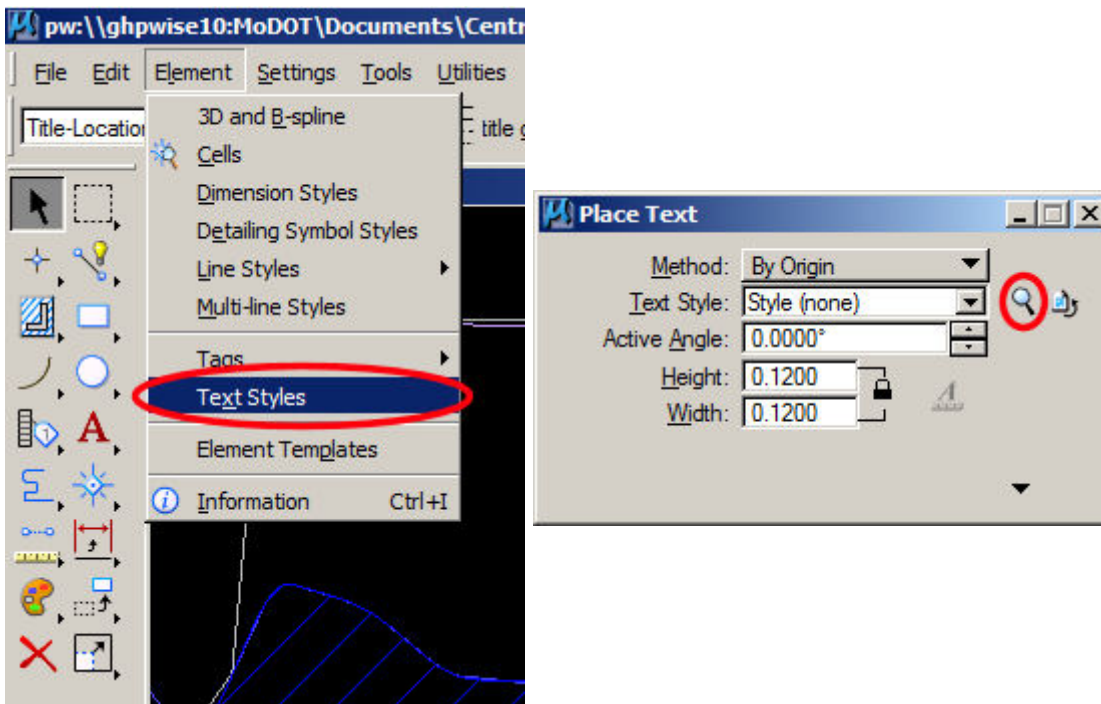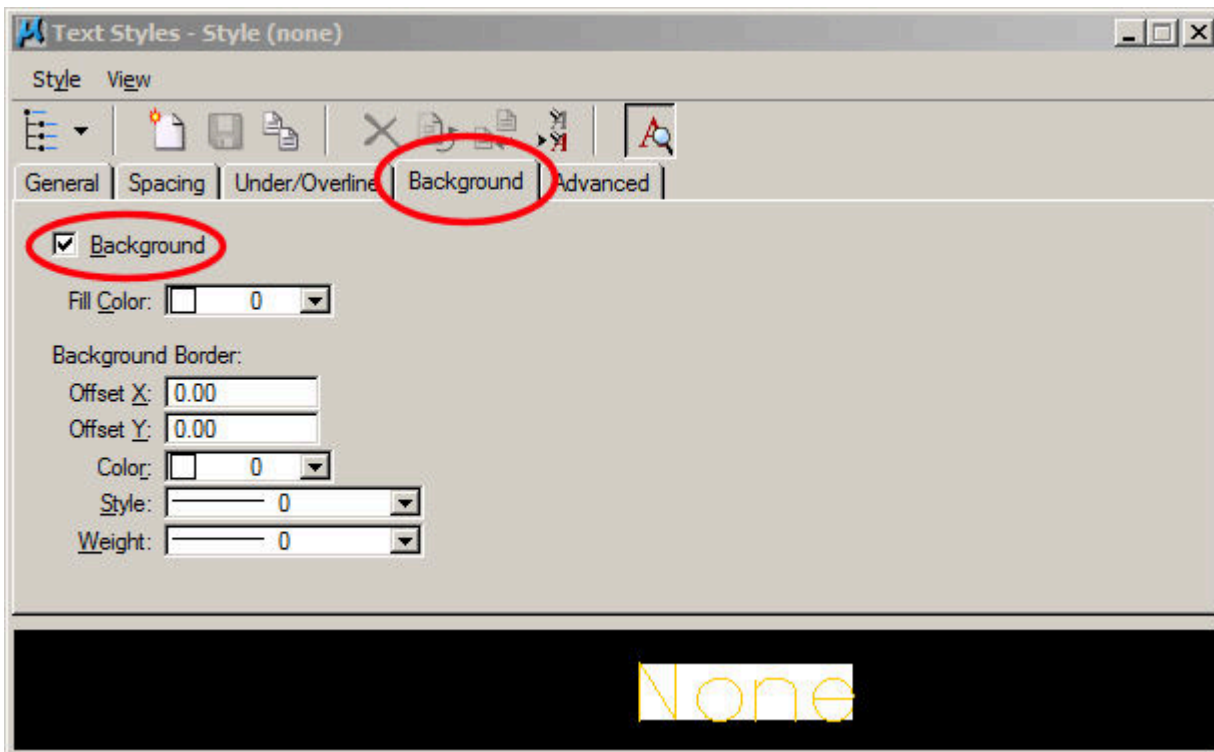You have the ability to add masking to any text elements within a design file. Being able to mask behind a string or block of text can be extremely beneficial when that text is positioned over an area of hatching or an image.

In order to place text using text masking, the background option must be enabled and set up properly through the **Text Styles** dialog box.
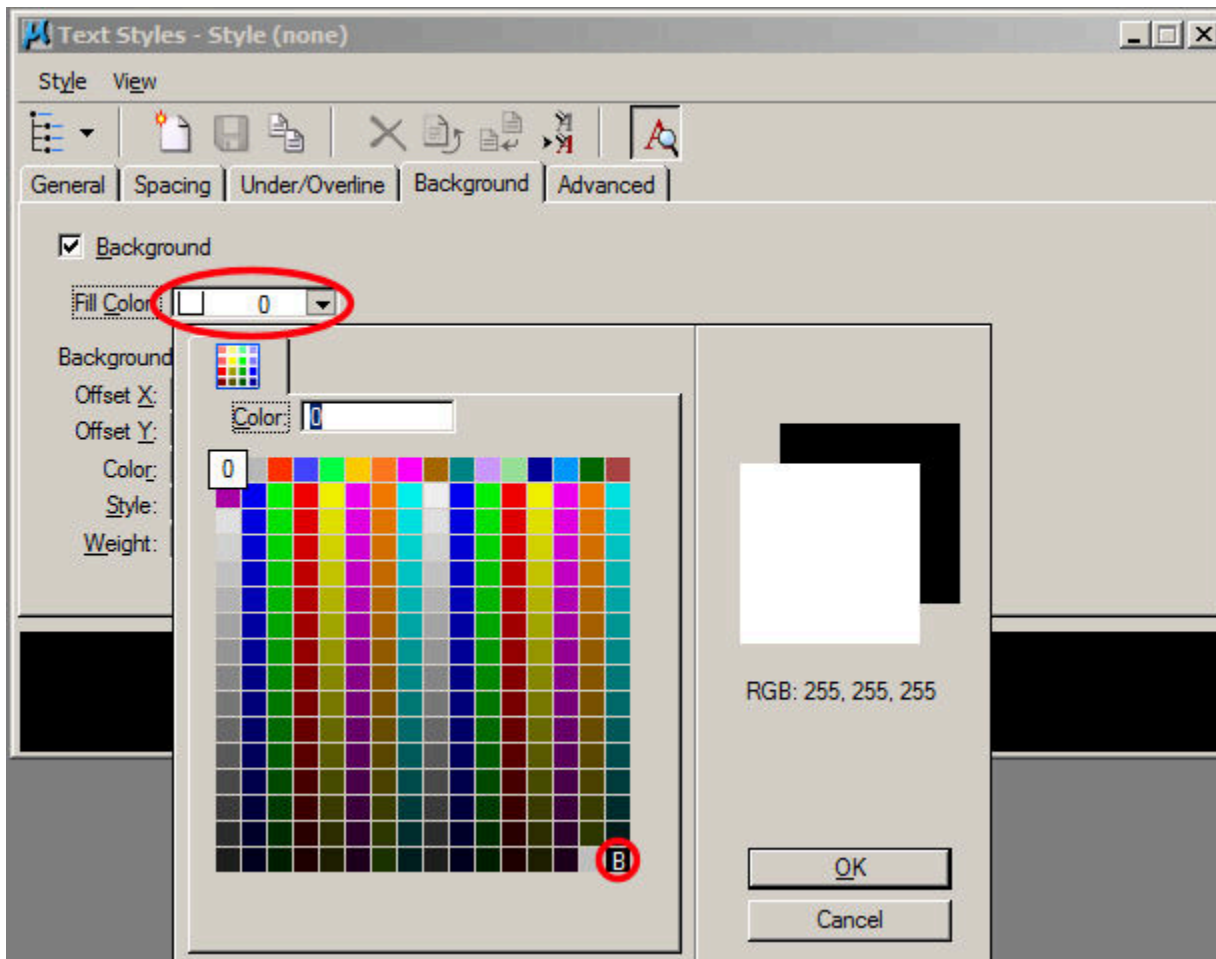
The first step in this process is to access the **Text Styles** dialog box. This can be done by selecting the **Element** drop down menu at the top of the MicroStation screen and choosing the **Text Styles** option, or by clicking the **Browse** button on the **Place Text** tool settings dialog box.

Within the **Text Styles** dialog box, we will need to access the **Background** tab and place a check in the **Background** check-box to enable this option.
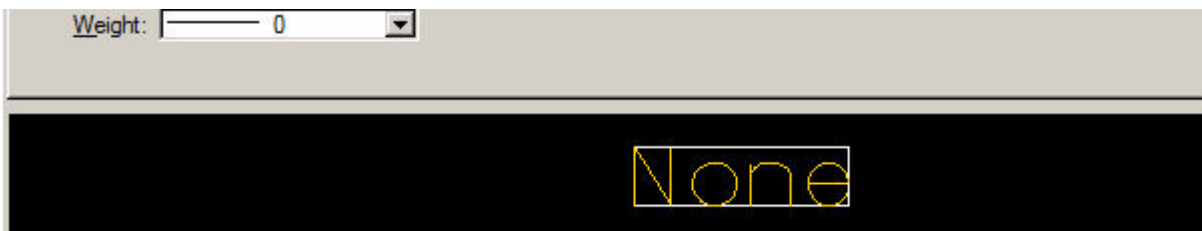
Now that the background settings are available, we will need to make a few adjustments to make the masking appear correctly.

The first thing we will need to change is the color for the masking. Notice the Text Preview area at the bottom of the Text Styles dialog box. If we were to use the mask with this color, we would get a black box that would not allow us to see our text. What we need to do is to change the color to something that will allow our text to display correctly. If we click on the small down-arrow located to the right of the color number, the color palette will be displayed, giving us more color choices. It is recommended to select the color block located at the bottom right corner, designated by the letter "B". This option will match the existing background of our MicroStation V8 design file.

Once this color is set, you will notice the change in the appearance of your text in the text preview window.
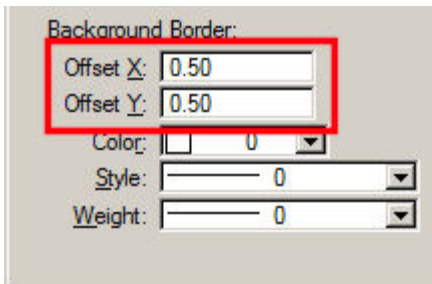

Now we need to make some changes so that the border is not set right on the edges of our text.

For this step, we will need to make some adjustments to the **Offset X** and **Offset Y** input areas.

One change that V8i has brought is that this is now a decimal percentage of the actual height and width.

A value of 0.5 is 1/2 the height, and the recommended setting.

If we do want to show a border around the masking for our text, we can simply create text and place it. If we do not want to show a border around our text masking, then we need to make one more change before placing text.

The **Color** setting under the **Background Border** portion of this tab controls the color that is assigned to the border, or frame of our masking. In order to make this border "disappear", we will need to set this color to the same color we chose for the masking. So if the fill color was set to 255 (This is where the "B" is in the bottom right corner of the color palatte), then we need to set our border to the same color.

FYI- Once you set the border color to 255, the masking will not show up in the Text preview pane because it blends in with the background color.

Now that we have our masking set up, we can create and place text with these masking attributes applied. Masking will now be applied to any new text element placed in the design file with the exception of dimension text.

Multi-line text placed with masking and no border

Once the Background option is turned on and set up, you can apply masking to existing text with the **Change Attributes** tool. With this tool, you can change the attributes of existing text by selecting each piece of text individually, or by making a selection set out of multiple pieces of text, and then activating the **Change Text Attributes** tool.

PROBLEMS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE

There are several things that can affect the way masking is displayed that you need to be aware of.

First, as you can see above, you will probably not want to use a border if you are placing multi-line text.
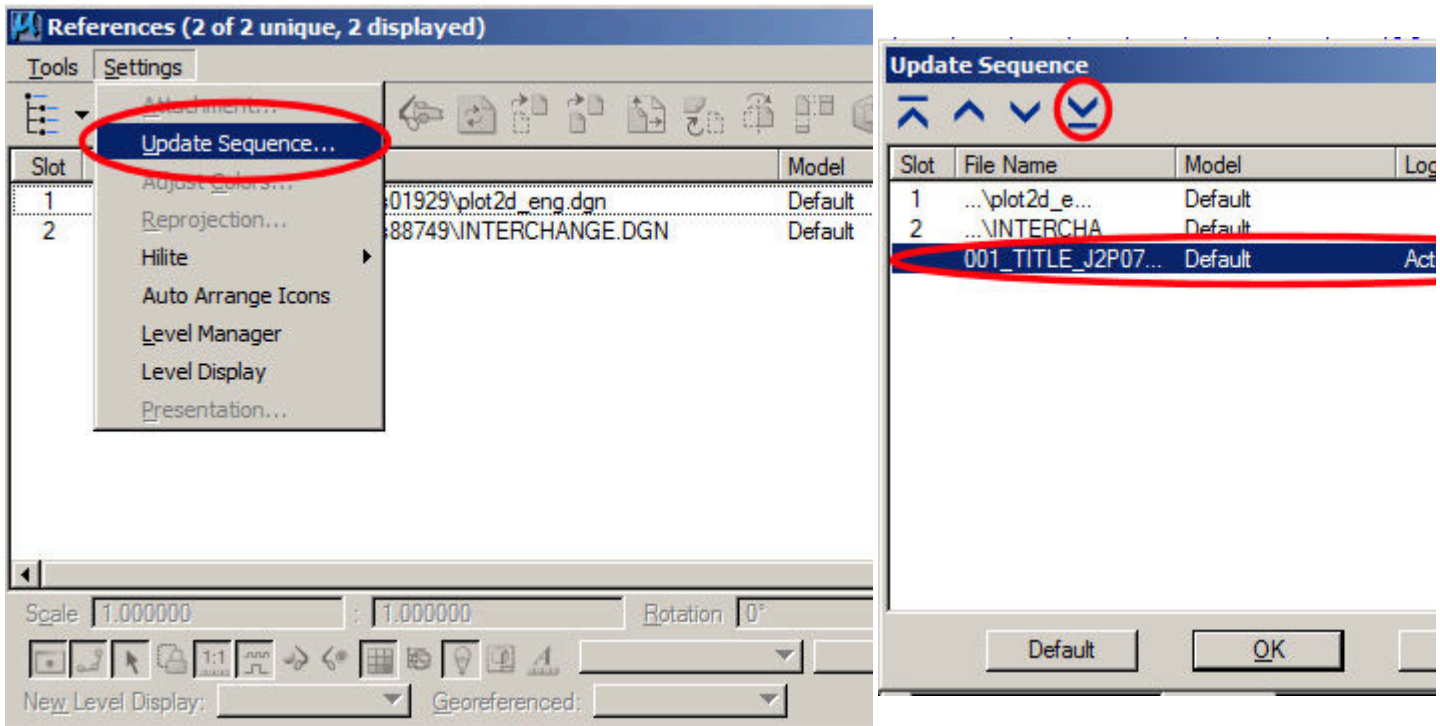

Another problem you may see is conflicts between the **Offset Y** and the **Line Spacing** of the text being placed. If this occurs, you need to increase the value for **Line Spacing**. This setting is found under the **Spacing** tab in the **Text Styles** dialog box.

This value is also a decimal value of the text height. A value of 0.5 Will be 1/2 the Text Height. For multiple lines, you want this to be at least 1.0

A third situation that can cause problems with masking if you are trying to place text with masking over geometry that is referenced into a design file, is the **Update Sequence**. If the **Update Sequence** is set so that the referenced files are redrawn after the active design file, then any referenced geometry will be displayed on top of your masking.

The easiest way to remedy this situation is to change the order that the files are loaded through the **Update Sequence**. This can be accomplished by selecting the **Update Sequence** option from the **Settings** menu in the **Reference** dialog box. Once the **Update Sequence** dialog box is available, select the active file and move it to the bottom of the list with the **Move To End of Sequence** butoon located at the top of the dialog box.

A very important last note ! Remember to go back to your Text Styles dialog box and uncheck the Background option on the background tab or any text you place will have a mask applied to it.