowledge-based system, in order to couple a declarative with a traditional geometric modeller.

The declarative conception cycle of declarative modelling is extended, in order to include the reverse engineering process, by introducing the reconstruction phase and the iterative design process becomes automated. During the reconstruction phase, RS-MultiCAD receives a selected geometric solution, which is semantically understood, permits the designer to perform geometric and topological modifications on the scene and results a declarative description which embodies the designer modifications. That resultant declarative description leads to more promising solutions and reduces the initial solution space.

Keywords: Declarative modelling, Reverse engineering, Knowledge-based systems, Computer-aided design.

Discipline: Informatique

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