

BuildingNet: Learning to Label 3D Buildings

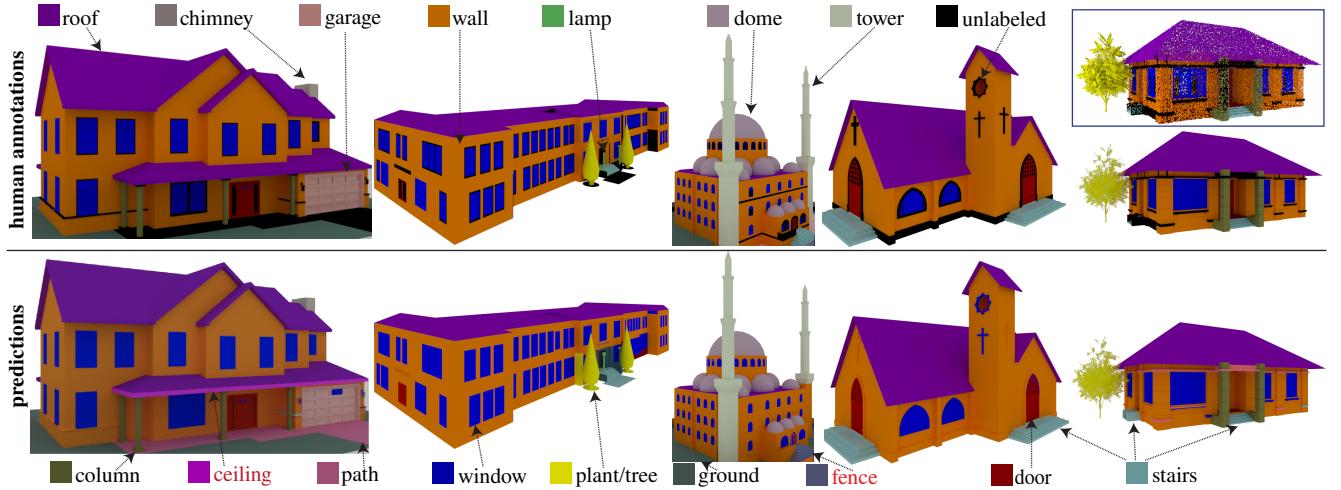
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Figure 1: We introduce a dataset of 3D building meshes with annotated exteriors (top). We also present a graph neural network that processes building meshes and labels them by encoding structural and spatial relations between mesh components (bottom). Our dataset also includes a point cloud track (blue box). Examples of erroneous network outputs are in red text.

Abstract

We introduce BuildingNet: (a) a large-scale dataset of 3D building models whose exteriors are consistently labeled, and (b) a graph neural network that labels building meshes by analyzing spatial and structural relations of their geometric primitives. To create our dataset, we used crowdsourcing combined with expert guidance, resulting in 513K annotated mesh primitives, grouped into 292K semantic part components across 2K building models. The dataset covers several building categories, such as houses, churches, skyscrapers, town halls, libraries, and castles. We include a benchmark for evaluating mesh and point cloud labeling. Buildings have more challenging structural complexity compared to objects in existing benchmarks (e.g., ShapeNet, PartNet), thus, we hope that our dataset can nurture the development of algorithms that are able to cope with such large-scale geometric data for both vision and graphics tasks e.g., 3D semantic segmentation, part-based generative models, correspondences, texturing, and analysis of point cloud data acquired from real-world buildings. Finally, we show that our mesh-based graph neural network significantly improves performance over several baselines for labeling 3D meshes. Our project page www.buildingnet.org includes our dataset and code.

1. Introduction

Architecture is a significant application area of 3D vision. There is a rich body of research on autonomous perception of buildings, led in large part by digital map developers seeking rich annotations and 3D viewing capabilities for building exteriors [14], as well as roboticists who design robots to operate in building interiors (e.g. [45]). Recent advances in AR/VR also rely on computer-aided building analysis [6]. Early work on digital techniques for architectural design, including freeform design explorations as well as full-fledged constructions [15], led to the current ubiquity of computational design tools in architectural studios. In addition, computers can automate the processing of architectural data such as photographs, satellite images and building plans, for archival and analytical purposes (e.g. [62, 32]).

Thus, there is significant incentive to apply modern data-driven geometry processing to the analysis of buildings. However, while buildings are bona fide geometric objects with well-established design principles and clear ontologies, their structural and stylistic complexity is typically greater than, or at least markedly *different from*, those of shapes in common 3D datasets like ShapeNet [5] and S-

canNet [10]. This makes them challenging for standard shape analysis pipelines, both for discriminative tasks such as classification, segmentation and point correspondences, as well as for generative tasks like synthesis and style transfer. Further, data-driven methods demand data, and to the best of our knowledge there are no large-scale, consistently-annotated, public datasets of 3D building models.

In this paper, we present BuildingNet, the first publicly available large-scale dataset of annotated 3D building models whose exteriors and surroundings are consistently labeled. The dataset provides 513K annotated mesh primitives across 2K building models. We include a benchmark for mesh and point cloud labeling, and evaluate several mesh and point cloud labeling networks. These methods were developed primarily for smaller single objects or interior scenes and are less successful on architectural data.

In addition, we introduce a graph neural network (GNN) that labels building meshes by analyzing spatial and structural relations of their geometric primitives. Our GNN treats each subgroup as a node, and takes advantage of relations, such as adjacency and containment, between pairs of nodes. Neural message passing in the graph yields the final mesh labeling. Our experiments show that this approach yields significantly better results for 3D building data than prior methods. To summarize, our contributions are:

- The first large-scale, publicly available 3D building dataset with annotated parts covering several common categories, in addition to a benchmark.
- A graph neural network that leverages pre-existing noisy subgroups in mesh files to achieve state-of-the-art results in labeling building meshes.
- An annotation interface and crowdsourcing pipeline for collecting labeled parts of 3D meshes, which could also extend to other categories of 3D data.

2. Related Work

3D shape semantic segmentation datasets. Existing datasets and benchmarks for 3D shape semantic segmentation are limited to objects with relatively simple structure and small number of parts [7, 21, 18, 58, 36, 61]. The earliest such benchmark [7, 21] had 380 objects with few labeled parts per shape. More recently, Uy et al. [52] released a benchmark with 15K scanned objects but focuses on object classification, with part-level segmentations provided only for chairs. The most recent and largest semantic shape segmentation benchmark of PartNet [61] contains 27K objects in 24 categories, such as furniture, tools, and household items. However, even with PartNet’s fine-grained segmentation, its categories still have a few tens of labeled parts on average. Our paper introduces a dataset for part labeling of 3D buildings, pushing semantic segmentation to much larger-scale objects with more challenging structure and several tens to hundreds of parts per shape.

3D indoor scene datasets. Another related line of work has introduced datasets with object-level annotations in real-world or synthetic 3D indoor environments [19, 1, 39, 46, 4, 10, 28, 63, 13]. In contrast, our dataset focuses on building exteriors, a rather under-investigated domain with its own challenges. While an indoor scene is made of objects, which are often well-separated or have little contact with each other (excluding floors/walls), a building exterior is more like a coherent assembly of parts (windows, doors, roofs) i.e., a single large shape with multiple connected parts, including surroundings (e.g., landscape). Building exteriors share challenges of single-shape segmentation (i.e., segment parts with clean boundaries along contact areas) as well as scene segmentation (i.e., deal with the large-scale nature of 3D data). Buildings also come in a variety of sizes, part geometry and style [31], making this domain challenging for both shape analysis and synthesis.

3D urban datasets. With the explosion of autonomous driving applications, large-scale 3D point cloud datasets capturing urban environments have appeared [38, 16, 43, 2, 48]. These datasets include labels such as roads, vehicles, and sidewalks. Buildings are labeled as a single, whole object. Our dataset contains annotations of building parts, which has its own challenges, as discussed above. The Rue-Monge14 dataset contains 3D building frontal facades captured from a street in Paris with 8 labels related to buildings [42]. Our buildings are instead complete 3D models with significantly more challenging diversity in geometry, style, function, and with more fine-grained part labels.

Deep nets for 3D mesh understanding. A few recent neural architectures have been proposed for processing meshes. Some network directly operate on the mesh geometric or topological features [33, 17, 26, 44], spectral domain [3, 37, 60, 41], while others transfer representations learned by other networks operating, e.g., on mesh views or voxels [20, 55, 25]. Our method is complementary to these approaches. It is specifically designed to process meshes with pre-existing structure in the form of mesh components (groups of triangles), which are particularly common in 3D building models. CRFs and various grouping strategies with heuristic criteria have been proposed to aggregate such components into labeled parts [55]. Our method instead uses a GNN to label components by encoding spatial and structural relations between them in an end-to-end manner. From this aspect, our method is also related to approaches that place objects in indoor scenes using GNNs operating on bounding box object representations with simple spatial relations, [64, 53], and GNN approaches for indoor scene parsing based on graphs defined over point clusters [27]. Our GNN instead aims to label mesh components represented by rich geometric features, and captures spatial and structural relations specific to building exteriors.

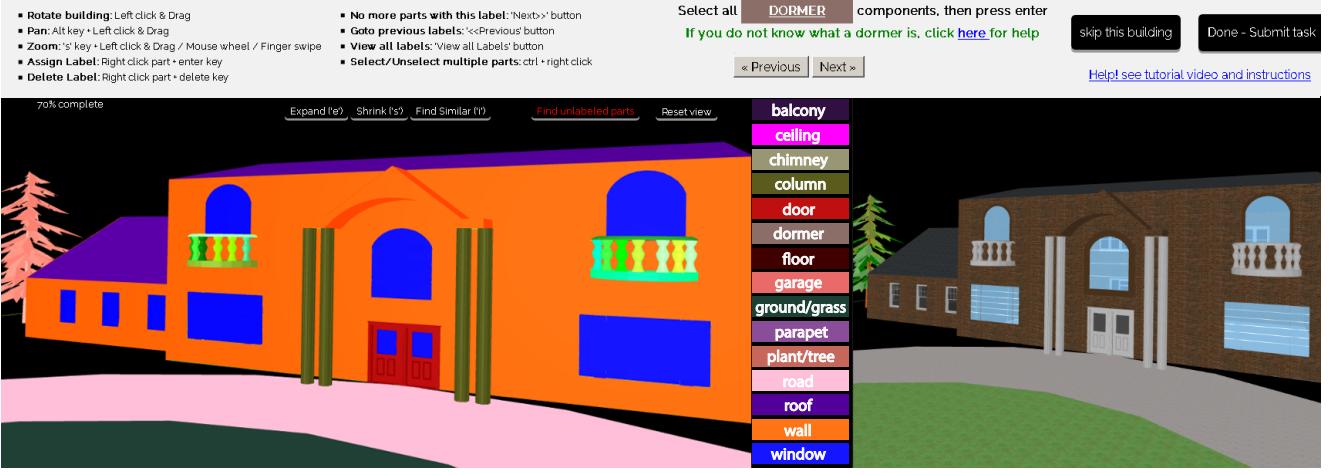


Figure 2: Our interface for labeling 3D building models. The colors of annotated components follow the legend in the middle (we show here a subset of labels - the UI contained 16 more labels in a more extended layout). Any components that have not been labeled so far are shown in shades of light yellow/green (e.g., balcony components). The UI displays instructions on top and offers functionality to facilitate labeling, such as automatic detection of repeated components (“find similar”), automatic grouping/un-grouping of components (“expand”/“shrink”), and auto-focusing on unlabeled ones (“find unlabeled parts”).

3D Building Mesh Segmentation and Labeling. There has been relatively little work in this area. Early approaches for semantic segmentation of buildings relied on shallow pipelines with hand-engineered point descriptors and rules [49, 50]. A combinatorial algorithm that groups faces into non-labeled components spanning the mesh with high repetition was proposed in [11]. A user-assisted segmentation algorithm was proposed in [12]. Symmetry has been proposed as a useful cue to group architectural components [24, 35]. Our method instead aims to label 3D building meshes with a learning-based approach based on modern deep backbones for extracting point descriptors. It also incorporates repetitions as a cue for consistent labeling, along with several other geometric and structural cues.

3. Building Data Annotation

We first discuss the procedure we followed to annotate 3D building models. In contrast to 3D models of small and mid-scale objects, such as tools, furniture, and vehicles encountered in existing 3D shape segmentation benchmarks, such as ShapeNet [58, 59] and PartNet [36], buildings tend to contain much richer structure, as indicated by their mesh metadata. For example, one common type of metadata are groupings of polygon faces, commonly known as *mesh subgroups* [36], which correspond to geometric primitives and modeling operations used by modelers while designing shapes. These subgroups often correspond to “pieces” of semantic parts e.g., a window is made of subgroups representing individual horizontal and vertical frame pieces or glass parts. The average number of mesh subgroups per object at the last level of group hierarchy in the largest shape segmentation benchmark (PartNet [36]) is 24.4, and the me-

dian is 11. In our dataset, the average number of mesh subgroups per building is 25.5x larger (623.6 subgroups), while the median is 44x larger (497.5 subgroups). We note that these numbers include only building exteriors i.e., without considering building interiors (e.g., indoor furniture). PartNet relied on mesh subgroups for faster annotation i.e., the annotators were manually clicking and grouping them into parts. Selecting each individual mesh subgroup in our case would be too laborious in the case of a large-scale 3D building dataset. To this end, we developed a user interface (UI) that followed the PartNet’s principles of well-defined and consistent labelings, yet its primary focus was to deal with the annotation of a massive number of mesh subgroups per building. In particular, our UI offers annotators the option of *label propagation* to similar subgroups based on both geometric and mesh metadata to enable faster labeling. Another focus was to achieve *consensus* across several trained crowdworkers annotating in parallel. To this end, we employed a majority voting process. We focused on crowdsourcing annotations for *common part labels* encountered in buildings. In the rest of this section, we describe our user interface (UI) for interactive labeling of 3D buildings (Section 3.1), and the dataset collection process (Section 3.2).

3.1. Interface for labeling

Our interface is shown in Figure 2. On the left window, we display the building with a distinct color assigned to each mesh subgroup. When a subgroup is annotated, it changes color from the default palette (shades of light green and yellow) to a predetermined, different color according to its label. On the right, we display the textured version of the building so that crowdworkers also access color cues useful

for labeling. The workers have full 3D control of viewpoint (pan, zoom, rotate). Changes on the viewpoint are reflected in both windows. On the top of the interface, we provide instructions and links with examples of parts from real-world buildings for each label. The workers are asked to label the mesh subgroups through a sequence of questions e.g., “label all walls”, then “label all windows”, and so on. Alternatively, they can skip the questions, and directly select a desired part label from the list appearing in the middle of the UI. To perform an assignment of a currently selected label to a mesh subgroup, the workers simply right-click on it and press enter. Alternatively, they can select multiple subgroups and annotate them altogether. All adjacent subgroups with the same label are automatically merged into a single labeled *component* to decrease the workload of manual merging. We note that we considered the possibility of incorporating mesh cutting tools to split large subgroups into smaller ones for assigning different labels, as done in PartNet [36]. However, such tools require reconstruction into watertight meshes, which could not be achieved for most building subgroups due to their non-manifold geometry, disconnected or overlapping faces, and open mesh boundaries. For the majority of buildings in our dataset, we observed that each subgroup can be assigned with a single part label without requiring further splits. Annotators were also instructed not to label any (rare) subgroups that contained parts with different labels.

Clicking individual mesh subgroups for assigning part labels can be still cumbersome, since buildings have hundreds or thousands of them. Our UI takes advantage of the fact that buildings often have repeated mesh subgroups e.g., the same window mesh is re-used multiple times in a facade during 3D modeling. Thus, in a pre-processing step, we found all duplicate mesh subgroups by checking if they have the same mesh connectivity (mesh graph) and vertex locations match after factoring out rigid transformations. Details about duplicate detection are provided in the supplementary material. Workers are then given the option to select all subgroup duplicates and propagate the same label to all of them at once, as shown in Figure 3(top). Another UI feature was to allow users to “expand” a mesh subgroup selection by taking advantage of any hierarchical grouping metadata. This expansion was performed by iteratively

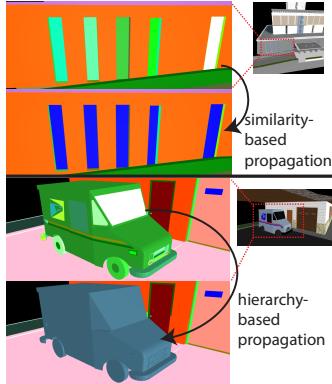


Figure 3: Label propagation to repeated subgroups (*top*) or their parents (*bottom*). Initially selected subgroup is in white.

Table 1: Statistics per building category. *From left to right:* building category, total number of models, average/median/minimum/maximum number of mesh subgroups per model, average number of unique subgroups.

| Category | num# models | avg# subgrps | med# subgrps | min# subgrps | max# subgrps | avg# un- subgrps |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Residential | 1,424 | 678.7 | 547 | 83 | 1989 | 167.1 |
| Commercial | 153 | 723.4 | 606 | 90 | 1981 | 159.8 |
| Religious | 540 | 487.0 | 348 | 93 | 1981 | 139.9 |
| Civic | 67 | 628.8 | 480 | 118 | 1822 | 144.4 |
| Castles | 85 | 609.8 | 485 | 125 | 1786 | 193.0 |
| Whole Set | 2,000 | 623.6 | 497.5 | 83 | 1989 | 160.5 |

moving one level up in the mesh group hierarchy and finding all subgroups sharing the same parent with the initially selected subgroup, as shown in Figure 3(bottom). We refer readers to our supplementary video showing a tutorial with details of our UI operations.

3.2. Dataset and Benchmark

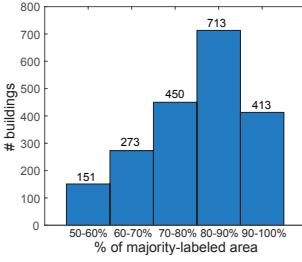
To create our dataset, we mined building models from the 3D Warehouse repository [51]. Mining was driven by various quality checks e.g., excluding low-poly, incomplete, untextured meshes, and meshes with no or too few subgroups. We also categorized them into basic classes following the Wikipedia’s article on “list of building types” [57] and an Amazon MTurk questionnaire. Since we aimed to gather annotations of building exteriors, during a pre-processing step we removed interior structure from each building. This was done by performing exhaustive ray casting originating from mesh faces of each subgroup and checking if the rays were blocked. We also used ray casting to orient faces such that their normals are pointing outwards [47]. Details about mining, classifying, and pre-processing of the 3D models are given in our supplement.

Part labels. To determine a set of *common* labels required in our UI to annotate building exteriors, we launched an initial user study involving a small subset of 100 buildings across all classes and 10 participants with domain expertise (graduate students in civil engineering and architecture). For this study, we created a variant of our UI asking users to explicitly type tags for mesh subgroups. We selected a list of 31 frequently entered tags to define our label set (see Table 2 and Appendix B of our supplement for details).

Annotation procedure. One possibility to annotate building parts would be to hire “professionals” (e.g., architects). Finding tens or hundreds of such professionals would be extremely challenging and costly in terms of time and resources. In an early attempt to do so, we found that consistency was still hard to achieve without additional verification steps and majority voting. On the other hand, hiring non-skilled, non-trained crowdworkers would have the disadvantage of gathering erroneous annotations. We instead proceeded with a more selective approach, where we iden-

tified crowdworkers after verifying their ability to conduct the annotation task reliably based on our provided tutorial and instructions. During our worker qualification stage, we released our UI on MTurk accessible to any worker interested in performing the task. After a video tutorial, including a web page presenting real-world examples of parts per label, the workers were asked to label a building randomly selected from a predetermined pool of buildings with diverse structure and part labels. We then checked their labelings, and qualified those workers whose labeling was consistent with our instructions. We manually verified the quality of their annotations. Out of 2,520 participants, 342 workers qualified. After this stage, we released our dataset only to qualified MTurkers. We asked them to label as many parts as they can with a tiered compensation to encourage more labeled area (ranging from \$0.5 for labeling minimum 70% of the building area to \$1.0 for labeling > 90%). Out of the 342 qualified MTurkers, 168 accepted to perform the task in this phase. Each qualified MTurker annotated ~60 buildings and each annotation took ~19.5min on average.

Dataset. We gathered annotations for 2K buildings. Each building was annotated by 5 different, qualified MTurkers (10K annotations in total). We accepted a label for each subgroup if a majority of at least 3 MTurkers out of 5 agreed on it. The inlet figure shows a histogram displaying the distribution of buildings (vertical axis) for different bins of percentage of surface area labeled with achieved majority (horizontal axis). All buildings in our dataset have labeled area more than 50%, and most have > 80% area labeled. In terms of annotator consistency, i.e., the percentage of times that the subgroup label selected by a qualified MTurker agreed with the majority, we found that it is 92.0%, indicating that the workers were highly consistent. Our resulting 2K dataset has 513,087 annotated mesh subgroups, and 291,998 annotated components (after merging adjacent subgroups with the same label). The number of unique annotated subgroups and components are 111,832 and 86,492 respectively. Table 1 presents subgroup statistics for each basic building category. Table 2 shows labeled component statistics per part label. We include more statistics in the supplement.



Splits. We split our dataset into 1600 buildings for training, 200 for validation, 200 for testing (80/10/10% proportion). The dataset has no duplicate buildings. We created the splits such that (a) the distribution of building classes and parts is similar across the splits (Table 2 and supplementary) and (b) test buildings have high majority-labeled area (> 85%) i.e., more complete labelings for evaluation.

Table 2: Number of labeled components per part label in our dataset, along with their number and frequency in the training split, hold-out validation, and test split.

| Label | # labeled comp. | # in training split (%) | # in validation split (%) | # in test split (%) |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Window | 140,972 | 109,218 (47.8%) | 15,740 (55.1%) | 16,014 (46.0%) |
| Plant | 26,735 | 20,974 (9.2%) | 1,870 (6.5%) | 3,891 (11.2%) |
| Wall | 22,814 | 18,468 (8.1%) | 2,270 (7.9%) | 2,076 (6.0%) |
| Roof | 12,881 | 10,342 (4.5%) | 1,396 (4.9%) | 1,143 (3.3%) |
| Banister | 13,954 | 9,678 (4.2%) | 1,467 (5.1%) | 2,809 (8.1%) |
| Vehicle | 8,491 | 7,421 (3.2%) | 716 (2.5%) | 354 (1.0%) |
| Door | 9,417 | 7,363 (3.2%) | 785 (2.7%) | 1,269 (3.6%) |
| Fence | 5,932 | 5,637 (2.5%) | 88 (0.3%) | 207 (0.6%) |
| Furniture | 6,282 | 5,000 (2.2%) | 575 (2.0%) | 707 (2.0%) |
| Column | 6,394 | 4,870 (2.1%) | 623 (2.2%) | 901 (2.6%) |
| Beam | 6,391 | 4,814 (2.1%) | 437 (1.5%) | 1,140 (3.3%) |
| Tower | 4,478 | 3,873 (1.7%) | 286 (1.0%) | 319 (0.9%) |
| Stairs | 4,193 | 2,960 (1.3%) | 472 (1.7%) | 761 (2.2%) |
| Shutters | 2,275 | 1,908 (0.8%) | 77 (0.3%) | 290 (0.8%) |
| Ground | 2,057 | 1,572 (0.7%) | 229 (0.8%) | 256 (0.7%) |
| Garage | 1,984 | 1,552 (0.7%) | 182 (0.6%) | 250 (0.7%) |
| Parapet | 1,986 | 1,457 (0.6%) | 153 (0.5%) | 376 (1.1%) |
| Balcony | 1,847 | 1,442 (0.6%) | 199 (0.7%) | 206 (0.6%) |
| Floor | 1,670 | 1,257 (0.5%) | 205 (0.7%) | 208 (0.6%) |
| Buttress | 1,590 | 1,230 (0.5%) | 53 (0.2%) | 307 (0.9%) |
| Dome | 1,327 | 1,098 (0.5%) | 114 (0.4%) | 115 (0.3%) |
| Path | 1,257 | 1,008 (0.4%) | 113 (0.4%) | 136 (0.4%) |
| Ceiling | 1,193 | 903 (0.4%) | 111 (0.4%) | 179 (0.5%) |
| Chimney | 1,090 | 800 (0.4%) | 103 (0.4%) | 187 (0.5%) |
| Gate | 827 | 737 (0.3%) | 65 (0.2%) | 25 (0.1%) |
| Lighting | 921 | 702 (0.3%) | 51 (0.2%) | 168 (0.5%) |
| Dormer | 798 | 601 (0.3%) | 48 (0.2%) | 149 (0.4%) |
| Pool | 742 | 544 (0.2%) | 78 (0.3%) | 120 (0.3%) |
| Road | 590 | 444 (0.2%) | 55 (0.2%) | 91 (0.3%) |
| Arch | 524 | 393 (0.2%) | 11 (0.03%) | 120 (0.3%) |
| Awning | 386 | 295 (0.1%) | 19 (0.1%) | 72 (0.2%) |
| Total | 291,998 | 228,561 | 28,591 | 34,846 |

Tracks. We provide two tracks in our benchmark. In the first track, called “BuildingNet-Mesh”, algorithms can access the mesh data, including subgroups. In this aspect, they can take advantage of any pre-existing mesh structure common in 3D building models. The algorithms are evaluated in two conditions: when the RGB texture is available, and when it is not. In the second condition, algorithms must label the building using only geometric information. The second track, called “BuildingNet-Points”, is designed for large-scale point-based processing algorithms that must deal with unstructured point cloud data without access to mesh structure or subgroups, which is still challenging even in the noiseless setting. To this end, for each mesh, we sample 100K points with Poisson disc sampling, to achieve a near-uniform sampling similarly to PartNet [36]. The point normals originate from triangles. There are also two evaluation conditions: with and without RGB color for points.

4. Building GNN

We now describe a graph neural network for labeling 3D meshes by taking advantage of pre-existing mesh structure in the form of subgroups. The main idea of the network is

to take into account spatial and structural relations between subgroups to promote more coherent mesh labeling. The input to our network is a 3D building mesh with subgroups $\mathcal{C} = \{c_i\}_{i=1}^N$, where N is the number of subgroups, and the output is a label per subgroup. In the next section, we describe how the graph representing a building is created, then we discuss our GNN architecture operating on this graph.

Graph Nodes. For each 3D building model, we create a node for each mesh subgroup. Nodes carry an initial raw representation of the subgroup. Specifically, we first sample the mesh with 100K points (same point set used in the “BuildingNet-Points” track), then process them through the 3D sparse convolutional architecture of Minkowski network (MinkowskiUNet34 variant [8]). We also experimented using PointNet++ [40]. We extract per-point features from the last layer of these nets, then perform average pooling over the points originating from the faces of the subgroup to extract an initial node representation. We concatenate this representation with the 3D barycenter position of the subgroup, its mesh surface area, and the coordinates of the opposite corners of its Oriented Bounding Box (OBB) so that we capture its spatial dimensions explicitly. The combination of the above features in the resulting 41D node representation \mathbf{n}_i yielded better performance in our experiments.

Proximity edges. Driven by the observation that nearby subgroups tend to have the same label (e.g., adjacent pieces of glass or frame are labeled as “window”), or related labels (e.g., windows are often adjacent to walls), we create edges for pairs of subgroups that capture their degree of proximity. To avoid creating an overly dense graph, which would pose excessive memory overheads for the GNN, we created edges for pairs of subgroups whose distance was up to 10% of the average of their OBB diagonals. Relaxing this bound did not improve results. To avoid a hard dependency on a single threshold, and to capture the degree of subgroup proximity at multiple scales, we computed the percentage of point samples of each subgroup whose distance to the other subgroup is less than 1%, 2.5%, 5%, and 10% of the average of their OBB diagonals. Given a pair of subgroups (c_i, c_j) , this results in a 4D edge raw representation $\mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(prox)}$, where each entry approximates the surface area percentage of c_i proximal to c_j at a different scale. Similarly, we compute a 4D representation $\mathbf{e}_{j,i}^{(prox)}$ for the opposite edge direction.

Support edges. Certain arrangements of labels are often expected along the upright axis of the building e.g., the roof is on top of walls. We create a “supporting” edge for each subgroup found to support another subgroup, and “supported-by” edges of opposite direction for each subgroup found to be supported by another subgroup. The edges are created by examining OBB spatial relations. Specifically, as in the case of proximity edges, we compute a multi-scale 4D edge raw representation $\mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(ontop)}$ measur-

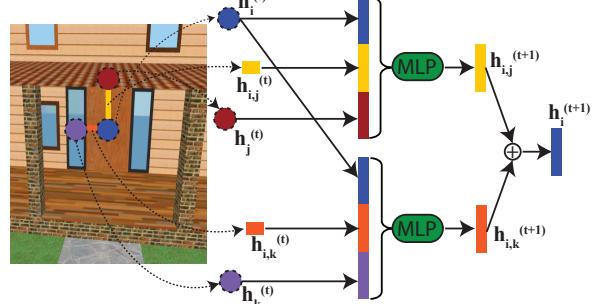


Figure 4: Architecture of the message passing layer. The door representation (blue node) is updated from a support edge (yellow edge) to a roof component (red node) and a proximity edge (orange edge) to a window (purple node).

ing the area percentage of c_i ’s bottom OBB face lying above the c_j ’s top OBB face for different distances 1%, 2.5%, 5%, 10% of the average of the two OBB’s heights. We also compute a 4D edge raw representation $\mathbf{e}_{j,i}^{(below)}$ corresponding to the the surface area percentage of c_j ’s top OBB face lying beneath the c_i ’s bottom OBB face.

Similarity edges. Subgroups placed under a symmetric arrangement often share the same label (e.g., repeated windows along a facade). We create an edge per pair of subgroups capturing repetition. For each pair of subgroups, we compute the bidirectional Chamfer distance between their sample points after rigid alignment. To promote robustness to any minor misalignment, or small geometric differences between subgroups, we create similarity edges if the Chamfer distance $d_{i,j}$ is less than 10% of the average of their OBB diagonals. Increasing this bound did not improve results. We normalize it within $[0, 1]$, where 1.0 corresponds to the above upper bound, and use $\mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(symm)} = 1 - d_{i,j}$ as raw similarity edge representation. We also use the same representation for this opposite direction: $\mathbf{e}_{j,i}^{(symm)} = \mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(symm)}$.

Containment edges. Driven by the observation that parts, such as doors or windows, are enclosed by, or contained within other larger parts, such as walls, we create edges for pairs of subgroups capturing their degree of containment. For each pair of subgroups, we measure the amount of c_i ’s volume contained within the c_j ’s OBB and also their volume Intersection over Union as a 2D edge representation $\mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(contain)}$ (and similarly for the opposite edge direction).

Network architecture. The network updates node and edge representations at each layer inspired by neural message passing [23]. Figure 4 shows one such layer of message passing. Below we explain our architecture at test time.

Initialization. Given a pair of subgroups c_i and c_j , we first concatenate their edge representations across all types:

$$\mathbf{e}_{i,j} = \{\mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(prox)}, \mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(ontop)}, \mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(below)}, \mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(contain)}, \mathbf{e}_{i,j}^{(sim)}\}$$

We note that some of the edge types might not be present between two subgroups based on our graph construction. The

entries of our edge representations indicate degree of proximity, support, containment, or similarity, and are normalized between $[0, 1]$ by definition. Zero values for an edge representation of a particular type indicate non-existence for this type. Each raw edge representation $\mathbf{e}_{i,j}$ is initially processed by a MLP to output a learned representation $\mathbf{h}_{i,j}^{(0)} = \text{MLP}(\mathbf{e}_{i,j}; \mathbf{w}^{(0)})$, where $\mathbf{w}^{(0)}$ are learned MLP parameters. The initial node representation is $\mathbf{h}_i^{(0)} = \mathbf{n}_i$.

Node and edge updates. Each of the following layers process the node and edge representations of the previous layer through MLPs and mean aggregation respectively:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{h}_{i,j}^{(l+1)} &= \text{MLP}(\mathbf{h}_i^{(l)}, \mathbf{h}_j^{(l)}, \mathbf{h}_{i,j}^{(l)}; \mathbf{w}^{(l)}) \\ \mathbf{h}_i^{(l+1)} &= \frac{1}{|N(i)|} \sum_{j \in N(i)} \mathbf{h}_{i,j}^{(l+1)}\end{aligned}$$

where $\mathbf{w}^{(l)}$ are learned MLP parameters. We use 3 layers of node/edge updates. Finally, the last GNN layer processes the node representations of the third layer, and decodes them to a probability per label using a MLP and softmax. Details about the architecture are in the supplement.

Training loss. Since some parts are more rare than others, as shown in Table 2, we use a weighted softmax loss to train our network, where weights are higher for rarer parts to promote correct labeling for them (i.e., higher mean Part IoU). For each building, the loss is $L = -\sum_{c_i \in \mathcal{L}} w_l \cdot \hat{\mathbf{q}}_i \log \mathbf{q}_i$, where \mathcal{L} is the set of all annotated subgroups in the building, $\hat{\mathbf{q}}_i$ is the ground-truth one-hot label vector for subgroup c_i , \mathbf{q}_i is its predicted label probabilities, and w_l is the weight for the label empirically set to be the log of inverse label frequency (i.e., a smoothed version of inverse frequency weights similarly to [34]). We use the same loss to train the MinkowskiNet used in our node representation: the loss is simply applied to points instead of subgroups. We experimented with other losses, such as the focal loss [29] and the class-balanced loss [9], but we did not find significant improvements in our dataset (see supplementary material).

Implementation details. Training of the BuildingGNN is done through the Adam optimizer [22] with learning rate 0.0001, beta coefficients are $(0.9, 0.999)$ and weight decay is set to 10^{-5} . We pick the best model and hyper-parameters based on the performance in the holdout validation split.

5. Results

We now discuss our evaluation protocol, then show qualitative and quantitative results for our benchmark tracks.

Evaluation protocol. Since most part classes are commonly encountered across different building categories (e.g., walls, doors, windows), all evaluated methods are trained across all five building categories (i.e., no category-specific training). Methods must also deal with the part

class imbalance of our dataset. For evaluation in the point cloud track (“BuildingNet-Points”), we use the metrics of mean shape IoU and part IoU, as in PartNet [36]. We also report the per-point classification accuracy. For the mesh track (“BuildingNet-Mesh”), the same measures are applied on triangles. However, since triangles may differ in area, we propose the following IoU variations, where the contribution of each triangle is weighted by its face area. Given all the annotated triangles across all buildings of the test dataset T_D , the part IoU for a label l is measured as:

$$IoU(l) = \frac{\sum_{t \in T_D} a_t \cdot ([y_t == l] \wedge [\hat{y}_t == l])}{\sum_{t \in T_D} a_t \cdot ([y_t == l] \vee [\hat{y}_t == l])}$$

where \hat{y}_t is the majority-annotated (ground-truth) label for a triangle $t \in T_d$, y_t is the predicted label for it, and $[\cdot]$ evaluates the above binary expressions. The shape IoU for a shape s with a set of annotated triangles T_s is measured as:

$$IoU(s) = \frac{1}{|L_s|} \sum_{l \in L_s} \frac{\sum_{t \in T_s} a_t \cdot ([y_t == l] \wedge [\hat{y}_t == l])}{\sum_{t \in T_s} a_t \cdot ([y_t == l] \vee [\hat{y}_t == l])}$$

where L_s is the set of all labels present in the annotations or predictions for that shape. We also report the per-triangle classification accuracy weighted by face area [21].

“BuildingNet-Points” track. As an initial seed for the leaderboard of this track, we evaluated three popular nets able to handle our 100K point sets: PointNet++ [40], MID-FC [54], and MinkowskiUNet34 [8]. We also tried other point-based networks e.g., DGCNN [56], but were unable to handle large point clouds due to excessive memory requirements (see our supplementary material for more discussion). All networks were trained under the same augmentation scheme (12 global rotations per building and small random translations). For all networks, we experimented with SGD, Adam [22], with and without warm restarts [30], and selected the best scheduler and hyperparameters for each of them based on the validation split. We did not use any form of pre-training. Table 3 reports the results. We observe that the MinkowskiNet offers the best performance. We also observe that the inclusion of color tends to improve performance e.g., we observe a 3% increase in Part IoU for MinkowskiNet. Another observation is that compared to PartNet classes, where the Part IoU ranges between $\sim 30 - 70\%$ for PointNet++, the performance in our dataset is much lower: PointNet++ has 14.1% Part IoU. Even for the best performing method (MinkowskiNet), the part IoU is still relatively low (29.9%), indicating that our building dataset is substantially more challenging.

“BuildingNet-Mesh” track. For our mesh track, we first include a number of baselines which rely on networks trained on the point cloud track, then transferring their results to meshes. One strategy for this transfer is to build correspondences between mesh faces and nearest points.

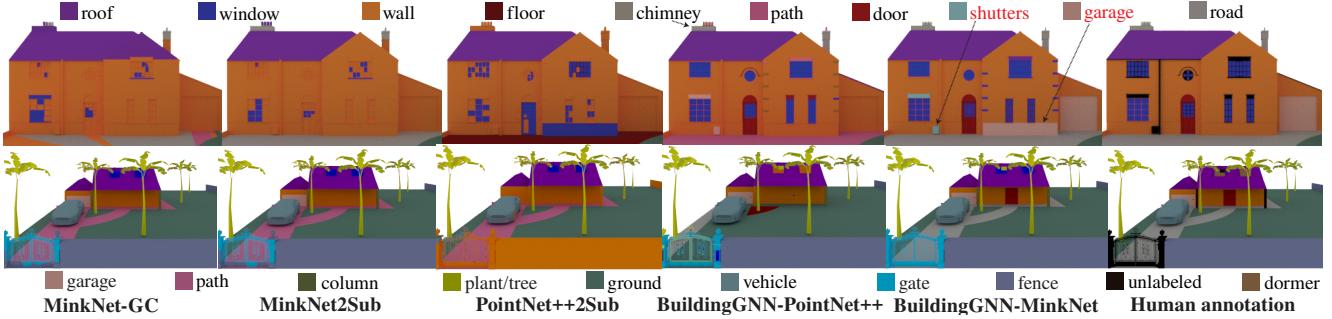


Figure 5: Comparisons with other methods. Despite a few errors (red text), the BuildingGNN is closer to human annotations.

Table 3: “BuildingNet-Point” track results. The column ‘n?’ means whether networks use point normals, and the column ‘c?’ means whether they use RGB color as input.

| Method | n? | c? | Part IoU | Shape IoU | Class acc. |
|---------------|----|----|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| PointNet++ | ✓ | ✗ | 8.8% | 12.2% | 52.7% |
| MID-FC(nopre) | ✓ | ✗ | 20.9% | 19.0% | 59.4% |
| MinkNet | ✓ | ✗ | 26.9% | 22.2% | 62.2% |
| PointNet++ | ✓ | ✓ | 14.1% | 16.7% | 59.5% |
| MID-FC(nopre) | ✓ | ✓ | 25.0% | 22.3% | 63.2% |
| MinkNet | ✓ | ✓ | 29.9% | 24.3% | 65.5% |

Specifically, for each point we find its nearest triangle. Since some triangles might not be associated with any points, we also build the reverse mapping: for each triangle, we find its closest point. In this manner, every triangle t has a set of points P_t assigned to it with the above bi-directional mapping. Then we perform average pooling of the point probabilities per triangle: $\mathbf{q}_t = \sum_{p \in P_t} \mathbf{q}_p / |P_t|$ where \mathbf{q}_p and \mathbf{q}_t are point and triangle probabilities respectively. We report results of these baselines in Table 4. We note that we tried max pooling, yet average pooling had better performance (see supplement). Another strategy is to aggregate predictions based on mesh subgroups instead of triangles i.e., average probabilities of points belonging to each subgroup. This strategy takes advantage of mesh structure and improves results. Another baseline is Graph Cuts (GC) on the mesh, which has been used in mesh segmentation [21] (see supplement for the GC energy). Finally, we report results from our GNN (“BuildingGNN”), using PointNet++ or MinkowskiNet node features. The BuildingGNN significantly improves the respective baselines e.g., with color as input, BuildingGNN with PointNet++ features improves Part IoU by 15.4% over the best PointNet++ variant, while BuildingGNN with MinkowskiNet features improves Part IoU by 5.6% over the best MinkowskiNet variant. The BuildingGNN with MinkowskiNet features performs the best with or without color. Our supplement includes an ablation study showing that each edge type in the BuildingGNN improves performance over using node features alone, while the best model is the one with all edges.

Qualitative results. Figure 5 shows comparisons of BuildingGNN with other methods. We observe that its pre-

Table 4: “BuildingNet-Mesh” results. PointNet++2Triangle means triangle-pooling with PointNet++ (similarly for others). PointNet2Sub means subgroup-pooling. MinkNet-GC means graph cuts with MinkowskiUNet34 unary terms.

| Method | n? | c? | Part IoU | Shape IoU | Class acc. |
|------------------------|----|----|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| PointNet++2Triangle | ✓ | ✗ | 8.8% | 13.1% | 54.7% |
| MidFC2Triangle | ✓ | ✗ | 23.1% | 22.1% | 42.9% |
| MinkNet2Triangle | ✓ | ✗ | 28.8% | 26.7% | 64.8% |
| PointNet++2Sub | ✓ | ✗ | 9.5% | 16.0% | 57.9% |
| MidFC2Sub | ✓ | ✗ | 26.4% | 28.4% | 46.2% |
| MinkNet2Sub | ✓ | ✗ | 33.1% | 36.0% | 69.9% |
| MinkNet-GC | ✓ | ✗ | 29.9% | 28.3% | 66.0% |
| BuildingGNN-PointNet++ | ✓ | ✗ | 29.0% | 33.5% | 67.9% |
| BuildingGNN-MinkNet | ✓ | ✗ | 40.0% | 44.0% | 74.5% |
| PointNet2Triangle | ✓ | ✓ | 14.0% | 18.0% | 60.7% |
| MidFC2Triangle | ✓ | ✓ | 27.3% | 26.2% | 45.6% |
| MinkNet2Triangle | ✓ | ✓ | 32.8% | 29.2% | 68.1% |
| PointNet2Sub | ✓ | ✓ | 16.1% | 23.5% | 64.8% |
| MidFC2Sub | ✓ | ✓ | 30.3% | 33.1% | 48.6% |
| MinkNet2Sub | ✓ | ✓ | 37.0% | 39.1% | 73.2% |
| MinkNet-GC | ✓ | ✓ | 33.8% | 31.1% | 68.9% |
| BuildingGNN-PointNet++ | ✓ | ✓ | 31.5% | 35.9% | 73.9% |
| BuildingGNN-MinkNet | ✓ | ✓ | 42.6% | 46.8% | 77.8% |

dictions are closer to human annotations compared to others. Figure 1 presents more results from BuildingGNN.

6. Discussion

We presented the first large-scale dataset for labeling 3D buildings and a GNN that takes advantage of mesh structure to improve labeling. A future avenue of research is to automatically discover segments in point clouds and embed them into a GNN like ours. Currently, edges are extracted heuristically. Learning edges and features in an end-to-end manner may improve results. Finally, mesh cutting and hierarchical labeling can lead to richer future dataset versions.

Acknowledgements. We thank Rajendra Adiga, George Artopoulos, Anastasia Mattheou, Demetris Nicolaou for their help. Our work was funded by Adobe, NSF (CHS-1617333), the ERDF and the Republic of Cyprus through the RIF (Project EXCELLENCE/1216/0352), and the EU H2020 Research and Innovation Programme and the Republic of Cyprus through the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy (Grant Agreement 739578).

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