

# Arbitrary Section Property Calculation and Use

For LUSAS version:	19.0
For software product(s):	All (except LT versions)
With product option(s):	None.

## Description

The section properties of an arbitrary shaped box section are to be computed and saved in a user library. Section geometry is supplied as a DXF file.

Units of N, mm, t, s, C are used.

### Objectives

The required output from the analysis consists of:

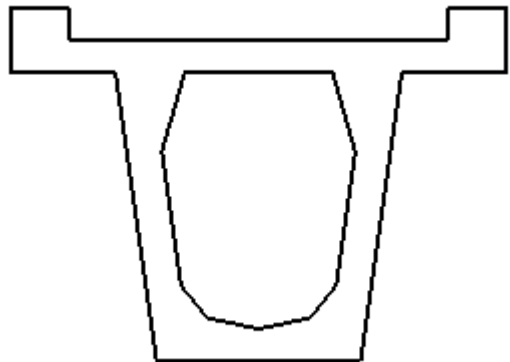
- Section Properties of a box section

### Keywords

2D, Inplane, Section Properties, Arbitrary Section, Box Section, Holes, Local Library, Server Library, Fibre locations.

### Associated Files

- box\_section.dxf** DXF file containing geometry of section.



# Modelling

## Running LUSAS Modeller

For details of how to run LUSAS Modeller, see the heading *Running LUSAS Modeller* in the *Introduction to LUSAS Worked Examples* document.



**Note.** This example is written assuming a new LUSAS Modeller session has been started. If continuing from an existing Modeller session select the menu command **File>New** to start a new model file. Modeller will prompt for any unsaved data and display the New Model dialog.

## Creating a new model

- Enter a File name of **box\_section**
- Use the default User-defined working folder.
- Ensure an Analysis type of **Structural** is set.
- Select an Analysis Category of **2D Inplane**
- Set Model units of **N,mm,t,s,C**
- Leave the Timescale units as **Seconds**
- Select a Startup template of **None**.
- Ensure the Layout grid is set as **None**
- Enter a Title of **Box Section**
- Click the **OK** button.

## Discussion

The arbitrary section property calculator within LUSAS Modeller computes the section properties of any open or closed section. Cross-sections are created either as a single regular or irregular surface, or as a group of surfaces (including holes). Fibre definitions (positions on the cross-section at which stresses or values can be plotted when viewing results) are also created for each drawn section at the time of section property calculation.



**Caution.** 2D cross-sections for section property calculation must be defined in the XY plane.

## Feature Geometry

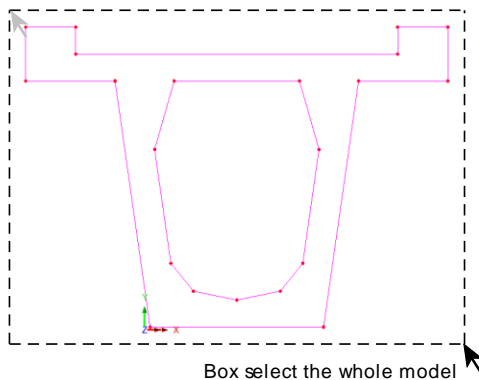
File  
Import...

- Set the **Files of type** drop-down menu to **DXF Files (\*.dxf)**
- Locate the **box\_section.dxf** file in the **\<Lusas Installation Folder>\Examples\Modeller** directory and click the **Import** button to read in the DXF file and create the cross section geometry as shown below.

## Defining holes within a section

This is done by first defining a surface that represents the total extent of the box-section, then defining a surface that represents the void or hole, and then selecting both the surrounding and inner surface to create the hole in the bounding surface.

- Drag a box around the whole model



Box select the whole model

Geometry  
Surface >  
By Lines...

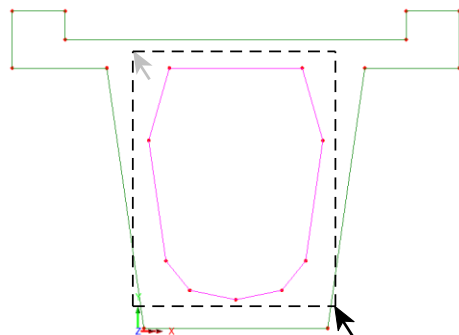


Click the **OK** button to create a **General Surface** (for the outer surface) from the selected Lines.

- Now, drag a box around the only the lines defining the void.



Click the **OK** button to create a **General Surface** (for the inner surface) from the selected Lines.

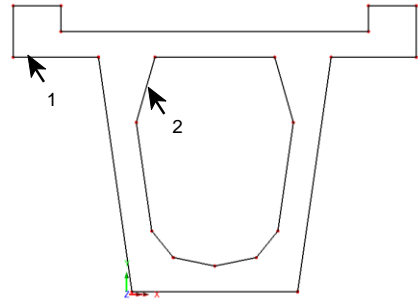


Box select the lines defining the void

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- Select the outer Surface of the box-section, then hold the **Shift** key down, and select the inner Surface representing the void.



Select the two surfaces

- On the Create Holes dialog, ensure the option **Delete geometry defining holes** is selected, and click **OK**.

A new singular Surface will be created, containing a void. This can be seen by clicking inside the outer perimeter of the box section and seeing that all lines are selected.



Save the cross-section model for any future modifications or for use with the definition of any additional fibre locations.

The section properties can now be calculated as follows:

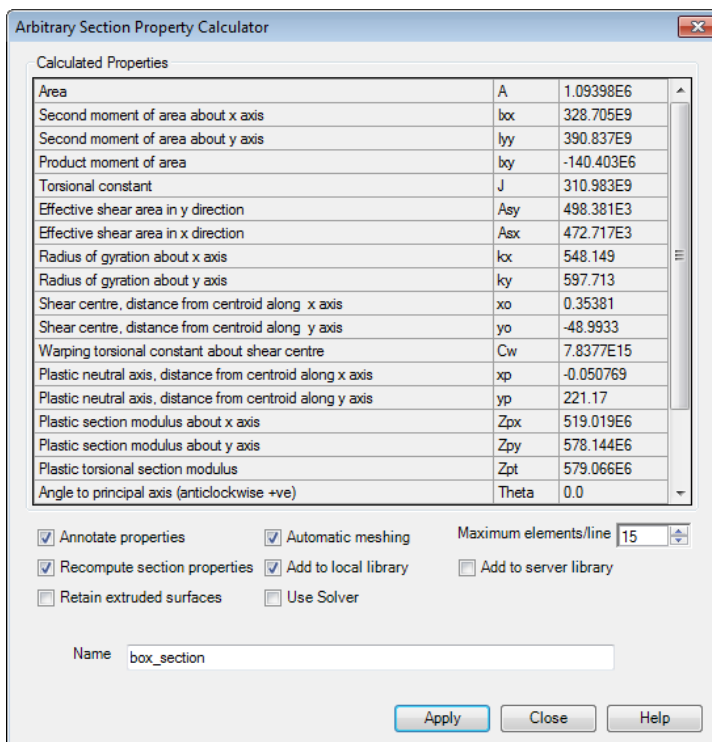
### Calculating Section Properties

- Select the **Add to local library** option.
- Click the **Apply** button, and after a short wait the calculated section properties will be displayed in the grid at the top of the dialog.

Geometry  
Surface >  
Holes >  
Create

File  
Save...

Tools  
Section Property  
Calculator >  
Arbitrary  
Section...



- Click **Close** to close the dialog.



**Note.** There is no need to compute the section properties in the units they are to be used in the analysis model because conversion of units is carried out when the section properties are extracted from the section library if it is found to be required.

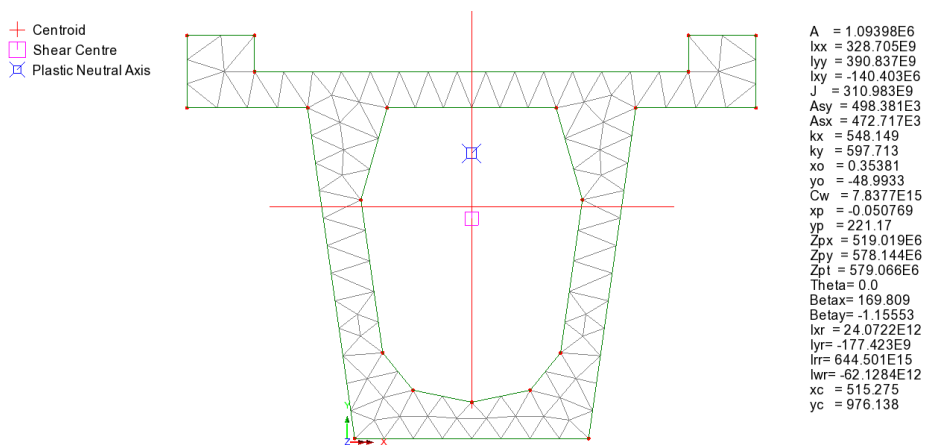



**Note.** Section properties may be added to local (user) or server (all users) section property libraries by selecting the appropriate option(s) prior to selecting the **Apply** button. Alternatively you can deselect the ‘Recompute section properties’ option after selecting the ‘Add local library’ or ‘Add server library’ options. By default the model name is entered as the Section Name. This can be modified if required.

## Notes on the automatic meshing used

The mesh used to compute the properties of each of the surfaces (and the holes) is displayed in the graphics window. Centroid, Shear Centre and Plastic Neutral Axis symbols and locations are also shown.

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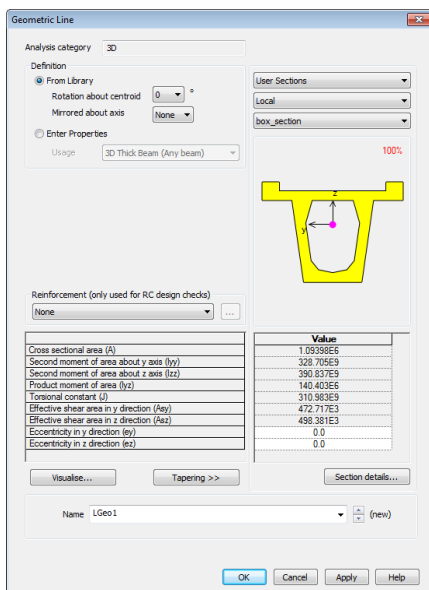
By default an element size is selected which will assign 15 elements to the longest side and a minimum of 2 elements is applied to the shorter sides. This mesh may be adjusted by deselecting the automatic mesh check box and changing the mesh size in the  Treeview. Alternatively, the maximum element on the longest side may be adjusted by changing the 'Max elements/line' option as required prior to selecting the Apply button. As with all finite element models the more elements used the more accurate the results but the slower the calculation. A good compromise of 2 elements across all thin sections has been found to provide reasonable results without using excessive computation time.

## Viewing and using sections in the user library

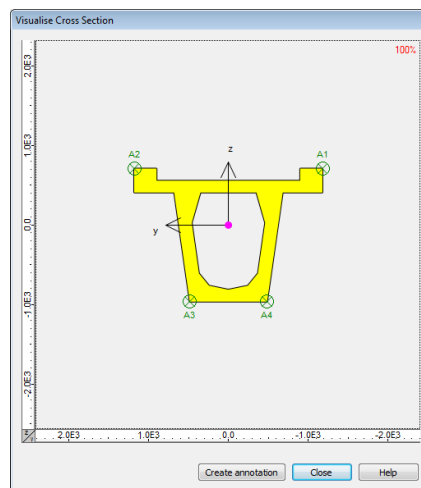


Create a new model called **Test**, select an analysis category of **3D**, and select units of **N,mm,t,s,C** from the drop down lists. Click **OK**.

- Select **User Sections** from the top-right drop-down on the dialog
- In the Local library, browse for, and select the **box\_section** name. The basic section will be visualised. Note that eccentricity values can be defined here for sections, when appropriate.
- Press the **Visualise** button and the fibre locations will be seen. Click **Close**.



Visualisation of local library item



Visualisation of fibre locations

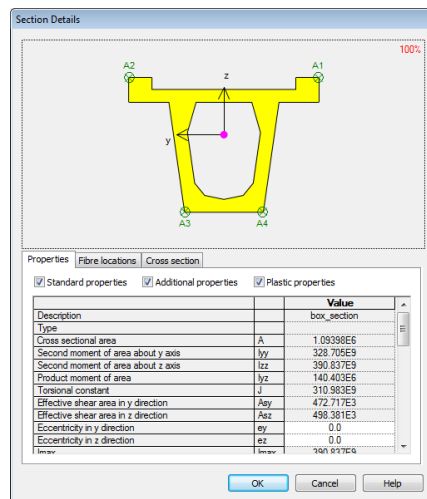
Fibre locations are used to calculate beam stress results for plotting force and moment diagrams. LUSAS automatically creates one for every extreme point on a section.

- On the Geometric Line dialog, press the **Section details** button.
- Select the **Fibre locations** tab. The calculated extreme fibre locations can be seen.

Note that additional fibre locations can be added manually to the library item by clicking in the Fibre locations area and pressing the **TAB** key until a new line is created, and then entering the coordinate of the fibre location required.




**Tip.** If additional fibre locations are required on the section use Modeller to obtain the properties of any additional points on the saved model and enter the point coordinates in the manner described above. Note that if invalid coordinates are used the fibre location will be added to the nearest point on the outer perimeter of the section.



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- Press **OK** to save changes and return to the Geometric Line dialog.
- Finally, to add the local library section to the Attributes  Treeview (ready for assignment to selected lines representing beams in the model) press the **OK** button.

This completes the example.