

Master Thesis

Master's Degree
Smart City Solutions

Integrating Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Enhanced Management and Efficiency of Urban Infrastructure in Smart Cities

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Declaration

I declare, that the thesis with the title: " Integrating Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Enhanced Management and Efficiency of Urban Infrastructure in Smart Cities" is entirely my own work. No resources and means other than those specified were used. In each case, the source of direct quotations and references from other works were given and indicated.

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Abstract

Integrating Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) offers transformative potential for managing urban infrastructure within the framework of smart cities. The thesis explores the integration of BIM and GIS through three stages: a literature review to identify challenges and opportunities, a prototype model demonstrating practical applications, and actionable guidelines to support stakeholders in urban planning and infrastructure management.

A literature review establishes the theoretical foundation, highlighting the complementary roles of BIM and GIS, existing standards like ISO 19650 and CityGML, and the barriers to seamless integration, including data interoperability, semantic inconsistencies, and technical complexities. The review further examines key concepts such as BIM dimensions, and LOD concepts in BIM and GIS, which define the granularity of information at various stages of project workflows. Additionally, widely adopted classification systems, such as UniClass, OmniClass, and DIN 276, are discussed for their role in standardizing data organization and enhancing interoperability.

The study develops a prototype model, leveraging tools such as ArcGIS Pro, Revit, and GDAL, to demonstrate the integration of real-world datasets from Stuttgart, Germany. The prototype incorporates digital terrain models, cadastral data, and 3D building geometries, employing various integration methods, including direct use of BIM files, geodatabase conversion, and Building Scene Layers. These methods are evaluated for their advantages, limitations, and applicability to diverse urban planning scenarios.

The research provides actionable best practices based on insights from the literature review and prototype development. These include developing a clear understanding of project objectives, establishing standardized data workflows to address interoperability challenges, defining clear roles for stakeholders, and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration. The recommendations highlight the importance of leveraging appropriate software solutions and ensuring consistent use of spatial reference systems throughout the project to enhance accuracy and facilitate seamless integration.

This thesis concludes that BIM-GIS integration is a critical enabler for smart city initiatives, offering a framework for managing urban infrastructure. Future research should explore the application of emerging technologies, such as digital twins and IoT, to further advance the integration of BIM and GIS in dynamic urban environments.

Table of Contents

Declaration	2
Acknowledgments	3
Abstract	4
List of Tables	7
List of Figures	8
1 Introduction.....	12
1.1 Background and Problem Statement.....	12
1.2 Research Questions.....	12
1.3 Research Objectives:	13
2 Methodology.....	14
2.1 Literature Review Methodology	14
2.2 Prototype Development Process	14
2.3 Best Practices and Guidelines Formulation.....	15
3 Literature Review	16
3.1 Smart City Framework and the Roles of BIM and GIS.....	16
3.2 Overview of Building Information Modeling (BIM).....	17
3.2.1 BIM Dimensions	19
3.2.2 Standards and Guidelines for BIM Implementation	20
3.2.3 Classification Systems for BIM Projects.....	22
3.2.4 Level of Development (LOD) in BIM	23
3.3 Overview of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	25
3.3.1 GIS Data Representation.....	29
3.3.2 Coordinate Systems and Geo-Referencing.....	30
3.3.3 Standards for GIS Interoperability.....	31
3.3.4 Three-dimensional Data Representation and Levels of Detail (LOD)	33
3.4 BIM and GIS Integration: Challenges and Opportunities	34
3.4.1 Benefits of BIM-GIS Integration	35
3.4.2 Barriers to Effective BIM-GIS Integration	36
3.5 Technological and Data Requirements for BIM-GIS Integration	37
3.5.1 Infrastructure and Tools for BIM-GIS Integration.....	37
3.5.2 Data Formats for Interoperability	37
3.5.3 Managing Information Flow and Data Consistency	39

4	Developing a Practical BIM-GIS Integration Prototype.....	41
4.1	Configuring the GIS Environment.....	42
4.2	Leveraging Open Geodata for Spatial Context.....	43
4.2.1	Integrating Digital Terrain Models for Topographical Accuracy	44
4.2.2	Importing ALKIS Data for Cadastral and Land Use Insights.....	50
4.2.3	Incorporating 3D Building Models for Enhanced Visualization	52
4.3	Integrating BIM Models	60
4.3.1	Preparing BIM Data for Geospatial Integration.....	60
4.3.2	Understanding the Data Structure of BIM Files in ArcGIS Pro	60
4.3.3	Methods for Adding BIM Data to ArcGIS Pro	63
4.3.3.1	Direct Import from Local Files	63
4.3.3.2	Cloud-Based BIM Integration via Autodesk Construction Cloud.....	66
4.3.3.3	Converting BIM Data into a Geodatabase for Enhanced Analysis	68
4.3.3.4	Generating Building Scene Layers for Optimized Visualization.....	70
4.3.3.5	Comparison of BIM Integration Methods.....	72
4.3.4	Adjust Layer Symbology and Create Filters	73
4.4	Simulating Flood Risks with Integrated BIM-GIS Model	73
4.5	Publishing Integrated BIM-GIS Models Online	78
4.7	Comparison of Different Approaches for BIM-GIS Integration	81
4.7.1	Evaluating Cesium for BIM Integration.....	81
4.7.2	Alternative Approaches for BIM and GIS Integration.....	85
5	Best Practices and Guidelines for BIM-GIS Integration.....	86
5.1	Establishing a Theoretical Framework	86
5.2	Developing Effective Management Practices	87
5.3	Strategies for Practical Implementation	87
6	Findings and Discussion	90
6.1	Insights from the Literature Review	90
6.2	Performance Analysis of the Prototype Model.....	91
6.3	Directions for Future Research	92
7	Conclusion.....	94
8	References	96

List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of ISO 19650 Standards for BIM Information Management (Source: Author)	20
Table 2: Overview BIM Classification Systems and Their Applications	23
Table 3: Summary of commonly used GIS formats (Adapted from GISGeography, 2019).....	38
Table 4: Summary of widely used BIM formats (Adapted from Souza, 2019).....	39
Table 5: Comparison of Default 3D Elevation and DGM025 Digital Terrain (Source: Author)	48
Table 6: Comparison of Default 3D Building Models and Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) Data (Source: Author)	54
Table 7: Advantages and Disadvantages of BIM Integration Methods (Source: Author).	72
Table 8: Comparative Analysis of Software Functionalities and Performance (Source: Author)	88

List of Figures

Figure 1: BIM Workflow (Source: Waas and Enjellina, 2022).....	18
Figure 2: Overview of BIM's 7 Dimensions (Adapted from Autodesk, 2024b)	19
Figure 3: LOD Levels for an Elevator (Source: Abualdenien and Borrmann, 2022)	24
Figure 4: GIS Data Layers (Source: USGS, 2016).....	26
Figure 5: Key Areas of GIS Applications in Urban and Environmental Contexts (Source: Author)	27
Figure 6: GIS for Public Services and Infrastructure (Source: Hu, Guo and Zhang, 2020).....	27
Figure 7: Flood Warnings across Finland (Source: Finnish Meteorological Institute, 2024).....	28
Figure 8: 3D map of Zurich highlighting future construction sites in yellow (Source: Stadt Zürich, 2024).....	29
Figure 9: Comparison of raster and vector data representations for points, lines, and polygons (Source: Akhund, 2022).....	30
Figure 10: Cartesian and Spherical Coordinate Systems (Source: PostGIS, 2023). ...	31
Figure 11: CityGML representation of the Hague, showcasing terrain and building structures (Source: Ohori et al., 2018).....	32
Figure 12: Levels of Detail (Source: Ergun, Sahin and Bilucan, 2023).....	33
Figure 13: Comparison of two representations within the same Level of Detail (Source: Biljecki, Ledoux, and Stoter, 2016).	34
Figure 14: Applications of GIS and BIM in Different Industries (Source: Author).....	35
Figure 15: The scheme illustrates the development of the BIM/GIS model in the following chapter (Source: Author).....	41
Figure 16: Study area in Stuttgart highlighted in red, showing selected cells from the geodata portal (Source: Author)	43
Figure 17: View 1: Visualization of the terrain using the default 3D elevation layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	45
Figure 18: View 1: Visualization of the terrain using the DGM025 in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	45
Figure 19: View 2: Visualization of the terrain using the default 3D elevation layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	46

Figure 20: View 2: Visualization of the terrain using the DGM025 in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	46
Figure 21: View 3: Visualization of the terrain using the default 3D elevation layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	47
Figure 22: View 3: Visualization of the terrain using the DGM025 in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	47
Figure 23: Elevation Surface Layer Tab in ArcGIS Pro: Configuration of elevation settings in the 3D scene (Source: Author)	48
Figure 24: Visualization of the default Revit model displayed above ground in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).....	49
Figure 25: Visualization of the default Revit model displayed below ground in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).....	49
Figure 26: Visualization of an underground pipe network developed using data from Esri Documentation (Alvarez, 2024) (Source: Author)	50
Figure 27: Visualization of geodata for land parcel usage in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	51
Figure 28: Visualization of geodata for building usage in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	51
Figure 29: Visualization of land parcel numbers, building addresses, and associated attribute information in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	52
Figure 30: View 1: Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) data retrieved from the geoportal (Source: Author).	55
Figure 31: View 1: Default 3D building models available in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	55
Figure 32: View 2: Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) data retrieved from the geoportal (Source: Author).	56
Figure 33: View 2: Default 3D building models available in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	56
Figure 34: View 2: Visualization of the area using a Google Earth image for reference (Source: Author).	57
Figure 35: View 3: Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) data retrieved from the geoportal (Source: Author).	57

Figure 36: View 3: Default 3D building models available in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	58
Figure 37: View 3: Visualization of the area using a Google Earth image for reference (Source: Google Earth, 2024).	58
Figure 38: Visualization of LOD2 Buildings Combined with Integrated Mesh Scene Layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).....	59
Figure 39: Visualization of LOD2 Buildings and Integrated Mesh Scene Layer with Adjusted Symbolology in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	59
Figure 40: BIM Model in Revit with Project Base Point (Source: Author)	60
Figure 41: Processing of BIM File by ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	61
Figure 42: Categories in Revit Model Structure (Source: Author).....	61
Figure 43: Visualization of the "Walls" Category in Revit (Source: Author).....	62
Figure 44: Visualization of the "Walls" Feature Class in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)	62
Figure 45: How BIM file data is structured into feature datasets within ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	63
Figure 46: BIM File Workspace layers created from a BIM file within ArcGIS Pro, organized by disciplines and categories in the Contents (Source: Author).....	64
Figure 47: Visualization of a BIM model integrated and displayed within an ArcGIS Pro scene, displaying attributes for roof elements on the left side(Source: Author).	65
Figure 48: Georeferencing Tools in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).....	65
Figure 49: Example of .wld3 file (Source: Author).	66
Figure 50: Autodesk Construction Cloud Account Settings (Source: Author)	66
Figure 51: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro Scene, featuring SharedView and SharedVer attributes (Source: Author).	67
Figure 52: Visualization of a BIM model within the Autodesk Construction Cloud platform (Source: Author).	68
Figure 53: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro scene after converting it into a geodatabase (Source: Author).	69
Figure 54: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro scene after converting it into a geodatabase , excluding the CurtainWallPanels layer (Source: Author).	69
Figure 55: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro scene utilizing earlier methods of integration (Source: Author).	70

Figure 56: Layers added from a database in the Contents pane (Source: Author).....	70
Figure 57: Building Scene Layer Package Layers in the Contents pane, generated from a BIM file (Source: Author).	71
Figure 58: Visualization of Building Components with Filters Applied in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	73
Figure 59: Flood Configuration Options in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).....	74
Figure 60: Visualization of Flood Extents after 1 Hour in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	75
Figure 61: Visualization of Flood Extents after 2 Hours in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	75
Figure 62: Visualization of Flood Extents after 1 Hour with Defined Water Source in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	76
Figure 63: Visualization of Flood Extents after 2 Hours with Defined Water Source in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).	76
Figure 64: Visualization of Flood Extents with Water Source Point in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).....	77
Figure 65: Warnings and Errors Identified in ArcGIS Pro Analysis (Source: Author)...	79
Figure 66: Access to ArcGIS Online Portal via Catalog Pane (Source: Author)	80
Figure 67: Published Scene in ArcGIS Online (Source: Author).....	81
Figure 68: Published Scene in ArcGIS Online, Closer View (Source: Author).....	81
Figure 69: Setup of Revit Model for Export to Cesium ion (Source: Author).....	82
Figure 70: Revit Model Imported into Cesium ion (Source: Author).	82
Figure 71: Revit Model Imported into Cesium ion, Closer View (Source: Author).....	83
Figure 72: Revit Model Imported into Cesium ion, Interior View of the Building (Source: Author)	83
Figure 73: Potential Use of Unreal Engine for Game Development Based on Geodata from Cesium (Source: Cesium, 2024a).....	84
Figure 74: Framework for Effective BIM-GIS Integration (Source: Author).....	86

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Problem Statement

Urbanization and technological advancements have transformed the way cities are managed and developed, emphasizing the need for innovative solutions to meet the growing demands of urban infrastructure. Smart cities have emerged as a promising framework to address challenges such as resource efficiency, sustainability, and improved quality of life for citizens (Javed et al., 2022). At the heart of smart city initiatives is the integration of advanced technologies, including BIM and GIS, to enable data-driven decision-making and efficient urban management. This synergy provides unique capabilities for managing detailed building information and spatially referenced environmental data. (Law and Lynch, 2019; Wang, Pan and Luo, 2019).

However, integrating these two technologies presents significant challenges (Han et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020). BIM and GIS operate within distinct domains, employing different data structures, standards, and workflows. This lack of interoperability hampers seamless data exchange, leading to inefficiencies. Moreover, technical complexities, such as coordinate misalignments, large dataset handling, and semantic inconsistencies, further complicate integration efforts.

1.2 Research Questions

This research seeks to explore and answer the following key questions:

- **What are BIM and GIS, and how do they contribute to urban infrastructure development and management?**

This question aims to define the state of the art in BIM and GIS, establishing a comprehensive understanding of their core principles, applications, and individual contributions to smart city development. Additionally, it explores the combined potential of these technologies to enhance the management, efficiency, and sustainability of urban infrastructure.

- **What are the key challenges and opportunities in integrating BIM and GIS for urban infrastructure management?**

This question seeks to identify the technical, organizational, and operational challenges that limit effective BIM-GIS integration while exploring the potential

benefits and advances that integration can bring to urban infrastructure in terms of performance, safety, and citizen experience.

- **What are the data and technical requirements for successful BIM-GIS integration in urban infrastructure management?**

This question examines the critical data types, formats, and interoperability standards, alongside the technological infrastructure and tools necessary to achieve seamless integration and support data-driven decision-making in urban infrastructure projects.

1.3 Research Objectives:

- Conduct a literature review to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with BIM-GIS integration in urban infrastructure.
- Design a conceptual framework detailing the data requirements, technical specifications, and interoperability standards necessary for effective BIM-GIS integration.
- Develop a prototype model that demonstrates BIM-GIS integration within urban infrastructure.
- Establish best practices and guidelines for implementing BIM and GIS integration in urban infrastructure, providing actionable recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) industry.

2 Methodology

The methodology of this thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze BIM-GIS integration for urban infrastructure management. The qualitative aspect focuses on conceptual and comparative analysis of tools, frameworks, and standards, assessing software functionalities and addressing user experience and integration challenges. The quantitative component evaluates performance metrics such as visualization efficiency, and data format performance, including comparisons of storage and computational demands. By integrating these approaches, the thesis provides a balanced evaluation of technical capabilities and offers recommendations for effective application in urban infrastructure projects.

2.1 Literature Review Methodology

To answer the foundational research questions, a detailed literature review forms the backbone of the methodology. This phase involves the exploration of academic literature, industry standards, and existing frameworks related to BIM-GIS integration. Key focus areas include:

- Developing an in-depth understanding of BIM and GIS principles, their standalone applications in urban infrastructure, and their synergies in smart city initiatives.
- Identifying theoretical models explaining integration barriers, such as data interoperability and software compatibility, alongside the opportunities for enhanced visualization, decision-making, and sustainability.
- Analyzing essential data types, formats, and interoperability standards required for seamless integration, as well as the technological infrastructure and tools necessary to support data-driven decision-making.

The literature review will establish a robust theoretical foundation, offering insights into the potential and limitations of integrating BIM and GIS.

2.2 Prototype Development Process

A prototype model will be developed to demonstrate the practical implementation of BIM-GIS integration. This phase comprises several critical steps:

- Collecting real-world datasets such as 3D building models, digital elevation models, and ALKIS cadastral data. Open BIM models provided by Autodesk will

also be employed. While the BIM model will not represent real-world data, it will demonstrate the possibilities and methodologies for integration.

- Utilizing tools like Revit, ArcGIS Pro, QGIS, and GDAL to integrate BIM and GIS data, ensuring compatibility and interoperability.
- Conducting functionality testing and accuracy verification of the prototype. Comparative analysis will evaluate the performance of different software and approaches for data processing.

The prototype aims to highlight practical challenges, such as data handling and software compatibility, and propose solutions to address these issues effectively.

2.3 Best Practices and Guidelines Formulation

The final phase synthesizes insights from the literature review and prototype development to establish actionable best practices and guidelines for BIM-GIS integration. Key outputs include:

- Strategies to overcome integration challenges, maximize benefits, and ensure effective collaboration among stakeholders.
- A guide outlining methods for implementing BIM-GIS integration in urban infrastructure projects, tailored for policymakers, urban planners, and the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) industry.

By combining theoretical insights with practical implementation, the methodology provides a holistic approach to exploring and advancing BIM-GIS integration, paving the way for innovative solutions in urban infrastructure management.

3 Literature Review

This chapter delves into the foundational concepts and applications of BIM and GIS within the framework of smart cities. It begins by examining the smart city concept and the distinct yet complementary roles of BIM and GIS. The chapter then explores the technical principles, standards, and classification systems underpinning these technologies. Key topics include the dimensions of BIM, levels of detail (LOD) in GIS, and the challenges and opportunities in integrating the two systems. Through this exploration, the chapter provides a understanding of how these technologies contribute to smart city development and urban infrastructure management.

3.1 Smart City Framework and the Roles of BIM and GIS

Urbanization and advancements in technology are fundamentally transforming the infrastructure and management of cities globally. Smart city initiatives now lie at the heart of urban planning, focusing on the integration of cutting-edge technologies to enhance the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of urban systems (Javed et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2021).

The concept of a smart city is diverse and varies based on the priorities and objectives of different cities (Halegoua, 2020; Law and Lynch, 2019). At its core, a smart city leverages information and communication technologies (ICT) to optimize urban services, increase operational efficiency, and improve citizen engagement and well-being (Albino, Berardi and Dangelico, 2015; Dameri, 2013; Law and Lynch, 2019). By integrating technology with urban infrastructure, smart cities aim to address critical challenges such as environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social well-being (Law and Lynch, 2019; Snow, Håkonsson and Obel, 2016; Yigitcanlar et al., 2018).

ICT forms the backbone of smart city operations, enabling real-time monitoring and data collection through interconnected sensors and high-speed networks. This data is transformed into actionable insights to manage urban infrastructure, including transportation, waste management, energy usage, and emergency responses (Halegoua, 2020).

Smart cities operate within a multi-dimensional framework encompassing technology, community, and policy (Yigitcanlar et al., 2018). These dimensions form a framework that guides the development and implementation of smart city initiatives, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among citizens, businesses, and government entities (Snow, Håkonsson and Obel, 2016).

However, the term "smart city" often implies a hierarchy, positioning certain cities as more advanced based on their use of technology and innovation (Halegoua, 2020). This categorization is frequently used as a strategic tool to attract investment and talent, with definitions ranging from ICT-driven governance and citizen services to technological improvements in sustainability, public safety, and transportation.

With the rise of smart city concepts, managing spatial information has emerged as a critical research area. BIM and GIS are pivotal technologies in this domain. BIM and GIS serve distinct but complementary roles in representing architectural and spatial data (Wang, Pan and Luo, 2019). BIM specializes in representations of individual buildings, while GIS provides perspectives of external environments (Han et al., 2020). Their integration creates a holistic view of the built environment, supporting the digital evolution and driving advancements in urban infrastructure and planning. However, it is imperative to comprehend these technologies individually prior to delving into the subject of integration.

3.2 Overview of Building Information Modeling (BIM)

BIM is a dynamic concept that encompasses various definitions and interpretations. BIM was first identified by Professor Charles Eastman in the 1970s as a digital representation of a building's physical and functional characteristics that serves as a shared knowledge resource for information about a facility (Borkowski, 2023; Vignali et al., 2021). However, this early understanding has expanded significantly over the years.

BIM is no longer merely a software tool or an industry standard but a comprehensive approach to creating, managing, and sharing information throughout a building's life cycle (Race, 2019). Narrow interpretations of BIM focus on its technological aspects, such as 3D modeling and information management, while broader definitions highlight its transformative potential (Borkowski, 2023). BIM is increasingly recognized as a collaborative process (Figure 1) that enhances communication, promotes stakeholder cooperation, and ensures the seamless flow of information across all project phases.

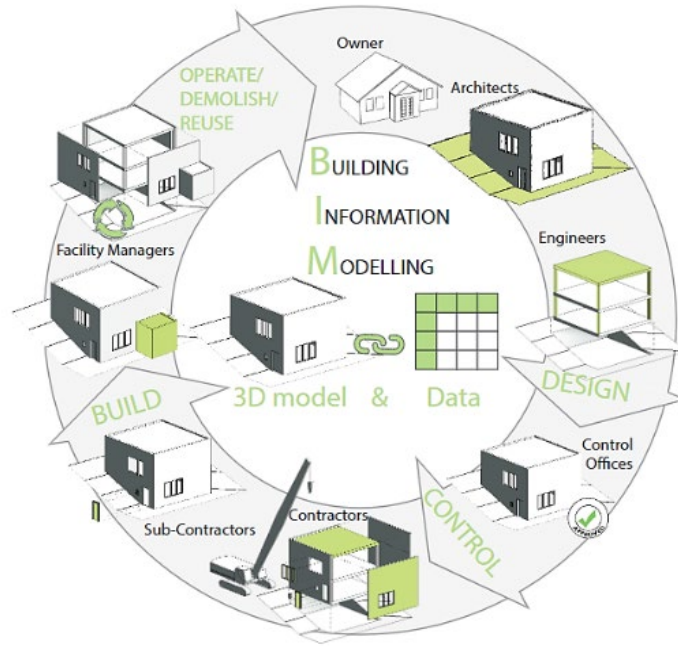


Figure 1: BIM Workflow (Source: Waas and Enjellina, 2022)

This perspective applies to buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces, reinforcing its adaptability across scales and project types (Borkowski, 2023). This scalability and transformative nature have made BIM an essential framework for managing information in projects ranging from small practices to large, multinational developments (Vignali et al., 2021).

The integration of BIM supports improved design, cost estimation, efficient construction planning, operations, and maintenance by providing dynamic coordination, simulation, and optimization throughout all project phases (Chan, Olawumi and Ho, 2019; Samimpay and Saghatforoush, 2020; Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, BIM integrates with emerging technologies such as Digital Twins, GIS, and Virtual Reality, enabling more efficient and data-driven practices (Afzal et al., 2023; Jin et al., 2019; Khudhair et al., 2021). As a robust data repository, BIM supports innovative techniques such as lean and off-site construction, enabling more efficient and sustainable project delivery (Jin et al., 2019).

Despite its benefits, BIM adoption faces significant challenges, including stakeholders' resistance to change, high costs for software, hardware, and training, as well as insufficient organizational support for implementation (Durdyev et al., 2021; Honcharenko et al., 2020).

3.2.1 BIM Dimensions

BIM has revolutionized traditional construction practices by extending project management capabilities beyond 3D visualization to incorporate additional dimensions (Zhang and Zhao, 2021). BIM 'dimensions' (Figure 2) often serve as a conceptual framework to indicate various levels of information and capabilities integrated into building models. Initially, BIM focused on 3D (spatial dimensions), with 4D incorporating time (scheduling) and 5D extending to cost management. Over time, additional dimensions were introduced to address sustainability (6D), facility management (7D), and safety (8D) (Koutamanis, 2020).

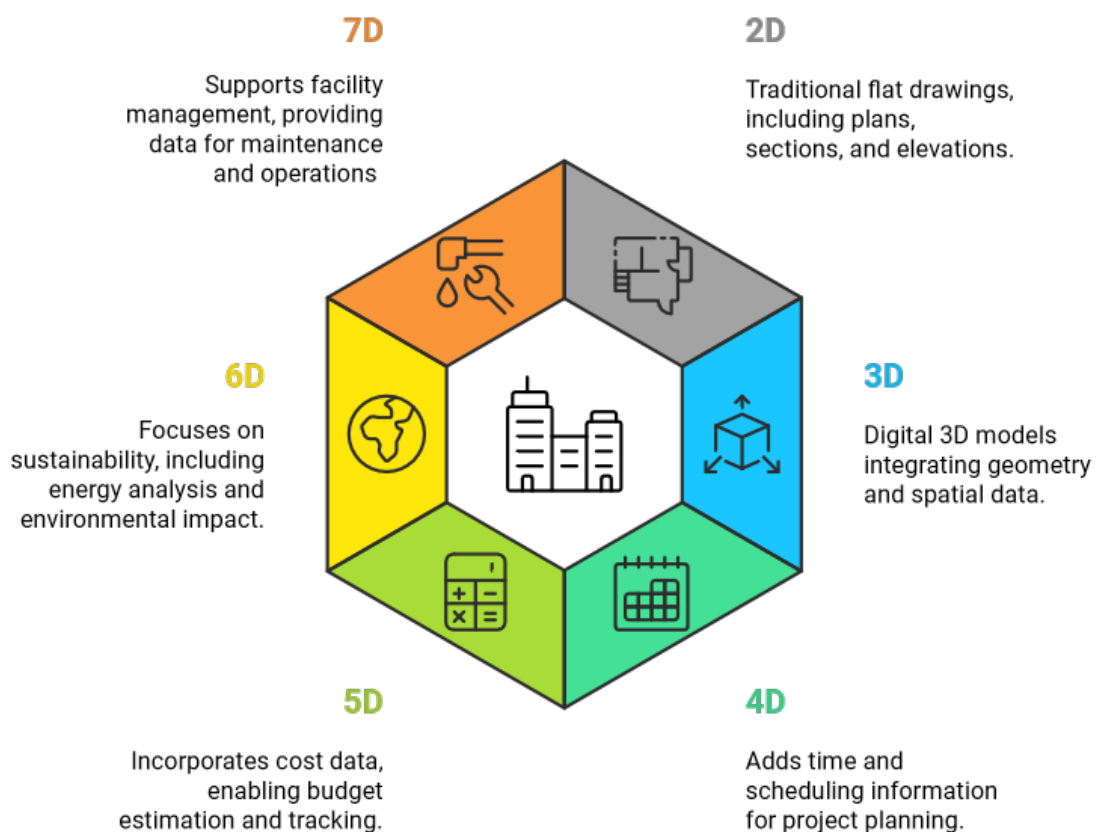


Figure 2: Overview of BIM's 7 Dimensions (Adapted from Autodesk, 2024b)

The concept of BIM dimensions has been both praised and critiqued. On the one hand, it emphasizes the scalability of BIM for complex project management. On the other, its metaphorical use to describe information capacities can lead to ambiguity (Koutamanis, 2020).

A fundamental critique arises from the lack of consensus beyond 5D and the tendency to use dimensions as marketing terms rather than rigorous technical frameworks (Charef, Alaka and Emmitt, 2018). The integration of additional dimensions must

carefully consider the data structure and practical application, ensuring that added complexity delivers meaningful benefits.

While BIM dimensions provide a useful metaphor for describing added functionalities, their effectiveness depends on clear definitions and their capacity to enhance decision-making without unnecessary complexity (Ellis, 2023). Standardization efforts, like those aligned with ISO standards, remain crucial for maintaining consistency and utility in BIM's dimensional expansions.

3.2.2 Standards and Guidelines for BIM Implementation

To standardize BIM practices globally, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) introduced the ISO 19650 series (Table 1), which provides a comprehensive framework for information management using BIM throughout the lifecycle of built assets. The ISO 19650 series is an international standard that outlines the organization and digitization of information about buildings and civil engineering works, including BIM (McPherson, 2024).

Table 1: Overview of ISO 19650 Standards for BIM Information Management (Source: Author).

Standard	Focus Area	Description
ISO 19650-1	Concepts and principles	Provides a framework for exchanging, recording, versioning, and organizing information among stakeholders throughout the asset lifecycle. Ensures consistency in data exchange and organization across all project phases (ISO, 2018a).
ISO 19650-2	Delivery phase of assets	Specifies requirements for information management during the delivery phase of assets, focusing on processes and procedures for effective exchange during design and construction (ISO, 2018b).
ISO 19650-3	Operational Phase of assets	Focuses on managing information during the operational phase of assets, ensuring data remains accurate and useful throughout the asset's life (ISO, 2020a).
ISO 19650-4	Information Exchange Protocols	Defines protocols for information exchange, emphasizing clear communication and standardized methods to enhance collaboration among stakeholders (ISO, 2022).
ISO 19650-5	Information Security	Outlines steps for cultivating a security mindset in organizations handling sensitive information, with a focus on monitoring and compliance (ISO, 2020b).
ISO 19650-6 (In Development)	Health and Safety	Integrates health and safety considerations into information management processes, promoting safer operations (ISO, 2024).

The ISO 19650 series, specifically parts 1, 2, and 3, is instrumental in standardizing information management processes, ensuring that information requirements are effectively linked to the needs of various end-users. These standards highlight the distinct differences in information flow between the delivery and operational phases of a project (Godager et al., 2022).

Defining clear information requirements is essential for optimizing assets throughout their lifecycle, a core focus of the ISO 19650 standards. However, guidance for clients on how to articulate these requirements remains limited (Ashworth, Dillinger and Körkemeyer, 2022). Implementation of these standards in complex projects often encounters challenges such as budgetary constraints, legal frameworks, cultural barriers, and personnel limitations (Chvedine et al., 2023). Additionally, regions like Malaysia face unique obstacles due to the absence of detailed national standards aligned with ISO 19650, which hampers BIM adoption and its potential to mitigate cost and time overruns (Kah and Qin, 2024).

However, the ISO 19650 series has been adopted in Europe as EN ISO 19650, for example, British BS EN ISO 19650 (Blankenbach and Becker, 2022). In Germany, it is published as DIN EN ISO 19650, aligning with national standards and practices (Anon., 2024).

Germany also incorporates additional complementary standards and guidelines into its BIM framework. DIN EN ISO 16739 (IFC) defines the Industry Foundation Classes (IFC) as an open, vendor-neutral standard for the exchange of information across software platforms during the entire lifecycle of a building (Krause, Ulke and Ferger, 2024). DIN EN ISO 29481 provides the Information Delivery Manual (IDM) standard, which outlines methodologies and frameworks for defining and managing information requirements in BIM projects (Krause, Ulke and Ferger, 2024). DIN SPEC 91350 and DIN SPEC 91391 address linked BIM data exchange between building models and performance specifications, as well as requirements for Common Data Environments (CDE) in BIM projects (Krause, Ulke and Ferger, 2024).

The guidelines established by the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI), which translates to "Association of German Engineers," further contribute to Germany's adoption of BIM (Krause, Ulke and Ferger, 2024). VDI 2552 covers the foundational principles and applications of BIM throughout a project lifecycle. It focuses on data management, including definitions for collaboration, versioning, and file structures, ensuring seamless integration and communication between stakeholders. Meanwhile, VDI 3805 focuses on digital product data for building services, defining standardized parameters for

components such as HVAC systems to ensure interoperability and lifecycle management (BDH-Köln, 2024).

These standards and guidelines collectively strengthen the approach to BIM-based information management. By incorporating both international standards and national adaptations, they improve collaboration, data management, and efficiency in the construction and operation of built assets.

3.2.3 Classification Systems for BIM Projects

The effective organization and management of information are fundamental to the success of BIM projects, as highlighted in the discussion on BIM dimensions and standards. While BIM standards provide guidelines for information management throughout a project's lifecycle, classifications offer a structured framework to categorize and streamline data across various stages of construction and operation. This section delves into widely recognized classification systems.

BIM classifications provide an essential framework for managing and organizing the vast amount of information involved in construction projects (Royano et al., 2023). These systems aim to ensure that data is structured, accessible, and interoperable across different stakeholders and project stages. Classification systems, when effectively implemented, enable efficient communication, better decision-making, and improved project outcomes in terms of time, cost, and sustainability.

Among the most widely recognized classification systems (Table 2) are UniClass 2015, OmniClass, and CoClass, each designed to address specific regional and project requirements (Royano et al., 2023). Additionally, region-specific systems such as DIN 276 in Germany, MasterFormat in North America, TALO 2000 in Finland, and CCS in Denmark are essential for aligning project workflows with local standards and practices.

Table 2: Overview BIM Classification Systems and Their Applications

Classification System	Region	Purpose and Features
UniClass 2015	United Kingdom	Developed by the National Building Specification (NBS) in 2015, it is a unified classification system for building environment assets, using 12 hierarchical tables for detailed project information organization. Mandated by the UK government for all BIM projects (Royano et al., 2023).
OmniClass	North America	Multi-dimensional classification system integrating work results, construction elements, and project phases. Supports traditional and BIM workflows, ensuring efficient collaboration and data interoperability (Lima et al., n.d.).
CoClass	Sweden	Designed to minimize construction costs from communication challenges, covering all stages of an asset's lifecycle, from design to demolition. Developed for digital classification and streamlining information exchange (Strelets et al., 2024).
DIN 276	Germany	Focused on cost management in construction projects. Provides standardized methods for organizing costs across a building's lifecycle. Aligns cost data with BIM models for transparent estimation, tracking, and control (Martin, Linhard and Preidel, 2024).

Classification systems are grounded in international standards such as ISO 12006-2 and ISO 81346. These standards establish a foundation for developing classification frameworks that are compatible across borders and industries (Sadrinooshabadi et al., 2020).

BIM classifications, including DIN 276 and other systems, play a critical role in advancing the construction industry's digital transformation. By adopting standardized frameworks and leveraging emerging technologies, these systems will continue to drive innovation, efficiency, and sustainability in the built environment.

3.2.4 Level of Development (LOD) in BIM

Building on the importance of standardized classifications discussed in the previous section, another critical framework within BIM is the concept of Level of Development (LOD). While classifications ensure consistency in how information is categorized, LOD provides a structured approach to defining the granularity and detail of information at various stages of a project's life cycle. This framework not only enhances clarity in BIM

workflows but also ensures that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of the model's maturity at any given phase, facilitating better collaboration.

LOD ranges from simple geometric shapes to highly detailed specifications and operational data, aiming to mitigate issues caused by insufficient information and streamline BIM implementation (Alshorafa and Ergen, 2019; Latiffi et al., 2015).

There are several different LOD standards, one of which is the framework developed by BIMForum (Figure 3). It includes six levels:

- LOD 100 (Conceptual Design),
- LOD 200 (Schematic Design),
- LOD 300 (Detailed Design),
- LOD 350 (Construction Documentation),
- LOD 400 (Fabrication and Assembly),
- LOD 500 (As-Built or Facility Management).

These levels provide clear milestones for defining a model's completeness and usability at different phases of a project (Abualdenien and Borrmann, 2022; BIMForum, 2023).

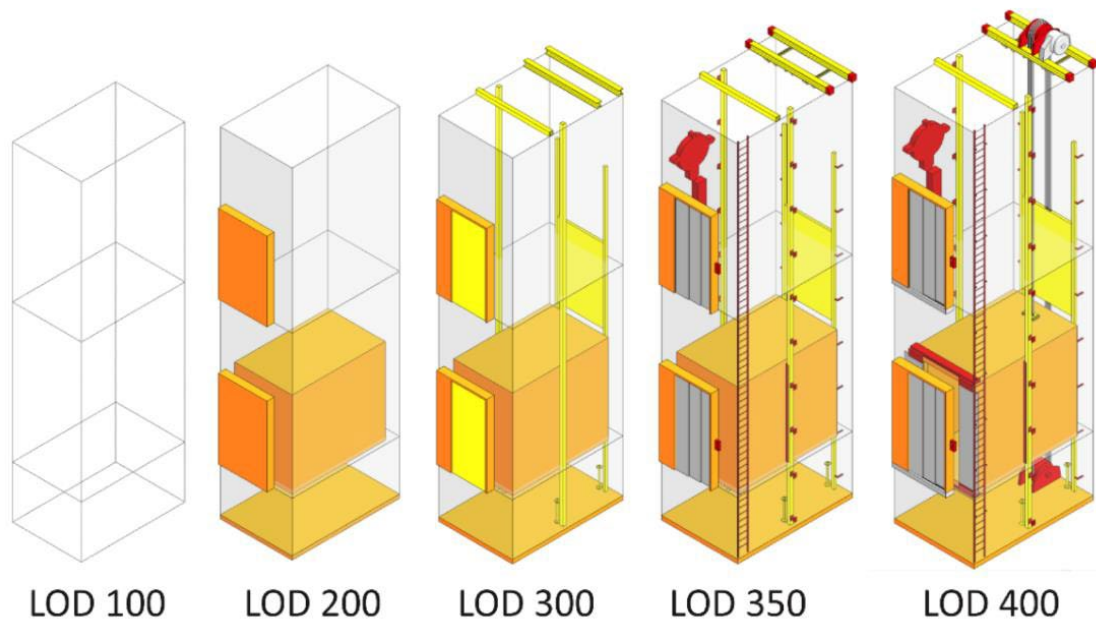


Figure 3: LOD Levels for an Elevator (Source: Abualdenien and Borrmann, 2022)

In Germany, the Modelldetaillierungsgrad (MDG), translated as the model level of detail, offers an alternative to the BIMForum's framework (VBI, 2016). MDG defines ten levels (010, 100, 200, 210, 300, 310, 320, 400, 510, 600). Unlike LOD, MDG directly correlates with the maturity required for each phase. While MDG levels 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500 align with their corresponding LOD levels, the other MDG levels, such as 010 and

600, have no direct equivalent in the LOD framework, reflecting its phase-specific approach (Abualdenien and Borrmann, 2022).

Determining the appropriate LOD in large-scale BIM projects can often be challenging and require considerable expertise. The process involves finding a balance between the cost of incorporating detailed elements and the value they add to specific BIM applications (Alshorafa and Ergen, 2019). This complexity is compounded by regional and project-specific variations, as well as the need for accumulated industry experience. Addressing these challenges requires the creation of well-defined guidelines and structured decision frameworks to effectively manage the design process (Alshorafa and Ergen, 2019; Grytting et al., 2017).

Additionally, the effort required to create models at higher LODs can increase substantially. Research indicates that increasing the LOD can significantly escalate modeling time, sometimes requiring up to eleven times more effort than lower levels (Leite et al., 2011). Despite the increased workload, higher LODs improve the precision of clash detection in mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) design coordination (Leite et al., 2011).

3.3 Overview of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Following the detailed exploration of BIM and its frameworks, this section shifts focus to GIS, another cornerstone technology in urban planning and smart city development. GIS are advanced computer systems designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and display spatial and non-spatial data. These systems consolidate diverse data sources (Figure 4), such as survey records, maps, satellite imagery, and archival data, enabling comprehensive management and analysis of geographically referenced information (Reddy, 2018).

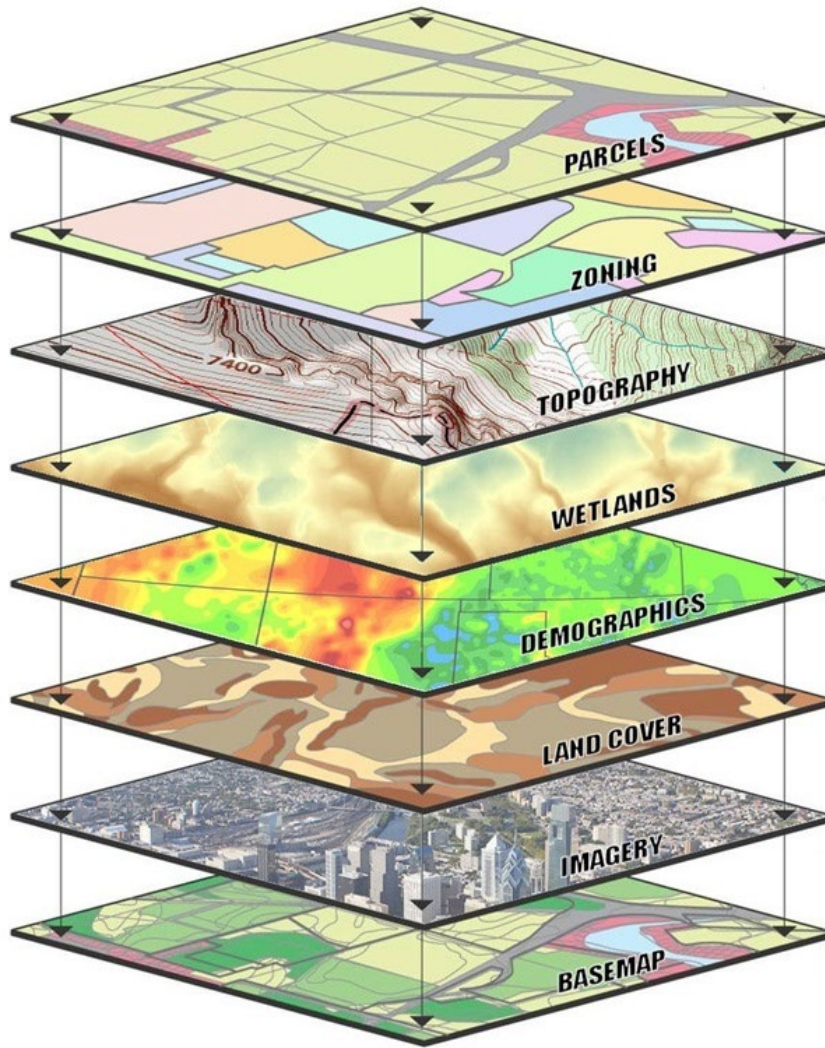


Figure 4: GIS Data Layers (Source: USGS, 2016)

Since its inception in the 1960s, GIS has evolved significantly, driven by advancements in information technology. Developments in big data, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), mobile computing, and cloud computing have opened unprecedented opportunities for GIS. These technologies not only enhance GIS capabilities but also demand innovations in spatiotemporal data collection and analysis (Song and Wu, 2021).

GIS applications support interactive queries, data editing, and effective presentation of results, functioning as a robust database management system for spatially located information. Its ability to synthesize data from various sources has made GIS a foundational tool for location-based services and spatial analytics (Akindele et al., 2023).

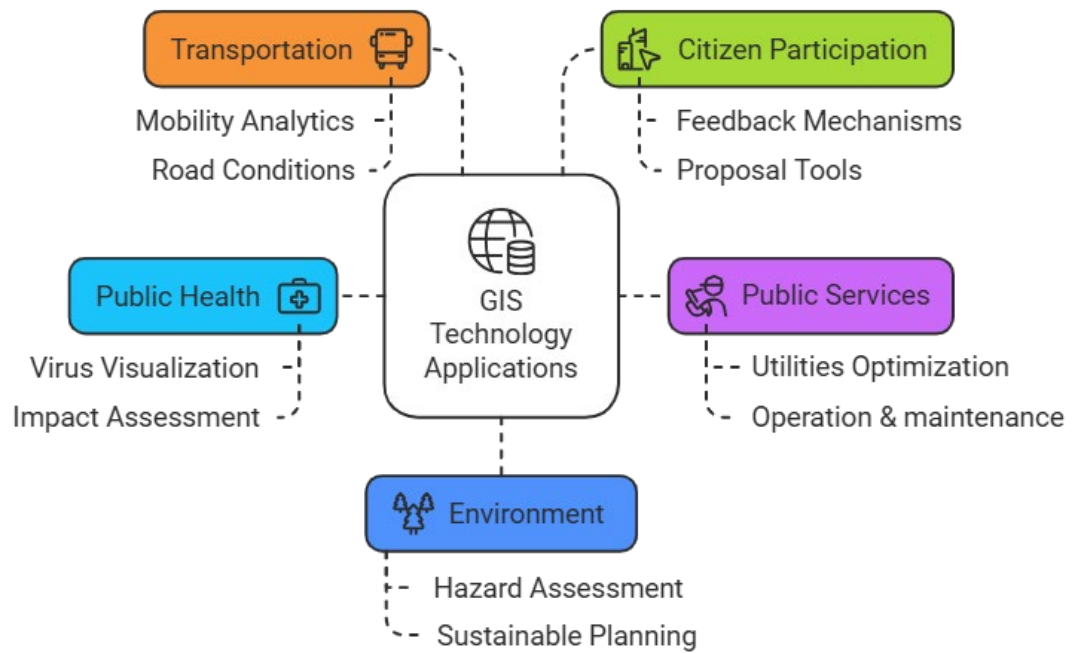


Figure 5: Key Areas of GIS Applications in Urban and Environmental Contexts (Source: Author)

GIS technology is integral to diverse sectors (Figure 5), revolutionizing research and practical applications. For example, in the planning and management of public services (Figure 6), GIS supports managing utilities such as gas, electricity, water, telecommunications, roads, sewage networks. These systems play a crucial role in optimizing the operation and maintenance of critical infrastructure (Ajwaliya, Patel and Sharma, 2017; Hu, Guo and Zhang, 2020; Jebur, 2021).

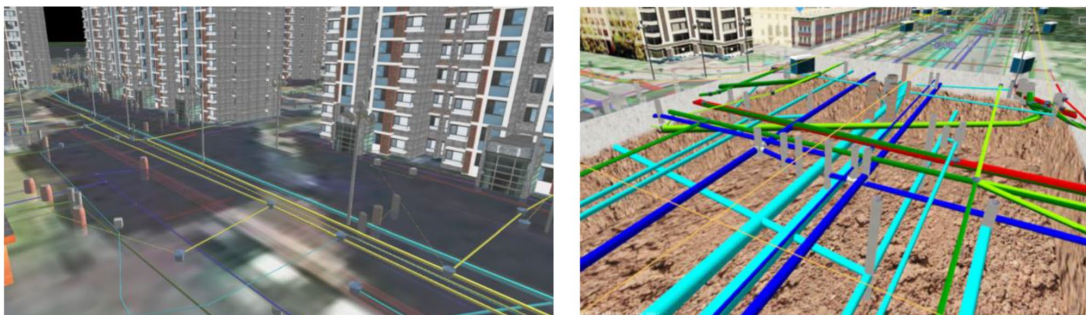


Figure 6: GIS for Public Services and Infrastructure (Source: Hu, Guo and Zhang, 2020)

In public health, GIS played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic by visualizing virus transmission and socio-economic impacts. WebGIS techniques were particularly valuable in understanding spatial dynamics and informing public health decisions. This highlights GIS's potential in managing future health crises by addressing healthcare access disparities and visualizing health data (Ahasan et al., 2022; Hu, Guo and Zhang, 2020; Yasmin et al., 2023).

GIS also underpins environmental management, natural hazard assessment (Figure 7), and urban planning, promoting sustainable development through effective resource management and risk mitigation (Jebur, 2021; Li et al., 2024).

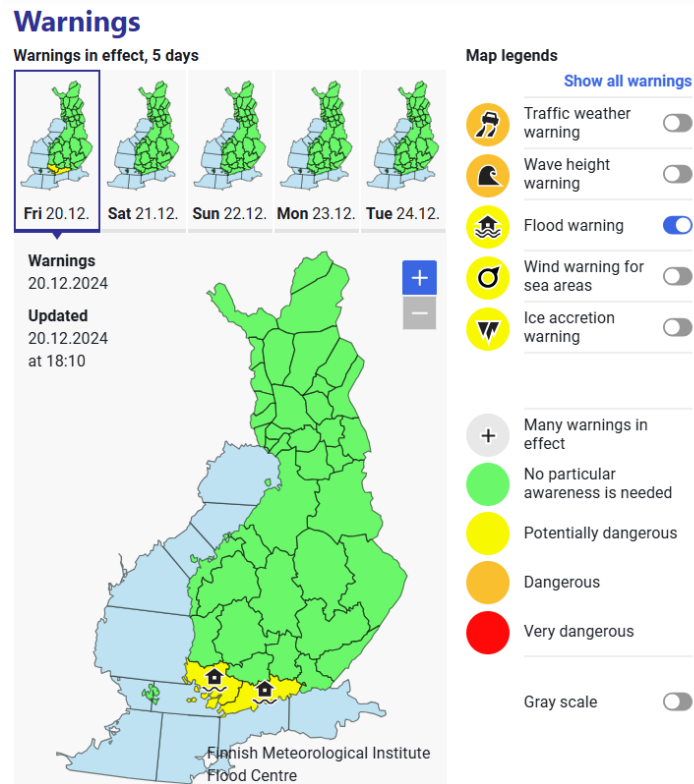


Figure 7: Flood Warnings across Finland (Source: Finnish Meteorological Institute, 2024)

In transportation, GIS combined with GPS trajectory data improves transportation mode identification, enhancing analytics and decision-making in urban mobility (Li et al., 2021). Furthermore, GIS models for sustainable urban mobility planning integrate social and environmental aspects, although adoption remains limited in Europe due to usability and data accessibility issues (Liu et al., 2023).

Applications also extend to highway management, where GIS-based systems handle road factors like topography, traffic, and pavement conditions. This approach enhances decision-making for road maintenance and upgrades, ensuring efficient transport operations (Singh and Sharma, 2023).

Additionally, GIS technologies have been utilized to promote citizen participation by furnishing spatial data for interaction. These systems empower citizens to respond to inquiries from the city administration and provide feedback on urban planning initiatives, such as the configuration of new infrastructure, including bikeways. This interaction predominantly occurs from a top-down perspective (Figure 8), wherein information is

disseminated to citizens, while also facilitating some bottom-up engagement, allowing citizens to express their own concerns and propose ideas (Thiel et al., 2017).



Figure 8: 3D map of Zurich highlighting future construction sites in yellow (Source: Stadt Zürich, 2024)

Despite its extensive applications, GIS faces significant challenges, particularly in interoperability and integration. The lack of compatibility between various platforms hampers seamless data exchange (Akindele et al., 2023). The integration of heterogeneous data sources, such as satellite imagery, GPS, and field surveys, also remains a key challenge in the era of big data. Improved methods for managing and analyzing such data are necessary to enhance GIS functionality (Zhou et al., 2020). Effective data management is crucial for generating realistic outputs and supporting various applications (Reddy, 2018).

3.3.1 GIS Data Representation

GIS represents spatial information through 2 major data models: vector and raster (Figure 9). The vector model is designed to represent discrete spatial features through points, lines, and polygons, each linked to attribute tables that describe their properties (Kumar et al., 2023). This structure is highly effective for mapping and analyzing linear and polygonal features such as roads, rivers, and property boundaries (Brisaboa et al., 2020).

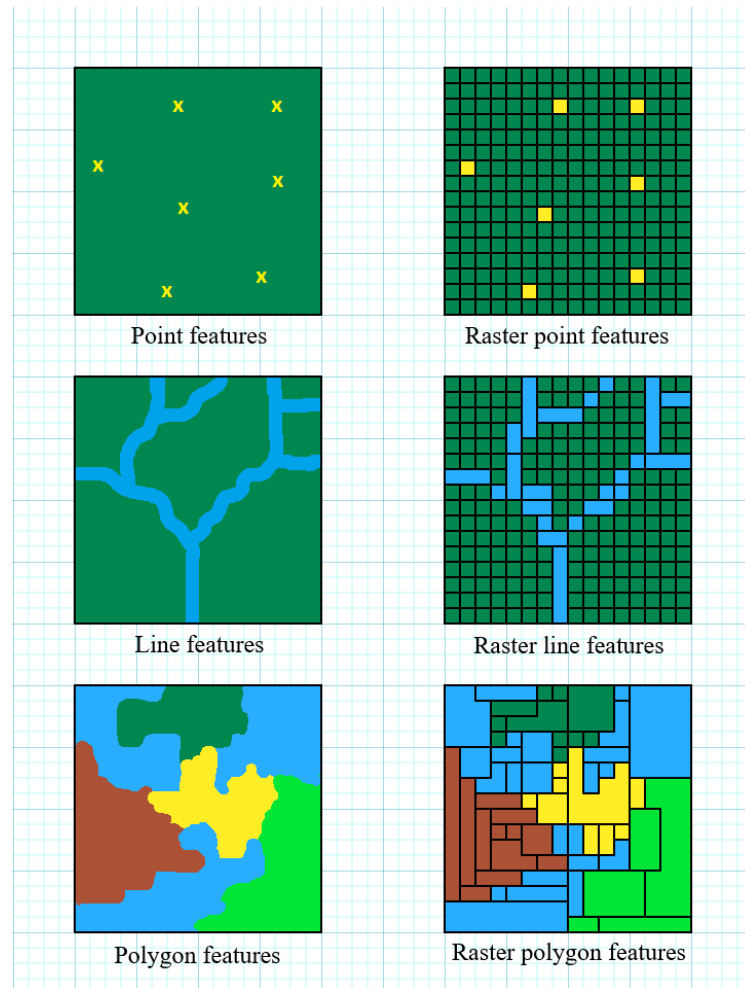


Figure 9: Comparison of raster and vector data representations for points, lines, and polygons
(Source: Akhund, 2022)

The raster model, in contrast, divides geographic space into a grid of cells, with each cell holding a value representing a specific attribute such as elevation or land use (Kumar et al., 2023). Raster data is especially suited for modeling continuous phenomena and performing spatial analyses like surface modeling and environmental simulations (Brisaboa et al., 2020).

Vector and raster models complement each other, and GIS often integrates both to leverage their respective strengths. Vectorization and rasterization processes allow seamless conversion between the two formats, enabling hybrid approaches for complex spatial analyses

3.3.2 Coordinate Systems and Geo-Referencing

Coordinate systems and map projections are fundamental to GIS, providing the framework for spatial data representation. There are various coordinate systems, including planar (Cartesian) and spherical (geodetic) systems (Figure 10). Planar systems use (x, y) pairs, while spherical systems use latitude and longitude (United

Nations, 2024). Different map projections are used to represent the curved surface of the Earth on a flat map. Common projections include the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM), Lambert Conformal Conic (LCC), and polyconic projections (Kumar, Singh and Kaur, 2019).

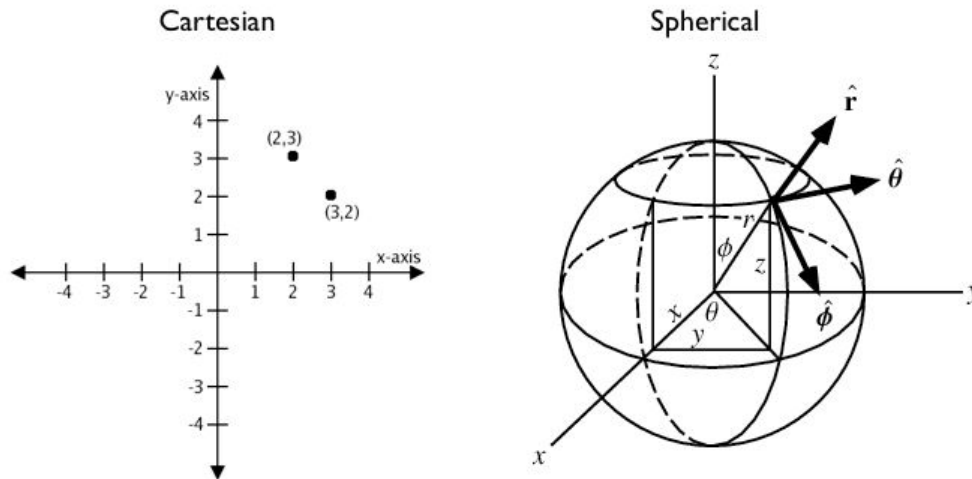


Figure 10: Cartesian and Spherical Coordinate Systems (Source: PostGIS, 2023).

Geo-referencing is the process of aligning spatial data to a known geographic coordinate system. This is crucial for integrating data from different sources and ensuring accurate spatial analysis. Geo-referencing allows for the accurate placement of data within a real-world context (Kumar, Singh and Kaur, 2019). It is essential for integrating various data layers, such as census data, land-use information, and socioeconomic data, ensuring they align correctly when overlaid (United Nations, 2024).

The accuracy of spatial measurements can vary significantly depending on the coordinate systems and map projections used. When spatial databases referenced to different map coordinate systems are used for analysis, significant measurement differences can occur. For example, differences in datums (e.g., NAD 27 vs. WGS 84) can lead to large discrepancies in area and distance measurements (Wing, 2024).

Accurate geo-referencing and the use of appropriate coordinate systems are critical for applications such as the location of BIM data (Esri, 2024i).

3.3.3 Standards for GIS Interoperability

Having explored the fundamental concepts and applications of GIS, it is essential to delve into the standards that underpin their functionality and interoperability. Just as BIM relies on frameworks like ISO 19650 for consistent information management, GIS standards ensure uniformity in spatial data representation, exchange, and integration.

There are different international GIS standards. For example, ISO 19101-1:2014 provides the foundational reference model for geographic information, ensuring consistency in GIS applications (Clemen, 2022). ISO 19107:2019 focuses on spatial schemas for geometric and topological data, crucial for integrating GIS and BIM models. ISO 19111:2019 ensures precise georeferencing within GIS systems, addressing alignment challenges.

Emerging standards like ISO 19166 (BIM to GIS Conceptual Mapping) aim to facilitate data transformation between BIM and GIS for various applications, while ISO/NP TR 23262 explores semantic and geometric mappings to improve interoperability (Janečka, 2019). Despite their importance, adoption of these standards is limited due to their complexity, abstract nature, and lack of practical implementation guidelines (Clemen, 2022; Janečka, 2019).

While these standards provide a strong framework, their adoption remains limited due to complexity, semantic inconsistencies, abstract nature of standards and the lack of practical guidelines for implementation (Clemen, 2022; Janečka, 2019). Further refinement and dissemination are required to achieve broader interoperability and application.

In contrast, The Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) plays a significant role in promoting interoperability through open standards for geospatial content and services, GIS data processing, and data sharing (OGC, 2024). Widely adopted OGC standards, such as CityGML (Figure 11) and Web Feature Service (WFS), facilitate seamless data exchange between different geospatial systems and applications (Clemen, 2022).

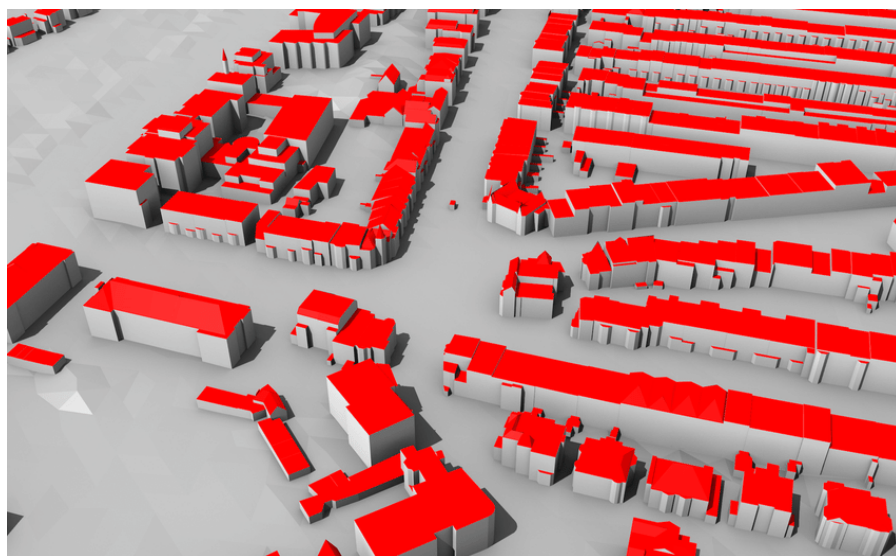


Figure 11: CityGML representation of the Hague, showcasing terrain and building structures (Source: Ohori et al., 2018).

CityGML, an international standard, facilitates the representation and exchange of 3D city models. It encompasses 13 themes to define the geometry, topology, semantics, appearance, and other attributes of urban entities. CityGML is extensively adopted in Europe, where all capital cities and most major cities in Germany offer LoD2 models covering entire urban areas. Its use is expanding globally, including in parts of Asia and Africa. The applications of CityGML are diverse, including noise mapping, energy analysis, and disaster management, making it a pivotal standard in research related to BIM/GIS integration (Tan, Liang and Zhu, 2023).

3.3.4 Three-dimensional Data Representation and Levels of Detail (LOD)

Two-dimensional GIS has advanced in data processing and analysis but is limited by its inability to fully represent the three-dimensional nature of real-world objects (Wate et al., 2013). In contrast, 3D GIS incorporates volumetric and surface-based models, enabling detailed analysis of both above-ground and underground structures, which is essential for urban planning, disaster management, and infrastructure design (Wate et al., 2013).

A key focus of 3D GIS is the creation of city models, which digitally represent urban environments and support applications such as navigation, visibility studies, emergency response planning, energy demand analysis, noise mapping, and solar radiation assessment. While thousands of 3D city models exist, further advancements are required to enhance their usability and maximize their potential (Sun et al., 2019).



Figure 12: Levels of Detail (Source: Ergun, Sahin and Bilucan, 2023)

The concept of Level of Detail (LOD) is central to 3D data representation in GIS (Figure 12). It describes the degree of geometric and semantic detail required for different applications. LOD enables digital models to reflect varying complexities of real-world objects, balancing detail and computational efficiency. In the CityGML standard, LOD is categorized into five levels (Ergun, Sahin and Bilucan, 2023):

- LOD0 for basic 2.5D terrain models
- LOD1 for block models
- LOD2 for detailed roof structures and building boundaries

- LOD3 for architectural models with facade and structural elements
- LOD4 for highly detailed interior representations .

However, the traditional LOD framework has faced criticism for ambiguity, particularly in LOD2 (Figure 13), where implementations vary widely in roof detail and thematic structures (Biljecki, Ledoux and Stoter, 2016). These inconsistencies can lead to inaccuracies in applications like solar potential analysis.

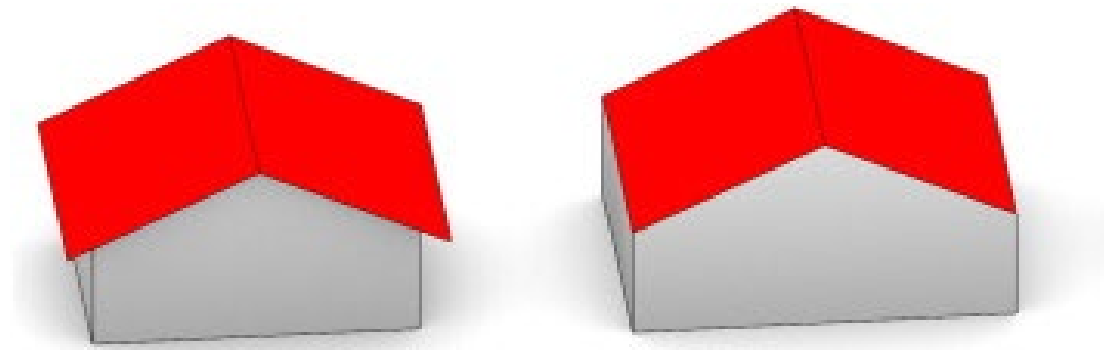


Figure 13: Comparison of two representations within the same Level of Detail (Source: Biljecki, Ledoux, and Stoter, 2016).

To address these challenges, Biljecki, Ledoux and Stoter (2016) propose LOD specifications up to 16 sub-levels, offering greater granularity and clarity. This new approach reduces ambiguity and aligns data acquisition methods, such as LiDAR and photogrammetry, with the appropriate LODs. Coarser LODs typically rely on satellite or aerial data, while higher LODs require detailed techniques like terrestrial laser scanning (Wate et al., 2013). These refinements ensure LODs are better suited to diverse use cases while balancing accuracy and computational efficiency.

3.4 BIM and GIS Integration: Challenges and Opportunities

Having established the core principles, standards, and functionalities of both BIM and GIS, this section delves into the integration of these two technologies. The synergy between GIS and BIM serves as a critical enabler for advancing research and innovation in dynamic smart city development (Han et al., 2020). The applications of BIM and GIS have been demonstrated in a variety of studies (Figure 14) (Zhu and Wu, 2022).

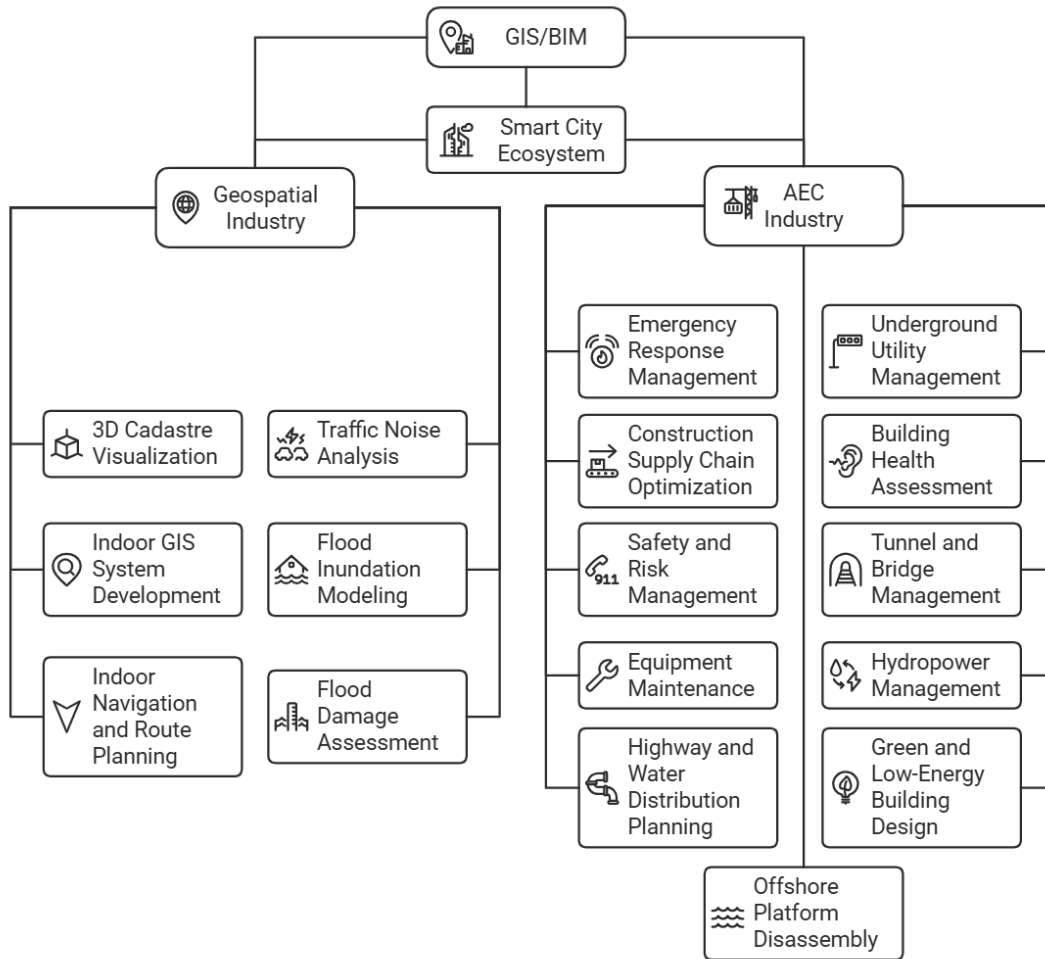


Figure 14: Applications of GIS and BIM in Different Industries (Source: Author).

GIS has evolved from 2D to 3D, marking a significant transition toward 3D GIS. This advancement enables the transformation of 2D geographic data into three-dimensional models using sophisticated computing technologies, offering superior visualization while minimizing effort and file size requirements (Badwi, Ellaithy and Youssef, 2022). Similar to the transition in design and construction industries from 2D to 3D workflows, this development underscores the growing convergence of GIS and BIM (Mangon, 2022).

3.4.1 Benefits of BIM-GIS Integration

The integration of BIM and GIS offers numerous advantages. Active community engagement is a cornerstone of successful smart city initiatives (Ajibola, Daud and Hammons, 2021). GIS-BIM integration aids urban governance by providing a comprehensive data framework that enhances citizen engagement, improves transparency, and facilitates communication (Cao et al., 2023; Wang, Pan and Luo, 2019). The use of 3D models and geospatial data simplifies the visualization of urban

projects, enabling citizens to better understand and participate in development plans (Barrile et al., 2024).

Collaboration is critical to achieving project objectives such as cost efficiency, timeliness, and quality, particularly in complex and large-scale projects. BIM-GIS integration fosters seamless communication and coordination among project stakeholders, streamlining workflows and decision-making processes (Kurwi et al., 2021). This synergy can be further enhanced by incorporating VR technology, which provides clear project visualization and enables detailed exploration and analysis of individual components (Han et al., 2020).

As cities focus on becoming “smarter” with digital technology, GIS-BIM integration technologies can significantly improve urban emergency management systems (Zhang and Li, 2021). This combination also forms the basis for developing a digital twin - a virtual representation of physical assets, infrastructure, and urban environments (Lippold, 2022). By combining these technologies with IoT, cities can develop responsive systems that enhance emergency preparedness and response (Zhang and Li, 2021).

Another benefit of integration is in the planning of smart city utility infrastructure by forecasting requirements for water, sewage, and energy. It facilitates the development of adaptable frameworks that enhance the planning and management of urban infrastructure (Marzouk and Othman, 2020). Additionally, the integration supports building sustainable, energy-efficient cities by analyzing factors such as solar exposure and land surface temperature to optimize energy usage and infrastructure planning (Bushra and Maya, 2024).

The circular economy is another important aspect of smart cities (Formisano et al., 2022). By combining GIS modeling with BIM, material cadastres can be created to map urban material stocks, supporting circular city strategies such as closing, slowing, and narrowing material loops (Schiller et al., 2024). Furthermore, the integration enables life-cycle assessments (LCA) to optimize material selection and waste management, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Zubair et al., 2024).

3.4.2 Barriers to Effective BIM-GIS Integration

Despite the potential benefits, significant challenges exist in the integration of BIM and GIS systems, including handling large datasets, incompatible formats, non-standardized coordinate systems, and the absence of unified specifications (Han et al., 2020). The presentation of three-dimensional city models on web platforms poses additional challenges due to the complexity of three-dimensional data (Varlık and Dursun, 2024).

Data exchange and interoperability between BIM and GIS continue to be significant challenges, particularly with the prevalent IFC-to-CityGML conversion process, which struggles with geometry transformations and semantic alignment, often resulting in information loss (Wu, Li and Yan, 2022; Zhu et al., 2020; Zhu and Wu, 2022). This challenge arises from the significant differences in how BIM and GIS handle data creation, storage, and management (Zhu and Wu, 2021).

3.5 Technological and Data Requirements for BIM-GIS Integration

Integrating BIM and GIS requires careful consideration of technological and data requirements. These requirements span data types and formats, interoperability standards, and the necessary technological infrastructure (Liu et al., 2017; Sani and Abdul Rahman, 2018).

3.5.1 Infrastructure and Tools for BIM-GIS Integration

The integration of BIM and GIS demands robust technological infrastructure, including high-performance computing resources to process large datasets effectively. The primary function of software solutions is to facilitate the visualization, processing, and analysis of data (Wyszomirski and Gotlib, 2020; Zhu et al., 2022).

A review of the relevant literature reveals that the utilized software for integration includes Revit, AutoCAD, ArchiCAD, Bentley Systems, and Navisworks for BIM modeling. Meanwhile, GIS tools such as ArcGIS, QGIS, Google Earth, and Cesium are employed (Barrile et al., 2024; Bartoněk et al., 2023; Congiu, Quaquero and Rubiu, 2024; Fernandez-Alvarado and Fernandez-Rodríguez, 2022; Niu, Pan and Zhao, 2015; Tsai et al., 2017; Wu and Zhang, 2016; Zhu and Wu, 2022). Integration frequently necessitates the utilization of specialized plugins or middleware, such as FME, to enable seamless data exchange and transformation (Borkowski and Duc, 2024).

3.5.2 Data Formats for Interoperability

Effective BIM-GIS integration relies on managing diverse data types, including spatial, geometric, and attribute data (Wu, Li and Yan, 2022; Wyszomirski and Gotlib, 2020). The most common BIM formats include IFC, RVT, DWG, PLN, DGN, NWF (Table 4), and GIS formats include GML, Shapefile, Geodatabase, Geopackage, KML, GeoJSON, and GeoTIFF (Table 3) (Azevedo et al., 2021; Bartoněk et al., 2023; Cepa et al., 2024; Roumyeh, Badenko and Volkova, 2022; Wu and Zhang, 2016; Wu, Li and Yan, 2022; Zhu and Wu, 2022).

Table 3: Summary of commonly used GIS formats (Adapted from GISGeography, 2019).

Type	Format	Extensions	Description
Vector Formats	Esri Shapefile	.shp, .shx, .dbf	The shapefile is one of the most widely used geospatial file formats, accepted by nearly all GIS software.
	GeoJSON	.geojson	Lightweight format for web applications, supports points, lines, and polygons.
	Geography Markup Language (GML)	.gml	XML-based OGC standard for modeling complex spatial features and relationships. It is more data-intensive compared to GeoJSON.
	Google Keyhole Markup Language (KML)	.kml, .kmz	KML is an XML-based format for Google Earth, later replaced by KMZ, a compressed version.
Raster Formats	GeoTIFF	.tif, .tiff	Embeds georeferencing, ideal for remote sensing and elevation modeling.
Geographic Databases	Esri File Geodatabase	.gdb	Database format for storing diverse GIS data efficiently, supports up to 1TB, and handles complex datasets like networks and raster mosaics.
	OGC GeoPackage	.gpkg	An open, SQLite database storing vector, raster, tiles, and attributes in a single, easily shareable file.
Relational Databases	PostGIS + PostgreSQL		Spatial database that supports geometry types for querying and managing geospatial data and open-source GIS.
Web File Formats	Web Feature Service (WFS)	URL	OGC standard for sharing and editing of geospatial data over the internet.
	Esri ArcGIS Online Web Services	URL	Cloud-based platform, enables users to publish and share geospatial content collaboratively

Table 4: Summary of widely used BIM formats (Adapted from Souza, 2019).

Format	Extensions	Description
Industry Foundation Classes (IFC)	.ifc	Open, vendor-neutral format standardizing building model data for interoperability across BIM software.
Revit File (RVT)	.rvt	Native format for Autodesk Revit, storing parametric building models with detailed architectural, structural, and MEP data.
AutoCAD, Civil 3D files (DWG)	.dwg	Proprietary format by Autodesk for 2D/3D design, often used for CAD drawings; supports integration with BIM workflows.
ArchiCAD Project (PLN)	.pln	Native format for ArchiCAD, storing architectural building models and project information.
MicroStation Design File (DGN)	.dgn	Native format for Bentley Systems' MicroStation, widely used in infrastructure projects and compatible with BIM workflows.
Navisworks File (NWF)	.nwf	Autodesk Navisworks format for managing project coordination and visualization, integrating multiple model formats.

3.5.3 Managing Information Flow and Data Consistency

In integrated systems, the flow of information typically culminates in GIS. Building information is often transformed into GIS datasets using semantic formats, such as CityGML, or non-semantic formats, like shapefiles (Zhu and Wu, 2022).

A robust data management strategy is essential for successful integration. This involves implementing version control, data backup and recovery, and metadata management. It is important to note that some GIS software may not support certain versions of BIM files, necessitating careful version compatibility checks (Esri, 2020).

For effective integration, data types from BIM and GIS must be harmonized. For instance, a building's location needs to be accurately georeferenced within the GIS coordinate system. Similarly, attribute data from both systems must be mapped and linked appropriately to maintain consistency and usability (Zhu and Wu, 2021a). Interoperability is a critical requirement for integration, ensuring seamless data sharing across different platforms and applications. This includes addressing differences in data structures, coordinate systems, and semantic mismatches (Liu et al., 2017; Wyszomirski and Gotlib, 2020; Zhu et al., 2020).

The review of literature has identified critical challenges and opportunities in the integration of BIM and GIS, particularly regarding data formats, interoperability standards, and 3D modeling techniques. These insights have guided the design and implementation of the prototype model discussed in the following chapter.

4 Developing a Practical BIM-GIS Integration Prototype

Building upon the gaps and challenges identified in the literature, Chapter 4 presents the development of a prototype model integrating BIM and GIS technologies (Figure 15) to demonstrate their practical applications in urban infrastructure management. The model is based in Stuttgart, Germany (Figure 16).

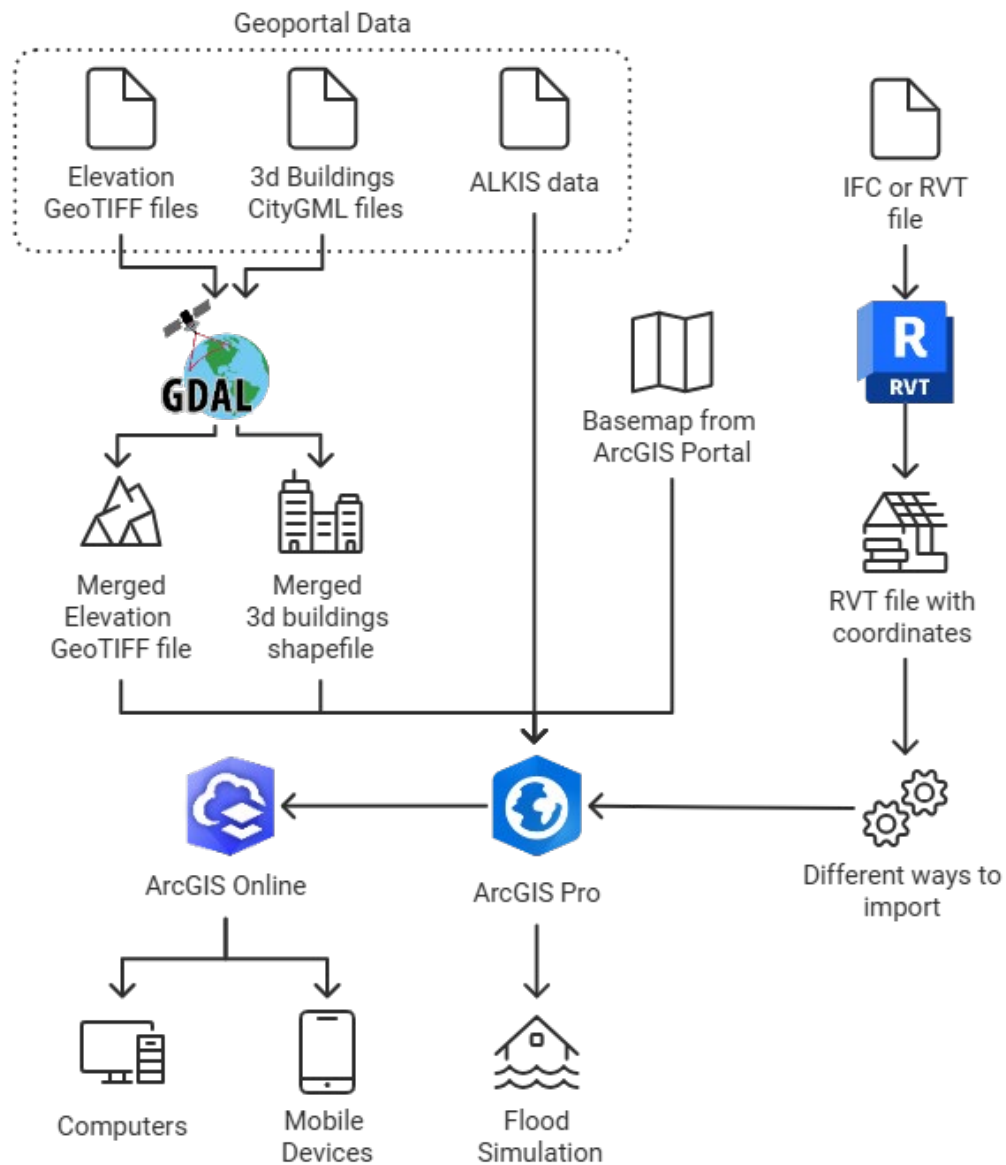


Figure 15: The scheme illustrates the development of the BIM/GIS model in the following chapter (Source: Author).

The chapter begins with configuring the GIS environment, utilizing open geodata such as digital terrain models, cadastral data, and 3D building models. It then examines various methods for integrating BIM data, focusing on importing, visualizing, and analyzing datasets through ESRI tools like ArcGIS Pro and Autodesk software such as

Revit. An additional component of this chapter is a flood simulation, illustrating how BIM-GIS integration can address urban planning and disaster management challenges. The chapter also explores publishing integrated models to ArcGIS Online for collaboration and accessibility.

Additionally, advanced visualization techniques using platforms like Cesium and Google Earth are discussed, further enriching the prototype's capabilities. Throughout, the chapter provides a overview of the technical methodologies employed, highlights the challenges encountered, and offers insights into implementing BIM-GIS integration for smart city development.

The prototype development focuses on showcasing the interoperability of BIM and GIS technologies using ArcGIS Pro 3.4 and Revit 2025.2. The software was deployed on a Lenovo IdeaPad Gaming 3 15IMH05 laptop with the following specifications:

- **Processor:** Intel(R) Core(TM) i5-10300H CPU @ 2.50GHz, 2.50 GHz
- **RAM:** 8.00 GB (7.87 GB usable)
- **System Type:** 64-bit operating system, x64-based processor
- **Operating System:** Windows 11 Home

4.1 Configuring the GIS Environment

In order to begin, open ArcGIS Pro and create a new Local Scene. The scene may automatically include a number of default layers, including a basemap, elevation layers, and potentially 3D buildings. In accordance with the specific requirements of the project, it may be necessary to remove these layers. In this example, all default layers except the basemap were removed.

In the scene properties, the name of the scene should be modified to more accurately reflect the specifics of the project in question. Optionally, modify the "Background Color" to suit your needs. Setting it to blue will make the sky in your scene appear blue. Check the option "Allow assignment of unique numeric IDs for sharing web layers." This setting is crucial if you plan to publish your scene online (Seler, 2024).

Proceed to the "Coordinate Systems" within the Scene Properties and select the appropriate coordinate system in accordance with the geographical location of the project. In the case of Stuttgart, Germany, the horizontal coordinate system should be defined as EPSG:25832 (ETRS89 / UTM zone 32N), while the vertical coordinate system should be defined as EPSG:7837 (DHHN2016 height) in order to ensure accurate representation of elevation (LGL, 2024).

It is possible to activate "Display Shadows in 3D" in order to achieve a greater degree of realism in lighting effects. Furthermore, the "Date and Time" option may be utilised in order to define illumination based on specific times of the day, which allows for the simulation of shadows and lighting conditions for different scenarios.

Once the settings of properties are adjusted, click the OK button to save the changes. The scene is now configured and ready for further development or data integration

4.2 Leveraging Open Geodata for Spatial Context

Geospatial model development relies on accurate and reliable geodata. In Germany, many states and cities provide open geodata portals offering a wide range of datasets for urban planning, research, and development.

For instance, the Bavarian State Office provides Digital Orthophotos, Elevation Models, Surface Models, and 3D Building Models in formats like GeoTIFF and GML, accessible through its OpenData portal (LDBV, 2024). Similarly, the Geoportal Sachsen offers cadastral data, elevation models, and 3D building data at Level of Detail 2 (LoD2) in formats such as GML and shapefiles, ensuring compatibility with GIS tools (GeoSN, 2024). Additionally, the Geoportal Hessen provides access to topographic maps, cadastral information, and environmental data through a user-friendly interface (GDI-Hessen, 2024).

In the context of this thesis, data from the Open GeoData Portal (Figure 16) of the State Office for Geoinformation and Land Development Baden-Württemberg (LGL) will be employed (LGL, 2024).



Figure 16: Study area in Stuttgart highlighted in red, showing selected cells from the geodata portal (Source: Author)

4.2.1 Integrating Digital Terrain Models for Topographical Accuracy

The Stuttgart region is characterized by its hilly terrain, which presents a significant challenge for the analysis of complex topography. The portal offers two data sets, which are essential for such analysis (LGL, 2024). The data sets are DGM1 (Digitales Geländemodell, translated as digital terrain model) and DGM025, which are provided in 2 km x 2 km tiles. Both datasets are high-resolution digital terrain models (DTMs) derived from LiDAR-based surveys.

The DGM1 dataset provides terrain elevations in xyz format with a spatial resolution of 1 m x 1 m. It represents the surface of the Earth, excluding vegetation, buildings, infrastructure, and traffic objects (LGL, 2024). The dataset has a vertical accuracy of 50 cm, while the DGM025 dataset offers a spatial resolution of 0.25 m x 0.25 m and is provided in GeoTIFF format with a vertical accuracy of 15 cm (LGL, 2024).

For the current thesis, the DGM025 dataset was selected. The primary reason for this is that the DGM1 dataset is provided in xyz format, which cannot be imported directly into ArcGIS without additional preprocessing (Esri, 2023). During the conversion process, the data was corrupted, resulting in the digital terrain model displaying holes between 2 km x 2 km tiles.

The higher resolution of the DGM025 dataset requires significantly more storage and computational power than that of the DGM1 dataset. For an area of 6 km x 10 km, the merged GeoTIFF dataset for DGM025 occupies 3.7 GB, whereas the unmerged xyz file package for DGM1 for the same area has a size of only 1.62 GB. Despite the larger file size, the DGM025 dataset is highly valuable for high-precision applications such as detailed flood risk assessments, site planning, and small-scale topographical studies.

As the DGM025 dataset is provided in tiles of 2x2 km, the GDAL was employed to merge these tiles into a single seamless file. The GDAL (Geospatial Data Abstraction Library) is an open-source library that is widely used for the processing of geospatial data in a variety of formats (GDAL, 2024). The GDAL tools can be accessed in a number of ways. The easiest method is via the graphical user interface of the QGIS software. Alternatively, the OSGeo4W shell may be used, which provides a comprehensive command-line interface for geospatial tools and libraries on Windows platforms (OSGeo4W, 2024).

In order to merge the data from DGM025, it is possible to use the "Merge" tool, which is provided by GDAL and accessible in QGIS. This process helps to avoid the need to manage multiple layers within the ArcGIS scene. Once the merged file has been created,

it can be integrated into the ArcGIS project by right-clicking on the Elevation Surface in the Contents Pane and selecting the merged GeoTIFF file (Esri, 2024f).

The differences between the DGM025 dataset and the default elevation layer, which was removed during the scene setup, are illustrated below (Figures 17-22) and summarized in Table 5 .



Figure 17: View 1: Visualization of the terrain using the default 3D elevation layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

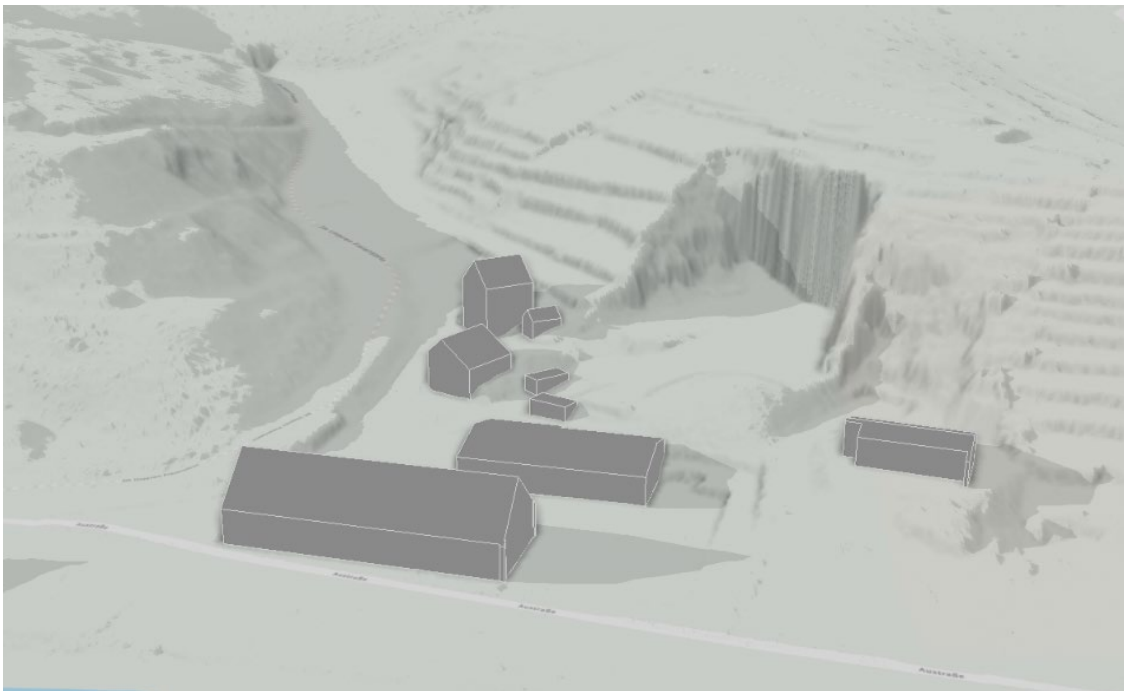


Figure 18: View 1: Visualization of the terrain using the DGM025 in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)



Figure 19: View 2: Visualization of the terrain using the default 3D elevation layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)



Figure 20: View 2: Visualization of the terrain using the DGM025 in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

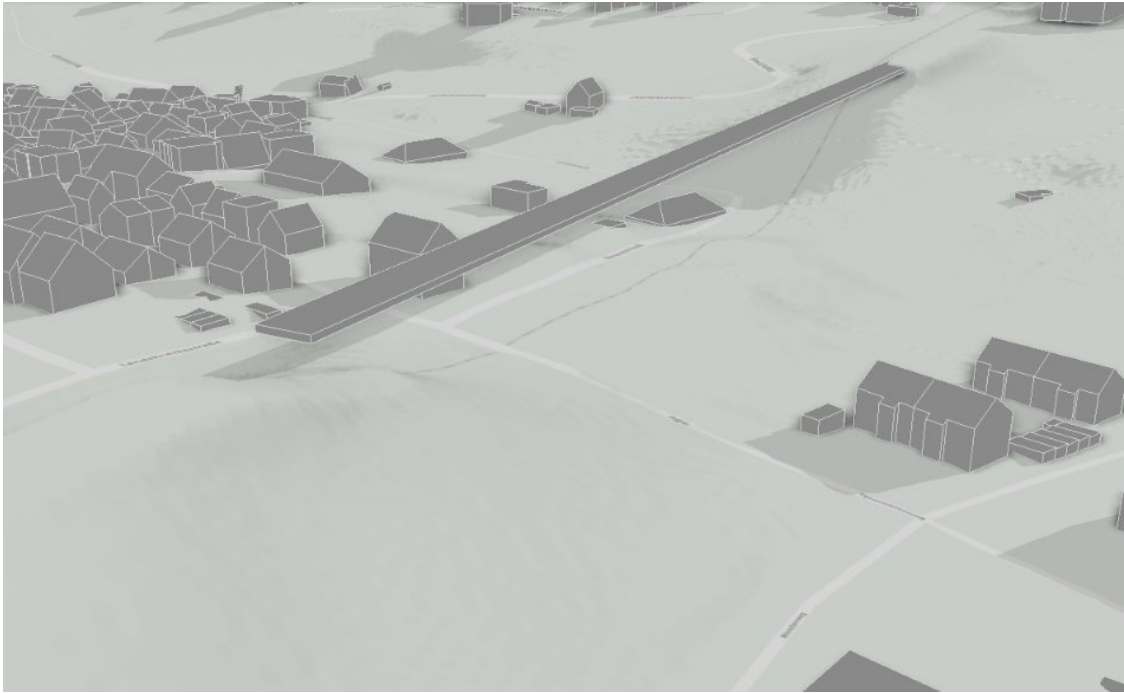


Figure 21: View 3: Visualization of the terrain using the default 3D elevation layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

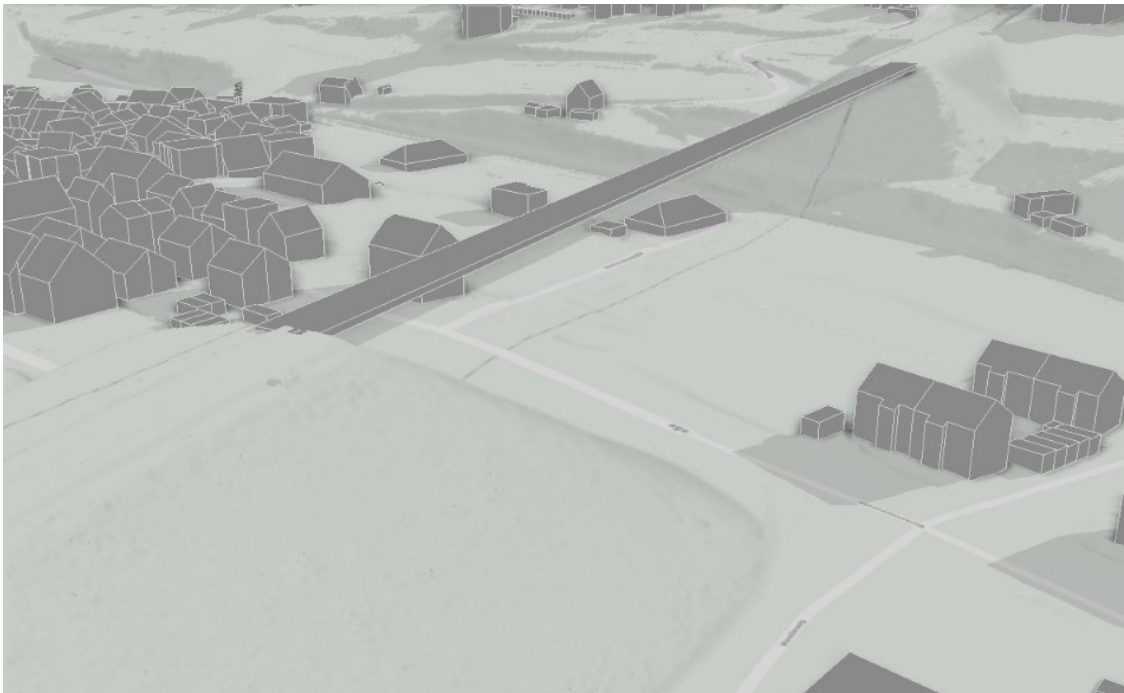


Figure 22: View 3: Visualization of the terrain using the DGM025 in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

Table 5: Comparison of Default 3D Elevation and DGM025 Digital Terrain (Source: Author)

Aspect	Default 3D Elevation	DGM025 Digital Terrain
ArcGIS Pro Rendering (e.g., zooming, rotating)	~35 FPS	~25 FPS
Integration	Ready to use in ArcGIS	Requires preprocessing
Applications	Broad-scale terrain visualization and analysis	Detailed simulations, analysis, construction planning
Advantages	Lightweight. Do not require high computer storage	High precision. Coordinate system can be assigned, essential for web publication
Limitations	Low details, not for detailed studies	High storage requirement

As an additional option, the Navigate Underground (Figure 23) feature can be enabled on the ribbon located beneath the Elevation Surface Layer tab. This feature is particularly useful in the context of underground structures, as it allows users to view features located beneath the terrain surface (Figures 24-26).

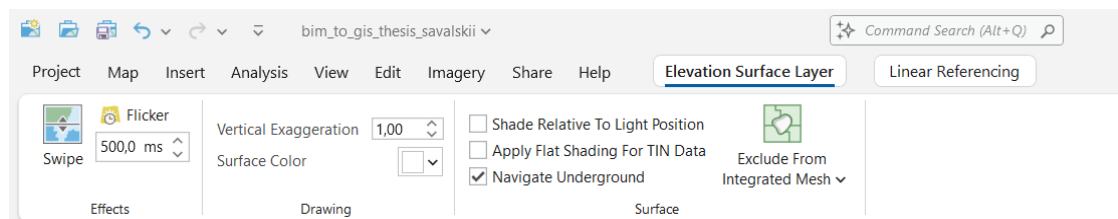
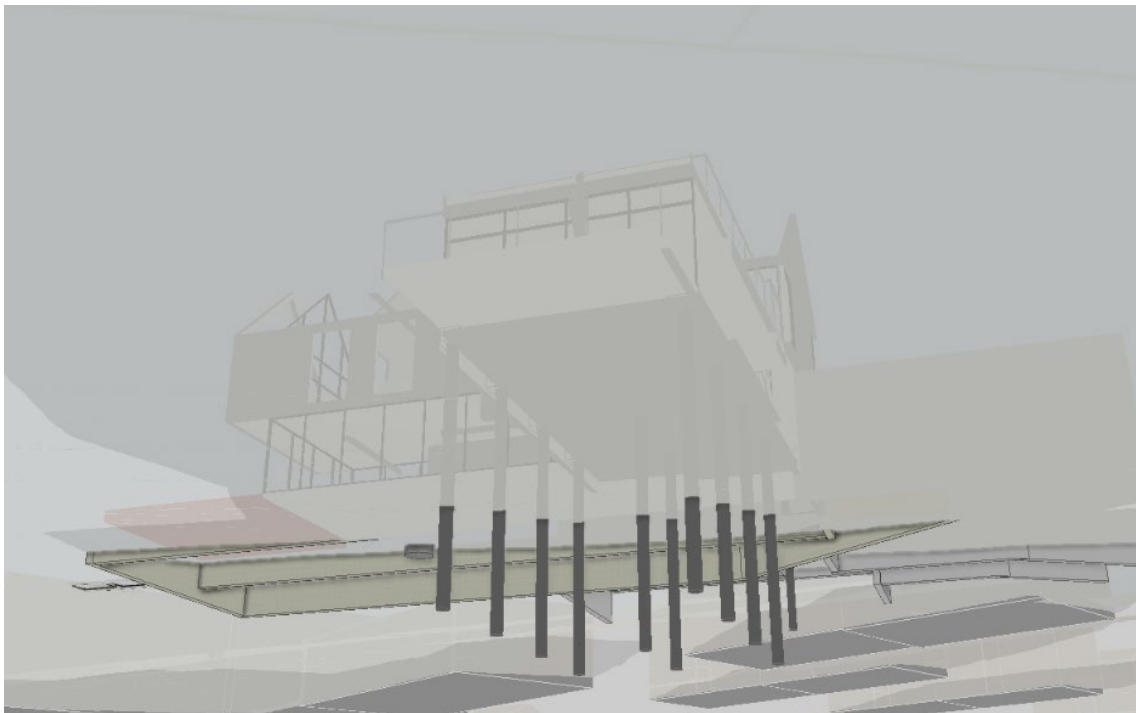


Figure 23: Elevation Surface Layer Tab in ArcGIS Pro: Configuration of elevation settings in the 3D scene (Source: Author)



*Figure 24: Visualization of the default Revit model displayed above ground in ArcGIS Pro
(Source: Author)*



*Figure 25: Visualization of the default Revit model displayed below ground in ArcGIS Pro
(Source: Author)*

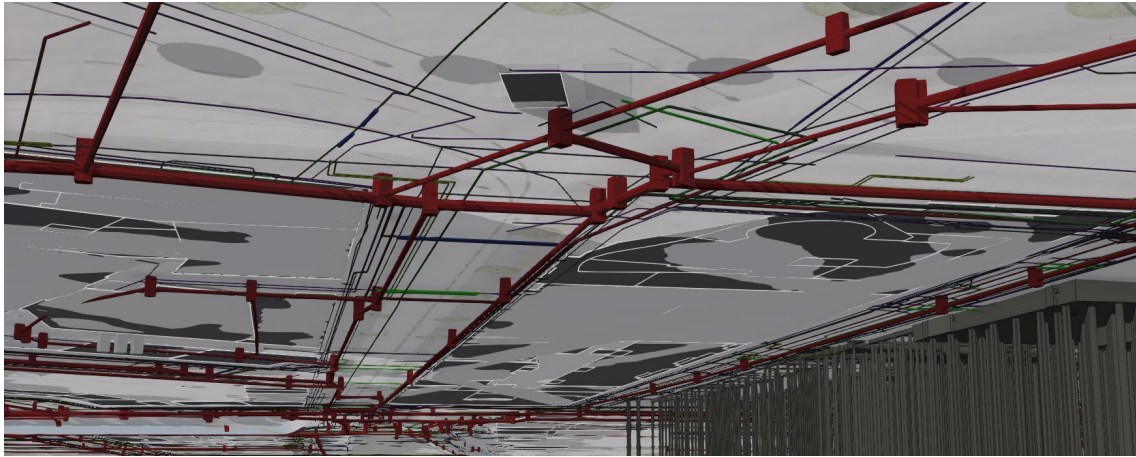


Figure 26: Visualization of an underground pipe network developed using data from Esri Documentation (Alvarez, 2024) (Source: Author)

4.2.2 Importing ALKIS Data for Cadastral and Land Use Insights

Another important dataset is ALKIS data, which represent "Official Real Estate Cadastre Information System" data. The data for various districts can be obtained in two formats: the NAS exchange format or as shapefiles. The NAS format, a standardised XML-based data exchange format within the German cadastral system, is optimal for the export of database data (Vitsaras, 2023). For the purposes of this thesis, shapefiles are employed due to their simplicity and direct compatibility with GIS software, making them suitable for smaller-scale projects.

In order to import geodata in Shapefile format into ArcGIS, it is necessary to confirm that the downloaded data includes all of the required files, namely .shp, .shx, .dbf, and .prj. It is essential to ensure the presence of these components, as their absence may result in the shapefile displaying incorrectly (Esri, 2024m).

To begin, open the Scene that was created in the previous step. Then, navigate to the "Catalog" pane and add a "Folder Connection" to the folder containing the shapefiles, or alternatively, insert the folder containing the Geodata into the project folder. The final step is to expand the desired folder and add the desired file to the current map (Esri, 2024l). The imported shapefiles will appear as 2D layers draped over the ground surface in the scene.

It is possible to assign symbology for newly created layers by utilising values extracted from the attributes of the layers (Esri, 2024n). For example, the downloaded archive contains data on land parcel usage, which can be employed to illustrate the utilization of land parcels for residential, commercial, industrial, and other purposes (Figure 27).

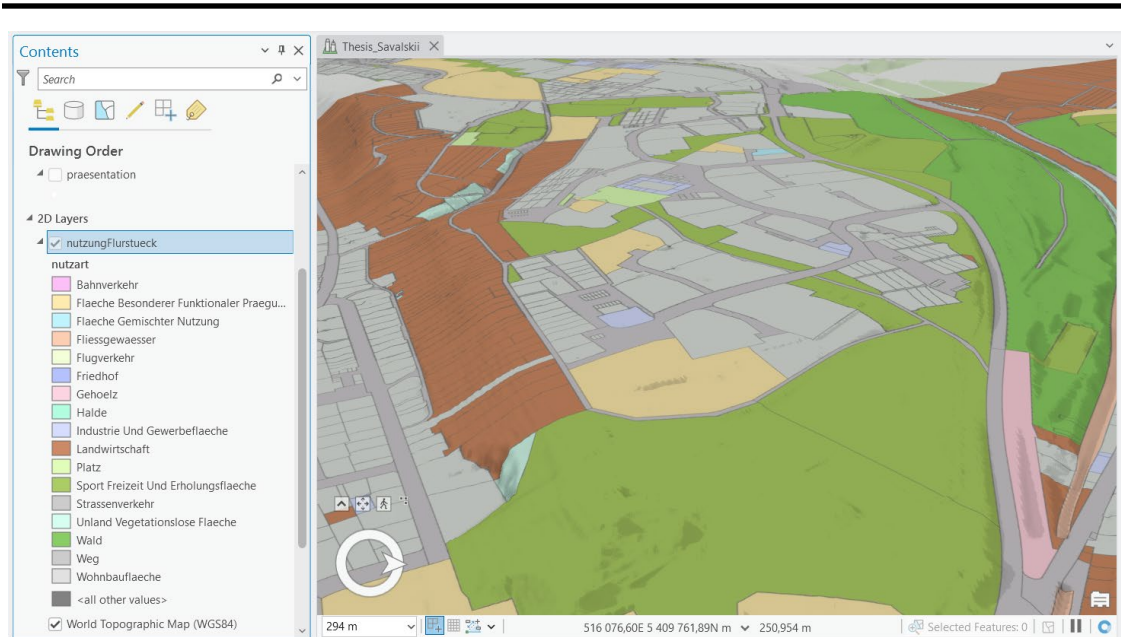


Figure 27: Visualization of geodata for land parcel usage in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

In addition, the dataset includes information on building usage, which can be presented to illustrate the functional roles of buildings, including residential, public service, commercial, and other categories (Figure 28).

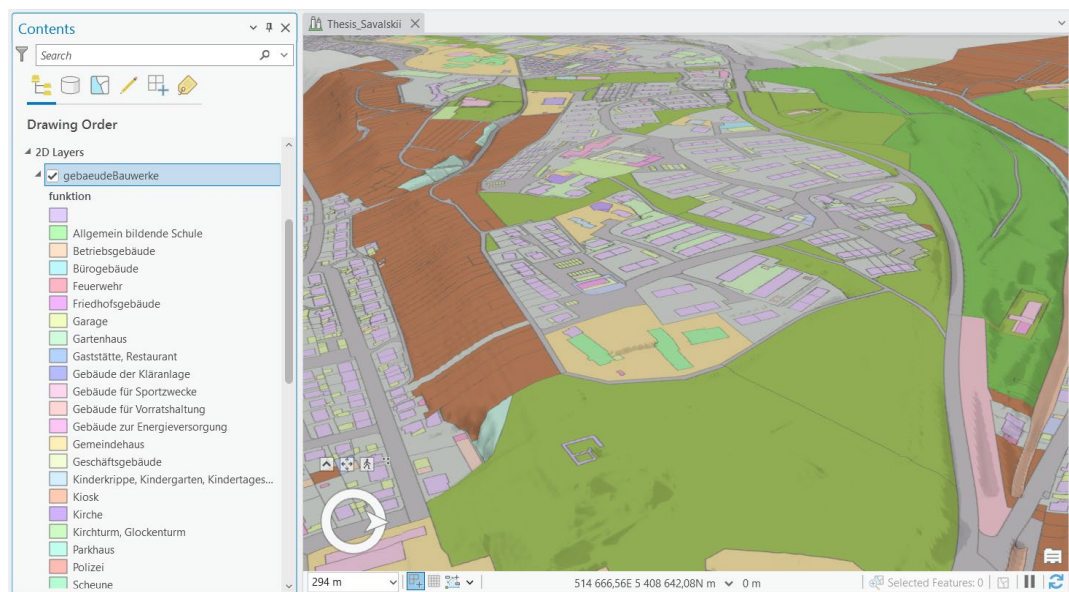


Figure 28: Visualization of geodata for building usage in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

The dataset also includes a Shapefile containing points with various attributes, including land parcel numbers, building addresses, and other information (Figure 29). This data can be visualized using labels to display relevant information directly within the scene. However, to proceed with this step, it is necessary to transfer the layer into the 3D Layers group located within the Contents pane (Shephard, 2024).

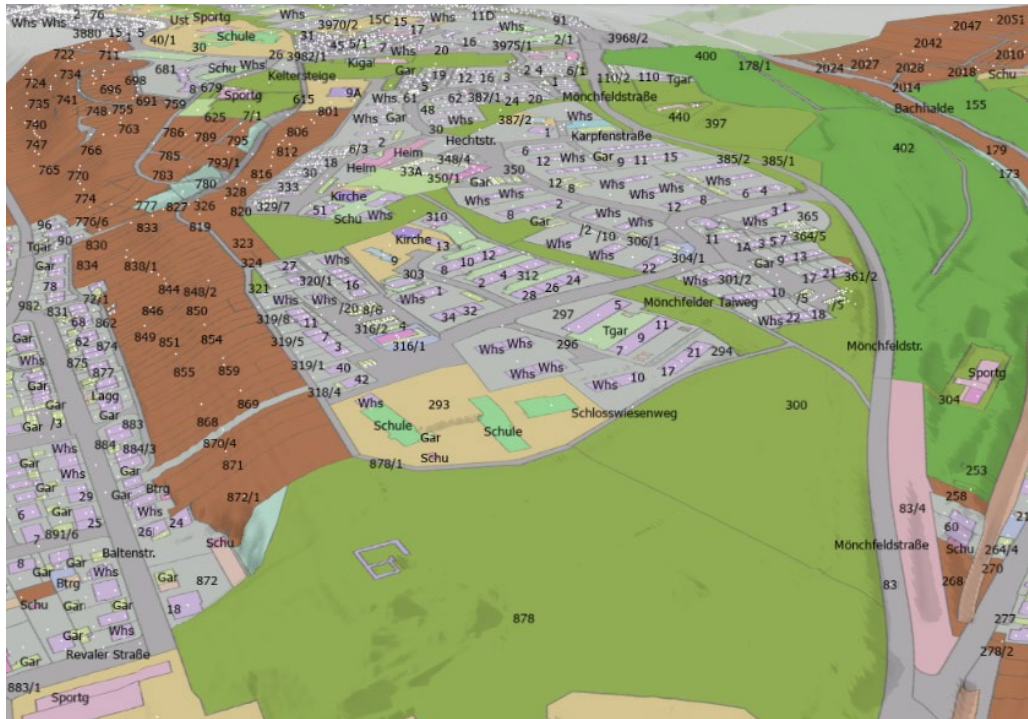


Figure 29: Visualization of land parcel numbers, building addresses, and associated attribute information in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

ALKIS data is highly valuable for understanding the surrounding context of an area, such as land use or building purposes. Land parcel usage helps identify zoning and land allocation, while building usage provides insights into the functional roles of structures within the area. This thesis, however, requires a 3D environment, as it enhances the presentation of models by incorporating realistic surroundings.

4.2.3 Incorporating 3D Building Models for Enhanced Visualization

The portal also offers 3D buildings data with LOD 2 in the GML format, structured into 2 km x 2 km tiles. The dataset includes building geometries, which are essential for urban modelling and analysis. As ArcGIS does not natively support the GML format, alternative approaches are available for the conversion and utilisation of this data.

The "Data Interoperability" extension for ArcGIS Pro can be installed to facilitate the native reading of GML files (Newton, 2021). The "Quick Import" tool, accessible via the extension, may be utilised for this purpose. In this tool, the "Input Dataset" should be set to the relevant GML file, and an "Output Staging Geodatabase" specified. The tool should then be executed in order to import the data.

However, in the event that the license for the Data Interoperability extension is unavailable, the GDAL can be employed to facilitate the conversion of GML files to shapefiles. It provides powerful tools for converting GML files to formats supported by ArcGIS, such as shapefiles. To convert GML files to shapefiles and combine multiple

tiles into a single dataset, the following commands can be used in the OSGeo4W shell (GDAL, 2024b):

```
ogr2ogr -f "ESRI Shapefile" -a_srs "EPSG:25832+7837" path_output.shp  
path_input1.gml Building
```

This command creates a new shapefile using the first GML tile. The "-a_srs" parameter assigns the spatial reference system. "Building" refers to the layer name within the GML file. GML files often contain multiple layers, each representing different types of geographic features (MapServer, 2024). To verify the available layer names within a GML file, the following command can be utilized in the OSGeo4W shell:

```
ogrinfo path_input.gml
```

To append data from other GML files to the existing shapefile, allowing for the merging of multiple tiles use, the following command may be employed:

```
ogr2ogr -f "ESRI Shapefile" -update -append -a_srs "EPSG:25832+7837"  
path_output.shp path_input2.gml Building
```

In order to incorporate shapefiles into the scene, it is necessary to follow the same steps as were employed for shapefiles obtained from ALKIS data.

It should be noted that there are differences between the default 3D building layers, which were removed during the scene setup, and the building data obtained from the geoportal (Table 6).

Table 6: Comparison of Default 3D Building Models and Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) Data (Source: Author)

Aspect	Default 3D Building Models	Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) Data
Accuracy (LOD)	Basic building outlines with minimal detail.	Greater level of infrastructure representation
ArcGIS Pro Performance (e.g., zooming, rotating)	~25 FPS	~30 FPS
Integration	Ready to use in ArcGIS	Requires conversion or specialized tools (e.g., GML to shapefile)
Applications	General 3D visualization and city-wide analysis	Detailed urban planning, zoning
Advantages	Do not require high computer storage	Includes metadata like building usage, editable
Limitations	Lacks metadata, limited structure details, missing structures like power towers	Missing minor structures (e.g., garden sheds)

In some cases, the data obtained from the geoportal provides a more detailed representation of certain areas, while in other instances, it does not. For example, while the geoportal data includes additional features like transmission towers (Figures 30, 31, 35, 36, 37), it lacks smaller buildings, such as garden sheds or small outbuildings (Figures 32-37), that are sometimes present in the ArcGIS default dataset. Despite this limitation, the overall building geometries in the geoportal data are more accurately and precisely represented, offering a more detailed visualization.

A key advantage of the geoportal data is its editability and the inclusion of additional metadata. This dataset provides valuable information about building usage or other characteristics that enhance its applicability for urban analysis, planning, and visualization tasks. The ability to customize and enrich this data makes it particularly suited for projects that require tailored geospatial models with high precision and context-specific information.

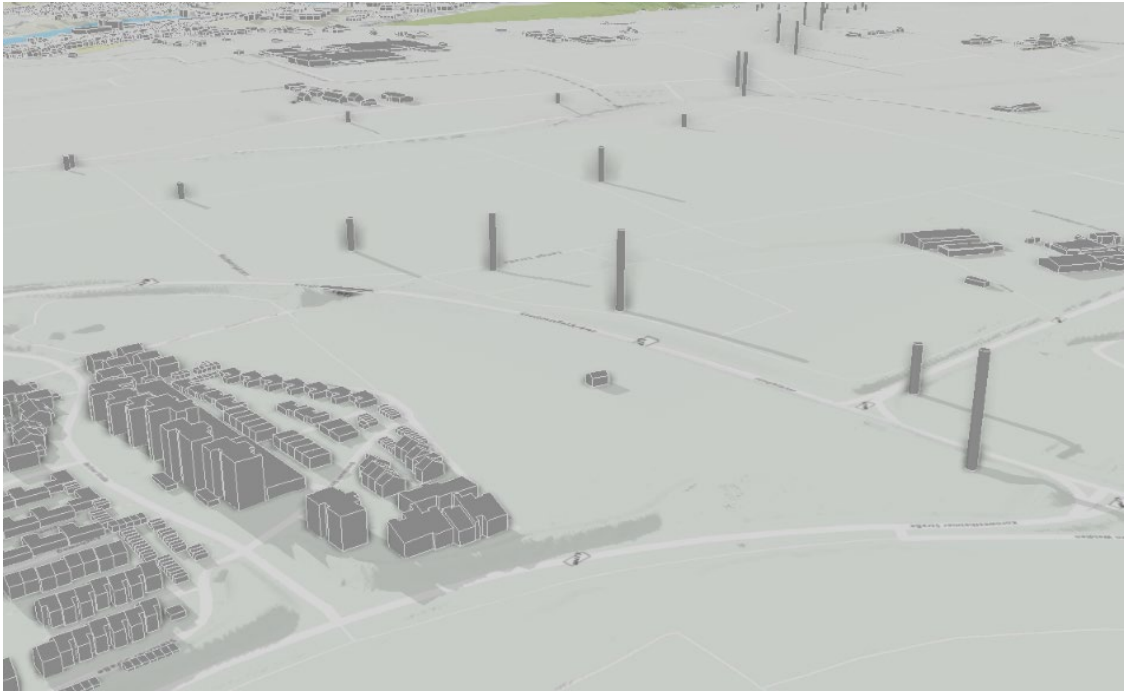


Figure 30: View 1: Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) data retrieved from the geoportal (Source: Author).

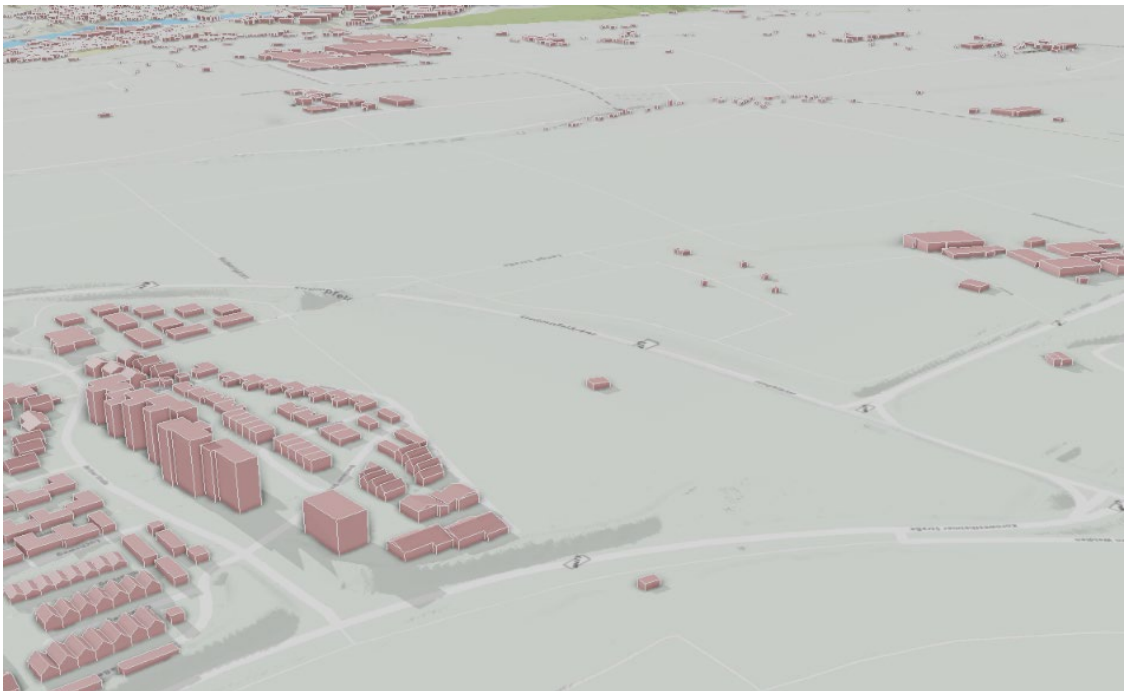


Figure 31: View 1: Default 3D building models available in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).



Figure 32: View 2: Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) data retrieved from the geoportal (Source: Author).

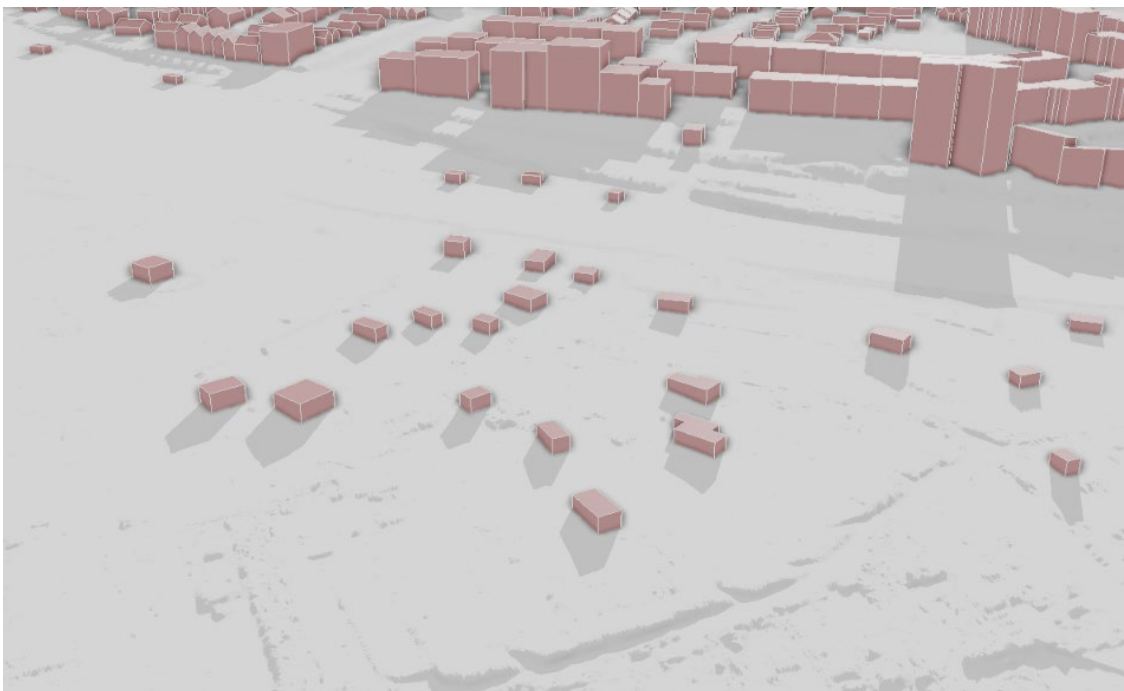


Figure 33: View 2: Default 3D building models available in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).



Figure 34: View 2: Visualization of the area using a Google Earth image for reference (Source: Author).

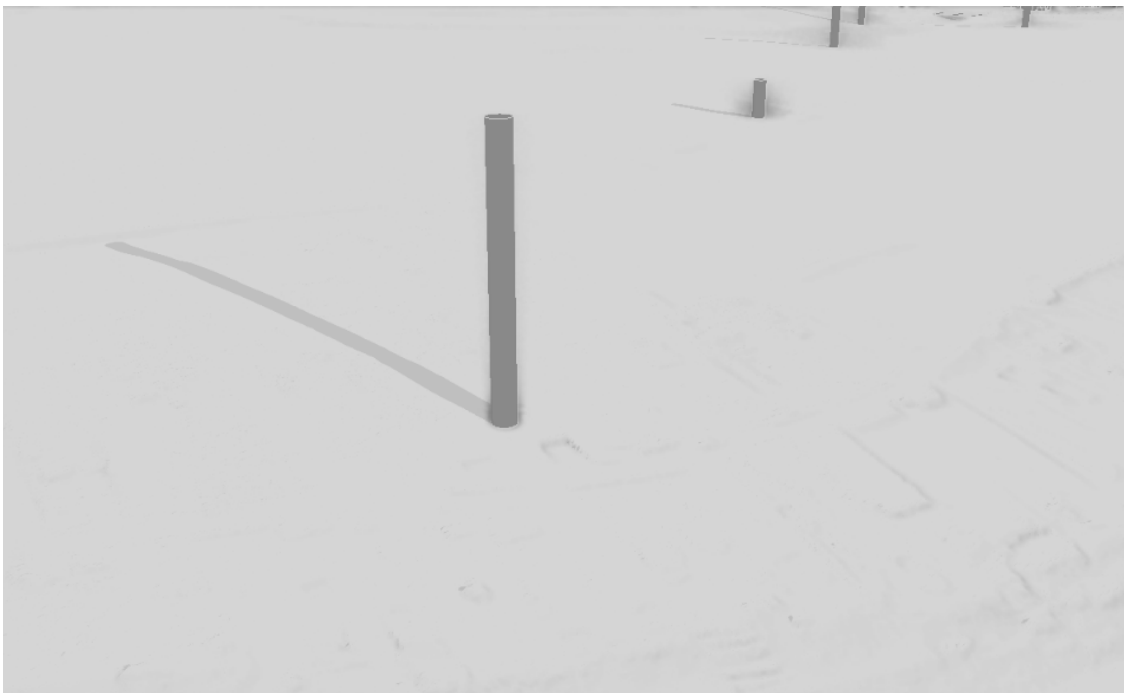


Figure 35: View 3: Level of Detail 2 (LOD 2) data retrieved from the geoportal (Source: Author).

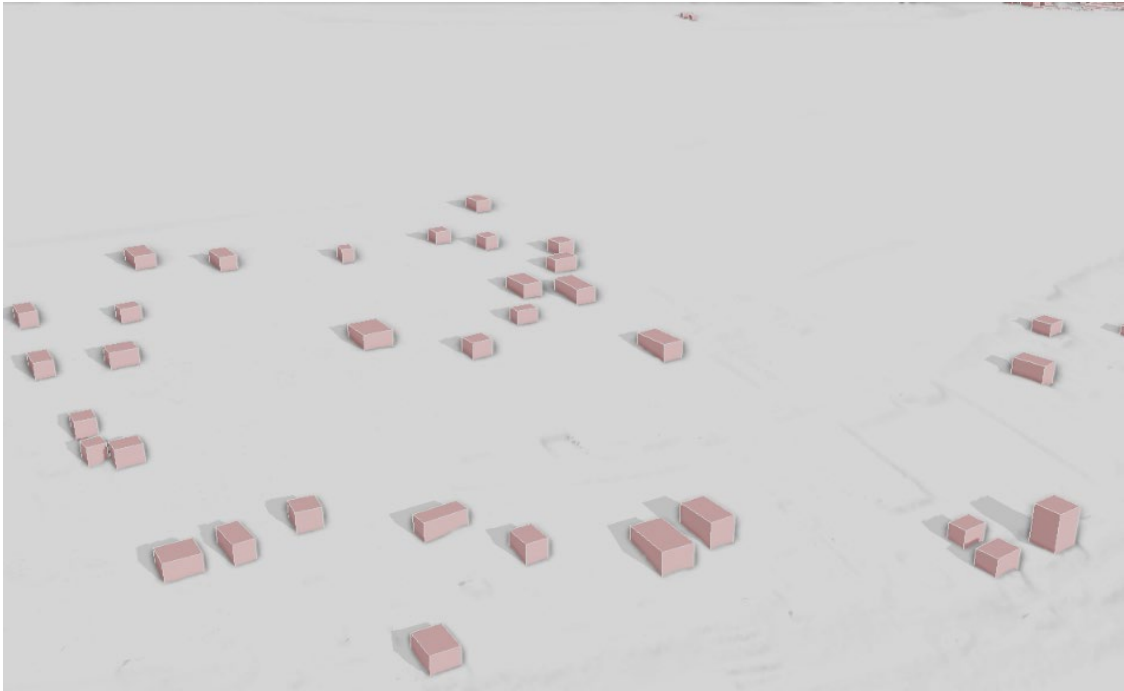


Figure 36: View 3: Default 3D building models available in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).



Figure 37: View 3: Visualization of the area using a Google Earth image for reference (Source: Google Earth, 2024).

As an alternative, if the objective of the project is to visualise buildings without the necessity of working with their attributes, it is also possible to utilise open-source models from ArcGIS Living Atlas, which offers a selection of 3D models of cities with metadata. However, based on the examination of models of Munich and Frankfurt, it should be noted that these models are not editable.

Optionally, you can bring in extra data to enhance the visualization of your project. For example, you can add the Integrated Mesh Scene Layer of Stuttgart (Figure 38), which can be found in the ArcGIS Online Portal and accessed via the Catalog pane.



Figure 38: Visualization of LOD2 Buildings Combined with Integrated Mesh Scene Layer in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

After adding the Integrated Mesh Scene Layer, LOD 2 buildings overlay the real-world image. You can adjust symbology, such as setting semi-transparent fills and changing outline colors, to enhance visibility and clarity (Figure 39).



Figure 39: Visualization of LOD2 Buildings and Integrated Mesh Scene Layer with Adjusted Symbology in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

4.3 Integrating BIM Models

4.3.1 Preparing BIM Data for Geospatial Integration

It is essential to ensure that the BIM file is in a format that is supported by the chosen software, such as Autodesk Revit (.rvt) or Industry Foundation Classes (.ifc). ArcGIS Pro is compatible with Revit file versions from 2020 to 2025, as well as a range of IFC formats. Attempting to use unsupported BIM file versions will invoke the error message: Unsupported BIM file (Esri, 2024j).

The BIM model utilized in the prototype was sourced from Autodesk's repository of free models. It is essential to assign a base reference point (Figure 40) using the "Specify Coordinates at Point" function when preparing a Revit model (Zusik, 2024). It is also essential to ensure that the units used in the project are consistent with those required by the GIS coordinate system. To illustrate, if the Revit project employs millimetres for the length but the GIS coordinate system utilises metres, it is necessary to specify the coordinates (North/South, East/West, and Elevation) in Revit in millimetres. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to optimize the project by utilising Revit's "Purge Unused" tool, which can enhance performance.

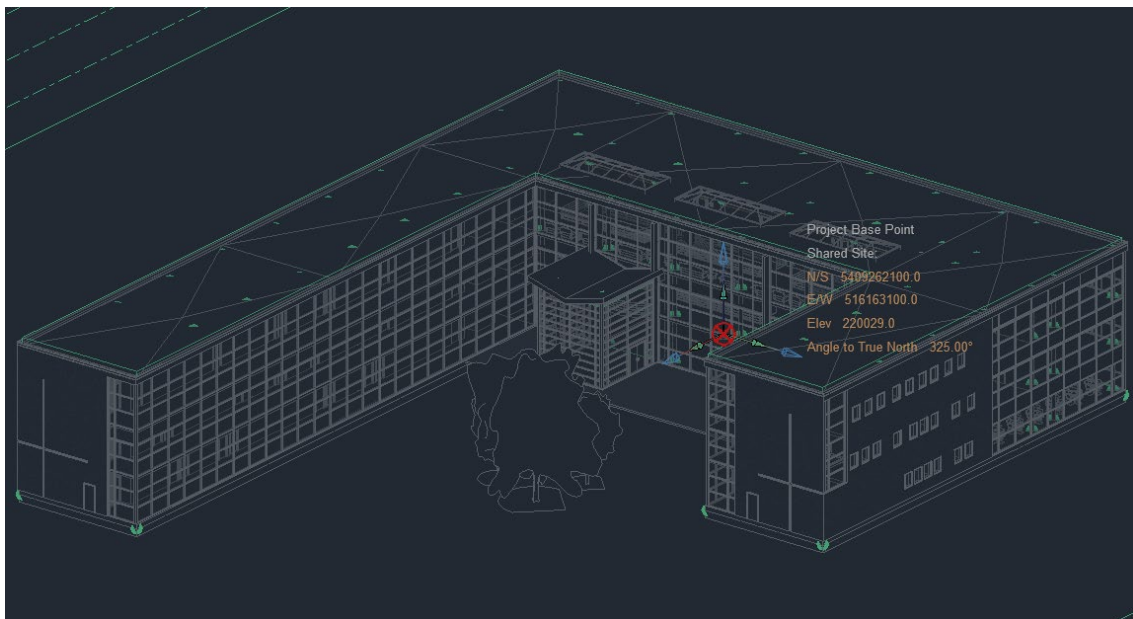


Figure 40: BIM Model in Revit with Project Base Point (Source: Author)

4.3.2 Understanding the Data Structure of BIM Files in ArcGIS Pro

Before importing a Revit file into ArcGIS Pro, it is crucial to understand how ArcGIS Pro processes and organizes BIM data. The software converts Revit data into a "BIM file workspace," which mirrors Revit's internal categorization of building elements (Figure 41) (Esri, 2024a).

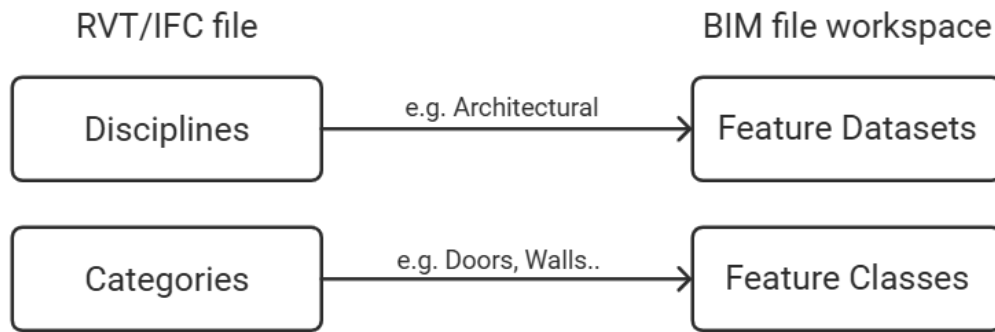


Figure 41: Processing of BIM File by ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

In this structure, construction disciplines from the Revit file are transformed into feature datasets, while Revit categories (Figure 42), such as Walls, Floors, or Doors, are mapped directly as feature classes. This ensures a one-to-one correspondence between the categories in Revit and the feature classes in ArcGIS Pro (Esri, 2024j).

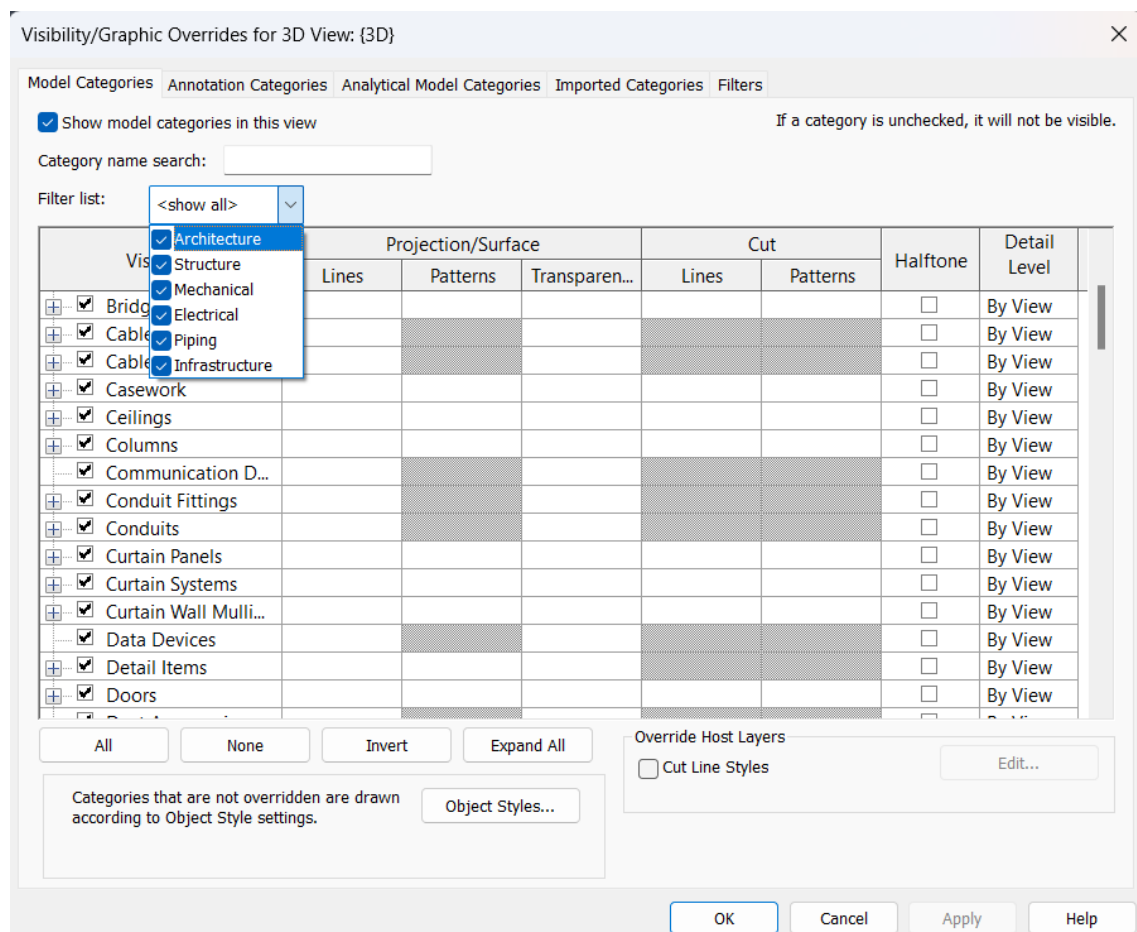


Figure 42: Categories in Revit Model Structure (Source: Author)

For instance, the category "Walls" in Revit (Figure 43) translates seamlessly into the feature class "Walls" in ArcGIS Pro (Figure 44), maintaining consistency and usability across platforms.

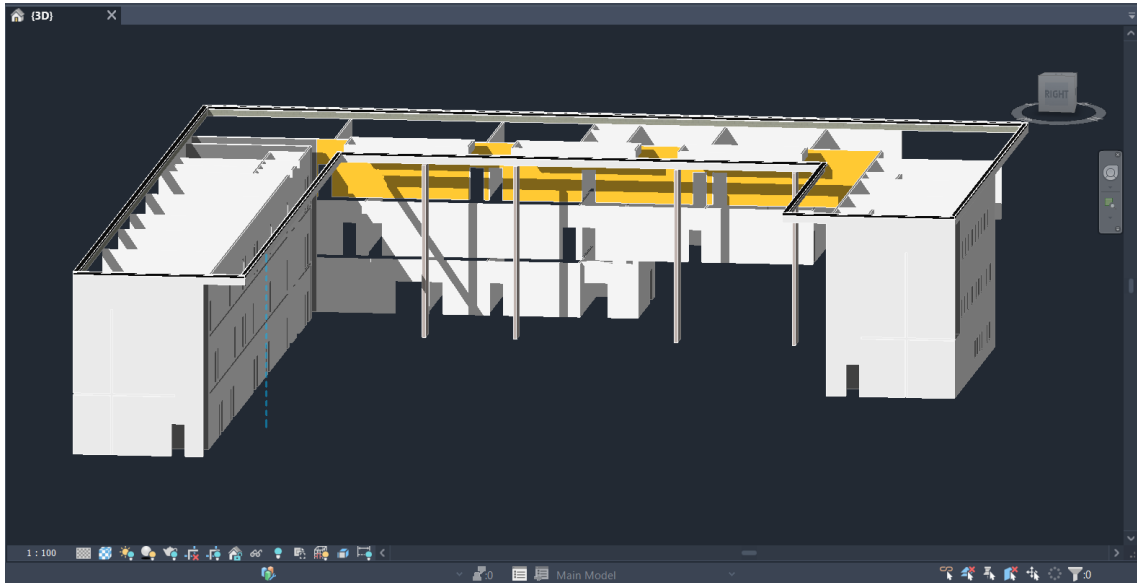


Figure 43: Visualization of the "Walls" Category in Revit (Source: Author)



Figure 44: Visualization of the "Walls" Feature Class in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

This approach results in the creation of six feature datasets, each containing multiple feature classes, as demonstrated in Figure 45. This organization preserves the hierarchy and categorization of the original Revit model.

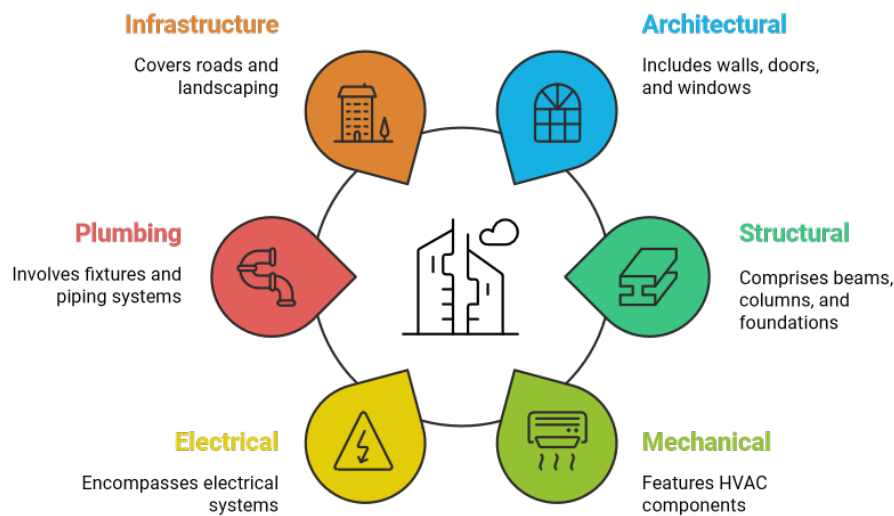


Figure 45: How BIM file data is structured into feature datasets within ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

Each feature class in the BIM file workspace provides attributes with detailed information like materials or price, along with metadata from the original Revit file, including project details, levels, and phases.

The BIM file workspace additionally incorporates a Floorplan dataset that includes feature classes, including Floorplan_Polygon, Floorplan_Polyline, Footprint, PointsOfInterest, Areas, which can be utilized for indoor mapping applications.

4.3.3 Methods for Adding BIM Data to ArcGIS Pro

The integration of BIM data into an ArcGIS Scene can be accomplished through several methods. These include:

4.3.3.1 Direct Import from Local Files

The initial stage of the process is identical to that employed when adding 3D buildings. In order to proceed, a folder connection must be added, or the Revit file must be located in a folder within the project directory. The BIM model can be added using the "Add to Current Map" function or the file may alternatively be dragged into the scene.

After the BIM model is added, the layers in the Contents pane will be organized in a structure similar to the one shown in Figure 46. This arrangement corresponds to the "BIM file workspace" and illustrates how the data is systematically categorized for optimal usability in ArcGIS Pro.

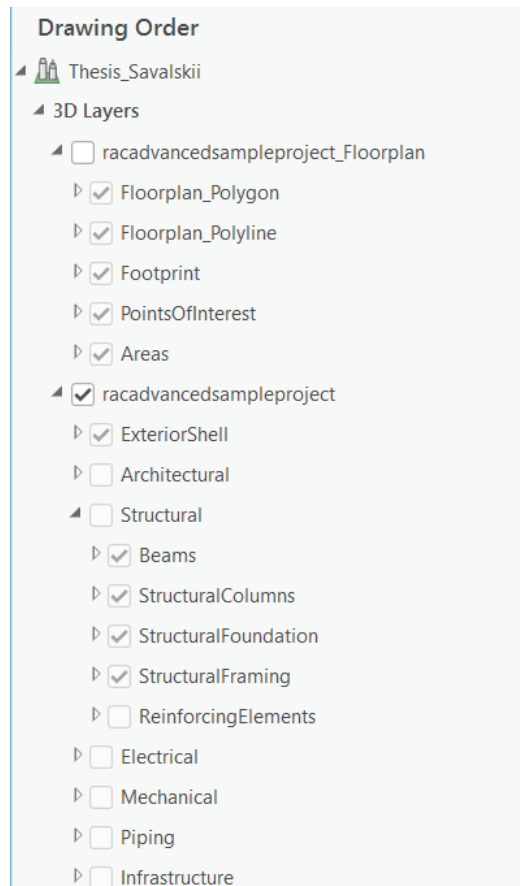


Figure 46: BIM File Workspace layers created from a BIM file within ArcGIS Pro, organized by disciplines and categories in the Contents (Source: Author).

Following the addition of the model, a warning message will be displayed indicating that the object is not aligned with a coordinate system. To address this issue, it is necessary to have a Projection File (.prj) within the project folder, as this enables the accurate positioning of CAD and BIM data within a geospatial context. It includes details about the datum, spheroid, prime meridian, and units of measure. If the .prj file is missing, it is necessary to create one to guarantee accurate geospatial positioning. The "Define Projection" tool in ArcGIS Pro can be utilised for this purpose. (Esri, 2024a). Upon completion of the above steps, the model should become visible on the scene (Figure 47).



Figure 47: Visualization of a BIM model integrated and displayed within an ArcGIS Pro scene, displaying attributes for roof elements on the left side (Source: Author).

If the coordinates of the BIM model were not assigned in Revit, or if the location, rotation, or scale of the model or certain feature classes need to be changed, the georeferencing tools in ArcGIS Pro can be used (Figure 48).

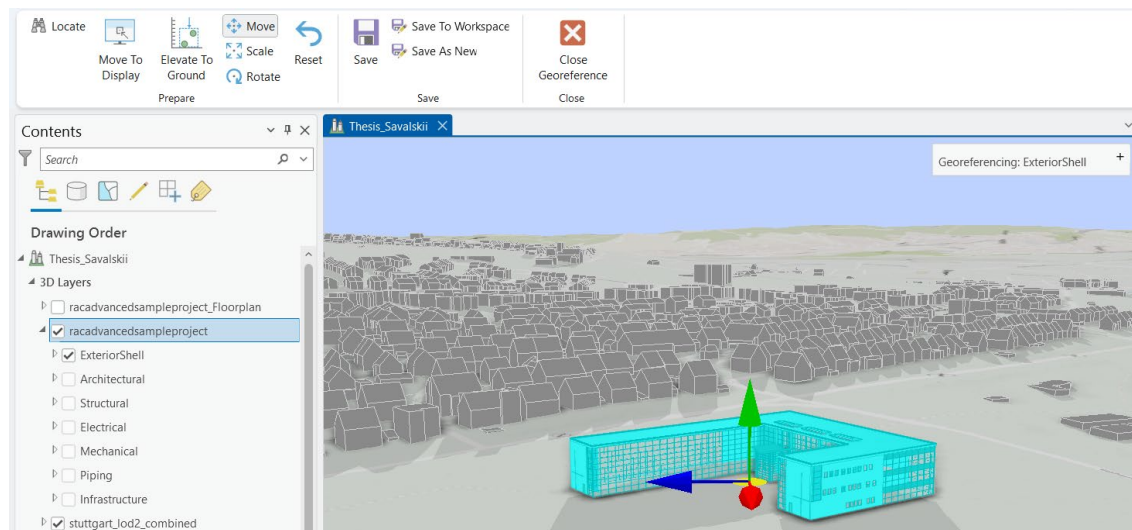


Figure 48: Georeferencing Tools in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

This process generates a World file (.wld3) which is a georeferencing text file used in ArcGIS Pro to accurately position BIM data within a spatial coordinate system (Esri, 2024a). It contains two rows, each defining a displacement vector with from and to points in 3D coordinates (Figure 48). The structure includes:

- First Row: <from-pt1x,from-pt1y,from-pt1z> <to-pt1x,to-pt1y,to-pt1z>

- Second Row: <from-pt2x,from-pt2y,from-pt2z> <to-pt2x,to-pt2y,to-pt2z>.

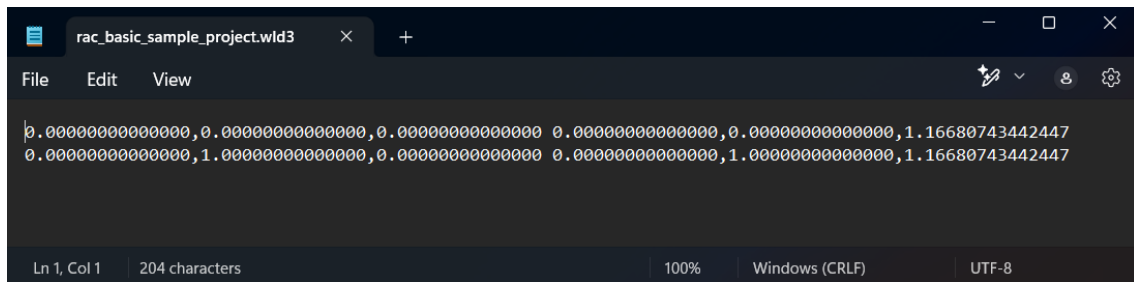


Figure 49: Example of .wld3 file (Source: Author).

Together, Projection and World Files enable precise integration of design data into GIS applications, ensuring that your models are correctly oriented and positioned in relation to real-world geography.

4.3.3.2 Cloud-Based BIM Integration via Autodesk Construction Cloud

As an alternative, it is possible to establish a connection between Autodesk Construction Cloud (Alvarez, 2022; Chantlos, 2020; Esri, 2024e). This platform serves as an invaluable tool for managing the flow of project information, a fundamental principle of the BIM process. However, before setting up this connection, it is essential to create and configure an Autodesk account.

To gain access to the Autodesk Construction Cloud, it is first necessary to log in. Navigate to the Account Admin settings and open the BIM 360 Admin section. Proceed to the Apps icon and select ArcGIS Pro (Figure 50).

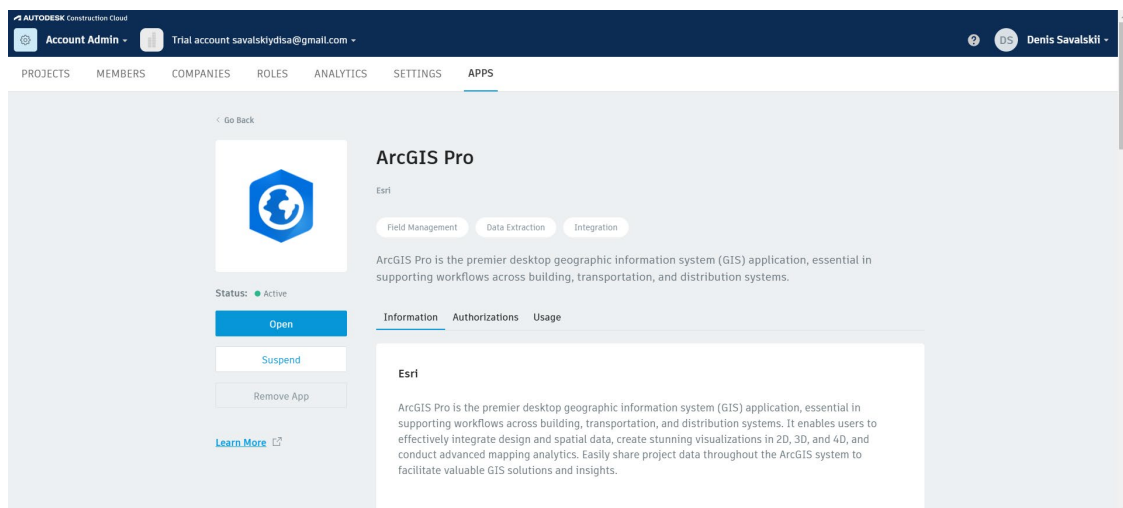


Figure 50: Autodesk Construction Cloud Account Settings (Source: Author)

The next step is to open the app page and click the button labelled "Add to BIM 360." This will prompt the user to grant the necessary permissions. Once ArcGIS Pro has been

successfully integrated with BIM 360, a connection between the two platforms can be established.

In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to utilize the "Add New BIM Cloud Connection" option in ArcGIS. The connection must be named, and the user must log in with their Autodesk account within ArcGIS. Once authentication is complete, the newly created BIM Cloud Connection will be visible in the Catalog pane, from which the user can then drag and drop the relevant BIM model onto the map.

Revit files will be downloaded to the project folder and incorporated into a scene in an automated fashion. If the folder in the Construction Cloud lacks a .prj file, it will be necessary to utilize the "Define Projection" function to assign the appropriate spatial reference to the Revit file.

There are two benefits to be gained from the utilisation of Autodesk Construction Cloud. Firstly, Revit models are enhanced with two additional attributes (Figure 51): the SharedView, which links to the digital model hosted on the Construction Cloud (Figure 52), and the SharedVer, which tracks the version of the model.

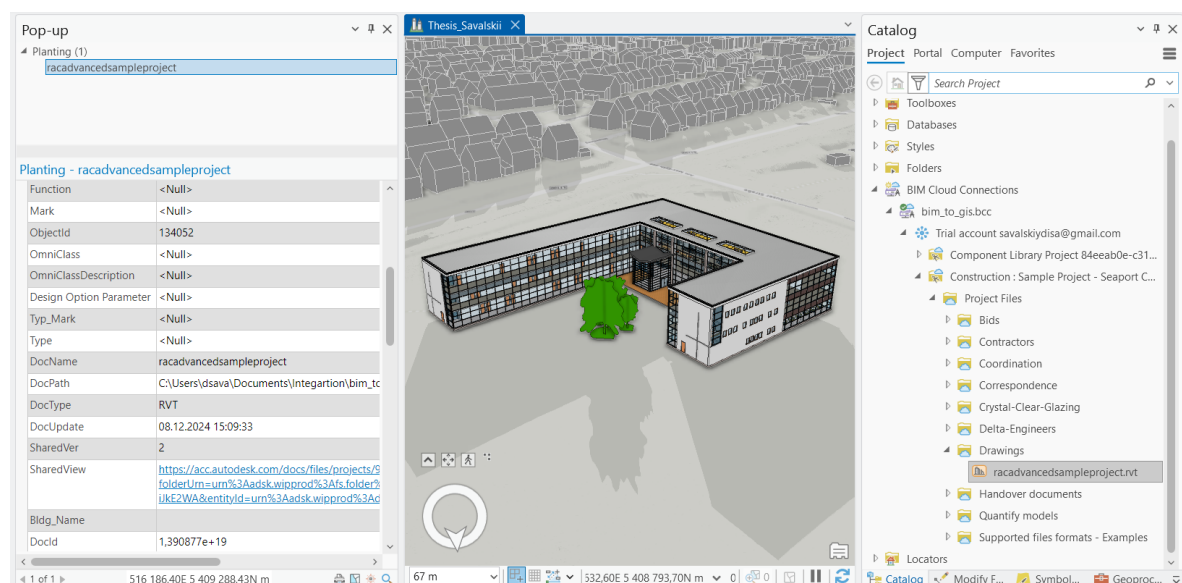


Figure 51: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro Scene, featuring SharedView and SharedVer attributes (Source: Author).

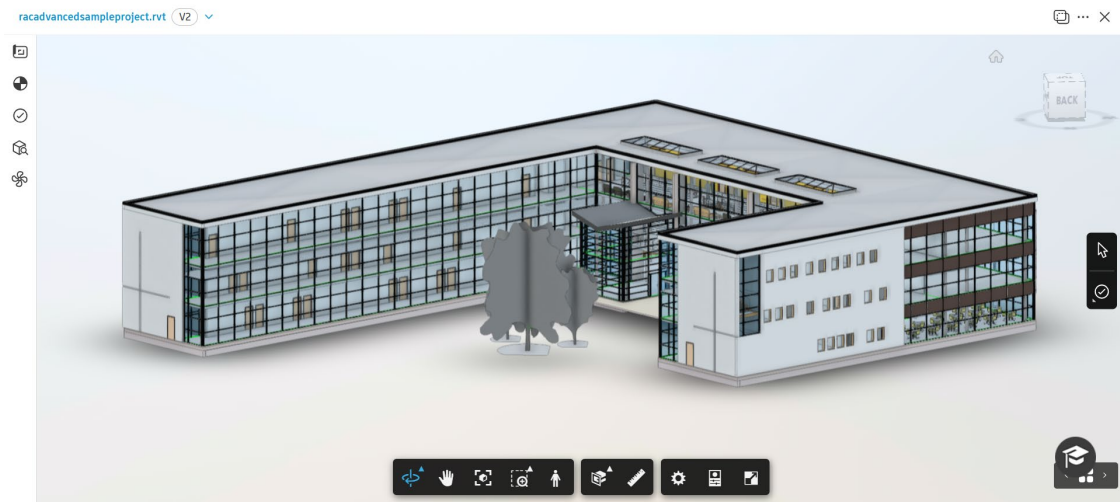


Figure 52: Visualization of a BIM model within the Autodesk Construction Cloud platform (Source: Author).

Updates to the models in the Construction Cloud are synchronized with ArcGIS Pro, ensuring that the latest data is always utilized in project workflows. This integration streamlines project management and enhances accuracy.

The primary disadvantage of these two methods is that the Revit file in the scene is utilized primarily for visualization and analysis. Changing components or attributes requires work in BIM software or an alternative approach (Esri, 2024a).

4.3.3.3 Converting BIM Data into a Geodatabase for Enhanced Analysis

In cases where modifications to the attributes of a model are required, it is possible to utilise the “BIM File to Geodatabase” tool, which can be located within the Geoprocessing pane (Esri, 2024b). This tool is a component of the ArcGIS Pro toolbox, which has been developed for the purpose of converting BIM data into a geodatabase.

To execute the tool, first, select the folder or directory that contains the BIM file (e.g., .rvt or .ifc) that is to be converted. Then, specify the geodatabase into which the converted BIM data is to be stored. Select the appropriate coordinate system for the project, and optionally, check the box next to "Include Floor Plan Feature Classes." Then, execute the tool by clicking Run. Once complete, add the newly created dataset.

The advantage of this method is that, in contrast to previous ones, once BIM data has been converted into a geodatabase, it can be employed with ArcGIS Pro's additional set geoprocessing and analytical tools, thus allowing for greater flexibility in analysis. Users are able to edit all attributes as required for the specific project. Another advantage is the ability to combine multiple BIM models into a single geodatabase (Esri, 2024b). This simplifies the management and organization of complex projects.

In terms of disadvantages, the conversion process can be time consuming, depending on the size of the BIM file and the versions of softwares. However, in my case, the model with a 13,4 MB size took 1 minute and 37 seconds to convert. It is also important to note that the transfer of data from one format to another may potentially result in the loss of information or corruption (Mangon, 2022). However, no data loss was observed in the context of this particular model.

The method presented a minor visual limitation, as it was not possible to view the furniture within the model through windows (Figure 53) unless the interior was zoomed inside the building or the CurtainWallPanels layer was made invisible (Figure 54). This issue was not encountered in previous methods (Figure 55).

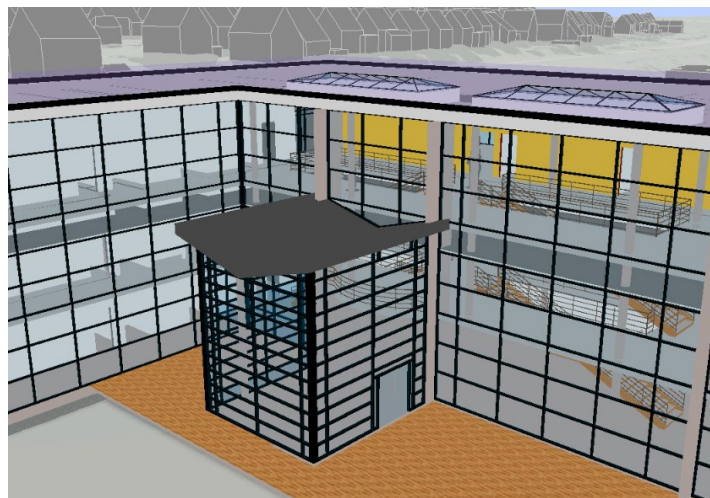


Figure 53: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro scene after converting it into a geodatabase (Source: Author).

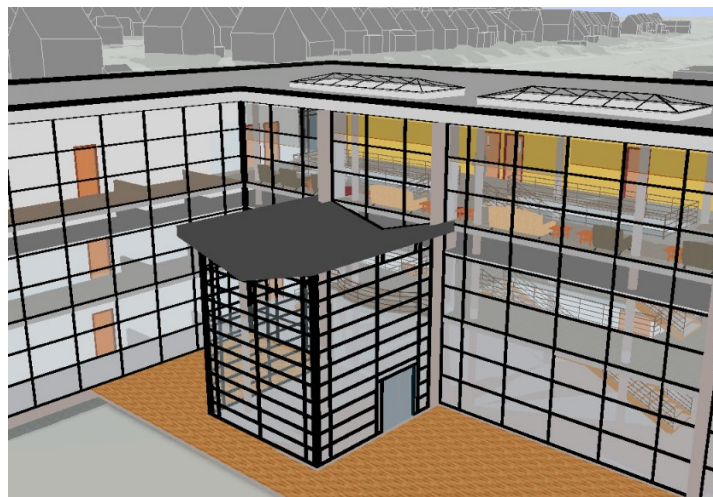


Figure 54: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro scene after converting it into a geodatabase , excluding the CurtainWallPanels layer (Source: Author).

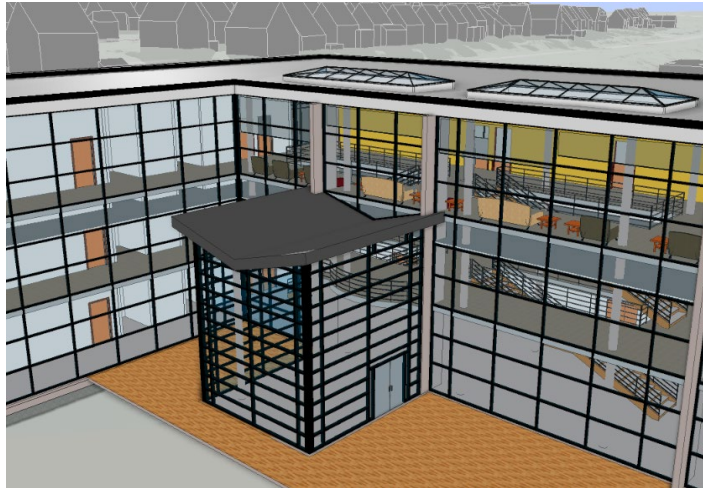


Figure 55: Visualization of a BIM model in ArcGIS Pro scene utilizing earlier methods of integration (Source: Author).

Additionally, in contrast to earlier approaches, this method did not group layers on the Contents pane into a structured hierarchy with disciplines. Instead, all layers were imported as separate, unstructured layers, but in accordance with the names of the layers, aligning with the feature classes of the "BIM file workspace" (Figure 56).

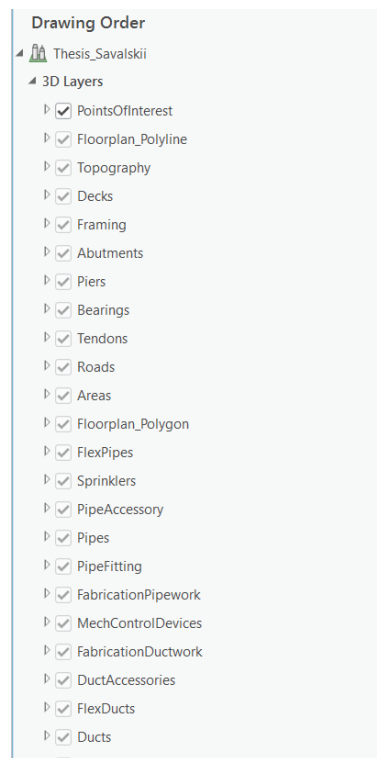


Figure 56: Layers added from a database in the Contents pane (Source: Author).

4.3.3.4 Generating Building Scene Layers for Optimized Visualization

A Building Scene Layer represents an alternative approach that enables the editing of BIM data within ArcGIS Pro. This method facilitates optimized visualization and analysis

of extensive and complex 3D building datasets. This method facilitates the conversion of BIM data into a scene layer package on disk, which is stored in the .slpk format (Esri, 2020b; Esri, 2024c; Esri, 2024k).

The input for this tool can be either a BIM file workspace or a geodatabase dataset comprising multipatch feature classes. Upon completion of the processing stage, the tool then proceeds to organize the BIM data into a composite layer, thereby representing the building or structures as a unified entity. In contrast to alternative methodologies, this technique simplifies the organization of layers within the Contents pane (Figure 57) by including only the disciplines and features present in the Revit file.

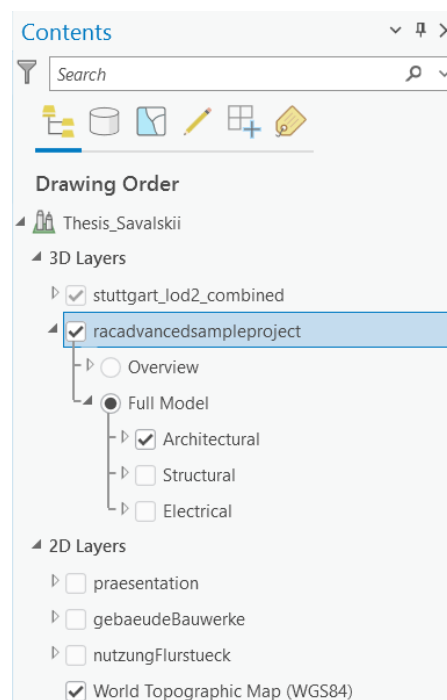


Figure 57: Building Scene Layer Package Layers in the Contents pane, generated from a BIM file (Source: Author).

The resulting Building Scene Layer Package (.slpk) allows for the efficient sharing of large datasets across platforms, thereby ensuring that detailed 3D models enable advanced visualization in both web-based and desktop applications.

One of the key benefits of the Building Scene Layer is that it optimizes performance for large datasets while maintaining the advanced visualization of previous methods. By reducing the computational load and enhancing interactivity, it offers smooth user experience when navigating complex three-dimensional models.

However, the creation of Building Scene Layers based on a BIM file does not permit the viewing of attribute tables for the layers, nor does it allow for the editing of building attributes or geometries. Additionally, the process of creating and exporting scene layers

can be resource-intensive, particularly when dealing with large datasets. But in this case, the conversion of the model required one minute and fifty-four seconds.

4.3.3.5 Comparison of BIM Integration Methods

Each method has distinct advantages and disadvantages (Table 7) based on factors like data management, flexibility, and performance. The choice of method depends on the project's specific needs, such as the level of detail required, the scale of the project, and the need for real-time updates or collaboration.

Table 7: Advantages and Disadvantages of BIM Integration Methods (Source: Author).

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Local Files	• Simple and quick integration. • Supports Revit and IFC files directly. • Ability to see attribute tables of layers.	• Limited editing options of attributes and geometries. • Requires manual updates and version control.
Autodesk Construction Cloud	• Real-time collaboration and updates. • Streamlined workflow for multiple stakeholders. • Cloud-based access. • Ability to see attribute tables of layers.	• Limited editing options of attributes and geometries.
BIM to Geodatabase	• Advanced analysis and editing of attributes and geometries within ArcGIS Pro • Ability to combine multiple BIM models	• Potential data loss during conversion • Conversion can be time-consuming when dealing with large datasets • Minor visual limitation
Building Scene Layer Package	• Optimized for large datasets and high-performance rendering • Simplifies layer organization including only the disciplines and features present in the Revit file	• Does not permit the viewing of attribute tables for the layers, nor does it allow for the editing of building attributes or geometries • Conversion can be time-consuming when dealing with large datasets

urban infrastructure. With the integration of BIM and GIS, we can generate flood risk models that account for both natural terrain features and human-made structures (Esri, 2024d; Esri, 2024g; Esri, 2024h). This section will describe the workflow for flood simulations using ArcGIS Pro, with simplified rainfall and water flow rates for demonstration purposes.

Configure Simulation (Flood Layer 1 (active))

Duration: 02:00:00

▼ Rainfall Rate

Start Time	Duration	Rate	Units/hr
00:00:00	01:00:00	50	mm
01:00:00	01:00:00	60	
02:00:00	(Split)		
(Append)			

Rainfall rate transition time (minutes): 0

▼ Participating Layers
Layers: Visible Layers

▼ Starting Water Level
Water Depth Raster: <None> m

▼ Infiltration Rasters
Infiltration Rate (units/hr): <None> mm
Maximum Infiltration: <None> mm

▼ Dimensions
Length: 2537,36 m
Width: 2537,36 m

Apply Cancel

Figure 59: Flood Configuration Options in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

To create a rainfall simulation, in the Analysis tab, expand the Simulation section and select Rainfall. Next, choose the Area of Interest and click the Create Simulation in Area button. You can set the rainfall rate, for example, the author sets 50 mm/hr for the first hour and 60 mm/hr for the next hour (Figure 59). Additionally, you can set the infiltration rate to model how much water will be absorbed by the ground. The results of the simulation are shown in Figures 60 and 61.

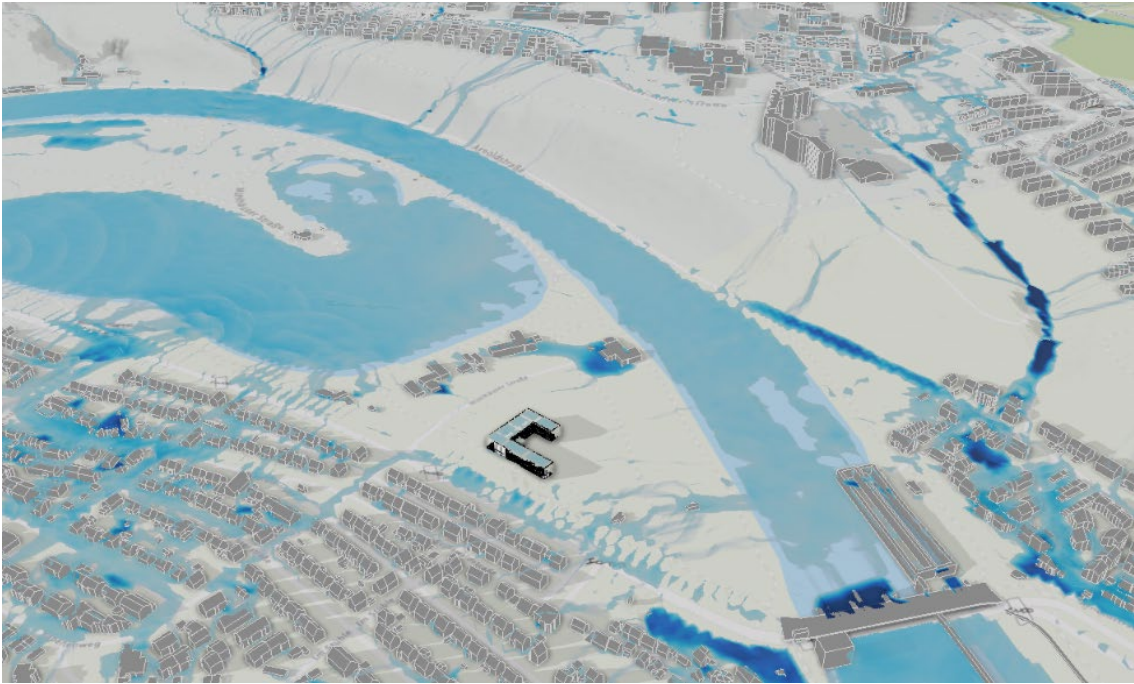


Figure 60: Visualization of Flood Extents after 1 Hour in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

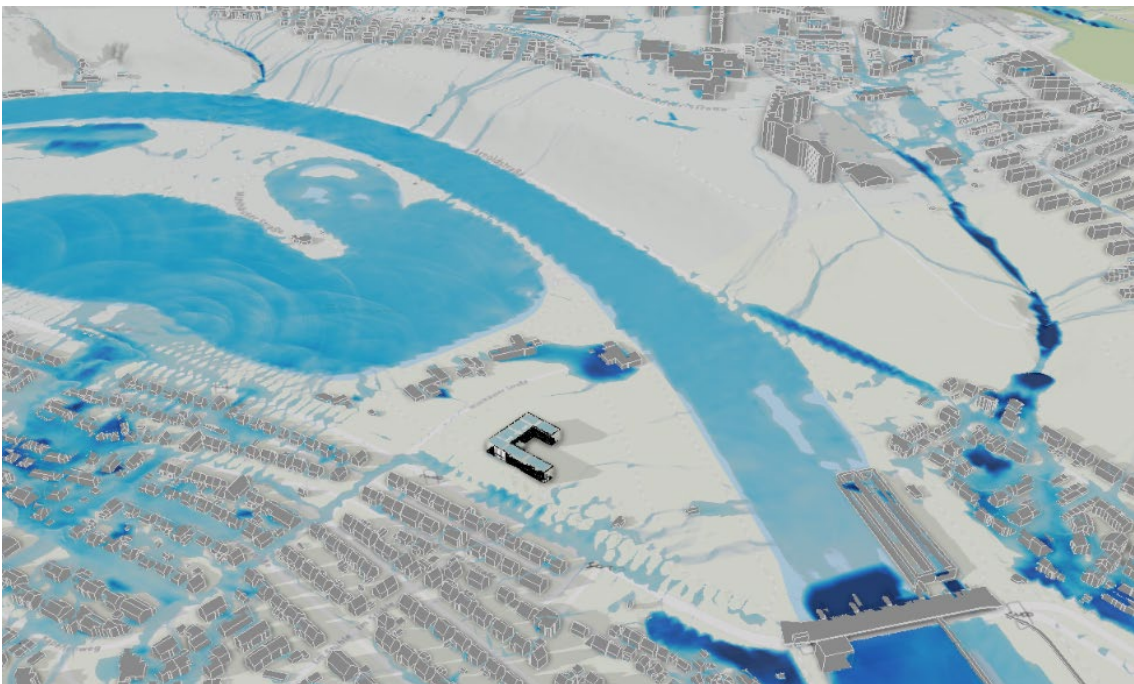


Figure 61: Visualization of Flood Extents after 2 Hours in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

However, this simulation is far from a real-world scenario, as it does not include natural water bodies such as rivers, lakes, or reservoirs. To improve accuracy, you can add water areas into your scene through the Simulation Configuration (Figures 62, 63). For example, the author selects a river area and assigns a flow rate of 145 cubic meters per second. Additionally, Channels and Barriers can be incorporated into the simulation to

refine the flood model and account for how water flows through or is blocked by various features.

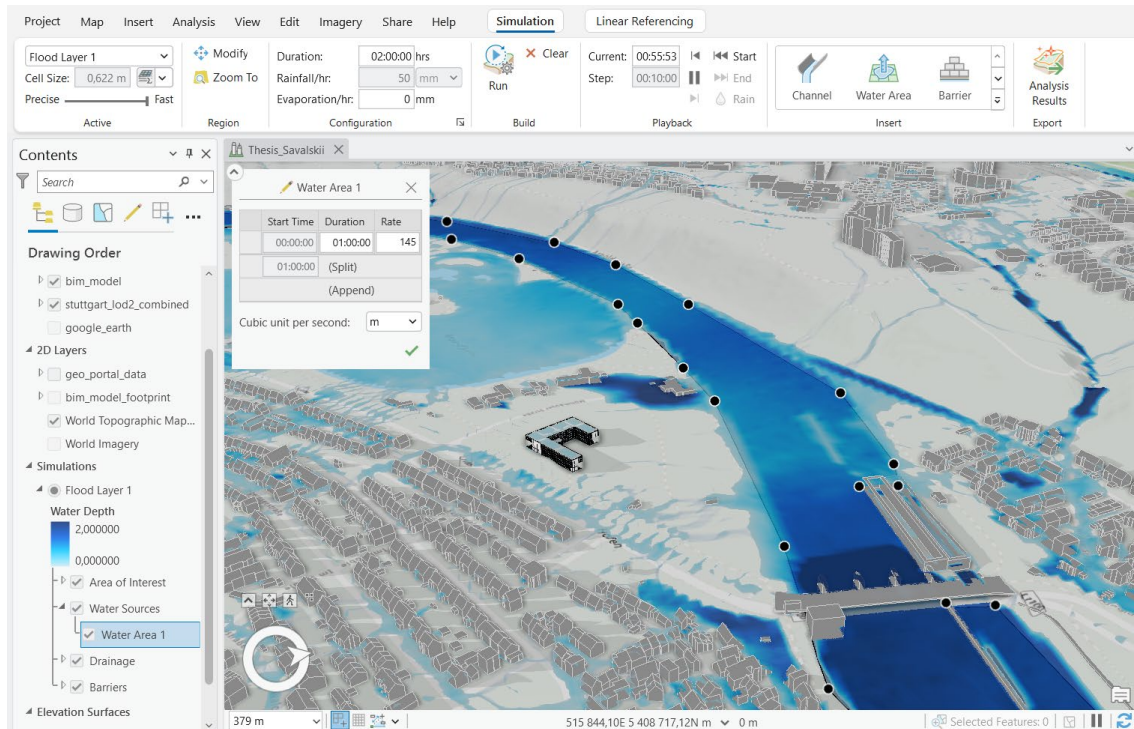


Figure 62: Visualization of Flood Extents after 1 Hour with Defined Water Source in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

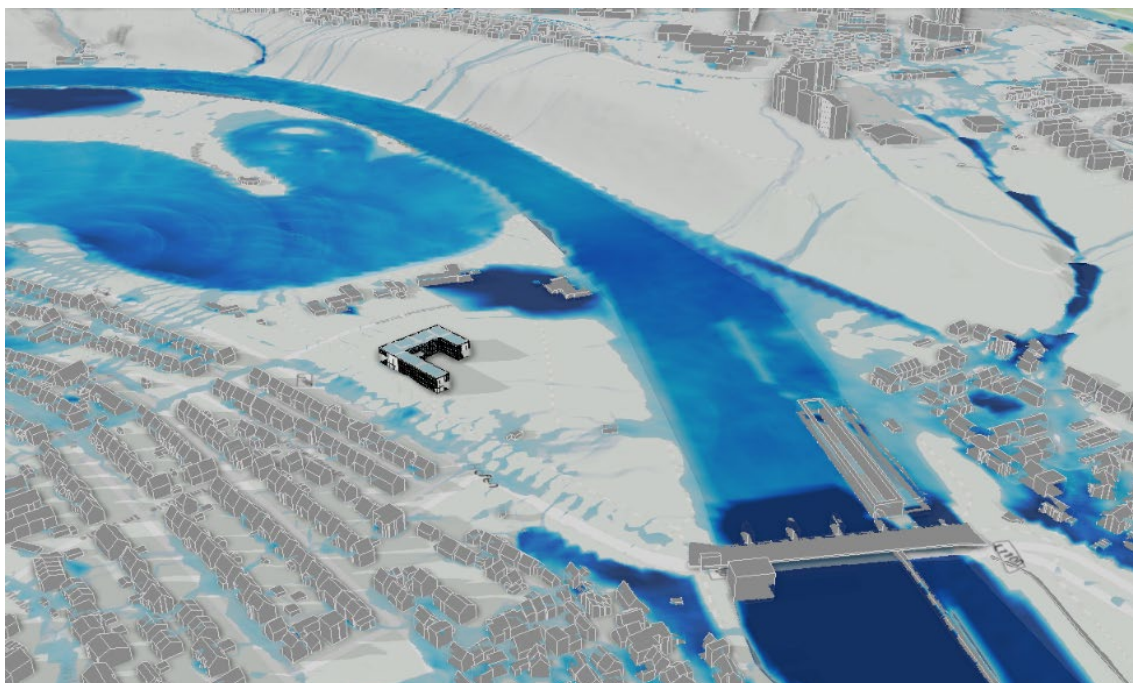


Figure 63: Visualization of Flood Extents after 2 Hours with Defined Water Source in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author).

Another approach to flood simulation is by adding a water source point (Figure 64), which can represent scenarios such as a broken dam. To create a water source simulation,

expand the Simulation section in the Analysis tab and select Water Source. Define a specific flow rate for these source points to stimulate the release of water into the surrounding environment. This allows modeling of dynamic and complex flood scenarios, such as those resulting from sudden infrastructure failures. For example, the author sets the flow rate for the water source point at 150 cubic meters per second.

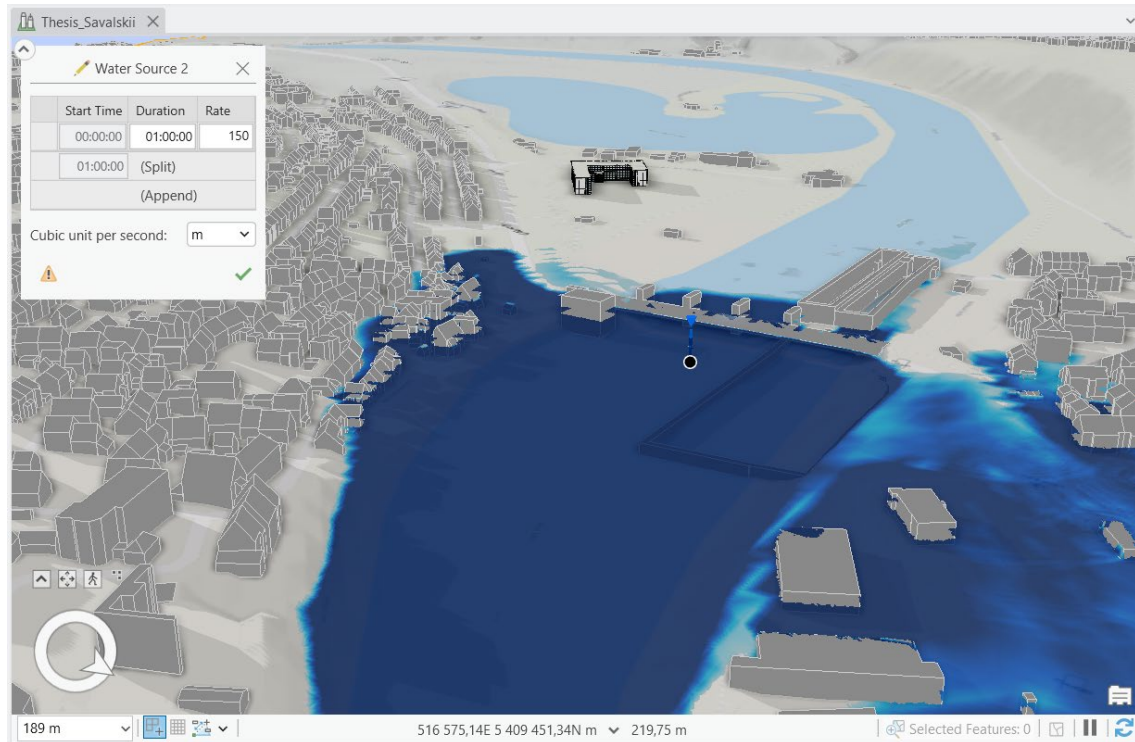


Figure 64: Visualization of Flood Extents with Water Source Point in ArcGIS Pro (Source: Author)

This simulation does not include real-world natural water bodies, but you can add them as needed, similar to the earlier method.

As demonstrated in this chapter, ArcGIS Pro offers a wide array of tools for conducting comprehensive analysis and simulations, including flood risk modeling based on rainfall events. The integration of BIM and GIS data provides significant advantages in simulating and visualizing the impact of various flood scenarios on urban infrastructure. The ability to incorporate both natural and artificial elements, such as water bodies, channels, barriers, and water source points, further enhances the accuracy and complexity of these simulations.

However, it is important to note that running these advanced simulations requires substantial computing power. During the creation of flood simulations, performance issues such as software lag were observed. Therefore, users must ensure access to

powerful hardware to optimize performance and avoid disruptions during the analysis process. Despite these challenges, the flexibility and robustness of ArcGIS Pro make it a valuable tool for flood risk assessment and urban planning.

4.5 Publishing Integrated BIM-GIS Models Online

The final step in the process is to publish the model online. However, before doing so, it is essential to finalize your scene in ArcGIS Pro. Start by naming the layers in the Contents pane so that all stakeholders can easily understand the data available in the scene. This step is crucial for ensuring clear communication and effective collaboration. Additionally, create bookmarks for the scene to save specific views and help navigate the model. Bookmarks are essential for guiding users through different sections of the scene, especially in large or complex models, allowing them to quickly access key areas of interest.

Once the scene is finalized, proceed to the Share tab and click “Share As Web Scene” (Alvarez and Seler, 2024). You will need to assign a name, description, and tags for the scene, and specify the location in ArcGIS Online. It is also important to set the appropriate sharing level, depending on who should have access to the published scene.

You can further refine the sharing settings by adjusting the Content tab in “Share As Web Scene” tool. Here, you can enable editing for specific features or opt to cache some content locally on your computer. This approach allows you to create some of the content offline and only publish the final result to ArcGIS Online, minimizing credit usage. This approach helps save credits, as it reduces the need for data creation on the cloud and minimizes associated costs (Esri, 2024o).

Before finalizing the publication of the scene, it is essential to use the Analyze function in the software to review the data for any warnings or errors. As demonstrated in the author’s results, warnings and errors may arise during this process (Figure 65).

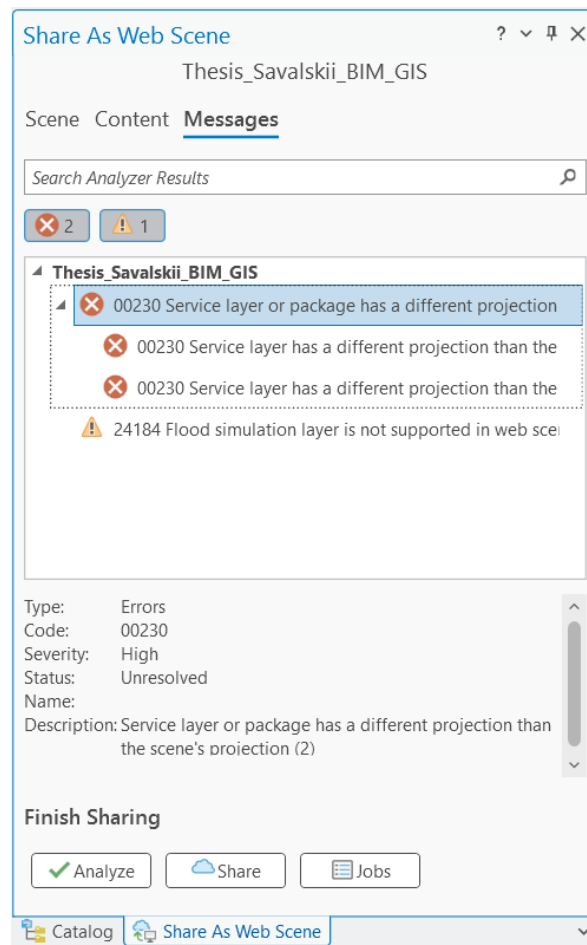


Figure 65: Warnings and Errors Identified in ArcGIS Pro Analysis (Source: Author)

One notable warning indicated that flood simulation was not supported in the current configuration. Additionally, notifications highlight that some layers in the scene are using different coordinate systems, which prevents successful publication. Specifically, the issue in this case involved the base map layer, initially set as the default map when the scene was created, and the Integrated Mesh Scene Layer added in Part 4.2.3. These layers were found to have differing projections, with the base map and the Integrated Mesh Scene Layer in WGS 1984 coordinate system. This emphasizes the critical role of coordinate system alignment, as inconsistencies can affect not only the precision of maps or models but also the functionality and compatibility of software tools.

To resolve this issue, the mismatched layers must be removed, and replacement maps with compatible coordinate systems should be identified. In this case, the author selected a new base map from the ArcGIS Online portal, accessible through the Catalog pane (Figure 66). The author identified that WMTS and Vector Tile layers are suitable base map types for publishing scenes online.

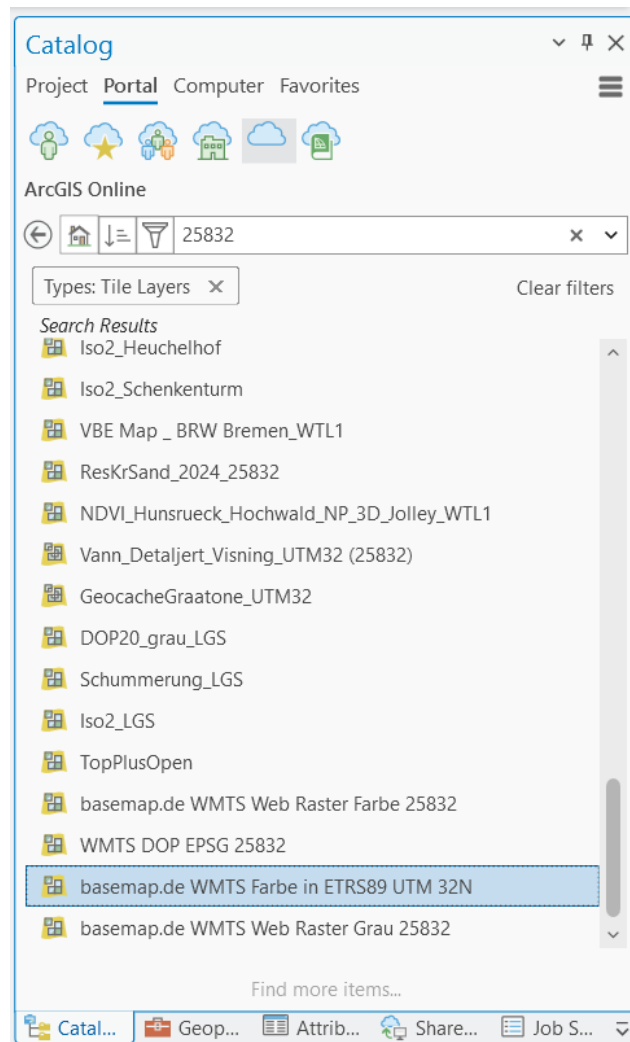


Figure 66: Access to ArcGIS Online Portal via Catalog Pane (Source: Author)

Once these adjustments are made, the scene can be successfully published. Upon publication, the scene becomes accessible via a shared link, allowing users to view it on various devices, including phones, tablets, PCs, and laptops. Furthermore, users can interact with and edit the data directly within the scene. It is also worth noting that the performance of the published online scene (Figures 67, 68) is significantly faster compared to the author's desktop setup, demonstrating the advantages of cloud-based geospatial visualization.



Figure 67: Published Scene in ArcGIS Online (Source: Author)



Figure 68: Published Scene in ArcGIS Online, Closer View (Source: Author)

4.7 Comparison of Different Approaches for BIM-GIS Integration

4.7.1 Evaluating Cesium for BIM Integration

ArcGIS is not the only platform supporting BIM-GIS integration. This section compares ArcGIS Pro with Cesium, highlighting their respective approaches to integrating BIM and GIS data. Cesium is a powerful platform for visualizing and managing 3D geospatial data, offering advantages in flexibility, compatibility, and performance.

Cesium supports integration of BIM data in IFC and Revit formats, enabling seamless inclusion of architectural and engineering models into geospatial projects (Braig, 2024). Cesium converts BIM data into 3D Tiles, Cesium-created open standard designed to efficiently stream and visualize large-scale 3D geospatial datasets (Cozzi, 2023). This format optimizes performance for rendering large-scale models in web-based and

interactive environments. The conversion process simplifies complex BIM data, retaining its geometry, metadata, and textures while optimizing it for rendering in a browser or interactive applications. This makes it ideal for applications requiring real-time visualization, such as city planning, disaster response, or immersive presentations.

To add a Revit model to Cesium, install the Cesium for Revit Add-in (Cesium, 2024). This tool directly exports Revit models to Cesium ion, where they are automatically converted into 3D Tiles. In Revit, select the Cesium Add-in tab, configure export settings (Figure 69), and upload the model to Cesium ion.

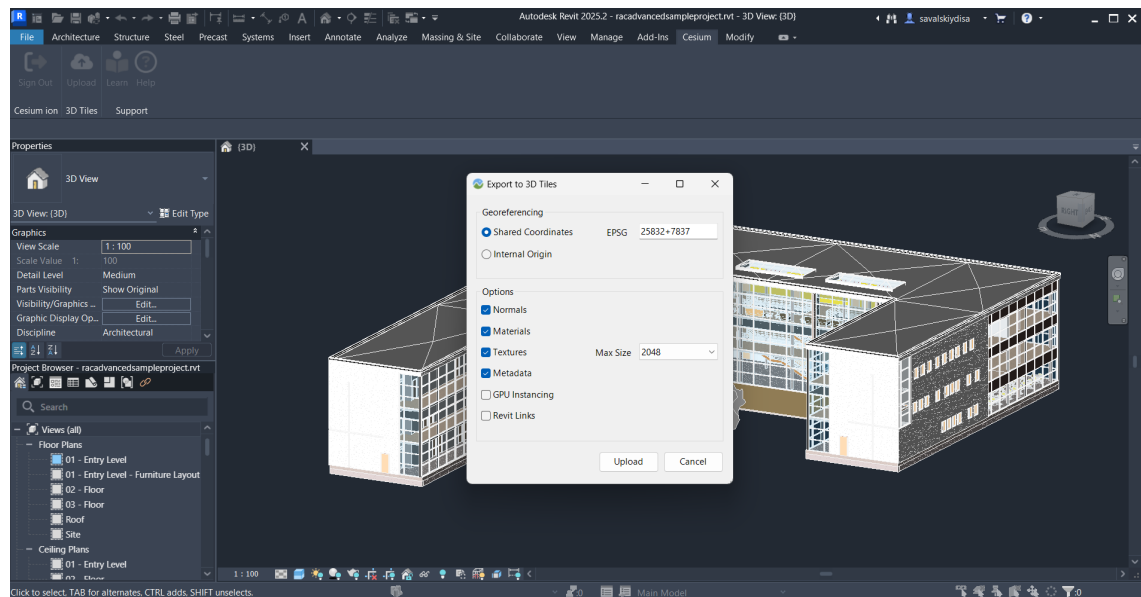


Figure 69: Setup of Revit Model for Export to Cesium ion (Source: Author).

Once uploaded, the model can be accessed and visualized in the Cesium ion (Figure 70-72).

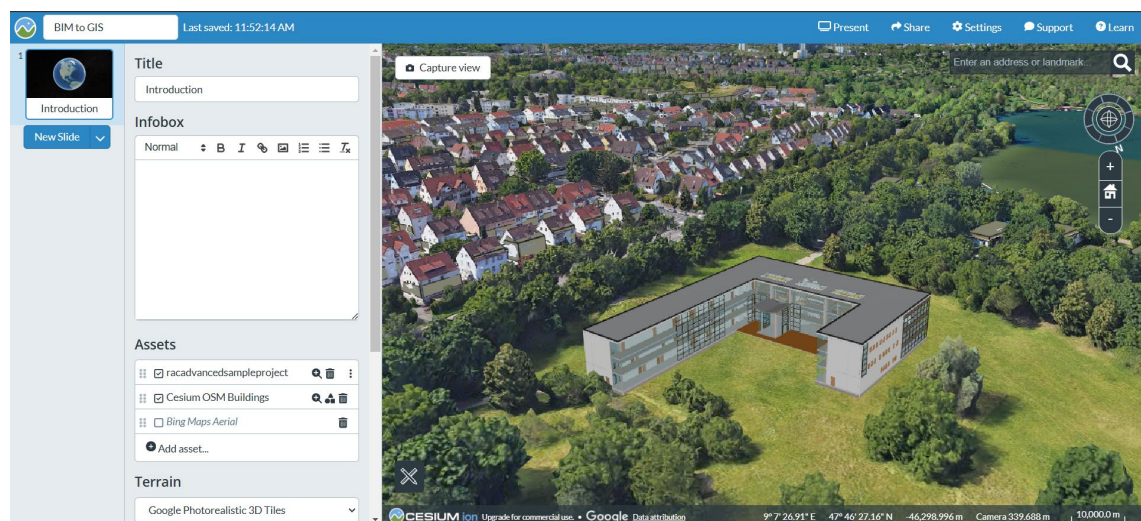


Figure 70: Revit Model Imported into Cesium ion (Source: Author).



Figure 71: Revit Model Imported into Cesium ion, Closer View (Source: Author)



Figure 72: Revit Model Imported into Cesium ion, Interior View of the Building (Source: Author)

Cesium also supports IFC integration (Cesium, 2024d). IFC models can be uploaded to Cesium ion, where they are converted into 3D Tiles for visualization. Go to the Cesium ion portal, upload the IFC file, and select the desired tiling and geolocation options. After processing, the model is ready for use in Cesium applications.

Cesium's open-source nature contributes to the development of the platform in collaboration with its community and provides users with significant flexibility to customize workflows and develop tailored solutions. Developers can write their own code to enhance Cesium's capabilities, such as adding custom shaders (Cesium, 2024c), creating specialized data pipelines, or integrating Cesium with other tools and platforms. However, it is important to note that while Cesium offers free access for community use, commercial applications and higher usage capacities, such as increased storage and data streaming, require a paid subscription.

Additionally, Cesium's integration with Unreal Engine enables advanced visualization capabilities (Cesium, 2024a), same as ArcGIS. By linking Cesium 3D Tiles with Unreal Engine (Figure 73), users can create immersive experiences, such as VR environments and realistic 3D simulations. This feature allows stakeholders to explore models interactively and make informed decisions based on highly detailed visualizations. It is important to note that ArcGIS also has these capabilities (Branscomb and Hansen, 2024).



Figure 73: Potential Use of Unreal Engine for Game Development Based on Geodata from Cesium (Source: Cesium, 2024a)

While Cesium emphasizes visualization and web accessibility, ArcGIS Pro offers a more comprehensive toolset for geospatial analysis and data management. ArcGIS Pro integrates BIM models within a GIS environment, enabling advanced workflows. Unlike

Cesium, ArcGIS Pro allows for direct interaction with attribute tables and editing of BIM data.

Cesium and ArcGIS serve distinct purposes in geospatial data management and visualization. Cesium focuses on web accessibility and lightweight visualization, offering flexibility for custom tool development but with fewer built-in functionalities. In contrast, ArcGIS Pro provides a suite of tools for geospatial analysis and data management, including direct interaction with attribute tables and extensive in-software capabilities. While Cesium is ideal for streamlined, web-based presentations, ArcGIS Online can achieve similar visualization while extending ArcGIS Pro's features to the web. Both platforms support IFC, Revit, and integration with tools like Unreal Engine, catering to diverse 3D geospatial needs.

4.7.2 Alternative Approaches for BIM and GIS Integration

Apart from ArcGIS Pro and Cesium, other methods and tools for integrating BIM and GIS data include converting BIM files to Shapefiles or GML formats using translators such as FME (Borkowski and Duc, 2024; Tan, Liang and Zhu, 2023). This method simplifies integration into GIS platforms like QGIS and ensures compatibility with a wide range of GIS tools. However, it comes with limitations, such as the loss of detailed 3D and metadata information and limited support for real-time visualization and advanced spatial analysis.

GeoBIM from ArcGIS is another integrated solution that bridges the gap between GIS and BIM, allowing seamless data exchange and supporting workflows that combine geospatial analysis with BIM models for enhanced decision-making (Autodesk, 2024a).

Autodesk Civil 3D integrates with Google Earth, enabling users to export Civil 3D models to Google Earth for visualization and enhance spatial understanding through geolocation and topographic overlays (Autodesk, 2024c; Autodesk, 2024e). Additionally, Autodesk Civil 3D integrates directly with ArcGIS, providing a streamlined workflow for sharing and visualizing infrastructure models and utilizing geospatial analysis within engineering projects (Autodesk, 2024d; Autodesk, 2024f)

The diversity of tools and methods for integrating BIM and GIS data reflects the varied needs of professionals in urban planning, infrastructure development, and architecture. Choosing the right approach depends on project-specific requirements, including the balance between visualization, analysis, and interoperability.

5 Best Practices and Guidelines for BIM-GIS Integration

Building on insights derived from the literature review and prototype development, this chapter outlines actionable recommendations to facilitate the effective integration of BIM and GIS for urban infrastructure projects. This chapter is divided into three parts (Figure 74): Theoretical Framework, Management Practices, and Implementation Strategies, each addressing key aspects of effective BIM-GIS integration.

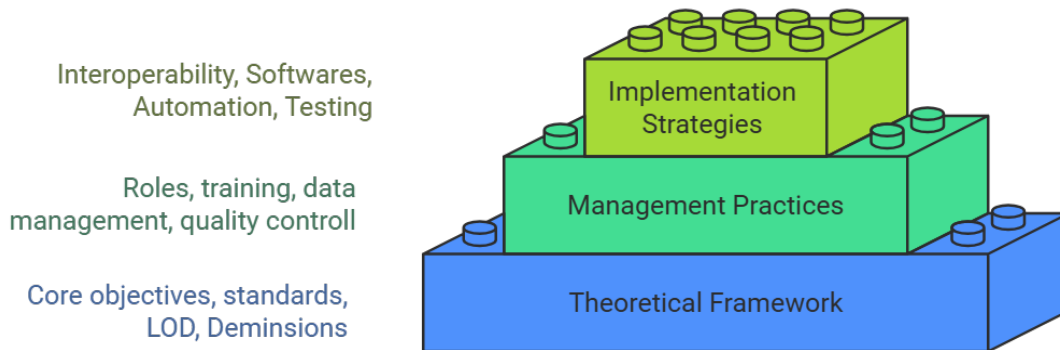


Figure 74: Framework for Effective BIM-GIS Integration (Source: Author)

Together, these sections present a comprehensive approach to addressing both strategic and operational aspects of BIM-GIS integration, fostering collaboration and innovation in urban infrastructure management.

5.1 Establishing a Theoretical Framework

A robust theoretical foundation is essential for successful BIM-GIS integration. While the optimal approach may vary depending on project-specific requirements, the following general principles can guide the process:

- Clearly articulate the objectives and expected outcomes of BIM-GIS integration for each phase of the project lifecycle.
- Engage stakeholders early in the process to identify their requirements and align expectations.
- Adhere to established standards such as ISO 19650, CityGML, and those defined by the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) to ensure interoperability and data consistency.
- Define the Level of Detail (LOD) for BIM and GIS datasets to meet the required granularity and accuracy at each project stage.

- Identify and integrate relevant BIM dimensions (e.g., 3D geometry, 4D time, and 5D cost) based on the project scope and objectives.

5.2 Developing Effective Management Practices

Effective management practices are critical for translating theoretical objectives into actionable workflows. A collaborative environment that fosters knowledge sharing and cooperation is vital. Key practices include:

- Define clear roles and responsibilities for all team members involved in BIM-GIS integration.
- Provide targeted training on integration tools and workflows to build team competency.
- Foster collaboration between BIM experts, GIS specialists, and urban planners to promote interdisciplinary knowledge sharing.

Robust data management practices underpin successful BIM-GIS integration. Essential strategies include:

- Use established classification systems, such as UniClass 2015, OmniClass, or DIN 276, to organize project information systematically.
- Develop a comprehensive data management strategy to maintain the accuracy, consistency, and accessibility of datasets.
- Implement quality assurance protocols to validate the completeness and accuracy of BIM and GIS datasets.
- Use standardized metadata to enhance dataset discoverability and usability.

To monitor progress and maintain integration consistency, control measures should be implemented:

- Maintain version histories for datasets to ensure traceability and prevent conflicts.
- Conduct regular reviews with stakeholders to ensure alignment with project goals and optimize workflows based on feedback.

5.3 Strategies for Practical Implementation

Transitioning from theory and management to practice, this section addresses actionable strategies for the real-world implementation of BIM-GIS integration. It emphasizes overcoming interoperability challenges, prototyping, and scalability:

- Select software solutions and data formats that prioritize interoperability, ensuring seamless data exchange between BIM and GIS platforms. In the event

that open-source software is utilized, it is essential to ensure that it can offer equivalent functionalities to those of licensed software (Table 8).

- Utilize tools such as FME, GDAL, or proprietary plugins to streamline data conversion, georeferencing, and format validation.
- Automate repetitive tasks, including data transformation and validation, to reduce manual errors and enhance efficiency.
- Align spatial reference systems, such as UTM or WGS84, across BIM and GIS datasets to ensure spatial consistency.

Table 8: Comparative Analysis of Software Functionalities and Performance (Source: Author)

Software	Open Source / Licensed	Supported Formats	Key Functionalities	Performance
ArcGIS Pro	Licensed	BIM data (IFC, RVT). Shapefiles, GeoPackage, GeoTIFF, Databases (Geodatabases, PostgreSQL, Oracle, SQL Server), and more (Esri, 2025).	Advanced spatial analysis, 3D modeling, flood simulation, custom function development.	Highly effective for complex tasks; extensive format support enhances versatility.
ArcGIS Online	Licensed		Cloud-based data sharing, team collaboration.	Excellent for collaborative workflows; seamless integration with other Esri products.
QGIS	Open Source	CityGML, Shapefiles, GeoPackage, GeoTIFF, PostGIS, SpatialLite, Databases (PostgreSQL, SpatialLite), and more (QGIS, 2025).	Open-source GIS analysis, flexible data visualization.	Excellent for 2D data; limited support for 3D and BIM data; potential data loss during BIM format conversions.
Cesium ion	Open Source with Optional Commercial Subscription	BIM data (IFC, RVT via conversion to 3D Tiles). 3D Tiles, KML, CityGML, GeoTIFF, and more (Cesium, 2025).	Web-based 3D visualization, tiling of large 3D datasets, geospatial context integration.	Effective for streaming and visualizing large-scale 3D geospatial data; supports a wide range of formats optimized for web-based applications.

A practical and incremental approach ensures the successful integration of BIM and GIS:

- Begin with small-scale pilot projects to test workflows, identify challenges, and refine integration processes incrementally.
- Capture insights from pilot implementations to guide future projects and improve scalability.
- Continuously refine prototypes based on stakeholder feedback and performance evaluations.

By structuring these recommendations into theoretical, management, and implementation categories, this framework addresses both strategic and practical aspects of BIM-GIS integration. Such an approach not only aligns with project goals but also fosters collaboration, innovation, and technological advancement in urban infrastructure management.

6 Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses their implications in the context of integrating BIM and GIS for urban infrastructure management. The results of the prototype model development, functionality testing, and analysis are interpreted in light of the research objectives and questions.

6.1 Insights from the Literature Review

The literature review provided a foundational understanding of BIM and GIS technologies, their applications, and the opportunities for integration. Technological and data requirements necessary for effective integration were also identified, including software interoperability, data storage formats, and processing capabilities.

BIM is a holistic approach to the creation, management, and dissemination of information throughout the entire lifecycle of a building, emphasizing micro-level representation of building structures (Race, 2019). Key concepts include parametric modeling, lifecycle data management, and the use of dimensions such as 4D for scheduling and 5D for cost estimation, which enhance project efficiency and sustainability (Zhang and Zhao, 2021). GIS, in contrast, offers macro-level spatial data analysis, visualization capabilities, and the integration of diverse datasets. These capabilities are crucial for urban planning and environmental management (Reddy, 2018; Akindele et al., 2023).

Standards such as ISO 19650 for BIM (McPherson, 2024) and OGC standards for GIS (OGC, 2024) provide robust frameworks for information management and interoperability. LOD concepts for BIM and GIS, were identified as critical components for technology understanding (Alshorafa and Ergen, 2019; Ergun, Sahin and Bilucan, 2023). Coordinate systems and projection methods, such as UTM and EPSG standards, were emphasized as essential for aligning spatial data accurately (Kumar, Singh and Kaur, 2019). Classifications like Uniclass 2015 and CityGML standard further streamline data organization.

The integration of BIM and GIS enables enhanced decision-making through detailed spatial and structural data analysis, improved visualization, and effective collaboration among stakeholders (Han et al., 2020; Cao et al., 2023). Additionally, this integration supports sustainable urban development by enabling energy analysis, resource optimization, and disaster management (Bushra and Maya, 2024; Schiller et al., 2024). Practical applications include infrastructure planning, smart city development, and digital twin creation. These implementations allow for real-time monitoring, simulation, and

predictive analysis, making them invaluable tools for urban infrastructure management (Zhang and Li, 2021; Marzouk and Othman, 2020).

The existing literature identifies several challenges associated with the implementation of BIM and GIS separately, as well as with their integration. These challenges include incompatible formats, non-standardized coordinate systems, and significant data exchange issues, particularly in IFC-to-CityGML conversions. These conversions often result in information loss due to fundamental differences in how BIM and GIS handle data (Han et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020).

6.2 Performance Analysis of the Prototype Model

The developed prototype successfully demonstrated the integration of BIM and GIS technologies. The integration of datasets, including BIM data, 3D building models, and digital elevation models, was achieved with minimal data loss. The prototype enabled enhanced visualization of urban infrastructure components and advanced analysis capabilities. The ability to overlay BIM data onto GIS datasets highlighted the potential for detailed planning and decision-making.

The interoperability between Revit and ArcGIS Pro has been effectively demonstrated for the processing and visualization of BIM and GIS datasets (Esri, 2024j). The integration of BIM data into ArcGIS was explored through the "BIM file workspace," providing an understanding of its functionality. Various approaches for importing BIM data were utilized, showcasing the strengths and limitations of each method and highlighting their suitability for different project requirements.

Flood simulation was employed within the model to illustrate the potential of BIM-GIS integration in identifying risk areas and enhancing disaster preparedness. However, the simulation was based on abstract parameters, limiting its representation of real-world scenarios. Additionally, constraints in the current workflow prevented the online publication of the flood simulation results. Despite this, all other components of the model were successfully published.

While the study met its objectives, certain limitations were noted. The prototype was developed using a sample BIM dataset, which may not fully represent the complexity of real-world scenarios. The alignment of BIM and GIS datasets necessitated precise georeferencing, and the utilization of a consistent coordinate system across all datasets was essential. ArcGIS Pro's inability to support the CityGML format, which is essential for translating certain datasets, further compounded these challenges. The optimization

of data formats and the utilization of high-performance computing tools were instrumental in mitigating these challenges.

Furthermore, an alternative approach employing Cesium ion was identified. This platform integrates three-dimensional geospatial data and BIM models, offering exceptional visualization capabilities for web-based applications. The Cesium ion platform is a valuable tool for sharing and analyzing urban models interactively, opening new avenues for future research.

While integrating BIM into GIS using ArcGIS Pro is relatively straightforward, working with diverse geodata formats presents challenges, though it is feasible. This thesis offers practical guidelines to address such issues, providing solutions to streamline data conversion, enhance interoperability, and mitigate discrepancies in BIM-GIS workflows. By adopting these recommendations, future projects can achieve more efficient and seamless integration, leading to improved outcomes in urban infrastructure management and smart city development.

6.3 Directions for Future Research

The integration of BIM and GIS holds considerable potential to contribute to smart city development by enhancing urban infrastructure management, enabling data-driven decision-making, and supporting sustainable urban planning practices. To realize this potential, future research should focus on several key areas.

Incorporating real-time sensor data into BIM-GIS workflows could transform urban management by providing dynamic, up-to-date information streams. Sensor-enabled Internet of Things (IoT) devices allow real-time monitoring of infrastructure, enabling predictive analytics and efficient resource allocation (Cepa et al., 2024). For instance, real-time data on energy consumption, traffic flow, or environmental conditions can enhance decision-making when integrated into BIM-GIS models. Standards such as the SensorThings API from the Open Geospatial Consortium offer robust frameworks for implementing these capabilities (Paschke, 2020).

Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) present new opportunities for innovation in BIM-GIS workflows. AI techniques can enhance modeling, data processing, predictive analytics, and decision-support systems (Dolhopolov et al., 2023; Espinel et al., 2024). Machine learning and AI-driven algorithms could significantly improve the accuracy and efficiency of BIM-GIS integration, automating complex tasks such as data classification, error detection, and urban simulation modeling.

The use of laser scanning technologies offers substantial opportunities for BIM-GIS workflows by providing precise, high-resolution data. These systems capture real-world structures with sub-millimeter accuracy, enabling detailed modeling of urban environments (Pepe et al., 2021). Future research could investigate better integration of laser scanning data into BIM-GIS workflows to support applications such as infrastructure monitoring, disaster management, and urban redevelopment.

Exploring other open-source and licensed software tools and methodologies could further enhance BIM-GIS integration. Licensed platforms, such as Bentley Systems, provide advanced tools and functionalities, while open-source solutions offer cost-effective and customizable alternatives, fostering innovation through community collaboration. The Industry Foundation Classes (IFC) format, an open and widely recognized standard for data exchange in BIM workflows (buildingSMART, 2024). The integration of the IFC format with GIS platforms faces challenges due to semantic mismatches and geometry inconsistencies. Future research should also focus on data standards, such as the OGC LandInfra/InfraGML format, which supports the representation and exchange of land and civil engineering infrastructure information (OGC, 2025). Comparative studies could help identify optimal tools and strategies for specific project requirements and budgets.

The application of game engines, such as Unreal Engine, to BIM-GIS workflows represents a promising avenue for innovation. These platforms enable the use of virtual reality (VR) and gamification to create immersive environments for urban planning and infrastructure design (Cesium, 2024a; Branscomb and Hansen, 2024). Future research could explore how these tools can improve stakeholder engagement and decision-making in smart city projects.

Additionally, the development of geodatabases tailored specifically to BIM-GIS workflows warrants further investigation. Such databases could streamline data integration, enhance interoperability, and support more efficient management of complex urban projects.

By addressing these areas, future research can drive significant advancements in BIM-GIS integration, unlocking new possibilities for urban infrastructure management and fostering the development of smarter, more sustainable cities.

7 Conclusion

This thesis establishes a comprehensive understanding of BIM and GIS, examining their individual contributions to urban infrastructure and their combined potential in improving efficiency, sustainability, and decision-making. To address the research question, "What are BIM and GIS, and how do they contribute to urban infrastructure development and management?", the thesis explores the distinct roles of these technologies: BIM excels at managing detailed building information throughout a structure's lifecycle, while GIS specializes in analyzing spatial and environmental data at broader scales. Their integration creates synergies that enhance urban planning and infrastructure management, enabling more efficient, sustainable, and informed decision-making processes.

The second research question, "What are the key challenges and opportunities in integrating BIM and GIS for urban infrastructure management?", was explored through a detailed literature review. This identified significant challenges, including interoperability issues, semantic inconsistencies, and handling large datasets. Despite these barriers, the study highlighted substantial opportunities for improving collaboration, enhancing visualization, and fostering data-driven decision-making, making BIM-GIS integration a cornerstone of smart city development.

To answer the third research question, "What are the data and technical requirements for successful BIM-GIS integration in urban infrastructure management?", the thesis identified critical elements such as the adoption of standards (e.g., ISO 19650, CityGML), the use of high-performance computing tools (e.g., ArcGIS Pro, Revit), and the importance of consistent spatial referencing systems. These requirements form the technical backbone for effective integration.

A core contribution of this thesis was the development of a prototype model that demonstrated the practical feasibility of BIM-GIS integration. By employing real-world datasets and state-of-the-art tools like ArcGIS Pro, Revit, and GDAL, the prototype successfully integrated BIM and GIS data to create a comprehensive 3D model of a Stuttgart neighborhood. This integration was systematically evaluated, addressing challenges such as georeferencing, data conversion, and visualization accuracy, and offering practical insights into the strengths and limitations of different methods.

The methodology employed in this research combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative component involved an extensive literature review that explored theoretical frameworks, standards, and integration challenges. The

quantitative aspect focused on testing and analyzing the prototype model, assessing performance metrics like visualization efficiency and computational demands. This mixed-methods approach not only validated the technical feasibility of integration but also established a strong foundation for future advancements in this field.

All findings, best practices, and recommendations derived from this research are systematically presented in Chapters 5 and 6. These results offer practical guidance for current BIM-GIS workflows while emphasizing critical areas for future research, including real-time data integration, advanced AI applications, and the use of sensor technology to support dynamic monitoring and decision-making.

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that the integration of BIM and GIS is not only feasible but also transformative for urban infrastructure management. By addressing key challenges and exploring innovative solutions, this research contributes to the realization of smarter, more resilient cities, aligning technological innovation with the pressing demands of urbanization.

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